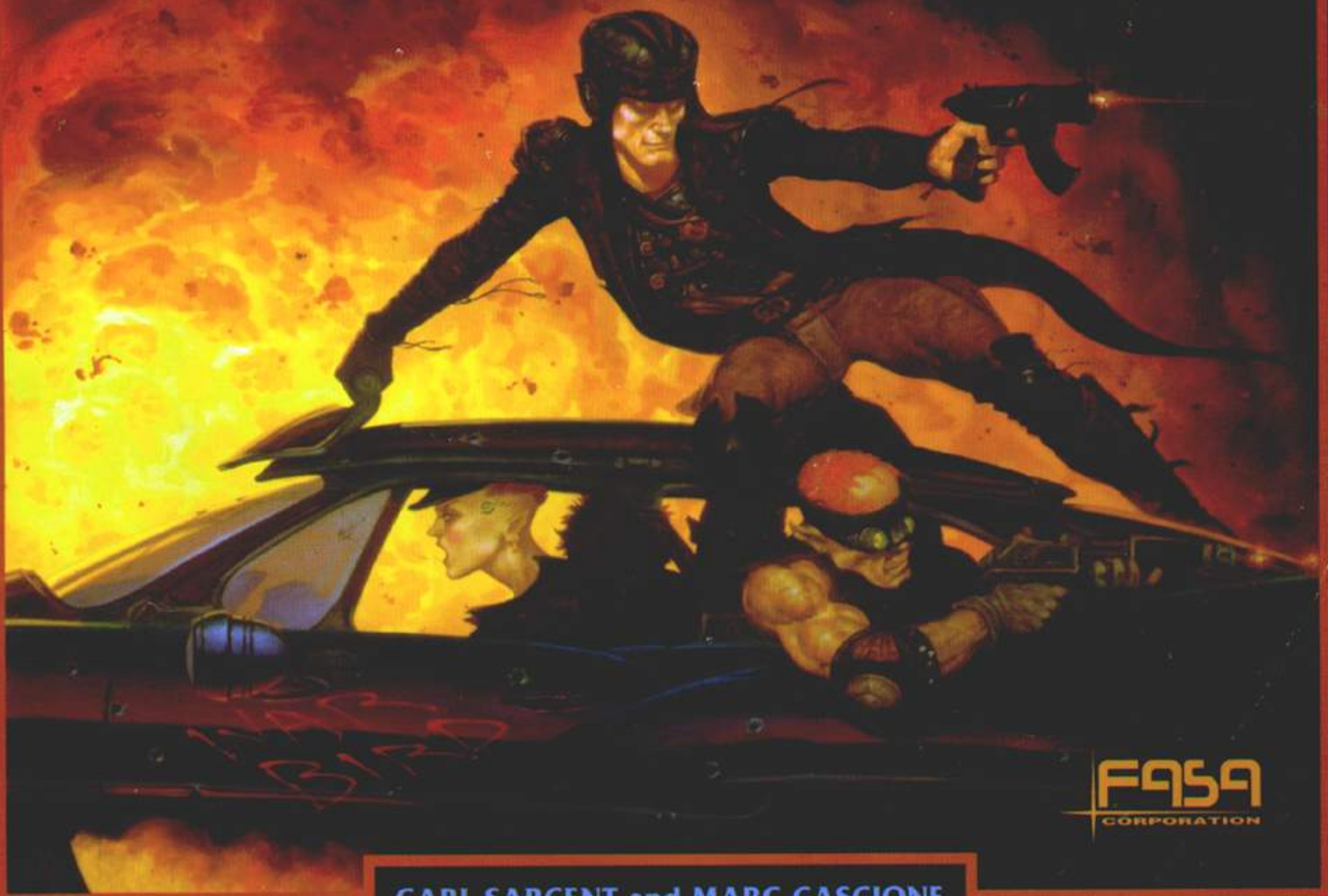


PRIME RUNNERS™

A SHADOWRUN SOURCEBOOK



FASA
CORPORATION

CARL SARGENT and MARC GASGIONE

PRIME RUNNERS™



FASA CORPORATION

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INTRODUCTION

Prime Runners is a sourcebook for **Shadowrun, Second Edition**. It provides profiles, details, whispers and rumors for 41 non-player characters—the prime runners of the title. Intended as a gamemaster resource, this book offers information on interesting, dangerous, and sometimes important characters that can serve as obstacles player characters might run up against, enemies they might make, targets they might hunt down or be hunted by, and sources of jobs and legwork.

Each prime runner profile provides full game statistics so that gamemasters can use these characters straight “off the shelf.” For most characters, the profile also provides the following key information: birth date and place, nationality, metatype, current residence, physical characteristics, and dominant personality traits and motivations. Each profile also offers a personal history and background, also as a convenience for the gamemaster, but all these details can easily be changed to suit the gamemaster’s campaign or whim. For example, the ace decker Michael Sutherland is described as an Englishman based in New York. As written, the greatest part of his character and charm relies on the fact that he plays the role of the Englishman abroad to the hilt, but a gamemaster could easily transplant him to Seattle or New Orleans or the current location of an adventure or ongoing campaign.

While many characters presented in **Prime Runners** seem particularly shadowy or elusive due to their nature or occupation, the information provided on terrorists, schizoid psychopaths, serial killers, chipheads, and their delightful kin remains deliberately sketchy to allow gamemasters fill in the details as needed.

Each profile also includes **Hooks**, which offer suggestions for ways to use these characters in game play: as an incidental part of a campaign, the focus of an adventure, a recurring character, and so on. Use these characters as more than glorified contacts—these prime runners have unique personalities, lifestyles, motivations for their actions, typical ways of reacting to situations and people, and other characteristics that make them individuals. They can function as a “real” part of each gamemaster’s **Shadowrun** universe. Information on these characters is offered by other shadowy types as a service to their fellow runners, and so the prime runners in this book represent known quantities; other runners, in turn, have posted comments about these characters on the Shadowland bulletin board. As usual, these rumors and comments may or may not be accurate—each gamemaster decides the truth in his or her game.

Characters are listed in alphabetical order, except when two or more work together (e.g., the yakuza Hiroshige and Takemura). Such characters are presented one after the other.

The gamemaster may find the following **Shadowrun** sourcebooks helpful for using **Prime Runners: Virtual Realities, Street Samurai Handbook, Shadowbeat** and **Shadowtech** are all useful resources for checking rules and hardware elements for characters presented here. Some characters have spells listed and described in **The Grimoire, Second Edition**.

Finally, **Prime Runners** includes a short section describing an expansion of the Threat Rating system offered in **Shadowrun, Second Edition**, for handling non-player characters.





WELCOME TO THE FREAK SHOW



>>>>(All too often friends and associates need some special talent—the best decker money can buy for a really tough session in the Matrix, a bodyguard who can laugh in the face of assault cannons, a detective or consultant who knows some drek no one else has a cat-in-hell's chance of knowing. Sometimes only the best will do, and you need to know who fits the bill—and how far they can be trusted, of course.

We started out compiling a short directory of such talent, but then some friends suggested that our focus was too narrow. They'd come across some nasty jokers more than once, and they wanted to warn other people about these crazy killers, wannabes, and homicidal gangers. "Hey, put these guys in too," they said. "Runners oughta know about them." And so the cautionary tales crept in. Little more than rumor exists on some of these slags, but these were rumors repeated by different people we trusted not to tell us drek.

And then our good friend Rusty said, "You oughta list a couple of Johnsons who pay well for runs. Sometimes a runner needs to raise big nuyen fast." Good old Rusty. Shame about that fragmentation-grenade sandwich Shoot-to-Kill and Hammerhead fed him, but that's how it goes. Anyway, we know you've got your own Johnsons whom you trust and rely on for regularly scheduled gigs, but we wanted to point out a few less well-known job opportunities—and to warn you off one or two as well.

So, this is what we know. Think of it as a smorgasbord of human and, of course, metahuman diversity.)<<<<<<

—Doktor Freeman and the Deathcore Kid
(00:00:00/03-22-55)

>>>>(A smorgasbord? Are these men mad? Can we trust anything they say?)<<<<<<

—Bitter Lemon (11:32:17/03-25-55)

>>>>(Chill, Lemonhead. Their basic data is almost always accurate, from what I can tell. They're careful to separate speculation from established fact and admit when they don't know something. And the Doktor also has no less than five degrees in medical and psychological sciences.)<<<<<<

—Juggler (02:16:40/03-29-55)

>>>>(Drek, so do I. Bought 'em all from some mail-order university at fifty nuyen a throw. So what?)<<<<<<

—Rubbisher (03:30:11/04-01-55)

>>>>(Look, sunshine, the Dok's great-granddaddy was the man who invented the transorbital lobotomy—so I wouldn't argue if I were you.)<<<<<<

—Juggler (04:02:55/04-15-55)





ALICE ADAMS (Journalist)

Birth Date: January 4, 2024

Birthplace: New Orleans, CAS

Nationality/Metatype/Gender: CAS/Black Human/Female

Current Residence: Baltimore, UCAS

Height: 162 cm

Weight: 58 kg

Hair: Black

Eyes: Dark brown

Distinguishing Physical Features: Unknown

Psychology

Traits: Curious, determined, pragmatic, ambitious

Motivations: Investigations

Lifestyle: Middle to High

If a trid soap star has a secret love nest or a preacher has skeletons in his closet, chances are Alice Adams will find out about it and tell the world. Alice is one of the leading investigative journalists for that much-villified upholder of the common American's unblemished right to know, *The National Tattler*. The *Tattler* comes in the traditional color-printed weekly magazine—which still manages to sell even in this electronic-media age—and a twice-weekly trid show. Both versions are distributed throughout America and beyond. Now a revered media institution, the *Tattler* is the premier source of all those fascinating stories about the indiscretions of minor celebrities, heart-warming tales of miraculous recoveries, and bizarre anecdotes concerning the allegedly supernatural ("Spirit of Abyssinian Fainting Goat Talks from Beyond the Grave," "Two-headed Baby Born Singing Duet," and the like). Pandering totally to the popular taste of the masses, the *Tattler* makes no claims to highbrow political comment or arts coverage; it knows what the people want, and it gives it to them.

Alice Adams has always said that she was a nosy child. In high school, she always knew who was dating whom. While attending university, she worked as chief gossip spreader for the student newspaper and was nearly suspended after doing a story revealing the involvement of a senior lecturer with four Bourbon Street topless dancers—with photos, of course. No one ever wondered where Alice would end up. Indeed, after school she moved immediately to take up a trainee reporter's position at the *Tattler's* headquarters just outside Baltimore.

Under the beady eye of legendary "old-school" editor Maxwell Roberts, Alice learned everything there is to know about dishing the dirt, from disguise and surveillance to dumpster diving and wriggling out of libel suits. Slowly but surely, her natural curiosity and flair for scandal enabled her to rise up through the ranks to become a top correspondent, jetting around the globe in search of the juiciest stories. She has repeatedly turned down promotions to an editor's chair, which has not endeared her to the career journalists who work with her, and her refusal to tone down her strong New Orleans accent hasn't helped the mostly Maryland-bred staff accept her either. But her talents for dishing it are well respected. She has a real knack for knowing exactly what her readers want to hear about a particular celebrity, almost an internal barometer of who is well liked and who is being willed for a fall's.

Alice appearance is rather nondescript, something she cultivates because it helps her move unnoticed among unwilling subjects. She lives in a sizable and luxurious apartment overlooking the Patapsco River at the fashionable end of Baltimore's harbor district, drives a smart car when not on assignment and generally enjoys all the benefits of someone at the peak of their profession. However, she plainly enjoys being out on the road, tracking down a lead, hiding in a closet with a micro-recorder hoping to hear something very juicy, or dressing up as a laundry maid just to rifle someone's motel room. What she does may be trivial—even unsavory to some observers—but Alice Adams does it very well.

>>>>(You might add that Alice has never appeared on the *Tattler* trid show in person, fearing that it would blow her cover—as if any of her targets would watch such drek! Anyway, she's always portrayed as a tall blonde white woman from the West Coast in the photo that accompanies her by-line, presumably to throw people off the scent.)<<<<<
—Edmonds (08:33:10/10-14-55)

>>>>(Yeah, the photo was Adams's idea. Latest buzz says she's involved with a married man in Washington. Apparently she's trying to keep all the details secret, especially from her arch-rivals at Channel 7's *Celebrity Exposure*. Recently Alice did a three-page spread on child-procuring accusations made against one of *Exposure*'s reporters (the whole thing was set up using *Tattler* stooges). You can bet the hacks at Channel 7 are just dying to get something on Adams to pay her back for that stunt.)<<<<<
—Vim (02:20:11/10-17-55)

>>>>(Actually, the photo was just a bungle. Some little grunt in the bowels of the *Tattler* building inadvertently stuck some photo of a model at the top of the first Adams report in the rag, so they stayed with it. They'd have looked awfully stupid saying, "er, wrong person" and putting in the right photo afterward.)<<<<<
—Collector (03:16:01/10-18-55)

>>>>(Recently Adams has been sniffing around DeeCee's less secretive social gatherings, schmoozing her way into the confidences of department nonentities. Guess she's gathering drek on some poor two-timing senator who's rubbing his secretary. And I thought she didn't do political stuff.)<<<<<
—Doler (06:16:57/10-20-55)

>>>>(Don't you believe it: she was very forthright about the shortcomings of that white supremacist congressman Illinois tried to elect a few years back. Shot his campaign down like a lead zeppelin in double-quick time. Good thing too.)<<<<<
—Cable (10:42:18/10-21-55)

>>>>(Who says that two-timing senator is a "he," boys?)<<<<<
—Bethan (11:06:19/10-21-55)

>>>>(Know something we don't, Bethan baby?)<<<<<
—Cable (11:08:11/10-21-55)

>>>>(Go ask Alice.)<<<<<
—Bethan (11:12:02/10-21-55)

Hooks

Alice Adams has many uses, most of which could prove very annoying for a team of runners who are trying to stay out of the media spotlight. If they are working for anyone involved with any branch of entertainment, it may be a coincidence that she is snooping around their area of operations in search of some dirt. Indeed, someone may hire the runners to stop her. If the runners do something especially newsworthy themselves, they may come to her attention; having Alice Adams running a "revealing-the-dark-secrets-of-the-world-of-the-shadowrunners" type exposé will do no good for any shadowrunner's career.

But Alice's work can be more serious, too. In her recent digging for a forthcoming series on celebrity partners of political figures, she has been working the fringes of the administration's social circles. In the course of this work, she has turned

up several innocuous facts that, when combined, reveal choice details of corruption in the highest levels of the Department of Business. Alerted to her snooping, the department's head of security has called in some favors with the FBI, and the story—or indeed Alice Adams—may well be suppressed before she has a chance to reveal it. Alice has tried telling her superiors at the *Tattler* what she has found and has essentially been told to stick to the sex-and-scandal that she's good at—"the *Tattler* ain't interested in no politics. Who d'ya think y'ar, anyway, Woodward and fraggin' Bernstein?" Alice needs someone else she can trust to investigate further and get the story onto the front pages where it surely belongs. Someone else like ... great, you guessed.

Attributes

Body: 2
Quickness: 4
Strength: 2
Charisma: 4
Intelligence: 4
Willpower: 6
Essence: 4.2
Reaction: 4

Special Skill

Nose for News: 7

Initiative: 4 + 1D6

Professional Rating: 2

Threat Ratings

Combat: 3

Cyberware

Datajack
Display Link
Headware
Memory, 100 Mp
Head Telephone

Skills

Car: 2
Computer: 3
Etiquette (Corporate): 5
Etiquette (Media): 6
Etiquette (Political): 3
Etiquette (Street): 3
Firearms: 2
Interrogation: 6
Negotiation: 5
Stealth (Rural): 4
Stealth (Urban): 8

Gear

Armor Jacket (5/3)
Binoculars w/Low-Light and Thermographic Vision
Colt American L36 [Light Pistol, 11 (clip), SA, 6L, w/50 rounds regular ammo]
Doc Wagon™ Contract (Gold)
Laser Microphone
Micro-Recorder
Micro-Transceiver
Pocket Secretary
Voice Identifier

Notes

Adams wears her armor jacket only on jobs where she sniffs the scent of some possible danger or hazard.

Ariel Almodovar (Detective)



Ariel Almodovar (Detective)

Birth Date: April 7, 2025

Birthplace: Houston, CAS

Nationality/Metatype/Gender: UCAS/Mixed Race
(Caucasian-Hispanic) Human/Female

Current Residence: Indianapolis, UCAS

Height: 161 cm

Weight: 52 kg

Hair: Reddish blonde

Eyes: Light brown

Distinguishing Physical Features: Twin moles on back,
over kidneys

Psychology

Traits: Vigilant, cautious, distrustful, aloof, neurotic
under pressure

Motivations: Staying alive long enough to get
enough money to get out

Lifestyle: Middle

If you need surveillance with a lot of care and cover, Ariel's your woman. She's the one if you want to be certain your target won't realize he's being tailed, or if you want someone or something to die or disappear "nice and quiet-like." But be ready with the nuyen, because if the money's not right Ariel's not interested.

Almodovar used to work for Cord Mutual in downtown Atlanta as a discreet investigator of corporate insurance claims—strictly small- to medium-sized businesses. She did her time trooping round the CAS, picked up some contacts and learned some stuff. Word is, at some point she came up against some complex scam involving a cartel of medium-sized businesses conspiring with Cord to defraud rival insurance companies. Now, she had harbored no illusions about Cord's scruples, but when she found a dozen charred corpses of kids who died in an arson attack planned by some sleazy little local outfit conspiring with Cord, something snapped. She cashed in her chips and got herself a UCAS passport by marrying some chiphead who needed money for his habit. Ariel dumped the creep very quickly and has spent the past four years in Indianapolis. Why Indianapolis, you ask? What the frag has Indianapolis got? Exactly ... Ariel prefers to stay away from the bright lights and attention.

Ariel does not trust people readily and requires solid references from anyone who's going to employ her. She doesn't like the idea of working for any corporate concern again, though she will if she needs the nuyen. She's not worried so much about runners shortchanging her. Ariel's concerned mostly about runners double-crossing her, using her as a decoy or bait for traps, that kind of stuff. Almodovar is a resourceful and skilled mage and investigator, who deserves the pay rate she asks. Just make sure that's a credstick in your pocket and she'll be glad to see you.

>>>>>(Ariel's someone to take on board if you're going up against some kind of dual-nature critter, too. Knowing that astral static stuff can be distinctly useful under such circumstances.)<<<<<

—Magister (23:24:01/09-04-55)

>>>>>(Her ma named her after that Shakespearean spirit thing, didn't she? Anything in that?)<<<<<

—Rialto (02:17:41/09-09-55)

>>>>>(Ah, culture permeates even down into society's pre-guttural levels. Wrong, chummer. Momma gave her the name after a book of poetry by some self-absorbed schizoid-spoiled middle-class daddy's-girl brat who iced herself and her kids. Not really the ideal start in life, but Ariel's good if you get past her diffidence and reserve. She has good reasons—including a four-year-old daughter—not to trust most people, so don't try to frag with her. We're good chummers, and if she doesn't teach you a lesson, I will.)<<<<<

—Cobalt Blue (05:32:11/09-10-55)

>>>>>(If you go see her, watch out for a mangy looking pooch following you back home. Ariel has enough tracking spells, but following in person is never a bad move if you can't be detected easily.)<<<<<

—Rosario (11:19:22/09-21-55)

Hooks

As a mage-detective, this character's roles are obvious. Runners might pay her to conduct her own surveillance for them or accompany them on some spying mission. She can also be used to create diversions at the site of a run, and her analytical spells have obvious uses on an active investigation (i.e., entering restricted areas, interrogating where you can and shooting where you can't). Almodovar is very smart and will want to see that runners have a coherent plan and contingency measures if she is to accompany them. She's happier being left to her own devices rather than working with others.

Gamemasters can complicate any plot line by making Almodovar the only person who knows some vital piece of information the runners need to make progress with their current run. Given that she's a professional detective, such a situation is entirely credible. She has quietly stored away a lot of knowledge during all those years of work (the main reason why Cord Mutual hasn't tried to geek her—they're afraid she might have stored it physically someplace, to be made public if she dies). Further complicate the runners' lives by placing Almodovar in the hands of some hostile faction that may have taken exception to her most recent interest.

Attributes

Body: 2
Quickness: 3
Strength: 1
Charisma: 2
Intelligence: 6
Willpower: 4
Essence: 6
Magic: 9 (12)
Reaction: 4

Skills

Conjuring: 7
Etiquette (Corporate): 5
Etiquette (Street): 4
Firearms: 5
Magical Theory: 8
Negotiation: 3
Psychology: 3
Sorcery: 7
Stealth: 5

Initiative: 4 + 1D6

Grade of Initiation: 3

Professional Rating: 2

Threat Ratings

Combat: 2
Magical: 2 (3)

Gear

Ares Viper Slivergun [Heavy Pistol, 30 (clip), SA/BF, 9S (f), w/60 rounds of flechette ammunition, Silencer]
Armor Jacket (5/3)
Doc Wagon™ Contract (Gold)
Power Focus: 3
Spell Type Focus (Manipulation): 3

Spells

Combat

Sleep: 6
Stunblast: 5

Detection

Analyze Magic: 6
Analyze Device: 7
Analyze Truth: 7
Clairaudience: 5
Clairaudience (Extended): 4
Clairvoyance: 6
Clairvoyance (Extended): 4
Detect Individual: 6
Detect Object: 7
Detect Enemies: 5
Mind Probe: 4

Illusion

Chaotic World: 5
Improved Invisibility: 5
Mask: 7
Vehicle Mask: 4

Manipulation

Astral Static: 5
Shapechange: 7

Notes

Establishing Ariel's personality and her tactical style are important to making her interesting in game play. The following notes apply mostly to her tactical style.

Ariel uses Mask/Vehicle Mask spells to cover approaches to areas that must be explored directly, and Clairaudience/Clairvoyance spells to explore such areas from a distance. She also likes to use Clairvoyance if a suitable subject can be found (e.g., a bribed security guard, goon, and the like). She is reluctant to conjure watchers, because they are detected easily and the conjuring cost in ritual materials is high. Generally, Ariel dislikes any dealings with spirits. She will enter areas in shapechanged form only if she must do so. (Because she has Stealth Skill, she'll use shapechange only when no indirect/disguised/covert approach to a location exists.) During any approach, she uses the improved invisibility spell for her peace of mind. She employs other detection spells as appropriate to the circumstances.

Ariel likes to confuse potential witnesses at the scene of any surveillance or attack as well. Masking, astral static, and especially chaotic world spells are key here. She always demands money for her services, but she'll accept as payment access to a grimoire giving her versions of such spells with Force Ratings of 6–8.

Whenever Ariel goes on a run, she leaves her daughter, Gloria, with a female friend. The friend knows how to call in some runner chummers from Ariel's days back in the CAS if things get dangerous. Any runners trying to dump drek on Ariel get it back in spades.

Finally, Ariel's Unaugmented Magic Attribute shows that she is a Grade 3 Initiate of a hermetic order. Decide yourself whether your campaign includes a network of mage-detectives that includes her as a member. If not, assume she's extremely secretive about this, and so it requires no explanation.

As her centering ritual, Almodovar performs a swaying, slow dance during which she does not move from the point where she is standing (this is important for a surveillance mage).

Giancarlo Baggio (Simsense Wiz)



Giancarlo Baggio (Simsense Wiz)

Birth Date: May 1, 2029

Birthplace: Naples, Italy

Nationality/Metatype/Gender: Italian/Caucasian
Human/Male

Current Residence: Apartments in Naples, Paris, London,
New York, Seattle, Nogoya, Sydney

Height: 180 cm

Weight: 71 kg

Hair: Dark brown, wavy

Eyes: Green

Distinguishing Physical Features: Ponytail, aquiline nose,
high cheekbones

Psychology

Traits: Super-cool, ultra-hip, cunning and ruthless

Motivations: Megastardom

Lifestyle: High

Giancarlo is a boy genius. Although many would say he's the greatest independent sleazeball of our times, Baggio has done pretty well for a Naples street brat without any formal education. Every company in the world is after him. Sure, his hot new simsense star, Anna Silenzio, may be the one shifting the units, but Baggio is the man the big simsense companies want on their payrolls. Giancarlo's having none of it. He's the most brilliant simsense producer/editor the business has right now, and he can command astronomical sums as a freelancer. He's even said to have turned down a 15-million nuyen offer from Fuchi for a two-year contract. Baggio works only on an individual-product basis and constantly makes sniffy noises about "artistic integrity." (Anyone who's seen Silenzio's last simsense knows Baggio has about as much artistic integrity as a proctologist.)

Baggio's special talents are threefold. First, the guy is the best pseudosim patcher alive. Even in his late teens, when Fuchi had him on contract through their Italian branch, his work was so accurate, seamless and fast, it saved the company thousands. As an editor, his polyPOV synchronizing is incredible, effortless, and of the highest standards. But he's got a unique skill that really came to the fore only after he got himself a head full of wiring and a little extra on the bodyware front from Fuchi's generously increasing bonuses. Baggio appears to be a complete EC/PC, full-Emotive chameleon. If he whacks enough simsense playbacks into himself, he's capable of emulating almost every nuance of the original performer's responses. Not everything—that would be impossible, of course. But his editing is so phenomenal that you won't notice. And with the augmentations he's got, Baggio can exaggerate and multiplex sensations—things no special effects machines can do.

Exaggerating means that Baggio can take the simsense recording and sculpt the thing, adding in peaks of heightened arousal and awareness from his own synchronized responses. His internal hardware helps with that. He performs an extensive training program of deep hypnosis, biofeedback entrainment and autonomic conditioning. But anyone who's seen him work knows there's something else beyond that, something special. Giancarlo seems to be able to know a simsense performer's responses better than they do themselves, and his augmentations are perfect.

Baggio's also a uniquely gifted polyPOV sculptor/editor. He can synchronize the responses of different performers so that response and arousal matching is uncannily perfect, closer than anything Nature herself can produce. No more lonely wet dreams for those sad frags who lock into simsense; now they can have perfectly synchronized wet dreams with each other.

>>>>>(Don't knock it. You can't catch anything, and it's better than the real thing—not just for you but for everyone!)<<<<<

—Bitter Lemon (20:19:14/11-21-55)

>>>>>(Incidentally, part of Baggio's method for developing what he calls "synergistic facilitation" of his simsense stars—that is, getting inside them close enough to be able to do what he does—is, indeed, getting inside them. He has explored all of his simsense performers intimately. This applies to performers of both genders.)<<<<<

—Marguerita and Tom (23:16:15/11-22-55)

>>>>>(Baggio is now said to be working on a new project: multiplexing in an interactive mode so that a single recipient can experience the sensations of different performers simultaneously. This has been in the cards for some time, but no one else ever came close to perfecting the multiplexing the qualitative rather than quantitative aspects of EC/PC and Emotional that's the key to this. No one, that is, until Baggio.

So "go frag yourself" becomes a real possibility.)<<<<<

—Cobalt Blue (05:12:00/11-23-55)

>>>>(That is impossible. What we're talking about here is, after all, just high-class porn, and I don't see how physiology allows anyone to be at both ends of the equation at the same time, if you see what I mean.)<<<<<

—Rubbisher (16:25:44/11-25-55)

>>>>(I think it's more likely that you'll be offered the chance of being several experiencers at the same end of the equation, to use your odd euphemism. You no longer have to content yourself with the love object of your choice. You can do several at the same time, and probably every which way you want as well. A program that measures your responses to ordinary simsense and then re-creates the maximally pleasurable stimuli from each encounter at any given second wouldn't be too hard to handle. Isn't progress great?)<<<<<

—Cobalt Blue (05:54:52/11-28-55)

>>>>(Now, wait a minute. I rather like the idea of feeling what it's like to run blocking as the entire Seahawks offensive line!)<<<<<

—Kingdome Veteran (12:08:51/11-29-55)

>>>>(Now *that* is sick.)<<<<<

—Cobalt Blue (06:16:00/11-30-55)

Hooks

Baggio may be a unique emulator, but he's always trawling the streets for a really good EC/PC match for one of his stable of simsense stars or supporting cast. He's now so busy with his experimental work that he begrudges spending time doing the same old stuff. This brings him out prowling the streets (accompanied by about fifteen bodyguards, all chromed up to the eyebrows). He's also a gross egotist and adores being recognized and worshipped. He appears regularly on media shows, attends the very best parties and fashion shows at fashion houses. Roll 1D6 and add 2 to determine the number of bimbos in tow (determine gender randomly).

All this makes Baggio potentially vulnerable. The big shots cannot decide whether to buy him up or take him out and deny their competitors the chance of getting a huge edge in the very profitable simsense market. Obviously, such corps would love to get their hands on his modified Truman Simth also, though this would be a poor second to getting the man himself—at least until he's actually translated his multiplexing experiments into hardware form. Currently, Truman Technologies pays Baggio whatever he wants and keeps close tabs on him (he knows and doesn't like this).

If runners are hired to protect Baggio, he may be happy to take them on board because he is very conscious of the need to keep up with every new fashion at every level of society. He's always hungry to hear the newest, most wiz exploit among the shadows, new trends he can cash in on later, the latest changes in street slang, and the like.

Runners may be hired to protect Baggio, to abduct him, to steal his equipment or kidnap Silenzio. Fuchi may hire runners to pose as agents of a competing corporation and scare Baggio into their arms with a campaign of threats and strikes against his bodyguards. Baggio presents an enormous number of possibilities. And it would certainly spice things up if one of the runners is a good EC/PC match for one of Baggio's stars, of course.

Attributes

Body: 4
Quickness: 5
Strength: 2
Charisma: 6
Intelligence: 6
Willpower: 5
Essence: 0.3
Reaction: 5

Initiative: 5 + 1D6

Professional Rating: 1

Threat Ratings

Combat: 3

Skills

Athletics: 4
Biotech: 5
Biotech (B/R): 4
Computer: 5
Computer (B/R): 5
Cybertechnology: 8
Electronics: 8
Electronics (B/R): 8
Etiquette (Corporate): 4
Etiquette (Media): 8
Etiquette (Street): 7
Firearms: 4

Special Skill

Simsense Engineering: 15

Cyberware

Cyberears w/High- and Low-Frequency and Recorder
Cybereyes w/Low-Light, Thermographic, and Camera
Headware Memory, 400 Mp (beta-customized), and unique transplexer chip
Olfactory Booster: 6
Simsense Rig (Full-X, beta-customized) with Senselink and Internal Transplexer/Transmitter
Voice Modulator with Playback

Gear

Ares Viper Slivergun [Heavy Pistol, 30 (clip), SA/BF, 9S (f), w/50 rounds of flechette ammunition]
Bodyguards (15 human or elf samurai)
Doc Wagon™ Contract (Super-Platinum)
Portable Laptop Computer
Portable Wrist Vidphone
Simsense recordings, Dir-X, approx. 60 hours total
Tres Chic clothing (approximately 80 suits)
Truman Inner-1 Simth with associated recording/playback gear:
ASIST Enablers, EC/PC and Emotive, both Rating 10
ASIST Dir-X Multiplexer, 16 channels
PolyPOV Samplers, Dir-X Format (10)
Sense Patch Injectors (20)
Sense Peak Controllers (12)
Baggio has facilities for all B/R skills.



Martin de Vries (Vampire Hunter)

Birth Date: June 16, 2011

Birthplace: Nijmegen, Netherlands

Nationality/Metatype/Gender: Dutch/Caucasian Human (Vampire)/Male

Current Residence: Unknown; believed to be in UCAS

Height: 188 cm

Weight: 72 kg

Hair: Black

Eyes: Dark hazel

Distinguishing Physical Features: Walks with pronounced stoop, youthful appearance (looks to be in his late 20s), severely chewed fingernails, very pale skin

Psychology

Traits: Obsessive-compulsive personality, wholly goal oriented, chain smoker, hypertense

Motivations: Vampire hunting

Lifestyle: High

Beware, my dear little friends who think you are the too, too tragically hip denizens of the night, because you just might run into Martin. He won't be terribly interested in you, probably, but he *has* been known to drive the proverbial stake

through the hearts of idiots who go for that mascara'd vampire-wannabe look. He hates the real thing so much that he's sometimes happy to feast on anyone who simply wants to *look* like one.

De Vries was a brilliant student of hermetic studies at Nijmegen, then Oxford and Yale. At Oxford, he became known as an exceptional mage and an initiate of the Ordo Maximus until he dropped out—word is he found it too much an old coot's drinking club and too little preoccupied with magical threats, imagined and real. His contemporaries found him paranoid, antisocial and obsessive. Apparently, a wealthy uncle left him a considerable sum of money, which de Vries used to finance his own researches into magical threats. While others were hunting toxics or insect shamans, de Vries became convinced that a secret society of vampires was working to awaken some metaplanar monstrosity that would make those menaces look like old women. Ridiculed for this view, de Vries undertook an extensive series of one-man vampire hunts in Europe between 2040 and 2051. Then he disappeared from view for a period of some 18 months.

Later, it became apparent de Vries had contracted vampirism himself somehow. It seems almost unbelievable that any vampire would have given him this dubious gift willingly if that vampire had known of de Vries' nature and identity. Some European runners have claimed that de Vries deliberately offered himself to a vampire for this induction, intent on learning more about his targets by becoming one of them. Some observers speculate that he offered some training in magical skills in return for this. However it happened, de Vries has now become a paradox: a vampire that maintains its own essence by feeding on other vampires. Only in utter desperation does de Vries prey on any other targets.

De Vries uses a variety of strategies to deal with vampires. He prefers to battle other vampires hand-to-hand, draining blood and essence from his targets; a curious magical artifact he discovered on an Indonesian trip in 2045 is said to give him an edge in such duels, though its nature is unknown. However, in the case of an exceptionally dangerous opponent, he is known to have hired samurai with *extreme* capabilities—explosives and frag-lethal fire and blast assaults. If you get lucky meeting him, he may contract you to supply such services. If you're unlucky, you may become dinner—heh, heh, heh. Oh, de Vries is in town. Notice how the Minneapolis blood slaughters of 2053–54 stopped quite abruptly? It might be your neighborhood tomorrow, so make sure you order your pizzas with extra garlic, chummers.

>>>>>(The Minneapolis joke ain't funny—fifteen kids got iced in fifteen months. De Vries figured the exact timings from some weird arcane astrological treatise and found his man. We got stuff you dream about, man, and plenty of it—depleted uranium ammo, assault cannons, missile launchers, everything. Hell, you musta seen the newstrid. When de Vries decides to take out one of those bloodsuckers, he don't frag with half measures. And he came through with every last nuyen and some magical firepower that made our combat mage go green at the gills. What's more, the guy put up fifteen thou each for us to take a prolonged holiday out of town afterward. As for the

guy himself—yeah, he's weird. Crazy weird, totally obsessive. Working for a bloodsucker who only wants to nuke other bloodsuckers is disturbing. Can't recommend it for the mental health, but the money was good.)<<<<<

— Anonymous (10:19:25/10-20-55)

>>>>(Work for bloodsuckers icing bloodsuckers? Sounds like a standard company job to me.)<<<<<

— Crusher (21:52:00/10-25-55)

Hooks

De Vries may hire runners to make a hit on another vampire, or a Johnson (or a vampiric pawn, see **Paranormal Animals of Europe**) serving another vampire may hire them to destroy de Vries. Either way, the runners should have skills in using heavy weaponry and/or explosives. Whenever possible, conceal the vampiric nature of patrons hiring the runners, so that they must work to discover the truth.

De Vries also makes a valuable consultant for any runners faced with a problem involving vampires or critters such as banshees, bean sidhes, brocken bows, and the like. Finding de Vries and persuading him to help can be quite a job in itself. Runners may have to fight or negotiate with de Vries' enemies while locating him. And de Vries is a skilled mage as well. He keeps his grimoires in bank security vaults, but he may be willing to teach a runner mage a spell or two as a reward for services rendered.

The kind of secret vampire society de Vries has researched could be extended into a highly dangerous campaign as well, possibly culminating in an astral quest to deal with the meta-planar monstrosities de Vries believes exist. Dragging in the Ordo Maximus (de Vries was a Grade 3 Initiate) may add enormously to the complications of such a campaign.

Finally, if de Vries' Essence Focus (see **Notes**) is taken from him, he becomes utterly desperate to regain it and pays almost any price to do so.

Attributes

Body: 4
 Quickness: 10
 Strength: 8
 Charisma: 4
 Intelligence: 6
 Willpower: 6
 Essence: See **Notes**
 Magic: 8 (12, see **Notes**)
 Reaction: 8

Skills

Car: 4
 Conjuring: 8
 Firearms: 4
 Negotiation: 5
 Psychology: 5
 Sorcery: 8

Special Skill

Centering (see **Notes**): 6
 Vampirology: 8

Initiative: 8 + 2D6

Grade of Initiation: 3

Professional Rating: 4

Threat Ratings

Combat: 5
 Magic: 5

Gear

Ares Predator [Heavy Pistol, 15 (clip), SA, 9M, w/50 rounds of regular ammunition]

Eurocar Westwind

Heckler & Koch HK 227 [Submachine Gun, 28 (clip), SA/BF, 7M, w/50 rounds of regular ammunition, Laser Sight]

Power Focus: 4

Transys Neuronet CA7000 personal computer w/400 Mp database (research data)

Unique Essence Focus (see **Notes**)

Spells

Combat

Death Touch: 7
 Fireball: 7
 Manablast: 7
 Ram: 6
 Slay Vampire: 8
 Sleep: 8
 Stun Cloud: 7

Detection

Analyze Truth: 7
 Clairaudience
 (Extended Range): 8
 Detect Individual: 8
 Detect Magic: 6

Manipulation

Shadow: 6

Notes

As a vampire, de Vries has the following Powers: Enhanced Physical Attributes, Enhanced Senses (Improved Hearing and Smell), Essence Drain, Immunity to Age, Immunity to Poison, Infection, Mist Form, Regeneration, and Thermographic Vision. His weaknesses include: Allergy (Sunlight, severe), Induced Dormancy (lack of air), Essence Loss, and Vulnerability (Wood).

De Vries has a unique Essence Focus that adds 4 to his current Essence score and enables him to boost his Essence Rating to 16. When his Essence Rating reaches 4 (i.e., a "natural" zero), he does not die. He suffers cumulative penalties of +1 to all target numbers, and his Essence continues to decrease per standard rules. When his total Essence Rating reaches zero, he must drain Essence per standard rules or die. His Essence Focus takes the form of a small jade statuette of a four-armed demoness. De Vries keeps this statuette on his person at all times. (For rules on Essence draining by vampires engaged in combat against each other and for profiles of vampiric pawns, see **Paranormal Animals of Europe**.)

De Vries lacks a weapon focus, a fact that may surprise runners. Such items negate the Regeneration power, and so they have immense value against vampires. So, how come de Vries does not have one? He lost his in the terrible fight that killed him and made him into a vampire. The gamemaster can develop that part of Martin's life as much as he likes, but certainly de Vries would go to great lengths to find and bond a suitable weapon focus to himself. He would pay a good price for one.

De Vries is believed to employ a centering ritual based on poetic declamation which builds to a scream of fury, accompanied by staccato stabbing movements of both hands. Finally, de Vries uses a dressed straw mannequin of his target for centering when he conducts magical operations against other vampires.



Juan Jesús Diaz (Ganger)

Birth Date: February 12, 2026

Birthplace: Houston, CAS

Nationality/Metatype/Gender:

CAS/Hispanic Human/Male

Current Residence: Houston

Height: 172 cm

Weight: 63 kg

Hair: Black

Eyes: Dark brown

Distinguishing Physical Features: Livid scar running full length of left forearm; gold earring and platinum skull pendant in left ear

Psychology

Traits: Aggressive, volatile, vulnerable, unique spatial ability

Motivations: Confused personality, paradoxical

Lifestyle: Low

Diaz is a strange, strange one. Gangers are ten-a-penny on the streets of Houston and, given Texans' enthusiastic embrace of firearms of all conceivable kinds, gangers rarely reach their 20s. And so Juan could get blown away at any moment—which would be a sad loss, because the kid has a unique talent.

Sure, computers play chess more efficiently than humans, but they don't play it with the same beauty that humans do. Mistakes are precisely why humans can make those deep, deep strategic moves that finally destroy an opponent through a subtle exploitation of space, control of a key file, or exploiting some weakness in the opponent's strategy. Human chess is played entirely without any cybertech under FIDE rules; computer chess against cybered human opponents is a waste of time, and nobody watches it. Not that trid can exactly sell live chess in prime time, but enough of a market exists on the specialty channels to attract advertisers. And Diaz's photogenic looks, his aggressive and uncultured personality, and the whiff of that long-forgotten fiction—the American Dream—that hangs about him has made the ganger the hottest property chess has right now. When he's at the board, his head's transfixed, his eyes flick from the board to his opponent's face, and he stabs out his moves like a boxer. He goes for the jugular with an aggressive style of play not seen since Kasparov and Kryenin, underpinning his swift assaults with extraordinarily deep, Fischerlike strategy. Something in all of us loves to see a street brat strike down the faceless, suited geeks and nerds who usually triumph in this game. A grandmaster at 16, Diaz is now poised to win the UCAS/CAS senior title and take a tilt at world champion Anatoly Grishkin in 2058. If he survives, that is.

Why mention him? Because you might run into him on the streets, and if you do, try to make sure he doesn't get geeked. I have a soft spot for this kid.

>>>>>(I wasn't aware that chess playing was a traditional part of Hispanic culture.)<<<<<

—Crusher (19:33:12/10-04-55)

>>>>>(Drekbrain. I suppose you have no idea that Capablanca was one of the finest chess players ever seen, or that the commonest opening in all of chess is the Ruy Lopez.)<<<<<

—Analyzer (12:30:21/10-05-55)

>>>>>(But does he really have a shot? I mean, it does seem rather incredible.)<<<<<

—Cobalt Blue (05:02:17/10-06-55)

>>>>>(Apparently, he has at least a 70/30 for the American title and his chances down the road are rated at 50/50 with Grishkin. He could very well win the world crown if he doesn't blow up or go ape-crazy in the interim, but he might need some chaperones to hold his hand to get there. Anyone interested?)<<<<<

—Juggler (01:17:12/10-10-55)

>>>>(Be wary of his patch, though. He hangs with the Dicemen, identifiable by the white skulls on their clothing. They're into petty crime and violence primarily, and most of them still bite it at the end of a knife rather than a gun, leastways in the Hispanic communities. They mostly don't have the money for guns. Those that do tend to graduate out of the slums and into bigger and better drek like selling BTLs to the suits in the suburbs. The only way most of them can turn a buck. Same old story.)<<<<<

—Wild Man Fischer (01:00:44/10-12-55)

Hooks

This is the *idiot savant*, the confused and volatile kid with a unique skill. See **Notes** for more information.

