

# SHADOWRUN

# WITNESS

# CRIME PAYS

*Illegal is a strong word.*

It means you're doing something that the government doesn't want you to do. You'd never do anything like that, right? Or would you?

It might be that some laws are ... Misguided.

It's civil disobedience and a moral imperative to oppose those laws.

Gandhi taught us that.

My friends and I—we're here to help you make these difficult moral choices. We'll even provide you with a support network, if someone objects to your strong moral compass. And, hey, if everything works out, maybe all of us might come out ahead. Don't worry! We've got your back.

**Vice** is a sourcebook for **Shadowrun, Fourth Edition**. It provides a detailed look at all levels of organized crime, from the major transnational syndicates—like the Yakuza, the Triads, and the Mafia—to the smallest street gangs and specialist organizations. History, personality, and membership of these groups are provided along with suggestions on how best to use them as key players in a **Shadowrun** campaign. The crimes they commit, the metahumans they recruit, the law enforcement they oppose, and the shadowruns they sponsor are all in here. Whether your team of runners works in concert with the criminal underworld or tries to oppose it, **Vice** will offer new insights and options to your campaign.

# SHADOWRUN®

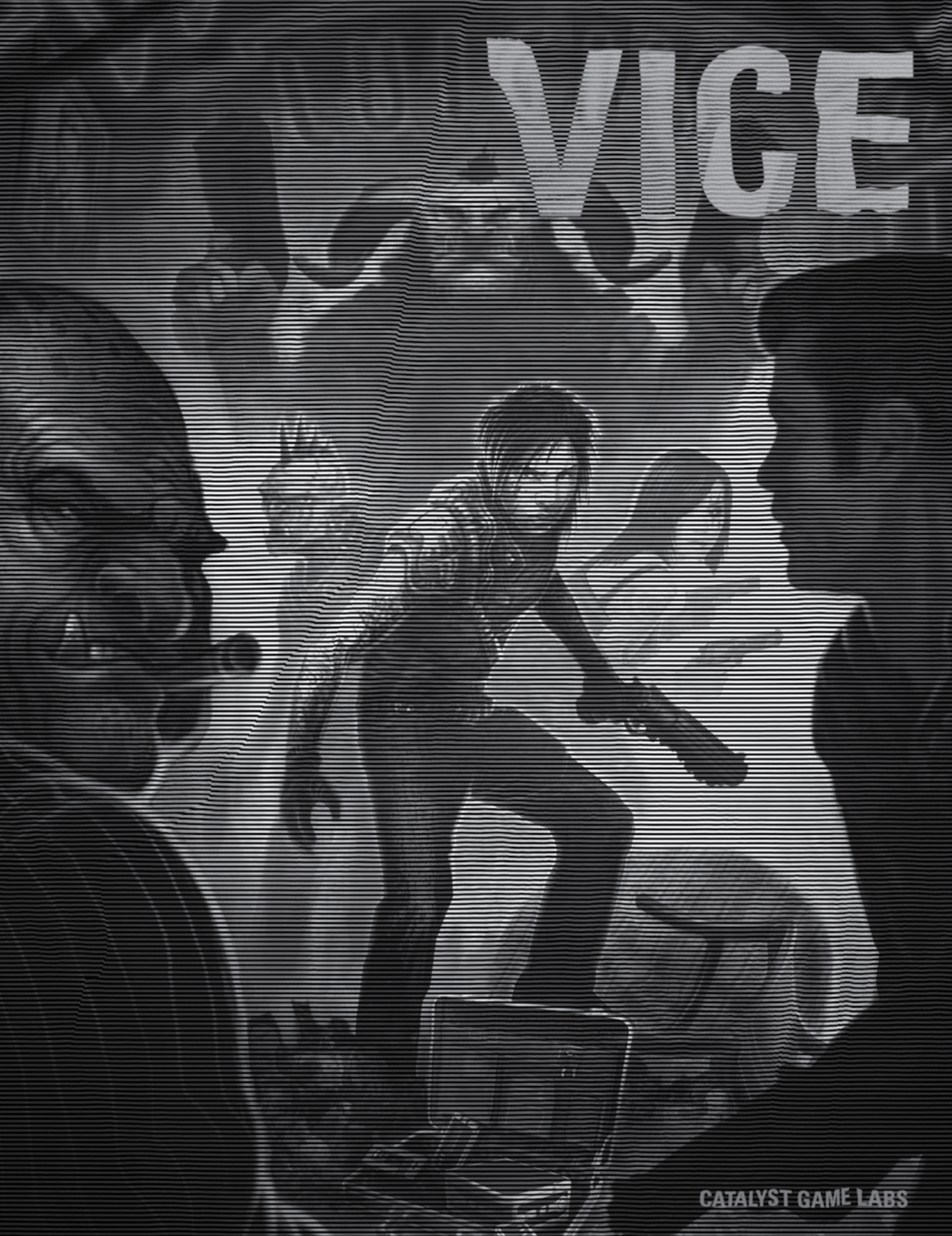


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# VICE



CATALYST GAME LABS

# ... TABLE OF CONTENTS ...

<b>CRIME PAYS</b>	<b>5</b>	D'Onore (Uomine d'Honore)	71	<b>ETHNIC SYNDICATES</b>	<b>93</b>
<b>Crime 101</b>	<b>6</b>	Donna d'Honore)	71	<b>Fanti Pirates</b>	<b>95</b>
Arson	6	Associates	72	Interests and Income	97
Black Magic	6	<b>The Children's Hour</b>	<b>44</b>	<b>Grey Wolves</b>	<b>98</b>
Blackmail	8	<b>Yakuza</b>	<b>46</b>	Current Affairs	99
Controlled Substances	10	The Gaijin's Game	46	Territorial Rights	99
Counterfeiting and Piracy	11	<b>Postmodern History</b>	<b>46</b>	Trading Culture for Nuyen	101
Forgery	12	Coda	47	Anatomy of a Wolf Pack	101
Financial Crime	13	Jingi	48	<b>Kabul Maffiya</b>	<b>101</b>
Gambling	14	Giri	49	Modern Crimes	102
Grifting	15	Ninjo	49	Drugs	102
Hijacking	16	Rituals	50	Arms	102
Kidnapping	17	Irezumi	50	Smuggling	103
Matrix Crime	18	Renaming	50	Ancient Culture	104
Money Laundering	18	Sakasuki	51	Following the Code	104
Pornography	19	Yabitsume	51	Family Ties	105
Prostitution	19	Divisions	51	<b>The Komun'go Seoulpa</b>	
Protection	21	The Old School		<b>Ring</b>	<b>105</b>
Robbery	21	and the New Way	52	Komun'go	106
White-Collar Crime	22	The Watada-rengo	52	A Brief History Lesson	106
Underworld Support Structure	23	Most Prominent Rengo	52	The Shape of a Ring	107
Fencing	23	The Shotozumi-rengo	53	The Biz	107
Fixing	23	The Four Oyabun	54	<b>The Koshari</b>	<b>108</b>
Loansharking	24	<b>Fathers and Sons</b>	<b>55</b>	Recent Events	108
Smuggling	24	Rengo	56	Las Vegas	109
Underworld Medicine	24	Kumi and Kai	56	Los Angeles	109
<b>Mafia</b>	<b>26</b>	Saiko-Komon	58	Organization and Operations	110
Traditions	28	Wakagashira-hosa	58	Layout	110
Initiation	28	Hisho	60	Major Rackets	111
Omerta	30	Kaikai	60	Personnel	111
Pentito	30	Komon	60	The Outer Circle	111
Rispetto	31	Shingiin	60	Santa Fe	111
Minor Traditions	31	Kumi-In	60	Phoenix	111
Introductions	31	O-Nee	62	Denver	111
Nepotism	32	Affiliates and Employees	63	Las Vegas	111
We Only Kill Each Other	32	Ninja	63	Recruiting	112
The Organization	32	Students	64	Initiation	112
The Mafia in America	32	Notable Ninja Societies	64	<b>Zobop</b>	<b>112</b>
The Mafia in Australia	34	Koga	64	Rootwork and Slavery	113
The Mafia in Europe	34	Oni Do Kai	64	The Houses of the Loa	113
The Commissione	36	Yagyū Ryu	64	A Rising Darkness	115
Capo di Tutti Capi	36	<b>The Triads</b>	<b>65</b>		
The Family	36	Interesting Times	65	<b>GANGS</b>	<b>116</b>
Capo Famiglia (Don, Dona)	37	Red Scare	65	<b>Gang Life</b>	<b>118</b>
Capo di Capi	37	Growth	65	A Primer on Gang Life	118
Consigliere	38	Organization	66	Gang Culture	118
Sotto Capi (Sotto Capo/ Sotto Capa)	38	Running the Numbers	66	Racial/Ethnic Gangs	118
Capi (Capo/Capa)	40	Philosophies	68	Turf Gangs	119
Soldati (Soldato/Soldata)	42	Common Triad Ranks	69	Activist Gangs	119
Picciotti (Picciotto)	42	Variations on a Theme	70	For-Profit Gangs	119
		Global Ties	70	Initiation	119
		Operations	71	Membership	120
		Computer Crime	71		
		Controlled Substances	71		
		Brand Counterfeiting	72		
		Gambling	72		
		People Trafficking	72		
		Prostitution	72		
		Protection Rackets	72		
		Smuggling	72		
		Notable Triads	73		
		Red Dragon Triad	73		
		Large Circle League	73		
		Sapphire Crane Society	74		
		<b>Vory V Zakone</b>	<b>74</b>		
		Thieves of the Code	74		
		Recent Events	75		
		The Code	76		
		Ranks	76		
		<b>Tactics</b>	<b>77</b>		
		Intimidation	77		
		Bribery	77		
		Bigotry	78		
		Thaumaturgy	78		
		Specialties	78		
		Data Brokerage	79		
		Loan Sharking	79		
		Matrix Crimes	79		
		Prison Economics	79		
		Prostitution	79		
		Protection	80		
		Smuggling	80		
		White Collar Crime	80		
		<b>Povryejhda Seattle</b>	<b>80</b>		
		Tsar Aleksander Bilotkiy	80		
		Sovetnik Sergei Antonov	80		
		Lideri Piotr Kirilskiy	81		
		Bojevik Lyubov Kirilskaya	81		
		Shestiorka Konstantin Valerov	81		
		Local Operations	81		
		Manpower	82		
		<b>Ghost Cartels</b>	<b>83</b>		
		A History of the Ghost Cartels	83		
		NewsNow! By Holly Haskins	84		
		<b>David Cartel</b>	<b>86</b>		
		South American			
		Politics and Crime	87		
		The Andes Cartel	88		
		Products	88		
		Morales Cartel	89		
		Organization	89		
		Friends and Neighbors	89		
		Cachoeira Cartel	89		
		Olaya Cartel	90		



<b>Little Fish, Big Pond</b>	<b>121</b>	Chupra Sangre	163
King of the Mountain:		The Crimson Moon Stalker	163
Top-Tier Gangs	122	Erik Dannover	164
Patina of Legitimacy	122	Frida Kohlman	164
The Ancients	123	Job	165
Portfolio	124	Kane	166
Friendly Relations	124	Walter Kralt	167
Firepower	125	Merode Ngobobo	167
<b>Comando Verde</b>	<b>125</b>	Mikasa Heihachiro	168
Organization and Membership	126	MRX	168
Revenue and Expense	126	Null	169
Government Compliance	127	The Pied Piper	169
<b>Chaos Engine</b>	<b>127</b>	Sergei Malenkin	170
The Virtual Boogiemen	128	Sir Simon	170
<b>The Yardies</b>	<b>129</b>	Snowbird	171
Manpower	129	Teachdaire	171
Business Interests	130	Xin Lao	172
<b>The Cutters</b>	<b>131</b>		
Leadership	131		
Internal Organization	131		
<b>Second-Tier Gangs</b>	<b>133</b>		
Los Angeles Ardientes	133		
Leadership and Organization	134		
Initiation	134		
The Vikings	134		
Leadership and Organization	135		
Allies and Enemies	135		
Income and Interests	135		
<b>The Cocotona</b>	<b>135</b>		
Income and Interests	136		
Leaders and Organization	136		
<b>The Numbers Gang</b>	<b>137</b>		
Leadership and Organization	138		
Membership and Initiation	138		
Income and Interests	138		
<b>First Nations</b>	<b>138</b>		
The Unholy Trinity	139		
Resources and Profits	139		
<b>Third Tier: Life at the Bottom</b>	<b>140</b>		
Matrix Gangs	140		
Go-Gangs	141		
Wizzer Gangs	141		
Theme Gangs			
(And Other Psychos)	142		
<b>OTHER OUTFITS</b>	<b>143</b>		
<b>Introduction</b>	<b>144</b>		
<b>Organleggers</b>	<b>144</b>		
History	146		
Operations	147		
<b>Crackerz</b>	<b>148</b>		
Dead Deckers Society	148		
Schattengesellschaft	148		
Schattengesellschaft Ops	149		
<b>Fences</b>	<b>150</b>		
The Support Structure	150		
Sell High, Buy Low	151		
Finding a Fence	151		
Hot Spots	152		
Infobrokers	152		
<b>Other Outfits</b>	<b>154</b>		
IAD Underworld Investigations Report	154		
<b>DANGEROUS MINDS</b>	<b>159</b>		
Interpol News	160		
Interpol's Most Wanted	160		
Billy Joe Wallace	160		
Castle Grey	162		
Charlie Wire	162		

## THE LAW 173

<b>Know the Law Before You Break It</b>	<b>174</b>
The Big Leagues	176
What Can They (Legally) Do?	176
The Minor Leagues	177
Cops for Hire	178
Lone Star	178
Major Divisions	179
Knight Errant	180
Second Tier	180
Getting (and Keeping) a Contract	181
Time is Money	182
Public Opinion:	
What You Think Matters	183
GovPol: HomeGrown Cops	183
PCC Cops:	
An Exercise in Efficiency	183
Knowing Your Legal Rights	184
Scotland Yard:	
Policing the Police State	184
NeoTokyo Police: Saving Face	185
Corporate Masters	186
International Police	186
Cooperation and (Mis) Communication	187

## GAME INFORMATION 188

<b>It's a Crime</b>	<b>188</b>
<b>Knowing Your Place</b>	<b>188</b>
Competition	188
Organized Crime and the Law	188
<b>All in the Family</b>	<b>188</b>
Kinship	188
Honor	189
Diplomacy	189
Corruption	189
Criminal Activity	189
<b>Different Worlds</b>	<b>189</b>
Size	189
Scope	189
Resources	189
History	189
Culture	189
<b>Organizations</b>	<b>190</b>
The Syndicate	190
The Gang	190
Independent Operators	190
Between Worlds	190
<b>An Offer You Can't Refuse</b>	<b>191</b>