Runners can bump into Diaz in obvious ways. His gang may try to roll them for what they own, the gang may try to geek someone the runners are protecting, or the runners may just walk into a gang firefight. Or the runners may be hired by a media outfit that wants to keep Diaz alive and sign him up for rights. This job could be complicated by Diaz's distaste for corporations and his rebellious streak. Trying to chaperone him would be very tricky. Naturally, the runners would have to stop other gangers from killing the kid. But agents of the current UCAS/CAS chess champion or even Grishkin might attempt to take Diaz out as well.

Diaz could make a good character for a long-term campaign, as runners get involved with him right up to the 2058 world title match. The kid would have to graduate from the streets to some kind of corporate cover, and the runners would have to earn his trust and respect to accomplish that. They would probably be hired by whichever promotions company decided to take Diaz on, and eventually other hangers-on would arrive too—chess analysts, seconds to help out with preparation, a fashion consultant and a tutor for PR purposes, and so on. Then the runners could become the security detail for the final 24-game series, opposed by fiendish Eastern Europeans and corporate types armed with all manner of firepower and devious strategies.

Attributes

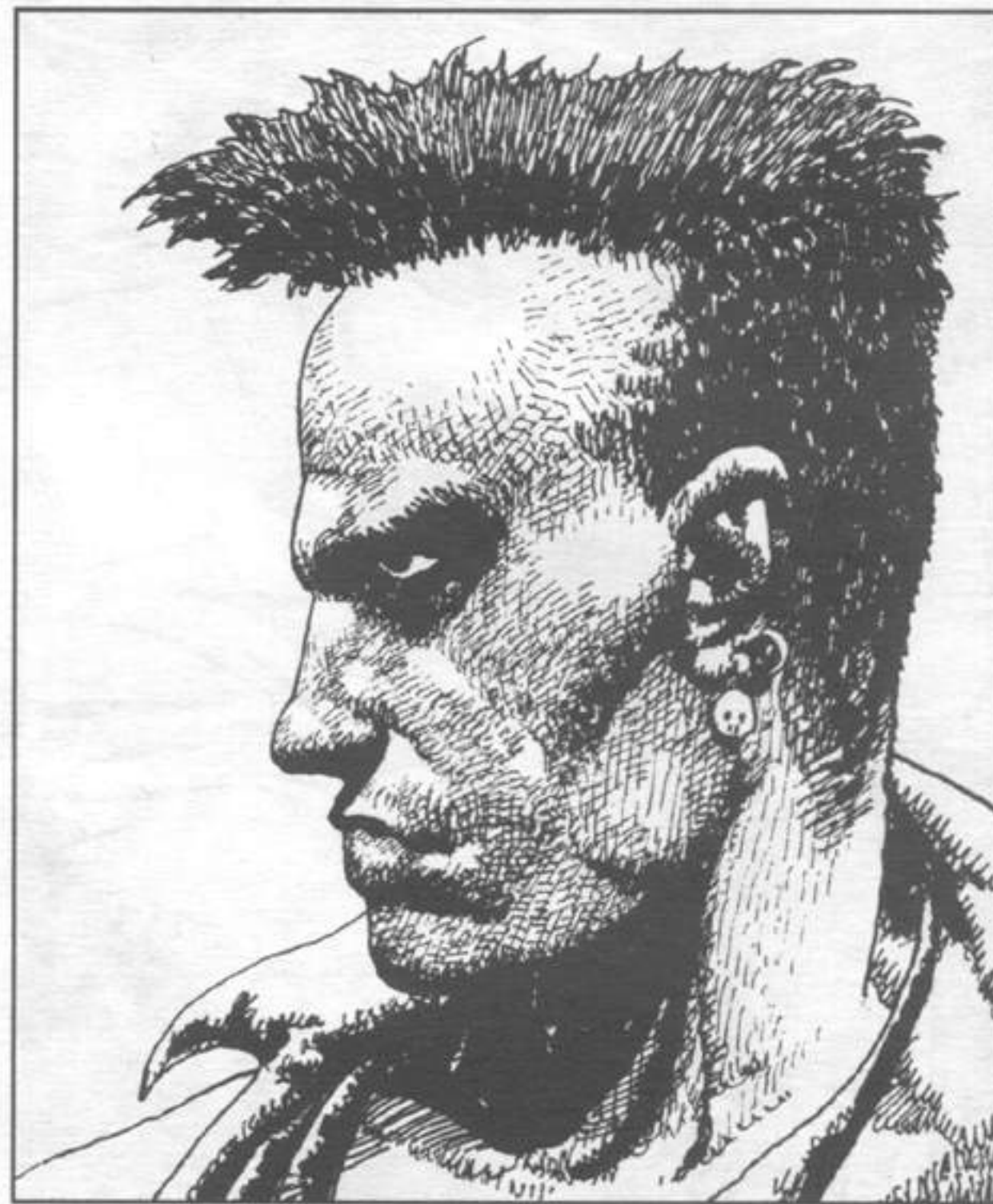
Body: 3
Quickness: 6
Strength: 4
Charisma: 4
Intelligence: 6
Willpower: 4
Essence: 6
Reaction: 6

Skills

Armed Combat: 4
Knife: 6
Bike: 4
Etiquette (Street): 6
Firearms: 3
Language
English: 2
Stealth: 5
Throwing Weapons: 4
Unarmed Combat: 5

Special Skill

Chess Playing: 15



Initiative: 6 + 1D6

Professional Rating: 3

Threat Ratings

Combat: 3

Gear

Ares Predator [Heavy Pistol, 15 (clip), SA, 9M, w/40 rounds of regular ammunition]
Armor Jacket (battered, poor quality; 4/2)
Chess sets (6)
Heavy Knife
Library of 300 chess books
Synthleathers

Notes

Juan saves his Ares Predator for really serious trouble. He usually packs only a knife.

Diaz treasures his library of chess books. He has no computer database, no army of lackeys analyzing positions for him; he relies on his books. Also, he has no hangers-on, only his trusted fellow gang members. These individuals are deliberately left unspecified here. Customize them to suit your campaign.

Without the type of support network most good chess players enjoy, Juan's success is truly incredible, but that's part of his character. He's also a vulnerable and very sensitive individual, a confused soul in need of some straightening out. Keep Diaz a vivid, complex character with considerable empathic ability.

Didier Deschamps=Descloux (Agent)



Didier Deschamps=Descloux (Agent)

Birth Date: September 15, 2020

Birthplace: Marseille, France

Nationality/Metatype/Gender: French/Caucasian
Human/Male

Current Residences: Apartments in Paris, Marseille,
Rome, London, Tokyo, Cape Town, New York, Atlanta

Height: 181 cm

Weight: 78 kg

Hair: Dark brown, wavy

Eyes: Dark green

Distinguishing Physical Features: Missing small finger on
left hand, walks with slight limp

Psychology

Traits: Ambitious, ruthless, extremely charming,
very vain

Motivations: Craves attention and celebrity

Lifestyle: Luxury

Didier is usually known as "Tri-D," or sometimes "TD," especially in America, where it's rather appropriate considering he is the agent for many of football's star players. He was born Alain Rocard, but he changed his name at the age of 16, naming himself after a great French soccer player he admired as a kid. Don't remind him of his original name or he might have you killed for the insult (I'm not kidding). TD is a man of extraordinary vanity, yet oddly he is proud of his missing finger and limp. He says they are scars from his youthful sporting days, but others tell a different story. Certainly, as a street kid in Marseilles TD had plenty of opportunities for losing digits and otherwise getting maimed.

TD has always been able to sell himself, and he made his first million by age 19. Everyone admits the man can charm the ass off an angry rattlesnake. So he got into selling other people. He started with smalltime bands trying to break into the music biz, but he found the competition too heavy for his liking. A sports agency proved a bit more lucrative in Europe, and that's what he got into next. Now, he's into football, Urban Brawl, jetball, baseball, sumo wrestling, cricket, soccer, and even truly weird drek like ostrich racing in Azania. He's mastered the small print brilliantly, and he cuts cunning deals with team managers and owners. For several years, he was signing big names up for mediocre salaries, until people figured out the complexities of the advertising control and percentages clauses in TD's contracts. Basically, TD had managed to gain control of a slice of advertising for each of his clients and used obscure special clauses to deliver that advertising to his own advertising contacts. That arrangement delivered big nuyen to TD and his clients. Nobody on TD's books ever wants to come off. In fact, they line up to join. But if you don't stay at the top, you get dumped. Almost all the contracts have performance clauses—TD won't hesitate to dump you like a shark spitting out what it doesn't eat.

>>>>>(But sharks eat everything.)<<<<<<

—Gnasher (19:44:59/ 07-11-55)

>>>>>(I think that's the point. Nothing's left when TD spits you out.)<<<<<<

—Bitter Lemon (22:22:11/07-13-55)

TD's agency, Tri-D Global, is always looking for extra security, which is why TD may interest some of you. Tri-D Global hires the best security outfits but also likes to contact some additional help that can keep them in touch with what's on the street—like the dumb frag planning some stunt at the big game or unusual betting that might indicate someone's planning to do something to one of his clients that TD wouldn't like. And Global likes to keep some extra firepower in the crowd as well, in case the fans get a little over-excited. But be careful. Don't get clever. Three years ago Marc McLaughlin's TransInternational Sport agency was the big number in the CAS. Sadly, their executives had astonishing attacks of sudden ill health. Couple of heart attacks, a diabetic coma, a tragic car

smash. Nothing that could ever be proved. But TIS folded within six months and Tri-D Global swallowed up the clients they wanted from the TIS books. Drek, even the Australian agency handling most of the Aussie Rules football stars got the treatment, and incredibly enough, four sudden deaths occurred among the somnolent dolts at Lord's, the headquarters of cricket, before Tri-D got the deal they wanted for representing professional players in that most genteel of sports. You've been warned.

>>>>(Marseilles is home to more goons and organized crime than dogs have fleas, and TD has strong links with several outfits. He and his clients travel internationally all the time, which provides an excellent cover for all kinds of smuggling enterprises. Grotty BTLs from Italy and northern Africa, drugs of all kinds, designer bioware—TD's money is behind some of the cutting-edge Japanese and Californian labs on that one. Ask yourself why 80 percent of the weightlifting gold medals went to TD's clients in the past Olympics.)<<<<<

—Name deleted at own request (15:08:16/08-01-55)

Hooks

Runners can find work as extra bodyguards for TD's clients, fending off hitmen, dopers, saboteurs, kidnappers and the like. But TD is also neck-deep in crime, and runners can find themselves up against the yaks, the Mob, and the like if they unwittingly become associated with TD's smuggling operations. In another scenario, the runners may have to extract some sports star who has discovered TD's criminal enterprises. If one of TD's spies overhears the runners talking to the star, the athlete could easily die and the runners find themselves framed for the hit. For some real fun, have a rival of TD hire runners to investigate rumors of his criminal activities. The "rival" is actually a Johnson working for TD, who wants to check out his own security people. Whether they succeed or not, TD will have the runners iced after they've performed their investigation.

If TD decides to acquire a sports team, he uses all means fair or foul to get his way. Runners may be recruited to assist in such operations or to take the rap for criminal activities carried out by his own people. Individuals trying to fend off a TD takeover may hire the runners as well.

Attributes

Body: 2
 Quickness: 4
 Strength: 3
 Charisma: 6 (8)
 Intelligence: 6
 Willpower: 5
 Essence: 6
 Reaction: 5

Skills

Car: 4
 Etiquette (Corporate): 7 (9)
 Etiquette (Media): 7 (9)
 Etiquette (Street): 4 (6)
 Firearms: 5
 Law: 3
 Tort (Contract) Law: 8
 Psychology: 7
 Unarmed Combat: 4

Special Skill

Knowledge of Sports: 8

Initiative: 5 + 1D6

Professional Rating: 3

Threat Ratings

Combat: 2

Bioware (Body Index: .4)

Tailored (Cultured) Pheromones: 1 (+2 Social Skill dice)

Gear

Ares Viper Slivergun [Heavy Pistol, 30 (clip), SA/BF, 9S (f), w/60 rounds of flechette ammunition]
 Armor Jacket (5/3, not usually worn)
 Federated Boeing Commuter 2050 (4)
 Lear-Cessna Platinum II w/Signature Modification (**Sig** 5) and custom armaments (gamemaster's discretion)
 Pocket Secretary
 Portable Multistation Trideo (6 units)
 Portable Tabletop Computer (600 Mp)
 Rolls-Royce "Phaeton" Limousine (6)
 Unlimited amounts of Tres Chic clothing

Other items determined by the gamemaster (TD is worth megamillions)

Notes

TD travels everywhere with a coterie of sycophants and servitors that includes three or four "secretaries" with minimal secretarial skills, three lawyers, two image consultants, a couple of advertising types, a dozen or so samurai and runner types, and one or two clients he wishes to be seen with.

TD's vanity is his key weakness. He *has* to be on chat shows wherever he travels, and in Europe at least, the lucky inhabitants are able to avail themselves of Tri-D labeled designer clothing, Tri-D perfume, Tri-D jewelry—an entire line of Tri-D accessories. Most of these items are made in underdeveloped countries by people working for slave wages. Some of these operations may be illegal in themselves (e.g., the perfume operation may involve killing protected, endangered species or even a paranormal species deemed to be sentient).

Erik Vernon Dreyfuss (Runner)



Erik Vernon Dreyfuss (Runner)

Birth Date: June 8, 2031

Birthplace: Klosters, Switzerland

Nationality/Metatype/Gender: UCAS/Caucasian
Human/Male

Current Residence: Hartford, Connecticut, UCAS

Height: 170 cm

Weight: 64 kg

Hair: Red

Eyes: Blue

Distinguishing Physical Features: Wears glasses or contact lenses; large, protuberant ears

Psychology

Traits: Nervous, slightly obsessive, friendly

Motivations: High need for acceptance,
sensation-seeking

Lifestyle: High

Many individuals see the world of the shadowrunner as glamorous beyond compare and yearn to become a part of that world. One of the most famous of these runner "wannabes" is Erik Dreyfuss. A fixture on the East Coast wannabe circuit, Erik is the son of the late Arthur Peabody Dreyfuss, the defense telecommunications magnate of the Connecticut Dreyfusses.

Since graduating college (a small, private place near Providence—Erik was turned down by Harvard, much to the family's displeasure), Dreyfuss has had much spare time on his hands. Although his father bequeathed Erik his corporation, a committee led by his mother is running the firm until such time it decides that Erik is mature enough to step in and take over. Since her husband's death, however, Erik's mother has become very protective of her sole child, and it seems Erik will not be taking the board for some time to come.

As a result, Erik continues to occupy himself by entertaining his shadowrunning aspirations. He's certainly got the right gear. Living in the ancestral home takes care of his mundane living expenses, and his monthly trust fund enables him to obtain the latest hardware and software on the market. Indeed, through contacts in his father's corporation, Erik occasionally obtains experimental technology, including partially tested weapons. Erik's other contacts range through all levels of the East Coast defense industry.

>>>>>(It's Dreyfuss the Doofus! What an absolute nerd, a total maroon. Stay away, boys! This guy's a joke. Sure, the cash looks inviting, but the catch is you have to take him with you. And let's face it, when the flechettes are flying the last thing you want is to babysit some prize dork who couldn't hit a one-legged dog in a henhouse.)<<<<<

—Niney (13:00:67/10-02-55)

>>>>>(Too right. And try laughing at his pathetic jokes if you can. He wants to be liked so badly it makes the backs of your hands just itch wanting to hit him, and his sense of humor varies from the pathetic to the pitiful.)<<<<<

—Crusher (17:51:22/10-03-55)

>>>>>(I think the kid's alright. Certainly no worse than those New Jersey punks who think a torn leather jacket, a rusty .22 and the ability to win at Super Mario Nerds makes them fit to be fully qualified shadowrunners. I say he's OK.)<<<<<

—Slater (21:20:34/10-07-55)

>>>>>(Yeah, Slaty-boy, and just look at all that cash. ... The kid's absolutely loaded, and he's always very happy to pay for his pals, ain't he? Now, pardon my French, but sure sounds like using someone to me.)<<<<<

—lg (07:07:21/10-09-55)

>>>>>(Use him, schmooze him! Penniless runners seek introductions immediately!)<<<<<

—Trump (23:11:58/10-08-55)

Hooks

The runners want money to finance a job? Simple, ask Dreyfuss the doofus. Only trouble is, he wants to come along—or, rather, more or less demands to do so, though he's not impolite enough to demand this outright. Of course, the runners can always ditch him (or worse) if they suspect he is too much of a liability, as they almost certainly will. Or perhaps when the proverbial chips are truly down, Dreyfuss comes through as the hero of the hour, if only to reward the hapless runners for their patience in not shooting him out of hand the first time he dropped his gun. Ultimately, Dreyfuss is a *lovable* idiot, a cross most tolerant characters willingly bear, and an absolute godsend for truly broke shadowrunners.

His doting mother's accountant carefully monitors Erik's trust fund. While he is able to spend vast amounts of money on himself, anyone trying to take Dreyfuss for a large sum is detected. The accountant has many friends among the independent financial community and generally prefers to deal with problems of this kind by hiring freelance security personnel.

Attributes

Body: 1
 Quickness: 5 (6)
 Strength: 2 (3)
 Charisma: 5
 Intelligence: 4
 Willpower: 6
 Essence: 2.1
 Reaction: 4 (8)

Skills

Car: 2
 Computer: 2
 Etiquette (Corporate): 5
 Firearms: 1
 Motorboat: 3
 Sailboat: 2

Initiative: 4 + 1D6 (8 + 3D6)

Professional Rating: 1

Threat Ratings

Combat: 2

Cyberware (all beta-customized)

Datajack
 Muscle Replacement: 1
 Retractable Razors
 Skillsofts
 Armed Combat: 4
 Unarmed Combat: 3
 Skillwire: 4
 Smartgun Link
 Wired Reflexes: 2

Gear

Binoculars with Low-Light and Thermographic Vision
 Doc Wagon™ Contract (Platinum)
 Full Suit of Heavy Armor (8/6)
 Harley Electraglide
 Hyundai Offroader
 Heckler & Koch HK227-S [Submachine Gun, 28 (clip), SA/BF, 7M, w/200 rounds of regular ammunition]
 Panther Assault Cannon [Heavy Weapon, 22 (clip), SS, 18D (Belt), w/50 rounds of regular ammunition]
 Remington Roomsweeper [Heavy Pistol, 8 (magazine), SA, 9S (f), w/40 rounds of regular ammunition]
 Respirator
 Saab 776TI
 Tres Chic Clothing, 10 suits (These suits are hideous. Erik has the fashion sense of Pee-wee Herman.)

Other Items at gamemaster's discretion

Notes

Erik may have a drekload of gear, but he doesn't necessarily know how to use most of it. He's a very nervous guy; to use any of his enhancements in a conflict situation (combat, tough negotiating on the street, and the like), Dreyfuss must make a successful Willpower (6) Test to employ his skillsofts. This applies even to his wired reflexes; his autonomic nervous system is sufficiently pitiful that even such reflexive enhancements can't be guaranteed to work right. And much of his gear (like the assault cannon) simply mystifies him. If he points the thing the right way 'round, count yourself lucky. Much of the weaponry he has stashed in the garden shed back home is faulty (gamemaster's discretion). Erik wouldn't know a 100 percent pure-wiz Panther from an imitation made-in-Pakistan model. It shouldn't be obviously faulty. It should be faulty in the kind of exciting, intermittent way that means it jams or blows up when a runner is in deep drek during a run going bad. That, of course, helps set up the scene where Erik comes through in the moment of crisis.



"Alfredo Garcia" (Barman)

Birth Date: Unknown

Birthplace: Unknown

Nationality/Metatype/Gender: Salish Shidhe/
Sasquatch/Male

Current Residence: London, UK

Height: 269 cm

Weight: 143 kg

Hair: Dark brown (fur)

Eyes: Brown

Distinguishing Physical Features: He's a sasquatch!

Psychology

Traits: Sociable, friendly, slightly wary, expansive

Motivations: Unknown

Lifestyle: Middle

For those of you who haven't crossed the Pond lately, the Technicolor Yawn barbecue and steamboat bar, located in the magnificently brazen Australian enclave in Earl's Court, London, is celebrating its first anniversary. The place is a demented babble of nonconformist creatures in all their glory, proud of their complete failure to avail themselves of even the most elementary facets of manners, socialization or what most of us call civilization. Evolution never quite worked out right with Australians. But for all that, they are easily the most buoyant and generous people in the world, providing you need to drink 20 pints of the old amber treasure. Australian chic (I know it's an oxymoron, but what the hell, people still talk about "military intelligence") attracts many of London's finest socialites and not a few of them come to gawk at Alfredo. Some people call him Alf, some call him Fred, but either way the sasquatch is unmistakable.

Most of the time Alf pulls pints of lager, but the Yawn's management maintains a cocktail bar for the more arty patrons as well, and the sasquatch comes into his own here. He's simply a brilliant cocktail mixer. He never forgets a recipe and his agility is astounding. Alf can rip the skin off a pineapple and dump it in your Brain Neutralizer together with three fruit juices, half a melon, five shots of spirit and two fruit liqueurs inside fifteen seconds, all the time dancing and gesturing away. He's an extraordinary sight in full flow. And he becomes even more interesting when things slow down.

Technicolor Yawn gets its share of runners, Johnsons, and people who prefer privacy, because the noise and mayhem of the place keep unwanted ears from overhearing conversations. Except Alfredo's ears, that is. Because the sasquatch can't speak, people begin to behave toward him as if he were stupid or somehow unable to hear, even though they know perfectly well that he understands them when they tell him what they want to drink. It's the old blind spot on the part of fully functional people faced with someone who has some disability or other. And so, Alfredo overhears all kinds of things he would not if he were human, and his unusually keen hearing helps. He appreciates people who don't patronize him, and if he gets to know someone who regularly behaves in a friendly and courteous manner, he may dispense all manner of interesting tidbits. It helps if you can sign. But he can write perfectly well, so if jotted notes on a napkin are okay you can find out what's hot and what's not in certain interesting areas of London life. If you're in the Smoke, you could do worse than to try this place. As long as you can stomach the Australians, that is.

>>>>(How the hell did anyone get a Salish-Shidhe sasquatch through British immigration?)<<<<

—Collector (02:11:17/08-14-55)

>>>>(We'd all like to know that. Drek, I'd disguise myself as one. Anyway, my Brit chummers—I mean terms—tell me that this is a genuine contact and that as far as his name goes, if you ask him about it he makes signs for "bring me the head of Alfredo Garcia" and puts on one of those cork-trailing hats the Aussies wear, dances around a lot and grins hugely. Something

to do with some ancient movie, apparently. It seems to amuse the sasquatch, anyway.)<<<<<<

—Ghost Man (03:15:55/08-21-55)

>>>>>(When Alf first arrived there were regular visits from eco-activists and metahuman rights people making damn sure he was happy to be where he was. Sasquatches are cheerful critters anyway, and it's not always easy to know whether they really are happy or not. But Alf is obviously happy at his work, and lately the management has even given him a cabaret slot on Friday nights doing his illusions and magical trickery.)<<<<<<

—Slater (19:44:44/08-27-55)

Hooks

Alfredo is an excellent contact if runners befriend him. Alfredo overhears the small talk of London's social animals, runners and Johnsons, and knows what the Yawn's ebullient owner, Gwendolyn Robinson, does on the side. The charismatic club owner charmed the lonely sasquatch on a visit to Spokane, and Alfredo was only too happy to travel to exotic London (!) to work at the bar. Robinson imports aboriginal art from Australia to decorate her club and recently began importing Native American Indian art as well for a new, Amerindian-themed club she has in the planning stages. She breaches export laws in so doing and also imports spell fetishes and talismans for illicit sale; British Customs & Excise is not very bright when it comes to distinguishing between native art and fetishes. She sells these illegally to British magicians and uses her profits to finance various criminal activities. Alfredo has only just learned about all this. He's very angry that what he regards as the cultural property of his Salish-Shidhe friends (among others) is being ripped off, and he's seen some very unpleasant guys in dark suits and shades hanging around his boss lately. He'd like to do something about it or get something done about it, but he's worried about getting back home if the Yawn should fold. Either way, he's bound to need some outside help.

Attributes

Body: 8
 Quickness: 3 x 4
 Strength: 7
 Charisma: 3
 Intelligence: 4
 Willpower: 2
 Essence: (6)
 Magic: 6
 Reaction: 3

Skills

Conjuring: 6
 Pour Large Drinks: 6
 Sorcery: 6
 Unarmed Combat: 6

Special Skill

Sound Mimicry: 8

Initiative: 4 + 1D6

Professional Rating: 1

Threat Ratings

Combat: 1
 Magical: 2

Gear

Astronomical Map
 Battered Telescope

Spells

Illusion

Confusion: 3
 Entertainment: 5
 Invisibility: 4
 Spectacle: 5
 Stink: 4
 Trid Entertainment: 3

Manipulation

Fashion: 4
 Levitate Item: 4
 Levitate Person: 4
 Magic Fingers: 5
 Makeover: 4

Notes

Alfredo has +1 Reach for Unarmed Combat. He also has Acute Hearing.

Roleplay Alfredo carefully. He is a naive, simple soul. His prize possession is an old gold-banded mahogany telescope that he uses to stare at the stars, comparing what he sees with a huge fold-out map of the northern skies. He has a simple awe of the scale of the universe that he finds difficult to express to others. Alfredo also loves old Hollywood musicals and silent movies. He doesn't understand how trid units work and isn't adept at using them, so he has no trid recorder or playback unit. But anyone who gives him a unit and teaches him patiently how to operate it makes a friend for life.

The runners shouldn't patronize Alfredo; the sasquatch is very sensitive to such treatment. He exhibits more humanity than most humans do and is a decent, kind and honest soul. Not too many of them are still walking around, chummer.

Finally, Alfredo is a Dog shaman. He is really only dimly aware of this, however. His spellcasting talents are intuitive, and he has little idea of exactly how he creates the magical effects that he does. If the runners include a Dog shaman, Alfredo would react positively to say the least.



Alexander Tyrell Gates (Decker)

Birth Date: December 17, 2044

Birthplace: Seattle

Nationality/Metatype/Gender: UCAS/Caucasian
Human/Male

Current Residence: Bellevue, Seattle

Height: 145 cm

Weight: 43 kg

Hair: Blonde

Eyes: Blue

Distinguishing Physical Features: Front incisors crooked, does not have all his adult teeth

Psychology

Traits: Curious, friendly, ingenuous

Motivations: Curiosity, Matrix exploration

Lifestyle: Luxury

Microdeck Industries has become one of the leading publishers of computer software under the directorship of six generations of the Gates family, owners of the firm. Microdeck products have always been cleverly designed and marketed and have remained close to the cutting edge—at a price regular people can afford. Producing such contemporary software has required a very advanced research department, which has earned a reputation as a testing ground for some of the most forward-thinking programming and Matrix construction techniques in the world. This department is run by Jeff R. Gates, younger brother of Microdeck's chairman, Brian W. Gates III. Brian's wife, Deborah, is one of the department's chief Matrix programmers. Alexander is the couple's eleven-year-old son.

Alex Gates was first hooked into the Matrix at the age of three months, as part of a carefully controlled test of some prototype Microdeck infant-level, virtual playroom software. He

took to the Matrix as easily as any other growing child takes to the real world—with immeasurable curiosity about the way everything functioned and his own rapidly increasing abilities to respond to and move about in such a world. He has never looked back.

Alex has spent all of his short life jacked into the Matrix, exploring, communicating, learning, and creating. At first, he was confined to his metaphorical backyard, Microdeck's internal matrix, but as his confidence and skills grew he has explored farther afield. Computer-based tutorials have provided his standard education for the most part, which has left him undereducated—verging on the educationally subnormal—in some ways. But where the Matrix is concerned, he is as fluent as a poet. Because he has grown up treating the Matrix as the real world, he is able to respond to all of its intricacies as easily as a normal human responds to the multitude phenomena of real life. If most deckers react in the Matrix like wet-suit clad divers entering deep ocean, Alex is like a free-swimming dolphin.

As a result, he can do things within parts of the Matrix that seem to contradict, or at least circumvent, the cumbersome procedures and routines that apply to less gifted "outside" deckers. The boy is totally in his element cruising the data streams, jumping easily from one construct to another and bypassing even the fiercest security measures as easily as a juvenile apple thief avoids a farmer's guard dog. His insatiable curiosity has taken him into some of the securest datastores of the Matrix, but he is almost always disappointed to find they contain only adult secrets of no interest to a young boy.

Like any child his age, Alex has his own den. Of course, his is located in a dim part of the Microdeck matrix. To those who do not have full access, it is simply his workstation. But at increasingly lower levels it becomes his playroom. Typically, it is a riot of abandoned items; half-played games left for later; toys strewn around the floor; and unidentifiable, abandoned objects brushed into dark corners. His "friends" are here too. These friends began as animated toys and later evolved into limited-level AI simulations. Each possesses defined personalities and behavior patterns. They retain their early forms, however, and so they continue to resemble a teddy bear, rabbit and train, though they behave in far more animated fashions than their real-world counterparts.

Microdeck is beginning to take more of an interest in Alex Gates's talents as the boy grows older, and the firm undoubtedly will begin putting him to work soon—work disguised as play mixed with school, of course. In this manner, Microdeck will use Alex's innate abilities to make new advances that will bring about their contributions to the next generation of computers and software.

>>>>(So you're saying that this little kid, apparently unknowingly, naturally even, is manipulating areas of the Matrix unconsciously—just as we, unlike our simian friends still swinging about in the trees, would not think twice about opening a door or using tools to build something out of wood?)<<<<<

—Jarrold (00:14:12/10-11-55)

>>>>(Pretty much seems like it. Those studying the development of the Matrix have predicted that children reared in such an environment would begin to treat it as their natural home. However, they had assumed that such children would remain bound by the strict "natural laws" of the Matrix. The shortcuts that Alex Gates—and a whole generation of other children—apparently use seem to indicate these laws do NOT bind them. And current Matrix security measures cannot prevent the type of access and manipulation such children display. It is fortunate, then, that Alex's interests remain limited to childish snooping, to defeating locks with no concern for the information protected by such locks. But when he grows up a little more, or if someone were to, say, persuade him to bring back such items—then problems may arise.)<<<<<

—Hawk (00:15:58/10-11-55)

>>>>(You say an entire generation of these kids exist? How many are actually as Matrix-adept and virtually Matrix-dependent as Alex?)<<<<<

—Marse (05:17:30/10-14-55)

>>>>(Estimating with any degree of accuracy is difficult. Generally, the research departments of major corporations do not limit their trials to adult volunteers. Some federal safety laws mandate all-ages pre-launch trials for many products, and even when they aren't required, our friendly corporate chummers like to run such tests on hapless brats in Asia or Africa or somewhere else they can get away with it, just to make sure that young Chuck back home won't fry his brains trying to do something he shouldn't. As a result, countless guinea pigs are being used to test software, biotech and worse. Now, how many of these are among the new generation of Matrix-literates like Alex? I would not presume to hazard anything like an accurate guess, but if other companies have dedicated people like the Gates—so involved with Matrix development that they virtually live inside it permanently—hundreds of these Matrix-literates could exist. A fascinating and terrifying thought for the future, I would say.)<<<<<

—Hawk (05:28:51/10-16-55)

Hooks

Alex's usefulness to a runner team can be nearly limitless, provided the team can persuade him to help. Alex can be a powerful guide through various parts of the Matrix, especially Microdeck's research sections. He can sometimes bypass security systems intuitively, though the runners will also find that some basic defenses can pose far more problems for him, as they cannot be circumvented by his own peculiar logic applications. And problems arise because Alex does not regard secrets or information in the same way as adults. He is more likely to break into somewhere very secure only to write his name on a wall and scam, leaving the door wide open—and the hidden data still sitting there.

Above all, remember that Alex Gates is ultimately a child, with a child's concerns. Indeed, in many ways he is backward,

almost an idiot savant who lives most of his life in a totally different reality. He has severe difficulties relating to the real world, to solid three-dimensional streets, shops, open spaces and people. If someone wants him to do something that he is not 100 per cent happy with, he may become totally unresponsive. And bear in mind that Alex is the child of the second most powerful man at Microdeck Industries, a man who won't be at all happy to discover someone is interfering with his son and an experimental property in which Microtech has invested a tremendous amount of money.

Attributes

Body: 1
 Quickness: 5
 Strength: 2
 Charisma: 4
 Intelligence: 6
 Willpower: 4
 Essence: 5.3
 Reaction: 5

Skills

Computer (Hardware): 3
 Computer (Software): 6
 Computer Theory (Hardware): 5
 Computer Theory (Matrix): 7
 Computer Theory (Software): 6
 Electronics: 3
 Stealth: 2

Initiative: 5 + 1D6 (5 + 4D6 in the Matrix)

Professional Rating: 1

Threat Ratings

Combat: 1
 Decking: 8

Cyberware

Datajack
 Headware Memory, 50 Mp

Gear

Fairlight Excalibur, modified with MPCP 14, Hardening 7, I/O 75, Response Increase: 3

Programs:	Browse: 6
Bod: 6	Cloak: 6
Evasion: 6	Decrypt: 6
Masking: 6	Deception: 5
Sensors: 7	Relocate: 6
Analyze: 7	Sleaze: 6

Notes

Simulating Alex's unique skills and intuitive abilities in game play is not straightforward, and it shouldn't be. If something in the Matrix engages his curiosity, add 4 dice to his Hacking Pool. Add 2 to his Hacking Pool when he is using any Sensor program. These effects are cumulative. However, one of most interesting things about this character is his ability to do things that deckers shouldn't be able to do. So bend the rules a little to reflect this. Alex is an inquisitive child who doesn't know that he has limits.

Jonty Geldenhuys (Bounty Hunter)



Jonty Geldenhuys (Bounty Hunter)

Birth Date: November 14, 2013

Birthplace: Bloemfontein, Oranje-Vrystaat, Confederated Azanian Nations

Nationality/Metatype/Gender: Dutch/Caucasian Elf/Male

Current Residence: None (travels constantly)

Height: 188 cm

Weight: 79 kg

Hair: Dark blonde, frequently dyed

Eyes: Green (frequently tinted with corneal filters)

Distinguishing Physical Features: Slightly protuberant eyes, large triangular scar on left shoulder blade, right cyberarm

Psychology

Traits: Controlled, impassive, extremely thorough

Motivations: Hunter-killer

Lifestyle: High

Better watch that your trail doesn't cross Jonty's. He's one of the most implacable, persistent trackers the world's ever seen. For seven and a half years he pursued Keppler Malan, the guy who dished the dirt on the Vrystaat's secret-government Broederbond, but he got him in the end. Once he's paid to find someone, that someone isn't going to shake him off until one of them dies or the elf gets his man.

Jonty was born an elf in the rabidly anti-metahuman Oranje-Vrystaat. Fortunately for him, his parents smuggled him out of the country to distant relatives in Holland, where he spent his formative years. Geldenhuys harbors a very ambivalent attitude to the Oranje-Vrystaat, a real rejection-acceptance thing. In part, he despises the Vrystaat for its anti-metahuman bias, which denied him the chance to grow up with his parents. But at the same time, he wants desperately to be accepted by the Vrystaat's powers-that-be, and he's executed more contracts for the Vrystaat than for any other state.

Perhaps he manages to handle this extreme ambivalence through displacement: his hatred of Anglos is well known. He knows every humiliation inflicted on the Boers by the Brits that history ever recorded and believes that an Anglo conspiracy threatens the Vrystaat and its people. This hatred hasn't stopped him from working in the American states, though, where he has several corporate clients. Geldenhuys prefers dead-or-alive jobs, and 90 percent of the time the target comes back dead. If the target is an Anglo, "dead or alive" means plain dead for sure.

Other than his hatred of Anglos and his strange relationship with the Vrystaat, Jonty has few weaknesses or vices. The elf does not smoke, drink, do chips or drugs, and he'd rather be paid to shoot a woman than get romantically involved with one. He has no personal vanities or conceits that can be exploited. He's exceptionally quick and hardy, a survivalist capable of getting by with virtually no resources at all. You could stick this guy in the Sahara, 100 miles from water, and he'd survive. Don't take a job trying to protect anyone he's been paid to get. You'll only be in the way, and he plans the removal of obstacles very meticulously.

>>>>>(I know this slag. I gather it's very unusual for him to do this, but he hired me to do some routine surveillance on a target he planned to capture. No names, no pack drill. He demanded regular encrypted reports at 48 hour intervals, precisely. I had a clause in my contract that docked 10 percent of my daily fee for every minute I was late with that report. I had to record and transcribe everything, take photographs, hell I even had to take fraggin' soil samples.

He got his man, though.)<<<<<

—Blues Cruiser (09:44:00/09-17-55)

>>>>>(From what I hear, it isn't so unusual for him to use lackeys. By using several different agents and spies for terrain-mapping, he can avoid being spotted himself until he's ready to take out the target. He may employ others to assist with the actual hit or capture, but only when really necessary. If he has

to bust a corporate installation, he'll get the heavy-weapons team, and so on. But usually he likes to find and exploit a weakness, whether it's the target's monthly visit to the opera, abducting the target's daughter from her private school, using a sniper shot when Mr. Dead-Man's cruising the streets on his Saturday night good-time-girl run, whatever. He likes to take care of business alone when possible, because then he does not have to run the inherent risks of working with others who may not be as good as he is—which means most of us.)<<<<<<

—Cobalt Blue (04:09:02/09-19-55)

>>>>>(I've heard Jonty has a laconic sense of humor, though. Let's face it, the exploding wedding cake that took out Walter Marshall in Chicago was a hoot.)<<<<<<

—Trap Man (01:07:41/09-24-55)

>>>>>(Oh, everyone knows about that one. But that was way back. These days, he has a very strong preference for the direct hit and dislikes that kind of distant-action tactic. He's going to turn up for you in person, and if his bullet's got your name on it, cheery-bye. Apparently he didn't like the fact that the cake iced six other people too. No remorse, you understand, but rather a distaste for such crude, inefficient methods.)<<<<<<

—MesoStim (05:52:11/10-01-55)

Hooks

Jonty provides two obvious hooks. First, the runners can be hired to protect someone from Geldenhuys. The players must decide whether they stay put like ducks in a shooting gallery or try to get Jonty before he gets them. Alternatively, Geldenhuys can hire the runners to do some preliminary investigations on a target for him. This provides for more complicated problems (halfway through, a group of assassins/bounty hunters hired by the grieving ex-spouse of one of Geldenhuys's kills turn up and target the runners).

Also, remember that Geldenhuys has learned a great deal about a lot of people and places. He is absolutely meticulous and keeps files of notes about certain highly sensitive locations stashed away in bank deposit boxes as well as in his headware memory. He may have taken out the targets at those places, but that knowledge might still be very, very useful to runners some time. Of course, to get it, they have to help him with his current tasks.

Attributes

Body: 4	Intelligence: 6
Quickness: 7	Willpower: 6
Strength: 4 (7)	Essence: 1.6
Charisma: 6	Reaction: 6 (12)

Special Skill

Survival: 8

Initiative: 6 + 1D6 (9 + 4D6)

Professional Rating: 4

Threat Ratings

Combat: 5

Cyberware

Cyberarm with integral Smartlink, Spurs and Increased Strength (+3)
 Datajack
 Display Link
 Head Radio Receiver
 Head Telephone
 Headware Memory, 50 Mp
 Wired Reflexes (beta-customized): 2

Skills

Armed Combat: 5
 Bike: 4
 Car: 4
 Etiquette (Corporate): 4
 Etiquette (Street): 5
 Firearms: 7
 Sniper Rifles: 9
 Walther WA-2100: 11
 Interrogation: 5
 Psychology: 4
 Stealth: 6
 Unarmed Combat: 5

Gear

Defiance Super Shock [Taser, 4 (magazine), SA, 10S]
 Lined Coat (4/2)
 Ingram Smartgun [Submachine Gun, 32 (clip), BF/FA, 7M, w/200 rounds of regular ammunition]
 Medkit
 Remington Roomsweeper [Heavy Pistol, 8 (magazine), SA, 9S (f), w/100 rounds of regular ammunition]
 Restraints (6)
 Shock Glove
 Stun Baton
 Survival Kit
 Trauma Patches (8): 2
 Walther WA-2100 [Sniper Rifle, 10 (magazine), SA, 14S, w/100 rounds of regular ammunition, Laser Sight, Rangefinder, Shock Pads, Silencer]

Notes

Geldenhuys has natural Low-Light Vision.

He always tries to kill cleanly and by stealth. He doesn't like heavy weapons, explosives and the like. The sniping rifle or the precision hit in some other form is his thing. He also doesn't like using a magician for the hit itself, but he has been known to employ magicians to deceive or confuse bodyguards or to dispel magical barriers and protections, thus enabling him to make a clean hit.

Geldenhuys's Survival Skill applies when he is stuck in some desolate wilderness hell or the like. He knows which plants are safe to eat and have enough water in them to survive on, he knows which grubs and caterpillars are edible, he has perfect spatial sense, he knows how to start a fire without any apparent way of doing so.

Finally, no vehicle is listed for this character, but he always has one—rented or "borrowed" (with or without its driver)—as circumstances dictate.

Kazuyuki Geva (Terrorist)



Kazuyuki Geva (Terrorist)

Birth Date: February 7, 2029

Birthplace: Santa Rosa, California

Nationality/Metatype/Gender: CFS/Asian Ork/Male

Current Residence: Saratoga, CFS

Height: 177 cm

Weight: 68 kg

Hair: Peroxide white

Eyes: Dark brown

Distinguishing Physical Features: Hair shaved at sides, plaited and braided at back; large burn scar on outside of right thigh

Psychology

Traits: Ruthless, violent, borderline paranoid

Motivations: "Freedom fighter"

Lifestyle: Low

Kazuyuki Geva is a terrorist and San Francisco is his battleground. His aim? Quite simply, to force the Japanese occupiers to retreat from his home, by whatever means necessary.

Geva was born in California to naturalized-American Japanese parents who worked in the computer industry. He was raised as an American in a plush apartment overlooking Candlestick Park. When Japanese forces assumed control of San Francisco on his ninth birthday, his family believed life would get better for them, because they were nominally related to the occupiers. But when young Kazuyuki succumbed to Goblinization a year later, life changed for the worse. His parents lost their jobs as a result of the institutionalized Japanese anti-metahuman prejudice. The authorities forced the family to give up their home and relocate to a rundown condo in Oakland, alongside hundreds of other families with ork and troll children. His parents' health began to decline steadily, and both died within four months of each other in 2046.

The teenage Kazuyuki moved out on to the streets. Eventually he joined up with others like himself, the dregs of society who lived lives unseen by the uncaring masses. He lived by shoplifting, mugging, and running deliveries for weapon and chip dealers.