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```

Connecting JackPoint VPN ...
... Matrix Access ID Spoofed.
... Encryption Keys Generated.
... Connected to Onion Routers.
> Login
*****
> Enter Passcode
*****
... Biometric Scan Confirmed.
Connected to <ERROR: NODE UNKNOWN>
"Crimes, like virtues, are their own rewards."

```

### JackPoint Stats

61 users currently active in the network

### Latest News

\* <012172> Make sure you've updated your JackPoint key with security patch v.12.2 and the multimedia plug-in pack [RodeoK](#) to get more bang for your buck out of the content on this p2p MoSoSo network.. - FastJack

### Personal Alerts

- \* Your "xploit3r" agent has an 3 [urgent messages](#) for you
- \* You have 7 new private [messages](#)
- \* You have 2 [messages](#) queued for anonymous re-routing
- \* You have received 3 [Metalink Friends](#) add requests
- \* You have 18 new [responses](#) to your JackPoint posts
- \* PDA: The Mercurial Tribute Concert at Underworld 93 starts in 8 hours, 12 minutes and 30 seconds [\[map\]](#)
- \* PDA: You have received 3 [pings](#) from K.

### First Degree

You are hidden from all contacts. Your Current [Rep Score](#): 56 (92% Positive)  
Current Time: February 28, 2072, 1215

- PREFERENCES
- FEEDS
- TASKS
- LINKS
- HISTORY

Welcome back to JackPoint, omae; your last connection was severed: 4 hours, 28 minutes, 23 seconds ago

### Today's Heads Up

\* Still clearing your head after the tempo high? Sorting through the fallout of the gangland wars? Want to know what the underworld status quo looks like now that the dust is settling? This file might be just what you want. [Tag: [Vice](#)]

### Incoming

- \* Have you been wondering what our would-be lords and masters have been scheming of late in their comfy ivory towers? Find out the latest buzz with our latest download. [Tag: [Corporate Guide](#)]
- \* Serious changes are afoot in the Emerald City. Brackhaven is governor, The Star has fallen. The Shotozumi-gumi has taken a pounding. All this and more in our latest guide to the City on the Sound. [Tag: [Seattle 2072](#)]

### Top News Items

- \* In a press conference today, a spokesperson formally confirmed the Corporate Court's long-rumored project to develop a space elevator, or specifically a so-called "sky hook". Speculation is rife about the Earth-based anchor point, but Ariana Smith, the CC spokesperson, also confirmed that the operation to introduce a counterweight asteroid into Earth orbit has already been launched and should be finalized sometime next year. [Link](#).
- \* The Draco Foundation has announced a 10,000 reward for information leading to the recovery of the stolen artifact known as the "Sexton of Worlds". The relic—an item only known from public mentions in the will of the late President Dunkelzahn—was stolen last week while in transit from a Foundation vault in Washington DC to a Dunkelzahn Institute of Magical Research facility in Boston. Federal authorities have been investigating the case in conjunction with Foundation investigators. [Link](#).
- \* The series of gruesome murders attributed to the serial killer known as the "Chupra Sangre" continued today with Pueblo authorities in Los Angeles announcing the discovery of an eighth body. Thomas Parker, the killer's latest victim, was a 24-year-old college student attending Caltech. As with the Chupra Sangre's previous victims, Parker was Awakened. Peace Force authorities have asked for any witnesses to come forward. [Link](#).



- CHAT
- MESSAGES
- FILES
- POSTS
- NEXUS
- SEARCH

- Active: ComStar Firewall
- Active: Jack-in-the-Box Antivirus
- Active: SpamWitch Filter
- On/Receiving: Commcode
- Excellent: Signal
- Active: Hidden Mode
- Local Map

**Vice**

Invited Guests

Abracadavre

Posts/Files tagged with "Vice":

- \* Crime Pays
- \* Dangerous Minds
- \* Gangs
- \* Independents
- \* Local and Ethnic Syndicates
- \* The Opposition

CONTINUE

ADVANCED SEARCH

SAVE



It had been three days, and Pistons was still jacked in. /dev/grrl checked the drip going into her vein, and the little stimpatches full of uppers lining her neck. Pistons' sister Bette was in the living room, watching her twins play a private Matrix game they'd made up and keeping a parental eye on their Matrix traffic. Pistons joked that as soon as the kids got old enough to recognize Matrix porn, she'd have to give them the "speech" just to "keep the number of unwed teenaged technomancer mothers down." It was only half a joke. Pistons never let any of the girls out alone, not even /dev/grrl. Too many predators on the streets for kids; not just rapists and drug dealers, but gang recruiters, ghouls, and organleggers too.

/dev/grrl had called the orks, the ones who took bodies to those who didn't ask questions; just broke them down for spare parts. She had to get things ready before they got here. Pistons started talking out loud.

"Twenty-five. The data's good, I just have to get it out," she said.

The bodies were laid out on the kitchen table. With a deep breath, and a bit of queasiness, she picked up the knife and pliers, then ran the tutorial she'd bought from Butch.

"Señor Rohas, please, you know I'm not trying to duck you, but money's tight with my sister and her kids..."

Sometime after she had removed the datajack and was rooting around with a finger on the bone to trace the connections where the headware memory should be, one of the twins got sick. Bette got up to look after her.

"... and that'll clear my marker? We'll be even? Okay, forward me the details."

/dev/grrl deposited the gory chunk of hardware in a bowl. She'd wash the bits of brain and hair off later.

"What about the paydata? That's still good for twenty-five, if you move it quick. No, I know what Hector said, but Hector couldn't punch code to save his own skin."

The cyber hand was old and tricky, desiccated skin and slivers of bone still attached to the stump. The little AROs painted a stenciled line where it wanted her to cut, and flashed a warning about a back-up battery on this model that might still be live.

Just as /dev/grrl was finishing up, Pistons jacked out and sat up, blinking. Her eyes were adjusting to three days without light, and her hands gave little shakes as the stims wore on her nerves a little more. Bette handed Pistons a bottle of electrocyte refresher, which the hacker gulped greedily.

"Rohas says I owe him forty thousand for springing Bette and the kids. He knows I can't pay, but he's offered a trade." Pistons said as /dev/grrl washed her hands and tools.

"Need any help?" the teen offered.

"Oh sweetheart, you've been fantastic so far. I never could have done this without you. This run is going to be dangerous, and it'll take time. We need to get you home before your parents start to worry," Pistons replied.

"Relax, they're in Vegas on a business junket-slash-second honeymoon. They think I'm with the sitter, I've been getting their calls forwarded through one of my anonymizers. We've got a couple days yet," /dev/grrl said.

"Now tell me, who's the target?"



- It's been a crazy tough year. It's been a while since we'd seen this level of violence on the streets, and I don't think it's ever been this widespread. Tempo was too hot a business opportunity to miss out on, while for others it was a convenient excuse to dust off old feuds. There's been so much blood running on the streets it's hard to tell who's still standing and who's taken another bite out of the pie. So I decided to put the word out and put together a file with what we know about what the criminal underworld looks like after the recent shakeups. We'll start with some general background and move into the specifics of the major and minor players.
- FastJack

## CRIME 101

Posted By: Red Anya

Some do what they must to survive; others do what they must to prosper. I joined the *Vory* to escape the streets, and I learned their lessons well. There are thousands like me that never broke their ties, and others, professional criminals, like us, denizens of the city's dark underbelly. These are the faces to Lone Star's statistics. They are responsible for the vast majority of everyday crime in our cities. We may share the streets with them but make no mistake, they are as dangerous as any company man or merc; after all they make a living out of committing crimes.

The crimes I am about to relate do not exist in a vacuum; like it or not they are a part of life in the cities, and they are all interconnected. A simple brothel owner (prostitution) may buy his girls from Peru (people trafficking), modify them to his clients' tastes (organlegging and a black clinic), keep them happy with cheap Kong chips (drug dealing), and record them while they are servicing the clients, either to upload to his paysite (pornography) or to influence those clients later (blackmail). Not all criminals will be as enmeshed as the whoremaster in my example, of course, but you must never make the mistake of thinking that a thief is always a thief, and capable of nothing else, or think that because you see the surface of a crimelord's enterprise that you know all aspects of his business.

## ARSON

Controlled demolition and fire-setting has become relatively rare—the same motives are there, but the technical expertise required to pull it off successfully has become much scarcer. Most of the buildings put up in the last forty years simply don't incorporate substances that burn easily, and even then they usually incorporate fire-suppressive measures that defeat simple planned "accidents." The reasons behind arson remain the same, however: dispose of evidence, cover up crimes, defraud an insurance company, or get rid of some annoying people so you can build something new. Not to mention using fires to convey an abject lesson and for simple property damage. And of course, there are also amateurs who set fire to things just to watch them burn or to protest some eco-political agenda or because they get a hard-on for the pretty flames (though both kinds can be quite accomplished if they get the chance to develop a technique).

- One of the best times I can remember as a kid was a street party hosted by the Finnigan family. Don O'Malley had just come to town and made a big show of getting everybody in the neighborhood out-

side to have a good time; even had a couple soldatos carry old ladies downstairs in their rocking chairs. There was plenty of synthahol and music and fireworks ... and about 2300, the entire block went up in flames. Don O'Malley had everybody stay in the street as the fire burned through the buildings, kept them from running back in or getting in the way when the fire department finally showed and gave up. The whole damn block burned down. Some people lost everything. I heard later that there was a Yakuza pimp operating in Finnigan territory on that block, or that Don O'Malley owned the whole row and used the insurance to bank his war against the Yaks. I think he did it just to prove a point.

- 2XL

Setting a fire is not easy; ideally you must make it look like an accident, and make sure it does sufficient damage to achieve your purposes. Electrical fires are best, especially in older tenements that don't use chemical fire extinguisher systems (or whose systems haven't been maintained): spray acid on the wires to eat through the insulation, or damage the local transformer with a "stray shot" from a drive-by and watch the sparks fly. Chemical fires are more difficult to conceal, but easier to set up—nearly anything can be made flammable in the right proportions. Of course, it is good to arrange for some "tinder" to be nearby and carry the flames—stocking a cleaning closet with alcohol-based cleaners or arranging for a local construction site to leave bags of fertilizer nearby, for example. Myself, I prefer low explosives.

- Oh ho, somebody's talking sexy. Low explosives are simple and devious when done right—all you need is something combustible and an oxidizer. Flour or sugar dust suspended in the air in a confined space works wonders. Then all you need is a spark and ... boom.
- Sounder

Magic is good for demolitions, if done properly: it leaves no trace provided you remember to clean the astral signatures from the spell or spirit. Unfortunately, sometimes the lack of evidence can be damning; if there is no other logical explanation, these days the investigators might begin to consider magic as the only possibility. It is much better to set up your situation carefully beforehand and then use an elemental spell to begin the process. "Rogue" spirits have been used, but their activities are far more difficult to conceal.

- You're forgetting some of the high-tech solutions. Disassembler nanites are an arsonist's dream, and a hacker or technomancer who cracks a power station can fry entire subdivisions if the automatic cutoffs fail. Not to mention the damage a drop of thermite will do in a gas pipe, or a fuel-air explosive carefully concealed as a gas leak in the basement.
- Puck

## BLACK MAGIC

The demand for magical goods and services among the criminal element is high, particularly if the magician in question is competent or their materials potent, and the price is whatever the market can bear—provided you can find someone capable of doing what you wish in the first place. Spells and spirits both have their particular advantages for security and gangland violence,







## DO IT YOURSELF

Posted By: Stone

While Krasny Anya discusses how the syndicates do business, I've taken it upon myself to discuss how independent criminals can profit from various criminal enterprises, for a minimum investment of time, capital, and effort. I've flagged these with the DIY tag, so you can screen 'em out if you already feel confident in your expertise.

## DIY: DITCHING THE RIDE

There comes a time in every criminal's life when they need to dispose of a vehicle quickly and leave behind as few traces as possible. Sometimes it's a stolen getaway car, other times you just don't want to be connected with where it's been or what it's been carrying. Hell, I have a friend that switches cars every week, sure his aura will rub off on it and some magician will track it back to him if he keeps it too long.

Me, I keep a special bag for just such contingencies, and I take it with me in every car or truck or bike I own. The basics are three atomizers, cleaner cleaner, varied sponges and rags, rubber gloves, a re-breather, safety glasses, a gallon of blood from the local street doc, an EMP grenade, a bar of thermite, and a half-liter of one-hour carcerands.

Procedure is simple: you put on the protective gear and spray the blood over everything, even the air conditioning vents—that way the cops have to work through a mess of DNA, of which any of yours that survives will be only one. Then you go back with the c-squared and clean up all the blood you can see. The protective gear is self-explanatory: you want to be sure not to leave other evidence on top (hence the gloves), and take care not to breathe in any of the fumes or get them in your eyes (hence the re-breather/goggles). Then drop the EMP grenade under the hood (or wherever the engine is on your model); that should fry most of the electronics. You can go dig out the optical chips if you really want to, but unless the car was purchased in your name I wouldn't sweat it.

The thermite and carcerands I usually reserve for "oh fuck" situations, when I don't have time for the niceties. Mix the thermite with the carcerands (remember to follow the instructions; you can find 'em on any good anarchist forum), shake well, and spray over the entire interior of the car. Walk away very fast: while you have time to go over everything with the atomizer before the carcerands go off, remember that the clock is ticking.

and sometimes you hear of more interesting uses—spirits used in kidnapping, human trafficking, and possession, for example, or preservation spells for organlegging. Nearly every syndicate recognizes the need for magical assets of their own, and even poor magicians may be coddled so long as their powers are even remotely effective. The Triads in particular have institutionalized this practice with their Incense Masters.

Beyond actual magical operations, such as buying a magical tattoo or warding a building for a period of time, some criminals and organizations offer more specific services for their more exacting or superstitious clients. Technically referred to as **simony**, this is the buying and selling of religious favors—a couple of gallons of holy water from a defrocked Catholic priest, initiation into the Shango cult on Trinidad to cover a gangan's gambling debt, copying spells from a coven's Book of Shadows without permission, and funerals for the excommunicated are all examples of this sort of craft.

- Some of those uses have actual magical value, I am told; many uses of geomancy are tied up in various non-secular rituals and practices of sacred geometry, every houngan and shaman is traditionally a priest of their pagan faith as well as a magician, and religious initiation is typically a prerequisite for deeper magical understanding. The various churches of the world have their own uses for the underworld, of course—weak priests often rely on la cosa nostra, with their strong Catholic bent, to feed their pleasures of the flesh, and in turn even the most faithful bishop has asked for assistance from a local don when the exorcist needs a little muscle for a job.
- Fianchetto
- There's been a surprising amount of counterfeit black market magical goods—not rubbish disguised as fetishes or anything like that, but actual magical goods advertised as something they're not. Some Vory crew on the Black Sea has been shipping amulets and jewelry set with insects trapped in amber to Chicago where they're sold as genuine bug shaman gear.
- Sticks
- That's nothing, you almost have to become an antiquarian to pick out an authentic hardcopy grimoire these days. Charing Cross is a den of thieves, I'm telling you.
- Winterhawk

## BLACKMAIL

Violence has its place in the underworld, but it is not the only way to turn a nuyen. The mere threat of violence, or the exposure of some indiscretion or criminal wrongdoing, can be sufficient leverage to extract favors and money from many men and women. This basic principle is inherent in many crimes, but it reaches its fullest expression in blackmail.

The syndicates generally reserve blackmail for their mid-level marks (though they've been known to be ambitious). Small-time marks are easier to intimidate, as they have less defense against violence and the more subtle pressure of blackmail, but they consequently have far less to offer for the amount of time and effort put into it. The ideal victim has the funds or influence to be likely candidates, but not the will or foresight to protect themselves. The



**DIY: TINGLING**

Legally engaging in any sort of magical healing requires a magical healer certification, minimum, in most of the civilized world. Since that's not an option for the SINless or the shadowrunner that wants to make a quick nuyen on the side, the alternative is to disguise your magical healing as something else.

The laying on of hands is required in many healing spells, some empathic adept abilities, and for some holistic magical medicines like shiatsu or faith healing—most magicians can't even tell the difference between them without engaging their astral senses, and mundanes have no clue what's going on besides the fact that they feel better.

Naturally then, a lot of under-the-table magical healing is disguised as upper-level prostitution or entertainment services—if you're careful to pass yourself off as mundane, you can get a masseuse's license or even a sex worker certification much easier than a magical healer certification, and faking those licenses is a snap. To properly distinguish themselves from actual prostitutes and sensual massage therapists, key words and phrases are included in the ads. The most popular tags are *twinkle*, *tingle*, *twinkling*, or *tingling*, which is where the practice gets its name.

If you don't mind earning a couple nuyen this way, the easiest thing to do is get yourself a custom ARO tag offering your "services" that you can turn on and off—keep it discreet, and use the tags. Keep an eye out for the police, try not to have sex with the client unless really necessary, and don't sell yourself cheap—a couple hundred nuyen for an empathic handjob is normal, and actual hands-on spells can cost thousands of nuyen per casting.

Mundanes can fake this in some cases with the judicious use of drugged handcreams or massage oils—a little no-paint worked into the massage oil, or some DMSO laced with novacoke can convince somebody they're better (if not actually 100 percent), while a touch of camphor can give the characteristic "tingle" that the client might be expecting. Just be careful to claim very limited magical abilities and remember to use disposable gloves. You won't make thousands of nuyen in a couple minutes, but you'll be able to scam a couple hundred out of somebody in a quarter of an hour.

**DIY: WHITEMAIL**

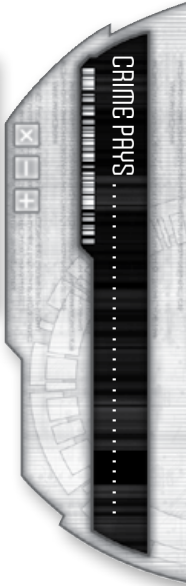
This is a classic carrot-and-stick scheme for when you need someone's full and willing cooperation very quickly and don't want to pull a gun or anything that might cause the mark to freak. The set-up is pretty simple. You give someone an outrageous financial incentive to do their job—like giving the maitre d' five hundred nuyen to get a table now instead of in fifteen minutes, or a valet to park your car—and then you press them to do something else for you: what you really want them to do, like plant the bug under the plate of the guy eating two seats over or breaking the taillight of the Porsche Cimmaron. The threat, which has to be voiced quickly and confidently, is that you'll tell their boss if they don't do as you say—and you should have a good line ready about what you'll claim the incentive was really for—but they can keep the outrageous tip if they do what you want. The key is to give the mark as little time to think through their options as possible.

most rich and influential, of course, take pains to prevent material that can be used to blackmail them from falling into others' hands, and can be very vengeful at any attempt to intimidate them.

Influence-peddlers and lobbyists tend to excel at blackmail, where their primary concern is getting their mark to use their extraordinary legal powers to pass a piece of legislation, release a prisoner, approve a government contract, etc. Shadowrunners tend to figure into these type of blackmail schemes either as go-betweens or to collect the original blackmail material.

- Everyone has dirty little secrets, even if they must be choreographed, manipulated, or manufactured to be of use. Even if you are not so foolish as to keep records of your transgressions and crimes, blackmailers can edit the face of an abess onto the body of a back-alley joygirl, or arrange for one to flirt with a corporate officer just enough to obtain the appearance of guilt. Everyone has someone or something they love, and are willing to pay to see unharmed, or at least alive and reasonably intact.
- Fianchetto
- Blackmail, as much as covering up their own crimes and spreading misinformation, is one of the reasons the major syndicates work to keep people in the major media outlets.
- Sunshine
- Yeah, it has nothing at all to do with them hiring the likes of you to fake trideo or still shots for them.
- Sticks

Most independent blackmailers rely on concealing their identity as protection against reprisals from their victims, and





are most successful when operating for a limited time to obtain specific goals or amounts of money. Syndicate operators are generally more forthright, relying on their reputation to circumscribe any thoughts of retaliation, and are generally looking to begin a more long-term relationship with their mark. In either case, the longer the period of time involved and the greater the demands made on the victim, the more desperate the victim will become and the more likely he or she is to attempt to end the blackmail, either through violence (the death of the mark or the blackmailer), retrieving the blackmail material or otherwise removing the threat, or exposing the blackmail to the media, police/corporate security/government authorities, or hiring agents to do the same.

## CONTROLLED SUBSTANCES

People want what they cannot have, and there is always somebody standing in a bathroom or back alley ready to sell it to you for whatever they can get. It doesn't have to be drugs and brainbenders—it could be some telesma from an endangered species and gathered with slave labor out of some Southeast Asian hellhole. Drug running, talislegging, arms dealing, the point is that whatever you are dealing in is a controlled substance—banned or regulated by some government, corporation, or religion. The reasons why anything becomes regulated are unimportant to the grand scheme of things, but include taxes, tariffs, religious prohibition, and a desire to keep other companies' profits from cutting into the bottom line.

- I can see that for some items, but when it comes to drugs and BTLs there are some legitimate health concerns.
- /dev/grll
- Trust me katya, in many cases the government and corporations simply do not want the competition.
- Red Anya
- The tempo binge may be over and the tempo pipeline running dry, but things are not as clean cut as the authorities would have you believe. Tempo detox and withdrawal are pretty complicated and time-consuming, as often as not the user comes out a husk of his former self, generally unempathetic and apathetic towards others. Flipheads are turning to other drugs in despair and drug-related crime is still soaring.
- Nepherine

Dealing in controlled substances is essentially the same as selling anything, except that since the business is illegal, there are no limitations on the practice of it besides those imposed by the criminals themselves. A single syndicate can potentially possess a vertical monopoly on a single product in a given market, setting the price as they wish because they control the total supply, and keeping costs to a minimum. Thankfully, such monopolies tend to be short-lived or limited to a small area. Many Ghost Cartels and Triads work to obtain these monopolies, not only distributing their BADs but controlling the farms where they are grown and their transportation as well; while the Yakuza is happy to sell weapons and black IC programs, international and intercorporate conventions prohibit Mitsuhamas from exporting to certain countries and municipalities.

## MOST POPULAR CONTROLLED SUBSTANCES

### BTLs/Moodies

Don't Datasearch This (500¥), Embrace of the Incubus/Endless Yaoi double feature (120¥), Skraachas in Heat (35¥)

### Drugs

Flipside/tempo (50¥), goblin heads (5/25¥), roid patches (2/50¥)

### Guns and Armor

AK-97 (500¥), Ares Light Fire 70 (350¥), Ruger Super Warhawk (250¥)

### Magical Goods

Combat spell fetishes (200¥), blood fetish (500¥), The Neo-Anarchist's Guide to Street Magic (22,000¥)

### Warez

Dawn of Atlantis: Epoch of Blood (150¥), Password Cracker V (5,000¥), PocketHacker (4,920¥)

- The Mafia's old influence on trade unions was actually based around controlling sources of skilled labor, and worked like a local monopoly in most respects. You might not give a second thought to the Teamsters, but without trucks to bring goods in or out, a city would soon starve or drown in its own shit. The rise of the megacorps, globalization, and the advent of drones and skillwires have really killed most of the unions, though.
- 2XL
- Not all of them. The Seers' Guild in France is an example of a modern guild that can't be downsized because of the latest technology. Fortunately, they've managed to police themselves sufficiently to keep the mob—and the other syndicates—out. For the moment at least.
- Arete

There is always room for smaller players in controlled substances, but it is perilous. Getting caught holding or dealing is always a risk, but the real danger comes from your competitors. A single user with a single marijuana plant is not a threat; an independent dealer or collective that manages a greenhouse full of Chicago Grey will attract the attention of other dealers looking to cut down on their competition. In general, the more profitable and organized your business, the more likely you are to draw attention. Case in point: the Ko'mungo Seoulpa Ring made massive profits off of tempo, and their sudden rise made them an immediate threat to Seattle's other syndicates.

- You pay the right percentages to the syndicate—usually 40–50 percent of any profits, right off the top, on time every month and

Urgent Message...



**DIY: CHIP LIFE**

I love optical chips. Metal detectors can't find them, drug-sniffing dogs and adepts can't smell them, EMPs don't erase them, the only way to see what's on them is to slot them, and they're legal. They can hold a wide range of contraband, from porn BTLs to combat progs to drug recipes, and they're legal. You can carry a suitcase of them on any sub-orbital in the world and take them anywhere else and the customs people won't even blink, and they're legal. Did I mention that they're legal?

Honestly, optical chips full of dirty warez or BTLs or anything else are great for bartering and emergency fund raising. If you're carrying an excessive number, the airport cops might slot one or two at random to make sure they're what's actually labeled, but chances are they won't. You have to be a little careful of them because rough handling can cause them to shatter or chip, which renders them worthless, but as long as they're packed tight and stowed securely that isn't a real problem. I have a leather belt with thirty-one chip-sized pockets sewn into it that I fill up and wear before every trip in or out of town.

The key to smuggling anything is to keep cool, especially while there are cops around. You need to score some chips before you leave (looking out for cops), then pass through security (smile at the cops), and then sell the chips and buy new ones (looking out for cops). Profits vary with your merchandise and local restrictions—selling CalHots in California isn't going to net you any cred, but they go for 150 percent of regular prices over the border in Aztlan, for example.

If you make regular trips, set up some contacts on both ends and fill orders for what they're looking for. This minimizes the hassle with finding buyers and sellers, guarantees your money on both ends, and as you develop a good working relationship you might be able to expand.

no having to bust your door down to find you—and you'll be all right. The trouble comes when the Golden Lions realize their Kong chips aren't selling too well and they decide to make an example of an independent so the rest will join up or die.

- Sticks

There's always good money to be made running illegal goods for one group of good ol' boys or another; they like

to keep things compartmentalized to avoid compromising the whole operation. More than a few runners find work as couriers, smugglers, and security in all manner of controlled substance ops.

Bad as they were, the tempo flare-ups in the past year brought a lot of business to the shadows and filled a whole lotta pockets.

**COUNTERFEITING AND PIRACY**

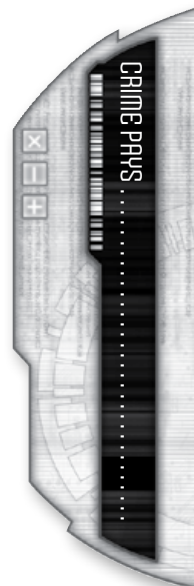
A lot of otherwise legitimate business men and women bend their ethics a little by making products that they aren't allowed to—cheap knock-offs of popular goods, bootleg toys and apparel based on the latest anime craze or pop idol, identical copies of expensive electronic goods (called “clones” or “rips” in pirate parlance, not to be confused with actual clones). The laws broken here involve patents and international copyrights and licenses, not the sort of thing a local cop is expected to know or give a damn about; they probably can't tell a hand-stitched Zoé purse from a machine-stitched knock-off made in a Triad sweat shop in Hong Kong.

- Most people don't give a damn about whether they have the “real” item or a bootleg. Quality can suffer, of course—I think the Ares Predator IVs out of the Gray Wolves' Balkan sweatshops are more prone to jamming—but the real problem is that the clones aren't registered with the “authentic” manufacturer. No patches or software updates, no maintenance plans, no money back.
- Riser

Piracy is big business—hell, Aztechnology was practically founded on it—but that carries with it the danger that the toes you're stepping on belong to corporations and megacorporations, and they are much more protective of their intellectual property and copyrights. Legend has it that almost 30 percent of all cases that go to the Corporate Court involve IP violation of some sort.

- Sweet irony. There are the few cases where the “clones” end up working better than the originals for whatever reason. Case in point, I bought a Cantonese knock-off of the Made in Aztlan Moebius entertainment suite for a third the price. All the Moebius line was pulled because of a faulty processor, but my knock-off still works perfectly.
- Ma'fan