He was soon recruited into the outer fringes of the Underground. There he found like minds, others who hated the occupiers with every fiber of their beings. But he also found many opposed to violent methods. When he and his associates set off several bombs on the BART tracks in 2051, Geva was banished from the central group. He set up his own splinter group, which he called the *Burakumin*, after the traditional Japanese name for beggars and street people. He recruited half a dozen individuals whom he could trust to follow his leadership. These were not political soldiers, but gangsters and runners who just wanted to cause mayhem. They were more than willing to swallow Geva's warped rhetoric as long as they robbed a bank every so often.

Geva apparently wants to create conditions that will prevent ordinary citizens from working in San Francisco and force Japanese security forces to clamp down so hard that the people will rise up in open revolt. Little of this seems to have made an impact on the general populace. In fact, news organizations have portrayed the *Burakumin* as a renegade ork terrorist unit intent on maiming innocent humans.

As an ork, Geva can go about his business virtually unnoticed by the average Bay Area citizen, especially if he adopts his usual disguise of a laborer on his way to start his shift. He has a selection of passes, obtained from contacts still in the Underground, which seem to allow him and his associates almost unlimited access to many parts of the city.

Last year his gang was drawn into a shoot-out when an unlucky squad of SFPD officers challenged it. The gang was returning from testing some new heavy weaponry up in the hills beyond Concord. In the end, the terrorists killed seven cops. The ensuing publicity forced the *Burakumin* to keep out of sight for a while. During the lull, rumors of plans for a new atrocity that will dwarf all others yet committed have begun to circulate.

>>>>(Geva? The guy's a psycho. I warn you, don't touch him with a ten-foot assault cannon. He hasn't got any real plans; he just wants to get that insurmountable rage out of his heart and into the open. He's a thug who uses politics as an excuse to go apedrek in a crowded place with some seriously heavy weaponry. Worse still, he's a beetlehead, has been since he was seventeen. That means sometimes he can think of nothing else but his next score. The man's ten million bees short of a hive, and you'd be crazy to deal with him.)<<<<<

—Skid (02:15:44/10-06-55)

>>>>(May be true, Skiddley Diddley, but these are crazy times. Geva's got an in with someone on an arms supply network, which means he can get you some pretty heavy drek if you want it. He don't care who has the guns either—he just likes to know that someone is out there causing some righteous mayhem. You want heavy weaponry, you could do a lot worse than Geva.)<<<<<

—Brandon (12:41:09/10-08-55)

>>>>(S'wiz, but watch out, this guy has mood swings from hell. Partner of mine lost three fingers when Geva started lobbing pins and grenades in different directions in the downstairs room of the ShadowJack squatclub.)<<<<<

—Ween (22:19:30/10-08-55)

>>>>(I've heard that Geva has his hideout under Highway 101 by the airport. The abandoned condo is crammed with goodies, including half a dozen surface-to-air missiles. Supposedly, if anything ever goes wrong, Geva's ready to barricade himself in and start picking aircraft out of the sky until the Imperial Marines come and get him.)<<<<<

—Aweder (03:16:58/10-09-55)

>>>>(The Underground formally disassociated itself from the murderous actions of the faction calling itself the Burakumin in a communiqué dated June 7, 2053. It believes that the ork calling himself Kazuyuki Geva to be nothing more than a gangster devoted to robbery and murder, and it shares none of his group's professed aims.)<<<<<

—Greyward (00:10:15/10-11-55)

>>>>(Buzz on the street is that the next target will be a real biggie, possibly a bridge. Can't wait, me. Anything that raks off the IM is totally fine with me.)<<<<<

—BrainDrain 400 (02:24:31/10-24-55)

>>>>(Ah, an intellectual in our midst. Or should that be adolescent? Tell all that drek to the innocent civilians. Tell that to the orphaned kids. Tell that to the maimed and injured. Wake up and smell the napalm, drekbrain. This isn't some John Wayne flick, and you can't solve problems by the detonation of simple explosives.)<<<<<

—Zuvuya (02:34:32/10-24-55)

>>>>(Innocent? If they were so innocent they wouldn't work for the occupying forces; they'd refuse and keep their consciences clean. But no, a dollar—or should that be nuyen now; hal—is more important than that. Ordinary people make me want to chuck.)<<<<<

—BrainDrain 400 (02:38:02/10-24-55)

Hooks

Kazuyuki Geva's unstable personality and hair-trigger temper make him a very dangerous individual. Anyone dealing with him is in for tremendous trouble. But sometimes trouble is just what the runners need to keep from getting complacent. Alternatively, trying to take out Geva without mounting major casualty figures can provide something of a challenge. And finally, any group out on a sensitive or dodgy run may suddenly find their work complicated by one of the Burakumin's little demonstrations.

Attributes

Body: 7
Quickness: 5 (7)
Strength: 7 (9)
Charisma: 5
Intelligence: 4
Willpower: 5
Essence: 0.45
Reaction: 4 (6)

Skills

Armed Combat: 5
Car: 4
Demolition: 6
Demolition (B/R): 5
Firearms: 5
Leadership: 4
Negotiation: 3
Psychology: 3
Stealth: 4
Unarmed Combat: 4

Cyberware

Datajack
Head Radio
Muscle Replacement: 2
Retractable Spurs
Smartlink
Wired Reflexes: 1

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

Professional Rating: 4

Threat Ratings

Combat: 4

Gear

Antidote Patches: 5 (2)
Armor Jacket (5/3)
Bug Scanner
Panther Assault Cannon [Heavy Weapon, 22 (clip), SS, 18D (Belt), w/200 belted rounds of regular ammunition, Reactive Trigger, Smartlink]
Plastic Explosive (Compound XII), 2 kg
Respirator
Ruger Super Warhawk [Heavy Pistol, 6 (cylinder), SS, 10M, w/200 rounds of regular ammunition]
Shuriken (6)
Stimulant Patches: 6 (4)
Survival Kit
Suzuki Aurora Racing Bike

Notes

Geva possesses natural Low-Light Vision.

Susan Hands-as-Wings (Rigger/Mechanic)



Susan Hands-as-Wings (Rigger/Mechanic)

Birth Date: March 17, 2012

Birthplace: Somewhere on Highway 90, east of Seattle

Nationality: Salish-Shidhe, Cascade Ork/Amerindian Dwarf/Female

Current Residence: Redmond, Seattle

Height: 124 cm

Weight: 41 kg

Hair: Dark brown

Eyes: Hazel

Distinguishing Physical Features: Tattoos of eagles and stags along forearms

Psychology

Traits: Highly curious, fearless, reckless

Motivations: Meddling, finding new rigger gear and using/wrecking/repairing it

Lifestyle: Low to Middle

You want a rigger, but you wouldn't waste your time looking for a dwarf. They're just not up to the job—not speedy enough and unable to get their feet down far enough to put the pedal to the metal, right? Bulldrek. No one uses pedals in

these days of control rigs. And having a rigger who can repair almost anything when it gets busted and fix it fast is pretty damn useful. And if that rigger happens to know virtually everyone with a finger in a dishonest pie at all points east of Seattle, you've got yourself one wiz deal, chummers. You have Susan Hands-as-Wings. No, she doesn't know why she got the name either. She blames it on her parents listening to too much of that pinkskin hippie music back in California ages ago and getting their brains a little addled. But this is one woman more comfortable in machine oil than in patchouli.

Susan is a very resourceful lady. She loves building rigs, stripping them to the basics, putting them back together, and then doing it all over again just to squeeze the odd extra 1 percent on the margin. If you want a customizing job done, here's where to go. If you want some of those new mil-spec Hyundai-CSA Advanced air-to-air missiles, Susan can find 'em for you. She'll want to give them the once-over and install them on your drone or aircraft as well, because she really just doesn't trust anyone else to do the job as well as she will. Give her the money and let her go to work. She may not do exactly what you want her to do, but the odds are she'll produce something superior to your original expectations. Oddly enough, she loves being paid to construct really heavily customized drones packed with explosives and then watching them detonate inside some building, fragging everything in sight.

Susan is also happy to whisk you runner folks away from the scene of those activities you'd like to get away from real fast. Her Eurocar can outperform virtually anything on the road, and last I heard, she was busy working on an oil-dispersing exhaust for the thing.

>>>>>(It's undergoing road trials right now. An oil slick combined with a thick smoke jet from burned oil passed over a cylinder running parallel to the gas exhaust is going to make it hard even to see that vehicle, let alone chase it.)<<<<<<

—Gnasher (19:50:02/08-01-55)

>>>>>(Well, if she's so good, how come she went out and bought a performance engine for it, then?)<<<<<<

—Bitter Lemon (22:16:30/08-07-55)

>>>>>(Be reasonable—no one can produce something as good as a factory soup-up, and even Sue couldn't make it as reliable. Well, not quite anyway. (Just in case you're listening, Sue.))<<<<<<

—Cylinderhead (03:25:07/08-22-55)

>>>>>(Seriously, that car—which is garaged somewhere in Redmond—is a survival bubble. Bullets virtually bounce off it and the thing's a sealed environment. It's quicker than a dragon that's swallowed its own weight in the latest designer amphetamines. Sue usually charges high rates for a run, but she's worth it. Check it out.)<<<<<<

—Crusher (20:16:12/09-02-55)

Hooks

Hands-As-Wings is a go-anywhere, do-anything character. She can work as a rigger, an expert in remote drone surveillance, a preparer of exploding drones, shooter-down of air vehicles with AAMs, and so on. Because of her battery of B/R skills, Sue can modify almost any vehicle runners might possess, from performing complex upgrades or just getting those irritating serial numbers off the chassis of "borrowed" vehicles. Sue is also useful as a fixer within the Salish-Shidhe lands—especially the Cascade Lands—though she dislikes elves strongly and avoids traveling through Sinsearach lands unless she must.

Also, Sue has friends in high places among the Cascade Ork tribe, the perennial troublemakers of the Salish-Shidhe lands. Runners working with her could easily find themselves in the middle of tribal politics turned nasty. Council agents might even try to frame Sue and any runners with her for smuggling. The accusation would be quite true for her, but the runners might just be convenient patsies.

Attributes

Body: 6 (7)
 Quickness: 5
 Strength: 6
 Charisma: 5
 Intelligence: 6
 Willpower: 5
 Essence: 0.75
 Reaction: 5 (9 when Rigging only)

Skills

Bike: 6
 Bike (B/R): 6
 Boat: 5
 Boat (B/R): 5
 Car: 7
 Car (B/R): 6
 Computer: 5
 Computer (B/R): 6
 Demolitions: 5
 Electronics: 7
 Electronics (B/R): 8
 Etiquette (Street): 5
 Firearms: 4
 Gunnery: 6
 Hovercraft: 6
 Rotor Craft: 6
 Rotor Craft (B/R): 6
 Unarmed Combat: 4
 Vectored Thrust Craft: 4
 Winged Planes: 5

Initiative: 5 + 1D6 (9 + 3D6 when Rigging only)

Professional Rating: 2

Threat Ratings

Combat: 3
 Vehicle (Control): 4

Cyberware

Cybereyes with Low-Light, Flare Protection, and Thermographic Vision
 Datajack
 Dermal Plating: 1
 Radio
 Smartlink
 Vehicle Control Rig: 2

Gear

Ares Viper Slivergun [Heavy Pistol, 30 (clip), SA/BF, 9S (f), w/50 rounds of flechette ammunition, Laser Sight, Smartlink]
 Armor Jacket (5/3)
 Aztechnology GCR-23C Hunter-Crawler with Body Upgrade (**Body** 6); 2 Mossberg CMTDs [Shotgun, 8 (clip), SA/BF, 9S, w/400 rounds of belted explosive ammunition]; Rigged; Remote Gear
 Doc Wagon™ Contract (Gold)
 Eurocar Westwind 2000: Rigged; High-Performance Engine and Body Upgrade (**Body** 8); **Speed** 98/296; **Sig** 3 with ECM listed below; **Economy** 12.7 km/l; 2 concealed Ingram Valiants [Light Machine Guns, Belt, 50 (clip), BF/FA, 7S, w/1,000 rounds of belted regular ammunition]; Two-Shot Missile Launcher (2 AVMs); Advanced Sensors; APPS; ECM (Level 2); EnviroSeal™ gas- and water-tight vehicle protection with integrated life-support system
 Hyundai Offroader with Suspension Upgrade (**Handling** 2/0); Roll Bars; Stoner-Ares M107 [Heavy Weapon, Belt, 50 (box), FA, 10S, w/200 rounds of belted explosive ammunition, Integral Gas Vent III Recoil Reduction System, Integral Laser Sight]
 MCT-Nissan Rotodrone with Body Upgrade (**Body** 4); Active Thermal Masking (Level 3, **Sig** 6); 2 Saab Saaker AAMs; Rigged; Remote Gear
 Remote Control Deck (with four slave points)

Notes

Sue Hands-As-Wings is sensation-seeking and brave to the point of fearlessness, and she has a dark, dry sense of humor. She is also very ready to openly insult almost anyone just for the hell of it, which can (and does) land her in trouble occasionally. She's smart enough to keep her head down if dealing with Knight-Errant Security, Lone Star, and their ilk, however.

Susan has permanent facilities for all her B/R skills, and kits as well, in case she has to work when traveling.



Keiji Hiroshige (Gangster)

Birth Date: September 4, 2007

Birthplace: Osaka, Japan

Nationality/Metatype/Gender: Japanese/Asian Human/
Male

Current Residence: Chicago, UCAS

Height: 157 cm

Weight: 60 kg

Hair: Black

Eyes: Dark brown

Distinguishing Physical Features: Entire body, with the exception of face, hands and feet, tattooed with traditional Japanese designs, hidden by everyday clothing

Psychology

Traits: Meticulous, well-mannered, very difficult to "read"

Motivations: Criminal ambition, revenge if made to lose face

Lifestyle: High to Luxury

Chicago has always been a long-term project for the yakuza. The traditional Mafia control, reaffirmed by secret deals with City Hall to keep the city afloat during the Awakening, is part of the basic fabric of life in the Windy City and is only now being eroded after years of pressure. Currently, the most visible *oyabun* in Chicago is Keiji Hiroshige.

Hiroshige was born in Japan, and his lineage includes many of the most important families in the land. The most relevant of these are the Inagawa, one of the most important yakuza families of the latter part of the past century. The Inagawa's influence is still strong at all levels of the yakuza world. When Hiroshige was twelve, his family moved to the United States, settling in San Francisco for a time and then Detroit. It is believed that he was recruited into the yakuza at the age of fifteen by a member of his family. He rose steadily through the ranks and took command of Chicago operations in 2047.

Despite his American upbringing, Hiroshige remains a traditionalist who tries to run his organization along long-established lines. He is opposed to the new centralized, syndicate style of the American yakuza. Compared to yakuza gangs in many other cities, he retains far fewer men under his direct control, as he prefers to recruit staff for individual jobs. He is a firm believer in the ancient yakuza codes, the *giri-ninjo*, and he encourages both the ritual tattooing that distinguishes his men from outsiders and the practice of *yubitsume*—the severing of the tip of the little finger to atone for a mistake and show continued loyalty. His traditions also extend to his offices, which are strictly Japanese in character. Each features traditional paper doors, low tables and a Zen garden.

Hiroshige is said to be a traditionalist in less pleasant ways, too. He is very right-wing politically and makes no secret of his hatred for orks and trolls, whom he considers sub-human. He is rumored to make donations to several local extremist policlubs.

Little is known of Hiroshige's private life, save that he has a son and was widowed last year. He is said to own several houses in select parts of the city. Apparently, he keeps fit through karate training and practices many other traditional Japanese arts as well.

The yakuza's operations in Chicago have been slow to come to fruition in the past, but under Hiroshige the Chicago operation has begun to increase its power dramatically. With the expansion of Mitsuhaman in the area, the operation has acquired a ready-made base for its black market activities. And the success of the simsense industries around Dream Town has created a market for "services" ranging from hard drugs to brothels—services the operation is happy to provide. Hiroshige has also managed to place a number of yakuza plants among the shareholders of several major Chicago-based corporations, including UCAS Steel. Their influence will soon be making itself plain. And in the city's poorer areas, yakuza loan sharks are engaged in a pitched battle with Don Patrick Murphy's mob-controlled lenders for market control. The yakuza even have strong influence among the go-gangs and other street trash of the Noose. Under Keiji Hiroshige, the Chicago yakuza is slowly but surely easing its way into every aspect of organized crime in the city.

>>>>(Hiroshige is a complex character. While he is unquestionably a lover of the "honorable" yakuza traditions, he has always been quick to spot new trends: the latest designer drug or simsense, new industries to exploit, and so on.)

His personal life has been complicated of late, too. His wife, Sunito, died last year, allegedly from heartbreak at the behavior of their estranged son, Tadashi. Tadashi had been isolated from the family for more than six years, following his refusal to follow in his father's footsteps. Keiji, who had been grooming his son for many years, was adamant that the young man accede to his wishes or be disowned. Tadashi chose the latter and now lives as a freelance decker in the Noose. Hiroshige and his wife also had a daughter, but she died at the age of fifteen in a car accident.)<<<<<

—Null (05:56:48/10-08-55)

>>>>(Tadashi Hiroshige has been linked to attempts by other yakuza factions to destabilize his father's position within the operation. It seems plain to many that the younger Hiroshige is not just a devil-may-care street runner but has his eyes on a greater prize.)<<<<<

—O'Brien (11:14:57/10-10-55)

>>>>(Tad says that he now considers himself to be a ronin, a masterless samurai. From the way he tells it, he had long been supplanted in his father's affections by the elder Hiroshige's personal bodyguard and apprentice, Akihito Takemura. Last time we talked, he mentioned in passing that he also had a host of plans cooking that would let his father know just what he thought of the yakuza and its traditions.)<<<<<

—ADSR (04:55:46/10-12-55)

>>>>(I've had some freelance dealings with Hiroshige's people and was treated with respect. The job was a simple sting on a trio of likely lads muscling in on the operation's territory in Park Ridge. Hiroshige's people fronted sufficient cash, new weapons and vehicles. Basically they were ideal employers, though I must admit that their initial approach scared the drek out of us.)<<<<<

—Anonymous (07:16:12/10-13-55)

>>>>(Hiroshige does donate money to local race-hate poli-clubs, but his attempts at forging firmer links with them have been strongly rejected for one simple reason: he is Japanese, and seen by the racist dimwits as almost as much of a threat as the much-feared ork and troll menace.)<<<<<

—Slater (00:15:15/10-21-55)

Hooks

The yakuza are a secretive organization which is justly feared by all. But occasionally the yakuza needs the services of runners—or runners need the yakuza. This is where Hiroshige—or perhaps his son—comes in. Runners can cross paths with or rip off the yakuza inadvertently, in which case they likely run into the errant Tadashi. And Hiroshige is always

very interested in news of his estranged son, though he will not seek contact with him. Or if the runners are having trouble with the Chicago mob, Hiroshige's yakuza might prove unlikely allies—or vice versa. Internal conflicts within the yakuza may also provide work for the runners; warring factions may want outsiders to do their dirty work, after all.

If the yakuza want to contract runners, a trio of heavily built men in dark suits approach the runners in their favorite haunt and make it plain a job is being offered. Typically, the runners then meet with a more senior figure at some suitable location and time, usually a yakuza-owned warehouse at midnight. Hiroshige's yakuza pay well and promptly, but insist that those in their employ follow yakuza rules to the letter. Any deviation from them or any mistakes can mean mutilation or death.

Of course, all this information is relevant only as long as the balance of power in Chicago remains as it is.

Attributes

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

Skills

Car: 2
Etiquette (Corporate): 6
Etiquette (Street): 5
Etiquette (Yakuza): 6
Firearms: 3
Interrogation: 8
Japanese: 8
Leadership: 7
Negotiation: 5
Unarmed Combat: 6

Special Skill

Yakuza Traditions: 7

Initiative: 5 + 1D6

Professional Rating: 3

Threat Ratings

Combat: 3

Gear

Ares Viper Slivergun [Heavy Pistol, 30 (clip), SA/BF, 9S (f), w/50 rounds of flechette ammunition]

Armor Jacket (5/3)

Doc Wagon™ Contract (Platinum)

Katana coated with Dikote™

Other items at gamemaster's discretion (Hiroshige doesn't carry much hardware)

Notes

Hiroshige is always accompanied by his samurai bodyguards. Akihito Takemura (see p. 42) is the most important of these individuals. Dealing with Hiroshige is much easier if one of the group's runners has a high Etiquette Skill Rating. Specific knowledge of the yakuza, Japanese manners and etiquette also proves a major advantage. Unless one or more runners have such skills or knowledge, increase all standard target numbers for Charisma Tests, Social Skills Tests, and the like by 2 when dealing with Hiroshige.



Akihito "Tuesday" Takemura (Gangster)

Birth Date: October 28, 2031

Birthplace: Waipahu, Hawaii

Nationality/Metatype/Gender: UCAS/Asian Elf/Male

Current Residence: Chicago, UCAS

Height: 178 cm

Weight: 66 kg

Hair: Black

Eyes: Dark brown

Distinguishing Physical Features: Tattoo of sword-wielding samurai derived from traditional Japanese design stretches from right shoulder to lower left back, smaller chrysanthemum design around left thigh, hair very long but usually tied back

Psychology

Traits: Fanatically determined, loyal, ruthless

Motivations: Preservation of honor through loyalty to his *oyabun*

Lifestyle: High

Keiji Hiroshige took Akihito Takemura under his wing when the young man was only eight years old. Takemura's father is a second cousin of Hiroshige, and it was probably a matter of some family pride that the rising yakuza man took the child as his *kobun*, or apprentice.

Under Hiroshige's tutelage, Takemura was brought up in both the Japanese and American cultures. And from the start, he was also groomed to look out for his *oyabun* (patron) through instruction in *iaido* (Japanese swordmanship) and *ninjutsu* with some of the best practitioners outside of Japan. Today he is a master swordsman and possesses an expertise in unarmed combat and weapons that make him a perfect bodyguard for the head of the Chicago yakuza.

As well as watching over Hiroshige's personal safety, Takemura oversees security at his master's house and office, where several dozen men always stand guard. Often, Hiroshige uses Takemura to "sort out" disputes with disloyal yakuza members, but the *oyabun* rarely uses his trusted bodyguard for such purposes outside of the organization because Hiroshige values the man too highly to risk losing him in a firefight. In fact, many observers believe that Takemura has supplanted Tadashi Hiroshige as heir to the leadership of the Chicago yakuza, though it seems probable that other factions in the organization would object to Takemura taking over as *oyabun*.

Incidentally, his nickname stems from the day on which he was born.

>>>>>(This guy is most impressive, everything you would imagine a fantasy historical samurai to be. It's like he stepped out of a Hokusai print dressed up in the most fashionable suit. He is so calm and centered you would swear that he had stopped breathing and turned into a statue, but he can react in the blink of an eye. The merest wave of a finger toward his master and he's there, sword or gun in hand, as if he materialized from thin air. You'd swear he could almost sense your intentions before you did anything. He is so emotionless that he does not bat an eyelid if asked to kill or maim—guess it's all part of the code. And his mere presence sure adds to Hiroshige's persuasive charm when the *oyabun*'s negotiating the fine points of a deal!)<<<<<

—O'Brien (14:08:28/10-08-55)

>>>>>(In our language he is *nihirisuto*, a laughing samurai—a totally fearless warrior who walks on the edge of the darkness, continually ready for action, death or other noble pursuits. When he stands alongside his master, Takemura is ready—no, eager—for whatever may happen. He gladly embraces the heroic death that could await him each day. When you can think like that, anything less that happens is easy to deal with.)<<<<<

—Null (03:17:21/10-09-55)

>>>>>(Why does an elf serve a known hater of metahumans?)<<<<<

—Miras (19:20:22/10-09-55)

>>>>(Simply, honor. He has been raised to think of nothing save constant unbending allegiance to his master and oyabun. Besides, his links with his elven kin have been so limited throughout the latter part of his upbringing that he has all but forgotten his true nature. And it is said that Hiroshige is less hostile to elves, for they are regarded as noble and cultured rather than brutish and subhuman.)<<<<<

—Null (01:17:54/10-11-55)

>>>>(The rumor mill says that, of late, Tuesday has been questioning this gap in his life, and discretely making contact with parts of the elf community in and around Chicago. He is apparently trying to reconcile his mefatype with his Japanese upbringing and his duty to Hiroshige. But I would not be at all surprised if some of his new friends have been planting some interesting, perhaps contradictory, ideas in his head.)<<<<<

—Ake (10:16:39/10-17-55)

>>>>(Nicky Takagi, a reasonably well-known face in Chicago yak circles until Hiroshige took over, reckoned that he had proof that Takemura had killed Hiroshige's daughter, Michiro. The family never talks about the death, but apparently Takagi told a friend of a friend that he had been drinking with Tuesday when the conversation turned to Tadashi and his relationship with his father. Allegedly Tuesday said something like, "I should have run him over when I had the chance to," and then changed the subject. The official accident reports merely state that Michiro was struck by a car that had been left in gear and do not mention who was driving the vehicle. Wouldn't surprise me at all. Anyway, Nicky Takagi apparently killed himself four days after Hiroshige assumed control. Supposedly he performed a very traditional seppuku, but I sure don't buy that.)<<<<<

—Anonymous (04:16:50/10-22-55)

>>>>(You do well to keep your identity hidden. If Takemura reads that entry you will become a man marked for death. I do not know if your assertion is correct, but I believe that Tadashi suspects it is true.)<<<<<

—ADSR (23:11:18/10-22-55)

Hooks

The most likely scenario for an encounter between Takemura and a runner group involves the runners crossing Keiji Hiroshige in some way. Initially, Takemura and half a dozen lesser thugs warn them off with a terrifying demonstration of swordsmanship, a lot of cuts and bruises. Later he may come after the runners for real. In another scenario, Tadashi Hiroshige hires the runners to help him take revenge on his father's bodyguard. If the runners are dealing with Hiroshige—hired for a job, perhaps—they may well get to meet Takemura. And the bodyguard is definitely present if they ever get to meet the *oyabun* in person.

Attributes

Body: 6 (8)
 Quickness: 7 (8)
 Strength: 6 (7)
 Charisma: 4
 Intelligence: 5
 Willpower: 5
 Essence: 0.15
 Reaction: 6 (9)

Skills

Armed Combat: 8
 Katana: 12
 Car: 4
 Etiquette (Corporate): 5
 Etiquette (Yakuza): 6
 Firearms: 6
 Languages
 Japanese: 4
 Sperethiel: 1
 Negotiation: 3
 Psychology: 2
 Stealth: 4
 Unarmed Combat: 6

Initiative: 6 + 1D6 (10 + 4D6)

Professional Rating: 4

Threat Ratings

Combat: 5

Cyberware (beta-customized)

Bone Lacing (Titanium) (1/1 Armor)
 Hand Razors
 Smartlink
 Wired Reflexes: 3

Bloware (Body Index: .8)

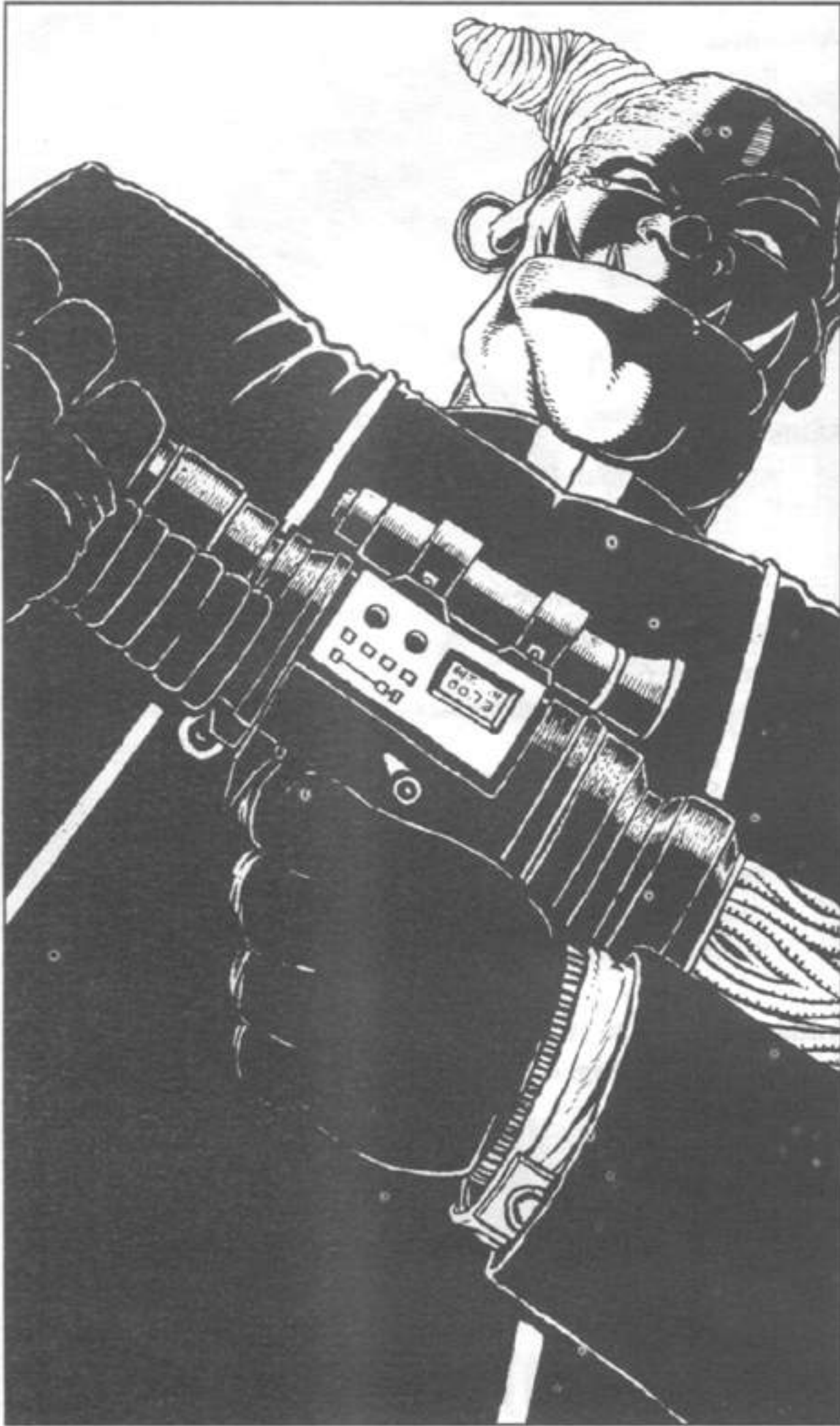
Muscle Augmentation: 1

Gear

Ares Viper Slivergun [Heavy Pistol, 30 (clip), SA/BF, 9S (f), w/200 rounds of flechette ammunition, Silencer]
 Armor Jacket
 Grenades (Offensive): 6
 Katana hardened with Dikote™
 Walther WA-2100 [Sniper Rifle, 10 (magazine), SA, 14S, w/100 rounds of regular ammunition and 50 rounds of explosive ammunition]

Notes

Takemura has natural Low-Light Vision.



Hoodlum Priest

Birth Date: Unknown, believed ca. 2033

Birthplace: The Noose, Chicago

Nationality/Metatype/Gender: UCAS/Black Troll/Male

Current Residence: The Noose

Height: 274 cm

Weight: 286 kg

Hair: Black

Eyes: Brown

Distinguishing Physical Features: Braided black beard

Psychology

Traits: Extraordinary charisma, fearless, messianic complex

Motivations: Conversion of unbelievers, community building

Lifestyle: Low

We are talking *weird*, ladies and gentleman. Here is a troll, clad in the full regalia of a Catholic priest, who likes to poke his machine gun in your face and says in that wondrous, incredible voice of his, "convert or die, fragface." The voice is like bitumen dipped in honey, like steel melted by the burning heart of a lover, like nothing on earth. And when the Hoodlum Priest's congregation gathers in that ruin of a church on the borders of the Shattergraves, you'll find orks and trolls—so mean and cruel they'd rip your guts out for a dollar—standing around a battered old piano, belting out that old gospel sound of salvation. When he takes communion around, the barrel of the SMG strokes your neck as you drink the wine. No one knows his real name; they just call him Father. And the Noose contains a thousand downtrodden souls who would die for him without a second thought.

Why? Because he has some kind of magical talent. Magicians who have assensed his aura say it reads like that of a shamanic adept, though he doesn't fit any standard pattern. When he delivers his message everyone is transfixed. He says the world is for the brotherhood and sisterhood of every creature that thinks and feels and has a soul, and that those who are oppressed have the right to take what is theirs from those who oppress them because that's the will of God. Not a word of originality in it, but it doesn't matter. The eyes roll back in that great head of his and the words pour down like silver. Even the ghouls and spectres of the Shattergraves seem entranced by him. The Hoodlum Priest walks among those troubled souls, and they don't touch him. They watch, and some even offer hands in supplication as if receiving some kind of benediction. Now I have years of training in psychology and I know the tricks of the image transformers and the scumbags of advertising and marketing, but this is no ordinary manipulator or trickster. Something *truly* magical hovers around this troll, and if I didn't know that He doesn't exist, I'd even wonder whether God had a hand in it.

>>>>(You will learn better. We can see salvation in the way he walks among troubled souls, in the eyes of our children, in the new shining hope he has brought us in our brotherhood. Hallelujah!)<<<<<

—The Granite Butcher (19:32:41/10-11-55)

>>>>(Yes, but his boys still pull a lot of raids and kill a fair number of those souls they claim to care about so much.)<<<<<

—Cronkite (16:44:30/10-15-55)

>>>>(Most of them are just villains and drekheads from the Murphy's Law gang. The Father's got something going for the ordinary down-at-heel, starved, half-crazy and wretched down in the Noose. He's not just another Mob lackey grinding their faces into the dirt. Normal service may not be resumed. There's gotta be at least a couple of hundred street brats who would have starved to death or been abducted for the organ market or worse, if not for him.)<<<<<

—Gnasher (02:12:50/11-01-55)

>>>>(And though he ain't ordained by any church I know of, he's got some kind of power in him, that's for sure.)<<<<<

—The Benedictine Burner (00:34:07/11-05-55)

Hooks

Runners could become embroiled in the running war between the Hoodlum Priest and his followers and the Murphy's Law gang. And if runners have to deal with ghosts, the Priest's Preaching skill and special talents could prove uniquely valuable to them (see **Notes**). The Priest is always interested in joining up with runners as extra heat, providing the pay is good (he has a lot of buildings to repair in the Noose to make them livable). And the Priest's rabble of followers could be very useful if runners need a mass decoy or a large escort, but these people lack any decent equipment. In any case, don't let the runners just use this guy or his associates. These are hard but decent people with a sense of community, and they fight hard for their dignity and what little they have.

And again, things could change should the status quo shift in the Windy City.

Attributes

Body: 9 (10)
 Quickness: 4
 Strength: 8
 Charisma: 6
 Intelligence: 3
 Willpower: 4
 Essence: 4
 Reaction: 3 (5)

Skills

Armed Combat: 6
 Bike: 3
 Etiquette (Street): 5
 Firearms: 6
 Stealth: 3
 Throwing Weapons: 5
 Unarmed Combat: 6

Special Skill:

Preaching: 10 (see **Notes**)

Initiative: 3 + 1D6 (5 + 2D6)

Professional Rating: 4

Threat Rating

Combat: 4

Cyberware

Wired Reflexes: 1

Gear

Armor Jacket (5/3)
 Doc Wagon™ Contract (Basic)
 Ingram Valiant [Light Machine Gun, Belt, 50 (clip), BF/FA, 7S, w/2 belts of 200-round explosive ammunition, Deluxe Gyro Mount, External Smartlink]
 Panther Assault Cannon [Heavy Weapon, 22 (clip), 5S, 18D (Belt), w/100 rounds of regular ammunition, External Smartlink]
 Smart Goggles
 Wallacher Combat Axe

Notes

The Priest has natural Thermographic Vision, Dermal Armor: 1, and +1 Reach for Armed/Unarmed Combat. He has a Mild Allergy to anything containing the metal chromium.

The Hoodlum Priest's Preaching Skill works as follows for interactions. The Priest rolls dice equal to the skill rating with a target number equal to the target's Willpower. For every success he achieves, his Charisma Rating is considered as 1 point higher for later tests in the same interaction (negotiating, interrogating, and so on). Preaching only requires a Simple Action of speaking a few words of declamation—we're not talking about lengthy sermons here. No rules are provided for converting people to his beliefs, because runners aren't susceptible to this. Let your game needs determine the beliefs of other NPCs. However, if the Priest wants to whip up his flock with fiery enthusiasm (e.g., for a run, a raid) he can use this skill to add 1 point to each of their Professional and Threat Ratings for the duration of the next combat encounter.

The Hoodlum Priest also has a special power with respect to ghouls and ghosts (and, at the gamemaster's discretion, other critters such as banshees, and perhaps even vampires and the like). Roll dice equal to the Priest's Preaching Rating with a target number equal to the Essence Rating of the creature. If he achieves 2 or more successes, the creature will not attack him and anyone accompanying him unless they attack the creature first. If he records 4 or more successes, the Undead move away from him if he so commands and if it is possible for them to do so, and/or communicate with him if he so demands (e.g., "tell me what you know of who walked here among you last night"). When the Priest deals with a large group of ghouls or ghosts, add 1 to the skill test target number for every 20 critters. The ghosts and ghouls of Chicago's Shattergrave district know the Hoodlum Priest well enough that they will not attack him unless attacked by him or magically compelled to do so.



Richard Kaminsky (Fixer)

Birth Date: June 17, 2027**Birthplace:** Strasbourg, France**Nationality/Metatype/Gender:** Swiss/Caucasian
Human/Male**Current Residence:** Zurich**Height:** 196 cm**Weight:** 83 kg**Hair:** Black (prematurely silver at temples)**Eyes:** Light brown**Distinguishing Physical Features:** Aquiline nose, high forehead, very slim build**Psychology****Traits:** Cool, professional, cautious, avaricious, strong anti-metahuman bias, extreme fear of flying**Motivations:** Unknown**Lifestyle:** Luxury

For those of you who have too much money and medical problems only the best can solve—or who want some real cutting-edge augmentations—Dr. Richard Kaminsky is your contact. Kaminsky knows the very best Swiss medical specialists, the finest shadowclinics all over Europe, and most of the research scientists in the most secret laboratories around the globe. As editor of the prestigious *Bulletin of Advances in Cybermedicine*, Kaminsky has published the research of virtually every leading practitioner in the field. The journal holds three annual conventions in Zurich, Berne and Strasbourg, so he gets to meet most of them as well.

Educated at Cambridge and Berlin, Kaminsky is a snobbish and patronizing individual known to dislike metahumans, especially orks and trolls. However, he has a major weakness: he's greedy. His salary isn't great—academics aren't paid that much—but he's refused some top corporate jobs because they don't offer the prestige and visibility of his current position. As a result, he's always open to approaches from individuals who want to know where to get augmentations, whether out of need or desire, and want something a little special. The institutions he sends people to don't advertise their wares and are happy to have him broker deals. If you want to use his services, you'll have to travel to see him. The man will travel short distances within Europe reluctantly, but he is well known for his extreme fear of flying and has never traveled outside of the continent and the UK.

>>>>(Shadowclinic city. If you want to pump yourself full of cyberware—like, lots more than you could usually handle without going schizoid—you need this guy as a contact. He's a rat in a suit but aren't they all?)<<<<<

—Analyzer (01:17:32/07-17-55)

>>>>(Does his job though. I've never heard a word of complaint from any of his clients. After an exceptionally lucrative little datasnatch from a certain corporate database, a friend and I visited Kaminsky. He passed us on to Silicon Glen in Scotland, where my friend got the best wired reflexes money could buy and I got one of those cutesy little C2 head computers. We got the best treatment imaginable, apart from those fragging bagpipes. Kaminsky took 15 percent of the fee, a cut that compares well with media reptile agents and their kin. You know where to go, people.)<<<<<

—Chiphead (00:40:19/07-21-55)

>>>>(Actually, most of his clients are simply fashion slaves who want the latest Dikote™ cheekbones or color-changing cybereyes, that kind of drek. Most of this is commercially available, but these people like to spend three times as much as they need to just for the thrill of having it done somewhere really secret.)<<<<<

—Bitter Lemon (19:30:11/07-25-55)

>>>>(But that's the point. Then the gossip rags and tabloid-trids can ask "where did Janna Dream get those wiz new

Explorasense™ breast implants?" or whatever. It's an investment, a way of paying extra for gossip/publicity. Naturally, Kaminsky's name sometimes crops up on those shows, and he always smarms about a bit and says he couldn't possibly comment. It's all the same circus.)<<<<<<

—Rubbisher (19:11:01/08-02-55)

>>>>>(However, from what I hear this guy won't touch anything illegal directly. He likes to keep his nose clean. So if you get shot up on some European run, a fate I suggest you make strenuous efforts to avoid, don't even think about turning up on his doorstep looking for some wiz place to fix you up. The closed-circuit scanners outside his condo will size you up, and the sentry guns will start chattering.)<<<<<<

—Legless and Bleeding (20:11:51/08-11-55)

Hooks

Obviously, Kaminsky can serve as a contact for shadowrunners seeking customized cyberware. However, the character also presents numerous story hooks.

For example, Kaminsky might hire runners to protect him from an angry client disfigured by a botched operation and seeking revenge against the fixer. In return, Kaminsky could pull strings to offer runners some beta-customized cyberware at a considerably reduced rate (he can't pay much, because his lifestyle leaves him with little spare cash).

Or Kaminsky might be into espionage. His role as a publisher of research data would provide perfect cover for the communication of secret information. He could have a racket going with a scientist at the cutting-edge laboratory of one industrial corporate, selling secrets to another for a fat, fat sum that will allow him to live in the luxury he thinks he deserves. He stores such data in his headware memory and refuses to download it except on-site to the purchasers. He won't even trust couriers from his buyers. Kaminsky refuses to fly, and so he needs runners to protect him all the way across the ocean from Santander to Central America, or for the entire rail route of the Trans-Siberian to get to Kamchatka and on to Japan. Of course, all kinds of people with bad attitudes are going to turn up along these routes—goons from the companies whose secrets he has stolen; goons from the company he's selling to, trying to get the data for free; freelancers who've got a sniff of it; Siberian bandits; corrupt police; deranged homicidal maniacs riding the train; and so on.

Attributes

Body: 2
 Quickness: 5
 Strength: 3
 Charisma: 4
 Intelligence: 6
 Willpower: 6
 Essence: 4.5
 Reaction: 5

Skills

Car: 5
 Cybertechnology: 7
 Replacement Construction: 9
 Transimplant Surgery: 9
 Etiquette (Corporate): 5
 Languages:
 English: 7
 Japanese: 6
 Negotiation: 4
 Unarmed Combat: 2

Initiative: 5 + 1D6

Professional Rating: 1

Threat Ratings

Combat: 2

Cyberware (beta-customized)

Datajack
 Datalock
 Display Link
 Headware Memory, 200 Mp

Gear

Doc Wagon™ Contract (Platinum) (Swiss equivalent)
 Eurocar Westwind
 Medikit
 Pocket Personal Computer
 Pocket Secretary
 Portable Vidphone with flip-up screen
 Tres Chic Clothing

Notes

Kaminsky always wants to meet the people he's dealing with face to face. Combined with his fear of flying, this trait makes him an obviously difficult person to do business with. If runners want to buy the very best, they have to slip into Switzerland to find the man.

Samuel Lamptey (Seattle Seahawks Fullback)



Samuel Lamptey (Seattle Seahawks Fullback)

Birth Date: November 18, 2030

Birthplace: Bouaké, Ivory Coast

Nationality/Metatype/Gender: Ivory Coast/Black Troll/Male

Current Residence: Seattle

Height: 284 cm

Weight: 308 kg

Hair: Black

Eyes: Dark Brown

Distinguishing Physical Features: Huge, even for a troll

Psychology

Traits: Cheerful, happy-go-lucky, hedonistic

Motivations: Crushing linebackers

Lifestyle: Luxury

Here he is, folks, the Ivory Crusher, Samuel Lamptey. This is the guy behind that awesome line, the Troll Roll, that hopes to take the Seahawks back to the Super Bowl. A short-yardage specialist and blocking fullback, he ran for 441 yards on 107 carries last season, scoring 15 touchdowns—and *no* fumbles. It's that last number that makes him stand out among the meat machines of the modern-day NFL. The Seahawk's quarterback, Drew Masterson, had the best QB rating in the league last year, and Lamptey's incredible blocking skills had a lot to do with that. When he grinds out on the strong side with quicksilver-fast elven halfback Roger "Speedwise" Sylvester, he'll take out half of the defense and leave the rest forlornly pursuing the elf down the sidelines. But it's the short yardage stuff people love. When the opposing team's crowd is yelling "defense, defense" in those goal-line stands, on comes the troll and they fall silent. He is wholly unstoppable, the most powerful thing on two legs in the world. No one will forget that amazing 32-yard bust-out against the Jets in the UCAS League Championship game last year, when he made the last fifteen with three linebackers hanging on to him. Heck, if half the Seattle defensive team hadn't been ejected after the Jets, starting tailback lost his left arm in that unfortunate fracas just after half time, Lamptey would already have a Super Bowl ring.

Lamptey's father used some money to get him into Notre Dame on a sports "scholarship," and he was a wiz as a rookie. The Seahawks piled a great deal of money into equipping him with everything legal in the way of cyberware and bioware, and they've been very well rewarded to date. They have an insurance policy out on him with a premium damn near as high as the guy's salary. They don't make it public, but it's known to run way, way into seven figures. With incentive bonuses and loyalty bonuses, call it somewhere between five and seven million nuyen a season. Which means the kid has a huge amount of money. Now doesn't that sound like good news to impoverished runners everywhere?

Lamptey's been in this country only a few years. He's still fascinated by all the chrome and glitz and neon and wizzery of American civilization. Runners fascinate him especially. This gives the Seahawks management an appalling headache. They surround Lamptey with security, but now and then he gets fed up with being cocooned and wants to get out on the streets. He wants to see runners in action, to be part of the thrill. The Seahawks have kept him away from simsense (it's in his contract), fearing that developing a simsense dependency might frag the guy's mind. But they watch covertly for runners pulling drek that isn't *terribly* dangerous and push them Lamptey's way, so that Lamptey can satisfy his taste for excitement and danger in relative safety. So, if you know some people who don't mind getting beaten up and shot up just a little, somewhere around some dilapidated building no one cares about, a nicely staged event could earn you a tidy sum. Go to it, people.

>>>>>(Huh. Sure, the 'Hawks will pay you a hefty fee, but have you ever been around an excited troll who weighs the better part of a ton? I drew the role of front-seat chaperone on one such outing. Lamptey got so excited when the Panthers started blasting that he clean ripped off the titanium-steel armor barrier in the limo and shook me by the shoulders, yelling, "Hey man! Look at that! Wow!" I got a new set of muscle implants and bone restructuring courtesy of the team accountant, but I wasn't that unhappy with the original version. Be warned.)<<<<<<

—Gnasher (21:02:41/07-03-55)

>>>>>(Be careful too because Lamptey likes the thrill of anything illicit. He has a bad gambling habit, which worries the Seahawks to no end, given the nature of folks who organize illegal gambling. Lots of people would love to see him doped or honey-trapped, sabotaged in some way or other. Like Gnasher says, the money is excellent but is it really worth it?)<<<<<<

—Edger (03:17:50/07-11-55)

>>>>>(The Seahawks not only spent millions fitting the guy out with everything under the sun, they spent a fortune in legal fees battling the NFL over the legality of titanium bone lacing. They won that one, and so it seems only reasonable that they're prepared to spend a few nuyen on runners to keep their star happy.)<<<<<<

—Ghost Man (01:17:12/07-15-55)

Hooks

Runners may be hired as bodyguards, chaperones and stagers of events to keep this excitable troll happy. Of course, all these gigs can be souped up with complications. For instance, say the defensive coordinator of the Seahawks, the infamous "Blubby" Ryan, has been bribed by the Buffalo Bills to take Lamptey out. While the Seattle offensive coordinator hires the runners to stage a run for Lamptey, Ryan hires another group of runners for the express purpose of blowing the frag out of Lamptey—and the first runner group, of course. The runners and Lamptey may survive this, but the paranoid Ryan now sets more assassins on the runners' trail, to prevent them from tracing their assailants back to Ryan himself. This one should run and run all the way to the Super Bowl itself, where a last-ditch aerial invasion attempt will be made by missile-launching chopper-riding homicidal madmen to ice Lamptey, the runners, and most of the Seahawks as well. If the runners survive, they get to sample all the wonder and glamour of the Super Bowl itself—the endless hype, the hot dog vendors, the inane commentators, the idiot fans running around shirtless in 30-below-zero temperatures, not to mention the appalling and seemingly endless half-time "entertainment" by clapped-out trid "stars"!

Attributes

Body: 11 (14)
 Quickness: 5 (16)
 Strength: 11 (18)
 Charisma: 2
 Intelligence: 2 (1)
 Willpower: 5 (6)
 Essence: .35
 Reaction: 3 (12)

Skills

Athletics: 8
 Running: 10
 Language
 French: 8

Special Skills

Crushing Linebackers: 10
 End Zone Celebrating: 6

Initiative: 3 + 1D6 (12 + 3D6)

Professional Rating: 4

Threat Ratings

Combat: 2

Cyberware

Bone Lacing (Titanium) (1/1 Armor)
 Mastoid Radio Receiver (linked to QB microphone)
 Wired Reflexes: 2

Bloware (Body Index: 8.1)

Adrenal Pump: 2
 Muscle Augmentation: 4
 Pain Editor
 Suprathyroid Gland
 Synthocardium (+2 Athletic dice)
 Trauma Damper

Gear

Lined Coat
 Doc Wagon™ Contract (Super Platinum)
 Sony CB5000 Portacam
 Super Luxury Apartment with every entertainment device imaginable

Notes

Lamptey has natural Thermographic Vision, Dermal Armor: 1, and +1 Reach for Armed/Unarmed Combat. He is fluent in French and English.

Also note that Lamptey is subject to Biosystem Overstress (see **ShadowTech**, p. 7) with his augmented Quickness.



Ren Martindale (Media Jock)

Birth Date: December 31, 2019

Birthplace: Dark Harbor, Maine, UCAS

Nationality/Metatype/Gender: UCAS/Caucasian
Human/Male

Current Residence: Boston, UCAS

Height: 178 cm

Weight: 100 kg

Hair: Brown

Eyes: Blue

Distinguishing Physical Features: Pock-marked cheeks; limp in left leg; severe scarring up left side; bullet scars on right side, right shoulder and left buttock

Psychology

Traits: Reliable, honest, trustworthy, determined, sociable

Motivations: Investigating, sensation-seeking

Lifestyle: Middle

Every Thursday night, ten through midnight, Ren Martindale and his sturdy dwarf camera jockey, Alfie Gash, delve deep into the illicit world of the criminal, armed with only a shoulder-mounted trid system, an old raincoat and a hand-held microphone. Martindale chooses his targets well, but he does not discriminate between the loftiest corporation and the lowest street swindler. WNKS, the Boston-based NBS-affiliated trid station that produces the show, has licensed it to

more than 128 outlets and in the process has made Martindale virtually a household word across much of the eastern seaboard and beyond.

The show always begins with a shot of a dark alley, the walls and dirt-strewn ground streaked wet by rain. A light comes on, illuminating the shape of a window on the wall. Martindale steps into the thin electric glare, leans toward the camera lens and speaks in a loose drawl. "Yeah, this poor, tired world of ours sure is full of trash. Do you smell something rotten? I sure do. Come on, America: let's go get 'em!" The credits roll, followed by a brief teaser of tonight's investigation.

Some of Martindale's shows are pre-recorded, but most are transmitted live, as they happen. Of course, this sometimes leads to a very uneven program, but when the drek hits the fan it can produce entertainment of unparalleled realism and intensity. Martindale's favorite topics for investigation are sensation-alistic crimes, especially those involving sex, famous people or both. Stories of large impersonal corporations swindling or exploiting regular citizens are also popular, but Martindale covers anything he believes will make good trid viewing.

Martindale himself is an enigmatic character. With his drawl, his raincoats, his pock-marked face and his burly body, he seems every inch the old-fashioned shamus, more at home on the pages of an old Raymond Chandler novel than chasing after this week's wrongdoer. His sense of injustice certainly seems to date from an earlier, more innocent time. His on-screen fulminations against the crimes allegedly committed by his subjects have led subjects to sue him for libel on numerous occasions (current score: fourteen upheld, two not proved). Occasionally, it does indeed seem as though he has appointed himself judge and jury, prepared to conduct a "trial by television" without a thought for the consequences.

His thoroughness sometimes creates the distinct impression that Martindale suffers from monomania. His instincts have been proved reliable on countless occasions, but sometimes it seems as if Martindale simply sees conspiracies behind everything. Last June, for example, Martindale ran one such report on two local UCAS senators. Following that fiasco, his producers prohibited him from doing any stories involving senior political figures.

Martindale has a reputation for being a hard-drinking loner, a keen sailor and game fisherman. He has lived aboard his boat, the *Night Spray*, for the half decade since his divorce. The craft is usually moored at Port Norfolk or Dorchester.

>>>>(A constant in all of Martindale's work are his frequent on-air fulminations against the concept of alimony, child support and all other aspects of "judicially enforced welfare for single mothers." Apparently, a Suffolk County judge with a grudge ripped off Martindale royally when he divorced from his wife in '49. Since then, Martindale has spent two brief periods in prison for failing to pay child support. Later, Martindale's ex-wife, Marta Swenson, successfully sued him for libel after he made a mass of defamatory references to her and their son during the course of an investigation. Now Martindale tre-

quently criticizes Swenson on his show, referring to her obliquely as "the Leech" and "the Bloodsucker Who Must Remain Anonymous.")<<<<<<

—Williams (15:48:04/09-28-55)

>>>>>(Aw, did the poor dear father a liddle baby and then want to run back to his playmates? If he tried to rub and run, it sounds like he got just what he deserved. Oh sure, not all men are pigs. Just the ones like Martindale.)<<<<<<

—Miranda (23:07:17/10-01-55)

>>>>>(During the course of his investigations, Martindale has come across many people who have objected, some quite strenuously, to his attentions. He still walks with a limp after being set on by three baseball bat-wielding trolls following an ill-advised examination of a New Jersey spare body-part racket, and only narrowly missed becoming their next customer by the quick actions of his partner. He has also been shot, stabbed and beaten up more than a dozen times by subjects.

At various times, people he has investigated have put bounties on Martindale's head, the usual "dead or alive" schtick, but few from this side of the tracks have ever been tempted to collect. Many runners seem to regard him as an ally against authority, despite his occasionally sensationalistic forays into what he invariably calls "the deadly midnight world of the shadows." Just what we've come to expect, really.)<<<<<<

—Williams (04:15:46/10-03-55)

>>>>>(Yeah, you can always tell when it's a slow news week back at the old trid shop when Crater Face and the Littlest Viking turn up at your favorite haunt, flashing ready cash and a repeat fee disclaimer form for you to sign, if you'd only point them in the direction of a cool story.)<<<<<<

—January (01:15:11/10-04-55)

>>>>>(This is not fair by any means. Ren and Alfie have proved very useful to runners on numerous occasions. You just got to know how to pitch it right so he gets interested, then use him for what he's good at. In the fall of '51 he blew the whistle on the board of directors at Dryden Steel following a long campaign, instigated by the board, of runner-led covert operations against alleged competitors KRN Inc. The whole thing was a setup designed to remove several top runners, but Martindale blew it wide open after two runners tipped him to the story. He went live with other illegal activities being practiced by the Dryden Steel suitslime, and a massive share crash swept the corporation off the board by the next morning. Sure, in that case old Ren and Stumpy were used by runners for their own ends, but everyone bar the bad guys came out on top.)<<<<<<

—Slater (06:55:32/10-11-55)

>>>>>(Ren and Stumpy? All together now: happy happy joy joy!)<<<<<<

—George Liquor (03:19:15/10-13-55)

>>>>>(Oh gawd, another nostalgia simsense fuzzhead. Give 'em the gong.)<<<<<<

—J.P. Morgan (03:28:18/10-14-55)

Hooks

Ren Martindale is always approachable—provided the story is right. Feed him the right angle, and he'll blow the lid on anything you like. Drek, he might even pay if the information is good enough. He is virtually untouchable by those he is investigating, so tipping Ren can be a good way to get somebody investigated or at least create some unwelcome publicity without exposing oneself to personal risk. Of course, his immunity generally works only if he is able to fully expose his subjects; he knows that if any loose ends are left, someone may come calling for him with the sort of greeting card that goes tick tick bang. Alternatively, he and Gash may want to just hang with a runner gang to get the lowdown on life on the streets. Martindale may prove a most useful contact, but it must be remembered that he is his own man and is more than willing to investigate runner informants who turn out to have their own shadowy dealings going.

Attributes

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

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

Professional Rating: 2

Threat Ratings

Combat: 3

Cyberware

Wired Reflexes: 1

Gear

Ares Light Fire 70 [Light Pistol, 16 (clip), 5A, 6L, w/20 rounds of regular ammunition]
Armor Jacket
Binoculars with Low Light and Thermographics
Chrysler-Nissan Jackrabbit
Micro-Recorder
Signal Locator
Tracking Signals (6)

Notes

Martindale doesn't use that weedy little gun. It's only there for self-defense in *serious* situations, the ones where more than a baseball bat is being used against him. His cameraman packs the more serious protection (see **Alfie Gash**, p. 55).



Alfie Gash (Trid Cameraman)

Birth Date: January 1, 2020

Birthplace: Flint, Michigan, UCAS

Nationality/Metatype/Gender: UCAS/Caucasian
Dwarf/Male

Current Residence: Boston, UCAS

Height: 130 cm

Weight: 75 kg

Hair: Gold to gray

Eyes: Silver/blue

Distinguishing Physical Features: Long hair, beard and mustache, usually plaited; jagged scar down left cheek

Psychology

Traits: Unsociable, quiet, reticent, cowardly

Motivations: Unknown/uncertain

Lifestyle: Middle

Whenever Ren Martindale (see **Ren Martindale**, p. 53) is delivering another of his now famous rants, one can assume that his partner, Alfie Gash, is on the other end of the camera. Gash is Martindale's link with the outside world, whether operating his portable trid camera or beaming the program live from his backpack-mounted satellite link.

Gash is taciturn and dour, a man of very few words. His usual facial expression makes him seem gloomy or even downright scornful, and the pungent cigars he constantly smokes seem designed to keep people at arms length. Gash is happy to leave the limelight to his partner, but on a number of occasions only Gash's quick thinking has managed to keep Martindale from being very seriously hurt at the hands of some irate subjects of his probing investigations. Gash can point his gun in the right direction, and he can use it if he has to. But he does prefer not to have to.

Gash is an old hand at the investigative journalist format and has acted as camera and techjock for several of the East Coast's leading reporters, including Robert Barry and the late E. E. Valez. He came to Martindale's show after he narrowly escaped death in the explosion that killed his last partner, KRRR's Woody Williams. Since he joined Martindale, his career has blossomed. He is almost as famous as Ren himself because of his partner's constant on-screen references to him. Gash isn't wholly comfortable with that, however, and he persistently refuses attempts to interview him.

>>>>(Don't believe all you read. Alfie is legendary throughout media circles for his uncanny ability to suddenly be somewhere else the moment the fists or the bullets start to fly. Not to put too fine a point on it, the man's a coward of the highest order, a real lightweight who always makes sure that he and his equipment are safe before anything else. He got the hero label only because last time something bad went down he dove under a pile of garbage cans and buzzed the cops—while Martindale got his teeth smashed in with a tire iron.)<<<<<

—Bestyet (00:45:48/10-4-55)

>>>>(Gash is a sleaze too, a real dirtbag with an eye for "the laydeez." Watch those camera angles. It always amazes me how someone so short can manage to get his camera high enough to plunge so far down a subject's cleavage, but the Gash can. Failing that, Gash likes to throw in those tasty thigh shots—anything rather than stick to the subject's face. There's always been plenty of gossip in media circles about Alfie's taste for girls of, shall we say, an impressionable age. He's never been convicted of anything, but it's an open secret that he has had to fork over a hefty out-of-court settlement after more than one irate mother took offense at the liberties Gash took with her daughter.)<<<<<

—Miranda (14:21:40/10-6-55)



>>>>>(Check out those dead partners too. The man's a walking disaster area. You would really have to be either desperate or stupid to expect the Gash to cover your back in a tight spot. Story goes that he panicked and shot Valez in the back after they were jumped by a couple of local punks who objected to the two's nosing into a lottery ticket scalping scam. The guy's a jinx.)<<<<<

—Bestyet (11:55:12/10-11-55)

>>>>>(Trouble is, if you want to deal with Martindale—and there's a great many reasons why you might—you also have to put up with the dwarf. No matter how indiscreet you get with your requests for one-to-one discussions, the Littlest Viking always is lurking right behind him, one hand poised on the focus of his shoulder-mounted camera, the other plying his cigar.)<<<<<

—Slater (02:03:31/10-20-55)

>>>>>(Although the data file states Flint as his birthplace, Gash was brought up in a heavily Italian part of Brooklyn, New York. Word is that he still has several important contacts back there, and that certain moneys and favors are still owed to his family, if you get my drift.)<<<<<

—JJ (19:33:50/10-22-55)

Hooks

As the man said, if you want Martindale you also get the Gash. Alfie's there to ensure that the runners always leave a meeting with Ren feeling like they desperately want a bath. If Martindale threatens to expose runners over some nefarious activity, runners may wish to investigate Gash and arrange for their own show to go out, pirate-fashion, in place of Martindale's own. As implied, Gash has links with the Brooklyn Mafia, though only with the lower echelons.

Attributes

Body: 4
 Quickness: 4
 Strength: 5
 Charisma: 1
 Intelligence: 5
 Willpower: 4
 Essence: 5.3
 Reaction: 4

Skills

Car: 3
 Computer: 3
 Electronics: 6
 Electronics (Theory): 3
 Etiquette (Media): 2
 Etiquette (Street): 5
 Firearms: 2

Special Skill

Trid Camera: 8

Initiative: 4 + 1D6

Professional Rating: 1

Threat Ratings

Combat: 2

Cyberware

Datajack
 Head Telephone

Gear

Ares Predator II [15 (clip), 5A, 9M, w/100 rounds of regular ammunition]
 Armor Jacket (5/3)
 Foul Cigars (20)
 Sony HB500 Portacam with Satellite Uplink and Cinema Products Steadicam™

Notes

Gash has natural Thermographic Vision.



McBean (Exile)

Birth Date: June 17, 1987

Birthplace: Centralia, Washington, UCAS

Nationality/Gender/Metatype: UCAS/Mixed-Race
(American Indian/Caucasian) Human/Male

Current Residence: Shrine Pass, Colorado, Ute Nation

Height: 185 cm

Weight: 75 kg

Hair: White

Eyes: Blue-yellow

Distinguishing Physical Features: Long, off-white, straggly hair; weather-beaten skin; arthritic hands; slight, constant hand tremor

Psychology

Traits: Curious, high-spirited, "devil-may-care" personality, seemingly fearless, alcoholic

Motivations: Inscrutable

Lifestyle: Low

It is not entirely clear how someone becomes a legend. Folklorists, professors of cultural mythology and the like would have us believe their complicated graphs of associative links and all that malarkey. Cynics would have you believe that you just need to stick around long enough and wait for all the real innovators to die and there you are. But however one defines it, McBean is an indisputable, real-life living legend.

At the time of the Awakening, the Night of Rage, and well on into the rebuilding of the shattered American nations, McBean seemed to be everywhere. Initially, he was a journalist for a succession of fashionable multimedia magazines, most of them short-lived and all marked by a distinct inability to attract either advertising or contributions. But they proved an invaluable training ground for McBean, who learned how to construct exciting stories out of very little material and how to fill a magazine with articles written at the last minute under a variety of aliases—the sort of real-world drek journalism schools don't teach. Eventually, McBean joined the staff of the *New Rolling Stone*, a highly respected journal of politics. He covered a succession of wars, parties, rock bands, the New York food riots, corrupt political candidates and anything else he fancied. And he delivered each piece in his own inimitable style.

McBean (his first name has long been forgotten) is said to have told people that his mother was half Crow Indian. It may be for this reason that in 2011 he found himself tagging along with Daniel Coleman, also known as Howling Coyote, to witness the Great Ghost Dance out of Abilene, risking his life to relay a fantastical story that in the end was first published years after the event. That account would be the last story he filed for many years, for in 2012 he disappeared underground with Howling Coyote, returning two years later as part of Coyote's cadre of supporters.

Following the signing of the Treaty of Denver, McBean became caught up in the bickering that divided the Sovereign Tribal Council. He later said, disparagingly, that some members of the council were opposed to power being given to those who were anything less than full-blooded Native Americans. McBean's trail grows cold again around this time, but in late 2021 he reappeared, based in New Orleans, with his name on the byline of a lead article in *Time* describing the experiences of a close friend suffering from what was called "goblinization." Later, McBean expanded the article into his cult classic book, *Looking for Gonzo*, which continued the tale of Jerry "Gonzo" Petersen and his struggles to come to terms both with his own new "troll" form and the hatred of those around him.

Next, McBean entered the murky world of politics for a time as assistant to Edna Wallace, Governor of Louisiana. Despite opportunities to progress farther up the political ladder, McBean stepped out of the limelight once more, later alleging that certain factions in Wallace's campaign headquarters were opposed to a non-Southerner and a Native American wielding any type of meaningful power in their state. His next book, the critically acclaimed *In Search of Howling Coyote*, described his own search for his family roots, aided by a fictionalized dream-character based on Daniel Coleman. This search also led him to set up a home in the easternmost tip of the Ute Nation, just west of Denver.

In the past ten years, McBean's contact with the outside world has diminished greatly. Initially he continued to file the odd story, typically a reminiscence of earlier, more crazed times. A brief period also ensued in which younger writers came to write stories on him, drawn either by his legend or by persistent reports that he had flipped out and was now sealed in his house with supplies, dogs and plenty of guns, waiting for the end of the world. More recently, his name has dropped from the record once more. Locals report seeing him out hunt-

ing and scavenging for roadkill alongside Highway 6, taking the occasional pot shot at traffic. He is old now, his face and body beaten into leathery folds by exposure to the harsh mountain climate, and he seems to have adopted the wild-haired, unkempt look of the traditional hermit. In his head, though, he must still store thousands of memories of some truly momentous events.

>>>>(God, but this guy has been around! Sounds just like that old film with Dustin Hoffman as the ancient geezer who was around during every historical disaster for decades.)<<<<<<
—lo (06:15:43/10-1-55)

>>>>(You mean *The Ronald Reagan Story*?)<<<<<<
—Slater (06:24:08/10-1-55)

>>>>(Ah, McBean, McBean. If only one in ten of the stories about him are true, this man is a legend in his own lifetime. Of course, it is a great tribute to his persistence that he was in so many places at so many times, and yet a sign of fundamental flaws in his character that he has never achieved the true greatness that seemed destined for him. He seemed to get bored every so often and move on, where lesser characters would stick around and await the promotion that would eventually come. A shame.)<<<<<<
—Gator (00:12:15/10-8-55)

>>>>(A local board contained a posting recently concerning McBean's relationship with the local police, and more importantly the ski fascists from over the border at Aspen. Seems our hero has been treating himself to a bit of tourist target practice. All very admirable, natch, save that he winged the daughter of the head of a visiting Saudi Arabian trade delegation and almost sparked a diplomatic incident. The local boys in blue have never got on with the snooty badge-shiners from Aspen, but this has made matters far worse. Now a move seems to be afoot to relocate him somewhere where he can't do so much damage. That'll be a fight to remember.)<<<<<<
—Django (07:38:30/10-21-55)

>>>>(I attempted to approach McBean for help with a book I was researching on the Great Ghost Dance, but he was somewhat less than forthcoming. Well, no, that's not totally true. I was able to get an old pal of his, Ed Stratton, ex-staffer from the NRS, to send along a note vouching for me, and at first McBean made me welcome, after a fashion. Well, I mean the guy plainly hadn't washed for about five months and he would never put down his hunting rifle, and the first night we dined on what appeared to me to be dried armadillo and sweet potatoes—not the most pleasant atmosphere I've ever enjoyed. We talked a great deal, and he gave me a heap of information, most of which was new to me and seemed to give a very different but plausible angle on a topic, but he always insisted that he not be quoted directly. I got the distinct impression that he was scared of something, possibly something to do with Howling Coyote and his enemies, and certainly of what he

referred to as "walking Joshua Tree from ole Tir Tanglewood." On the second day he disappeared from the ranch house before we could talk, returning the next morning bearing half a deer that had been mutilated by a truck. The third day he insisted I leave immediately and became violent when I asked for a reason. I beat a hasty retreat, but not before he put a bullet into the side panel of my pickup. Crazy guy.)<<<<<<
—Sumi (20:47:01/10-25-55)

Hooks

You name it, chances are McBean was there in one capacity or another. This means that he has a tremendous amount of information stored away in that addled brain of his and that he has or had ties to a great many of the most important political figures around, even if most of his contemporaries are now past their prime and influence. Trouble is, you have to find where he is, then you have to get to him, and then you have got to persuade him to talk. That last part should prove especially difficult, unless the runners somehow manage to help forward part of McBean's very obscure agenda. But if you want to hinge an adventure around a very specific piece of historical information, McBean can be the one to reveal all. His name may keep coming up in the unlikeliest of places, especially old records from the time of the Awakening, until eventually he emerges as the ideal lead.

Attributes

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

Skills

Car: 4
Firearms: 4
Leadership: 2
Negotiation: 3
Projectile Weapons (Bow): 3
Psychology: 7
Stealth (Wilderness): 5
Unarmed Combat: 5

Special Skill

Recent History: 6

Initiative: 4 + 1D6

Professional Rating: 2

Threat Ratings

Combat: 2

Gear

Armor Jacket (Very battered; 4/2)
Dogs (mangy, assorted) (8)
Enfield AS-7 (4) [Shotgun, 10 (clip), 5A/BF, 8S, w/1,000 rounds of haphazardly assorted ammunition]
Radio (very battered and ancient)

Notes

Have fun roleplaying McBean. He's wild and unpredictable, but he also has a strange, fey, willful eccentricity about him. He's a fine dispenser of malapropisms and statements that seem like non sequiturs, except that they aren't if you think about them closely. Or, at least, if you think about them carefully you can't be sure. Borrowing an old metaphor from psychiatry, McBean's logic is often like "the knight's move in thought."

Madeleine Muller (Media/Corporate Wiz)



Madeleine Muller (Media/Corporate Wiz)

Birth Date: September 11, 2028

Birthplace: Aachen, Germany

Nationality/Metatype/Gender: Dual national French-German/Caucasian Human/Female

Current Residence: Zurich, Switzerland (also maintains apartments in Strasbourg, Paris, Aachen, Berlin, London, Manhattan, Nogoya)

Height: 173 cm

Weight: 58 kg

Hair: Honey blonde

Eyes: Gold flecked with hazel (cybereyes)

Distinguishing Physical Features: Perfection ("cheekbone heaven")

Psychology

Traits: Curiosity, great determination, extreme cool

Motivations: Investigative work, self-promotion

Lifestyle: Luxury

Madeleine Muller is Europe's top corp watcher. Half of the European media use her as a resident expert on corporate scheming and politics, and she's both exceptionally well informed and intelligent. But often those qualities are overshadowed by her devastating beauty—which is exactly how she likes it. All too often, corp executives—both male and female—are rendered almost helpless by her charisma and beauty and underestimate her brains and grit. Folks who ought to know better are clay in her hands after a few minutes of conversation, and let slip all manner of things they shouldn't.

Let's get poetic here. If you consider good old-fashioned lust a rough diamond, you're going to feel a 2,000-carat gem polished to a dazzling brilliance in her physical presence. Everyone who has ever met her reports the same feeling of intense longing for intimacy with the woman. It doesn't matter what your corporate programming or emotional screw-ups have bequeathed you. Your corporate employer may have told you that she has eye cameras and head recorders and your indiscretions are going right into her databases, but you're doomed anyway.

Despite the best efforts of corporations, she seems to get to their best people whenever she wishes—at exclusive clubs, theaters, restaurants, wherever and whenever she chooses. She has been known to use disguises, though the gold cybereyes are a giveaway. You can have bodyguards with you, but they're going to melt away with one wave of those elegant hands. It's like hypnosis, so I've heard.

Muller's important because she isn't just a gossip columnist. Her digging was vital in exposing the Naples toxic dumping scam of 2050 and the Marseilles experiments of 2051, and she has been a constant thorn in the side of the Russian government through her work in exposing long-term nuclear and toxic hazards in the Baltic states and the Ukraine over the years. She's researched and presented powerful trid documentaries on urban deterioration, local government scandals, and environmental threats and damage for several major European media outfits over the years, including an acclaimed series of pioneering programs for the BBC in London. At least two attempts on her life have been made in the past three years, but she refuses to stop her work. And she is rumored to be planning to assume ownership of a major European media corporation in the near future.

>>>>(Why does the good old BBC give her money to make her programs? Because they show France in a bad light.)<<<<<

—Watcher (07:03:36/09-16-55)

>>>>(Buldrek. Anyone who saw her documentary on the orks of the British Lake District know that piece gave the British government a hard time for months. The orks actually got some development money from a regional aid program, basically because Muller shamed the British government into it—something local activists had been trying to do for 20 years.)<<<<<

—Carol K (23:17:31/09-19-55)

>>>>(Yes, yes, all very interesting. But this is only the tip of the iceberg. She's got dirt on corporations that would anger even our ever-apathetic, cretinized public. Most of it doesn't even make it to the screen, because she uses it to blackmail corps into cleaning up their acts. That's where she's really hitting them hard.)<<<<<

—Moleman (01:42:48/09-21-55)

>>>>(She doesn't like to use researchers too much on the ground. I've heard that she's gotten into some scary scenes at street level digging up the dirt in nitty gritty detail, and almost got boxed in Marseilles four years back. Buzz says that Aztechnology has a contract out on her; don't know if that's true, but she's certainly kept extra security around her of late. Though that could be simply a response to the increasing number of star-obsessed lunatics who tend to be thicker on the ground in America than elsewhere.)<<<<<

—MesoStim (03:11:02/09-28-55)

>>>>(Muller is a very shrewd and calculating woman. No doubt that if and when she marries, it won't be for love—it'll be for money. She's ambitious and certainly wants direct control over a medium-to-major trid network herself, and that calls for plenty of big-time nuyen. No mere millionaire's going to catch this woman.)<<<<<

—Cynic (04:44:23/10-02-55)

Hooks

Muller may hire runners to perform ground-level research she can no longer do for herself or to accompany her as bodyguards. In the latter case, have an attempted hit made on her or, even better, have her kidnapped so that the runners must retrieve her. Her game plan includes moving into the American scene, so competitors may hire runners to try to stymie her research (of course, if the runners meet her they likely end up on her side). Media corporations targeted for takeovers by Muller may also hire runners to spy on Muller. Also, runners who desperately need some dirt to nail a corporation they have a grudge against (or which is trying to ice them) might try to get that information. She'd want help or some service in return, obviously.

Runners dealing with Muller in any context face her extraordinary charisma (see **Notes**).

Attributes

Body: 3
Quickness: 5
Strength: 2
Charisma: 6 (10)
Intelligence: 6
Willpower: 5
Essence: 4.0
Reaction: 5

Skills

Car: 4
Computer: 3
Etiquette (Corporate): 10
Etiquette (Media): 10
Firearms: 3
Interrogation: 10
Languages (French/German native)
English: 6
Russian: 6
Negotiation: 12

Initiative: 5 + 1D6

Professional Rating: 1

Threat Ratings

Combat: 2

Cyberware

Cybereyes with Camera
Datajack
Display Link
Head Recorder (audio)
Headware Memory, 100 Mp

Bloware (Body Index: .6)

Cultured Pheromones: 2

Gear

Ares Light Fire 70 [Light Pistol, 16 (clip), SA, 6L, w/20 rounds of regular ammunition]
Bodyguards (4)
Rolls Royce Phaeton Limousines (2)
Unlimited supply of Tres Chic clothing

Other items at the gamemaster's discretion

Notes

Muller's charisma is extraordinary. This is reflected partially by her Charisma Attribute increase due to her pheromones and by her high Interrogation/Negotiation scores. Any runner (male or female, any metatype) dealing with her in a social situation must make a Willpower Test against a target number equal to her augmented Charisma (10). If they fail the test, they are seriously distracted and at a disadvantage, so add 2 to all test target numbers for the duration of the social exchange.

Roz Nuaru (Researcher)



Roz Nuaru (Researcher)

Birth Date: June 12, 2018 (for original human version)

Birthplace: Reporoa, New Zealand

Nationality/Metatype/Gender: New Zealander/appears as Mixed Race (Maori/Caucasian) Human/Female (actually a Free Spirit of Man)

Current Residence: Sacramento, CFS

Height: 157 cm

Weight: 45 kg

Hair: Black, very long and curly

Eyes: Dark brown

Distinguishing Physical Features: Long hands, broad shoulders in proportion to rest of body

Psychology

Traits: Restless, sociable, impulsive

Motivations: Research, teaching

Lifestyle: Middle

I think that, by now, Roz's secret isn't so secret anymore. Her employers at the University of Sacramento know about it, certainly. So, as long as you slags don't blab too freely, we can inform you all that Roz Nuaru is dead. The real Roz, that is. The entity currently occupying the Chair of Shamanic and Metaplanar Historical Studies at the learned institution is actually a free spirit. She's taken the identity of the original Roz Nuaru, who either killed herself or was lost on a journey into the metaplanes and never returned back in 2047. Either way, the spirit the original Roz conjured and then befriended decided that she kinda liked it among us folks and stayed for the ride. The new Roz—if I can still use that term; she's been around for some years by now, after all—has skill in sorcery, but she isn't a shaman. But she does have a cat that always prowls around with her, and he's a bit of a story in himself. She calls him Carruthers because he turned up when she was reading some drek on John Dee and meowed very loudly when he saw the book, she says. Clearly, the animal was a Brit, she adds. She took the stray in, and he's become a mascot. He also helps Roz keep alive the Cat shaman cover she uses to keep her job. Many of the faculty members and virtually all of the students have no reason to disbelieve the spirit's cover story.

Roz is a friendly, kindly woman who teaches students well and has helped more than a few magicians and shamans. Roz is an expert on obscure topics such as pre-Awakening spike births, the history of pre-Sixth World occultists and mages, and—less obviously—metaplanar topography. If you need to learn some drek in these general areas, you'll find no better source.

>>>>(More than that. Roz may be willing to help a down-on-his-luck magician in need of help on a quest or journey out to the metaplanes. As a free spirit, she has the ability to open the gateway to the astral, and a chummer of mine says that she's prepared to watch over your body while you're away.)<<<<<

—Cobalt Blue (05:12:07/07-12-55)

>>>>(But she won't touch anyone with any corporate affiliations, and she won't touch anyone who's ever worked for the UCAS, CAS or CFS governments in any shape or form. Roz has many friends among the Melanesian and Polynesian communities of the Pacific who are still paying the price for American nuclear experimentation with their homelands and ancestors a hundred years back.)<<<<<

—MesoStim (01:11:44/07-16-55)

>>>>(So how come even the dumbest shamanic student can't tell that Roz is no shaman? Two reasons. First, her masking is superb. Second, that fragging cat. It just looks at anyone who's even thinking that she might not be what she appears and, I can tell you, it knows. Most people realize that Nuaru has something going with kitty after experiencing that. Carruthers can frag with your mind, too. Believe it.)<<<<<

—Mogman (19:14:43/07-28-55)

Hooks

Roz can serve as a consultant, most obviously on pre-Awakening spike children (though with such politically important people as Lugh Surehand or Liam O'Connor, she may be extremely reluctant to reveal any information). She's a treasure trove of obscure information on summoning and dealing with spirits, and she knows several free spirits in America and Europe. Also, she is willing to use her Astral Gateway power to protect a magician making an astral quest or some equally onerous journey into the metaplanes, if that magician (or a willing associate) is prepared to grant her Karma. Roz needs Karma both for herself and for Carruthers, and runners prepared to hand some over can form a long-term alliance with her.

Note that Carruthers isn't any ordinary cat. He's a blackberry cat, of British origin, and has cut a deal with the free spirit. He's the animal vessel for her hidden life, and he's much smarter and tougher than most. In return, the spirit can grant acquired Karma to him (which in turn must come from humans prepared to give it to her) and enable the cat to improve its own Attributes. Carruthers is a smart, curious, calculating and manipulative cat. Don't make Carruthers' true nature obvious to runners. And don't go out of your way to show runners that Professor Nuaru isn't the friendly, sociable human she appears to be.

ROZ NUARU**Attributes**

Body: 8
 Quickness: 9 x 3
 Strength: 5
 Charisma: 7
 Intelligence: 7
 Willpower: 7
 Essence: 7(A)
 Magic: 7
 Reaction: 8

Initiative: 8 + 1D6

Professional Rating: 3

Threat Ratings

Combat: 7
 Magical: 5

Gear

Specific Spell Type Focus, (illusion): 2
 Table-Top Personal Computer (100 Mp)
 Weapon Focus (Knife): 4

Powers

Accident, Alienation, Astral Gateway, Aura Masking, Concealment, Confusion, Fear, Guard, Hidden Life, Search, Sorcery

CARRUTHERS**Attributes**

Body: 2
 Quickness: 7 x 5
 Strength: 2
 Charisma: 3
 Intelligence: 4/9
 Willpower: 5
 Essence: (6)
 Reaction: 6

Initiative: 6 + 3D6

Professional Rating: 4

Threat Ratings

Combat: 6

Powers

Accident, Adaptive Coloration, Blindness, Darkness, Desire Reflection, Enhanced Movement, Enhanced Reactions (for 6D6 turns, 1D6 times per day), Enhanced Senses (Low-Light Vision), Hypnotic Meow, Illusion

Notes

The free spirit known as Roz Nuaru was deliberately set free by the human Cat shaman Roz Nuaru, before the original Nuaru committed suicide following an ill-fated love affair. The spirit took Nuaru's identity as the shaman suggested. Though the new Roz is a city spirit, she has befriended several Polynesians through her travels back to New Zealand and the western Pacific islands to learn more of Roz's background and has come to sympathize a great deal with their trials and tribulations over the last century or so.

Make Nuaru seem like a flesh-and-blood person (even though she technically isn't) and develop the interactions between her and Carruthers. This spirit has a genuine love of learning and teaching and has a wide-eyed and almost naive quality about her. She enjoys helping runners and has a kindly, philanthropic, optimistic attitude toward life. She reckons she's lucky just to be around (which, in a sense, is true). Consider using this character not just as a one-off, single-scenario adviser, but as someone who can become a long-term adviser, helper and confidante for runners. And don't make it a one-way relationship. Roz and Carruthers want Karma, after all. If desired, develop the notion of a network of free spirits with related or common goals (see **The Grimoire II**). If such a network exists, Roz would certainly be part of it and very well informed about other members, thus extending her usefulness as a consultant.

For his part, Carruthers is cynical and highly intelligent. He has a Damage Code of 6L with a -1 Reach modifier.

William Marshall Ossian (Rock Star)



William Marshall Ossian (Rock Star)

Birth Date: May 1, 2029

Birthplace: Monmouth, Tir Tairngire

Nationality/Metatype/Gender: Tir Tairngire/Caucasian Elf/Male

Current Residence: Necanicum, Tir Tairngire

Height: 183 cm

Weight: 73 kg

Hair: White (often dyed)

Eyes: True color unknown; always wears silver corneal shields

Distinguishing Physical Features: Multicolored tattoo of angel figure down right side of face; always wears black leather jacket with angel's wings design painted on back

Psychology

Traits: Unknown

Motivations: Unknown

Lifestyle: High (has resources for Luxury)

Billy Ossian, a.k.a. the Oz-man or just plain Billy, has risen from nowhere over the past four years to become a major player in the West Coast rock scene. His band, Anhedonia, has hit it big with large numbers of disaffected mall-rat youth who seem to find Anhedonia's particular brand of depressing electronic dirge to their liking. The band's only real musical innovation lies in its attempt to incorporate a traditional, almost Celtic folk influence and a modern, electronic harshness: loud, jagged noise washes overlaid with heartbreaking, primordial melodies. Certainly this musical style is nowhere near as extreme as the experimental music coming from some circles in Tir Tairngire. Whatever its form, however, Anhedonia's music has steadily transformed them from a small, obscure Portland club act to a major attraction.

Much of the credit for this change must lie with Ossian. In person he seems every inch the flashy, vacuous showman, with his fancy-dress style and dramatic facial tattoo. Indeed, he seems to enjoy deliberately fostering this impression, knowing that everyone expects it of a rock musician. Beneath his surface pose he is tremendously sharp, with a keen business brain. Rumor has it that Ossian is following a nine-year strategy that he devised along with his manager, Edwin Pound, before even starting the group. Whatever the truth, Ossian is a major control freak who insists on access to every level of the decision-making process regarding his career. Pound, a shadowy figure with a background in trid production licensing, is credited with having fronted the money to establish Anhedonia and the band's own recording and marketing company, Chrome Damage. However, Ossian seems to come up with all the creative and marketing ideas.

Pound has most helped Ossian manage his finances so expertly as to make him a very rich young man in a short space of time. Ossian's mansion on the edge of Clatsop Forest, northwest of Portland, now houses his own recording studio, where the band and several new signings to the Chrome Damage label will produce their new works. Less publicly known is the string of nightclubs the label owns through a management company called Chrome Wall. Ossian and Pound own both the Chrome Rat in Salem and the Chrome Stallion in San Francisco, and trusted managers run both clubs. The two clubs have played an important part in pushing Anhedonia's music, and will undoubtedly figure in plans to launch the label's new signings in the future.