- That was good work, if I do say so myself.
- DangerSensei

Shadowrunners rarely have the craft or resources to set up a proper counterfeit goods operation, and are instead hired for protection, to deliver the goods, or to send a message. Smaller corporations without the corporate security presence to enforce their copyrights internationally have been known to engage shadowrunners to identify and destroy these illicit factories and sweat shops.





INCOMING FEED.....

## FORGERY

The continued development of technology has made forgery and counterfeiting increasingly sophisticated tasks, and generally beyond the means of any individual, no matter how accomplished. Even the major transnational syndicates rarely invest in currency counterfeiting operations these days, given the low chances of success and the difficulties involved in moving the product—not to mention the risk of earning Z-OG's displeasure.

The big money in forgery comes from forging documents and identities. These days this requires some serious Matrix skills, but some countries still prefer the archaism of “papers.” Those who say forgery is an art-form aren't too far off; it's not just about getting all the details right, its making sure they fit together and feel right. You need a special knack to get it just right.

Other areas of interest for the talented forger include the art and artifact markets. The European *organizatiyas* in particular are

## DIY: FAKE DRUGS

You don't hear about this much, but some of the easiest forgeries to pass off are false pharmaceuticals or illegal drugs made to look like the real thing. I wouldn't try passing these off to street docs, but making up a batch of pseudo-narcotics and offloading them on a bunch of druggies can score some serious cred. Of course, any run-through with a chemsniffer will reveal you're peddling shit, so some people like to mix in at least a little of the active ingredient—turn a hundred Mitsuhamma Ultra Migraine Relief pills (average retail is 50 nuyen) into a thousand, that kind of thing.

For pills, you need a tabletop pill-maker—those have to be ordered from a medical technology provider or built in a machine shop for a thousand nuyen or so. The dies are the important part; they need to be the correct shape and have the properly incised logo

or image, so for that you need a moderately skilled forger. Then you just mix together your filler (sugar or whatever else you can get your hands on), water, and dye to achieve the proper shade. The end result looks just like your powder-pills straight from the store. Gel capsules and the like require slightly more complicated equipment. Derms are pretty much the same junket, except you need to buy a derm-machine (three to five grand), blank derms (0.1 nuyen in bulk packages of 1,000 or more), and DMSO instead of your normal filler, dyes, and dies. You still need a forger to get the external appearance right—the graphic, the name of the company and product, the dosage information, etc.

A nice finishing touch is to do the actual packaging, but the costs are much higher—too high for most profit margins. I'd suggest generic pill bottles with the labels removed; the derms are fine by themselves.

Urgent Message...

**THE PAPER LOTUS****Posted By: Lyrán**

The Paper Lotus is properly a grift relying on a solid counterfeit to be pulled off. An expert enchanter, often in concert with a collector or the curator of a museum, discreetly obtains or studies a pre-Awakening magical artifact. The enchanter, using a combination of the Flexible Signature and Masking metamagic techniques, can then create new enchantments using the astral signature of the magician who crafted the artifact, often enchanting a pre-existing artifact of the same culture and period, which becomes the eponymous Paper Lotus of the trick. In this way, the collector can sell the Paper Lotus for much more than the actual value of the focus because of its perceived historical value.

Many plots and variations can include a Paper Lotus. The collector or curator might purchase or obtain a loan of the item—or even be asked to authenticate it as an authority in such finds—and then switch the original with the Paper Lotus (a staged robbery can then allow the con artists to claim insurance on the stolen goods while selling the Paper Lotus and the original on the black market). If the con artists have created a trove of such artifacts, they might salt a prospective archaeological dig with one or two of their finds so that their later “excavations” at a nearby site appear to be legitimate and can be sold openly.

No matter what the details of the scam, however, the Paper Lotus trick relies on the forgery being ac-

cepted as genuine by the buyer, and hopefully other experts, and it has high requirements for success. To fool arcanarchaeologists, the Paper Lotus has to match the style and materials of previous period artifacts as well as possess an astral signature associated with a known pre-Awakening enchantment—or, at the very least, appear to be of the same school and tradition (if two artifacts are dated four hundred years apart but have the same astral signature, it is almost certain one is a forgery).

The best way to assure the right style and materials is to obtain some genuine non-magical relics of the correct age, culture, and location and enchant them, but even this must be performed in such a way as to leave no residue of Sixth World techniques. Further, almost every artifact is logged and tagged, making it easy to track their sales and to authenticate them. The con artist would either have to find his own, purchase them from the black market, or attempt to disguise legitimate artifacts as his own. Even if the con artist succeeds in making the Paper Lotus, selling it can be a tricky business—many museums, collectors, and organizations will be highly suspicious of a regular supply of “pre-Awakening enchantments” from a single source, particularly if all of the astral signatures look similar to those of existing magicians or if all the enchantments are of known types.

The difficulty and cost of finding proper materials and a suitable puissant enchanter versus the proceeds obtained from such sales combine to make the Paper Lotus a rarity in the Sixth World.

very involved in the underworld art market, however, creating and selling excellent copies of stolen or purchased artwork to illegal art purveyors. I have also heard the Ghost Cartels and some of the ethnic mafias and maffiyas make considerable money selling fake artifacts from archeological digs, basing them on authentic pieces.

- Even with art, archaeological artifacts, and antiquarian books, you're looking at a much smaller margin than you had in previous years because the technology to discern age and authenticity is much more widespread. Of course, most syndicates engaged in such operations have arrangements in place with the art dealers themselves; the clients have known the dealers for years and trust them more than someone just off the street...
- Elijah

**FINANCIAL CRIME**

With the Matrix in place, financial crime is basically restricted to certified public accountants, corporate officers, hackers, the little old lady who's been working payroll for the last thirty years and is the only one who knows how the system works, Treasury agents, stockbrokers, rogue tax collectors...

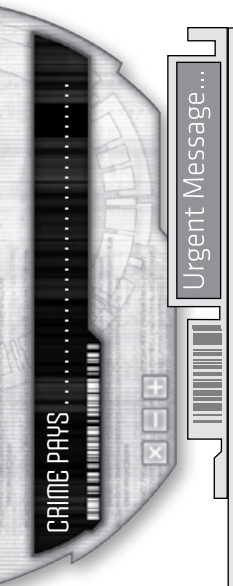
- Ouch. That hurt.
- Mr. Bonds

... everybody except the guy that fifty years ago would have slipped a couple of rubles out of the till without anyone knowing any better. With all the money flowing through the Matrix every minute of every day, it is only natural that people will get greedy and come up with ways to work the system. The details vary and usually revolve around smaller crimes operated on a greater scale: fraud, theft, selling counterfeit ones, playing dirty and manipulating the finances of the world for your own benefit, etc. Embezzlement, bribery, influence peddling, and insider trading are standard and everyday business practices for criminal syndicates and megacorporations, and many megacorps have to expend considerable assets cutting down on corruption in their little empires.

- The saying goes that behind every great fortune is a great crime, and there's truth to that. Forbes-Fujikawa's Top 100 is full of people who scammed and stole their way to being richer than kings and queens, or the Lucky Sperm Club of trust-fund babies descended from them. A lot of the people the FinCrim masterminds use and set up to take the fall don't even understand that they're party to a crime until they get arrested.

Fortunately for them, financial crime sees less punishment than misdemeanors in most countries, which is part of the reason the syndicates with more money than they knew what to do with





## DIY: IN NUYEN WE TRUST

This might seem a little weird, but bear with me. The nuyen is the world's global currency and is controlled and monitored by the Zurich-Orbital Gemeinschaft Bank (Z-OG), which is under management (i.e. owned and operated) by the Corporate Court. Z-OG, with the cooperation and assistance of the United Nations, basically controls and polices the nuyen. It's actually written into the Business Recognition Accords and the agreements nations sign when they get admitted into the UN that member countries give the Z-OG total and complete legal jurisdiction with regard to the nuyen.

- Translation: Counterfeiting or tampering with nuyen is a crime directly policed by the Corporate Court—in addition to whatever local statutes might be in place. You mess with the Z-OG, and GOD's bankers will fall on you like wrath from the heavens...
- Kay St. Irregular
- You just couldn't resist being punny, could you?
- Mr. Bonds

That said, there are nuyen outside the jurisdiction of the Z-OG. Banks that exist in nations that haven't signed the BRA or joined the United Nations have accounts filled with unregulated nuyen that the Z-OG cannot legally touch. Of course, with no oversight these banks can be pretty shady and the Z-OG has sometimes sent black ops to take out rogue banks, but those are the risks you take.

Making money off the deal: once you find a bank (have fun) and deposit your cred there, the bank takes your cred and deposits it into a legitimate bank or investment. Without the control of the Z-OG, these investments have higher margins (and risks) than usual. Okay, so it doesn't have the thrill of a bank heist, but if you have 500,000 nuyen or so sitting around and want to see an 8 percent return in twenty-four months, you could do worse. Also, the money is essentially laundered for free! Isn't that nice?

started taking an interest. It's one thing to make ten million nuyen selling flipside in Seattle, and something else again to grow it into 100 million nuyen by selling short and arranging for a corp's latest lab to burn down in a spectacular and well-publicized fashion—and only face six months of minimum security prison time and a 45 million nuyen fine if you get caught doing it.

- Mr. Bonds

## GAMBLING

There are three keys to illegal gambling: any stakes, any game, and the collection agents won't accept the fact that you don't have any money. Unlicensed and unrestricted gambling is one of the traditional services that organized crime provides, and one of their major cash cows. Specifics vary with the syndicate and the country, with the games always adapting to the tastes of the locals—trying to start up a mahjongg parlor in Tenochtitlan would be difficult, but you couldn't stop them from betting on a court ball game.

Games of chance, from a lottery to a ticket on the horse track, represent entertainment, an unreported source of income, the only chance (slim as it is) most people have to get out from under debt or away from their personal hells, and a great way to launder money.

- Yep. Anyone can come in and exchange their nuyen for chips, win or lose, then cash out and walk away with a different amount of nuyen. It's real black magic from a financial viewpoint.
- Mr. Bonds

Even in countries where gambling is legal, and in the Matrix, there are restrictions on where you can bet, how much, and on what—and always taxes to be paid on the winnings. In an underworld gambling operation, the stakes are only limited by how deep the backers' pockets are.

Normally upstanding citizens have their own little poker games and pools on certain sporting events, but they don't have the financial strength to back major bets or the muscle to collect if they need to. The real small-time gambling operations are the province of well-to-do criminals, independent bookies, and ambitious grifters who think they know the odds; every bartender and ganger in the world knows somebody they can go to when they need to try their luck. These are the type of operations where you can meet the guy who owns the place during the game, and he's likely to be the one coming after you if you owe him. Typical bets can range from five nuyen to five hundred; stakes over ten thousand nuyen or a used vehicle are rare.

- You can tell grifters because they set up shop quick and leave even quicker, before their customers or the local syndicate get wind of them. The sharps that try to actually work the casinos—the grifters that walk in to a casino aiming to score big and leave scot free—are actually worse. Cocky little shits. Gotta make an example of 'em, you can't trust 'em to pay up no matter what you threaten to do to 'em.
- 2XL

Bigger gangs and small syndicates have dedicated bookies on the streets, each reporting their debts and winnings up the line and keeping a part of the proceeds for their trouble. Stakes can reach up to a hundred thousand nuyen. These are the kind of people that send *vory* after you, not cheap hoods, and they don't try to collect themselves.

- Online casinos are different. The Choson Ring in Seattle has a Matrix casino as nice as anything the Yakuza or the Triads have, thanks to the extent of their Matrix operations. I imagine that's where they laundered all their cred from the tempo trade.
- Kia





**DIY: WIN BY LOSING**

The key here is to lose money. You'll need a large stake of seed money to begin with, and a good hacker. Start by going to a casino (legal or otherwise) and pissing away enough money at the tables or machines to get invited into the back rooms. The key is to be polite, professional, and profoundly unlucky. That isn't to say you toss away a full house in a game of draw poker, but you need to lose more than you win, even if you end up just shy of break-even at the end of the night. Do that a couple nights in a row and you'll start getting invitations to private games—where the real players play. Grease a few palms and you can speed things up.

Gambling is a great social activity. Even if you're polite and keep to yourself, you pick up names and meet people who you wouldn't otherwise meet. You'd be amazed at what underworld figures, hotshot corporaters, and politicians show up for a friendly game. Go to a few of the games, recognize the familiar faces, and pick your mark carefully. Then you bet a hefty certified credstick. If the person accepts your marker, you've just won.

Inside the credstick you place a judas program—a stealthy little agent that sends you a message when and where the credstick is used. Do it right, and you can gain valuable intel on your target—not least of which is what bank account they send your cred to. Really smooth hackers can even set them up to slowly drain the account, hiding the funds as bank fees and sending 'em to escrow accounts. Of course, if they guy never uploads the certified cred into his account, you'll be operating at a serious loss, but that's the risk you take.

The biggest syndicates graduate from owning one or two underground casinos to owning *real* casinos; even today most of the higher-ups in Reno and Las Vegas are these older third- and fourth-generation Italian guys. Even the millions that a real casino brings in is nothing compared to the ability to launder all the money from their other illegal activities under the guise of a perfectly legitimate business enterprise. Of course, these casinos are the places where the real high-stakes games take place: multi-million-nuyen poker tournaments and thousand-nuyen-a-night hookers just for showing up with the money.

- Most metroplexes have at least one, or sometimes dozens of local lotteries. To keep the game "fair" and allow the largest number of people to play, the daily number is taken from some public statistic—in L.A., it's the last three digits of the pollution index, and the payout is about 800 to 1 (that is, if you bet 1 nuyen and win you get 800 nuyen). Of course, there are still ways to fix things, so most of the lotto numbers are three or four digits, and the numbers are taken from two or more separate systems to keep a clever hacker or technomancer from fixing the database or software. Even in the AAAs the wageslaves have little pools based on the company's stock price or something like that.
- Haze

**• Blood Money and Body Lotteries**

You hear about these things, usually as urban legends, but they're real. People who can't pay their debts are sometimes broken up for spare parts, people and animals are pitted against each other to bleed and sometimes die while gamblers bet and howl, and in certain particularly desperate or jaded places many things besides money are wagered. It's a nasty business. If you're lucky, the guy collecting will have a veterinary activesoft and he'll clean his vibroknife before he gets carving on you.

- Johnny No
- C'mon Johnny, not gonna tell all the stories about your Yakuza pals putting up a girl's virginity as the prize for a bunch of old men? Or those shamans down in Amazonia who'll accept your soul as a stake on a game of cards? We know this is a nasty little world, but at least make your bedtime stories the fun and exciting ones.
- Kay St. Irregular

**GRIFTING**

Confidence tricks never completely disappear, but adapt to reflect the times and needs of the men and women who use them. A lone grifter or team of confidence men are essentially trying to get their marks to voluntarily relinquish their money without stealing it directly or providing any goods or services in return. The details and complexity of the cons vary considerably, from fake charities and investment schemes to a man on the corner offering to sell a valuable item (actually a piece of crap) for less than its usual price. Grifting requires considerable knowledge of human nature, creativity, cleverness, and people skills to pull off successfully, and may be the one form of underworld crime in which the major transnational syndicates do not have a controlling interest, as they have other, more reliable forms of income.

It is important to remember that no particular profile exists for either confidence men or their victims. A given con could depend on greed overruling caution or on naïveté and trust. The simplest con has only a single victim, like a cop busting in while the john is with a prostitute, then leaving him alone for a bribe—of course, the prostitute and the "cop" are partners in the scam—to frauds that can affect thousands of people through pyramid and Ponzi schemes. Some grifts are combined with other criminal activity in order to drum up business or otherwise attract marks; many drug dealers and ganders use a simple grift in the form of a "free sample" or "complimentary massage" to get victims addicted or in a position to be kidnapped.

- Magic adds a nice touch to grifting; so many people are so completely ignorant about what magic can and cannot do that they'll believe almost anything. The trick, of course, is getting people to believe by demonstrating some results—it's so easy to claim a "magical elixir" does the job when it's really a spell or an air spirit—and my favorite touch is applying the limitations and setting up the atmosphere. A bit of baby's blood, a little chemistry ... it's really amazing what you can get away with.
- Haze
- Speaking of chemistry, how are you feeling?
- Nephrine
- High on life ... and nothing else.
- Haze



Urgent Message...

### DIY: STOP AND SQUAT

Your basic insurance grift, this scam requires two cars, a little careful coordination, and a willing lawyer. Basically, Car 1 gets in front of another vehicle—your mark—which should be a middle- or middle-upper-class vehicle. Then Car 2 pulls ahead of Car 1 and cuts Car 1 off, forcing the vehicle to stop. The mark's vehicle can't possibly stop in time and crashes into Car 1 while Car 2 speeds off. After exchanging insurance information, the fun starts. Your lawyer sues the mark for damage to the car, to you, time off work for surgery, etc. and after a couple weeks of increasing demands, offers to settle for something like thirty thousand nuyen, which most people will jump at. Considering you can do this with stolen cars, that's a pretty good return on your investment.

Some things to keep in mind: your cars should not be identical, and they shouldn't look like shit—if you're going to steal a car, steal a nice car. Always have a good fake SIN; if insurance investigates, the scam might still go off, but you don't want to take too many chances. Finally, remember to buckle up. You're looking for at least a fender bender, but whiplash is nothing to joke about.

### SPAM

Posted By: Pistons

The Sixth World equivalent of the grift is spam—you all have to deal with this stuff, the ads for Awakened pharmaceuticals that'll troll-size your penis or the too-good-to-be-true free offer that you just have to sign up for, the supplement that'll get you a college degree for fifteen minutes of work a day or make you a magician or a technomancer. The megacorps are responsible for more of this than you'd imagine, but plenty of low-level syndicates churn out billions of these things every day, on the off chance that you'll show some interest in the latest pay-for-porn service they've got you pegged down for or that you really are stupid enough to believe you won the Amazonian national lottery even if you live in Seattle and never entered it in the first place.

Lagos is a particular haven for spammers, where hordes of young boys slave away every hour on cheap commlinks spamming their little hearts out as part of massive hacker gangs.

Urgent Message...

### HIJACKING

Violence, or the threat of violence, is a viable tactic for theft, and one that the syndicates are not afraid to use. Most gangs and ethnic mafias rely on a reputation of violence to enforce their underworld preeminence, and even the more sophisticated criminals fall back on violent retribution when all else fails. The propensity for armed robbery, or hijacking as it is most often known, is determined by the victims' ability to fight back (and the likelihood that they will). In a place where weapons are disallowed and most people walk about unarmed and untrained, such as the United Kingdom, a simple blade or physical intimidation may be sufficient, while in places where weapons may be carried easily or military training is mandatory, such as Israel or the CAS, the thief must demonstrate a greater capacity for violence and damage. Syndicates have an advantage in hijacking over independent operators in that they generally have access to heavier classes of weaponry.

- If she's carrying a pop gun, bring a bigger one. If she's carrying a heavy pistol, bring a shotgun. If you're facing rentacops, machine pistols and SMGs, maybe a grenade or two. If she's walking around completely unarmed in a place where the parents make sure they bring their guns to school, then she's probably an adept or a mage; whack her from a distance and then loot the corpse.
- Sticks

- Oh, and if whatever you're stealing is too big to easily move—a plane, say, or a load of gold bars—wait until it's loaded and/or in motion before making your move. A little bit of momentum goes a long way when it comes to getaways.
- Rigger X

The key to a successful hijacking, however, is not superior firepower but intimidation. Bloodshed might be necessary to complete a heist, but in most cases the purpose of being armed is to elicit the cooperation of the victims: have them remove their own valuables, open the maglock, give you the password for their vehicle, or show you the way to the proper room. In this, the gun or blade is necessary only as a prop. The true route to success is to impose your will on them, making them fear you and believe you capable of tremendous violence when necessary. Of course, you could also simply kill and rob them, but this can make things more difficult.

- The thing that makes hijacking so dangerous is that if you go in expecting violence, there's a much greater chance that violence will happen, and then things get very difficult. Punishments for theft are generally much less than for assault or murder, depending on the laws of the corp/country (though stealing from criminals is almost universally bad news).
- Ma'Fan

People can see and understand a knife, or a gun, or even most bombs very easily, but martial arts, magic, or black programs are generally intangible qualities that have to be demonstrated unless you have a spirit manifest nearby, a small flashy spell, or something like that.



**DIY: MOB WAREHOUSE**

Most criminals worth the name have a stash—someplace they can store their illegal goods between the time they get them and the time they sell them. Sometimes that means a cooler under the bed with a key of uncut tempo, sometimes that means a bathtub full of AK-97s. In the case of syndicates, who deal in bulk, it means a warehouse. Your average mob warehouse has to be innocuous enough to blend in with the rest of the neighborhood and sufficiently well-protected to put the boss's mind at ease—after all, the capo or kobun can't exactly go to the police and complain he got robbed, or claim a crate of black market commlinks on the insurance form.

That means your mob warehouse will probably be guarded 24-7 by armed guards, and successfully getting in and out requires killing or disabling them before they can sound the alarm or call for backup. Because nobody likes robbing an empty warehouse, it also means staking out the building ahead of time and keeping track of what goes in and out, and when. Audacity and a gun to somebody's head can get you into a warehouse, but it takes brains to get out of it in one piece with what you came for. You don't want to spend half an hour going around the building looking for the one crate of Ares Alphas or chasing down the one security guard you missed.

Of course, fencing mob goods can be tricky. I suggest setting up the sell in advance.

**KIDNAPPING**

Kidnapping, the abduction and holding of a person, is a resource-intensive crime that carries severe penalties. Some amateurs attempt kidnappings, particularly men and women who are not reasoning clearly because of some derangement or highly emotional situation, but few have the resources and foresight to successfully carry it out, keep their charge alive and healthy (at least until they serve their purpose), and avoid getting caught. Some professional independent criminals with the right connections, and the more horrific syndicates and gangs, make a regular practice of kidnapping, but for other syndicates it is, at best, a necessary evil.

- I have participated in a few such jobs myself. It is not very different from your typical extraction, except that the victim is assumed to be unwilling. Of course, there is something to be said for seizing the moment—a rag of chloroform around the mouth and throat, dragging the girl into an unmarked van off the street, enticing a child with a sweet or the promise of a trideo game to come into an alley, or out of their secure school or house—but such tactics are risky. Such is our business.
- Fianchetto

**SHADOWSEA QUICKSEARCH:***Dead Hostages*

While rare, and usually reserved for Triads and Korean syndicates with a greater regard for the disposition of their ancestors and their remains, some individuals and families are vulnerable to blackmail and extortion if the bones or remains of their antecedents are recovered and held hostage. Such actions generally face lower criminal penalties if caught, but may carry additional and unseen Awakened threats in the form of magical protection, ghosts and specters, and shedim.

Kidnapping has many uses. Extortion is primary—in this case, it matters less who the victim is than who they are connected to. The Latin American drug cartels were, and still are, very sensitive to the kidnapping of their children, spouses, and other relatives for purposes of extortion. Sometimes kidnapping is necessary to retrieve information that a subject knows or possesses, such as a passcode, biometric data, or certain file numbers; this is common among the Seoulpa Rings, whose “Stand Over Men” kidnap and torture other criminals until they give up the names and locations of their contacts and stashes.

- At other times, a kidnap victim is simply a hostage to ensure good behavior. The Yakuza gumis are well known for this practice, holding a trusted relative or key operative in relative comfort while the oyabuns negotiate over a larger matter.
- Mihoshi Oni

**DIY: THE ROOT EXTRACTION**

Extractions, like my last divorce, are nasty proceedings, especially if the target has family. In this case, it's sometimes a good idea to stage a kidnapping of the target's loved one(s) a couple days or weeks before the actual extraction, leaving a note or other instructions for their release. Of course, the note is just a red herring to throw corporate security off the trail and make them think this is a legitimate extortion attempt. What you really want is to pre-extract the target's spouse/kid/fuckbuddy/parents before the real deal.

On the downside, corporate retention divisions tend to notice this kind of thing, and place greater surveillance on the target and their domicile—not to mention that the person(s) being kidnapped won't be cooperative. In some cases, the kidnapping itself is a head fake to extract the target's assets—I know more than one researcher eager to dump his wife and keep the three million red yen he'd earned during twenty-plus years in Renraku. For this kind of extraction, the meet where you hand over the money (in certified cred form) is also where you extract the target (possibly dumping off the unwanted spouse et. al.)

## MATRIX CRIME

A Matrix crime is not any crime committed using the Matrix. By modern law a Matrix crime must be committed wholly within the Matrix. Such crimes include datatheft; aiding and abetting <insert Matrix crime here>; AR vandalism; distributing copyrighted material; trafficking in illegal programs; cracking copyrights; programming, possessing, or using restricted programs; or the death, damage, or destruction of sapient beings or AIs and other things of that nature.

- That last one is still a little spotty; AIs don't enjoy those rights in every system. Sprites aren't recognized at all.
- Netcat

The legalities of Matrix cases are complex, with precedents going back over a hundred years and security forces, government agencies, and even the Grid Overwatch Division still duking it out over who has jurisdiction where. By some accounts, Matrix crime is the most prevalent of all crimes. Downloaded a music file without paying for it? Used a cracked program? Congratulations, you are a Matrix criminal.

- Please! The megacorps take filesharing into account. It's practically advertising for them. Studies have shown that the most-downloaded files are also the most-purchased files. All the major megacorps leak their own material as a precaution just to make sure it's clean and won't fry somebody's brain—or be as clean as the real deal.
- Glitch
- If it were only that simple. Remember those reports of the Hackazon cascading attack proggy that seized up your persona when you deployed it against security hackers? Well, turns out the cracked copy MCT leaked included some hidden code.
- Pistons

Matrix crime is truly democratic; anybody with a commlink can participate. It's also the world marketplace, considering that all fund transfers are electronic. The syndicates make money off it by offering digital versions of their services—online brothels and BTL parlors, warez pirate groups trading in cracked software and multimedia, practically any sort of financial or white-collar crime. Few syndicates truly exploit the Matrix to their full capabilities, leaving the field more open to smaller and more technically proficient competitors like Warehouse 23 and its counterparts. Professional hackers and other independent operators are the ones who think up and execute the major dataheists, ripping off banks and corporate systems, running Matrix rackets and burning down nodes for their own gain.

## MONEY LAUNDERING

It is a transnational crime to conceal the source or destination of any currency. The institution of the nuyen and other electronic currencies was in part motivated by the desire to mitigate the ability to conceal physical currency, which has for ages been used to engage in illegal (and, more importantly, untaxed) business. As every nuyen (or corporate scrip, or electronic national currency) can be traced through the Matrix, money laundering is supposedly