>>>>>(Those interested in Anhedonia's music should check out the following on disc or chip: *She Will Be Leaving* (2051), *Across a Thousand Blades* (2052) and the epic *Sad-Eyed Angel Falls* (2054). Wiz enough, if you're sad-eyed, sixteen, have too much money and like to wear black all the time, but I think they're way too derivative. Ossian seems to have deliberately sat down and decided mathematically which elements of current rock and other music to combine into a saleable whole (which probably explains why he's so damn popular)!

By the way, the other members of Anhedonia are Jerry De Wulf, keyboards; Ian I. Banks, keyboards; Paul Cline, percussion; Angela Kostelanetz, vocals and keyboards. Most of them just follow Ossian's orders—indeed, rumor has it that he records all the album tracks and they just learn them to play live later. De Wulf's the exception; he assists Ossian in designing the band's unique keyboard rigs.)<<<<<

—DJ Jeff (04:23:26/10-4-55)

>>>>>(He may be popular, but word is out in media circles that Chrome Damage is in financial trouble following that last extravagant tour, which came on the back of that lengthy (and hence costly) delay while Ossian took too long completing the band's most recent over-ambitious record. Word is that several of the Californian majors are circling like vultures, waiting to pounce and snatch up the business if it crashes.)<<<<<

—Nazir (12:00:34/10-5-55)

>>>>(Chrome Damage is certainly worryingly overstretched for an independent—or it would be if its sleeping partners in the Tir didn't support it so strongly. Word is that just about everything is paid for via another source, leaving Ossian free to pursue his own artistic ends in peace.)<<<<<

—Beth B (00:07:38/10-7-55)

>>>>(What, a source like Kokura Biotech? Whoops, what a giveaway!)<<<<<

—Shamu (03:12:20/10-7-55)

>>>>(Ossian and Pound will certainly need some new investment soon. Their newest concern, Chrome Edge in Portland, is astonishing inside. Check it out; it's on 112 NE Killingsworth. Word is that Anhedonia's doing a one-off, official launch on New Year's Eve. Everybody who's everybody is sure to be there.)<<<<<

—DJ Jeff (04:14:50/10-7-55)

>>>>(Everyone has heard, of course, of the recent much-reported death of starlet Janna Dream in the gutter outside the Chrome Stallion in Frisco. It's common knowledge that she was very close to Ossian, and some of the press are now openly reporting Ossian's ownership of the club.)<<<<<

—Minna (01:54:44/10-19-55)

>>>>(I heard Janna's death was a warning to Ossian from somebody who—well, let's just say somebody who believes that all's fair in love and business.)<<<<<

—Ryder (18:08:19/10-19-55)

>>>>(Zat right? I heard it was a warning to her from her ex-boyfriend that she was a no-good sluf. She rode with the Rituals, dig, and they don't take kindly to their property upping and leaving with the first flower-chewer who crooks his finger across a crowded bar.)<<<<<

—Zanti (05:14:17/10-21-55)

>>>>(I got both of those stories; I also heard rumors that the Tir authorities weren't at all happy that their number one up-and-coming was boffing a human, and a pretty darn famous one at that. Doesn't quite present the right sort of image for all the eager young punters back home to follow, that's for sure.)<<<<<

—Wolf (17:50:21/10-22-55)

>>>>(Incidentally, just how the hell does Ossian manage to travel in and out of the Tir so easily? You know, to run a club in San Francisco and to constantly zip back and forth, playing concerts throughout America?)<<<<<

—Zag (02:02:30/10-23-55)

>>>>(Easy? Who says it's easy? But yeah, the guy does seem to have the right connections somewhere, doesn't he? I wonder if he's allowed to keep the club in Frisco going for a real important reason?)<<<<<

—Card (03:13:12/10-23-55)

>>>>(If Ossian's making so much money and beginning to show signs that he and his company will be expanding rapidly in the next few years, I would have thought that certain concerns, mindful of such revenues, would be only too happy to smooth his passage a little bit.)<<<<<

—Karells (12:07:31/10-24-55)

Hooks

Ossian is a shrewd operator who is really starting to hit the big time. He needs friends, especially visibly shadowy ones who can help his street credibility no end. If the threat from the Rituals is serious, he needs bodyguards; he rides a large bike and likes to portray himself as a renegade, but he's no go-ganger. He needs some people to discreetly check out Janna Dream's death for him, and he would very much like to know more about Kokura Biotech's ultimate plans for recouping on their silent investment in Chrome Damage without drawing any obvious attention or media flak in his direction. If nothing else, the runners should check out Chrome Edge's official opening party on New Year's Eve; after all, *everybody* will be there!

Attributes

Body: 3
Quickness: 7
Strength: 3
Charisma: 6
Intelligence: 5
Willpower: 4
Essence: 3
Reaction: 6 (8)

Skills

Bike: 4
Car: 3
Computer: 3
Electronics: 2
Etiquette (Corporate): 4
Etiquette (Media): 6
Etiquette (Street): 6
Firearms: 4
Leadership: 3
Negotiation: 4
Unarmed Combat: 3

Initiative: 6 + 1D6 (8 + 2D6)

Professional Rating: 2

Threat Ratings

Combat: 3

Special Skills

Instrumental Music: 7
Musical Composition: 5
Musical Instrument (B/R): 4
Singing: 5

Cyberware

Datajack
Wired Reflexes: 1
Smartgun Link

Gear

Acoustic Modulator
Ares Viper Slivergun [Heavy Pistol, 30 (clip), SA/BF, 9S (f), w/60 rounds of regular ammunition, Smartlink]
Armor Jacket
Body Microphone
Doc Wagon™ Contract (Platinum)
Fine Electric Guitars (2)
Hall Amplifier and Speakers
Harley Electraglide
Mixers (2)
Rolls Royce Phaeton Limo
Synthlink
16-voice Synth
Tres Chic Clothing (6 suits)

Notes

Billy Ossian has natural Low-Light Vision.



Taylor Kimball Pauline (Contract Arranger)

Birth Date: July 24, 2021

Birthplace: Coney Island, New York, UCAS

Nationality/Metatype/Gender: UCAS/Caucasian
Human/Male

Current Residence: Toronto, UCAS

Height: 180 cm

Weight: 78 kg

Hair: Gray

Eyes: Brown

Distinguishing Physical Features: Prominent streak of black in hair; gray goatee

Psychology

Traits: Charming and charismatic, quick-thinking even under extreme pressure

Motivations: This man lives to make deals, to unite customer with supplier, shadowy client with shadowrunner. In a precarious world, his main motive is to survive, make another deal, and collect his commission

Lifestyle: High

Many people on the periphery of the shadows are adept at making contacts, but few are as well-connected as Taylor Pauline. Members of his family are major shareholders in the revitalized theme park at the famous Coney Island resort, and he comes from a long line of carnival and fairground folk. Pauline has acquired the family talent for showmanship and fast-talking, and he has put it to use in the offices and boardrooms of many middle-ranking corporations.

Pauline began his career as a rising executive with Honshu-McDouglas Systems in Baltimore, with special responsibility as a liaison between the Weapons R&D division and freelance field-testing groups. He proved exceptionally gifted at his job, but after what was later proved to be a genuine, blameless misunderstanding regarding certain aspects of contract procedure, he set up his own freelance agency. Though he continued to act as the corporation's liaison man, he also branched out and began offering his unparalleled services to all comers.

Pauline specializes in bringing together corporate clients and freelance operators from the murkier end of the market: deckers, hackers, fixers and all manner of assorted shadowrunners. He can be very useful to those seeking employment who have yet to establish their own contacts with the various Mr. Johnsons of this world. Of course, Pauline's services cost a certain premium, but his standard rate of a mere 5 percent of the fee makes it plain that Pauline sees himself as responsible for investing in his runners so that they can get bigger and better jobs in the future, as well as finding them jobs in the present.

Taylor Pauline always presents an immaculate appearance, though his tastes sometimes tend toward the garish and flashy. Recently he has taken to wearing a cape and carrying a silver-topped cane; coupled with his black-streaked gray hair and pointed beard, this ensemble can make him look either cultured or cadaverous.

>>>>>(Harooo-wah! Warning! Major sleaze alert! Take it from me, this guy is a rip-off merchant without compare. Oh sure, the deal looks super-sweet when he comes to you. There's always a ton of cash up front, all wrapped up real purty in industrial-strength flattery. You know the sort of thing: "There's only one team that could handle this one ... the client asked for you specially," that kind of smarmy bulldrek. Somehow most of the cash never quite seems to make it from his credstick to yours—boy, do those initial expenses start mounting once you're signed up and can't shake free of his contract. More importantly, if you make it as far as your job, chances are you'll be badly briefed in the extreme—ridiculously low estimates of opposition firepower or ice defenses, not enough to scream setup, but plenty enough to make a difference between a clean getaway and a sudden pressing need for a streetdoc who don't ask questions. Finally, you can take it as read that if he says the deal is worth fifty thou, there was a hundred and twenty on the table. Don't trust the creep. You want to do business with Mr. Johnson, speak to him in person. Let's face it, if you're any good, he'll find you.)<<<<<

—Whistler (00:07:48/10-01-55)

>>>>(Sounds to me like you're describing a totally different guy than the one I know. Taylor Pauline has arranged four jobs for me and my business associates and each one has produced major dividends, or will when the final payments come in. From the start, Pauline invested big chunks of his own money in each job, providing partial payment for gear and the like; that proved to us, at least, that he was as concerned with our ultimate success as we were. OK, sure, we don't actually know who we ultimately worked for, but I can understand the corporate high-ups wanting to keep such stuff secret, can't you? All in all, I cannot recommend the man's services highly enough—and it goes without saying that our corporate clients got just the results they asked for.)<<<<<

—Ghost Man (14:17:21/10-09-55)

>>>>(Seems to me the answer's simple; if you must use the guy, get it in writing first—and always get the client's name. Everyone has to take chances with every deal you make. Corporate Johnsons are always dodgy characters, and Pauline ain't no different.)<<<<<

—SSD (23:09:5/10-14-55)

>>>>(Not near good enough by a country mile, chummer. Chances are every last thing this guy tells you is drek, pure invention to keep you, the innocent runners, away from the truth about the client. They don't want you to know what they paid Pauline that he should be passing on to you, any real important details of the mission, how good (or rather, bad) the guns are that he's fixed you up with (ditto the so-called expert help he always recommends), the whole nine yards. The man is slime, and it's time someone indicated to him just how unwelcome his sort of user really is.)<<<<<

—Slater (01:16:22/10-15-55)

Hooks

Despite appearances, this character exists not for the players' benefit, but for the gamemaster's. Taylor Pauline is a pitch-queerer, almost a jinx, whose main function in a runner's life is to be the sole link in a succession of apparently attractive deals that soon go very, very sour. Pauline's aim in life is to make a deal, take his commission (a hefty one, if he can swing it) and then stiff everyone involved. In certain circumstances, he stays sweet with a corporate client in order to blame the failure of a badly organized deal on inept shadowrunners, so that he can continue to offer his services to the unsuspecting client for future jobs. Ultimately, he should burn the shadowrunners badly, either financially or by setting them up with a very dangerous mission.

Of course, runners who find that Pauline has treated them very badly may wish for revenge on the man. Keep in mind that he is a very slippery customer, a tricky man on whom it is difficult to pin anything. In all circumstances, a fault with one of Pauline's missions will lie not with him, but with the corporate client (who cannot be approached except through Pauline) or with simple bad luck. Should he find himself in difficulties,

Pauline usually soothes angry runners by offering a brand new job, just in, paying far better than the previous one and a guaranteed stroll at that. Why, he'll even stump up some of his own money to show he has no hard feelings (but then rapidly claw it back for equipment and the like). If matters come to a real head, Pauline has several notable contacts in a number of different law enforcement agencies, and he has been known to call in heavy professional help to persuade troublesome runners that he was not to blame for any flaws in their mission.

Persuading badly ripped-off runners that Pauline is innocent, or at least allowing him to wriggle his way out of taking blame for a mission gone wrong, may require a delicate touch from the gamemaster. However, it will certainly live a gamemaster's day to give him free rein to set up a bunch of unsuspecting saps who like to think they rule the shadows.

Attributes

Body: 4
Quickness: 5
Strength: 4
Charisma: 7
Intelligence: 4
Willpower: 6
Essence: 5.2
Reaction: 4

Skills

Computer: 4
Etiquette (Corporate): 6
Etiquette (Street): 4
Firearms: 4
Negotiation: 5
Bargain: 8
Fast Talk: 10
Psychology: 6
Stealth: 4

Initiative: 4 + 1D6

Professional Rating: 2

Threat Ratings

Combat: 3

Cyberware (beta-customized)

Skillsofts
Germanic: 6
Japanese: 8
Skillwire Plus: 4

Gear

Ares Predator II [Heavy Pistol, 15 (clip), SA, 9M, w/40 rounds of regular ammunition
Doc Wagon™ Contract (Gold)
Micro-Recorder
Pocket Secretary
Portable Phone
Tres Chic Clothing (with cane)

Notes

Pauline has a small office in a nondescript business block on the east side of Toronto, and a second in New York. However, he is just as likely to want to meet runners at other, usually public, locations (at the gamemaster's discretion). A standard office should suffice for any meeting with him.



Richard Petrosian (Scientist)

Birth Date: June 15, 2007

Birthplace: Kiev, Ukraine

Nationality/Metatype/Gender: Ukrainian/Caucasian
Human/Male

Current Residence: Unknown

Height: 175 cm

Weight: 79 kg

Hair: Black, short, very curly

Eyes: Brown

Distinguishing Physical Features: Index and second fingers on left hand have deep nicotine stains, walks with heavy limp

Psychology

Traits: Obsessive-compulsive, intense spider phobia, depressive temperament

Motivations: Scientific research, revenge

Lifestyle: Currently unknown

Richard Petrosian has a complex family tree: he is part Ukrainian, part Russian, and part Turkish. A brilliant research scientist, he defected from Bioenergetica Ukraine (BU) in the spring of 2055. He worked with tactical computers, and his research was reportedly brilliant. A theoretical paper published in the April 2053 edition of the *International Journal of Neurotechnology* laid the foundations for an entirely new approach to tactical implants, and the research community has eagerly awaited further reports from this secretive, morose, difficult individual. He worked almost entirely alone and never trusted anyone else with hard copy or computer records of his research; rumor has it that he stored everything in his head. Though not especially paranoid, he is contemptuous of most others' lack of intelligence compared with his own. (Needless to say, he had very few friends back in the Ukraine.)

Petrosian defected because BU iced his Turkish wife. The story goes that the company discovered she was a sleeper agent for a foreign outfit (which one remains the subject of speculation). Knowing the depth of Petrosian's attachment to her, they chose not to confront him with the evidence because they suspected he would never believe them and feared he might react aggressively. Instead BU arranged for Petrosian's wife to die in a motoring "accident." How Petrosian discovered this is unknown, as is his method of escape from the Ukraine. His actions suggest more street skills than one might expect from his academic background. Some reports claim he fled to émigré White Russians in Paris, and then on to a similar group in London. Though Petrosian is not pure Russian, the émigrés would gladly aid anyone fleeing the Ukraine. His current whereabouts are unknown, though an unconfirmed report claims he is working as a street doc in the back streets of Izmir. He may be looking for members of his wife's family to help him get revenge against BU. Runners may be interested in the fact that BU (unofficially, of course) is offering a 250,000-nuyen reward to anyone who returns Petrosian to them alive.

>>>>>(They'll also pay 100,000 for him dead. They don't want the opposition to get him. They want the dead body intact, though; they're after the internal memory. So don't go for the head shot.)<<<<<

—Collector (01:17:06/10-17-55)

>>>>>(How the frag can someone so easily identifiable elude pursuit? BU must have their own goons out after him. The ID's pretty exact. Are we sure they haven't got him yet?)<<<<<

—Trap Man (04:11:17/10-25-55)

>>>>>(Absolutely certain. I still hear from chummers being offered some action in the hunt. Don't forget that Petrosian must have contacts in the bioware and medical fields; he could easily have gotten cosmetic surgery, especially if he's been among the Whites. But he can't hide that chain-smoking habit or his fear of spiders, nor the fact that he's about as much fun as a necrophile convention.)<<<<<

—Cobalt Blue (05:00:05/10-29-55)



>>>>(But who else is after him? Every corporate bastard with an interest in corpsec must want the contents of Petrosian's head. It's got to be a battleground out there.)<<<<<

—Bitter Lemon (22:17:15/11-04-55)

Hooks

This character begs to have an entire scenario written around him. An obvious choice is to have BU hire the runners to find him. Because the corp has probably hired other runners to do exactly the same thing, the runners may well find themselves being shadowed by others eager to steal the fruits of their investigation into Petrosian's whereabouts. Alternatively, the runners may meet a Johnson acting for Petrosian, who wants them to make a hit on the team of BU assassins after him because he believes they iced his wife. In return, Petrosian offers them a download of his headware memory, which includes the design for a souped-up Level 4 tactical computer (see p. 53, **Shadowtech**). One of these babies sells for around 3.5 million nuyen, so this is one heck of a deal; the runners should have to sweat for it. For example, they might successfully ice the BU killers, and return to find Petrosian kidnapped and abducted by a second team (from BU or one of their competitors, or anyone else the gamemaster can think of). To get their reward, the runners must find and rescue Petrosian. As an alternative to using a Johnson, one of the runners might be treated by Petrosian working as a street doc; the Ukrainian offers to hire them after some test-the-water interactions

(maybe the runners are with him when a BU team raids his home or clinic). Petrosian is a competent street doc, and may be working in Russian/Ukrainian communities in London, Paris, or New York, or among Turkish ones (staying with relatives of his wife, perhaps) in Germany, London, New York, Marseilles and so on. Finally, of course, the runners must find the right corp to buy Petrosian's design—and someone else may not want them selling the info.

Attributes

Body: 2
 Quickness: 3
 Strength: 2
 Charisma: 2
 Intelligence: 6
 Willpower: 5
 Essence: 4.6
 Reaction: 4

Skills

Biological Sciences: 7
 Neurology: 10
 Bioware: 8
 Computer: 9
 Computer (B/R): 9
 Computer Theory: 9
 Electronics: 9
 Electronics (B/R): 9
 Etiquette (Corporate): 4
 Etiquette (Street): 3
 Negotiation: 2

Initiative: 4 + 1D6

Professional Rating: 3

Threat Ratings

Combat: 2

Cyberware

Datajack
 Headware Memory, 200 Mp (beta-customized)

Gear

Ceska vz/120 [Light Pistol, 18 (clip), SA, 6L, w/50 rounds of regular ammunition]
 Medkit
 Slap Patches (gamemaster's discretion)

Notes

If Petrosian sees a spider of any size within 10 meters of him, he loses control and suffers a penalty of 4 to all target numbers. One within his line of sight beyond the 10-meter range makes him desperately anxious; he suffers a penalty of 2 to all target numbers. If confronted with an insect shaman, he freezes up and cannot act in any way. Currently, he only has kits for his B/R skills.



Sukie Redflower (Combat Mage)

Birth Date: March 17, 2028

Birthplace: Spokane, Salish-Shidhe Council

Nationality/Metatype/Gender: Salish-Shidhe
(Salish)/Mixed Race (American Indian/Caucasian)
Elf/Female

Current Residence: Seattle

Height: 170 cm

Weight: 53 kg

Hair: Metallic silver

Eyes: Violet-blue

Distinguishing Physical Features: Six fingers on left hand

Psychology

Traits: Flamboyant, aggressive, exploitative but honest

Motivations: Sensation seeker

Lifestyle: High to Luxury

Need some serious magical firepower? As Sukie says, have combat spell focus, will travel. You can't miss Sukie. Her clothes scream at people from half a mile away; they're all black, violet, and metallics. She talks like a machine gun and gives off an intensity most people find disturbing. Though vain, Sukie has enough of a sense of humor to know that and even take a poke at herself now and then—but don't you ever do it, or you'll live to regret it. Sukie has a powerful temper and a list of grudges as long as the Golden Gate Bridge.

Sukie moved to Seattle only a year or so ago and took up residence in Tacoma. So far, she's found enough money and enough Johnsons in Tacoma to keep her happy, though she plans to move on up to Bellevue. She's a mercenary, pure and simple. Though her manner is hardly ingratiating, she's managed to avoid making any life-threatening enemies during her time in the city. She gets respect because she is good at her job, despite all the in-your-face attitude and up-front pushiness. She's gutsy and brave; if a run goes bad, she doesn't pull out and leave anyone behind. Though some folks call her a sharp dealer when it comes to nuyen, she doesn't cheat. Just read the fine print of any contract you have with her (yes, she has a legal eagle draw up contracts for her employment).

>>>>>(You've got to be kidding. She's such a bitch. If you can handle constant denigrating of your talents, appearance, equipment and anything else you hold dear at the rate of two thousand syllables a minute, get her on the payroll. Otherwise, forget it. Frankly, she ought to be strangled with her own stockings.)<<<<<<

—Cobalt Blue (04:44:17/07-13-55)

>>>>>(Whoa! That reminds me, I have to get my cat neutered. ... Seriously, folks, Cobalt's out of order here. Yes, it's difficult to keep Sukie quiet. You need a sense of humor and patience. But she's a professional and she gets the job done. She's also got good contacts with Salish-Shidhe talismongers, so if the nuyen are right you'll find her helpful. Most of all, though, she's fast. I've never seen anyone move that quickly without wiring or drugs.)<<<<<<

—Cracker (11:16:32/07-20-55)

>>>>>(And she's one hell of a looker.)<<<<<<

—Sister Ray (01:16:11/07-22-55)

>>>>>(True, but fall for that and she'll wrap you around her little finger. She's highly adept at playing the "you're being beastly to me because I'm a girl/elf/Indian" number and tugging at those bleeding-heart white liberal sensibilities. This little lady's left a trail of broken hearts stretching halfway across Salish-Shidhe, and she's snapped a few in Seattle already. Mind you, it would be quite entertaining to watch if she gets fond of any guy. Other women would have to watch out. One sideways look at her man and you'd be a smoking pile of superheated carbon residue.)<<<<<<

—Cityboy (01:01:07/07-27-55)

>>>>(Be wary about forming too permanent a professional relationship with the lady; she left some enemies behind in Salish-Shidhe. I've heard from a couple of sources about some Cascade Crow guys who'd like to catch up with this little madam and ask a few pointed questions about the disappearance of money. After they'd pumped her full of snub-nosed bullets, that is.)<<<<<

—Bitter Lemon (18:44:51/08-04-55)

Hooks

A combat mage with a personality to drive your players crazy, Sukie is a talented mercenary specialist. She is the character the runners should find whenever magical firepower is at a premium.

Complications should arise in any dealings with her. She has a past in the Salish-Shidhe lands; several people have a grudge against her because she stole expendable spell fetishes when she was desperately down on her luck. Someone somewhere in Salish-Shidhe has a contract out on her, and the goons should turn up halfway through any given run. Once the lead stops flying, the runners can ask her why the goons are after her, but should receive answers that only make things more complicated. This character gives the gamemaster a chance to involve runners in Salish-Shidhe politics after determining who Sukie had worked for (and against) in that nation. Also, Sukie's spell list proves her to be awfully adept at persuading mages to teach her. Clearly, she has left a long trail of contacts behind her with whom the runners can get involved.

Attributes

Body: 2 (5)
Quickness: 8 (11)
Strength: 2
Charisma: 4
Intelligence: 6
Willpower: 5
Essence: 5.7
Magic: 7
Reaction: 7

Skills

Armed Combat: 4
Conjuring: 7
Etiquette (Corporate): 4
Etiquette (Street): 5
Firearms: 6
Magical Theory: 4
Sorcery: 7
Unarmed Combat: 5

Initiative: 7 + 1D6 (8 + 1D6)

Professional Rating: 3

Threat Ratings

Combat: 6
Magic: 4

Cyberware

Smartlink (beta-customized)

Gear

Armor Jacket (5/3)
Binoculars with Thermographics
Bug Scanners (2)
Combat Spell Focus (4)
Ingram Smartgun [Submachine Gun, 32 (clip), BF/FA, 7M, w/300 rounds of regular ammunition, Sound Suppressor]
Portable Wrist Phone
Power Focus (3)

Remington Roomsweeper [Heavy Pistol, 8 (magazine), SA, 9S (f), w/200 rounds of regular slug ammunition, Silencer]
Respirator
Reusable Spell Fetish (amber-tipped birchwood wand, for exclusive spells noted)
Shurikens (8)
Spell Locks
Armor (4 successes)
Bullet Barrier (4 successes)
Enhanced Personal Attribute: Quickness +3
Personal Combat Sense (3 successes)

Spells

Combat

Death Touch: 5
Fire Cloud: 5
Fire Cloud (Fetish-Exclusive): 7
Hellblast: 5
Hellblast (Fetish-Exclusive): 7
Manaball: 7
Manablast (Fetish-Exclusive): 7
Powerblast: 5
Ram: 6
Sleep: 6
Stun Bolt (Fetish-Exclusive): 6
Wrecker: 6

Health

Heal: 5
Increase Reflexes +2

Illusion

Chaotic World: 6
Improved Invisibility: 5
Stink: 6

Manipulation

Acid Stream: 5
Blast Barrier: 5
Flame Bomb: 4
Ice Sheet: 4

Detection

Analyze Device: 6
Analyze Truth: 5
Detect Enemies: 6
Personal Combat Sense: 5

Notes

Sukie's appearance is striking; in addition to her gear and clothing, she likes metallic face cosmetics, and her extra finger is unmistakable. Six-fingered hands are a recessive genetic trait in her father's family; Sukie likes to grin at people and say, "it's useful to have an extra pinky" while stabbing her *middle* finger upwards in an unmistakable gesture. Sukie talks incessantly about almost everything, but her favorite subjects are politics, literature, Big Ideas and other such stuff. Sukie is a character that players either love or hate; she's bright, attractive, well-dressed and resourceful enough to inspire liking and respect, but her nonstop talking and intensity make most people reach for a trunk shot after ten minutes in her company.

As an elf, Sukie has natural Low-Light Vision. Her Quickness is exceptional, even for an elf.

Sukie uses a bastardized Cascade Crow war dance as her centering ritual, and she makes sure she looks really cute and cool if anyone is watching.



Rhonabwy (Welsh Great Dragon)

Birth Date: Unknown (first appearance February 22, 2012)

Birthplace: Unknown

Nationality/Species/Gender: NA/Great Western Dragon/Male

Current Residence: Llandovery, Wales, UK

Height: 4 m (shoulder height)

Length: 28 m (tail 24 m)

Weight: 737 kg

Skin: Scarlet (small-scaled)

Eyes: Green

Distinguishing Physical Features: Yeah, right

Psychology

Traits: Secretive, territorial, fast learner

Motivations: Pseudo-anarchist

Lifestyle: Extreme Luxury

Our chummers the dragons vary hugely from one to another. Dunklezahn is a media junkie, Lofwyr is a major corporate power player, and SIRRURG seems to be some kind of terrorist. Rhonabwy is slippery, *extremely* slippery. Some words of warning about him are definitely in order.

Rhonabwy first appeared outside Caerfyrddin (Carmarthen) in western Wales on February 22, 2012. The dragon emerged from a subterranean lair, leaving a sizable crater behind, and immediately went wild, destroying hundreds of buildings and killing more than 150 people in the process. Subsequently, in one of his rare public bulletins, Rhonabwy expressed considerable regret for the destruction and explained that he was suffering from "post-hibernation trauma" at the time. Over the years since, he has doled out considerable sums in nuyen to rebuild the town's shattered eastern sections. However, outside the town of Llandovery a week after the Caerfyrddin incident, he issued a simple ultimatum: he ordered everyone living within a five-mile radius of the town to clear out for good within 72 hours. Almost everyone did. Rhonabwy spent the next two months leveling everything in the area and then began burrowing. He still lives in Llandovery, but he has a lot more than a burrow to occupy these days. Rhonabwy paid double the value for everything he appropriated, and the people who live near his territory were somewhat mollified by that gesture. They also appreciate the fact that Rhonabwy's nature spirits patrol the land and keep hostile critters away from farmsteads and other settlements on the fringes of sometimes-dangerous terrain.

Most people believe that Rhonabwy dug down more than three miles until he struck a huge gold cache. The dragon's wealth is inestimable; he invested an unknown percentage of the hoard with the HKB and GA financial corporations and also in Swiss banking outfits, placing an absolute priority on secrecy. His corporate holdings are handled through these controlling companies, and so are not publicly known. Careful financial analysis, however, suggests that Rhonabwy holds 4 percent of Ares stock and 6 to 7 percent of Shiawase stock. He also has significant holdings of 10 percent or so in at least 30 European mid-sized corps. Rhonabwy acquired sound financial advice from HKB and others soon after his Awakening and appears to have learned to play the markets very quickly indeed. The dragon also excavated and developed his lair, and regularly refurbishes it with the latest media network systems. The dragon is an inveterate surveyor of business information from every media source available, though he keeps his specific interests hidden. Rumors abound that artisans and workers from both Snowdonia and Gwynedd aided Rhonabwy in his excavations; if true, the rumors strongly suggest an alliance between Rhonabwy, the Countess of Harlech, and the secessionist elves of northern Wales. They keep as quiet about helping him as he does about helping them. Rumor also has it—from reliable sources—that he helped the countess locate orichalcum and aids the elves in regenerating their lands with magic. The couriers who fly into the Dragon Land from Rhonabwy's financial advisers for rare consultations don't talk.

Word is, they have neural implants that make it impossible for them to speak of their dealings with the dragon unless the implants are deactivated by a complex sound/visual-stimulus code. (So don't bother intercepting them to find out what the critter is up to.)

Fine, you say. Why tell us? If he's secretive and keeps out of our faces, why do we need to know about him? Unfortunately, he doesn't keep out of people's faces. Rhonabwy is an extremely political animal with definite goals.

Many people believe Rhonabwy strongly dislikes elves. It's true that the dandelion eaters and these Big Guys have their ups and downs, and individual relations between them vary from cordial to hostile. Rhonabwy falls near the latter end of that spectrum. However, a generalized loathing of elves is too simple an explanation for Rhonabwy's actions. Rather than simply using his power to attack elves, stymie their goals, or generally give elves a hard time, Rhonabwy prefers a subtler approach.

In general, the dragon uses his financial power to destabilize elven communities *when they have become too powerful*—that is, when they control a society or a country. For example, Rhonabwy's money has fueled non-elven, Protestant paramilitaries in Tir na nÓg. Undoubtedly, his money supports factions in Tir Tairngire opposed to the current powers on the Council of Princes (and he is *extremely* suspicious of Lofwyr). Supplies of arms and logistical support to some of the Swazi bandits on the borders of the Zulu Nation also come from the dragon, though the unusually positive relations between elves and other metahumans in that land have kept his actions there on a small scale. On the other hand, Rhonabwy generously supports elven factions in north Wales, *specifically the secessionists*. In truth, Rhonabwy is less anti-elven than opposed to elven control over societies. He acts to destabilize such control, but wherever elves are discriminated against or powerless he will support them. It is possible that the dragon does not even oppose elven control, provided that control does not take political forms to which he objects.

Conversely, Rhonabwy is also a strong supporter of other metahuman groups in many countries, and—just to make things really complicated—he supports them even if they control a society in a rigid, totalitarian manner. This seeming paradox is extremely difficult to comprehend.

>>>>>(No it isn't, not if Rhonabwy considers totalitarian structures less likely to be stable in the hands of metahumans other than elves. And not if you look at how the dragon helps such societies. Look at the dwarf-run Grand Duchy of Westrhine-Luxembourg as an example. It's broke, and there was a time when democracy looked fragile there. Rhonabwy bought most of the country's mineral-water exports at an inflated price, effectively subsidizing the nation and making the political situation a lot more comfortable. It's not just the grand duke's purse that keeps the place going. The dragon knows how to stabilize as well as destabilize.)<<<<<

—Merchant Banker (22:27:02/06-30-55)

>>>>>(Is that your real name or is it just rhyming slang?)<<<<<

—Bitter Lemon (21:45:13/07-10-55)

Rhonabwy increasingly uses the same principles of operation in his financial dealings. If a particular corp seems to be gaining a stranglehold over a particular country or nation, Rhonabwy employs every strategy from stock-dumping to sponsoring local "terrorist" activity to direct action against local corporate executives to pry that grip loose. Obviously, he cannot do this kind of thing everywhere, nor can he do it unless the country concerned is relatively small. However, the diligent student of corporate intrigue might find the history of Aztechnology's unsuccessful involvement in certain areas of the Caribbean League quite instructive.

>>>>>(Hal Always did wonder how Welsh orichalcum ended up in the hands of some of the shamans down there. Interesting.)<<<<<

—Zeitgeist (00:00:00/07-23-55)

Rhonabwy's activities invite retaliation, but his immense power requires that retaliation to be indirect. Both he and those he acts against work through intermediaries, and so battle is usually joined between both sides' respective middlemen. A considerable number of allies, guardians and even some free spirits associate with Rhonabwy; the latter, in particular, are his usual envoys and Johnsons (but don't call them that). Naturally, those spirits frequently recruit runners who then personally experience the annoyance Rhonabwy's activities stir up at the sharp end. (You have been warned.)

To the (meta)human mind, Rhonabwy's activities can seem complex and even paradoxical. For example, Rhonabwy is perfectly capable of recruiting several teams of runners to undertake contradictory actions—some striking at an installation or other target, others brought in to defend it. The dragon often uses this strategy to expose as much as he can of the strengths and weaknesses of any particular situation. If he intends to strike such a target, he may use the defenders as secret sources of information about existing defenses. After all, they are there to strengthen those defenses, and he wants to be sure everything's watertight, right?

>>>>>(This is one mean, devious fragger.)<<<<<

—Bitter Lemon (22:15:30/07-15-55)

Smart runners won't make the mistake of thinking that because this critter lives in a small, obscure European country, they need not worry about him. His fingers—or claws—extend out to Azania, Tir Tairngire, the Caribbean, and points beyond. Whether it's all just a game to Rhonabwy or he's following some deep metaphysical commitment or other, no one has a fraggin' clue. Just watch out for a Johnson who looks a little less human and a bit more spiritual than he might be.

No more than a dozen mortals have met Rhonabwy face to face since his Awakening. Even his corporate advisers and



couriers talk to him by trid; he just likes to have 'em on-site on occasion so he can have complete control over every situation. One group of runners, however, did get to him after they were hired as the meat in the sandwich for a little affair in Tir Tairngire. They knew they couldn't touch him, but they wanted to know *why*. Rhonabwy apparently appreciated their skill in getting anywhere near his lair (watch out for hostile spirits, all kinds of paranimals and worse, folks) and even gave the team's mage a little trinket: a cute little power focus. Nothing heavy, just enough to make the guy go home with eyes the size of dinner plates.

One last point. Rhonabwy has uncertain relations with other dragons. He is curious about (and distrustful of) Celedyr, the dragon who lairs to the southeast behind a hi-tech installation and a phalanx of Rastafarians at Caerleon. He considers Dunklezahn a poseur and of no consequence and regards Lofwyr with something bordering on fear. He has no direct dealings with any of them. A recurrent myth concerning Rhonabwy and the Sea Dragon of Cardigan Bay (no one knows its name and gender, and so people refer to it only as the Sea Dragon) claims that Rhonabwy and the Sea Dragon were locked in an eternal, magical struggle for eons until the coming of the Sixth World. Some say they are the dragons referred to in the Arthurian myths. Rhonabwy has never stated or even hinted at the truth or otherwise of this tale.

Hooks

A gamemaster can draw runners into Rhonabwy's intricate web of operations in several ways. The simplest is to have one of Rhonabwy's free spirit chummers hire the runners for any one of a number of operations: a strike against some corporate or individual target against which Rhonabwy is scheming, a run that directly attacks a powerful elven faction (in Tir Tairngire, Tir na nÓg, the Zulu Nation, and so on) or a run in the interests of some non-elven metahuman group struggling to survive and/or preserve their culture. On any of these runs, runners are likely to come up against powerful opposed interests. Ideally, the gamemaster should structure the run so that the runners do not realize the full potential impact of what they are being asked to do.

For runners to even recognize Rhonabwy's involvement, a gamemaster will most likely need a campaign with several related runs. Only slowly should it become clear to the runners involved that the person hiring them is not the ordinary meal ticket. For example, their free spirit patron might have to help them extract their butts from the frying pan at some stage. The runners should become curious about this intervention: who is this spirit? What or who is behind it? If they persist with their investigations, they may discover that one of Rhonabwy's opponents (for example, Lofwyr) gives them indirect help in some way because the opponent wants Rhonabwy's operations exposed. Such a campaign can get very complicated; the runners' initial boss no longer wants them near his interests, while the people they've been acting against start getting helpful and friendly. Keep these kinds of

tangles well-buried; the runners will need serious investigative effort to discover what's really happening. Toward the climax of such an adventure, the runners should confront Rhonabwy or his opponent(s). Unless they act really dumb (trying to get aggressive, say), a confrontation can bring about either a resolution or a further development. For example, Rhonabwy might decide that his pawns have done enough work and pay them off in money, magic items, information or help with an astral quest. Or Lofwyr may decide that having some double agents might be useful, and so send the runners to work for Rhonabwy again—this time updating Lofwyr on everything that's going on.

In such a complicated set of scenarios, the gamemaster must use carrots and sticks to keep the runners from wimping out. Carrots include the lure of orichalcum from Rhonabwy's Welsh contacts, big-time nuyen payments, logistical support with good equipment. Sticks are less desirable but still useful. Rhonabwy's free spirit may try at some stage to get blood or other suitable linking material from a mage or shaman runner so that the spirit can use ritual sorcery as a last-ditch threat (considering Rhonabwy's Magic Attribute and related Skill Ratings, the threat is a powerful one).

Attributes

Body: 25/12
 Quickness: 10 x 3
 Strength: 45
 Charisma: 9
 Intelligence: 9
 Willpower: 12
 Essence: 12
 Magic: 25
 Reaction: 8

Initiative: 8 + 2D6

Professional Rating: 4

Threat Ratings

Combat: 7
 Magical: 12

Gear

Power Focus: 7 (see **Notes**)
 Other items as desired by the gamemaster (anything the dragon wants)

Spells

See **Notes**

Powers

Animal Control (Reptiles), Enhanced Senses (Wide-Band Hearing, Low-Light Vision, Thermal Sense), Hardened Armor, Immunity to Age, Immunity to Fire, Influence, Flame Aura, Flame Projection, Noxious Breath, Regeneration, Venom

Notes

Rhonabwy knows *all* spells in versions with Force Ratings of 5 through 15. In addition, he knows Combat, Detection and Manipulation spells with Ratings 16 through 20. He has a whole stack of magic items; the power focus—a simple gold scallop-shaped shell—is simply the most important of them. Realistically, because the runners should have no direct interaction with the dragon other than sitting and talking *really* politely to him, the specific spells he can cast don't matter too much. He can squash the runners like bugs any time he chooses. If a runner ends up getting a magic item from Rhonabwy, make it something unique. If the dragon gives it freely, the gamemaster might consider a lower-than-normal Karma cost for bonding such an item.

Rhonabwy has Sorcery and Conjuring skills equal to his (unaugmented) Magic Attribute. The dragon also has skills in certain areas (historical knowledge, financial markets and investments, politics) that don't require formal Skill Ratings. The gamemaster can determine Rhonabwy's knowledge, success, and so on to suit the way he wishes to advance adventures and/or a campaign.

The truth or otherwise of the myth about Rhonabwy and the Sea Dragon is left to the gamemaster to determine. If it's true, then runners might become involved in a major campaign. After testing their proficiency, Rhonabwy might ask them to undertake an astral quest in which the runners must travel to a Place among the metaplanes that has many formal correspondences to Arthurian Britain, and resolve the eternal magical struggle in Rhonabwy's favor. Returning to the mundane world, they find certain things changed; Rhonabwy has become more powerful, richer, and more influential, and is a corporate player on the scale of Lofwyr. The runners will certainly enjoy his patronage. This story can be a rich mythic theme to exploit, but it also makes for serious complications: therefore, we have left the issue up to the gamemaster's discretion.

Rhonabwy has one personality quirk; the dragon is enchanted by choral music (Welsh all-male choirs have a reputation for being the finest in the world). He might steal away from his lair in human form to attend a choral concert, allowing for an interesting encounter. A runner with an exceptional Skill Rating in Singing might become a protégé of the dragon—or Rhonabwy might already have one, and might recruit the runners to save/protect him or her. The gamemaster may feel free to devise another such personality quirk that allows for similar incidental involvements.



Peter James Self (Author)

Birth Date: February 5, 2026

Birthplace: Cleveland, UCAS

Nationality/Metatype/Gender: UCAS/Caucasian
Human/Male

Current Residence: Seattle

Height: 185 cm

Weight: 69 kg

Hair: Black, long, worn in a ponytail

Eyes: Brown-green

Distinguishing Physical Features: Cadaverous appearance, handsome, chain-smoker

Psychology

Traits: Voyeuristic, possibly idealistic, perhaps even a disappointed Romantic

Motivations: Writing

Lifestyle: Medium

When Random-Viking published Self's *The Privacy of Nobodies* in late '53, the literary cognoscenti rolled over on their backs praising the novel to the skies. They couldn't actually agree whether it was a deeply idealistic book or an incredibly nihilistic one, but that was part of the fun. That "controversy" allowed literary souls to talk drek on cable trid shows for weeks, peppering their outbursts with even more clever allusions, long-winded drivel and tedious analysis than usual. The author as well as the book made great copy for the tabloids; Self has the look of a doomed romantic and an apparently self-destructive, addictive personality. In this day and age poets no longer die of tuberculosis and artists no longer starve in gar-

rets, but a bit of the doomed-beautiful-young-thing aura goes a long way. And Self has a romantic background in spades, an achievement virtually unheard-of for someone born in such a grisly place as Cleveland. Kicked out of an Ivy League college for peddling drugs and sleeping with various professors' wives, Self bummed around Europe for a couple of years, studied at the Sorbonne under cyber-psychoanalyst Françoise Lacan and had a passionate affair with her, then studied neurology in Rome where he had another passionate affair, this time with a Russian ballerina who killed herself. After that, he spent three months in a therapeutic institution recovering from transient traumatic psychosis. His first book, *Rage Turned Within*, came out in 2052 and became a cult classic among the European student fraternity. The publication of *Nobodies* launched him full-force into the faddish pantheon.

For those who have not read it, *Nobodies* is a fictionalized documentary of a day in the internal and external lives of a group of down-and-outs in Milan. The cast is unappetizing; a couple of junkies, a chiphead who sells her body to feed her habit, and a self-mutilating ex-model, to name a few. The book is also larded with all kinds of metaphysical musings by the central observer/character that many people find overwhelmingly tedious and pretentious, but that the literati loved. Echoes of Joyce, they said, though a moment's thought would have made clear the preposterousness of such a claim. For all the novel's pretentiousness, however, Self showed considerable skill at getting right inside his characters. Readers felt as if they had known these people for years after reading about a mere 24 hours of their lives. Despite all the bulldrek and long-winded pseudo-philosophy, Self really seemed to touch the core of what drives thought and emotion.

Currently, Self is completing the screenplay for a trid-movie adaptation of *Nobodies* and finishing his third book, the provisional title of which his publishers are fiercely keeping under wraps. The upcoming novel has taken Self two-and-a-half years to write, so it had better be enough of a blockbuster to keep critical interest in him stoked and the royalties flowing. Self lives somewhere among the down-and-outs of Seattle much of the time, which makes his publishers very nervous. Given his self-destructive streak, they worry that he may not manage to complete the new book and screenplay before running into some heavy scene or other that could reduce him to just another body dumped in a back alley after the guns stop chattering.

>>>>>(Nobodies is an intriguing book. The central character (Self?) is a young Rat shaman crippled by childhood polio—no, they don't get vaccinated in the back streets and slums of Milan—who has an urge to get down in the dirt like a real rat does. You don't realize the central character is an ork until page 140, but when you find that out you realize you've intuitively known it all along. Sadly, the majority of American households have not read even one book for the last 75 years or so, but for the rest of you, I recommend picking up this one.)<<<<<

—Cobalt Blue (04:19:13/11-01-55)



DAVID COLEMAN



MARTIN DE VRIES



JURGEN DE BRUYNE



SUSAN HANDS AS WINGS



MC BEAN



SORIE REDFLOWER



MICHAEL JAMES SUTHERLAND

ARIEL ALMODOVAR

“WATCHING SOMEONE IS NEVER AS HARD AS ONE MIGHT THINK. MOST PEOPLE NEVER EVEN CONSIDER THE POSSIBILITY THAT SOMEONE MIGHT BE WATCHING THEM OR TRACKING THEIR ACTIONS. EVEN THE PARANOID ONES, BY VIRTUE OF BEING CAREFUL, LEAVE THEMSELVES WIDE OPEN TO AN EXPERT LIKE MYSELF ... ”



MARTIN DE VRIES

"THERE IS A CERTAIN IRONY TO HUNTING THE HUNTER, ESPECIALLY THESE BEASTS. VAMPIRES ARE ARROGANT AND CRUEL, SO DISTANCED FROM THEIR HUMANITY THAT KILLING THEM BRINGS ME NO GUILT. AS A SOCIETY, WE STAND QUITE READY TO PUT RABID DOGS OUT OF THEIR, AND OUR, MISERY. WHY NOT THESE FOUL ABOMINATIONS AS WELL?"





JONTY GELDENHUYS

“LOOK, I DO NOT HAVE THE TIME
FOR YOUR PETTY, POSTMODERN
PROCRASTINATION.
MY EMPLOYERS PAID ME TO PULL
YOUR SORRY HIDE OUT OF THE
TÍR AND RETURN IT TO WHERE IT
BELONGS. FRANKLY, I DO NOT
CARE IF IT IS ONLY YOUR HIDE
I BRING BACK ... ”



SUSAN HANDS-AS-WINGS

"I CAN DRIVE IT, I CAN FIX IT,
AND I CAN PAINT IT ANY
FRAGGIN' COLOR YOU LIKE.
BUT DON'T TRY TO MAKE ME
HANG THE FRAGGIN' FUZZY
DICE ON THE REAR SCANNER
DISPLAY, OKAY?"





MCBEAN

**“YOU AGAIN, FANCY?
GET OUTTA MY FACE.
WHAT? FORGOT TO PLUG IN
YOUR EARS TODAY?
I SAID, GET OUTTA MY FACE!
GET OUTTA HERE!
OKAY BONEHEAD, THEY’RE
YOUR LUNGS...”**



SUKIE REDFLOWER

"SCRAM THE CAN, CHUMMER. I'VE GOT A FIFTY-BY-TWENTY RACKED, COMPED, AND SCHED'D FOR OUR OPERATIONAL PLEASURES. LEAVE THE BY-THE-BY WHERE IT HITS; CAN'T JUICE THE HARDSUITS WITH A TODDLER-TRICK. FIRE ON THE LINE, WHERE YOU LIKE IT, CHUMMER. YOU MIGHT AS WELL CALL THIS ONE CLEAN."





MICHAEL JAMES SUTHERLAND

"MOST MATRIX SYSTEMS ARE
DESIGNED TO RESIST THE
METAPHORICAL SHOTGUN
BLAST. THAT IS, AFTER ALL,
THE APPROACH THAT MOST OF
THE SO-CALLED PROFESSION-
ALS YOU TEND TO HIRE
PREFER, ISN'T IT? THE
CORPORATIONS PROTECT
THEMSELVES AGAINST WHAT
THEY EXPECT. AND THAT, MY
FRIEND, IS EXACTLY WHERE
I BEST FIT IN."



>>>>(I'm sorry, this guy is a drekgeek. He's a parasite. Look at the wreckage he's left behind him. The suicide is just the most obvious case, but he preys on the "I'm going to save him through lurve" weakness so many women still have and wrings it dry. Major-league emotional user. Let's hope he does end up in a back alley, and soon.)<<<<<

—Sister Ray (01:06:59/11-02-55)

>>>>(Too limited a view, too personal. One of the major achievements of *Nobodies* is the depiction of so-called "lowlifes" as people connected to the Big Ideas of the world around them, who have their thoughts and aspirations and moments of wonder that come from getting outside themselves. The young dealer Giancàla's obsession with trains and his hours spent in the Milan station just reading the names of the faraway destinations of the expresses is just the most obvious signpost, but it's done in a hundred subtler ways all the time. Maybe you can't write this kind of stuff without being personally dissociated—I don't know.)<<<<<

—Reader (22:19:52/11-05-55)

>>>>(Interesting little sideline. I saw Self doing a stand-up monologue, of all things, at a hole-in-the-wall cabaret in the bowels of Berlin back in, oh, late '51. I remember most clearly a bizarre little story in which he claimed to have been washed up on some desolate desert island. He wandered for days, despairing of ever finding any human presence. Then he found a rowboat, which contained just one thing. "It was a small slice of fruit cake, from which all the raisins had been systematically picked out, one by one. At the sight of such an unmistakable sign of civilization, I rejoiced." Chummer, you have to be a bit near the edge to think like that.)<<<<<

—Collector (23:12:11/11-08-55)

Hooks

Self needs to hang around lowlifes for inspiration. Intensely voyeuristic, he talks little; he simply needs to observe. For lowlife runners, he can be a meal ticket; he willingly buys all the drinks, chips and so on a lowlife needs to get loosened up, talk and act.

Suggested ways to use Self include the following. Self may have writer's block, and his publishers are desperate to find some trustworthy runners to chaperone him while he descends into some really bad scenes to stimulate his jaded imagination. This kind of scenario allows the gamemaster to get the runners into all kinds of seedy situations where they'll face hostile lowlife. Alternatively, Self's new book gets delayed because he's stumbled onto something big. He's found a network of police corruption or some appalling corporate experiment on the effects of a new toxic/pathogenic agent being tested on unsuspecting victims in an impoverished community. Self is either sufficiently disgusted that he hires runners to find firm evidence and nail the people responsible (romantic), or else he wants to get as much real detail as he can for his book and needs runners to watch his butt while he investigates (cynic).

Attributes

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

Skills

Bike: 3
Cybertechnology: 4
Etiquette (Street): 5
Psychology: 7
Deviant Behavior: 9

Special Skills

Literary Composition: 9
Psychoanalysis (History and Theory): 8

Initiative: 5 + 1D6

Professional Rating: 1

Threat Ratings

Combat: 2

Gear

1D6 + 3 assorted train tickets
Grubby Clothing
Knife
Notebook and pens
Whisky, bourbon, and six packs of cigarettes

Notes

Self is both a romantic and a cynic; he hasn't made up his mind. He may be a cruel voyeur without care or compassion for the wretches whose lives he fictionalizes so vividly—but the empathy with which he writes of them suggests that a romantic may lurk beneath a more cynical surface. Make him an intriguing character; he has a colorful past, from which all manner of people and complications could come.

Self is definitely self-destructive. He chain-smokes and is prone to three- or four-day alcoholic binges. His publishers may well want runners to look after him during these drinking bouts because he's so close to delivering that desperately needed screenplay and third book. However, he refuses to touch heavy drugs or chips. "I prefer *slow* suicide," is his laconic comment.

Sherlock (Fixer)



Sherlock (Fixer)

Birth Date: November 16, 2031

Birthplace: Rockville, Montgomery, DC

Nationality/Metatype/Gender: UCAS/Caucasian
Ork/Male

Current Residence: Rockville

Height: 188 cm

Weight: 97 kg

Hair: Black

Eyes: Brown

Distinguishing Physical Features: Missing little finger on left hand

Psychology

Traits: Friendly, gregarious, easily bored, extraordinary mnemonic skill

Motivations: Sensation-seeker

Lifestyle: Low to Middle

Sherlock is a fixture in DC. A distant cousin of the infamous Farrell the Barrel, the fattest ork in the city, Sherlock often spends his time in Farrell's Kingdom Seven club. His appearance is somewhat eccentric, to say the least. The ork fell head over heels in love with CD versions of grainy old black-and-white Sherlock Holmes films starring Basil Rathbone, and he dresses in tweeds and a deerstalker in imitation of his idol. He frequently says "Elementary, my dear person," and the like; he acts the Sherlock Holmes part to the nines. The ork has also confused Sherlock and Shylock ever since he saw Rathbone playing the Shakespearean role in a movie version of *The Merchant of Venice*; every so often, he shuffles around muttering, "If I don't get my money I'm going to have my pound of flesh." This kind of behavior makes Sherlock a curiosity; he is of interest to runners, however, because of his phenomenal eidetic memory.

Sherlock never forgets anything. He can remember the exact details of a trade he negotiated for someone six years ago or more, down to the denominations of the notes he was paid with (he will not accept credstick payments). He can remember the exact appearance of everyone who has ever traded with him. He can even remember the serial numbers of every gun he's bought and sold, provided he saw it. Such fantastic ability makes him worth knowing, not just as a fence and fixer, but also as an information exchange. Some runners and people seeking runners get work or employees by giving Sherlock their contact numbers or addresses and their general interests; he stores all that information in his head and never forgets it. Runners looking for a job around DC (or almost anywhere else in UCAS or CAS) should get to know Sherlock—he knows exactly who is after what. Diplomatic and trustworthy, Sherlock makes a useful fixer, able to get almost anything short of military weapons and the kind of tech that only turns up in shadowclinics and experimental labs.

>>>>>(Sherlock gets good stuff, too. He's got a good supplier. Back in '49, he was the star witness for the prosecution in the trial of Baudelaire's Bastards, a heavy-duty extortion gang. He saw them icing a couple of significant business folks, and he was absolutely unshakable on the witness stand. He gave such accurate and complete descriptions of the perps that the defense hadn't a hope. The police put the entire gang away, more or less. That's how Sherlock got his body armor—real Fedpol issue (just in case any gangers who escaped justice decided to get revenge). Word is that ever since the trial, Sherlock's had a chummer in the police who ships him unlicensed stuff and items confiscated from criminals. It's all good quality stuff, and because most of it doesn't come from inventoried police stock, it's a safe buy. One important note: Sherlock hates slags who trade in black-market drugs or BTLs and won't supply them.)<<<<<

—Crusher (19:32:18/06-26-55)

>>>>>(He tries to fake an English accent. He really does love those old movies. They enchant him.)<<<<<

—Majeure (21:00:11/07-10-55)

>>>>(Stuff that. Make sure you have an ork deal with him. He prefers his own kind.)<<<<<<

—Shandor (02:17:51/07-17-55)

>>>>(Naturally, he's banned from playing blackjack virtually everywhere in DC and his name's on most databases shared by gaming house owners. Because he can remember every card that's turned face up, they think that gives him an edge. It doesn't really, because he doesn't have the smarts to make computations fast enough—and of course, anyone with a little headware help in that department gets run off the premises faster than a Republican tells lies. It raks Sherlock off a little that he can't even get a beer in a gaming house in his own hometown.)<<<<<<

—Gnasher (01:18:32/07-27-55)

Hooks

As a fixer, Sherlock can supply weapons (except military hardware, to which he does not have access) and armor at short notice (reduce the time needed to 75 percent of values given in **SR11**). He also serves as an employment exchange and can be used to direct runners toward helpful Johnsons. Don't use Sherlock as a source of clues or info other than employment opportunities unless the runners pay him well, and even then he should act in that capacity reluctantly. Someone might hire runners to find him if he gets kidnapped; many people might find the ork's extraordinary mnemonic skill useful. Sherlock's ork friends would certainly want him rescued, and might hire runners to get into places in DC where ork faces would not be welcome.

Sherlock might also become a witness to a crime. Runners might need his help identifying criminals for some action for which they've been framed, but (unfortunately for them) the ork has gone into hiding. Alternatively, Sherlock might land in the middle of a yakuza-mob skirmish, able to identify both sets of goons and scared witless that either of both of these organizations might come after him. When some runners turn up to see what job leads Sherlock has, the criminal goons putting the ork under surveillance get the bright idea of icing the runners to give Sherlock a little warning.

Sherlock will never identify or compromise his Fedpol "helper," so runners cannot make a contact out of the cop unless they put Sherlock under unbelievably good surveillance (and he is extremely careful).

Attributes

Body: 5
Quickness: 3
Strength: 4
Charisma: 2
Intelligence: 5
Willpower: 5
Essence: 5.5
Reaction: 4

Skills

Computer: 3
Electronics: 3
Etiquette (Street): 7
Firearms: 4
Negotiation: 5

Special Skills

Evaluate High-Tech Items: 6
Photographic Memory (see **Notes**)

Initiative: 4 + 1D6

Professional Rating: 3

Threat Ratings

Combat: 3

Cyberware

Smartlink

Gear

Ares Predator [Heavy Pistol, 15 (clip), SA, 9M, w/50 rounds of regular ammunition]
Armor Jacket (5/3)
Doc Wagon™ Contract (Basic)
Heavy Armor (full suit, not often worn)
SCK 100 [Submachine Gun, 30 (clip), SA/BF, 7M, w/100 rounds of regular ammunition, Sound Suppressor]

Notes

Sherlock has natural Low-Light Vision and a mild allergy to certain food additives. He is extremely careful about what he eats—he is a vegetarian and doesn't drink synthicaf, sticking to pure fruit juices and beers that he knows will not trigger an allergic reaction.

The gamemaster may dispense with any kind of Intelligence Test for Sherlock when he recalls people, items, events and scenes he has witnessed; his Photographic Memory Skill enables him to remember everything. He knows whatever the gamemaster wants him to know within the DC area; however, he doesn't travel outside DC and he will not know much about a few obvious areas of high life and such.

Because Sherlock is a fixer, the gamemaster should use standard Negotiation Tests for reducing prices. However, runners can get an extra 5 percent reduction on any deal if they manage to come up with some optical CDs of old 1930s and 1940s movies for Sherlock's battered old vid unit. The gamemaster can dispense with Etiquette Tests for determining the Availability of items for Sherlock, or subtract 2 from the usual target numbers for making such a test.

Kung Soo (Gangster)



Kung Soo (Gangster)

Birth Date: April 11, 1984

Birthplace: Kowloon, Hong Kong

Nationality/Metatype/Gender: Dual-national,
Chinese-British/Asiatic Human/Male

Current Residence: London, UK

Height: 163 cm

Weight: 54 kg

Hair: Gray

Eyes: Silver-gray

Distinguishing Physical Features: Long hair, usually
plaited into a single braid

Psychology

Traits: Unknown

Motivations: Unknown

Lifestyle: Luxury

The Temple of the East, an imposing Chinese restaurant, stands on the corner of Panton Street just off the main thoroughfare of London's Chinatown, in the heart of the United Kingdom's capital city. The building is tall and ornate, but the signs on the restaurant itself are simple. The windows of the offices upstairs have shutters over them; those of the restaurant below are tinted black so that no one can see those dining inside. Above the main entrance stands an imposing carving of a traditional Chinese dragon rampant among its coils; below the dragon, at all hours of the day and night, stands one of the building's uniformed Chinese doormen. The whole establishment exudes an air of discreet quality, luxury and refinement. It reflects the character and temperament of the man and the extended family who use it as a headquarters from which to rule over the largest criminal empire in the country.

Kung Soo was born in Kowloon, part of the UK Crown Colony of Hong Kong. When the colony reverted to Chinese administration in 1997, he and his family emigrated to London. Unlike their prosperous former home, they found London a depressing, dirty city wallowing in recession. The country was in the grip of an anti-immigrant period, and Soo's family found legal work hard to come by. In the degenerating sprawl of the central London area known as Overground, however, plenty of work existed for those newly arrived from the colony in the service of Zhing Wo, the London Tong that controlled all organized crime in the region.

Soo rose rapidly through its ranks, first as a street fighter protecting extortionists and later as an administrator and assistant to Zhing Wo's chief extortionist and drug dealer. Following the latter's fall from grace during internal infighting in 2006, Kung Soo replaced him and spent more than a decade organizing most of Zhing Wo's illegal activities across London. In 2017, however, the ever-present conflict with the Manchester-based Xiao Ziang family spilled over into open warfare. In a daring move, Soo turned his own allegiance and that of his most trusted men to the northerners' cause, and soon became the new gang boss in the capital.

Ever since then, Kung Soo has held absolute power over the London Tongs. In the past three decades, Soo has rebuilt his organized crime network until it now rivals that of the mighty Xiao Ziang and Si Peng. Like the northern-based families, his organization deals in every aspect of illegal activity, from gambling dens and drug dealing, illicit chips and bioware to guns and assassination, prostitution and extortion. He has unquestionably instigated widespread corruption among the most senior officers on London's police force, and has almost certainly also infiltrated small but important units of corporate security in the UK.

In person, Grandfather Soo initially seems far removed from the clichéd image of a criminal mastermind. Small and gray-haired, he is tanned and unusually youthful looking. He frequently wears Western dress and enjoys modern pursuits. In a famous interview with the *London Times* five years ago, he made it clear that he believed his organization's future lay almost entirely in manipulation of the Matrix rather than of local business owners.

>>>>>(I notice that Grandfather Soo was born in the Year of Rat. Such folk are supposedly known for their charm and composure; though easily angered, they hide it well. Those born under the sign of the Rat have a great deal of ambition and integrity, and unbelievable persistence. Grandfather Soo is all these things.)<<<<<

—Chung (20:49:18/10-4-55)

>>>>>(If the invite comes to visit Grandfather Soo at the Temple of the East, don't turn it down no matter what comes up. An invitation means you've come to his notice, which could mean that he plans to persuade you to stop whatever it is you've been doing to earn such notice, or that he's impressed with what he has heard and wants to use you for something special. Either way, you have a choice: go and

suffer the consequences or garner the rewards; or stay away, and either leave the country or wait for the burly guys with the cleavers to come a-knocking at your door real soon.)<<<<<<

—Mallin (00:08:41/10-7-55)

>>>>>(A few price idiots have tried to gatecrash the Temple of the East to see Soo. Only those with the most unbelievable chutzpah or downright good fortune have managed not to come out in a wicker basket, or in several wicker baskets, to be more accurate. If you really need Soo's help—and you just might, seeing as he controls just about everything major that's going down in the Overground—send a message via one of his trusted agents. If your contacts don't know who Soo's agents are, you're worth his attention; he may send some of his grandchildren to teach you not to be so presumptuous! Born under the Rat he may be, but he's a real tiger: so sleek and stylish it takes your breath away, with claws that can kill in an instant.)<<<<<<

—Sister Ray (00:34:14/10-13-55)

>>>>>(Some extra information you may find useful when dealing with Soo's people: a brief guide to the most common ranks in the Tong, plus the secret hand signals these guys use around us round-eyes. Don't let on that you know, and you'll be able to recognize who these people really are—quite an advantage.

- Hung Kwan, or "Red Pole": Leader of the fighters, the tough guy who doles out punishment and extortion. Also known as "elder brother." First two fingers out, ring and little finger in.

- Pak Tsz Sin, or "White Paper Fan": Pak Tsz Sin is an administrator or a planner, criminal or legal. Also known as "second brother." Index finger in, other three fingers out.

- Cho Hai, or "Grass Sandal": An intermediary, a liaison between the outside and the organization. Also known as "youngest brother." First three fingers out, little finger in.

- Sze Kau, or "Blue Lantern": This guy's the rank and file member—a fighter, dealer, transporter, shopworker, servant or whatever. All four fingers out.

Also note that ranks are sometimes identified by numbers, always led by the number 4. The Dragon Head, in this case Grandfather Soo, is 489; Red Pole is 426; White Paper Fan is 415 or 451; Grass Sandal is 432; and the Blue Lantern, the lowest rank, is 49. Keep in mind that some families use variations on these, and more signs and combinations exist than those I have provided.)<<<<<<

—Kirin (04:50:28/10-26-55)

>>>>>(Death is the only penalty for such disclosures. Be warned; the night is long and the blade is sharp.)<<<<<<

—Tan (11:03:10/10-26-55)

Hooks

If anyone wants to do anything to affect the running of the central London Overground area, they will come up against Grandfather Soo. Everything illicit in that region either happens with his permission or without his knowing about it (and it doesn't take him long to find out). He is less concerned about

individual runners, but organized crime either answers to him or is his enemy to the death. No one operates anything major on his patch for long and lives to brag about it.

If the runners have information he wants or are coming too close to one of the Tong's concerns, Soo will issue an invitation to dinner at the Temple of the East. The invitation is compulsory unless one wants to meet with some heavily armed Chinese intent on doling out a lesson in good manners. The meal will be superb, with no mention of payment. If Soo has something urgent to say to the runners, he will discuss it over a pot of steaming jasmine tea once the food has been cleared away and the Tong leader is puffing on his long-stemmed clay pipe. If Grandfather Soo wants to cultivate the runners or simply impress them, he may not mention business at all. However, the runners should be aware that by accepting and enjoying Soo's hospitality, they are in his debt. They owe him.

If the runners are experts in their fields or have some specific, salable skill Soo can use, he may well hire them. He pays well, but he expects absolute loyalty, discretion and obedience as part of the service. Often, however, he simply wants to hire a group of innocents to take the blame for another Tong scam or atrocity. In such a case, the runners swiftly find themselves in drek up to their necks.

Attributes

Body: 3
Quickness: 5
Strength: 4
Charisma: 6
Intelligence: 6
Willpower: 6
Essence: 2.8
Reaction: 5 (11)

Skills

Armed Combat (Edged Weapons): 4
Computer: 4
Etiquette (Corporate): 3
Etiquette (Street): 2
Etiquette (Tong): 8
Firearms: 3
Interrogation: 3
Leadership: 7
Martial Arts (Kung Fu): 4
Negotiation: 6
Psychology: 3

Initiative: 5 + 1D6 (11 + 4D6*)

Professional Rating: 3

Threat Ratings

Combat: 5

Special Skills

Cyberware

Retractable Razors
Wired Reflexes (beta-customized): 3

Tai Chi: 6
Tong Organization: 6

Bloware (Body Index: 1.3)

Nephritic Screen
Synthocardium: 2 (+2 Athletic dice)
Toxin Extractor 4

Gear

Determined by the gamemaster

Notes

Soo is very wealthy, but he owns more land than possessions. He is accompanied by at least one of his sons and a couple of additional bodyguards at all times.



Lisa Suarez (Talismonger)

Birth Date: June 16, 2014

Birthplace: New York

Nationality/Metatype/Gender: UCAS/Hispanic Elf/Female

Current Residence: Queens, New York

Height: 170 cm

Weight: 48 kg

Hair: Black (tinted with henna)

Eyes: Green-silver

Distinguishing Physical Features: Long, silver-lacquered fingernails, almond-shaped eyes, small feet

Psychology

Traits: Secretive, solitary, cautious, honest

Motivations: Historical scholarship

Lifestyle: Medium to High

If you can drag Lisa away from her grimoires and books (and provided she isn't out of town on one of her many foreign jaunts), you will discover that she is one of the best talismongers around. A lot of stuff passes through her hands, brought to her for sale and also for evaluation because she is honest and accurate in her estimations. She knows what things are worth, and she doesn't rip people off or lie to people about it. Though extremely knowledgeable about every aspect of her field, she is particularly interested in Eastern European talismans and relics. She has spent the past several years digging around in southern Ukraine, heaven knows why. She doesn't talk much about what she's found down there, but whatever it is, it isn't for sale.

Lisa is reluctant to deal with stolen merchandise—at least when stolen by gangers or members of organized crime groups. She likes to know something about how an item was obtained before she buys it. If someone offers her an object for evaluation, she asks no such questions unless the item interests her, and even then she doesn't push. She may not make an ideal fence, but a runner who buys something from her knows he need not fear being pursued by the item's hostile previous owner.

A very private person, Lisa is absorbed in her own interests and doesn't like noisy, aggressive, or pushy people. She sees right through anyone who tries to chat her up by faking interest in something that intrigues her. Deal with her honestly and politely, and you've got a reliable supplier at decent prices who can get what you need to you faster than most. She treats her vast number of contacts fairly and with respect; anyone with any brains will treat her the same way.

>>>>>(She keeps interesting company for someone so allegedly solitary. I once saw a pair of princely looking Tir Tairngire elves descend on her apartment in Queens. A couple of weeks later I saw what I thought were their doubles, except that they had pronounced Irish accents. The Tír na nÓg guys stayed overnight, I think, and left with a small parcel that one of 'em hadn't quite managed to properly conceal under his cloak. No point in asking Lisa about them, though, because she'll just smile and say politely that it's none of my business. Which is better than being told to frag off, I suppose.)<<<<<

—Cobalt Blue (04:12:17/09-12-55)

>>>>>(Lisa's also got solid connections with many of the Native American Nations, especially their shamans. She's returned items stolen from them, and she makes it plain she's not interested in dealing in anything taken from them years ago. She's very meticulous about that. If you need contacts in most of those nations, Lisa's a helpful person to talk to.)<<<<<

—Scintillator (00:18:18/09-17-55)

>>>>>(So what the heck is she doing in New York?)<<<<<

—Ghost Man (01:51:58/09-20-55)

>>>>(I suppose life in a log cabin somewhere in north UCAS would be romantic and all, but she likes her creature comforts and customers aren't thick on the ground out there. She also has a taste for opera and ballet, though I wouldn't necessarily hold that against her. Move the Met to the frozen wastes and maybe she'd relocate, but I doubt it.)<<<<<

—Sister Ray (03:17:11/09-27-55)

Hooks

Obviously, Lisa can serve simply as a talismonger contact. However, this character also gives the gamemaster the opportunity to drag runners on some exciting field trips. Lisa thinks she has found relics of an ancient civilization in southern Ukraine, but on her last trip there she found—for the first time—a hostile reception from local shamans and mages. On her next trip, she plans to take some bodyguards (the runners, perhaps?). Not only are some of the indigenous magicians opposed to her, but mages and/or shamans from elsewhere can turn up and try to thwart Lisa and the runners—agents from Tír na nÓg or Tír Tairngire, perhaps, or insect shamans trying to prevent Lisa from acquiring some item that is particularly potent against them. The gamemaster should determine the exact nature of the item and its history to suit the scenario or campaign he wishes to run.

Alternatively, runners may accompany Lisa on trips nearer to home to give cover while she forages for telesmas and other items necessary for enchanting operations. Such opportunities should not arise until the runners have dealt with her a few times and she has learned to trust them. Under such circumstances, the runners might run into all kinds of little local difficulties: rival mages or shamans hostile to them, paranormal animals into whose territory they have inadvertently stumbled, a corporate outfit exploiting a sacred site where the local shamans appeal to them for help, and so on.

Finally, the gamemaster can use the famous Maltese Falcon routine. On a dark and stormy night a dying man staggers into Lisa's apartment, half-busting the door down, and dumps an idol wrapped in brown paper on the floor before he coughs up his last. The thing screams with power, and all kinds of people are after it. Lisa appeals to the runners for help and protection while she finds out what the thing is and how to get rid of it; the runners are sitting ducks in a gallery full of angry guys with big guns and worse. This kind of scenario needs a definite twist to keep it from becoming a cliché, and so the item should confer a definite advantage on anyone owning it or near it to counterbalance its malign or dangerous effects. For example, it might enable Lisa to cast Increase Attribute spells on runners several times per day without suffering drain.

Attributes

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

Skills

Car: 4
 Enchanting: 9
 Etiquette (Native American Tribal): 6
 Etiquette (Street): 3
 Etiquette (Ukrainian Tribal): 5
 Magical Theory: 10
 Negotiation: 7
 Sorcery: 9
 Unarmed Combat: 2

Special Skills

Evaluate Magical Goods: 10
 Metalworking: 4
 Woodworking: 4

Initiative: 5 + 1D6

Professional Rating: 1

Threat Ratings

Combat: 2
 Magical: 5

Gear

Chrysler-Nissan Jackrabbit

Spells

Detection

Analyze Magic: 7
 Clairaudience: 5
 Clairvoyance: 5
 Detect Magic: 8

Manipulation

Levitate Item: 5
 Magic Fingers: 4

Notes

Lisa has natural Low-Light Vision. The gamemaster should determine what talismans, fetishes, foci and so on Lisa possesses to suit the circumstances of his campaign. Her magical gear depends how high-powered the runners are, but she should always have something they really want.



Michael James Sutherland (Decker)

Birth Date: August 17, 2025

Birthplace: Chelmsford, United Kingdom

Nationality/Gender/Metatype: British/Caucasian
Human/Male

Current Residence: Manhattan, New York, UCAS

Height: 188 cm

Weight: 73 kg

Hair: Blonde

Eyes: Light blue (has been known to use corneal filters to appear hazel eyed)

Distinguishing Physical Features: Major weakness in lower back due to shotgun injuries, wears thick waist corset for support

Psychology

Traits: Ultra-rational, very cool under pressure; intensely curious about computer systems; immaculate manners and tendency to banter present an impenetrable persona; describes himself as "into S & M—being shallow and meaningless"

Motivations: Unknown; extremely difficult character to "read"

Lifestyle: High (has resources for Luxury)

Michael Sutherland is one of the best deckers in the world. Born to a wealthy family that made its money from stock investments in light industry, he is used to money and is estimated to be worth some 12 million nuyen (excluding the value of his decks). Almost any megacorporation you can think of has used Sutherland as a runner. He cheerfully hacks into the systems of any of them at the behest of another, but has an unspoken understanding with clients that he will not lift ultra-sensitive data. No corp has attempted to ice him because of his immense value, and none has attempted to coerce him on to their payroll (by kidnapping, for example) because everyone else would get very upset about that. He has managed to climb a very greasy pole all the way to the top and has stayed there for a couple of years, so far. His personal charm and seeming lack of artifice, pretension or duplicity is highly disarming. He does not appear to have trampled on many heads on the way up and has no major enemies.

Fastidious to a fault, Sutherland is always immaculately dressed and has a strong aesthetic sense (known likes: Joscan, Palestrina, Renaissance and Bulgarian choral music, J.S. Bach, Verdi). Not an addictive personality, he does not smoke or abuse chips and has few liaisons with women; he drinks good wines, gin and malt whiskies in moderation. His Achilles heel is his intense curiosity. Give him a tough-to-crack problem in the Matrix and he wants to crack it simply because it's there. He does not tend to worry much about the consequences, believing that he can always cover his tracks. One of his greatest strengths as a decker is his ability to use smart frames and reroute systems to disguise his own activities to look as if they actually originated in another system, generally that of a small corporation. It is very difficult to tell exactly what coups Sutherland has brought off, because many of them are not ascribed to him and he does not boast about them. Diplomatic by nature, he cannot be lured into talking about the details of his runs.

Sutherland is the man to find if you have a Matrix problem you absolutely can't hack. His skills and resources are almost unequaled, and he may charge less than you think because his interest in a problem matters more to him than financial gain—but don't even think of stiffing the man.

>>>>(Sutherland's a genius of sorts. Completely weird. He's just not on the same planet as the rest of us. No one can be that polite. One time, in the middle of a nerve-shaking decking session with some corporate goons for once taking a heavy interest so that everyone else's fingers were twitching on their Predators, he gets up cool as you like and insists on Earl Grey tea and scones—miniature muffins with fruit in 'em—for tea. When we looked disbelieving, he just said we oughta be glad he didn't want high tea, because there weren't any deviled kidneys and he'd have been really pissed about that. Jeez. The only "high tea" I know about comes from Jamaica. Like I said, weird.)<<<<<

—Snorbitz (16:32:11/9-22-55)

>>>>(Huh. Just because he's got them Fairlights and all. Poseur.)<<<<<

—Ghost Man (23:11:17/9-30-55)

>>>>(Wrong. He has the skills, not just the equipment. He's modified his own decks, and the nested smart frame systems are incredible—all self-programmed. He's wiz. You wanna hire him, take along lots of nuyen and arrive in a tweed suit. Then he'll take a shine to you.)

—Slater (20:51:52/10-5-55)

>>>>(He's something of a snob. Don't arrive with half a dozen sweaty troll samurai in tow who chew tobacco and spit on the carpet. The man is English; he's civilized.)<<<<<

—De Rigueur (17:02:42/10-9-55)

>>>>(And don't even think about trying to steal his decks. Even if you got through the security in his condo, the decks are guaranteed to brain-fry anyone trying to use them, and that's after they scream through the Matrix to him and relay their exact physical location. The onboard smart frames are smarter than you, whoever you may be.)<<<<<

—Analyzer (20:20:41/10-22-55)

Hooks

Use Sutherland as a resource, a master decker type. Charge runners a high rate; make them suffer in the credstick for employing this man. He also makes a possible contact for a fixer who can supply exceptional decks, utilities or cyberware (less likely), or can serve as a possible contact for locating a shadowclinic. Don't have this guy give away secrets from his runs—he doesn't do that. Neither does he sell decks or programs, or accept commissions for customizing work. Runners must do that kind of thing themselves.

Attributes

Body: 2
 Quickness: 5
 Strength: 3
 Charisma: 5
 Intelligence: 7
 Willpower: 4
 Essence: 5
 Reaction: 6 (9 in Matrix only*)

Initiative: 6 + 1D6 (4D6 in Matrix only*)

Professional Rating: 2

Threat Ratings

Combat: 2
 Decking: 9

Cyberware

Datajack
 Headware Memory, 30 Mp
 Smartlink

Gear

Ares Predator [15 (clip), SA, 9M, w/50 rounds of regular ammunition]
 2 modified Fairlight Excaliburs (one with MPCP 14, Hardening 7, I/O 75, Reaction Increase 3; the second identical to the first but with Hardening 6). These decks never leave Sutherland's apartment.
 2 modified Fuchi Cyber-7s with Hardening 6, I/O 50, Response Increase: 3.
 Programs should be devised by the gamemaster (see below), but the Fairlights always have Sleaze: 9, Browse: 9, and Deception: 9. Sutherland has attack utilities with both area-effect and penetration options (see p. 22, **Virtual Realities**).
 Microtronics Workshop: Portable computer (heavily modified as gamemaster sees fit; wallet-sized version)
 Doc Wagon™ Contract (Platinum)
 Tres Chic clothing, Brit style
 Other items as the gamemaster determines

*Pre-20th-century music only. Add 1 point to Skill Rating for specific composers noted in Sutherland's biography.

Notes

Because different gamemasters handle decking differently, we have left it to the gamemaster to pin down every last detail of this decker. We offer the following suggestions for customizing him to suit the needs of your adventure.

Add other utilities to Sutherland's stash as appropriate for the needs of a run. Keep in mind that this man has money and contacts, and can easily get any program he needs. Special rules apply to Sutherland for jacking out of the Matrix (p. 171, **SR II**) and for his smart frames (p. 55, **Virtual Realities**). With smart frames, Sutherland's genius lies in the economy of contingency programming. To simulate this, consider the system load as 70 percent of its actual value when using the Fast Resolution System for smart frame operations.

Sutherland has an integrated cardiomonitoring and mini-PET brain-scanning system that continually monitors him while he is in the Matrix. If he comes up against black IC and attempts to jack out, this monitoring/stabilizing system allows him to subtract 2 from the target number for his Willpower Test to be able to jack out in the first place, and also gives him a Target Number of 3 for his Body Test to avoid Stun damage. If he is attacked by black IC and fails to jack out, he is allowed a Body Resistance Test against IC damage because of the stabilizers.



Frank Marshall Wendall (Private Detective)

Birth Date: August 14, 2017

Birthplace: Savannah, Georgia

Nationality/Metatype/Gender: CAS/Caucasian Human/
Male

Current Residence: Atlanta, CAS

Height: 180 cm

Weight: 77 kg

Hair: Sandy brown

Eyes: Blue-gray

Distinguishing Physical Features: Bullet-entry scar over right nipple; bullet-exit scar beneath right shoulder blade.

Psychology

Traits: Obsessive-compulsive, perfectionist, remorseless

Motivations: Pursuit of criminals, social justice

Lifestyle: Medium

Many people want to lose themselves; many more get lost through the actions of others. Whoever they are, wherever they are, Frank Wendall finds them.

Wendall once worked as an officer in the Atlanta Police Force. His meteoric rise through the ranks of the homicide division littered his record with commendations and notes on his remarkable successes at bringing killers to justice. In reaction to the considerable strain put on him by the investigation into the famous Kris Columbus case, during which Wendall was severely injured while apprehending the notorious serial killer, he took early retirement with a disability pension and disappeared into his house on the margins of the Okefenokee Swamp for more than three years.

No one knows who persuaded Wendall to return to work, but about six months after he accepted his first case, it came to the attention of the city authorities that Wendall could find people, and had done so for a succession of local folk in the surrounding towns. When the APF struck out in their attempt to find the missing twin sons of an important Renraku executive, the department hired Wendall. After studying all the relevant details of the case, he led the authorities to the boys' corpses, buried in a remote valley high in the North Georgia Mountains. The finger of suspicion briefly fell on him, but he cleared his name when he tracked down and brought in alive the woman responsible: the notorious Gracey McKimson.

Ever since that time, Frank Wendall has been involved in several well-publicized cases, as well as many more that escaped the attention of the media. He gained the greatest number of column inches and bulletin time for refusing to assist in tracking the errant City Hall financial director, William Cruise. Wendall always reserves the right to choose whether or not to take a case, and once he makes his decision it seems nothing can persuade him otherwise.

Wendall insists on veto power because of his unique methods of applying himself to a case. Psychological profiles have become standard in all areas of criminal investigation, but Frank Wendall takes the practice one step further. Much as a true Method actor adopts the entire personality of his current role, Wendall becomes the subject of his case. As a result Wendall has been known to acquire any deep psychological flaws his subject has and can sometimes be affected very deeply by the cases he works on. Often after a particularly disturbing case, Wendall disappears from the scene for up to a year before being lured back to assist with another case.

>>>>>(I have been told by one of the top shrinks at APF that Frank Wendall has no control over how he reacts when presented with a case. After absorbing every last scrap of information he can acquire about it, he either comes out totally cold and declines to take the job, or shoots off like a jackrabbit with a cyber-enhanced Doberman at its heels. As for payment, he takes what people can afford. Some in the city administration regard him with deep suspicion, but local people speak of him as a saint, albeit a troubled one.)<<<<<<
—Icepick (14:54:32/09-28-55)

>>>>>(Wendall had a wife and child. She left when his police work took precedence over her. She remarried, a nice guy but an alcoholic. The new guy killed the kid when he was drunk. Frank Wendall tracked him down after he did a runner and offed him, or so the story goes.)<<<<<<
—Rewind (04:03:33/09-30-55)

>>>>(Yeah, yeah. Everyone knows that one.)<<<<<
—Statler (11:08:59/10-02-55)

>>>>(So? That don't make it untrue.)<<<<<
—Rewind (05:01:14/10-03-55)

>>>>(Frank Wendall still has his stilt house down south; somewhere off Highway 84 west of Waycross, I believe. If you need Wendall's services, though, you can't just turn up at his door. He'll just introduce you to his pal, Mr. Buckshot. Plenty of people around know about him. Send out the word and he'll get in touch, if he wants the job.)<<<<<
—Doog (22:44:01/10-03-55)

>>>>(Forgive me, but I have heard that he is a major, well, user.)<<<<<
—lo (00:22:54/10-14-55)

>>>>(No way. Wendall's talent is natural. He is simply a very troubled man.)<<<<<
—Icepick (17:01:29/10-16-55)

Hooks

Frank Wendall is the ultimate bounty hunter, detective and bloodhound rolled into one tortured psyche. If someone's missing or a crime has been committed and the culprit cannot be identified, Wendall's name eventually comes up after all else fails—as a firm fact, a vague rumor, or even an urban legend. Simply finding him and persuading him to take a case can be an adventure in itself. Obviously, if an adventure depends on Wendall's participation, he must eventually agree to take the case, but because each case affects him so badly, he will not make it easy. Runners who need him must get used to his obsessive methods and self-torturing personality.

Attributes

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

Skills

Car: 4
Etiquette (Street): 5
Firearms: 5
Psychology: 5
 Individual: 9
Stealth: 4
Unarmed Combat: 4

Special Skills

Criminal Psychology: 7
Tracking: 6

Initiative: 6 + 1D6

Professional Rating: 3

Threat Ratings

Combat: 4

Gear

Armor Jacket (5/3)
Binoculars w/Low-Light and Thermographics
Browning Max-Power [Heavy Pistol, 10 (clip), SA, 9M, w/100 rounds of regular ammunition, Silencer]
Chrysler-Nissan Ranger All-Terrain Vehicle
Doc Wagon™ Contract (Gold)
Laser Microphone
Low-Light Goggles
Maglock Passkey
Micro-Camcorder
Micro-Recorder
Micro-Transceiver
Pocket Secretary
Remington 950 [Sport Rifle, 5 (magazine), SA, 9S, w/40 rounds of regular ammunition]
Shotgun Microphone
Signal Locator
Survival Knife
Survival Pack
Tracking Signals (4)

Notes

At his home in the swamps, Wendall has a large armory of assorted hunting weapons, a marsh-skimmer hoverboat, a small powerboat, and four large, well-trained German shepherds. Away from his house, he carries additional supplies, ammunition and weapons in his car.

Note that Wendall has no cyberware. He has a horror of it, believing that any implants will interfere with his ability to get under the skins of the subjects of his investigations. He has an almost phobic reaction to over-chromed samurai types, whom he finds repugnant.

In any scenario or adventure in which Wendall appears, make the most of his unique style. He collects every last scrap of information about his subject—visiting their haunts, interrogating families and friends, re-enacting traumatic scenes in their lives, and so on. Make Wendall a distinctive kind of sleuth.