## DIY: MATRIX ART FRAUD

Matrix art is protected by sophisticated encryption schemes, some of which are as difficult to crack as the ones protecting national currencies. That said, if you do crack the copy protection, you can freely copy any holographic sculpture or intelligent fresco. Selling them is trickier—unless you're registered as the owner of the original, with all the certification, no one will believe it's the real thing. So what most art frauds do is buy their ugly Matrix masterpieces, ship them to a hacker clan in the Balkans to crack and make copies, sell the illegal copies (with encryption in place) to the underground art market, and then sell the original back to the gallery. Beware of copying any "recently uncovered," partial, fragmented, or unsigned works. Yes, a lot of early Matrix art was lost during the Crash of '29 and the Crash 2.0, but most of it was saved in obsolete formats and can only be properly viewed using antique equipment—if you can see it with your commlink, chances are the gallery owner is trying to defraud you.

impossible—or so the Corporate Court and the United Nations would have us think.

In reality, money laundering is done on a daily basis by transnational syndicates, megacorporations, government agencies, and sufficiently affluent individuals. It is a necessity in the economy of the Sixth World; to profit in criminal enterprise, a boss or gangster must conceal illegal earnings or else be subject to scrutiny from taxmen, security forces, and financial institutions.

The exact process involved generally relies on first removing the money from circulation as certified cred. Most income generated by criminal activities begins as certified cred, though sometimes escrow accounts or even direct credit transfers are used and these funds must be converted into certified credit. This certified credit is then invested in a private financial institution that sends the monies through a series of complicated financial transactions designed to conceal its source—typically high-volume, short-term transactions such as currency exchanges, microsecond corporate loans, high-return bets, and the like.

- All of which can be tracked. There are some really nasty financial tricks that are the equivalent of a nod and a handshake between two school buddies, which look perfectly legitimate on the screen. Say you convert the certified cred in your account to shares in a money market account, and those shares are held in an escrow account being used as collateral on a short-term loan to take advantage of a slight downtick on the UCAS dollar ... and then the loan "falls through" and the collateral gets claimed to cover the loan.

The intent, natch, is for the value of the principal being laundered to remain, even as you convert it to something else, then back to good ol' fashioned nuyen—minus the commission and surcharges.

- Mr. Bonds

Urgent Message...

**DIY: IT TAKES A FIXER**

Most fixers worth their salt will be able to launder your money, or put you in contact with someone who can; the fee is typically 3–15 percent of the principal. As a rule of thumb, the smaller the principal, the larger the percentage the money launderer takes. You can launder the money yourself, but it requires some expertise and contacts. First, you have to get the money in certified cred form, as a credstick or the like; escrow accounts and such do not work. Then you have to buy something illegally with the certified cred, physically handing over the entire stick—no electronic transactions! Sell what you bought to someone for regular nuyen, and you have successfully laundered your money. Of course, the chance that you can re-sell without loss is slim for the average independent criminal. Another consideration is investment—you could turn a chunk of telesma and some reagents into a focus, sell it legally, and see a significant return on your principal in clean cred, provided no one asks you where you got the telesma or reagents in the first place.

All major syndicates retain money-laundering operations as a matter of course, typically based out of legitimate businesses to help conceal the profits—perhaps you wonder why the Mafia-owned construction company offers such high salaries, and has so many made men on the payroll? Or perhaps why some *maffiya* think nothing of losing so much money at the casinos they visit? Do you think it odd that a small laundromat could be making millions of nuyen in business a year if it is owned by the Yakuza? Of course, it must be said when dealing with the syndicates: don't fuck with their money.

**PORNOGRAPHY**

Anything of a sexual nature will sell to someone. Better-than-life chips set to orgasms looping over and over, dirty magazines, strip clubs, hentai games, trideo, video, interactive chats ... after that, it gets kinky. Animal acts and leather, pony play and other fetishes. Many of these are legal, if distasteful, enterprises; some are very illegal in prudish countries or nations with religious prohibitions against it, such as the various Islamic states. The attraction the purveyors and customers have to the darker side of things draws the interest of criminals: virility drugs and date rape prescriptions, exotic porn illegal under current statutes, a touch of the real thing.

Pornographic BTLs sell higher than any other type, and as with other controlled substances the syndicates like to control their own means of production. The Mafia specializes in this, with porn studios in the same building as the one where the chips are encoded. Some of the nastier lot even trade in “black beetles,” simflicks that include the torture and death (mostly simulated, but sometimes—unfortunately—very real) of one or more of the performers during the act. Pornography is tied in with many

**DIY: THE MONEY MAKER**

There's more smut available for free on the Matrix than you can imagine. The question you should ask yourself is how, with all this freely available pornography, do pornographers make money? Advertising. Most of the porn sites you visit on the Matrix, with all their freely downloadable content, derive their revenue from advertising. Every viewing generates some infinitesimal fraction of a nuyen that's funneled into the owner's coffers—and porn sites are designed to maximize credflow as you navigate through them.

So, setting up your own porn site can generate income. You'll need content—you won't believe what's protected these days, so you're probably going to have to steal it or make your own (yep, it's fun with cameras time!)—and you'll need sponsors to pay for the advertising, and then you'll need to promote it. I leave the details to you and your personal moral limits, kinks, fetishes, imagination, and available technology, but remember you'll need a SIN to register a permanent Matrix site, or decent hacking skills to build a floating AR porn-spot.

other aspects of biz such as prostitution or people trafficking: a sideline, but a profitable one.

**PROSTITUTION**

Where pornography gets you a taste, prostitution—in the flesh or online—gives you the real thing, with all the pleasures and dangers of disease, pregnancy, and degradation involved. There's always someone desperate enough to sell themselves for cred; the price just has to be right. Many sprawlspawn see it as their only option, especially those who suffer sexual abuse or exploitation as children. The independents fall into the smart camp and the stupid camp—the smart ones get out while they can, the stupid ones push their luck until they get stiffed, pregnant, cut up, diseased, stabled, or some combination of “your life is fucked.”

- Stabled?
- dev/grrl/
- When a pimp or madam takes them in, and they're no longer independent. It's like having a boss: they have to answer to someone, pay a portion of their profits to them, get their fix from them, whatever. A lot of boys and girls fall into a downward spiral: they left or were tossed out of home, started stripping for money, doing lap dances for a couple more bucks, then special “favors” for even more ... then your boss catches you and demands a cut, or he fires you and you're in the back alleys doing a little something for a quick fifty nuyen, and eventually a pimp finds you or the cops pick you up. Slippery slope.
- Sticks





- Call it what you will. Is it any different from what wageslaves and shadowrunners do, selling ourselves out for money?
- Hannibelle
- That's the attitude they take to justify themselves—Ghost, I wish Fatima was here saying this—acting as professionals, just doing their job and hoping to be treated as such. But we're talking about subtle degrees of degradation, each act just a little dirtier than the last. Prostitutes get raped, addicted to drugs or BTLs, beat up and cut up when they don't earn or try to escape, forced into augmentations and surgeries that distort their bodies into parodies of beauty or ugliness to suit their clients, and often face the choice of aborting their children to survive, selling themselves again just to feed their kids, or sometimes selling the fetuses to organlegging syndicates against their will. It's not a glamorous life, being a whore.
- FastJack

Organized prostitution is like any other talent service. It requires a pimp or madam to promote and exploit as well as protect the whores, a gander to pick them up, and customers to use them. The lowest form of prostitute is the streetwalker, who advertises

his or her status with revealing clothes and direct language or sometimes an AR menu. Higher-class prostitutes lounge around in warehouses and brothels; the Yakuza have their special bunnaku parlors and the other syndicates have their own equivalents these days. The "best" whores are the call girls (and boys), working men and women who receive a commcall and go to a particular hotel or house to do their duty; the higher-class ones cater to specialized fetishes. If they last long enough and they have enough ambition and business sense, some whores become pimps and madams themselves.

- Cultures differ. The various types of "sacred prostitution" in the Near East and Indian subcontinent are not call girls or gutterwhores like in Los Angeles, and confusing them as such will get you accused of sacrilege or worse. In Japan, the concept of "compensated dating," even with minors (I'm sorry, "pre-sexual metahumans") is still around, and it's even spreading to the UCAS through the Japanese megacorps. In parts of Europe, prostitution is legal and the syndicates make far less money out of it, being forced to cater to more exotic and illegal tastes instead of the usual trade.
- Goat Foot

Urgent Message...

### DIY: PIMPING THE GIRLFRIEND/BOYFRIEND

I'm not actually advocating you trying to get your significant other to sell themselves for money with you getting a share. Instead, this is an exercise in a classic grift: the ripped-off john. You need a partner, so that one of you can act as bait and the other as muscle. The bait hangs out on display like the rest of the whores, catches a john (or jane, let's not be sexist), takes them back to a motel or nearby vehicle, and demands payment (or at least half-payment) up front. Then, before any actual encounter starts, the muscle (who plays the enraged boyfriend/girlfriend/etc.) busts in. He/she threatens the john/jane and drags the bait off—along with the payment for services not rendered, natch.

The muscle needs to be intimidating—a knife, pistol, or other weapon helps tremendously. It also helps if the bait can get the john/jane naked first, as it limits the chance of them trying to follow you as you make your escape. Most of the risks in this scenario are taken by the bait, so I suggest discreetly arming him/her just in case the john/jane gets violent.

- Happened to me once, but it was a husband-wife team. They dragged their kid into it to kick the scam up a notch, the wifey was crying and everything. Sad. Almost makes me wish I hadn't paid in counterfeit nuyen.
- Kane

Megacorporations have recognized the need for prostitution—or at least intimate, if non-sexual (or at least non-penetrative-sex) relations for the health and happiness of their populations. It might also be that the higher-ups are horny old goats from cultures with intense sexual mores and protocols, but whatever the case, corp whores keep the population free of sexually transmitted diseases, minimize outside sexual relations for executives seeking release from job pressure that might provide opportunities for extraction, and offer an additional level of control on corporate citizens. The presence and actions of prostitution can be carefully tailored to fit the moral atmosphere of the setting. In areas where families are around, services are discreet; in satellites or out at sea, the ship's whore is becoming a fairly regular position, though it rarely carries that title and those who hold it have other duties such as counseling or medical care.

- Because corporate whores are employees too, the corp generally draws a line on how kinky things can get based on the individual's preference and training (you don't want to hear about Horizon's inhibition-lowering regimen) to avoid physical and emotional damage to client or "server." That means wageslaves and executives who develop those kind of tastes—heavy S&M, uro-fecal eroticism, certain extreme implants, exotic gender/metatype/ethnicity preferences, bestiality, underage victims, etc.—have to go outside the corp to get their freak on, generally at a syndicate brothel. The Yakuza, natch, make a point of presenting themselves as the preferable alternative once the sarariman gets out of the Japanacorp compound.
- Rigger X
- On the other end of things are traditional geishas, who aren't really prostitutes and are more of a status symbol for the Japanacorp guys—except there are unstated traditions about the "patron" of a particular girl taking her virginity and everything.
- Mihoshi Oni



## PROTECTION

These rackets are often misunderstood by foreigners, who only understand the protection schemes of their own gangs and syndicates. In most cases, the gang or syndicate goes through their territory and intimidates citizens or business owners into paying protection money—the protection in this case is from the gang itself, which makes examples of those who rebuff them. In other cases, the syndicate actually provides security for the area, working to reduce street crime (at least, those crimes they do not control) and keep out rival gangs and syndicates. The Yakuza are well known for this practice, as are some of the more traditional Triads and mafias.

- Protection rackets are rare in the well-policed panopticon enclaves and walled neighborhoods of most sprawls. They generally take the form of syndicate-backed private security corps, in which case their services generally guarantee that even if your home is burgled, the stolen items will be recovered within 24 hours as the syndicate looks to its fences and informants for the culprits.
- Fianchetto
- The latest protection rackets are in the Matrix and the astral. The Zobop make a reasonable living preying on superstitious locals' fear of their magic, for example, while some technomancers have used their abilities to effect similar schemes in Atlanta.
- Kane

## ROBBERY

In the *organizatiya*, every Vory is a thief. The Vory began as a gang of thieves, some petty pickpockets stealing for their bread, others more skilled, ambitious, or desperate enough to aim higher, stealing goods, vehicles, and physical currency. Thieves form gangs and networks for protection and mutual advantage, sharing information on the authorities, fences, rivals, and possible jobs. The most intelligent and ruthless of thieves take control of these informal cultures, using violence and informing on others to the police to cement their own position.

With coordination, thief-rings acquired territory and coordinated their efforts to identify and fleece specific marks. With success, the gangs became fraternities, and their leaders turned from pure robbery to controlling the fences and imposing limitations. You want to steal in this neighborhood, they say, then you must be one of us; and to be one of us, you must give us a percentage of the take. The *organizatiya's* fences would refuse to service non-Vory for fear of reprisal, while other thieves would hunt down rogues and take what they would not give, marking the outlaw thief for failure to pay respect.

Many syndicates today follow the same model. The local *organizatiya* enforces its control over its territory as well as it can, sometimes using neighborhood gangs to help—all thieves need not be Vory, or made men, or kumi-in, but the fences will be controlled by the *organizatiya*, and they will take a cut for their boss. The usual is 10–20 percent, less for members in good standing. Some will even control groups of petty thieves, pickpocket operations and the like, but the returns on these are very bad.

- No shit. You need a lookout, and at least one snatcher (two is better), and often a distraction; most of the goods are tagged and part of their owner's PAN, making their absence obvious. I've heard

### DIY: FREE DRINKS

Force of personality, supported by force of fist, goes a long way. When you walk into a bar where nobody knows you, break the bouncer's nose and lay 'em out. Then go up to the bar and tell the guy tending counter that you'll keep the place quiet tonight, as long as you and your friends drink for free. It can go either way depending on how many friends the bouncer had, when/if they regain consciousness, and how easy the bartender is to intimidate, but do it right and you're set for the evening.

pickpocket gangs still work in feral cities like Lagos, where there's a lot less of that kind of WiFi.

- Sticks
- Forget WiFi, the death of hard currency has severely limited returns on physical robbery of all stripes. Barring certified credsticks, you can't roll a john for the wad of currency he's carrying anymore, or break into his house for his fat stacks of cred, at least not outside of a feral zone like Chicago. So mostly you're looking for highly portable valuables like jewelry, genepets, nanofaxes, and artwork, forcing most thieves to fence their loot and tightening the syndicate's control over independent operators.
- Mr. Bonds

It is good, sometimes, to visit the local boss and ask permission before committing a robbery, to prevent reprisals and work out the boss's percentage, perhaps for the boss to arrange something with local law enforcement to keep the heat off. If it is a small thing, like a local store, then an underboss or button-man will do, as the boss will not want to be distracted by such trivialities, but

### DIY: FELL OFF A DRONETRUCK

Though ordering stuff over the Matrix is instantaneous, getting stuff from Point A to Point B on the planet still takes time. A lot of that time is spent on top of drone-operated mass transport, from the massive drone cargo ships out at sea to drone trucks, drone trains, and drone zeppelins. A skilled rigger who knows what route the ship (or other drone vehicle) will be taking can intercept it, hack the controls, and offload some or all of the cargo without anyone the wiser. Of course, you could also pull up and blow a hole in the vehicle and offload what you can while the drone's alarms are going off and its defensive measures are kicking in.

As should be obvious, the hard parts are getting the routes and shipping schedules (requires hacking or bribery), and hacking the drone ship. I know one crew that tried to steal the actual ship and sell it for scrap in Madagascar, but they got taken out by a joint Interpol-Aztlaner navy task force. Apparently AZT doesn't mind writing off a cargo ship or two.

Urgent Message...

CRIME PRUS



asking permission is still good—it shows respect. The more notorious the crime, of course, the more likely the local syndicate will take notice. In this case, they will put out feelers among fences and professional robbers to discover who the thieves are, and arrange an introduction—sometimes violent, sometimes not, depending on the boss and the syndicate. Whatever the case, the boss will always ask for more of the take if he has to chase you down afterwards—50–90 percent, if he doesn't decide to make an example of you by taking it all and leaving you injured or dead.

Many syndicate members, when they have enough influence and ambition, will organize their own heists, usually with their own muscle ... but sometimes, when they don't want to kick something up to the boss, or can't afford to, they'll go outside the *organizatiya* to shadowrunners and independents.

- Syndicate bosses contract work out too, when they want things done right and can't trust their own people, or when they want a deniable asset. Heck, sometimes they just bring in professionals when their mark turns out to be over their head.
- Ma'fan

The type of robberies most often indulged in by syndicates involve portable, high-return, and easy-to-fence items like artwork, gems, and jewelry. Bulkier items like warehouse goods, masses of precious metals, drones, and vehicles generally have to be stolen while prepped for transit, which falls under hijacking. Bank robberies and payroll heists are almost universally Matrix crime these days due to the lack of physical funds, though sometimes a crew will bust into a safety deposit box vault or precious metal storage in a corporate factory—gold, platinum, and other precious metals still have their uses in industry.

### WHITE-COLLAR CRIME

The sins of wageslaves and executives can be as terrible as or worse than those of made men and *sokaiya*. Safe in their enclaves and with their careers, with no uniform but their business suits and white-collared shirts, men and women commit crimes against their fellow metahumans for the profit, power, or advancement it brings them. White-collar crime isn't street crime; there is no violence or threat of violence involved, and the opportunities for it aren't available without a steady job in a corporation or the government.

- Or one of the bigger crime syndicates with lots of accountants. The Yakuza *sokaiya* and their counterparts have to be self-policing.
- Mihoshi Oni

The lesser forms of financial crime generally fall under white-collar crime. Somebody in accounting fattens their accounts a little by siphoning thousandths of a nuyen off every tenth transaction and watching the zeroes pile up, or Secretary Mhari listens in to the boss's commcall and gets a hot tip that nets her a little bonus on the stock market. Sometimes it's going for the ultra-flammable option on the latest product in exchange for a kickback, or raiding the retirement fund to pay off your gambling debt and hoping the next horse race will let you replace it before you get caught, or dumping the toxic waste in a metahuman ghetto and building a playground on top of it so you can pocket the difference.

### DIY: DAY JOB

I know some of you have 'em. Typical 8-6 jobs, probably, slaving away five or six days a week for a steady paycheck to support your parents, your kids, and your deadbeat sister who keeps getting pregnant and popping out another litter. Oh wait, I'm projecting. Anyway, there's no reason a day job can't work for you if you have the will and skill to make it happen. It works best when you're in some sort of hiring position on a remote site; the more power and access you have, the more opportunities present themselves.

Right now, I basically live in my StufferShack. The other three "employees" are my extra SINS, silently accruing legitimacy and collecting pay-cred deposits and benefits. I live off the stock I over-ordered and the stuff that gets reported as shoplifted. I've converted the employees' bathroom into a small armory—I can lock up and be out the door fully loaded in less than a minute. In two years I hit "senior manager" status and I'll be eligible for stock options.

Of course, running the store does cut into my shadowrunning time. I have to ensure that it makes at least a little bit of a profit, even if I need to hack StufferShack Corp. to cook the books. I've killed six people who've tried to rob the store over the last eighteen months, and I had to clean up and dispose of the bodies myself because if the cops look into my little operation, all my hard work is down the tubes. Still, it's a living—especially when the shadows get too hot and I need to lie low for a while.

- I'm never again going to StufferShack unarmed.
- Kane

Syndicates like white-collar crime when they can get into it. The *organizatiya* knows how to work these things; once it was the *vory* in the unions and workers' collectives, but now the *tsars* themselves are petrobarons and franchise managers, making money where they can. Too many nephews and nieces set up in cushy jobs with big university educations and nothing to do, fed scraps from their uncle's table and losing their generous allowances to exotic drugs; they get bored and go looking for trouble. These are the people open to a bribe for the thrill of it, who enjoy getting treated to champagne and a pretty hooker at a club while you swipe their biometrics, who will do you a favor to get into that exclusive club, who want to enlarge their own little pie and are willing to do shady stuff to accomplish it.

- It's not just the mob. The Yakuza's constituency is full of sararimen who might be asked a favor to repay a loan, and the whole principle of *nemawashi* is based on bending the rules to get the red tape out of the way.
- Mihoshi Oni

Urgent Message...







INCOMING FEED.....

## UNDERWORLD SUPPORT STRUCTURE

All the wonderful criminal activities that you and I take advantage of on a regular basis don't just occur by themselves. Well, some of them do, but the syndicates aren't terribly happy with the disorganized and random way that happens, so they make it their business to build up the local infrastructure for their enterprises.

Think about it: you can't buy drugs without a dealer, you can't sell something you've stolen without a fence, you can't buy an unlicensed pistol without a gunrunner (and an armorer to mod it out), and half the time you need a fixer just to find those people. If there's one good thing about syndicates it's that the higher-ups can see the bigger picture and ensure reliability and ease of access for these services, both for their own benefit and so they can squeeze the most cred out of us.

## FENCING

A **fence** buys and sells stolen goods, often under the cover of a legitimate business like a pawnshop or used car lot. The more prosperous fences tend to restrict themselves as their clients and contacts become more specialized; not every fence off the street can move a sixteen-carat uncut diamond or a cargo shipment of sixteen hundred Nitama Optimum II's, and they damn sure can't get you top dollar for them without the right connections. **Armorers**, for example, deal in weaponry while **talismongers** deal in magical goods and **databrokers** or **infobrokers** specialize in buying and selling paydata and information.

In the *organizatiya*, many lower-level bosses are also fences, commissioning and funding heists. Good work, if you can get it. It makes disposing of possible incriminating evidence easy. Personally, I prefer military and corporate security quartermasters; you can be

assured that they're very good because if they'd fucked up before now, they would be in prison.

- A good fence is a good friend.
- FastJack

## FIXING

**Fixers** are part of a long and dirty tradition of putting people and operations together. In the army, in the government, in the courts, there is always the man sitting at the bar—not too old, not too young, but old enough to know the oldest people worth knowing and young enough to meet all the newcomers—who can Get Things Done. They make introductions between people, or find the right people for the job. Many of the Mr. Johnsons and Herr Schmidts and Tanaka-sans we work for are professional fixers, putting teams together from the shadowrunners they know and equipping them from the dealers and fences they're in touch with, buying blueprints and system layouts from infobrokers and those in the know.

A good fixer can even get you out of jail, for a price, or at least make your stay in prison more comfortable. A fixer is as good as a fence for getting you anything you need, though the price is generally about 10 percent higher than you'd pay—commission, you know. Your fixer is not your nursemaid, however, and if you're too much trouble they'll never talk to you again.

- When you're in a fix, call a fixer.
- FastJack
- Jack, your agent's quotable shadowlore subroutine is looping again.
- Slamm-0!



## LOANSHARKING

Illegal loans are simple things for simple people. A small-time thief might borrow a thousand nuyen to cover a bet at the bookie's and then pay back a hundred nuyen a week for twelve weeks, for example. Most **loansharks** are understanding as long as you're willing to try to pay back the cred; it's only when you start ducking them, or skip town, or have the money but blow it on something else, that they start beating the shit out of you, adding on money to what you already owe, or just taking anything you own to cover part of it.

On the other hand, when you're in a pinch and you're good for it—or they need something from you—a loanshark's rates can be ruinous. Generally, the more you want, the higher the return expected. Business loans often require you to sign over half the business as collateral until the loan is paid. I would hope most shadowrunners know better than to take a marker with a local syndicate; too far gone and you'll have to do jobs just to keep up with the payments.

- Most underworld banking avoids a data trail when possible, so underworld debts—or markers—are generally kept on the strength of a promise between the loanshark and the debtor. On occasion, though, a marker will be rendered as a physical or digital promissory note that allows it to be traded, even sold. The new balance of a debt sold in this manner falls on the debtor.

So if, for example, you owe 10,000 nuyen to Señor Rohas, he could sell it to Savage Henri for 12,000 nuyen; and now you owe Henri 12,000 nuyen. Not a good place to be if Henri has it in for you.

- Mr. Bonds

## SMUGGLING

Whether contraband or controlled substances, black market goods have to come from somewhere, and getting them from place to place is the job of smugglers. Good smugglers have their own vehicles or means of transport and know their material so they can get the product to the destination in the best possible shape, but every now and again all you need is a mule with a colon full of BADs. The smugglers I know are creatures of opportunity, looking to cover the cost of fuel and maintenance on their vehicle plus something for themselves. All of the major syndicates have their own smuggling operations, but the field is wide open for independents, either on courier runs—being paid to transport a specific load of goods from origin to destination—or as dealers, buying in one place and selling in another for a profit.

There are specialists in the field, though these exist more as legal niceties than hard-and-fast class designations. If a smuggler is running a t-bird of Yakuza knock-off microtronics to mainland China, she probably wouldn't flinch at stuffing the nooks and crannies with grade-A pharmaceuticals that are illegal in the successor states.

**Gunrunners** are the Ares Arms of the underworld, moving everything from Wednesday Night Specials to the remaindered AK-97s sold by the kiloton to third-world governments. These people tend to be very well armed and safety-conscious. **Organleggers** support black clinics and street docs with proscribed pharmaceuticals, illegal implants, and fresh organs; they sometimes also dabble in medical technologies. It is common for individual organleggers

to operate on their own, carrying a cooler or driving a modified vehicle with a freezer or trunk full of dry ice. **Talislegging** involves the transport of illegal Awakened materials (including BADs in countries where they are not yet qualified as drugs), particularly alchemical reagents, exotic telesma, fetishes and the like; this sort of magical smuggling also typically includes acquisition of the raw materials from the wild as opposed to simply picking up the goods and moving on. **People trafficking** is a polite term for slavery, filling the needs of brothels and sweat shops the world over. Traffickers also smuggle illegal immigrants across national borders for a price, and I have heard of other uses—live fire tests of new ammunition and weaponry, sacrifices for blood magic rituals, live food for the Infected—but I have no direct experience of this.

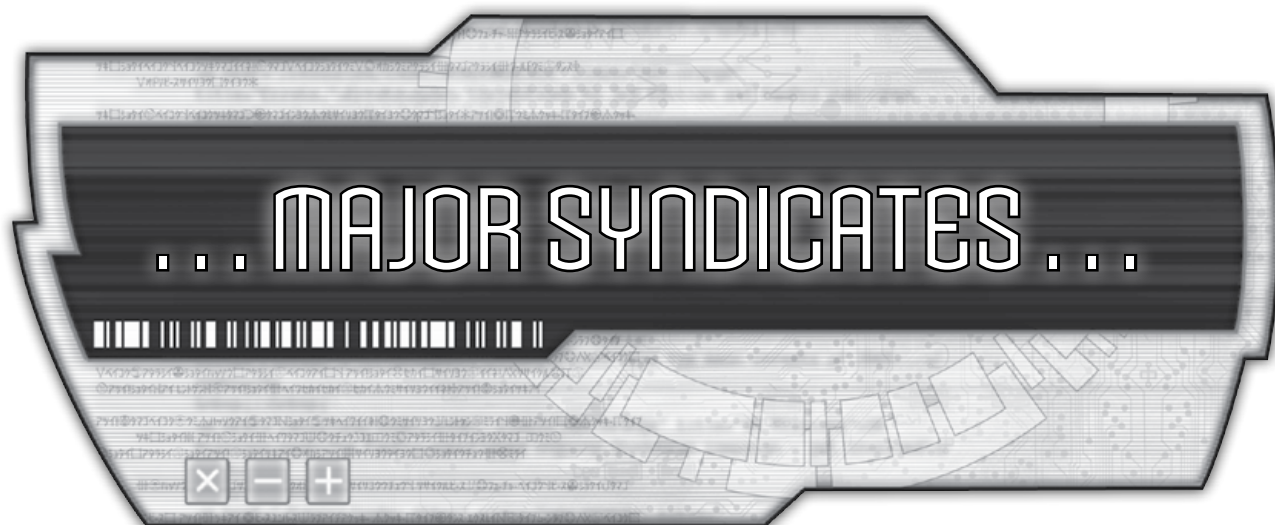
## UNDERWORLD MEDICINE

From the first midwife that sold abortifacients, medicine has had a place in the criminal sphere. Nowadays, the majority of the work is split between illegal medicine—performing procedures without reporting them to the police or anyone else, or practicing medicine without a license or the proper equipment—and black-market augmentations, with the remainder being the sale of illegal pharmaceuticals, a gray area between underworld medicine and drug trafficking. More than ever, the *organizatylia* and other syndicates are investing in illegal augmentations for their members, and when possible they prefer their own doctors to ensure security and quality.

**Street docs** are the low end of the scale and very mobile, the kind that tend to operate out of small offices that move constantly or the backs of large vans. They range from med-school dropouts to veterinarians and surgeons quietly performing illegal operations on the side. Typical jobs for street docs include patching bullet holes, digging out shrapnel, performing low-level augmentations or transplants (often with second-hand gear or organs from organleggers), and performing abortions or other procedures.

- Things to look out for: cleanliness of the workspace and tools, professionalism of the “doctor,” and any sign that they're just chipping the activesoft.
- Butch

**Black clinics**, on the other hand, are fully operational and staffed surgical centers and small hospitals dedicated to performing illegal or unethical operations. This is where discerning shadowrunners come to have top-of-the-line augmentations installed, including nanite infusions and gene treatments. Naturally, black clinics require significant start-up monies and continued funding and security, which usually comes from a corporation, government, or criminal syndicate. The backer almost always has a reason for needing the black clinic, such as tricking out their special forces units, installing experimental augmentations on willing or unwilling subjects, or caring for patients in the greatest possible anonymity and security; such a clinic will not accept walk-ins, even if you can find the place. The few truly independent black clinics are rare and do not have access to the most bleeding-edge options like cybermancy and cyborg operations, but they also accept anyone that can match their price and you rarely have to worry about them installing any additional surprises.



## ... MAJOR SYNDICATES ...

*The Calabrian and the Turk watched Sticks as he mixed the drinks. The shadowrunner filled the shot glasses halfway from a bottle of gin, and topped them off with a mason jar of some clear liquor he had brought with him. The normally unflappable Calabrian's nose twitched as he got a whiff of the pungent smell.*

*"What are you afraid of, 'ndranghetisti?" Sticks said, setting the drinks in front of his companions. The back room was quiet except for the muffled conversations in Turkish and Greek leaking through from the bar. The Calabrian's leathery hand lay on the worn green felt of the table, inches from his glass, the Grey Wolf had already taken hold of his drink, sprinkled pepper on it, and was holding it up to the light.*

*Sticks grinned and downed his own glass in a single gulp, eyes tearing as the alcohol burned down his throat. The Grey Wolf, satisfied as the pepper settled to the bottom of the glass, did likewise. The Turk's face turned a brilliant red as he endeavored not to cough or gag, and he wiped his mouth with the back of his hand as the aftertaste hit him.*

*The Calabrian picked up his glass as the Grey Wolf and the shadowrunner looked at him expectantly. He could hardly refuse to drink at this point. Tipping back in his chair, the Calabrian downed his drink as well.*

*The chair fell over. The 'ndranghettisti was on his side, puking blood and some vile, pale green paste from his stomach. As Sticks and the Grey Wolf watched, the lower half of his jaw literally fell away from his face, the liquefying meat unable to hold it together. Blood still managed to gurgle from the obscene hole where the mafioso's face should be.*

*"I have heard of a Sicilian necktie" the Turk mused, staring at his glass, the bottom still littered with black pepper "but this is the first time I have heard of a Calabrian cocktail."*

*"Gin and insecticide. It's something I picked up from the MacAvoy family in Chicago, though I hear Lawrence of Arabia used to do it." Sticks said, pulling what looked like a ribbon of cloth from his ankle, the memory blade becoming rigid as soon as it became free of its hidden sheath. "The purpose is the same. This is all about sending a message."*

*The Turk nodded and reached for the bottle of gin and a clean glass. "How did you know he was one of them?" he asked as Sticks chopped off what was left of the Calabrian's head.*

*"The same way I knew about you."*

*The Calabrian choked on his drink at Sticks's words, but the memory blade had already been drawn across his throat, and gin and blood spilled out of the wound. Sticks set about to work widening the dying man's wound, then reaching into it and up his throat to grasp the tongue and pull it through. As the light faded from the Turk's eyes, Sticks whispered into his ear.*

*"Don de Lecce sends his regards."*

• If there's one thing the tempo turmoil should have taught you: these are dangerous waters we swim in. Whether you're a newblood or a vet, it's important to know who else swims the same waters we do—I'd hate to see more of you end up like Fatima. Tempo showed just how vicious the small fish can be, but mostly it's the sharks you need to watch out for. I gathered a few friends to post their thoughts on the bigger fish out there, the ones you'll run into sooner or later, no matter where you happen to run. I'll be editing posts into order of global size and influence: first the Mob, then the Yaks, the Triads, the Vory, and finally the Cartels.

• FastJack

## MAFIA

Posted By: Pentito

The Mafia as it is known today began roughly two centuries ago, on the sun-baked isle of Sicily in the Mediterranean, when the code of omertà began to take hold. By itself, the rise of the Sicilian gangs was little different from the other ethnic mafias that form in every part of the world. Greed brought them together; greed set them against each other in bloody feuds for dominance across all of Italy, and omertà protected them.

The turning point began with the mass immigration of Italians to America in the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries, bringing the feuds and traditions of the Old Country to the New World. Relegated to the ghettos, the impoverished newcomers huddled together by race and by religion. Ethnic gangs arose, driven by necessity: for money, for protection from racial hatred, and to preserve their national identity in this melting pot. As the gangs grew more successful, they clashed with the law and with each other. For protection, the Italian gangs drew together to form the first American Mafia.

During the era of Prohibition the money to be made from the smuggling and distribution of controlled substances in America was tremendous. The profits were such that many honest men turned to crime, and the professional criminals became even more organized, the organizations larger, and the battles bloodier. Legendary capos were forged in blood and Tommy gun fire. After Prohibition ended, the Mafia retained its criminal networks and turned them toward other ends, opening up to absorb the Irish, Jewish, and Polish mafias, among others.

During the Second World War, the United States government released Salvatore 'Lucky' Luciano in exchange for his assistance in the invasion of Sicily. Luciano was the most powerful and influential mobster of his time, organizing the American Commissione, based on the Sicilian Cupola. The American Commissione included not just the Italian-derived mafias, but other powerful ethnic syndicates in the United States, expanding Luciano's influence from coast to coast. Back in Sicily, Luciano laid the groundwork for the postwar heroin trade, and renewed his contacts with the European Mafiosi. Italian and American immigration to Australia after the war spread the Mafia to yet another continent. Luciano eventually retired from crime, but the Commissione he established survived him and continued to expand.

After Luciano, the Mafia in America and Italy continued to expand until they were checked by new anti-organized crime governments, increased public awareness, and the rising threat of new, vicious syndicates like the Mexican Mafia and nationwide prison gangs. While the most powerful and wealthy dons remained untouched and as far from government scrutiny as ever,

the weakening of the Mafia from its street roots brought about the breaking of omertà and allowed the entry of many foreign syndicates into their markets, most notably the Yakuza in America and the Vory in Europe.

In the European Union, the Italian organized crime organizations reigned mostly uncontested for decades, some say centuries, spreading beyond Italy, diversifying into narcotics and white-collar crime, finally abandoning the bulk of their street level operations to gangs and local outfits. The Crash of '29 crippled their international financial networks; millions of national currency units were lost and the syndicates were forced to go back to the streets and rebuild their operations—but in the chaos of the EuroWars and on the heels of the Russian army: the Vory v Zakone, the Russian mafia, advanced on the vulnerable Italian Mafia on all fronts. While the Vory had been major players in Europe since the end of the Cold War, the sudden disorganization of the EuroWars opened up new opportunities that the Vory ruthlessly exploited. The European Mafia's situation worsened when the Italian Republic fractured, forcing the territorial and nationalistic Mob to devote many of their resources to keeping their communities together.

The formation of the Alta Commissione in 2046 proved to be the turning point in world Mafia history. United, the European Mafia have regained much of their power, if not the territory that the Vory have taken from them. In America, the cycle of mob wars has replaced the old dons with newer, more modern outfits. The Australian Mafia finally unified under the Melbourne Commissione in 2067, with the influence and support of the American and European Commissiones.

### SHADOWSEA QUICKSEARCH:

*La Cosa Nostra*

La Cosa Nostra. The Black Hand. The Mob. Mafia. The popular nicknames for the American Mafia were developed and promoted by governments and Hollywood to give the public a handle on the tricky subject of organized crime, and to help categorize cases against criminal syndicates and their members. The terms 'Mafia' and 'Cosa Nostra' have thus passed into such common parlance in the Americas, Europe, and Australia, and many small culturally-exclusive syndicates are known as 'ethnic mafias,' 'maffiyas,' or something similar. Even the Yakuza and the Triads were initially known as the Japanese and Chinese Mafia, respectively.

Among themselves, mafiosi do not use these names. Instead, they speak of the organization indirectly—a made man knows what is being truly said and knows that it is best never to speak of these things openly, where they may be heard by the uninitiated; at best they might refer to the organization, the life, or the culture, as *cosa nostra*, "our thing," a term the Sicilian mafia originally used to distinguish themselves from the Neapolitan Camorra.





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- So that's all of La Cosa Nostra? What about the Black Hand and the Irish Mob?
- /dev/grrl

- The US government came up with the 'La Cosa Nostra' thing from the phrase cosa nostra—no one with half a brain and an Italian lingua-soft would use the definitive article. As far as The Black hand, mano negra, that was the name or mark of a group of Italian blackmailers in New York city about a hundred and fifty years ago—pre-American Mafia. The term Mafia itself is of unsure lineage. Legend has it that back when Napoleon invaded Sicily, the motto of the rebellious bandits that became the Mafia was Morte alle Francia Italia anela (Death to the French is Italy's cry)—M.A.F.I.A. As for the Mob...uh...I dunno that one, go look up an online encyclopedia or somethin'.
- 2XL

## TRADITIONS

Many people hold romantic ideas about cosa nostra, even in these decadent days. People believe the Hollywood hype of the Mafia as defenders of the poor, businessmen in a world where crime is a legitimate tactic, no different from any corporate officer or entrepreneur, save that their business is illegal and they are too small to become extraterritorial. The public knows of the codes and culture the families abide by, or thinks they do.

They are right, and they are wrong. There are traditions—romantic ideals for some, hard rules to live by for others—and the Mafioso is a businessman—but a dirty one. At best, the Mafia is a structure of hypocrisy, advocating honor while dealing in the degradation of the metahuman body and spirit, protecting neighborhoods while dealing brainbenders and selling the flesh of children and the defenseless to fuel our greed, giving justice to those who cannot afford it while killing and maiming for any perceived insult. At worst, it is a heartless engine of bloody money, a soulless corporation in truth that abstracts the customers to numbers on a board to better sell their loathsome products.

- Laying it on a little thick?
- Slamm-0!
- I wouldn't say so. Pentito isn't just trying to say "Mafia bad!" he's just getting his ducks in a row and showing us all the ugly ducklings. Whether you subscribe to the idea of a romantic Mafia or not—and many do—you can't ignore the fact that these people are criminals. They don't wait around all day for some baker's daughter to get raped so they can break some kneecaps, they go out and bust somebody's skull and steal his tempo stash and sell it to twelve-year olds. Now, we're all criminals too—I know I've killed people in the course of a job (sometimes that was the job), and stolen things, and delivered BTLs, drugs, weapons and other things that I knew would make people's lives miserable. Pentito isn't lecturing us on morals or telling us where to draw the line, he's just taking the glamour off of it.
- FastJack
- <claps>
- /dev/grrl

## THE ROMAN CATHOLIC MAFIA

Posted By: **Fianchetto**

Italy remains a Catholic country, and the Italian Mafias were made of Catholic men. While they broke many commandments against theft and murder, the rituals of the Italian-influenced Mafia of today still rely on Catholic imagery and symbolism, and many members of crime families maintain connections with the Catholic religion. The church itself does not approve of these connections, but some priests and even bishops and cardinals develop and maintain relationships with Catholic Mafiosi for their own reasons—the Jesuits, for example, rely on the Mafia in Aztlan to smuggle them and their accoutrements into the country so that they may preach and hold services in that country to the secret Christians that reside there, and the Gambino and Genovese families have donated substantial funds to the renovation of Brooklyn's St. James Cathedral Basilica and St. Patrick's Cathedral in Manhattan. Many men of honor are also members of Catholic fraternal organizations such as the Knights of Columbus, which gives them contacts with many powerful politicians, civic leaders, and corporate officers.

Modern Mafia families are, in general, less religious than in previous generations. This trend to atheism is in part due to the general public turning away from Rome, and in part because of the greater religious diversity of the modern Mafia. Many current-day Mafiosi may be Jewish, Protestant, members of Sixth World religions like the Church of the Whole Earth, Inc. or the Church of the Dragon, or practice a syncretic religion such as Santeria or Rastafari. In families where a particular religion holds prominence, the initiation rituals typically reflect this. Jewish mafias, for example, typically hold a bar/bat mitzvah celebratory event to celebrate the thirteenth anniversary of becoming a made man, while the Batista Santeros of Havana use orishas in place of saints during their initiations.

## INITIATION

The Mafia has many employees and associates, but few members; they wield power disproportionate to their numbers by dint of wealth, organization, superior firepower, and brutal use of force. True members of the Mafia are 'made' men—they are the criminal elite, joined for life, men of honor that will be protected and taken care of as long as they live and serve the family.

Potential made men are recruited from the family's associates, typically strong-willed and intelligent young men and women from the streets who have worked their way up in the gangs and drawn attention to themselves by fulfilling syndicate jobs efficiently and without fail. The families prefer their recruits to be

Urgent Message...

MAJOR SYNDICATES





hungry and ambitious, as these drives make them very susceptible to the discipline of Mafia life and the rituals of initiation. Older soldati and capos constantly size up potential recruits, both from among their associates and their socio-biological family groups; possible soldati are given additional jobs to see how they handle themselves, and those who prove themselves may be invited in.

- Any or all of the restrictions may be waived depending on how traditional the boss is feeling and how bad the family needs new people. It's much more common to name a trusted associate as d'honore than to make them a made man, but with the newer families not relying on purebred Italians and capos starting up new operations, some dons will accept anyone whose loyalty and skills they can be sure of.

- 2XL

The initiation itself is heavy on mood and solemnity, but the bulk of the details differ from family to family and sometimes initiation to initiation as needs and tastes warrant. Most often, the applicant is given a card icon of a Catholic saint (the family saint), and then a small wound inflicted on the applicant so that their blood drips on the image, which is set on fire as they hold it in their bare hand; while the saint burns the soldato-to-be swears to abide by omertà and any other traditions held by the family before at least three witnesses, all made men. The flame is symbolic more than anything, and in most families the applicant is allowed to shift the burning card from hand to hand to avoid being injured.

- As this saint burns, so shall my soul burn in Hell if I break my silence. I enter alive, and am made anew; I will not leave until I am dead.

- 2XL

- ...or any of a hundred variations on that. Most of the ritual is for show, to impress the young kids and give them something to hold on to, no different than a gang initiation and often a lot quicker and simpler. No matter who the family is, you can be sure the ceremony will have a minimum number of props (less evidence if the cops come by later); a lot of outfits do without it completely.

- Sticks

- I heard the Order of Merlyn (that wiz-kid gang attached to the Finnigan family in Seattle) uses the mob rites as some kind of initiation ritual. Possible, or smoke in the Matrix?

- Kat o' Nine Tales

- By itself, even the most traditional and elaborate Mafia initiation is a valueless psychic vehicle for delving into the deeper mysteries of magic unless augmented with the additional application of a mystic oath or some sort of self-sacrifice component. So yes, it may be possible.

- Winterhawk

A made man has certain privileges and responsibilities. They must pay a percentage of all their criminal activity to their peers—typically around 50% after expenses—and are effectively on-call for the rest of their lives. If a soldato's wife is in labor and his capo calls for him, he has to go. Made men also enjoy the protection of the Mafia, which is often enough to deter non-Mafia criminals from harassing or killing them; even other made men don't kill

Urgent Message...

## WHAT IT MEANS TO BE MADE

Posted By: 2XL

Being made means protection and respect. Everybody on the streets knows that you mess with a made man, you mess with his family. If a non-mafioso kills a made man, they will have their revenge. How far this goes depends on the family, but any family that wants to maintain any kind of street rep takes the death of a made man seriously. It doesn't matter what gang or syndicate you belong to, it doesn't matter if you're police or the governor of the state, or whether you killed them by accident or to protect your kid, because the family will come for you. I knew a prison nurse that was hit for giving a made man his lethal injection.

The mafia is a secret thing because they're criminals. The risks they run include imprisonment, torture, maiming, death, and dishonor. Their enemies are the police, the feds, their rival gangsters, and anyone that can betray them to those. The mafia survives and prospers because they stand together, because they act through fear and terror, and because they keep silent. If they didn't hang out this kind of ultimatum and have the will and means to see it through, the mafia would get eaten alive by gangs and independent criminals like you and me.

So think about it for a second before you pull that trigger and send that made man on down the river. Because his family will come for you, and if they can't get at you directly, they'll come at you through your friends, your contacts, your enemies, anybody connected with you. That's what it means to be made: the promise of death to them who killed you.

each other lightly, as such an offense could strip them of their own protection or start a bloody cycle of vendetta. This protection depends on the favor of the don. A troublesome, traitorous, or talkative made man is a liability that will be eliminated.

- I love killing wise guys; it's practically guilt free. If the made man dies during duty—especially a soldato—the don or sotto capo will often arrange a lump sum or monthly stipend for the survivors. It's a consolation to know that the family of your victims will be taken care of.
- Kane

## OMERTÀ

The Sicilian code of silence is simple, but the implications and nuances are profound, and greatly tied up with their insular mindset, antagonism to external authority, and concept of masculinity. It is omertà that has protected cosa nostra from the police, the government, and the other syndicates, and it was the breaking of omertà that almost led to the systemic destruction of the organization.

In short, omertà is an oath to refuse to talk about the organization or its works or its members to anyone, especially the agents of the government. More completely, it is a refusal to cooperate with the police or government authorities in any matter, even to the point of suffering in silence.

- He's not kidding. There are made men that did ten, twenty, thirty years in prison for crimes they were innocent of without ever naming the guilty party, and gained a lot of respect for that. People willing to do time for you is a loyalty you can't buy. Jack Ghiberti did fifteen years on a second-degree murder in Maine without ever once naming the culprit—his bitterest enemy, Nicky Adamski. Nicky took care of him in prison the whole time, Jack wanted for nothing. Of course, when Jack got out the first thing he did was give Nicky a Colombian necktie, but by the standards of the Mafia both men had been the very pinnacle of honor.
- 2XL

As an implication to not talking to the police, the people of Sicily had little recourse if they were wronged or insulted. They could settle the matter themselves, or if unable to do so they would go to a powerful man—the forebears of the Mafia dons—and ask for justice. Of course, for this favor the victim would be indebted to the don. The modern crime families work in much the same way; made men seek their own vengeance, and if their vigilantism fails they must ask the capo famiglia for his aid, aid that can be denied.

The cost of breaking omertà is simple: death.

## PENTITO

In the last half of the twenty-first century, omertà was broken by the pentito, the penitent. A generation of mobsters and racketeers, whose drug money lifted them up from the streets into marble mansions and corporate boardrooms, were offered immunity and protection by governments afraid of their power, and they took it. Families were broken, the capi sent to prisons where they rotted and died, while the pentito lived new lives.

When the Commissions rebuilt themselves, it was the pentito that were their first targets. Dying men in hospitals and nursing homes were garroted and gunned down, witness protection programs found their agents tortured until death, even the pentito serving reduced terms in prison were made an example of. Omertà was enforced.

Even today, there are young men and women who think they can get away with turning evidence on their family. They have plans, they have protection, they think that they are immortal and untraceable. What those fools never think of is that the entire Mafia is bound to destroy them—even if their testimony collapses one family, three others will seek their destruction. There is no escape.

- Any Mafia family will honor a bounty for a pentito posted by another family, and believe me when I say some corporate security and government agency outfits have gone to considerable trouble attempting to protect their witnesses, right down to changing their DNA and shooting them into space. The reach of the Mob is very long indeed.
- Sticks
- So what does that say about our Pentito? He got a death wish?
- Ma'Fan





- Perhaps he's already dead. It is much harder to silence a ghost.
- Icarus

## RISPETTO

If omertà is the conspiracy that binds and protects cosa nostra, then rispetto—respect—is what lets it run smoothly. A made man is a man of honor, and a man of honor respects his superiors, and is respected by his juniors. Like other dangerous creatures, the made man is unfailingly polite; disrespect is born out of the belief that there are no consequences to insults and rude behavior, while a made man knows it is his duty to combat any insult to his honor or his family's. Thus, rispetto is an obligation: pay your percentages in full and on time, be polite in your dealings, and deal harshly with those who insult you or your family.

To illustrate my point, I will give an example: there was once two small families in Newark, New Jersey, the Marios and the Cevenzas, who respectively controlled the pornographic and prostitution rackets in the city, and in constant competition. Tony C., a made man of the Cevenza family, raped a young woman he thought to be a prostitute not paying her cut. In fact, the girl was the wife of a Mario-affiliated pornographic simsense director. Unable to take vengeance, the director appealed to one of the capos in the Mario family, Mario M., who obliged him by sticking the Cevenza soldatos and letting him bleed to death in the same alley where the rape had first occurred. Tony C. had a half-brother, also a made man, who responded to his brother's death by killing Mario M. while he was with his mistress. Soon there was a bloody feud that claimed thirteen more lives and left twice as many injured or maimed before the sides could make peace.

- Reminds me of some of the blood feuds from home, except with a depressing lack of camels.
- Goat's Foot
- I've eaten camel. The hump is the best part.
- Traveler Jones
- Would you two try to be serious for a minute? I know it's easy to make light of this shit just because it isn't happening to you, but gangland violence is why we no longer have Fatima or Dragonslayer around.
- Hard Exit

## MINOR TRADITIONS

Omertà and rispetto are the two major traditions that bind cosa nostra together, but there are other, lesser habits and beliefs that have become part of the Mafia culture. They are fairly widespread, but not universal nor always applied—the needs of the moment often take precedence over the social niceties.

## INTRODUCTIONS

As part of the practice of protecting themselves from prosecution, Mafiosi are very careful in their contacts with others, particularly possible business partners. It is considered proper, respectful, and cautious to always have a mutual acquaintance make the introduction when meeting with a Mafioso; this places part of the burden for any ambushes or foul play on the party that made the introduction, as they are supposed to vouch for the identity of the party they are introducing.

## DO I LOOK SICILIAN, MON?

Posted By: 2XL

The Italian mafia is just one syndicate among many. In America, the great melting pot, the Italian crime families had to compete with dozens of other ethnic mafias—Irish, Jewish, Polish, Jamaican, you name it. Like most oligarchies, in time some of these mafias decided it would be more profitable to stop fighting each other and get down to the serious basis of making money. That's how the first Commissione was formed.

In America, and to a lesser extent Australia, the old guard Italian mobsters died off, and new dons that hadn't just stepped off the boat replaced them. Some of them clung to their old traditional ways, others opened the ranks to non-Italians (or non-Irish, non-Jews, etc.) or just watered down their traditions (you have to have an Italian father to be made, you have to have an Italian name to be made, etc.) until it was practically the same thing. Slowly but surely, the bulk of the criminal organizations that we now call the Mafia, at least in Australia and the Americas, became multi-racial entities—though the old biases and tribal loyalties show through every now and again.

Even though they may call their soldiers and capos by different names, these non-Italian mafias are still organized in basically the same way and operate under the same traditions. A made man is a made man if he comes from the Sacra Corona Unita or the O'Rilleys in Boston, and he'll be treated the same by his "cousins"—probably. Most importantly, you have to be on or under one of the Commissiones to be recognized for such consideration by other families. Despite the fact that the Triads are sometimes called "the Chinese mafia" doesn't mean they're part of the actual Mafia, just as the "Mexican Mafia" is actually a prison gang and not treated as one of the families. Of course, it's impossible to check who's who in the middle of a firefight, so out-of-town made men generally make a point to "check in" with the local don and make themselves known—not doing so can be grounds for getting shot.

- Introductions are a big part of becoming a made man when you're an associate; it can be a sign that you're under consideration and need to be on your best behavior to impress the wiseguy you're being introduced to. Even if you're not affiliated with the Mob, a Mafioso contact is terrific just for making introductions with the rest of la famiglia...provided you phrase the request discreetly and politely.
- 2XL

Urgent Message...



## NEPOTISM

The early ethnic mafias depended heavily on recruiting their own extended families into their criminal organizations, and when they gained money and influence they used it to ensure positions for their sons and nephews as well. Such nepotism has its place—blood ties are emphasized even in many modern crime families—but it can also create tension and dissent as a nephew or niece is made or promoted above a trusted associate. In general, the necessity of nepotism has largely been dealt away with except in those families that require proof of ancestry, but can still be widespread.

- I love nepotism! Nephews make great metahuman shields, or a nice way to blackmail their uncles. It's like a walking, breathing insurance policy!
- Kane

## WE ONLY KILL EACH OTHER

This rule is relatively recent, and admittedly rare, first formally applied by 'Lucky' Luciano when he was reforming the American Mafia. Essentially, Luciano realized that as long as violence of the underworld was primarily confined to the underworld, the government and police would not care—after all, who gives a damn if criminals kill each other, so long as honest citizens can live in peace? More importantly, it prevented the police vendettas that accompanied the fevered hunt for cop-killers and political assassins. Mafia infighting, and even conflict between syndicates, can attract less police attention if no innocent bystanders or police were killed.

In practice, the policy was rarely implemented. Restricting targets to avoid collateral damage, and the inability to target crooked police officers, troublesome politicians, and ordinary men who insulted a made man were too much to ask of the bloodthirsty syndicates of the time, and such niceties, while sensible, are foolish when confronted with the viciousness of the Vory v Zakone or the honorless street gangs. Still, it is sometimes enforced at times when the pressure from anti-organized crime task forces or the media is on.

### • A Bit On The Side

I know it's a bit kitsch, but no matter how married-with-kids a Mafioso is, a disproportionate number of them keep girlfriends, boyfriends, mistresses, (what the heck is the male equivalent of a mistress? A mister?), or the like. It's more of a lifestyle thing than anything else; a lot of mob guys are straight-up family men—even the homosexual Mafiosi like to get married and adopt or do that get-weak-and-grow-in-a-tube thing—but it just isn't an evening out with the boys when you're dragging your wife or husband along.