Karl-Heinz Zessler (Mage)



Karl-Heinz Zessler (Mage)

Birth Date: January 16, 2011

Birthplace: Kaiserslautern, Germany

Nationality/Metatype/Gender: German/Caucasian
Elf/Male

Current Residence: Glastonbury, UK

Height: 183 cm

Weight: 73 kg

Hair: Silvery gray

Eyes: Green-blue

Distinguishing Physical Features: Widow's peak, very pale skin, shuffling gait

Psychology

Traits: Kind, charming, unselfish, modest

Motivations: Magical research

Lifestyle: High

I know Karl-Heinz. His birth certificate may say 2011, but I'd say he's been around a long, long time. He certainly looks aged, even for an elf, and that would probably put him in his nineties at least. I have never met such a kind, peaceful, tolerant and wise soul. I have never heard Karl-Heinz utter an ill word about anyone, and everyone I know who has ever met him agrees that his simple presence is wholly disarming, that to sit and talk with him is to see all the world in a more kindly way—not to fail to see its faults, vanities and wickednesses for what they are, but to be less judgmental and more merciful in understanding the weaknesses and frailties of the body and spirit. Once, a samurai of my acquaintance—a man who would kill his own mother for a couple of hundred nuyen—told me he thought Hessler was a saint. He didn't know what a saint was, exactly, but it had to be someone like this, he said.

Hessler has his own inherited money, but sometimes he works as a consultant on obscure occult matters. His thing now, the obsession that's been driving him for many years, is the stone circle zodiac centered on the village of Butleigh, a few miles southeast of Glastonbury. If it is a zodiac, by the way, it puts Glastonbury itself right next to the water carrier. Hessler thinks it's no accident that he was drawn to the place, given his birth date. Now maybe that's just bull-drek, but I wouldn't want to back my rationality against his intuitions. He's right too often.

So, why do you need to know about some crazy old elf staring at stones in the middle of Great Britain? Well, suppose you get your hands on something that screams magic and you don't know what it is? More than one slag has lost his head—literally—messing with powers beyond his understanding. This is when you need Karl-Heinz. You'll have to pay him well, but he'll tell you what it is, what it does, and what risks you take trying to tap into its magic or use it. Or say someone gets a piece of you and tries to nail you with ritual sorcery. Hessler can help you find out who and put a stop to it. Need to know more about the history and personality of some wandering spirit, banshee, dangerous free spirit, something like that? Hessler's your man—or your elf, rather. Got some curse laid on you by some angry shaman or mage? Call Karl. What bullets and missiles can't stop, Karl can. He just might be your spiritual Doc Wagon™.

>>>>>(But don't get too close to what he's fragging with at Glastonbury. The background here is terrifying, and unless you're a drekhot mage, don't even think about any kind of magical operations. The place has its own logic and purpose, and it might just consider you a helpful tool for its use or an irritant to scratch away.)<<<<<

—Serena D. (02:16:44/03-04-55)

>>>>>(Don't carry any weapons if you want to find Hessler. Well, maybe a knife is all night, providing it's a small one. Don't imagine that any concealment will work either. Hessler abhors violence, and he won't help anyone toting offensive weaponry.)<<<<<

—MesoStim (03:35:11/03-06-55)

>>>>>(I'd just like to contribute a testimonial. No names and no details on the run, but once some friends and I pissed off Aztechnology big time on some operations in Ciudad Obregón. They came for us using ritual sorcery. I saw two good friends die from something that turned them into things like the imaginings of some demented trid special effects technofreak. Nothing—no barrier I could construct anyway—could stop it. One victim each full moon. Raul and I got to Hessler a day before the third full moon. He didn't let me see his preparations, but when we stood inside his protective circles they screamed, and I mean really screamed, magic at me. And then the thing came. I'd rather not describe it, because, frankly, I don't want to remember too much about what it looked like. The spirit Hessler flung at it was suffused with a terrible vengeful beauty. Brilliant lances of light streamed from its body and cut the monstrosity to ribbons. Then the spirit soared into the ether far above us and shot off at a rate that makes suborbitals look like snails.

Raul asked where it had gone. Hessler smiled quietly and told the decker to think of it as a trace-and-burn program. We've never had anything come for us again.

Don't frag with the old elf. Anyone ever hurts him, we'll hunt you down til the end of our days.)<<<<<<

—Name deleted by request (00:00:01/03-25-55)

Hooks

Many obvious hooks are noted in the previous text. Runners in trouble can find help from Hessler on many scores. He can also serve as an occult consultant. In particular, his knowledge of the names, identities and purposes of free spirits is unequalled.

Hessler is studying the Glastonbury Zodiac because he suspects it is a potentially powerful portal to the metaplanes. Develop this at your discretion. Hessler might want help from runners on an astral quest to energize the magic of the portal. On the other hand, opening the portal might be very dangerous (potentially opening the door to some very unpleasant things trying to get in), and Hessler might need help to seal it. Other people—remnants of the Universal Brotherhood, insect shamans, cultists or maybe simply misguided students of magic and the occult—may actually want to let such monstrosities loose on the world. These folks might try to kill Hessler, interrogate him for his knowledge and exploit his magical operations for their own ends.

See **Notes** for additional information and ideas.

Attributes

Body: 1
 Quickness: 3
 Strength: 1
 Charisma: 6
 Intelligence: 6
 Willpower: 4
 Essence: 6
 Magic: 14 (17)
 Reaction: 4



Skills

Conjuring: 10
 Enchanting: 9
 Magical Theory: 11
 Negotiation: 3
 Parazoology: 6
 Psychology: 6
 Sociology: 5
 Anthropology: 8
 Sorcery: 10

Special Skill

Centering (see **Notes**): 6
 Occult Theory and Lore: 10
 Spirit Lore: 8

Initiative: 4 + 1D6**Grade of Initiation:** 8**Professional Rating:** 2**Threat Ratings**

Combat: 2

Magical: 5

Gear

Hermetic Library (Conjuring): 11

Hermetic Library (Enchanting): 10

Hermetic Library (Sorcery): 11

Hermetic Library (Magical Theory): 12

Power Focus: 3

Spells**Combat**

Manaball: 6

Slay Insect Form: 7

Sleep: 8

Stunblast: 6

Detection

Analyze Magic: 9

Analyze Truth: 8

Clairaudience (Extended): 7

Clairvoyance (Extended): 7

Detect Enemies (Extended): 7

Detect Life: 8

Detect Magic: 10

Mindlink (Individual): 8

Mind Probe: 8

Illusion

Chaotic World: 6

Mask: 9

Manipulation

Animate: 7

Astral Static: 9

Barrier: 10

Blast Barrier: 9

Bullet Barrier: 8

Influence: 7

Mana Barrier: 10

Notes

Hessler is certainly much older than the 44 years his official birth date suggests. He's probably 80–100 years old, and his past history can be improvised to suit your campaign. He is fluent in German, his first language, and English.

Hessler's home is continually protected by watchers, and he also has an ally, whom he humorously calls Merlin. Determine Merlin's stats to suit the requirements of your campaign, but keep the ally powerful. Hessler's house is fairly archaic. The mage detests any kind of instrumentation or gadgetry. No trid, so simsense unit, no microwave ovens, computers or other useless clutter of "civilization" spoil the atmosphere. He doesn't even have a radio. The domicile con-

tains primitive cooking facilities, candles and oil lamps (though the house does have electricity). An extensive library, containing several grimoires and guarded zealously by Merlin, occupies most of the house. If light-fingered guests walk off with books, they tend to wander back to return them within a few days and suffer some amnesia and disorientation for a little while afterward.

Hessler cannot summon spirits in the way a shaman can, but his knowledge of spirits enables him to call on them for help by making Charisma Tests. Add bonus dice for any general power focus or other magical item you determine is relevant. The target number for these tests is the Force Rating of the spirit called. If Hessler achieves any successes on the Charisma Test, a spirit of the type he calls appears. The spirit provides one service for every 2 successes. You may wish to require that Hessler give the spirit some reason for calling it; how closely the spirit examines Hessler's request depends on its Intelligence (equal to its Force Rating). Hessler doesn't often request spirit help, because he regards it almost as an invasion of a spirit's privacy (it's a strange idea, but Hessler has strange ideas), and he normally does so only for information.

Hessler knows many free spirits and even some great spirits. Whether these become involved in game play depends on the kind of scenario or campaign. Hessler can call on such powerful entities by sending a watcher as a messenger. In such cases, Hessler and the spirit deal as absolute equals and no Charisma Test is required. Free spirits often ask for Karma in return. Great spirits usually request some other, important, service. Make the runners do the sacrificing/serving.

Do not let runners use Hessler for magical tasks they can do themselves. He helps individuals in especially dire straits. A specific note: Hessler dislikes using combat spells and will only do so if he has no other option. This reluctance does not extend to his slay insect forms spell, however.

Hessler's Magic Attribute Rating marks him as a Grade 8 Initiate of a magical order. This order, its membership and purposes are deliberately unspecified. Hessler does not discuss these matters unless they are relevant to a campaign. And they become relevant only if the runners are involved in some *serious* magical/occult drek. Under such circumstances, flesh out the various factions, friends and enemies to fit your requirements.

Hessler uses more than one form of centering ritual. For most spell usage he speaks in an arcane language (Fumerian), but when enchanting or dealing with spirits or elementals he always sings in ancient Egyptian to evoke, summon, call or welcome the entity.

Hessler's personality is unusual for the world of 2055 and offers the main hook for roleplaying him. He is very polite and quiet, always thinks before speaking, and is unfailingly well-mannered and gracious. He is sharp as a razor as well. He loves books, holding them as carefully and lovingly as a mother might a newborn.

PRIME TERRORS



Mary Jo Doonan (Terrorist)



Julio "Chico" Hernandez (Terrorist)



Corey Martin (Serial Killer)



Teachdaire (Assassin)

Mary Jo Doonan (Terrorist)



Mary Jo Doonan (Terrorist)

Birth Date: August 21, 2023

Birthplace: Lafayette, Louisiana

Nationality/Metatype/Gender: CAS/Caucasian
Human/Female

Current Residence: Unknown, but rumored as New Orleans, CAS

Height: 180 cm

Weight: 59 kg

Hair: Light brown

Eyes: Green

Distinguishing Physical Features: Small round scar on left temple; missing tips of last two fingers on right hand

Psychology

Traits: Cold, detached, ruthless, borderline sociopath, paranoid

Motivations: Unable to analyze, but definitely complex

Lifestyle: Unknown

The American intelligence services expend a tremendous amount of time, energy and money training their field operatives, and so they expect a full return on their investment. When an agent tires of the espionage business, they usually retire from field operations and begin performing less sensitive duties. What they don't do is jump ship in Beirut, disappear for four years and then reappear smuggling illegal drugs into New Orleans. Unless they are Mary Jo Doonan.

Doonan's final mission for the CIA placed her in a back bedroom of the Beirut Imperial, with three high-ranking members of the British diplomatic corps and a large suitcase full of experi-

mental BTLs. Apparently, Doonan decided that she had had enough of performing increasingly unaccountable tasks. And so she emptied her pistol into the backs of the diplomats' heads, helped herself to the BTLs and an attaché case containing blueprints for a new prototype attack aircraft, and disappeared into the night. No one seemed especially eager to take the plans off her hands, but the BTLs went down very well in Italy.

The CIA next caught a brief glimpse of her in Zurich in late 2049, and then in Honduras the following year. After that, her trail went cold for four years, and presumably the agency placed her file on the back burner. During those years, it is believed she managed to slip back into America and return to her childhood home in Louisiana, where she worked swiftly to establish a base of operations, possibly among the swamplands around Vermillion Lake or Six Mile Bay. From there she has been running chips, prohibited weapons and drugs into the CAS. She has used a variety of methods, vehicles and names, including Dawn McMurty and Reba Nelson. Observers believe she is trying to acquire enough money to escape the attentions of the security services permanently.

In late 2052, Mary Jo sent a trid of herself to the *New York Times*. On that recording, she hinted that she had a great many secrets to reveal concerning her own covert activities, as well as those of her fellow agents both overseas and at home. In return, she wanted several hundred thousand nuyen. The paper paid gladly, but the courts prevented it from printing the story. Later, Harvill-Schuster advanced an equivalent amount for the book rights, and the manuscript is said to be in their hands. Publication of the text is certain to create an immense scandal.

Doonan is a highly trained agent. Although she was rarely called on to perform assassinations, she can kill with an icy cold detachment and is skilled in the use of a wide variety of weapons, both complicated and primitive. She is an expert at covert operations and can remain undetected for many years if necessary. Although undoubtedly the CIA has reopened her file and is looking for her once more, the agency seems to stand little chance of finding her unless she draws more attention to her activities.

>>>>(I have dealt with such a woman—early thirties, blonde, local accent. Helped run several cases of assault rifles into Mobile on a rigger called Nowhere Girl. Kept her hat and dark glasses on day and night and was helped by two enormous troll deckhands, so we didn't get too curious, even when she announced halfway through that she was making an unscheduled stop to pick up more "merchandise" for herself. She and her chummers insisted, so we had no choice. We met up with another boat. That crew sent over five small crates and she chucked over a holdall that must have had the cash in it, then we all took off. She was cool and professional and wished us well when we skipped ashore, even apologizing for the unscheduled interruption. But when we tried the contact number we had for her for another run six months later, the line was disconnected. Whaddaya reckon? Was that her?)<<<<

—Ernie (18:08:25/10-5-55)

>>>>(More than likely. It's fairly common knowledge that she's making regular runs now, maybe even a few too many for her own good. I know a couple of guys who deal in illicit chips who seem to be very well stocked all of a sudden. All this activity can't be good for her invisibility rating, I would think. Won't be long before the nondescript guys in the nondescript suits in the nondescript dark sedan come asking difficult questions.)<<<<<

—Sugar D (04:14:53/10-6-55)

>>>>(There's more than a thousand square miles of swampy delta and lakes out there. You couldn't think of a better place to hide out.)<<<<<

—Skink (07:08:12/10-6-55)

>>>>(Yeah, Skink, but if she's dealing with others, she or they have to make contact. I know people who swear they know people who dealt with her, and surely it's not safe to have that many people knowing what you look like, what you currently call yourself or where you might be. There are way too many drekbags about who would willingly drop a word in a fed's ear in exchange for a little reward money.)<<<<<

—Moon (08:14:23/10-6-55)

>>>>(I know for a fact that two local runners—Ennio Franzetti and Jackie Forester—who turned up floating face down in Lake Pontchartrain last year—were iced for blabbing too loudly about their contact for a prime arms smuggling job. They passed on names and contact numbers to just about every mover and shaker in the New Orleans shadows, which was not cool. It don't take Einstein to work out she was behind their disappearing all of a sudden.)<<<<<

—King Snake (14:13:08/10-17-55)

>>>>(If you're interested, download the Most Wanted files from FedMat at Atlanta when you have a moment. Mary Jo Doonan is near the top of the "Have You Seen This Woman?" stack. Page 6 provides some pretty tasty inferences as to why. Interesting reading.)<<<<<

—Cam (07:32:12/10-22-55)

>>>>(By the by, I'd suggest that Ernie's troll buddies were probably from one of the communities that dwell in the stilt villages throughout the Mississippi Delta. They are drekking huge, half-Creole in origin, well-muscled from hauling in fishing nets, and so handy with a gutting knife you'd swear you never saw it move. Not good news.)<<<<<

—Rouen (00:06:50/10-23-55)

>>>>(But could be an excellent pointer as to Doonan's whereabouts? Thanks, chummer.)<<<<<

—Bounty Killer (00:00:02/10-24-55)

Hooks

Mary Jo Doonan is an ideal contact for any group that wishes to acquire something very illegal or dangerous. Whatever you want, Mary Jo knows someone who can get it into a boat off the Louisiana coast within 72 hours. Trouble is, you got to get in touch with Mary Jo first. And then you have to deal with her. She has been monitoring the buzz on her whereabouts, and she is becoming very paranoid about with whom she does business. And her intelligence training makes her tremendously dangerous to deal with, especially if she suspects someone's double-dealing with her. Out on the water she is even more paranoid, alert for the slightest whiff of a setup, and those two massive trolls don't seem likely to allow much room for argument either.

Doonan knows an *awful* lot from her CIA days. She's seen files on, or hunted, or has known most of the major bad-news criminals, assassins, schizo-killers and general scum around the UCAS and the CAS. And so Doonan can serve as a source of information on numerous bad, mad villains. Of course, finding her and persuading her to share information can be a dangerous proposition in itself.

Lastly, Doonan may have some grudge from her CIA days. Perhaps she was set up as a fall guy and now wants to take out the fragger who set her up. She may not be able to perform the job herself, but she's got money to pay runners to do it. And, of course, when they set out to do the run they get mixed up in all kinds of CIA infighting. Doonan's old boss may tell them he knows that she was set up and is happy to have the responsible fragger killed, and he'd like her back on board. She's learned so much about smugglers and smuggling, after all. Is he lying? (*Come on. He works for the CIA. Of course he's lying.*) And so he sends the runners back out, maybe with a cortex bomb on board to keep 'em loyal. Have fun.

Attributes

Body: 5
Quickness: 7
Strength: 5
Charisma: 3
Intelligence: 6

Skills

Armed Combat: 5
Athletics: 3
Car: 4
Computer: 4
Electronics
(Electronic Warfare): 2
Firearms: 8
Firearms (B/R): 6
Interrogation: 6
Motorboat: 4

Initiative: 6 + 1D6 (10 + 3D6)

Professional Rating: 4

Threat Ratings

Combat: 5

Cyberware

Cybereyes with Camera, Low-Light, Flare-Compensation, and Thermographic Vision (can also be programmed to change eye color)

Datajack

Headware Memory, 100 Mp

Smartlink

Wired Reflexes: 2

Gear

Antidote Patches: 6 (2)

Armor Jacket (5/3)

Defiance T250 [Shotgun, 5 (magazine), SA, 10S, w/300 rounds of regular ammunition]

Metal Restraints (4)

Panther Assault Cannon [Heavy Weapon, 22 (clip), SS, 18D (Belt), w/200 rounds each of belted explosive ammunition and regular ammunition]

Remington Roomsweeper [Heavy Pistol, 8 (magazine), SA, 9S (f), w/120 rounds of regular ammunition]

Respirator

Shotgun Microphone

Stimulant Patches: 4 (6)

Trauma Patches: 7 (2)

Notes

Add other items to Doonan's equipment listing as she needs them (she's a fixer of sorts). Mil spec weapons, illicit pharmaceuticals, BTLs and the like are plausible additions. Her boat is a beat-up (but sturdy) bayou swamp craft that doesn't fit easily into any **Shadowrun** archetype. The closest craft is probably the Aztech Nightrunner. Add armaments at your discretion.

Make Doonan a dramatic character. She may like wearing a floppy broad-rimmed hat and tight-fitting jeans, but she's about as fragile as a swamp gator and has a deep voice redolent of a great deal of bourbon and too many cigarettes consumed late at night. Doonan is a tough, hard individual with a great deal of cynicism and little in the way of a sense of humor. She is unforgiving, pragmatic, hard and downright *mean*.





Julio "Chico" Hernandez (Terrorist)

Birth Date: November 19, 2027

Birthplace: Havana, Cuba

Nationality/Metatype/Gender: Travels on many passports, using many aliases (officially Cuban)/Hispanic Human/Male

Current Residence: Unknown

Height: 178 cm

Weight: 74 kg

Hair: Black

Eyes: Brown

Distinguishing Physical Features: None

Psychology

Traits: Psychopathic traits, charming, manipulative

Motivations: Self-hatred, destructiveness

Lifestyle: Unknown

Well now, boys and girls, here's an interesting case. The legendary Chico. Almost as many appearances in the American media as the president himself. This man has been responsible for more outrages than any other single operative in the Western Hemisphere. Nobody's entirely sure what Chico looks like, thanks to all his disguises, and all that we ever seem to get are grainy photos. Some kinda crazed treehugger, official sources identify Chico as the killer of no fewer than seven corporate vice presidents, nineteen other corporate suits, and a countless number of ordinary working people, clerical staffers, and simple human beings—oh, yes, and three media jocks in the famed Cajun Cataclysm of '51, when he blew an entire steamerload of Aztechnology hacks, riggers and general scumbags out of the Mississippi. Fortunately, the heroic anti-terrorist agencies of the UCAS and the CAS have been able to increase their budgets and mount determined raids against known associates of Chico, thus weakening his resources.

The whole thing's drek, kiddies. "Chico" is actually a corporate creation, a super villain designed to strike fear into and evoke the hatred of good citizens everywhere. And making him an anti-American Cuban *communist* evokes special hate among many residents of the CAS. In reality, this exceptionally hate-filled little psychopath was born in Mazatenango, Aztlan, a middling-sized city in what once was Guatemala. And he's no rogue anarchist either. He works for corporations for a variety of purposes. Corps often use him against particularly persistent pressure groups. Chico pops up and "helps" the activists out with a little direct action, thus associating them with violence, subversion of democracy, and the like. "That poor corporation," the public starts thinking. Chico's been known to geek the occasional corporate executive as well, and he seems to be a favored asset for power struggles within corporates (watch Saeder-Krupp). Though most of this is speculation, no one can deny that Chico is backed with obscene amounts of money, resources and logistical support.

No one's really sure who is behind the Chico entity, however. His controller—his immediate programmer—may be a freelancer. Certainly, Aztechnology, Saeder-Krupp and Shiawase have all used his services, and evidence exists of certain politicians in the CAS being in on the network, too. However, I don't think I'll make my little nest egg public yet. It's worth a few nuyen.

>>>>>(It's worth a visit from twenty trolls with assault cannons and plastic explosives, you drekhead. Keep your mouth shut.)<<<<<

—MesoStim (01:17:12/10-18-55)

>>>>>(You'll also find that one or two foreign governments have used Chico. Certain governments in the Arabic world regularly denounced by the West for exporting terrorism actually have little numbers going with Western insurance outfits. These governments insure certain aircraft against disasters. Chico blows them up. The insurance companies pay up and then raise the premiums through the roof, jumping their profits. Everyone in business gets fat. That's freedom for you.)<<<<<

—Collector (03:19:11/10-20-55)

>>>>(Gimme an example of the drek this guy's supposed to have done a little closer to home.)<<<<<<

—Bitter Lemon (04:16:07/10-21-55)

>>>>(Where have you been for the past five years? Remember the Fort Pierce event of '52? Saeder-Krupp was (and still is) a significant player in industrial developments down in southern Florida, developments that are really going to up the already absurd demand for water. Water for the plants, and water for the people who're going to swell those depressing, scuzzy strip towns along the Jacksonville-Miami highway. That's going to mean fragging what little is left of the Everglades with drainage, and the plans had been deeply unpopular with the general public. The eco-groups went supernova. SK and their chummers suggested a meeting with representatives of the public and eco-activists at Fort Pierce. One mile north of the place, the train tracks were blown apart as the train bringing the corporate team rode over them—17 dead, 35 injured. A coded message—using the right ID codes—from an underground Deep Green group to the media claimed responsibility. Now, you just have to ask why the hell those SK folks were traveling by train when they could have flown down? And you have to wonder how the hell the lines out of town weren't checked. "Oh, but they were, and we did not find anything," SK said cutely. It blamed the inefficiency of a local subcontracted security firm. Said it was routine practice to employ local security, good for the community, and so on. Bulldrek. I reckon it made it easier to sneak their guy past some dumb-butt bunch of dozy fat Floridians sleeping on surveillance.

Within three days the local police somehow turned up low-grade pictures of Chico talking with a couple of local guys known for their eco-activism. These are literate, intelligent people who had some effect on that apathetic, cretinized entity known as public opinion. Next thing, they're banged in jail for long enough to take them out of the frame of public debate, even though no charges ever stuck. SK got the contracts, the deals and the money. It also got paid off by Cord Mutual for lost employees: no-one's sure if Cord was in the loop, but it increased its premiums shortly afterward. Everything turned out pretty nice for everyone left alive and in business, didn't it?)<<<<<<

—Trap Man (03:33:31/10-27-55)

Hooks

Chico can involve the runners in some nightmare scenarios. The first is the patsy scenario. Here, Chico recruits the runners to work with him for some eco-activist aim. This appeals to players who worry about rain forests getting burned down, baby whales being nuked, and the like. Chico poses as some wealthy young idealist and makes his scheme seem like some anti-property strike while he is behind the scenes, rigging up the explosives and detonators to murder a couple of dozen innocent people. The runners get framed, and they must find Chico and force him to tell the truth. And such action prompts all kinds of corporate ferocity, of course.

The too-close-to-the-fan scenario (i.e., you're too close when the drek just happens to hit it) is a variation of the patsy scenario. Here, the runners are innocent bystanders, but Chico's corporate employers decide to use them as patsies anyway.

In the "stop-Chico" scenario, some corporate suit with a soul has discovered his employer is contacting Chico, and he wants to stop it. He contacts some green group, which sets up a meeting between itself, the runners and their suit. The suit gets iced on the way to the powwow and his employer tries to geek the runners, too. The runners have to find out why the company wants to dust them—which entails decking into the firm's computer system, learning the truth and stopping the assassination attempts.

The "runaway train" scenario is yet another option. Here, Chico has gone loco. The psychopath's facade has cracked and his full-blown madness emerges. Several corporate concerns are desperate to silence him permanently. If he's out of control, after all, no one can predict what he might get up to. Two different Johnsons approach the runners within an hour. Both want to contract Chico's assassination, but each provides a totally different story about why Chico must die, and they know him by different names. What's going on? Assuming that both corporates keep tabs on the runners, each gets fairly paranoid about the runners' involvement with the other. Manufacture several incidents that fuel corporate paranoia here.

A fifth possibility is the after-the-bomb-has-gone-off scenario. Here, one of Chico's bombs turns both the brother and best friend of a corporate suit into involuntary organ donors. The suit grows suspicious of the company's investigation of the atrocity and hires runners to make some additional inquiries. The runners turn up evidence that their employer's own company hired Chico for "resolution of internal disagreements concerning personnel placement" (i.e., a power struggle). The company reacts by geeking the runners' employer and trying to dust them. But the runners need just one more piece of evidence to go public with what they know.

Lastly, the runners might actually have to save Chico. An activist group has accumulated enough data to establish the truth about Julio Hernandez and wants him alive for interrogation. They approach the runners to bring him in. Meanwhile, corporate groups are placing hits on Chico now that he's become a liability. And they target the runners.

Attributes

Body: 5 (6)
 Quickness: 4 (5)
 Strength: 4 (5)
 Charisma: 6
 Intelligence: 6
 Willpower: 5
 Essence: 1.4
 Magic: 6
 Reaction: 5 (6)

Skills

Armed Combat: 5
 Bike: 5
 Car: 4
 Demolitions: 8
 Demolitions (B/R): 8
 Electronics: 6
 Firearms: 7
 Negotiation: 7
 Fast Talk: 9
 Psychology: 7
 Unarmed Combat: 7

Initiative: 5 (6) + 1D6 (+3D6)

Grade of Initiation: 5

Professional Rating: 4

Threat Ratings

Combat: 5

Bioware (Body Index 4.4)

Extended Volume Lungs: 3
 Orthoskin: 2 (1/1 Armor)
 Suprathyroid Gland
 Synaptic Accelerator: 2

Gear

Armor Jacket (5/3)
 Data Codebreaker
 Dataline Tap
 Defiance T-250 [Shotgun, 5 (magazine), SA, 10S, w/60 rounds each of regular and explosive ammunition]
 Hand Grenades (4 each fragmentation and concussion)
 Hyundai Offroader
 Jammers (2)
 Laser Microphone
 Plastic Explosive (gamemaster discretion)
 Ranger Arms SM-3 [Sniper Rifle, 6 (magazine), SA, 14S, w/60 rounds each of standard and flechette ammunition, Laser Sight, Silencer]
 Respirator
 Shotgun Microphone
 Signal Locator
 Tracking Signals (6)
 Voice Mask

See **Notes** for additional equipment.

Physical Adept Abilities

Body Control: 2
 Improved Physical Senses: High- and Low-Frequency Hearing, Flare Compensation, Low-Light and Thermographic Vision
 Killing Hands (L)
 Missile Parrying
 Pain Resistance: 2



Notes

Chico has employers who can afford to supply him with virtually anything—weaponry, vehicles, and the like—he needs for a job. The list represents what he typically has on hand. He has any cutting-edge surveillance and counter-surveillance equipment required for his assignments as well. For skills, regard both English and Mayan as effective first languages for Chico.

Chico's appearance may vary considerably. He employs both cosmetic surgery and much simpler techniques, such as dieting or overeating, to achieve significant (+/-18 kg) weight gain or loss. Although Chico uses bioware, he is a physical adept and does not use cyber implants.



Corey Martin (Serial Killer)

Birth Date: September 9, 2038

Birthplace: Toledo, Ohio, UCAS

Nationality/Metatype/Gender: UCAS/Caucasian
Ork/Male

Current Residence: Unknown, possibly Detroit, UCAS

Height: 175 cm

Weight: 72 kg

Hair: Dark green

Eyes: Blue

Distinguishing Physical Features: None

Psychology

Traits: Unknown

Motivations: Unknown

Lifestyle: Low

Corey Martin is a 17-year-old ork. Orphaned and homeless, Martin is also a serial killer responsible, either directly or indirectly, for the violent deaths of more than 20 people, including both of his parents. He is believed to be currently living in the Detroit metropolitan area, although his exact location will not become known until another body is found.

Corey's parents were burdened with six children already and had been living on welfare for several years when Corey was born. His parents and older siblings physically abused Corey as

the boy grew, and soon he learned to stay out of his parents' and elder siblings' ways. He became an isolated and solitary loner by his early teens, and soon taught himself enough about motorcycles to rebuild a wreck he had scavenged. As soon as his motorcycle was roadworthy, he began riding far from home, often venturing away for several days. (All of this has been pieced together by federal agents from testimonies provided by the surviving members of the Martin family.)

Evidence suggests that Martin began killing soon afterward. The body of his first victim, a homeless drifter named Arlon Morrow, was found in a shallow stream in fields outside of Norwood, west of Toledo. Investigators believe Corey killed several more times before turning his attention to his family. According to the testimony of his sister, Layla, Corey had returned from one of his trips when their father became angry and assaulted the teenager. Corey drew a knife and responded with a frenzied attack, which left the older man dying. When his mother and eldest brother, Rowan, tried to restrain him, Corey commanded Layla to stop them. She testified that she refused at first, but the force of his command was so strong that she ran to her father's desk, picked up his pistol and shot them both several times, before turning the gun on herself. She lost consciousness at that point; when she recovered enough to move, she crawled out into the yard and found two more corpses and her closest brother moaning in a pool of his own blood. Corey was long gone.

A series of similar slayings led authorities to trace Martin's path in a wide loop around Ohio and north into Michigan. His victims have included traveling businessmen, female motel desk clerks and several itinerants. Most of them have been humans and orks (he was known to have stayed with an ork commune in Columbus for three months at the end of last year), though his most high-profile victim was an elven senior executive of a modest Toledo-based corporation, Pavis Systems Inc. Investigators believe Martin may be living as an itinerant among Detroit's sprawling concrete wastes. But the population of such a sprawl greatly reduces the chances of catching Martin, and law-enforcement officials fear that he will kill again before he is apprehended.

>>>>>(But the most gruesome part of the story is what Martin does to his victims after they're dead. First, he likes to snack on their livers and spleens. Then, he likes to run a knife around the throat and back of the victim's neck in a full circle, a ritual semi-decapitation inflicted on the body. That's enough forensic pathology for today, children. Enjoy your dinners.)<<<<<

—Gnasher (14:41:30/10-13-55)

>>>>>(It has long been established that abuse and neglect are prime factors in transforming someone into a criminal. But my understanding of Corey Martin's profile is that he does not fit the known facts. And more than one expert has suggested that Martin has a partner—an accomplice who is perhaps more violent and sadistic than himself.)<<<<<

—Mass (18:12:19/10-17-55)

>>>>(Could he be suffering from a multiple-personality disorder, with a split personality that divides between a calm, law-abiding half and a pathological killer?)<<<<<

—Vale (18:29:50/10-17-55)

>>>>(Oh come on, nobody believes that drivel any more. Even the APA wrote it out of the DSM-V manual four decades back and changed the diagnosis to "Hysterical Dissociation Reaction with Associated False Memory Syndrome." I wouldn't put any money on a disorder. I think the most likely explanation is that a vital piece of information is missing about Martin, information that will probably come to light only when he is apprehended, as he ultimately must be.)<<<<<

—Mass (18:34:17/10-17-55)

>>>>(Updated information: homicides accredited to Corey Martin, as of today's date, by Ohio State Troopers in conjunction with the FBI, now stand at 24. An additional 19 homicides do not fit the full profile and have therefore not been credited to Martin.)<<<<<

—Fedeye (06:11:22/10-28-55)

>>>>(One file I've seen says that Eagle Security personnel did run into this suspect in Chicago late in '54 and blew him full of lead, as Eagle Security usually do. The firsthand report from the squad leader says that the suspect took more than 60 shots and was still standing up. The report makes the usual waffling references to "magical interference with the integrity of mental functioning of our operatives" to explain how he escaped them. It may be just an excuse, of course, but maybe there is something to it after all. Now, if Eagle Security's files are truthful, this is no ordinary serial killer we have on our hands here. Something distinguishes him from the several hundred other mass-homicidal crazies running around North America at any given moment. Exactly what, I don't know, but there's something.)<<<<<

—Ghost Man (01:13:00/11-01-55)

>>>>(Just been scanning the files, and, you know, I reckon I know the kid. I hang out in a block of unfinished condos corner of 13 Mile and Ryan in Warren, and there's a skinny green-haired kid who squats in the basement, kind of gaunt, never hangs around with the rest of us orks. Could be my imagination, but his eyes are real weird and he had some nasty fingernail scratches on his face that only just healed up. Tell me, is it him, is it him?)<<<<<

—Worried (00:04:16/11-03-55)

>>>>(Don't hesitate, chummer; dial 911 immediately.)<<<<<

—Citizen (00:05:58/11-03-55)

Hooks

Corey Martin is not just an abused kid gone bad. He is possessed by a creature known to Native American holy men as a *shella*, the personification of the cruel wind that gusts

across the frozen plains in winter, chilling to the bone. It entered his body in February '53, when he was fifteen. He had ridden far from his home and was caught by a sudden snowfall in rough country west of Portsmouth. When his bike died, he huddled up as best he could and tried to wait out the night, but the cold was such that he quickly began to die. The shella entered him that night when he was numbed by the freezing cold and added its own energies to bolster Corey's failing strength and keep him alive until morning. It continues to protect him and, by granting him all manner of powers, has proved a useful symbiosis.

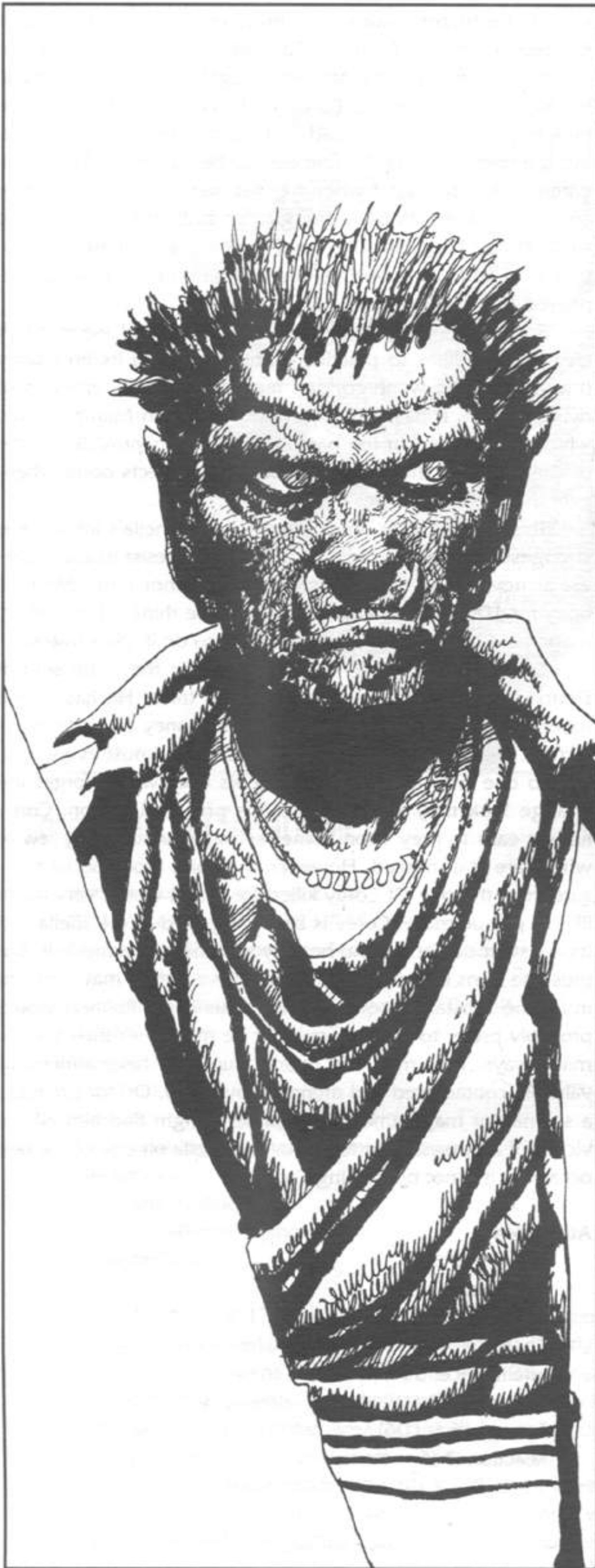
So, what exactly is a shella? It's a spectral wendigo. A creature that likes to practice cannibalism with its host body (the urge of the wendigo) and feed from the life energies of dying people. It has a very powerful effect on Martin's body, which is described in the parenthetical values provided in the profile here and the **Notes** section. These effects occur whenever the shella possesses Martin.

This possession is not continuous. The shella's influence is strongest at full moon (when Martin cannot resist it) and weakest at new moon (when the creature cannot enter Martin's body for 1D6 days). Martin could fight the thing off, but at full moon he'd have to make a titanic effort to do it. (See **Notes**.)

Corey is currently living in a squat on the north side of Detroit, among other itinerant orks and trolls. He has a little money and a beat-up car bought with money taken from his victims. He is slight in build, nondescript in almost every way, but no one who looked deep into his eyes would forget the strange look they saw there. In his present location, Corey finds it easy to prey upon homeless metahumans, very few of whom are ever missed. However, the spirit took special pleasure from the one elf Corey killed for it and would very much like to pursue more. Corey is becoming tired of the shella and its constant demands, and he may seek help to remove it. But those he turns to for help may not believe him or may turn him in for the substantial reward now on his head. Runners would probably prefer to avoid Corey, but he may enter their lives in many ways. They may turn bounty hunter or have a friend or valuable contact iced and munched by Corey. Or, for example, a shaman or mage among the runners might find himself the victim of a possession attempt by the shella on one of the rare occasions it is not possessing Corey.

Attributes

Body: 5 (8)
 Quickness: 4 (9)
 Strength: 6 (8)
 Charisma: 4 (5)
 Intelligence: 3 (4)
 Willpower: 3 (4)
 Essence: 6 (+1D6)
 Reaction: 3 (6)

**Skills**

Armed Combat: 2 (6)
 Bike: 2
 Car: 2
 Stealth: 3 (6)
 Unarmed Combat: 2 (7)

Initiative: 3 + 1D6 (6 + 2D6)

Professional Rating: 1(4)

Threat Ratings

Combat: 3 (5)

Gear

Knife

Notes

Powers available to Martin when possessed by the sheila are: Compulsion, Control (Zone x 4), Enhanced Physical Attributes, Enhanced Senses (Low-Light Vision, Visual Acuity, Hearing, Smell), Essence Drain, Fear, Immunity (Age, Pathogens, Poison), Influence (Zone x 4), Manifestation, Noxious Breath, Paralyzing Touch, Psychokinesis and Regeneration. Note that these powers all operate for the host body so, indeed, the Regeneration power makes the possessed person damnably difficult to kill. Hence, the Eagle Security report really was accurate.

When Corey is in the grip of its feeding frenzy, he is unable to stop pursuing his prey until or unless he is released. In practice, this means that the ork will not be aware of a need to flee pursuers or those stronger than himself. The spirit, however, remains aware of what is happening around it, and if necessary it will sacrifice its host body to escape capture or death. It can abandon its host at any time, but the spirit will be weak and unable to do anything other than drift in the ether until it chances on a suitable new host. The sheila is only able to enter when a prospective host is very stressed, injured or otherwise emoting tremendous fear, panic and pain. Under such circumstances, the victim may make a Willpower (6) Test to resist possession. Increase the target number by 1D6 within 24 hours of a full moon and by 1 within 72 hours of a full moon. The creature can be banished in the usual way; treat the sheila's effective Force Rating as 8 for the purposes of banishment, or 8 + 1D6 within 72 hours of the full moon.

As an ork, Corey possesses natural Low-Light Vision.



Teachdaire (Assassin)

Birth Date: Unknown, believed ca. 2011

Birthplace: Derry, Ulster, Tír na nÓg

Nationality/Metatype/Gender: Caucasian Elf/Male; travels on many passports, including Ukrainian, Irish, Tír Tairngire, British, Azanian (Cape Republic), possibly others

Current Residence: Unknown

Height: 196 cm

Weight: 85 kg

Hair: Dark blonde (frequently dyes his hair)

Eyes: Light blue (uses corneal filters to change appearance)

Distinguishing Physical Features: 33 cm scar running almost full length of left forearm

Psychology

Traits: Cold, aloof, no capacity for rapport; schizoid psychopath; he would kill a child as readily as an adult, but has an incongruous tenderness for felines; he also loves and knows well the art of Vincent van Gogh

Motivations: Unknown

>>>>(Jeez, if only someone did know.)<<<<<
—Burner (17:22:15/08-17-55)

Lifestyle: High to Luxury

Teachdaire is a uniquely dangerous assassin—he is the fastest living metahuman known, or at least fragging close to it. The man can fire off three head shots and kill half a parade before anyone else even moves. His stealth and speed are extraordinary, and he is absolutely deadly with a sniper rifle or

in unarmed combat. Though not prodigiously strong, his staggering speed makes that fact irrelevant. The elf does his work and leaves before anyone can react.

His name means “messenger” in Irish Gaelic, though no one knows what message (if any) he is trying to deliver. Teachdaire is Irish by birth, but no one knows for certain whether he serves the Tír na nÓg government. He does not appear to have the physical adept skills of the experts who walk the Northern Path, and his array of cyberware speaks against an affiliation with the ethos of Tír na nÓg elves. However, if half the accounts of his augmentations are true, he must have had access to customized cyberware, and that means access to Tír na nÓg’s shadow clinics. Many believe that even if he does not serve his government directly, government officials must have prepared and unleashed him to serve their general interests. Accounts of meetings with him refer to the many different accents in which he speaks—he is variously described as speaking with an Irish brogue, an Azanian Afrikaner accent, an Eastern European accent and others.

Accounts of Teachdaire are difficult to evaluate because so many must be retrieved under hypnosis. Apparently, Teachdaire can instantly hypnotize susceptible people to make them forget they ever saw him.