- 2XL
- By the same token, adultery is one of the most serious violations of protocol in the organization. You can blow up a wisegal's car during a job and just buy her a new one, but peg her husband and you earn an undying enemy, and the admonition of your peers. It shows disrespect, you see?
- Fianchetto
- Didn't need that image, Fian-o.
- Kat o' Nine Tales

## SENDING A MESSAGE

Sometimes, it is not enough to just kill a man. An example must be made. There are many examples of this in *cosa nostra*: an embezzler will be shot, and a credstick found shoved up his rectum or a pentito will be found stabbed to death and a dead canary stuffed in his mouth. These and other defilements are symbolic gestures that speak more directly to the common criminal than a clean kill or a sudden disappearance.

- The "Sicilian necktie" is a famous example, though the practice was originally Colombian. The victim's throat is cut, and the murderer reaches up through the wound and pulls the victim's tongue back down the throat so it exits the wound. Good way to try and throw off the scent when you have to kill somebody, but be careful about leaving evidence in the wound itself.
- Hard Exit

Urgent Message...

## THE ORGANIZATION

Mafias started small, and it took considerable time for these criminal organizations to reach the point where they had the influence and need for many families to come together across a region, or a nation, or a continent. Individual organizations sprung up wherever there was opportunity; a made man exiled from one country could try his luck in another. As the world grew closer, as the profits from our trade grew greater, as the police learned to cooperate across countries and seas, the mafias finally began the process of consolidation and cooperation on an international level. Today, the majority of mafia organizations exist on three continents, each with its own Commissione.

## THE MAFIA IN AMERICA

There are fifty-six capo di capi that sit on the American Commissione, with perhaps twice that number of families and associate organizations. With so many voices and the complex web of feuds and alliances that bind them, the full Commissione is an unwieldy beast and the bulk of the decisions are made by the Inner Circle, the twelve most powerful and influential families. Currently the Mafia is strongest in the UCAS and the CAS on the East Coast, but they have families in every nation and major city of the Americas.

The Commissione in America is in a state of flux. All of the dons agree it's time for change, but not on how to do it. The dons are looking at the Alta Commissione as a model; breaking the Americas into a couple of large operations and letting the capo di capi sit on the Commissione, cooperating with smuggling and distribution, and of course the Fratellanza. Of course, that means the bulk of the dons would have to answer to someone else, and they don't like that. A few have even floated the idea of inviting the Koshari into the Commissione to consolidate operations in the NAN.

- The way I hear it, right now the Commissione is in the middle of a major re-shuffle.
- 2XL



INCOMING FEED.....



MAJOR SYNDICATES.....

Urgent Message...



- Hey, double-wide, you keep saying “you heard this” and “you met this guy in Vegas.” Are you a made man yourself? If so, how do you square spilling your guts to all of us?
- Slamm-0!

• Oh, that’s simple, I’m just going to kill you all when this chat is over. No, seriously I’m just a smuggler and shadowrunner—but I wasn’t always one, if you catch my drift. There were some harsh words said, and a girl, and I have some unfinished business in Atlantic City, but I still have friends and contacts who use me for the odd job.

- 2XL

The major threats to the American Mafia are the Yakuza, particularly the Shotozumi-reno headquartered in Seattle, and the Chinese Triads, with the bulk of their street-level competition made up of gangs and smaller ethnic syndicates that have developed and spread with the balkanization of the Americas, such as the Zobop, the Koshari, and the Ghost Cartels.

The Inner Circle is made up of the heads of the Five Families in New York city, UCAS; the Sixth Family in Quebec City, Quebec; Don Augustus “Hollywood” Milano of the Milano family in Los Angeles and Don Dominic “Chips” Freda of the Verontesse family in Las Vegas, PCC; Don Conor “The Mick” O’Riley of Boston, Don Roland “The Greek” Stephanopoulos of the Detroit Partnership, UCAS; Don Miguel “Smoke” Batista of Havana, Carib League; and Dona Miriam “La Dame du Morte” Kozlowski of New Orleans, CAS.

## FRATELLANZA

A Fratellanza cadre is a unique, modern tradition started by the Alta Commissione shortly after its inception to serve as its right hand. Members of the cadre are the most elite hitters gathered from the many Mafia syndicates, and given the best equipment that money can buy or thieves can steal. Cadres train for months so they can act as a team before being sent out on their missions, and the bonds of friendship and personal loyalty forged during this process have brought many of the mafias closer together.

Fratellanza cadre missions are almost always hits, from simple, clean assassinations to demolishing an entire block and everyone in it. Members are chosen for ability and loyalty; their record must be impeccable. Cadre members are trusted with the authority to put down made men, even capos, sotto capos, and capo famiglia. It is considered a great honor to be named to a cadre, and the Alta Commissione is careful to rotate new members in on a regular basis to prevent jealousy from causing internal rifts.

The success of the Fratellanza program has prompted other mafias to attempt to duplicate it, with some success so far.



## THE MAFIA IN AUSTRALIA

Most of the Mafia presence in Australia is centered in Melbourne, hence the Melbourne Commissione, a very recent (2067) invention created by Don Johnathan Hawkes, who formed it at the suggestion and with the backing of the Alta Commissione. Organized crime in Australia is a mixture between the British-derived criminal gangs and the mafias brought by later successive waves of Italian and Greek immigrants.

Four powerful outfits are centered in Melbourne, with operations extending to cover much of the rest of Australia. The powerful and influential Paulini family is led by Don Hawkes and is focused on vice and financial crime, particularly BTLs, drugs, prostitution, and pornography; with heavy connections in Canberra.

- Don Hawkes runs a shadow exchange that deals with stocks connected with the Australian Stock Exchange (ASX). Nice place, fairly secure. I've heard the Paulini family Johnsons like to use the exchange's escrow services when paying runners.
- Mr. Bonds

The Greek Mafia is powerful in Australia, and under the control of Don Anton "The Mayor" Stephanopoulos of Melbourne. The don's brother runs the police, letting Anton jail his enemies and keep his own boys out of trouble. The Greek mob controls the bulk of the street crime in Melbourne, and the other families owe them multiple favors. Even the media doesn't dare joke about the Greek Mob's revolving door policy with the cops; the last reporter that tried that had his tongue cut out.

- I heard a rumor that Don Hawkes offered a seat on the Melbourne Commissione to the Greeks, but he was turned down. Then Stephanopoulos' mother had a little accident; she fell out of a sixth-story window through a sheet of "bulletproof" glass onto a half-dozen .50 caliber bullets. At the funeral, Stephanopoulos gladly accepted Hawkes offer.
- 2XL
- You forgot the part where the slugs were soaked in insecticide.
- Sticks

Other mobs in Melbourne proper include the Scots-Irish MacLaren Clan, affectionately referred to as the Old Bank, who maintain the bulk of the underworld infrastructure in the form of loansharks, fences, money laundries, and dealers; and the Forte family, which is similar to the American Sicilian Mafia and Sicilian Cosa Nostra, and have interests in Australia's government-run casinos and extensive illegal gambling and betting operations, including numbers rackets in most major cities.

The Darwin Mob in Darwin controls most of the Mafia organization in the Northern Territory, but his most notable accomplishment is an agreement with the Aboriginal tribes of the Outback to purchase tesmas, magical goods, and Aborigine artworks and artifacts, which are exported at a considerable profit. Don Henry Belaforte has a family winery on the outskirts of Darwin, which serves as his headquarters.

The Gatto N'Drise, a branch of the N'drangheta, is the only family currently operating in the independent city of Sydney, and maintains their cousins' penchant for violence. As a result, the

n'drise controls the bulk of the street crime in Sydney, taking a percentage off every street gang and regularly importing hard-to-find goods into the beleaguered metropolis.

- Something like one in six of their shipments gets destroyed by the perpetual manastorm around the city or just disappears in the Outback, and you know what their biggest seller is? Bottled water. Not even kidding.
- Sticks

Hamish Brown is the youngest Don in Australia at twenty-seven, and the third most powerful Mafioso in Australia after Don Hawkes and Don Stephanopoulos. The Brown Mob deals principally in smuggling of all kinds, extortion, blackmail, and fraud. By some accounts, the notoriously racist Mr. Brown owns a fifth of the Perth waterfront and makes it his business "to keep blackfellas and trops off my docks." His organization is currently fending off the Wading Bird Triad and a number of Vietnamese gangs, but they essentially are the mob for Western Australia.

## THE MAFIA IN EUROPE

The Alta Commissione is comprised of the six major Mafia organizations in Europe, which are currently in the middle of a bloody war with the Vory v Zakone. With the war looking to heat up, local gangs and ethnic crime groups are feeling their oats and expanding in the cracks in the underworld support structure. Still, the European Mafia continues to have worldwide connections and clout, with good relations and significant influence in both the American and Melbourne Commisiones. Unlike in America and Australia, the European Mafia is still primarily Italian; even if the operations appear local on the face, you can almost be certain that the don is Italian.

Currently, the Alta Commissione supports three major joint projects: a unified money laundering network for all members, a multinational trafficking set up where black market goods are shuttled from one end of Europe to the other (and beyond) by moving between "nodes" maintained by the different syndicates, and the elite fratellanza cadres.

The Neapolitan Camorra are a group of tight-knit families headquartered in their native Naples, with their territory extending from northern Italy over the Alps into Austria and the southern Allied German States, and they share operations with the N'drangheta in GeMiTo. Each family operates as a cell and controls its own operations, independent of the rest of the organization and bound only by their common traditions. However, dons will often seek assistance or cooperation for larger plans and operations. No single family dominates the rest of the loosely-structured Camorra, but the capo famiglia have elected the well-spoken and politically neutral Don Giannini to represent them on the Commissione.

Cosa Nostra is the Sicilian syndicate from which American Mafiosi get the phrase *cosa nostra*. Don Camillo Spinelli, head of the powerful Feretti family, is capo di tutti capi of the Cupola and the chairman of the Alta Commissione. The Cupola is a sort of Commissione for the Cosa Nostra families, and served as the model by which Lucky Luciano formed the American Commissione. Cosa Nosta is a deeply traditional organization, and the most well-connected and wealthy, with deep inroads into the financial backbone of Europe. The majority of its made men are high-level advisors and dealers, running smaller syndicates,



bankrolling casinos and brothels, and brokering international deals to purchase guns and brainbenders in bulk to distribute to their partners and street operators.

The Calabrian N'drangheta has traditionally been the most violent of the Italian syndicates, a legacy that almost saw it taken apart and destroyed by the police in the Twenties and a prolonged turf war with the Sacra Corona Unita in GeMiTo. It was Dona Allegra Fuselli that rebuilt her organization from the ground up, preserving their reputation for violence but adding a penchant for stealth and precision.

- I'll say. Those N'Drangheta adept teams are something else. I'd bet on them against Yakuza ninja any day. I don't know where the hell Dona Fuselli found them, but she's got to have as much magical assets invested in procuring and training her combat adepts as the other syndicates have in all their magical operations combined.
- 2XL

Where once the N'drangheta were organized (if I can use the term) similar to the Camorra, Dona Fuselli has reorganized the n'drise (families) into an insular, centralized hierarchy with herself as the queen bee. Its operations are centered around Calabria and GeMiTo, but it has n'drise scattered throughout Europe and Australia. Dona Fuselli fully supports the Alta Commissione and freely offers her soldati to execute their enemies.

Sacra Corona Unita in Apulia began as a breakaway from the Camorra; a small, rigidly hierarchical organization with thirteen distinct ranks; an overly complex system that starts with the società minore (populated by the equivalent of associates and picciotti) and works its way up through the società maggiore, which is further broken into the lo sgarro (soldati) and the la santa (soldati and capi), to the società segreta (capi, sotto capi, capi famiglia). It also features a Cosa Nostra-style Cupola, with the current capo di tutti capi Don Cosimo de Lecce. The SCU has enjoyed great successes in Eastern Europe and fruitful relations with the Grey Wolves Maffiya, smuggling in bliss and red orchid and exporting weapons from European arms manufacturers. There is still an unfinished faida (blood feud) between the Sacra Corona Unita and the N'drangheta which members of both syndicates are willing to pursue despite the decision of the Alta Commissione.

The Turkish and Muslim Grey Wolves maffiya, led by the man known only as the Commander and represented on the Alta Commissione by Shaykh Abdullah Kemal Özkök, began as a secular ultranationalist group, but were ousted from their native land during the EuroWars when Turkey went fundamentalist. They set up operations in Greece, Cypress, Azerbaijan, and the Balkans, where they developed business relationships with the SCU and ate the rest of the Turkish maffiyas.

- It is believed that the Grey Wolves harbor, or are led by, the remnants of the old Turkish intelligence agencies, which retain their connections with the British MI-6 and the American-Canadian CIA. If true, it could be the key asset that bought their way into the Alta Commissione...and why they are some of the best data brokers in the Mediterranean.
- Fianchetto
- One of the maffiya's identifiers is the sign of the jackal—middle two fingers of the left hand touch the thumb to form the muzzle, the

pinky and index at an angle (like the Italian sign for the bull's horns) for the ears. The Grey Wolves are nearly as violent as the N'drangheta, and very much feared in Turkey. If you absolutely need to intimidate someone, you can try it—just don't let the Grey Wolves catch you.

- Sticks

Today, the Grey Wolves are the principal connections between the European syndicates and the Middle East, centered in Istanbul, with extensive connections throughout Turkey and Kurdistan (among the so-called Grey Kurds), and fighting the Vory control of the Black Sea.

The Milieu Marseillais is the smallest of the syndicates with a seat on the Alta Commissione, a young, embattled union of the disparate Italio-French gangs who are fighting a losing war with the Vory. As the name suggests, the MM regime controls Marseille and the southern half of France (the north is Vory turf), including its valuable Mediterranean ports. Don Danial Martinez, the capo who—with the discreet backing of the Cosa Nostra, Camorra, and Asociación Vásquez—managed to unite the constantly-warring remnants of French organized crime. In the last few years, the Milieu Marseillais has fought hard to regain Paris from the Vor Batukhtina and gain friends in the reborn French nobility.

- The French mafia were the primary importers of tempo into Europe, spreading their poison to the rest of the Alta Commissione.
- Aufheben

Unione Corse is based out of Corsica and led by Don Guillaume Bonaparte, and is even more clannish, insular, and traditional than the Sicilian Cosa Nostra, and omertà is so deeply entrenched in the island's culture that the French government gave up enforcing continental law on the island, and it declared itself independent in 2050. The current Corsican government is little more than a handpuppet of the Unione Corse, and the tourist mecca and Freeport of Ajaccio forms a vital link in smuggling routes throughout the Mediterranean.

Asociación Vásquez in Spain cares little for the Vory; its troubles are with the Arabic Al-Akhirah Aswad Mayia in Andalusia and the breakaway Baptista Familia in Portugal. Don Vásquez has the support of the Alta Commissione, who have ordered hits on the renegade Baptistas and moved fratellanza cadres into Spain to support the Asociación. For his part, Don Vásquez has mortgaged everything save his soul in the defense of his operations, putting his faith and his credit in a new, secret endeavor.

- The word—and I can barely credit this—is that Vásquez is setting up a black clinic capable of churning out cyborgs. Only the scale of his operation lends any credence to it whatsoever: every independent street doc capable of delta-quality work, every private cyberneticist that can do quality custom work, and graduate student majoring in cybernetics, medicine, drone engineering, or computer science with Mafia loans in Spain and Euskal Herria has quietly disappeared in the last six months.
- Plan 9
- All that still won't buy him a single cyborg. Unless Dr. Halberstam is back from the dead and building jarheads in Spain, I'm not worried.
- Pistons



## THE COMMISSIONE

The most powerful capo famiglia, those who have earned the title capo di capi, comprise a loose association known as the Commissione. There are currently three Commissiones: one in the Americas, sometimes called the Commission; the Alta Commissione in Europe, and the Melbourne Commissione in Australia. Every crime family is answerable to the Commissione. It is the purpose of the Commissione to smooth relations between the families and mafia organizations, to promote projects that are of common interests, and to handle threats that affect the Mafia as a whole. In this, it acts no different than the Corporate Court or the United Nations.

In structure, the Commissione is much like a boardroom or committee. There is a chairman, who controls the agenda, and each member is accorded an equal voice on any issue, and debate continues until a consensus is reached. Being important men and women, the dons detest filibuster, and the chairman's duty is to keep things moving if anyone appears to be stalling.

- You can tell that only the most politic and controlled dons can handle this sort of thing. The urge to just cap the bastard that's holding up the whole show must be murderous. Of course, that's exactly the kind of behavior that the rest of the Commissione works to avoid, which is why they select who sits with them and who doesn't.
- 2XL

The Commissione as a body derives power from its members and their cooperation. It collects no percentages from the capo di capi, it has no standing army of soldati or other troops to enforce its decisions (save for the Fratellanza), and the Commissione recognizes the independence of each of its members to do as they will in their regimes. All decisions made by the Commissione are carried out independently by its members—failure to do so can result in censure or punishment. It pays to remember that the Commissione potentially has access to every hitman and assassin in the Mafia if they want something done.

In the past the Commissione met physically, but such gatherings were too high-profile and dangerous—as shown by the 1957 meeting of the American Commissione in Apalachin, New York, which was raided by the government and over half of the attendees captured, detained, and indicted. Nowadays, smaller Commissiones meet, either dons or their empowered representatives, to work out any issues that affect only those families called to attend. Meetings of the entire Commissione are very rare, and always in the Matrix with the tightest possible security.

- Now that's either a gross mistake or a subtle misdirection. I know for a fact that the last three meetings of the full American Commissione relied on hardwired direct lines that bypassed the Matrix altogether—you'd need to splice the optical cable being used just to read the traffic—and that there's been at least one physical meeting of all the dons in the last five years.
- FastJack
- Not sayin' you're wrong, Jack, but that would mean immobile physical endpoints that would stick around even after the meeting was over. Think they'd take that kinda chance?
- 2XL

- It could be done. The Shadow Matrix was based off pretty much the same idea. Keep a couple different stations in a given 'plex, biometric and passkey encoded—it's not Zurich Orbital but it couldn't be taken out by a single shot either.
- FastJack

## CAPO DI TUTTI CAPI

The Boss of All Bosses is the Mafia equivalent of Caesar—an Emperor who reigns over kings, first among equals—and for the most part is a title gathering dust on an empty chair. In America, there hasn't been a capo di tutti capi since legendary mobster Lucky Luciano over a hundred years ago. Australia has never had one. Before the Alta Commissione was formed, the head of each of the major Italian organized crime groups was capo di tutti capi of their own mafia organization.

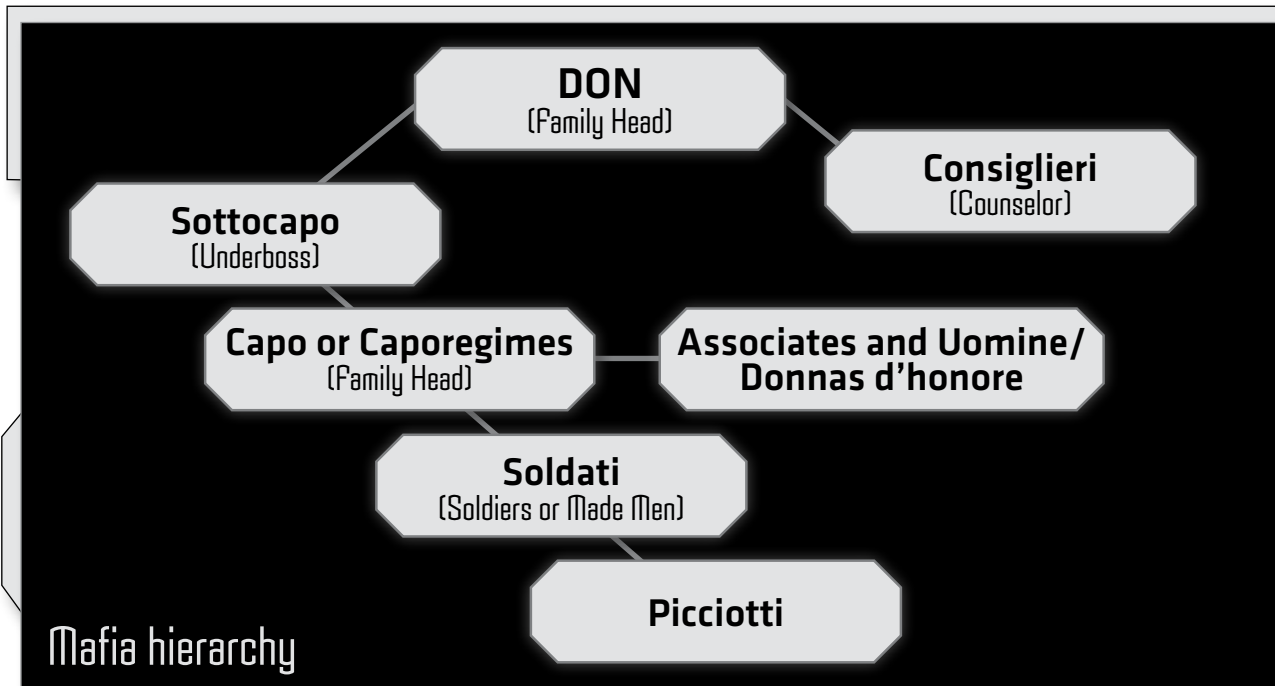
## THE FAMILY

Cosa nostra crime families are the most basic building block of the syndicate. Traditionally these families are based around an actual family or group of families that cooperate in their enterprises and have a single leader, from whom the family takes its name. The decline of traditional nuclear families has seen the rise of more crime families that are not based around blood ties, and depend on stronger material and emotional incentives to ensure loyalty.

The traditional Italian mafia is loosely based on a military-cum-family structure; the head of the family is a Caesar-type, and beneath him are his captains and his soldiers. Of course, the crime family is not a true military organization, but the chain of command is emphasized so that there is almost always a buffer between the don and the street-level soldati; this protects the don from being directly testified against. Non-traditional crime families have adapted more modern structures.

- Some Mafia crews or outfits are nominally independent—usually they broke away from their old family or just went somewhere else to set up a new operation and don't have to pay a percentage to anybody. Such small operations typically just have soldati, with maybe one of them that's the brains of the outfit acting as boss.
- Mihoshi Oni
- And then there's the corporate model. The availability of life-prolonging medical technology, not to mention some of the long-lived metahumans like elves and dwarfs, means that many dons can live over a hundred years. Now that significantly reduces the possibility for advancement, especially for the children of these older Mafiosi, who get sent to Ivy League schools and come back to find out that the rest of the family think they're soft-assed punks and even if they did get into the 'family business' they'd be stuck wiping their uncle's ass for the next fifty years until he finally catches a bullet or medtech fails to keep him together. So now, the kids are getting their act together and working on their own thing—full corporate model, board of directors, marketing, product development, everything.
- Mr. Bonds
- The problem with mob families is that in many cases they're actual families, and suffer from the usual difficulties facing those dysfunctional social networks.
- 2XL





Urgent Message...



Mafia families tend to be very small by comparison to gangs—no more than a few hundred made men in a given organization. Their strength and numbers come from multiple families working together, and from their multitude of associates; what they lack in numbers they make up for in the quality and caliber of their equipment, training, and organization, and by hiring outside the family. The Mafia uses independent criminals and shadowrunners for the same reasons as megacorporations or governments: discretion and deniability. While many families prefer to keep everything “within the family,” this is not always possible or desirable. Whatever the mission, if you are working for a Mafia family—though in few cases will they tell you this directly—you can be assured that you have some talent or worth that a made man does not, even if it is that you are eminently disposable.

### CAPO FAMIGLIA (DON, DONA)

The head of the family is called by the honorific don, or dona if female, and is the executive that leads the family and its organizations. They receive a percentage of the profits from all of the criminal enterprises and activities in their organization, and have the wealth and influence to begin new endeavors and conduct effective large-scale wars against other syndicates. The position of capo famiglia is not typically passed from father to son, but from boss to underboss; few sons, raised as they are in privilege, have the steel and experience to lead a family through war and through peace.

Families take their names from their capo famiglia, with few exceptions, such as the Finnigan family of Seattle led by Dona O’Malley—in that case, Don O’Malley (the dona’s late father) was installed as head of the Finnigan family by the Commissione, and he chose to retain the name as a mark of respect for the displaced don, a decision his daughter has respected and upheld.

- The Mafia isn’t exactly known as a bunch of grammarians, so no one’s going to bitch much if you use an -s to pluralize one of these Italian-style names when speaking or writing in English or Cityspeak.

Hell, plenty of Mafiosi talk about ‘dons’ and ‘capos’ themselves—the nearest thing these guys hear to Italian is Mass in Latin at Christmas and Easter.

‘course, all the Irish-, Polish-, Jewish-, etc. descended mafias might have their own terms for these positions (if a hundred years of Mob flicks hasn’t given them Italianitis), but the basics Pentito puts forward is true for all of them, no matter if you call them sgarristas or button men.

Tradition also plays a part. The Five Families of New York have had practically the same names for over a hundred years, no matter who the dons are.

- 2XL

### CAPO DI CAPI

The boss of bosses is a don who commands all the families in a given metroplex or Mafia organization, and is entitled to sit on the Commissione. The capo di capi may or may not receive a percentage of the other families’ profits; the arrangement depends on the relative strength of the families involved, but the purpose of the boss of bosses is to coordinate activities between multiple families, streamlining trafficking operations, smoothing out tensions, and directing the resources of all the families in large-scale conflicts against the Yakuza and other syndicates.

- Let’s take a couple of examples here. Dona O’Malley, as previously stated, is capo di capi of Seattle, which comprises the Finnigan family, the Gianelli family, and the Ciarniello family—that’s a good example of a single metroplex under one “rule,” and by virtue of her position Dona O’Malley is entitled to a seat on the Commissione. Now, the Sacra Corona Unita of Italy is made up of many clans (their equivalent of families), all of whom answer to Don Albertino Blanco, who is capo di capi of the SCU and sits on the Alta Commissione. Finally, you have families like the Gatto N’drise in Sydney, Australia, which is actually a branch of the N’drangheta, and like most N’drangheta n’drise the capo di capi is Dona Allegra Fusilli (who also has a seat



on the Alta Commissione)—but as part of the Australian Mafia, Don Henry James Gatto sits on the Melbourne Commissione.

- 2XL

- The capo di capi isn't just a position you can win by pure force of arms; the Commissione has to recognize and approve before you get a seat, and the Commissione can and does determine replacements when dons die, retire, or fail in their duties. Sometimes this means they let the local families fight it out amongst themselves until a winner emerges, and sometimes it means they appoint a sotto capo or troubleshooter to the position, particularly when the operation or area in question is vital and impacts the business of multiple families. Seattle, for example, is a key smuggling port for nearly every Mafia family in the UCAS—nearly all the black market goods that come from or go to Asia do so through the Port of Seattle (the alternative routes generally being the Panama and Nicaragua Canals, which the mafia doesn't control).

- Fianchetto

## CONSIGLIERE

Outside of the normal operational structure is the personal advisor to the capo famiglia, the consigliere. Often a lawyer or retired don, the consigliere oversees few, if any, criminal operations personally, and instead keeps up to date with the goings on in the family and the underworld, offers advice, and sometimes handles delicate situations which the don cannot be involved with personally. As such, a consigliere is part father confessor, part spymaster, part criminal mastermind, and part military tactician. The consigliere can also act as the capo famiglia's personal agent and representative when meeting with other syndicates, corrupt police and politicians, and the like.

It is difficult to overstate the respect that the position entails. While the consigliere serves at the will of the capo famiglia, he is the only member of the family guaranteed to have the ear of the don; a word from the consigliere can promote or damn a capo or sotto capo. It is not uncommon for a don to temporarily replace his consigliere with a general when involved in a period of underworld conflict, as the same skills that make an outfit profitable during peace can leave them stretched out and vulnerable during wartime.

If the consigliere hires you, then the job is considered extremely important: he is the voice of the don in these matters, and would never let the capo famiglia expose himself by consorting with shadowrunners, even the most trusted d'onore. Such jobs are often extremely lucrative and may carry rewards beyond mere remuneration, including forgiveness for the death of a made man, permission to kill a made man (often phrased as an order), or the title of d'onore. By the same token, such runs carry with them the implicit (sometimes explicit) consequence of death if the shadowrunner fails or talks.

## SOTTO CAPI (SOTTO CAPO/SOTTO CAPA)

In the smallest families, a capo will report to, take their orders from, and deliver their percentages directly to the don. Larger families will have at least one sotto capo, underboss, who will be responsible for a number of regimes, along with all the men of honor and their families that live there. Most families that can afford it have at least one sotto capo, usually the heir apparent to the don, often the don's own son, daughter, or favorite lieutenant.

The sotto capo represents another level of obfuscation between the don and the street, another layer of silence and obscurity

to protect the head of the family. For their troubles, sotto capi take a percentage of the earnings their capi pass up to them as their own, passing the rest on to the don. As far removed as they are from the streets, sotto capi are always in danger of losing touch with that side of things, becoming middle management concerned with figures and earnings and making business decisions that, while good on e-paper, are indefensible in real life. A good sotto capo keeps his finger on the pulse, letting the men of honor under his command do their own thing and reining them in or riding them only when needed; a bad sotto capo will stifle his men and lose the initiative to gangs and other syndicates.

- A bad sign for a family is when it has too many sotto capos. Makes the organization top-heavy and the big boys have to fight over who gets the big slice of the pie.

- Sticks

In no small part because of the amount of time it takes to perform their duties, few sotto capi can afford the luxury of an actual job to hide behind, and instead set themselves up as nameplate positions in Mafia-owned corporations, financially secure private citizens living off their investments, bank committee members and the like. They can afford their spouse's repeated cosmetic augmentations without trouble, send their spoiled-rotten brats to the best schools (after they erase their juvenile criminal records), and afford to waste their money on the usually obscene rich-people hobbies like yachting.

- The most affluent sotto capi, yes. Poor families, including those just starting out, are correspondingly little better off than their capi—and often have significantly more of their own assets invested in their criminal enterprises.

- Mr. Bonds

With their better view of the operations in an area, the sotto capo is generally the first to make war against a neighboring syndicate or to plan a defense against an invading syndicate. This sounds bloodier than it generally is; in most cases it amounts to the sotto capo telling one of his capi to take their crew and send a message, but in the event of an actual mob war—"going to the mattresses"—the sotto capo plays a vital role in commanding his men and defending his territory. The sotto capo is also the most common mafia Mr. Johnson, hiring shadowrunners to do something he cannot, or will not, trust to one of his capi.

The dream of all sotto capi is to one day move up—either to replace the don when he dies or retires, or to break away (with or without permission) and set up their own family. Of course, sometimes when the head of a large family dies each sotto capo will continue to run their operations independently, each one setting themselves up as don of their own small family.

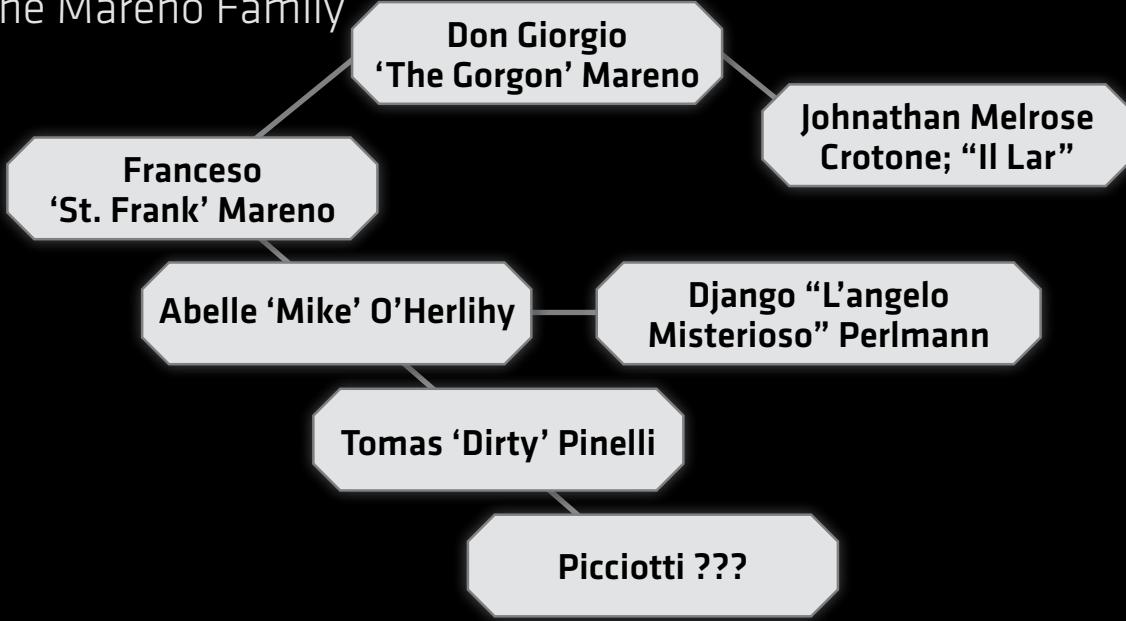
- Sotto capi also have to worry about rogue capi. That's when a capo decides to quit paying up to the sotto capo, running their own regime in the sotto capo's territory and paying up directly to the don instead—by cutting out the sotto capo, the capo keeps a higher percentage of the profits, see? The don generally lets the sotto capo sort it out, as a little bloodletting is good for most organizations.

- 2XL





## The Mareno Family



Urgent Message...



MAJOR SYNDICATES.....

Urgent Message...



### THE MARENO FAMILY

To further illustrate the structure of a typical mafia organization, I am including short profiles of a traditional, evolving mob family, the Marenos, and a member from each of its ranks. You will see how a crime family is forged of very personal relationships as well as business dealings, and how passions can flare and bloody feuds can begin.

The Mareno Family is almost a hundred and fifty years old, and began during the period of Prohibition in the 1930s as the *capi* and regimes under *sotto capo* Joseph Piazzo, primarily involved with the local newsstand distribution union and running numbers rackets. The most notable changes to the Mareno family in the Sixth World are the advent of Don Giorgio Mareno, a first generation ork, and their substantial investment in the Matrix. The family is still quite small, with fewer than two hundred made men, with very limited magical assets and no technomancers at all. Still they do quite well by themselves with the mundane means available to them.

St. Louis' unique geographic position—located on the Mississippi river and divided between the CAS and the UCAS—makes it an excellent smugglers hub in North America. The Marenos act as facilitators and brokers, providing warehouse space for pickup or delivery, purchasing contraband shipments from one band of smugglers to sell elsewhere at a markup, laundering the proceeds of a successful sale, and providing information on patrol routes and communication channels that the UCAS military, CAS military, and St. Louis police department will be using (all available for the right price—as are

localized “sensor blackouts,” though they prefer to keep these rare).

The Marenos are heavily invested in the St. Louis wireless architecture through local corporations, and their hackers have slipped backdoors into most government and media telecommunication systems, built up an extensive trade in BTL programs, operate several Matrix-based bookies, and established GatewayNet, St. Louis' premier black Matrix Service Provider-cum-money laundry. By tapping into the government's computers, the Marenos can operate smoothly while keeping three steps ahead of the police.

### DON GIORGIO 'THE GORGON' MARENO

**Race:** Ork

**Gender:** Male

**Birthdate:** 04/11/03

**Eyes:** One green, one purple

**Hair:** Black

**Distinguishing Marks:** Miscolored eyes (natural).

The Gorgon Goblinized in 2021, one of the first generation of ork Mafiosi. He nearly didn't make it, but by then he was already a made man and the son of the *capo famiglia*. His ascension to the top spot in the Mareno family was marked with the blood of those who stood against them. He earned the respect of his peers—and a reputation for settling insults quickly, quietly, and permanently—by holding tightly to traditions of *cosa nostra*.

Don Mareno is a capable if unexceptional administrator who lacks a good deal of formal education and relies

*Continued on p. 41*





INCOMING FEED.....



## CAPI (CAPO/CAPA)

A Mafia capo is in charge of a given regime, or territory, and all of the family's operations in that regime. It is the capo's job to see that the operations run smoothly and profitably, to deal with any minor threats and complications as they come up, and sometimes to deal directly with special customers and situations—say a judge wants a piece of underage tail, or a prominent local businessman wants a quarter-million nuyen loan under the table for twenty-five percent interest. In times of war, the capi are expected to lead their soldati personally and protect the assets in their regime.

- A good sign of a smart capa is when she closes all the businesses in her regime during wartime; she might not be earning but her enemy can't hit her in the purse, either. Then she and her soldati can go to the mattresses and not worry about protecting their places, straight offense.
- Fianchetto

Capi take a cut of all the businesses in their regime, and pass the rest upstairs; this means they make significantly more than the soldati and can often afford luxuries like their own homes or apartments, flash rides, good clothes, augmentations, health and dental care, and lots of eating out—the high life that most gutter-punks cannot even dream about. A flash capo doesn't always live very long; they attract too much attention from the wrong sort of people—police, criminals that prey on other criminals, taxmen and the like. The more successful and discreet capo will set himself

up as the owner of one or more small businesses to provide cover for his credflow.

The definition of regime is changing; where once a regime might have covered a single neighborhood or district, modern families are much more likely to declare a regime as all of the operations of a certain kind, such as money laundering or loansharking. This has the advantage in that operations can be standardized and each capo can learn about their given regime in depth—unfortunately, it does not lend itself to complementary operations, such as BTL production and prostitution, and can lead to some confusion as criminal enterprises in the same geographic area are led by different capi.

- What that means for us is that a lot of families are in the middle, either transitioning from territorial regimes to crimetype regimes, or having an uneven mixture of both. The Batista family in Havana, for example, has a single regime for Matrix crime led by capo Juan-Juan Vasquez, but practically all the territorial regimes in the city have to use the Matrix to some extent in their operations, which means that each regime effectively has their own Matrix resources separate from JJ's.
- 2XL
- The Batistas also consider the Astral a regime, less because they dabble in occult crime than to solidify and develop their Awakened resources. The last time I was in Havana rumors were thick as cubano smoke that the entire regime has been subverted, and answers to both Don Batista of the Mafia and Mama Pauvre of the Zobop.
- Sticks

## THE MARENO FAMILY (CONTINUED)

heavily on his capi to handle the technical details of the family business. Some see this as a weakness—something they learn to their mistake when they inevitably start up an operation inside a Mareno regime and the Gorgon has it raided, all the clients and employees and soldati killed, and the place burned to the ground. As a lesson, it usually lasts for a couple years before someone tries it again.

Now nearly seventy years old, Don Giorgio Mareno maintains the guise of a retired investor who donates generously to St. Louis inner city schools. The popular opinion is the Gorgon is starting to feel his age and looking to his legacy. He never had children of his own, but kept his brother's children close, and Francesco Mareno is his heir in all but name, and the strongest of his sotto capi. The other families worry that the Gorgon will clean house and smooth his nephew's way to becoming not just capo famiglia, but possibly capo di capi of St. Louis with a seat on the Commissione.

- The Mafia as a whole doesn't have a single policy on metahumans. Like with gender and ethnicity, it depends on the family, and sometimes the individual made man. I know most of the capi in the Ciarniello family would never initiate an ork or troll, but they don't have any trouble with elves.
- 2XL

### JOHNATHAN MELROSE CROTONE; "IL LAR"

**Race:** Human

**Gender:** Male

**Birthdate:** 09/22/12

**Eyes:** Brown

**Hair:** Black

**Distinguishing Marks:** Bioluminescent tattoo of a crucifix over right breast.

Johnny Crotone is the magical arm of the family, gifted with the Sight and oracular abilities, but not much else. Still, Crotone's uncanny divinations secured his place at the side of the Mareno capo famiglia—first old Don Salvatore Mareno, Giorgio's father, and then the Gorgon himself. The more superstitious soldati fear the fey, unaging mobster, but his devotion to the Gorgon is unquestioned.

While still the consigliere to the Mareno family—few living mobsters have Crotone's experience—his position as the Mareno magus has waned. While Il Lar makes the most of his limited Awakened abilities, his value lies in his extensive experience—he literally knows everything about the Mareno family and the St. Louis criminal underworld, and acts as both spymaster and chamberlain, managing the details of the affairs of the Mareno family.

As one of the Awakened, Crotone is somewhat bigoted against the Emerged, and I believe is fairly ignorant about the true capabilities of technomancers and virtu-kinetics.

- So...soothsayer? Professional prophet? How does this guy pretend to make a living?
- Slamm-0!
- Financial advising services; he runs a private business with a select clientele—no stake under six figures. We met once, in Paris; I offered him an introduction to the Seer's Guild (politely declined) and he offered me his card (accepted). I've always been very happy with his results. No one's yet been able to prove that divination can actually be useful for playing the market, so I'd imagine his success is as much due to financial crime than an ability to see the future.
- Arete

### FRANCESCO 'ST. FRANK' MARENO

**Race:** Ork

**Gender:** Male

**Birthdate:** 03/01/25

**Eyes:** Green

**Hair:** Black

**Distinguishing Marks:** None

The heir apparent to the Mareno family is sotto capo Francesco Mareno, and nephew of Don Giorgio Mareno, St. Frank is the most physically fearsome, intelligent, and farsighted mobster in St. Louis, as skilled with an Exploit program as he is with a gun. In 2064 he was made underboss of all of the family's operations in St. Charles and St. Louis counties, having killed the previous incumbent for talking to the police. When the Crash 2.0 crippled many of the family's operations, St. Frank saw in the destruction the opportunity to rebuild—by controlling the politicians handing out the building contracts for the city's wireless infrastructure, he was able to get a Mareno hacker writing backdoors into the city government's code.

St. Frank spends most of his days handling the day-to-day business of the Mareno family's Matrix interests, but his focus has not caused him to neglect his family's few street-level operations. Though he generally gives his capi a free hand provided their operations turn a profit and his percentages are turned in every week, St. Frank often hires shadowrunners to tail some of his men and women to assure that they are doing their job and not talking to the police.

As his legitimate cover, St. Frank maintains the façade of running The Life of the Mississippi, a legitimate riverboat casino.

*Continued on p. 43*



A capo is the lowest position with the influence (and nuyen) to really hire shadowrunners; the bulk of the runs they hire out for are directly related to their regime and their own activities. Usually they hire runners when they need extra muscle or specialists—particularly magicians, adepts, riggers, or technomancers. Payment will come directly out of the capo's pocket, so runners are more likely to be offered a share of the proceeds rather than a flat fee.

## SOLDATI (SOLDATO/SOLDATA)

The soldato is a made man, a fully initiated member of *cosa nostra*, and the most common of the Mafiosi. Soldati are professional criminals, and have developed skills that make them valuable members of the family. A soldato may have a stated occupation at a family-owned company or organization, but their true business is the operation and proliferation of the family's criminal enterprises. The soldiers of the Mafia have a well-earned reputation as thuggish, confident, and violent—a soldati will not offer an idle threat, and many are more than willing to die for their family, if it will take some of their enemies with them.

The strength of the soldati lies in their fervor and loyalty, a trait that the families cultivate in their young recruits. Traditional families groom their progeny for these roles, emphasizing the importance of proper action and family ties; nowadays skill, loyalty, and the correct attitude are more important than bloodline, and only the most hidebound families still will only admit soldati of purely Italian heritage.

## PICCIOTTI (PICCIOTTO)

The lowest rank of 'made men' are the picciotto, a rank that has evolved over the decades to encompass all non-combat specialists. Just as not all soldiers in the army fight on the front lines, so are not all soldati enforcers and gunsels. In many families, the term is a pejorative applied to sons and nephews 'made' because of who their fathers and uncles are rather than their skills. Picciotto handle jobs that would go to associates if they could be trusted with the details of the family business. In more modern families the picciotto are specialist non-combatants: BTL programmers, drug chemists, magical talents, fixers, lawyers, smugglers, and all the other essential operations of running a business that don't involve a gun or a blade. Valuable contacts for shadowrunners.

## D'ONORE (UOMINE D'HONORE/DONNA D'HONORE)

The *uomine d'onore* is an honorary member of *cosa nostra*—not a made man, but trusted and valuable associate who has proven himself repeatedly over a period of time.

• Since Pentito had not mentioned it, I believe it falls on myself: *uomine d'onore* means "man of honor" and *donna d'onore* means "lady of honor." The modern Mafia, while still notoriously sexist, is less discriminatory than it once was, and accepts women as members as well as men. Of course, female Mafiosi are caught in a trap, forced to act particularly masculine to earn the respect of their male peers, and then denigrated by those same peers both for their lack of feminine habits or for showing any. In many ways, it is like women that choose a career in "traditionally male" fields such as the military or law enforcement.

• Fianchetto

- Never mind the many historical examples of women that served with distinction in "traditionally male" roles. Look at Dona O'Malley of Seattle for a female Mafioso that takes life by the balls.
- Kat o' Nine Tales

Originally, this appellation and its variants applied to non-Italians (or non-Sicilian Italians) taken in to Italian mafias. While trusted sufficiently to be offered jobs and relied upon for their skills, the *uomine d'onore* is never truly trusted with the details of the family business—no don or capo would countenance the *uomine d'onore* hearing them make their plans, much less offer their own feedback—and they never achieve the authority to run a regime or give orders to any actual made men. As part of the organization however, the *uomine d'onore* is obliged to know certain things—who the family is at war with, who to go to in the family when you need an untraceable gun, an introduction to another family when traveling on business, that sort of thing. Assassins, hired guns, and shadowrunners placed on retainer are often made *d'onore* to make it easier for them to work with the soldati and capi.

*Uomine d'onore* must be sponsored by a capo or *capa*, though sometimes a soldato will introduce his friend to a capo to have him made *uomine d'onore*. The capo may or may not discuss it with the don or sotto capo, depending on how independent the capos are allowed to be and the size of the organization. The initiation is informal, and generally consists of an extremely brief run down on what the new *uomine d'onore* is and is not supposed to do—this covers the traditions of *omertà* and *rispetto* as well as any specific instructions the capo might have for them—followed by a swearing of loyalty. Modern capos typically add a task as part of the initiation, such as killing an associate with loose lips as a tacit example of what will happen to the *uomine d'onore* if they break their promises.

- Men of honor is a traditional reference to Mafia made men. So that means that somebody identified as 'uomine d'onore' might be an honorary member or an actual made man, depending on the family. This confuses outsiders, which the Mafia sees as a kind of bonus. In any case, always treat these guys as you would made men—they may not have the full protection of the Mafia, but they're dangerous and their made men friends are likely to seek revenge if you fuck with them.
- 2XL

## ASSOCIATES

The Mafia is not the most numerous of criminal organizations, and relies heavily on non-members for tasks too menial to be trusted to actual family members. Hired muscle and hangers-on, spouses, and friends willing to do a favor every now and then can be included in this category; politicians, corporate security, government agents, police, and anyone with family or personal connections are typically not—the Mafia does not abide connections with the authorities.

The position (it isn't really a title) is strictly informal, though some families' associates go through an abbreviated version of the mafia initiation—typically, just the oath with none of the pageantry—just to impress the associate. Even if they're working for us, associates are still outsiders and we don't talk to them about who we are or what we do. Particularly valuable and long-time as-



## THE MARENO FAMILY (CONTINUED)

### ABELLE 'MIKE' O'HERLIHY

**Race:** Human

**Gender:** Male

**Birthdate:** 02/07/31

**Eyes:** Blue

**Hair:** Red

**Distinguishing Marks:** Three gold-plated datajacks located at the base of the skull.

Mike O'Herlihy was with the Chicago mob, a college boy with a master's in business atrocities and a hand in promoting the lucrative BTL traffic. O'Herlihy managed to get out when the Chicago Containment Zone went up, one of the few Mafiosi to escape. Introduced to the Marenos by a mutual acquaintance, he literally married his way into the family, using Mia to get accepted and guaranteeing his promotion to capo. Placed in charge of pornography and BTL production in the St. Charles regime—an underdeveloped area of the Mareno family business—because of his experience in Chicago, O'Herlihy worked to modernize and expand the Mareno family's operations and fill in the vacuum left after the wall went up, then expanded from strict pornography to prostitution.

For the past few years he's turned his energies toward a new venture, inspired by the Japanese bunraku brothels: prostitutes made up like porn stars from the Mafia's hit XXX BTLs and chipped with personafix programs that cause them to act out the client's favorite scenes. He spends most of his days at these chipped whorehouses, which are concealed within the legitimate strip clubs he owns and operates in St. Charles.

- Word is that O'Herlihy's been looking for independent contractors to help him reestablish his contacts with Chicago, hoping to cash in on MacAvoy's blood-sport BTLs.
- Traveler Jones
- Or trying to get back in touch with his hive.
- Sticks
- Please, you see bugs behind every corner. This guy married a mob princess with the Sight. I'd believe he's kinked from his experiences (which would explain why they separated), but you think he could stand years of scrutiny like that?
- Haze

### TOMAS 'DIRTY' PINELLI

**Race:** Human

**Gender:** Male

**Birthdate:** 05/05/48

**Eyes:** Black with no visible iris or sclera

**Hair:** Brown with black highlights

**Distinguishing Marks:** Matte black cybereyes

'Dirty' Pinelli is the fifth generation in a family of made men, none of whom ever made it above soldato. Some people grow up knowing they're going to be cops because their family is cops; Tomas Pinelli knew he'd grow up to be an enforcer for the Mareno family. Even as a kid, Dirty was never afraid to get a little blood and shit on his hands; he used to get sent to juvie just to smuggle BTLs in to the inmates. By the time he was eighteen Dirty had a steady network inside the juvenile detention system and half the schools in St. Louis.

For the last couple years, Dirty Pinelli has been working for Mike O'Herlihy as a panderer and recruiter in St. Charles, picking up teenagers at the bus stations for the Mareno's pornography and prostitution operations. Pinelli has a knack for the job, though he has to work overtime with the rest of the soldati to convince them he isn't a pederast. O'Herlihy also has Pinelli making the rounds to the Missouri prisons, arranging conjugal visits and care packages for imprisoned Mareno family members, bribing and blackmailing guards, and dumping the bodies when one of the whores dies. O'Herlihy also has him play driver to any shadowrunners in from out of town, to put his knowledge of the local geography to good use and keep an eye on the hired guns.

- I met Dirty when he came down to Vegas for a weekend. A model soldato, loyal enough to take a fall, courageous enough to make a hit, and smart enough to run a low-level operation on his own for extended periods without scrutiny—even if he does need that math SPU to keep the books straight. He didn't come into this business to peddle X-rated Better Than Life chips to kids, or of kids, but he does it without question whether he likes it or not—and he doesn't like it. I don't think he really likes himself. You can't peddle that filth without getting a little filthy yourself. He'd love to move on to something, anything other than picking up some farm boy from Kansas and getting him a hot meal and greasing him up for O'Herlihy to break in.
- 2XL

*Continued on p. 45*

MAJOR SYNDICATES.....

sociates may be sponsored as honorary members, but only if their loyalty and service are without question—and if they know too much about us and our operations. Non-members are the most likely leaks in the organization, and the first to be eliminated when cleaning up after a job.

- The line between associate, honorary member, and made man is a lot finer these days, or at least there isn't as much ritual to it with the more modern outfits. You've always got a core group of people that are on the "inside" that know the big picture (made men), and then you've got the guys that are just here to do their job, ask no questions, get paid, and get out (associates), and you've got the people that have done the work before and are reliable and loyal, but are kept at arms length from the whole thing because they're not made (honorary). Same thing as the rest of the Mob, they just don't use all the fancy names or make you swear on your mother's rosary or anything.
- Hard Exit

Shadowrunners that can be depended upon are often made associates, and considered very valuable—if they prove that they have loyalty as well as skill, they may be made d'honore.

## THE CHILDREN'S HOUR

Posted By: 2XL

Everybody knows that the sons and daughters of today's Mafia are going to have to wait to take their place in the family—but now it looks like the kids aren't willing to wait. I mean you think about it, all those kids fresh from college and university with their degrees in business or international finance, and their parents might put them in charge of some numbers operation or let them run the chain of restaurants that comprise the family's legal holdings. Young men and women that grew up on stories of blood, honor, betrayal, and revenge, and who can't get a legitimate job because of the taint of their family names, and now can't do anything but sit on their heels and spend the family's money until they're old and gray.

Lately, that's been changing. Children of the Mafia from all over America and Europe have decided to join the family business a new way—by working in Mafia-owned and operated corporations. The Mafia has always been business at heart, with the dons and sotto capos getting a lot of small legitimate businesses together to help cover up their income, or just as part and parcel of collecting on loans and the like, but this is a whole nother level.

The primary corporation in North America is Franklin Associates, Inc., an A-rated transnational that mainly operates in the UCAS and CAS. They handle by-contract city services, such as fire fighting and waste management.

- Jeez, the Mafia is involved with the garbagemen. There's a surprise for you. Still, I am surprised, Franklin Associates is Seattle's fire department...I didn't think the local families had anything to do with them at all.
- Kay St. Irregular

The corporate directory reads like the Commissione's family tree, and lately the kids have been receiving some new direction. Right now, the Chairman of the Board is 25-year old Christopher

Morelli, the son of a Boston capo who worked through an MBA at Harvard, and I think he's been getting the other Mafia princes and princesses and putting together his own little Mafia-corp. I mean, they look like they're doing their jobs on paper, but every single one of 'em is engaged in illegal and quasi-legal operations that I'm sure their parents don't approve of or know about.

For example, Mhari Anastasi is a middle manager in Franklin Associate's waste management division in Atlanta—but she makes sure that all the trash from the Atlantean Foundation headquarters is dumped at a warehouse where it's combed through by a forensic accountant and a theoretical thaumaturgist before being shipped off to the recycling plant. I'm pretty sure she passes any information she finds right up to Morelli, who probably sells it off to the highest bidder.

- Enterprising kids. Are they hiring?
- Kane
- I'm more curious about what they want. I mean, they already have rich mommies and daddies. What more do they need?
- Pistons
- Extraterritoriality. I think the key here is they're tired of sucking on the family teat; they want to make it on their own, and they have the business acumen to do it. The only thing I can figure is that the kids don't just want to be Mafia, Inc.—they want what their parents don't have: a fully legitimate enterprise built on criminal endeavors.
- Mr. Bonds

The European equivalent is Trans-Europa, Inc., some sort of holding company for managing legitimate Mafia investments from multiple families, a discreet way to grow fortunes and maybe launder a little cred. Different types of investment schemes are handled by its subsidiaries: Trans-Scotia, Trans-Germania, etc. There's some interlocking directories with Franklin Associates; I think Chris Morelli is a vice president of something. Near as I can tell they're all into financial scams, using the Mafias' money to make bigger fortunes which they hide and funnel into the Franklin Associates operations.

- Um. Did these guys have a subsidiary named Trans-Latvia?
- Mr. Bonds
- Dunno, maybe. Why? You know it?
- 2XL
- Trans-Latvia is a significant shareholder in NeoNET. Now I know Trans-Europa doesn't own them any more, but if they did...that means Villiers was in bed with the Mob. Huh.
- Mr. Bonds
- Maybe, maybe not. Like 2XL said, on the surface these are legitimate corps—if Villiers was using Trans-Latvia as a blind during his patented Novatech Maneuver, he might not have known about its mob ties...at least until he tried to buy out the company.
- Fianchetto



**THE MARENO FAMILY (CONTINUED)****MIA 'STREGA' MARENO-O'HERLIHY****Race:** Human**Gender:** Female**Birthdate:** 04/15/35**Eyes:** Purple**Hair:** Black**Distinguishing Marks:** Five scars from small-caliber bullet entry and exit wounds: two on her chest, one on her left shoulder, and two on her back.

Don Mareno's niece Mia is the only full magician in the Mareno crime family, and too valuable a resource for her uncle to keep out of the family business. The other soldati call her 'Strega Mareno' because of her powers, and because she follows the witchcraft tradition of streggharia. Mia was formally schooled at the University of Missouri-St. Louis so that she would remain close to home, graduating with a Masters of Thaumaturgy in 2060 and earning a graduate certificate in Astral Security in 2061.

Strega Mareno is a skilled and powerful magician able to call on spirits, saints, and angels to protect and conceal the family and their work. Her reputation is such that it is widely believed no one in the St. Louis Occult Crimes Taskforce could tell if Strega Mareno did conceal a crime, if she chose to conceal it, and as such her presence at a meet or job is a good sign that the family considers the matter a serious one. If nothing else, her position allows her an exceptional knowledge of the Mareno family's practices, probably rivaled only by Il Lar—I believe he may be grooming her as his own replacement, if he could only pass on his oracular insights.

**DJANGO "L'ANGELO MISTERIOSO" PERLMANN****Race:** Human**Gender:** Male**Birthdate:** 09/13/26**Eyes:** Brown**Hair:** Brown**Distinguishing Marks:** Severe damage to face and head, usually covered with a nanopaste disguise, bullet scars.

L'Angelo Misterioso is a hitman and cleaner who's seen better days. He spends the most of his time disassembling and reassembling weapons while sipping his gun cleaner in his St. Charles apartment, waiting for Il Lar to call him. A talented assassin, Perlmann made an error in judgment that nearly cost the don's niece her life. While Don Mareno could never make him a made man, Perlmann was too valuable an

asset to let loose, and he's been kept on retainer as an uomine d'onore.

The majority of Perlmann's face has been removed, leaving an almost bare cyberskull. The hitman turned his disfigurement into an advantage, using nanopaste masks and other disguises to conceal his true features and keep his appearance in constant flux to prevent him from being identified. A consequence of his injury is a limited ability to express emotion. Perlmann prefers to work alone, but is not above hiring independent contractors from outside the family to assist him in his duties—their ignorance of the Mareno family and his reputation is generally to his advantage.

- The soldati of the Mareno family gave him his nickname as they toasted over drinks, talking about the guardian angel who'd save their ass during a firefight, then disappear. Except everyone described someone different; a mysterious figure. So, the mysterious angel.

- 2XL

**PADRAIG BUTLER****Race:** Human**Gender:** Male**Birthdate:** 03/05/55**Eyes:** Blue**Hair:** Blond**Distinguishing Marks:** Very small tusks, allowing him to mostly pass for human. Cigar burns on left arm

A typical Dogtown street creature, Padraig is your average runaway; one more kid in a Catholic family with an abusive alcoholic father and a mother that spends her days on dopadrine working at a call center. He took to the streets living out of a used '56 Ford Americar and makes his living delivering pizza—and acting as a bag boy for the Mareno family.

The streets aren't safe, and pretty early on delivering Padraig bought a Saturday night special—sometimes people just don't want to pay for pizza. In July, Padraig had to use his gun to shoot a pair of beetle-heads who were after a package he was delivering. Padraig didn't brag about it, or even mention it, but Pinelli and O'Herlihy found out anyway—and approved of the young man's action and attitude. Dirty made him a gift of a Walther Palm Pistol the next week and promised to show him how to use it. Now armed and blooded, Padraig is feeling a little more dangerous—and in a year or two, who knows, maybe he'll be made.