This elf has been known to serve corporate interests, but he is rumored to hate Aztechnology and to have iced at least five Aztech executives and technical experts. The corporation has offered a 250,000-nuyen bounty for him, meaning that they take him very seriously. Some reports claim that on rare occasions he has worked with other runners, but only on runs he would have undertaken anyway. Teachdaire is a particularly lethal killer, pure and simple.

>>>>(Hope he isn’t listening ... I went on a run with this guy in Atlanta, a contract to take out an Aztechnology liaison man recruiting personnel from other corps (who not unreasonably took exception to this). Now, my associates and I have been around the block a few times, but we were hired just to be logistical back-up for this guy. I swear to you, he enters the room and you feel like a wind from hell—the frozen circle out of Dante—just swirled around your spine. Teachdaire reminds me of what those guys who made the H-bomb quoted from the Hindu scriptures, “Now I am become death.” He didn’t talk much, but when he did he didn’t sound Irish to me. When he came to make the hit, he squeezed off two shots and left the room before any of us could react. And heck, we’ve got some booster cyberware between us, man. It’s not just his speed, it’s his elegance and cold beauty. More than that, it’s his aura. My mage friend says he tried aura reading the slag, and decided after a quick check that it would be more fun stuffing razor wire where the sun don’t shine than trying to read Teachdaire again. The guy uses some kinda drug to speed him up, and he didn’t try any hypnosis on us. Leastways, not that we know of. We didn’t hang around the scene of the hit, and we never saw him again. Suits me just fine.)<<<<<

—Name deleted by request (23:17:32/08-30-55)

>>>>(If you want to make a hit real bad and you think you need someone like this guy, let it be known among the Irish community in Massachusetts. That's the best way, I've been told, to get him to listen. Money don't come into it much. It's a question of whether he likes the idea of killing the guy you want to kill. You don't even need to have a reason.)<<<<<

—Siegfeld (20:16:37/09-01-55)

>>>>(One final reminder, boys and girls. Cross him and you're dead.)<<<<<

—Doktor Freeman (17:11:15/09-05/55)

Hooks

Teachdaire is the ultimate killing machine, but one made of stealth and speed rather than brute force. This assassin kills before his enemy even knows he's there. Use Teachdaire when the runners have to make a hit against a target they have no chance of reaching. Use him when they're desperate, when nothing else will do. Finding him can be a run in itself. Meeting him and working with him can have all kinds of ramifications—tangles with corps who want to find or ice him or want to know everything the runners learned about him, desperate boyfriends/girlfriends of people he's killed who turn up longing to know everything they can find out about the unseen killer whose name is the only thing they know, and so on. It's up to the gamemaster where to place Teachdaire in Tír na nÓg/Tír Tairngire politics, but his political connections make another good hook for landing runners in seven shades of drek from any kind of association with him. As a nemesis, Teachdaire is horrific. Runners who learn that Teachdaire is gunning for them to fulfill a contract placed on them will start asking all kinds of interesting questions: Why is he after them? At whose orders? Can he be stopped? If so, how? Have the hapless runners fallen into a nightmare scenario of mistaken identity? How can they placate an implacable, merciless psychopath? Or perhaps the hit must take place at some future date—say, a time of ritual significance—which allows the runners time to use their smarts to wheedle their way out of certain death. Have fun. Make those runners sweat.

Attributes

Body: 5 (7)
 Quickness: 7 (8) [10]
 Strength: 5 (8) [10]
 Charisma: 2 (8) (see **Notes**)
 Intelligence: 6
 Willpower: 4 (6) [8]
 Essence: 0.03
 Magic: 4
 Reaction: 6 (8) [12]

Skills

Bike: 6
 Etiquette (Corporate): 3
 Etiquette (Street): 5
 Firearms: 9
 Rifles: 11 (Walther WA 2100: 13)
 Languages
 Gaelic: 6
 Sperethiel: 6
 Stealth: 11
 Throwing Weapons: 3
 Unarmed Combat: 10

Special Skills

Ambidexterity: 13
 Centering (Tai Chi/Martial Arts): 8

Initiative: 6 + 1D6 (8 + 4D6) [12 + 4D6]

Professional Rating: 4 (never surrenders or stops fighting until dead)

Grade of Initiation: 9

Threat Ratings

Combat: 8

Cyberware (all delta-customized)

Bone Lacing (Titanium) (1/1 Armor, Unarmed Damage = [(8)[10]] +3 M)
 Hydraulic Leg Jacks: 6
 Level II Smartlinks, both hands (see **Notes**)
 Voice modulator with all functions (including playback)

Bloware (custom; Body Rating: 4.02)

Adrenal Pump: 2
 Damage Compensator: 6
 Enhanced Articulation (+1 die for physically oriented skills, except ranged combat)
 Muscle Augmentation: 3

Physical Adept Abilities

Increased Reflexes: 3
 Enhanced Centering (Combat Skills)

Gear

Ares Predator II [Heavy Pistol, 15 (clip), SA, 9M, w/100 rounds regular ammunition, 50 rounds APDS ammunition, Level II Smartlink]
 Doc Wagon™ Contract (Platinum) (or its equivalent in almost all countries)
 Harley Scorpion
 Walther WA-2100 [Sniper Rifle, 10 (magazine), SA, 14S, w/50 rounds each of regular, explosive, and APDS ammunition, uniquely adapted with personal Level II Smartlink, Silencer]
 Other items, especially armor, as the gamemaster determines

Notes

As an elf, Teachdaire possesses natural Low-Light Vision. In addition to his natural abilities, this heavy-duty assassin can bring to bear the multitude of advantages described below.

Teachdaire has separate neurally and reflexively circuited Smartgun links for his Predator and Walther. Completely ambidextrous, he fires the Predator left-handed and his sniping rifle right-handed (no, he can't use both at the same time). The Walther is uniquely modified to suit his particular balance and reflexiveness, and so he reduces all target numbers by 1 when using it. Because of this unique design, anyone else using Teachdaire's Walther suffers an increase of +1 to all target numbers. In addition to his skill with a sniping rifle, in hand-to-hand combat Teachdaire can pull people's heads off before they know he's there. In unarmed combat, his damage is 8M (Stun) without his adrenal pump working or 10M (Stun) with it. He's also very fond of using the Physical Damage rule from p. 83 of **Fields of Fire**.

Teachdaire got his customized bioware through the very best of Tír na nÓg's shadow clinics (see p. 152, **Tír na nÓg**). This fact alone should give any knowledgeable soul cause for deep concern about what those Tír na nÓg elves have been up to. Teachdaire suppresses and activates his adrenal pump using MAO/MAOI (MAO inhibitor)/ACTH shots (hence the street lore concerning his drug use). Teachdaire's statistics reflect both his bioware and his cyberware; the statistics in [brackets] apply when his adrenal pump is operating.

Teachdaire's Charisma is normally 2, but it rises to 8 in any situation that allows him to use the power of his personality and resources in a threatening manner. This applies to any situation in which an Interrogation Skill would apply, and also to any subtler social situations in which he presents a relevant threat.

Teachdaire possesses a unique magical item: a gold ring engraved with Celtic runes, of extraordinary age (dating from approximately 4000 BCE), that allows him to hypnotize people. He can use this item with a Complex Action at any time but must be facing his target at a range not exceeding 20 meters. The target must make an opposed Willpower Test against Teachdaire; if the target does not achieve at least 3 net successes, the elf has hypnotized him to forget that Teachdaire is or was ever present. The target simply does not sense Teachdaire's presence, even by technical means (he or she simply fails to see the IR detector blip, and so on). The hypnotic effect ends when Teachdaire leaves; if affected runners run into him on a subsequent occasion, the effect does not operate unless renewed on the spot. The hypnotic effect only works against one sentient target per Combat Turn. Any aggressive act by Teachdaire against the target breaks this hypnotic effect unless he renews it. Any magically active character prepared to pay 24 Karma Points to bind the ring to him can use it.

Teachdaire has a volatile and dangerous personality. Like the classic sociopath, the elf is usually coldly rational and deadly. Periodically, however, Teachdaire is prone to storms of emotion in which he rants and raves about unseen enemies



and "mad passions." At such times, he is irrational and even more dangerous than usual. The gamemaster determines how often this periodic psychosis occurs and how the runners might deal with it. Make them sweat. As to Teachdaire's primary motivations, he is always interested in hits on anti-elven factions and individuals. That's the nature of the eugenic and psychological programming he endured in Tír na nÓg. Apart from his overriding motivation to oppose Aztechnology, his hatred of those he perceives as anti-elven will always lead him to act.

WOLFRAM'S GANG

As the streets become increasingly unsafe and the corporations withdraw ever further into their well-guarded enclaves, a new ruling order has begun to dominate, especially in the inner cities. In post-quake New York the change has been particularly rapid; in many areas, where each of the three major law enforcement services are too busy checking up on what the others are plotting to pay much attention to what's going down on the streets, natural law has been reinstated and only the fittest survive. In these troubled regions many keep alive by running the shadows, balancing on the thin line between the law and criminality. Others have taken the opportunity to leap feet-first over that artificial line.

Countless criminal gangs operate in Manhattan. They come to the public's attention in a blaze of glory, hide out or hang out, commit half a dozen more crimes, and then vanish in an even bigger blaze. Only a few, whether through illicit corporate sponsorship, superb luck or sheer will to survive, manage to make a career of sorts out of crime. One typical outfit, about which many have heard but few have been unlucky enough to encounter, is a three-person gang led by a troll named Wolfram. The gang lacks an "official" name, but many law-abiding citizens instantly recognize the three criminally minded trolls informally dubbed Wolfram's gang. They are gun-happy bank robbers, extortionists, illicit chip dealers, kidnapers, demolition experts and even assassins.

The gang first appeared on the scene four years ago with a daring raid on a corporate wedding banquet. Having previously wired the hall with explosives, the trolls helped themselves to jewelry, drinks, and the entire wedding cake and then kidnapped the unhappy couple and drove off with them in the two most expensive roadsters in the car park. Despite the efforts of half the corporate security in New York to bring them down, they somehow managed to extort a hefty ransom from NJG Cybersystems and get clean away.

Ever since that auspicious and infamous debut, Wolfram's team has pulled off many more outlandish crimes, from straightforward heists of money or goods to more specialized crimes, such as kidnapping and corporate blackmail, that plainly required the attention of a keen mind. Wolfram undeniably has such a mind; the combination of his intelligence with the ruthless savagery of his two partners has made the gang enormously successful so far.

>>>>(Street buzz says Wolfram and his gang have escaped justice for so long because they're under the protection of someone high up in one of the corporations. As long as the team only hits competitors, they manage to keep the heat off them.)<<<<<

—Slam (09:18:15/10-6-55)

>>>>(Some people naturally point fingers at IIS, where Shoot-to-Kill's estranged father is now a senior executive. Of course, that hardly explains her attempted assassination of him ten months ago.)<<<<<

—Cityboy (23:57:53/10-6-55)

>>>>(Never mind that. More to the point is that Wolfram and his ruffians appear to have worked, at one time or another, for more than a quarter of all the leading corporations in the Manhattan Consortium, which therefore makes nonsense of suggestions of corporate protection. One week, it seems, they are doing a job clearly funded by Villiers against Netlink Telecom. The next week, the situation is reversed. Either Wolfram schmoozes some incredible deals or those corps don't know what they are playing at.)<<<<<

—Sevan (01:12:11/10-8-55)

>>>>(Put me down for both, chummer.)<<<<<

—De Lorean (03:20:38/10-8-55)

>>>>(Though the gang and their predations make them deeply undesirable as it is, those who know them worry that without Wolfram's undoubted charisma holding them in check, the other two would go completely off the rails. When Wolfram got injured in a shoot-out with Fuchi corp cops last August, Shoot-to-Kill and Hammerhead went totally crazy for two weeks—drinking and getting high, shooting up bars and clubs, the works. They also blew an attempted raid on a weapons dealer in the Terminal area who was said to have provided the weapon that blew up in Wolfram's face, and had to shoot their way out. Once their leader was fit to show his face again, no one—on the streets at least—wanted to know him or his precious pair of cretins. It took all his smoothing and schmoozing powers plus carpets of ready cash to get people talking to him again. If anything truly serious happened to Wolfram, I hate to think what Shoot-to-Kill and Hammerhead would do for revenge.)<<<<<

—Brand (04:15:27/10-10-55)

>>>>(You can badmouth Wolfram and his gang all you like. I've worked with them on four heists now—just as an extra pair of hands holding a gun, you understand—and they have acted more professionally than just about any other employer I could name. If the call came again tomorrow I'd drop whatever I was doing and join them again willingly. Guess you could call me loyal, but that's what treating people with respect earns you.)<<<<<

—BRT (01:00:52/10-12-55)

>>>>(For more details (albeit mostly invented) of the gang's dramatic entry into the spotlight during the famous wedding raid, watch a rerun of NBS's *Primetime Theater Special* for Christmas Day, 2054: *The Bride Wore Bloodstains*. Yup, trid movies already, and these guys haven't even been caught and convicted yet. If they keep it up, at this rate they'll be getting their own show, I betcha.)<<<<<

—Barry Normal (21:14:32/10-19-55)

Hooks

Wolfram and his gang are the regular opposition. Though expendable gangs of street samurai, hoods and general street punks abound in Shadowrun, the gamemaster can bring back this foul bunch time and time again to plague the lives of the runners in a hundred different ways. If the runners are going up against an evil syndicate boss, chances are the boss hired Wolfram's gang to provide some extra protection. If the runners must find someone important very soon, Wolfram's gang may also be trying to find or ice their target. Better yet, the trolls may have abducted the fellow in question and be demanding a huge ransom for his return.

In certain circumstances, the three gang members and their retinue of hired guns described in the following pages will not have the appropriate skills to perform a specific job—they're not much good with computers, for example. On such occasions, remember that they can easily do what any team of runners does—temporarily hire someone to do a skilled job for them. Of course, Wolfram's gang is more likely to kidnap someone, force him or her to do what the gang demands and then leave the poor sap floating face-down in the nearest river. Perhaps the runners, individually or as a group, possess the skills the gang requires. No matter how Wolfram persuades them to work for him, assisting Wolfram's gang with a heist may be the biggest mistake of the runners' lives.

The descriptions of Wolfram's gang are tied to a specific location in a specific city, but the gamemaster can easily transport Wolfram and his unpleasant pals from New York to his own game's location. All they need is a safe house from which to operate, several personal bolt-holes (apartments, sewers, underworld safe spots, or whatever) and a few favorite lowlife-thronged haunts.

Obviously, things get dull (not to mention unlikely) if Wolfram and his mob turn up every single time a gamemaster needs bad guys. This set of villains is much more effective if they arrive just when the runners really don't want to have to face them. If the players laugh and groan at the same time when Wolfram's familiar gruff voice greets them, you've made the right choice.





Wolfram (Street Shaman)

Birth Date: June 29, 2027
Birthplace: Staten Island, New Jersey, UCAS
Nationality/Metatype/Gender: UCAS/CaucasianTroll/Male
Current Residence: New York, UCAS
Height: 262 cm
Weight: 281 kg
Hair: None—shaved skull and eyebrows
Eyes: Brown
Distinguishing Physical Features: Shaved skull; bullet indentation along upper left portion of skull; unusually long fingernails; two bullet scars across right thigh
Psychology
Traits: Cool, calculating, well-mannered, selfish, aesthetic, fastidious
Motivations: Power-seeker
Lifestyle: High

The undisputed leader of the gang, Wolfram is the brains behind the operation and the main reason why they have managed to operate so successfully without getting caught or killed. Wolfram is intelligent and charismatic, qualities that have proved useful in dealing with corporate double-dealers and street punks. Unlike his two compatriots, Wolfram is sophisticated and cultured enough to bridge the gap between the worlds of corporate hospitality and street-corner gun battles.

Little is known of Wolfram's early life. He was born on Staten Island and raised by his father, who worked in the financial markets. Rumor has it his first name is Stephen, though he never uses it. No one knows how he developed his shamanic powers, nor if he associates with others of the same totem. When he first met Shoot-to-Kill, he was living in a respectable apartment block in the Village, the rent of which he paid by turning his hand to all manner of illicit activities, from corporate espionage to simple bank heists. He has always maintained that one cannot alienate the middle and upper echelons of society if one plans to work with them; better to seem as much like them as possible, to be cultured and educated and stylish. Even in hard times Wolfram always managed to give the impression of being a person of importance.

By the time he joined up with Shoot-to-Kill and Hammerhead, he had come to the conclusion that a great many people out there were just waiting to be ripped off in one way or another. All he needed was the means, back-up and firepower to give them what they deserved. His two compatriots provide exactly those necessities for him; with their physical skills and his talents for corporate deal-making, shamanic sorcery and intelligent plotting, how could they go wrong?

So far, Wolfram's gang has made very few mistakes. The few occasions when things have gone wrong have not resulted from miscalculations by their leader. Slim for a troll, Wolfram gives an impression of grace and poise rare in one of his metatype. He wears the finest clothes and scents and is always impeccably turned out, even when working. Rumors claim he keeps a large, luxurious apartment in the Cloisters in Newtown, though these tales could reflect wishful thinking on the part of those who want to see him as an all-powerful sorcerer and mystic. In the flesh, Wolfram seems more icy cool than mystical, possessed of the kind of calm that makes people tell him all their innermost secrets while he hardly says a word.

>>>>>(For all his supposed culture, Wolfram can cut it with the rough boys. When necessary, he can match Shoot-to-Kill for savagery and Hammerhead for thuggery any day. Worse, he does it all with intelligence, which means that he consciously knows just how far to go. He's got a dozen different strings to his bow, a score of different ways of responding to a situation, and the ability to use any one of them when the need arises. He's one major-league scary dude.)<<<<<

—January (00:19:18/10-7-55)

>>>>>(Though he plainly revels in his partners' savage approach to life and its obstacles (he once likened Shoot-to-Kill to a trained rottweiler bitch), Wolfram is also known to hang around with several notables from the art world. People say he's a keen theatergoer and gallery visitor, and he supposedly acts as a shadowy patron for a number of rising artists.)<<<<<

—Arch (20:08:02/10-8-55)

>>>>>(Yeah, and I bet he's kind to babies and orphans too. Cut the drek. The guy's a hood, full stop, and no amount of swanning around with dippy model-hyphen-actresses or standing around pretending to be entranced by daubs my two-year-old could manage better while clutching a plastic cup of warm Lambrusco will convince anyone otherwise. The Mafia dons try it all the time and nobody believes they're anything but thugs and killers. Just because this ugly mug says he's sensitive and tells us to worship the big blue puddytat in the sky don't make him less of a bloodthirsty animal.)<<<<<<

—Gage (05:12:34/10-10-55)

>>>>>(The thing that always strikes me about Wolfram—whom I have met several times and who never fails to charm me—is that he appears to have a specific plan of action that he is following closely in order to achieve some hidden aim. There is no question that he invests or simply hides much of the spoils from the gang's activities for use at a future date. I personally believe Wolfram is more interested in power and influence than in the kicks the others enjoy. How he plans to get that influence, I do not yet know.)<<<<<<

—Trump (10:12:09/10-14-55)

Hooks

Wolfram is a shadowy figure, less likely to be found in the usual underground haunts than Shoot-to-Kill or Hammerhead. He is more likely to appear at corporate functions or artistic events, in the company of like-minded aesthetes and patrons of the arts. When he does turn up in the company of his partners, he is slumming it, which may mean that he is in the mood for some violent fun. Wherever he appears, however, he is always secure, either personally well-armed or in the company of several well-armed companions.

Attributes

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

Skills

Car: 3
Conjuring: 6
Etiquette (Corporate): 3
Etiquette (Street): 5
Firearms: 6
Leadership: 4
Magical Theory: 5
Negotiation: 4
Sorcery: 6
Stealth: 2
Unarmed Combat: 7

Initiative: 5 + 1D6

Professional Rating: 3

Threat Ratings

Combat: 4
Magical: 3

Gear

Ares Viper Slivergun [Heavy Pistol, 30 (clip), SA/BF, 9S (f), w/300 rounds of flechette ammunition]
Armor Jacket (5/3)
Combat Spell Focus: 2
Doc Wagon™ Contract (Gold)
HK227-S [Submachine Gun, 28 (clip), SA/BF/FA, 7M, w/300 rounds of regular ammunition]
Partial Suit of Heavy Armor, rarely worn (6/4)
Respirator
Trauma Patches: 6 (2)
Wrist Phone

Spells

Combat

Fire Missile: 4
Power Bolt: 4
Powerball: 5
Powerblast: 5
Sleep: 5
Stun Touch: 5

Detection

Personal Combat Sense: 5

Illusion

Chaos: 6
Chaotic World: 5
Invisibility: 4
Mask: 5
Physical Mask: 4
Stink: 6

Health

Heal: 5
Increase Quickness +2
Increase Reflexes +2

Manipulation

Bullet Barrier: 4
Mob Mind: 4
Thunderclap: 4

Notes

Wolfram has natural Thermographic Vision, Dermal Armor 1, and +1 Reach for purposes of armed or unarmed combat. As a Cat shaman, he gains +2 dice for illusion spells and for conjuring city spirits. In his case, ignore the usual injunction that an unwounded Cat shaman will cast a "playing around" spell in a fight; Wolfram is sufficiently intelligent to deliver a hefty spell attack up front if faced with serious opposition.

Neither Wolfram nor his associates own a vehicle. The gang normally hires a rigger with a suitable urban vehicle for their heists so that they use a different getaway vehicle for every raid and thereby minimize the chances of being identified.



Shoot-to-Kill (Gang Member)

Birth Date: April 5, 2031

Birthplace: New York, UCAS

Nationality/Metatype/Gender: UCAS/Hispanic
Troll/Female

Current Residence: New York, UCAS

Height: 254 cm

Weight: 270 kg

Hair: Black

Eyes: Dark brown

Distinguishing Physical Features: Ultraviolet tattoos down both arms; smaller ultraviolet tattoo of a spider on left cheek.

Psychology

Traits: Sociopathic, ferocious temper, inclined to random violence

Motivations: Irrational sadist without concern for others or self

Lifestyle: Medium to High

According to a well-known street legend, Wolfram first met Shoot-to-Kill when they both decided to hold up the same bank on the same morning. He pulled a gun and came in the right-hand door just as she came in the left. As portrayed in the trid movie *96*, each of them did a double-take and realized that they were both trolls, plainly both at the bank for the same thing, and both aware that time was of the essence. Wolfram suggested a 50-50 split of their mutual take; she shook her head, shot him in the legs, grabbed all the cash and split with a cheery farewell wave. The story goes that Shoot-to-Kill's gall so impressed Wolfram that he tracked her down to her squat just off Times Square, waited until she left, and broke in. Finding the cash, he took half—half of each and every note, torn neatly down the middle. He then rigged the place with enough explosives to take out the entire block and left a charming note, along with the disconnected detonators, asking her once again to join him. She duly agreed that same evening, bringing her boyfriend, Hammerhead, along for the ride. The rest, as the cliché has it, is history.

Shoot-to-Kill's real name is Anna Santamaria, but those who know of her have never called her anything other than Shoot-to-Kill. She allows only Hammerhead and Wolfram to call her by her real name. Her folks worked as corporate wage slaves for IIS, lured north by the promise of a job that didn't involve ploughing and keeping chickens. When Shoot-to-Kill suffered goblinization at the age of twelve, her parents hid her in their human-only company-owned apartment for three years before the truth got out. When it finally did, they chose to keep the apartment and lose their daughter. Cast out, she finished growing up on the streets of the Lower East Side. Rumor has it that she initially joined the Sisters Sinister gang, where she acquired a reputation for being totally untrustworthy when handling a gun in the heat of battle. Following a falling out with that gang, she fled north to Neon City and fell in with Hammerhead and other street punks. She made a living rolling commuters and heisting easy targets until that fateful day when she met Wolfram.

Shoot-to-Kill is the loose cannon in Wolfram's gang, the hothead with a passion for fast gunplay and slow, lingering torture. She seems to live for the violent kicks that the criminal lifestyle allows her, never happier than when she has someone in her gun sights or strapped to a chair so she can torture them into revealing a computer password or safe combination. She has a reputation for biting chunks out of people when she runs out of ammunition, and she's also a proficient martial artist. She acts as the team's driver whenever they choose not to hire a back-up rigger for such a purpose.

She and Hammerhead have been virtually inseparable ever since they met, despite their frequent and often blood-soaked arguments. On a job, Shoot-to-Kill often covers Hammerhead's back while he sets explosives or breaks into a safe. The two of them have an apartment close to Central Park, but unlike their team's leader they make no attempt at sophistication or culture. Instead, they spend most of their cut of the gang's jobs on wild living and partying, buying the latest stu-

pid gadget and enjoying themselves just like any two normal troll gangsters in love.

>>>>(Let's face it, chummers, this girl's a one hundred percent, stone crazy psychopath, a real wild animal. Loco just ain't it! She lives to shoot bullets into people's flesh; if machine guns hadn't been invented, she'd be running around pushing bullets into people's heads by hand if she could. Stay right out of her way. She's trouble with a capital FRAG!)<<<<<

—MM (00:31:40/10-9-55)

>>>>(And don't even think about making eyes at Hammerhead (though I can't imagine who would want to do such a thing!). After a violent argument two years ago, he moved out for a month and shacked up with an old girlfriend in Queens. Street myth has it that Shoot-to-Kill tracked them to their love nest and cut the biff's head off while Hammerhead was out. She apparently left it on a dinner plate in the fridge, next to a six-pack of beer and a Polaroid of herself, along with a note reading, "Just to remind you what you're missing, lover boy. Hurry on home now! XXX." By all accounts he made it across town in record time!)<<<<<

—Bart (03:40:59/10-11-55)

>>>>(Shoot-to-Kill has a reputation for being turned on by violence, to the extent that she and Hammerhead have been known to risk safe, clean and quick getaways by stopping to do the nasty close to the scenes of their crimes. Street goss says she once shot an NYPD Inc. flatfoot over her boyfriend's shoulder when he chanced upon the two of them grinding away in an alley after another successful heist. After the copper went down, they kept on at it until they'd both got whatever it was out of their system. Awesome! No brains at all, but, boy, is this girl hot for it!)<<<<<

—Geena (02:14:53/10-23-55)

>>>>(Thank you for that tasteful little presentation.)<<<<<

—Gnasher (11:30:17/10-26-55)

Hooks

Shoot-to-Kill is the real psycho of the gang, a barely controllable lunatic who starts firing and blows a deal long before everything is sorted out satisfactorily. Her rampaging libido can lead her to make passes at all manner of people, the more dynamic, rugged and plainly unstable the better. She sometimes cruises the underworld runner haunts, on the lookout for someone attractive—but such behavior can lead to big trouble when Hammerhead finds out (which should give the unfortunate runner she picks plenty to worry about).

Attributes

Body: 8 (9)
Quickness: 4 (7)
Strength: 7 (10)
Charisma: 2
Intelligence: 3
Willpower: 5
Essence: 0.7
Reaction: 3 (5)

Skills

Armed Combat: 4
Bike: 2
Car: 4
Etiquette (Street): 4
Firearms: 7
Gunnery: 5
Interrogation: 5
Stealth (Urban): 3
Unarmed Combat: 4

Special Skills

Biting: 5
Slow, Painful Torture: 5

Initiative: 3 + 1D6 (5 + 2D6)

Professional Rating: 4

Threat Ratings

Combat: 4

Cyberware

Muscle Replacement: 3
Retractable Razors
Smartlink
Wired Reflexes: 1

Gear

Ares Predator II [Heavy Pistol, 15 (clip), SA, 9M, w/200 rounds of regular ammunition and 500 rounds of APDS ammunition]
Armor Jacket
Heavy Knives (2)
Miniature Trid Unit
Security Armor, Medium (only worn on heists)
Stoner-Ares M107 [HMG, Belt, FA, w/1,000 rounds of regular ammunition (carries 500 rounds belted at any one time), Gas-Vent system, Gyro-stabilization, and Integral Laser Sight]
Wallacher Combat Axe
Wrist Phone with flip-up screen

Notes

Shoot-to-Kill has natural Thermographic Vision, Dermal Armor 1, and +1 Reach for purposes of armed and unarmed combat.



Hammerhead (Street Samurai)

Birth Date: May 12, 2028
Birthplace: New York, UCAS
Nationality/Metatype/Gender: UCAS/Caucasian Troll/Male
Current Residence: New York, UCAS
Height: 277 cm
Weight: 320 kg
Hair: Fluorescent orange, worn in a Mohican brush
Eyes: Light brown
Distinguishing Physical Features: Missing two smallest fingers and first thumb joint from right hand; numerous burn and shrapnel scars on both legs, buttocks and lower back
Psychology
Traits: Unknown
Motivations: Unknown
Lifestyle: Medium to High

When Shoot-to-Kill first met Hammerhead, he was impressing upon a hapless human just how much he disliked having his drink spilled by grasping the man around the shoulders and repeatedly running his head into the nearest brick wall. At the time Hammerhead was working as a street samurai, drawing on experience he had gained during two years as a corporate mercenary seconded to Central America. He had become disillusioned with the trappings of the job, particularly with what he saw as the shortcomings of those who hired him. When Shoot-to-Kill introduced him to Wolfram a month after he started hanging around with her, Hammerhead realized that what he really wanted to do with his life was cause a massive amount of mayhem without recourse to restraint, legality or dealing with the Johnsons of this world. He resigned by holding his superior upside-down out a sixth-story window until he paid Hammerhead three months' wages worth of severance pay, and the troll has never looked back.

No one (except possibly Shoot-to-Kill) knows Hammerhead's real name. He is the strong, silent, violent type, slow and methodical in everything he does but always up with the action. He's the real strong-arm in the gang, the heavy weapons and demolitions expert. Unlike his girlfriend, whose idea of careful planning is to bring a second gun with which to blaze away at anything that moves in case the HMG jams, Hammerhead is a methodical strategist. He often cases the location of a job long before a strike in order to determine just what the team will need for the raid.

During downtime, Hammerhead relaxes by keeping fit and reading up on new developments in weapons research and explosives. Socially, he can drink all save his partner under any size table and is usually taciturn unless riled. When Hammerhead gets insulted, his desire for a demonstration of his own personal interpretation of the word "respect" can reach horrific levels of violence. He shares an apartment with Shoot-to-Kill and allegedly does all the cleaning and cooking. No one has ever seen him out of his heavy armor and boots; according to rumor, he sleeps in them.

>>>>>(Hammerhead got his nickname after banging five nails into a concrete wall with his forehead at Bloody Mary's on a legendary drunken night back in '51. Man, the red stuff was flowing everywhere, but he just kept pounding away until the nails went home. Seems he had a fifty that said he could do it before he passed out. The last nail went in, he snapped up the cash, strode confidently outside and passed out in the street. Came to in a back alley two days later, missing not only the cash but the rest of his wad, his weapons, boots and a real leather jacket. What a dunce.)<<<<<

—Ungawa (10:10:04/10-11-55)

>>>>>(Yeah, but what a forehead! He had dents in it for months. He also caught the troll who rolled him wearing his jacket in the Lion's Den in the Bronx three months later and pulled his head off his shoulders. Ruined the jacket in the process, but I bet revenge was sweet.)<<<<<

—Geena (23:14:15/10-11-55)

>>>>>(This guy has a personal beef about elves, possibly because of some incident with a superior officer early in his mercenary career. Whatever the reason, he gets so agitated around them that he often becomes prone to violence. The guy's a thug at the best of times, but show him a pair of delicately pointed ears, especially in his favorite watering hole, and he loses all respect for common decency and acceptable behavior.)<<<<<<

—Alon (02:14:18/10-15-55)

>>>>>(What do you mean?)<<<<<<

—Gorm (02:17:50/10-15-55)

>>>>>(For crying out ... He kicks the drek out of them! That plain enough for ya? Jeez, you're dumb enough to be an elf, pal, you know that?)<<<<<<

—Alon (02:18:28/10-15-55)

>>>>>(For all his craziness—much of which seems to be spurred by that fragging woman of his—Hammerhead is a top-rate explosives technician. He knows how to work the plastic like a real pro, and has never fried the merchandise by using too much charge to open a safe or deposit box. He's pretty handy with a large-caliber weapon, cool under fire, and in general a first class soldier. OK, I admit it, I was in the same unit as him in '48 and he's my buddy, but I'd recommend the big lug to anyone. Hey, chummer, if you're reading this, howsabout a drink sometime, eh? Just don't bring the little lady, OK?)<<<<<<

—Spara (14:04:17/10-21-55)

Hooks

Hammerhead is the huge brute of the team. He is the most likely to cause trouble in a social situation, especially if someone spills his drink or happens to commit the heinous social gaffe of having pointed ears. He also has a large number of unsettled scores from his mercenary and street samurai days; runners who have worked as street sams or mercs may well know Hammerhead, or even be one of his old enemies.

Attributes

Body: 10 (11)
 Quickness: 4 (6)
 Strength: 10 (12)
 Charisma: 2
 Intelligence: 3
 Willpower: 3
 Essence: 0.5
 Reaction: 3 (7)

Skills

Athletics: 4
 Computer: 2
 Demolitions: 6
 Plastic Explosives: 8
 Electronics: 3
 Electronics (B/R): 3
 Etiquette (Street): 4
 Firearms: 6
 Gunnery: 6
 Throwing Weapons: 5
 Unarmed Combat: 5

Initiative: 3 + 1D6 (7 + 3D6)

Professional Rating: 4

Threat Ratings

Combat: 5

Cyberware

Muscle Replacement: 2
 Smartlink
 Wired Reflexes: 2

Gear

AK-98 [Assault Rifle, 38 (clip), SA/BF/FA, 8M, w/integral Grenade Launcher, 500 rounds of belted regular ammunition and 100 rounds of belted APDS ammunition, 50 mini-grenades, Smartlink Rangefinder]
 Electronics (B/R) Facility
 Missile Launcher with 10 SAM missiles, 10 HE missiles and 10 Anti-Vehicle missiles
 Panther Assault Cannon [Heavy Weapon, 22 (clip), SS, 18D, w/100 rounds of belted regular ammunition]
 Remington Roomsweeper [Heavy Pistol, 8 (magazine), SA, 9S (f), w/100 rounds of APDS ammunition, External Smartgun Link]
 Security Armor, Medium (6/4)
 Wallacher Combat Axe

Notes

Hammerhead has natural Thermographic Vision, Dermal Armor 1, and +1 Reach for the purpose of armed and unarmed combat. And no, he does not carry all 30 missiles and all that ammo around all the time (be reasonable!).

THREAT RATINGS

Shadowrun, Second Edition, introduced the concept of Threat Ratings to simplify the control and maintenance of non-player characters (NPCs). Since then, we at FASA have received a great deal of feedback and many suggestions regarding the care and handling of NPCs. These suggestions inspired the following expansion of the Threat Rating system. As always, feel free to use whatever systems work best for your individual campaigns.

The basic Threat Rating system gives the gamemaster a constant number of dice to use for any offensive or defensive tests an NPC makes. The Threat Rating replaces Dice Pools, freeing the gamemaster from having to keep track of how many pool dice NPCs have used during combat. The Threat Rating system also allows the gamemaster to quickly strengthen an NPC—even archetypes or contacts—simply by increasing the NPC's Threat Rating. The Threat Rating can even be modified "on the fly"—while a game is running or even in the middle of combat. This flexibility enables **Shadowrun** gamemasters to instantaneously adjust the NPC opponents their player characters are facing to maintain game balance. Say the player characters are walking all over the corporate hit team that was supposed to give them the fight of their lives. No problem—simply increase the Threat Ratings of the NPCs that make up the hit team. If the player characters are taking a beating at the hands of rank amateurs intended only as a quick diversion, it is just as easy to subtract a few dice from the Threat Rating.

Gamemasters interested in working with a more complex system that better represents the specific capabilities of NPCs may use the following expansion of the basic Threat Rating system. This expanded version includes general guidelines for using the Threat Rating system to balance the strength and capabilities of NPC opponents to that of player character groups.

DEGREE OF THREAT

Shadowrun non-player characters excel at different things. Some possess exceptional skills in combat while others excel in magic, decking, controlling a vehicle and so on. To better reflect these diverse areas of expertise, an NPC may be assigned a Threat Rating for each area for which he would normally have a Dice Pool. In this multiple Threat Rating system, NPCs may be assigned separate Threat Ratings for their Combat, Magical, Decking and Vehicle (Control) threats.

The basic value for each of these Threat Ratings is equal to one-third (round to the nearest whole number) of whatever the

Dice Pool would have been for that character. Add the Threat Rating dice to all appropriate tests for that area (i.e., Combat, Magic and so on).

To use Threat Ratings to balance the strength of an NPC or NPC group and the player character(s) they oppose, the gamemaster may calculate Threat Indexes for NPCs. Threat Indexes provide an initial basis for comparison between the opponents, allowing the gamemaster to determine, in general terms, how balanced any given encounter is likely to be when the two factions meet. However, Threat Indexes alone do not provide an exact measure of the threat presented by NPCs. Keep in mind that a number of other variables—the NPCs' weapons, equipment, spells, cyberware, bioware and the like—also contribute to the groups' level of danger.

COMBAT THREAT RATING

The Combat Threat Rating represents an NPC's expertise in ranged, armed and unarmed combat.

When calculating the Combat Threat Index, gamemasters may wish to include the effect of the NPC's Initiative on the rating. To use Initiative as a factor, calculate the average number of actions the NPC has in a Combat Turn. Increase the NPC's Combat Threat Index by 50 percent for 2 actions, by 100 percent for 3 actions, and by 150 percent for 4 actions. Player characters' Combat Pool ratings can be adjusted in the same way for purposes of making this comparison.

Remember that an imbalance of firepower can shift a fight in favor of underskilled opposition or vice versa. The same holds true if one of the groups has melee weapons, especially those with Reach ratings, and the other side does not.

MAGICAL THREAT RATING

The Magical Threat Rating is used in the same situations as Magic Pool dice.

The gamemaster may allocate Magical Threat dice to spell defense at a ratio of 2 points of spell defense per 1 point (die) of Magical Threat. As long as these dice are allocated to spell defense, they may not be used for other magical Success Tests.

For purposes of comparing the opponents, gamemasters may also add one-half of an initiate's grade to the NPC's Magical Threat Index. Note that only spellcasting magicians have a Magical Threat. Conjuring adepts do not have Magical Threat Ratings, though the gamemaster may use an index equal to one-third (round to the nearest whole number) of the NPC's Conjuring Skill. For optimum game balance, however, the effect of any accompanying or conjured spirits should really be applied across the entire battle rather than in favor of a single character.

A character's spells, foci, spirits and the like can easily shift the balance between magic-wielding opponents. Therefore, gamemasters may wish to estimate the Magical Threat Indexes before beginning play and be prepared to re-balance them "on the fly" if necessary.

DECKING THREAT RATING

The Decking Threat Rating is used in the same situations as Hacking Pool dice.

When estimating the strength of opposing deckers, note that the character's cyberdecks and/or programs can shift the balance of strength radically. Also, corporate deckers fighting in a home system have an advantage automatically because they can ignore security codes and other obstacles.

VEHICLE (CONTROL) THREAT RATING

The Vehicle (Control) Threat Rating functions like Control Pool dice. It applies to tests relating to vehicle control, such as Driving, Piloting and Position Tests.

When balancing opponents in a control "fight" (such as a chase), note that the Handling characteristics of the vehicles involved can greatly affect the outcome.

IS THAT TOUGH ENOUGH?

Gamemasters can determine the level of challenge an NPC opponent group represents for a group of player characters by comparing the combined Threat Index of the NPC opponent group, multiplied by 3, to the combined Dice Pool points of the player character group. For example, a group of player characters with a combined Combat Pool of 36 points will find a fight with an NPC group possessing a Combat Threat Index of 12 (33 percent of the Combat Pool total), to be a breeze. The following Fight Level Table describes six levels of challenge calculated using this principle. The Threat Index in the table provides a quicky description of the challenge the player characters face. The Threat Index/Dice Pool Percentage provides the Threat Index as a percentage of the combined Dice Pool (as described in the example above).

Certain Threat Ratings are only relevant in certain situations. For example, an NPC's Decking Threat Rating only



FIGHT LEVEL TABLE

Threat Level	Threat Index/ Dice Pool Percentage	Description
A Breeze	33%	The proverbial cakewalk. Barely a scratch on the runners.
Tricky	75%	Not so simple but not really a concern. A lucky shot might do some damage.
Even Up	100%	The two sides are even matched. All things being equal, the fight could go either way.
Hard	125%	The runners are going to have to work to pull this one off. The opposition is tougher than they are, but not unbeatable.
A Bruiser	150%	When this one's over, the runners will know they've been through a fight. Everyone ends up hurting after this one.
We're Fragged	200%	The runners need to be <i>real</i> smart or <i>real</i> lucky to avoid ending up <i>real</i> dead.

becomes important when an encounter involves decking. And the Vehicle Threat only becomes important in chases and other situations where the Control Pool applies. In the most common fights—street actions and such—Combat and Magical Threat Ratings are most important.

As mentioned before, equipment and resources easily can tip the balance of a fight. For example, an NPC group with relatively low Combat Threats will do better in a fight if their weaponry outclasses the player characters' arsenal. Grenades and other independent area-effect attacks like missiles can quickly shift a fight in the favor of an under skilled attacker. Vehicles, spells and spirits, decks and other peripheral advantages can also affect the balance of fights considerably.

Unfortunately, any attempt to quantify these factors quickly turns into a mathematical orgy, and so we recommend that gamemasters use their own discretion to appraise the likely effects of various gear, weaponry, vehicles and the like when balancing an encounter.

Remember, use the Threat Index only for balancing the combat. Use the NPC's Threat Rating to play the game.

FINAL NOTE

Most non-player character profiles presented in **Prime Runners** include specific Threat Ratings. These represent guidelines—gamemasters should always feel free to modify any Threat Ratings published for **Shadowrun** NPCs or set their own ratings, because the level of danger an NPC presents is always relative to the strength of the player characters. For example, a decker NPC may have a fairly high Decking Threat Rating in her profile, but if your player character group includes a drekhot decker, that NPC may not present much competition unless the NPC's Decking Threat Rating is increased.

OPTIONAL INITIATIVE

To simulate a more experienced non-player character's ability to react in a combat situation, gamemasters may wish to add one-half (round down) the character's Threat Rating to his Initiative total.

CREATURE/SPIRIT THREAT RATINGS

Creatures and spirits have Threat Ratings as well. These are the equivalent of Combat Threat Ratings and are equal to one-half (round all fractions up) of a creature's Reaction or a spirit's Force. For creatures with paranormal or spellcasting abilities (specifically in dragons), increase these ratings by one-half of the creature's Essence if the critter possesses a combat, damaging or neutralizing spell or ability. Do not apply this increase to spirits' Threat Ratings.





FIN

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Prime Runners is a sourcebook of non-player characters for **Shadowrun, Second Edition**.



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