# YAKUZA

Posted By: Mihoshi Oni

The Yakuza are a venerable international crime syndicate that originate from the Japanese islands, and to this day Japanese nationals and those of ethnic Japanese descent make up the majority of the members. Scholars generally agree that the Yakuza can trace its ancestry to gangs of bakuto (gamblers) and tekiya (peddlers) from the 17th century, both of which began to organize and come into conflict with one another. To this day, many traditional Yakuza initiations and ceremonies can be traced to one group or the other. Yakuza historians (that is, those employed by the kumi) prefer to trace their organizations to the honorable machi-yokko, freelance soldiers who would protect towns—or, as some would have it, cut down on freelance crime so that organized crime would have no competition. Probably there's a bit of truth in both versions; the traditional Yakuza see themselves as protectors of the common man, and they are organized criminals who benefit from cutting down on freelance crime.

With the rise of the Japanacorps and the Japanese diaspora, the Yakuza are easily one of the most economically powerful organized criminal syndicates in the Sixth World. They employ tens of thousands of street-level operatives and have hundreds of thousands of affiliated criminals, employees, and hangers-on that service millions of clients and have a global economic impact exceeding a trillion nuyen each year. Shadowrunners have been working for the Yakuza since before the term came into popular use, and I predict we'll still be working for them when they decide to call us something else.

## THE GAIJIN'S GAME

At this point, you're probably wondering why the big, bad Yakuza need to use shadowrunners, and the answer probably isn't what you're thinking: we're outside the system. Yakuza organizations are rigid and formal, with clearly defined hierarchies and ancient traditions enforced with draconian efficacy; sometimes to get things done the Yakuza need to bend, break, or ignore those rules—and that means shadowrunners. Oh sure, sometimes they just need a hired gun or a criminal specialist for a special one-off job, but you'd be surprised how often Yakuza members hire shadowrunners simply because acting directly—or getting their underlings to do it—would be the end of them. Gaijin especially are popular choices because they have no loyalty to anyone in the organization, no connections to them, and no real concept of jingi or giri.

The Gaijin's Game, as shadowrunning is sometimes called in Neo-Tokyo, is a delicate balance between not being connected enough and not knowing enough to be useful, while at the same time knowing enough and having the right connections to stay alive and profit from it. Let's be honest, running for the Yakuza is almost as dangerous as running against the Yakuza; these aren't your average boardroom suits with professional killers on call or street monsters dolled up in nice suits—they're both. They have cred and connections that are invaluable to us, but they play by their own rules and if you don't understand them you're going to do something stupid and get killed.

## POSTMODERN HISTORY

At the time of the Awakening, the Yakuza were still mostly ensconced in Japan, though they had spread to the Americas

## SHADOWSEA QUICKSEARCH: Korean Yakuza

Before the Second Korean War, Koreans made up a significant percentage of both the Yakuza in Japan and many of its Oyabun. The Yakuza has traditionally recruited its members from outsiders, and the Korean (and often half-Korean) criminals in Japan were ideal, taking to the Yakuza enterprises with zeal and efficiency. The conflict with their ethnic homeland, and the ultranationalist propaganda that accompanied it, alienated many of the Korean Yakuza however, and the Yakuza soon found themselves being divided into pro- and anti-government camps. This divide only worsened when several prominent Korean Oyabuns were formally accused and sentenced of espionage and treason after the Crash of '29.

The Yakuza's answer to the Korean problem was to expel them from Japan—many of the Korean kobun and Oyabun were sent to Seattle, which was hard-pressed by the American Mafia. Seattle's Korean Yakuza flourished while in Japan, and elsewhere they found themselves excluded or forced to prove their continued loyalty to the Yakuza. Oyabun Akira Watada, paranoid over the continued success and independence of the Korean Yakuza in Seattle, demanded loyalty to the Watada-rengo. When he received no answer, the Oyabun sent assassins to destroy the entire Korean Yakuza leadership in Seattle, an event known as the Schism. <<see: Seoulpa Rings>>

Korean Yakuza still exist today, primarily the survivors of those Korean Yakuza who kept quiet about their heritage and live quietly among the rest of the Yakuza, even going so far as to take on Japanese names. Some New Way Yakuza organizations also recruit members of Korean or Korean-Japanese descent.

and Australia with waves of Japanese immigrants and the recent expansion of the Japanacorps. The Yakuza were initially slow to adjust to metahumans, magic, and how quickly the world began changing, but they received unexpected leadership in the form of the Watada-rengo. Oyabun Akira Watada, with the counsel and support of the Great Dragon Ryumyo, supported the Japanese government's militaristic and ultranationalist elements during the Second Korean War and the subsequent establishment of the Japanese Imperial State.

With extensive government and corporate contacts, the Yakuza turned to a phase of expansion and consolidation. Oyabun Watada gave official recognition and support to gumi (or in its correct form kumi) in important metroplexes such as Denver, Manila, Metrôpole, New York, and Seattle while bringing more and more of Japan's gumi under the banner of the Watada-rengo and strengthening his hold on that organization. The first Yakuza





INCOMING FEED.....



purge occurred shortly after the Goblinization began; superstition and shame caused many ork and troll Yakuza to take their own lives rather than live in shame; most of the rest were simply expelled; metahuman Yakuza outside Japan fared little better. The Yakuza's corporate influence was cemented in 2023 when Mitsuhamma Computer Technologies, a company backed by a coalition of Yakuza investors, obtained a seat as a founder of the Corporate Court.

The Crash of '29 began a period of strife and decline for the entire world. Many Oyabun were bankrupted as their bank accounts disappeared, complex money laundry schemes vanished, and dozens or hundreds of Yakuza-influenced corporations collapsed or were bought out by the megacorporations. With the initial cause of the Crash unclear, the xenophobic Japanese government blamed foreign terrorists for the attack, and the crippled Imperial Household Agency leaned on their Yakuza contacts for a scapegoat. Oyabun Akira Watada fed them Korean Yakuza with connections to the National Intelligence Service—who also happened to be the bosses most resistant to joining the Watada-rengo.

Oyabun Akira Watada would not lead a quiet life, and his reign as head of the Watada-rengo was fraught with massive changes in the world around him, prolonged underworld conflict, and betrayals as Oyabun Hanzo Shotozumi declared independence and the formation of his own Shotozumi-rengo. The old Oyabun finally grew too ill for his position in 2067 and named his nephew Hitori Hanzo as acting kumicho. Upon the death of the legendary Oyabun in 2068, Hanzo succeeded him and named himself Oyabun-no-Oyabun.

- Akira Watada was the closest thing to an Oyabun-no-Oyabun to ever exist, and probably no one else will ever come close. Look at Hanzo, so greedy for the title that he destroyed himself.
- Baka Debaka

Oyabun Hanzo's ambition proved his downfall. He refused to meet with or acknowledge his obligation to the Great Dragon Ryumyo, and for that (or some other offense; Hanzo had a way of making enemies) he was assassinated. His body was found, decapitated, in his home the day after he assumed the title.

The death of Hanzo saw the ascension of Maasaki Watada as Oyabun of the Watada-rengo. Oyabun Watada is a fierce traditionalist and proponent of the Old School who used his newfound position to enact retribution on his New Way rivals, most notably the Wanibuchi-gumi. In response, the New Way clans in Neo-Tokyo—with the support of Jurojin, Ryumyo's ally spirit, who had apparently broken free of the Great Dragon's influence—broke away to form the Wanibuchi-rengo, a severe blow from which the Watada-rengo has not yet recovered. As the Watada-rengo have ceased expansion in an effort to contain the Wanibuchi-rengo and for Oyabun Watada to consolidate his hold, several smaller rengo have formed to protect themselves from being absorbed gumi by gumi into the larger rengo.

## CODA

Modern criminals like to make fun at the romantic image of the Yakuza, with their antiquated traditions and excessive formality. But those same traditions have kept the Yakuza together for



centuries while other criminal organizations have collapsed in on themselves. Yakuza traditions bind them together and set them apart from their competitors, and whether you work with them or against them, you need to know how they operate and why.

## JINGI

Japanese society is based on social recognition of superiority, showing appropriate deference to those above you and expecting the same from those below you, which is collectively embodied in the concept of jingi. The Yakuza is built on jingi; the basic organization of the gumi depends on the Oyabun-kobun relationship, where everybody knows their immediate superiors, underlings, and the people of about their same level. There's a bit of creature comfort in this kind of organization, because you know exactly where you stand with everybody, at least in theory.

- Slot a Japanese etiquette 'soft before you see your Yak contacts and you should be fine.
- Sticks
- Or emulate the 'soft into a complex form.
- Netcat
- So, uh ... you can do that? That's pretty cool, I guess.
- Slamm-O!

Things get more complicated based on your job in the Yakuza and how long you've served, which can make things tricky. Kumi-in are technically the same "rank" as hisho, komon, shingiin, and kaikei, but there are subtle distinctions of status—the more important a hisho's boss, for example, the more important he or she is. Older kobun are nominally worthy of more respect for their age and experience, but if they haven't moved up the ranks it's likely that the younger kobun will look down on them.

- A foolish mistake. The Yakuza lifestyle is dangerous, very dangerous, and anybody that can survive long enough to be considered old, even if they didn't exactly climb the ladder of success, is worthy of at least a modicum of respect.
- Fianchetto
- And they're still Yakuza. I was in prison this one time—never you mind where, the story of the breakout's being scripted for a major trid production next year—and there was this quiet old Yak who never bothered anybody, doing his hundred years for some mass-murder his boss had done back in the twenties or something, due for release sometime before Hell froze over for the third time. He was the only Yak in the prison and his gumi was dead or gone because he never did get any visitors or care packages that I saw, and you knew he was small time because all his Yak tats were prison tats; he'd been blank as a sheet of paper before he came inside. So some new guy, one of those young bucks who watch too many trids and just got his first hair down south, decided he'd make his rep by shivving the poor bastard. The Yak never saw it coming, nice and clean. Except that this guy was still a Yakuza, right? Three days later, five Yaks come into prison. Three days is how long it took them to find out everything on this stupid young punk. They killed the kid's entire family and then sat there and turned themselves in. Trial took about five min-

utes, and in a remarkable show of efficiency the bus was fueled and waiting to take them right to prison. You've never seen the wheels of justice move that smoothly until they've been greased like that case was. The warden put the kid in solitary for his own protection, the guards got a nice little bonus, and the Yaks got some privacy as they worked on the kid. They peeled him, like a grape. Forget water torture, these guys used a potato knife and a squeegee bottle full of antibiotic spray and coagulant. By the time they were done, their appeals were already being processed; turns out one of the arresting officers forgot to read 'em their Mirandas.

- Kane
- Kid should have known his place.
- Mihoshi Oni

More than just knowing your place, jingi is concerned with proper behavior. The Yakuza stand outside the normal social order of Japan, but they still have their place in Yakuza society. So part of jingi is behaving in a fashion that does not reflect badly on the gumi as a whole—adding to the gumi's reputation for violence is acceptable, but wanton violence that causes significant civilian casualties is not. Dressing loudly and being rude in public is fine, but when you're at a Yakuza function you better be polite and properly attired. Proper behavior is expected, and failure to maintain that standard will cause you to lose face—and friends.

## SUITS AND LOUD SHIRTS

Despite their screen of being honorable protectors of the community and their relatively public face in Japan, the Yakuza are really social outcasts, and following the fine traditions of Japanese society, some of the Yakuza revel in this by wearing distinct outfits and behaving in certain ways that mark them as professional gangsters. It's a little like flashing your gang colors in Seattle—the public knows who you are, what to expect, and how to treat you. That's why you sometimes see Yakuza with garish and brightly colored Hawaiian shirts or pinstripe suits out of last century, strange hairstyles, walking with a wide gait while everyone else shuffles along, acting a little crazy, or flashing big tattoos on their face, hands, and necks.

On the other hand, you have the suits, who are more discreet. They look like businessmen, they talk and act like businessmen, and they're always in long-sleeved shirts with high collars that they never unbutton no matter how hot it gets or how informal the get-together. Their lapel might have a little pin with an insignia you don't recognize, and sometimes when they need to show affiliation they'll pull the sleeve down to expose a tattooed wrist. Most gumi have a preference one way or the other, but neither fashion is "wrong" as far as the Yakuza are concerned—suits are more suited to white-collar crime and boardrooms, shirts are best on the street, but both are generally acceptable.

Urgent Message...



- Which has its impact on us non-Yaks too. You can be friends with a Yak and paint the town red on Friday nights all you want, but if you act like a punk when you're with his boss or his friends it reflects badly on them for associating with you. Be a polite friend when the time is right.
- Haze

## GIRI

If you haven't been brought up Japanese, it is hard to get a grasp on exactly how fundamental and important giri, the devotion to fulfill an obligation, really is. It goes way beyond quid pro quo and eclipses mere gratitude—when you do a favor for a Yakuza member they will remember it and repay in kind. Of course, they also expect other people to do the same.

- So this is a debt, right? Helps the Yaks collect on their loansharking?
- Kane
- Not that kind of debt. Sometimes you can pay off giri with nuyen, but it's much more common to repay someone with loyalty and service. An Oyabun that forks out the nuyen for your Aunt May's hip replacement isn't just saddling you with a material debt but with a karmic debt. You don't owe him just the money, you owe him for your aunt's life—and even after you pay him back the nuyen, he can call on you for someone else's life. It's a bit Mephistophelean.
- Mihoshi Oni

There's a lot of societal pressure and momentum built into it; some of the greatest Japanese literature is concerned about matters of giri, with many examples of heroes and antiheroes that fulfill and obligation even if it costs them their life, and men and women broken when two different obligations put them in an impossible situation. The Yakuza knows about life-and-death obligations better than most; in the underworld where reputation is everything, a Yakuza member who fails to fulfill an obligation shames not only himself but his entire gumi.

Combined with jingi, giri is the driving force of most Yakuza members. Just by being accepted into the organization, they not only have to defer to their new boss but they owe him—for their livelihood, for taking them into the gumi, for the irezumi on their shoulders, everything. Where jingi can bind the loyalties of a Yakuza member to their boss and subordinates, giri provides additional ties to others in the organization, strengthening loyalties and binding the gumi closer together. Power brokers in the Yakuza secure themselves by doing favors for others.

- Giri is profitable in more ways than one. A Yakuza Oyabun who pays for his kobun's children to go to college and then get into high-level positions in his legitimate corporation when they graduate gains the obligation of the children and parents, reliable employees who know what they're doing and aren't going to leave as soon as they get something on their résumé. That keeps them close as insurance in case any of his kobun look like they're going to break away.
- Kia

Most people know that if you save someone's life, they owe you, even if they hate you. Doing favors for a Yak—even favors they don't ask for, or wouldn't know to ask for—can be the start of

## FOR EMPIRE AND EMPEROR

The Yakuza started associating with militant Japanese ultranationalist groups about a hundred and twenty years ago, which allowed them to use violence as a tool to gain political clout and gave them important contacts in the government and military. The Yakuza's continued right-wing ties helped it expand with the Japanacops and the Imperial Navy as Japan re-asserted itself as a world power during the 2020s with the invasion of the Philippines. Even with the Imperial Marines recalled to Japan, the Yakuza remained behind and continue to operate. To this day, the Yakuza will perform espionage and assassination services on the behalf of government and military officials who lack the resources to do so themselves—sometimes performing the work out of sheer patriotism.

Beyond a strong cultural attachment to Japan, however, the Yakuza are divided on their loyalty to the Emperor. Proponents of the New Way are generally in favor of the Emperor for his pro-metahuman policies and the strong position of the Empress as an icon of female power in the Data Age Japanese society. On the other hand, the Emperor has set himself opposite the Great Dragon Ryumyo and allied himself with the Shiawase family, which has alienated many traditional Yakuza tied to the dragon kami and Mitsuhamma.

turning them into a contact or working with a gumi as an affiliate. It's a delicate process, and strongly dependent on how honorable the Yak in question is or whether they take offense, but if done politely and well it's a devastatingly effective method of gaining a Yak's loyalty.

## NINJO

When a Yakuza Oyabun talks about being the protector of the people or keeping thieves from operating in his nawabari because it harms the people, he's displaying ninjo. Somewhere between empathy and sympathy, ninjo is kind of an aspect of jingi where the Yakuza, as an elevated person, is responsible for protecting the common man (generally human Japanese nationals, but sometimes just anybody in their territory). The Yakuza like to dress themselves up as a community service, protecting those who can't afford cops or private security. Whether this is a tie to a honorable heritage or a noble sentiment used to cover greedy and illicit dealings is academic, because some of them believe it and the rest are usually smart enough not to rock the boat.

Yakuza who practice ninjo don't target civilians. Oh, sure, they'll break somebody's arm if they're behind on a payment, take his wife as their new mistress in exchange for a gambling debt, burn down a house for an insult and kick a dog for being ugly, but when it comes to Yakuza-on-Yakuza violence, innocent bystanders are very rarely harmed. You don't see a lot of drive-bys and very few exploding school buses. Girlfriends, spouses, children, and

Urgent Message...



relatives are viable as hostages, but the Yaks know that if they play ball their loved ones will be released more or less unharmed.

Unlike *jingi* and *giri*, *ninjo* has pretty much fallen by the wayside and is now little more than a show for the marks. An Oyabun rarely truly cares about “his people” any more than an automated milking facility cares about its cows; he’s looking to get the most milk and cream out of them and that’s that. There are too many young and vicious syndicates out there for the Yakuza to start feelings sentimental enough to actually re-establish *ninjo* widely.

- Not quite true. The Yaks frown heavily on petty theft and most don’t tolerate it, going so far as to crack down on fences who deal with house thieves and the like. That’s part of the bias the Yaks have against the Korean and Vietnamese gangs—racial bullshit aside, a lot of them start up operations in Yakuza territory specifically because the Yaks don’t set up dealers in stolen goods; it’s a niche they can fill.
- Johnny No

## RITUALS

Beyond their codes of honor and behavior, the Yakuza have formalized and ritualized aspects of their lives and business to a large degree. While less universal than the concepts of *jingi* and *giri*, rituals like *sakasuki* and *irezumi* are very widespread in the Yakuza, though they see far more regional variation.

## IREZUMI

In Japan, tattooing (*irezumi*) is traditionally associated with the criminal elements of society, particularly with the Yakuza. I’m told the practice started when the government used to tattoo criminals to mark them for their crimes, and then criminals turned around and embraced the practice to mark themselves and demonstrate their notoriety. Of course later on decorative tattoos became more respectable, and certain dashing figures popularized the practice by being inked, so who really knows? In any event, traditional *gumi* are very into tattooing, particularly expensive full-body suits done by hand using the old techniques.

Each full-body suit is a major investment in both time and nuyen; the average suit can take a year of weekly sessions, each of which costs up to 6,000¥ per session; naturally it generally takes most Yakuza several years of repeated visits to finish, if they ever do. Full-body suits are a statement of commitment to the Yakuza lifestyle and a demonstration of wealth. Oyabun and senior *kobun* sometimes award loyalty and good service by subsidizing trips to the tattoo artist, even to the point of keeping certain artists “in house” solely to service members of the organization.

Hand-inked traditional tattoos are also the most common medium for quickened spells in the Yakuza, though the practice remains fairly uncommon—you have to have a fairly puissant sorcerer and a master tattoo artist. The modern practice appears to derive from the old belief that tattoos could act as a form of spiritual protection, and it did not become universal among the Yakuza until after the publishing of an addendum on quickening metamagic in 2058.

- I heard a story that the first magical tattoos in the Sixth World were accidental, the result of an Awakened artist who had the habit of finishing a session with a simple spell to cut down on the pain

from the tattoo. Imagine his surprise when the spell lasted a little while after he stopped sustaining it! Of course it still unraveled, but the *hiroshi* began experimenting and eventually incorporated the technique into his quickening technique.

- Sticks
- No offense Sticks, but that doesn’t jive. As far as I’m aware, there was no intermediate step between sustaining a spell and quickening it, nor could there be. I’d say the *Watada-rengo*’s affiliation with the Great Dragon *Ryumyo* had more to do with the dissemination of tattoo magic.
- Winterhawk
- You think so? I’m not saying either of you is right or wrong, but I know that there are examples in metahuman history of ancient rituals having verifiable magical effects, and I know not every magical advance in society is the result of some big flying lizard dropping crumbs for us wee mortals.
- Frosty
- There might be something to what both of them say; the *Watada-rengo* did have something of a monopoly on magical tattoos until the *Hirokeppu* addendum was published in ’58. Either *Ryumyo* taught it, or he encouraged it but kept it from spreading too far.
- Mihoshi Oni

Of course, not every *gumi* approves of *irezumi* since some of them don’t really want their skin to identify them as Yaks. There’s also the inconvenience factor—heavily tattooed people have trouble getting into some public bathhouses and the like, they get singled out in airports for security checks, that kind of thing. Other Yakuza, like the Sons of the Neon Chrysanthemum in San Francisco go in for more modern techniques, like nanotattoos and biotattoos. The Sons mentioned previously are famed for their bioluminescent tattoos, which are quite something to see in the dark clubs of glowy San Fran.

- Most Yaks of my experience split the difference—the body suit can be hidden if you wear long sleeved, button-up shirts and pants, and you can flash it pretty easy when you need to intimidate somebody.
- 2XL
- Yeah, following up on that, there are few times when the Yakuza are supposed to flaunt their tattoos: when playing *oicho-kabu* cards (fun fact, the worst hand is 8 (ya), 9 (ku), 3 (sa)—yakuza), during certain public festivals, and bathhouses (the ones that admit them), mainly.
- Sticks

## RENAMING

Not quite as common as it used to be, some Yakuza rename themselves to further dissociate themselves from their old lives and to show their loyalty to their new *gumi*. A member of the *Inagawa-kai*, for example, might rename themselves *Inagawa Kenno*. It helps the Yakuza maintain the appearance of personal ties, and gives at least the illusion of continuity when the new boss has the same family name as the old boss.



- Does that actually work?
- Slamm-O!

- There are probably Yakuza stupid enough to believe that the new boss might actually be the old boss's nephew even though the old boss was an only child—they've been known to hire the mentally handicapped but physically intimidating to scare sararimen and their wives—but mainly the façade is good for morale and to keep up appearances.
- Mihoshi Oni

## SAKASUKI

Sake-sharing is a time-honored Shinto ritual used by the Yakuza to seal promises and bonds of loyalty, most notably the induction of new Yakuza into the gumi and the establishment of the Oyabun-kobun relationship. Sakasuki ceremonies also feature prominently during weddings, truces, big business deals, and when a gumi joins a rengo. The act itself is fairly simple but highly ritualized, sometimes requiring a third party (often a Shinto priest) to set everything up correctly, pour the sake, say the prayers, etc. Both parties take a sip of sake out of the same cup. That's really the bulk of it; it's like an incredibly formal and stylized shaking of hands.

Before anyone asks, yes you do (rarely) get people that take advantage of the sake-sharing to pull a double-cross. Most of them are smart enough to just pull out a gun and shoot the other bastard, because spiking the sake—even if you do it so that you don't get poisoned, which can be done in more ways than this pretty little troll can count—is just stupid. It's one of the first things anybody will expect, the surviving party will be the most likely suspect, and it's strongly disapproved of by everybody involved. Of course, you could try to (literally) kill two Oyabun with one mycotoxin or something, but that's nothing special either. It's been done. Repeatedly, in some cases.

- Sweet southern baby Jesus, it was only twice! It's not like I made a career out of it.
- Kane
- Yeah, it's much more like a hobby. You know I still can't go to Guam because of you?
- Rigger X
- In Aztlan, sakasuki is often done with mescal at lower ranks because it's hard to find good sake. Some sort of tariff dispute with Japan, I think.
- Marcos

## YABITSUME

Finger-cutting is a traditional (I bet you're all loving that word by now) punishment that was a lot more meaningful before effective prosthetics and clonal phalanges. Of course, the really nasty part is that Yakuza members are expected to cut off their own fingers, on pain of shame, dishonor, and the Oyabun getting pissed and ordering a couple of his boys to do something nastier to you as an example to the others.

Physically, yabitsume is pretty simple. It's a formal ritual attended by the Oyabun. You bind the smallest finger on your right hand with a white cloth, take a very sharp knife, cut off a joint—or in some cases, an entire finger. The key here is a complete poker face, as showing pain or emotion is supposed to be even more shameful. After the slice and dice you stem the bleeding a little with the cloth and offer your boss the finger: if he accepts the proffered digit, you're good; otherwise you're back to the cutting board. Naturally, you're not allowed to replace the missing fingers with permanent prosthetics.

Few Yakuza make middle age without screwing up at least once and losing at least one finger joint. Missing fingers are such a mark of the Yakuza that it's one of those things Japanese security officers look for, and four-fingered animated icons are banned from Japanese educational materials to avoid scaring the kids. It's gotten to the point that the more modern gumi allow their members to redeem themselves in other ways.

- Failure is failure to the Yakuza. Whether you were outnumbered, outgunned, betrayed, sick, cyberware was malfunctioning—none of these things matter. What matters is whether or not you succeeded, and if you did not succeed you need to make amends.
- Baka Dabaka
- On (very) rare occasions, yabitsume is used as a demonstration of protest when it would be rude for the Yakuza member to speak up against the boss. Kumicho Ichiwa Ren of the Ichiwa-Kai comes to mind; he wanted to punish the association's tattoo artist Horimaho after the old man's work gave his son a staph infection that almost killed the young man. All six of the Ichiwa-Kai's senior kobun—and who had benefited from Horimaho's magical protections—cut off their own fingers and presented them to the kumicho instead. After all, the hiroshi couldn't continue his work without his fingers.
- Sticks
- Let us not forget that the ultimate in fuck-ups can only be fixed by committing seppuku—ritual suicide with an actual sword. Straight in and across; do it right and you'll spend your last minutes in complete agonizing pain as your intestines unravel and spill out of your gut, shit and bile and blood pooling around you—it's not a nice way to go, and I've seen it. Respectable Oyabun keep their personal executioners nearby to finish the poor SOB's off and end their suffering quickly.
- Rigger X

## DIVISIONS

Historically (Ha! Thought I was gonna say traditionally, didn't you?) the Yakuza have been pretty diverse and fiercely independent. That's changed. With globalization, the renewal of the Empire, Japancorp dominance, and the balkanization of so much of the world, the Yakuza gumi are both farther flung and closer than ever before. The Watada-rengo is the first and largest of the several rengo of unprecedented size, power, and influence unlike anything else in the Sixth World. Fortunately for the rest of the world, these rengo are divided by their ambitions and their ideologies.



These are the largest and most influential Yakuza organizations in the world, and their most prominent member gumi.

#### **Four Oyabun Rengo (Worldwide)** **Naheka-rengo (Australia and Oceania)**

Hidenaga-gumi (Aztlan)  
Kawaru-gumi (Australia, Hawai'i,  
Vladivostok)  
Sumiyoshi-kai (Philippines)

#### **Shotozumi-rengo** **(North and South America)**

Fujiwara-gumi (New Orleans)  
Hidenaga-gumi (Aztlan)  
Karatsa-gumi (San Francisco)  
Kenran-kai (Seattle)  
Nagato Combine (New Jersey)  
Naito-gumi (Denver)  
Shigeda-gumi (Seattle)  
Shotozumi-gumi (Portland, Seattle)  
Toki-gumi (Manhattan)  
Yamato-gumi (Denver)

#### **Wanibuchi-rengo (Neo-Tokyo)**

Inagawa-kai (Neo-Tokyo)  
Kodachi-gumi (Neo-Tokyo)  
Tsukigata-gumi (Shikoku)  
Wanibuchi-gumi (Neo-Tokyo)

#### **Watada-rengo (Worldwide)**

Ginryu-kai (London)  
Ichiwa-kai (Philippines)  
Kihara-rengo (Nagasaki)  
Kinsei-kai (Philippines)  
Komata-kai (Amazonia)  
Korogai-gumi (Scandinavian Union)  
Kuroiban-gumi (Bangkok)  
Mita-gumi (Neo-Tokyo)  
Sumiyoshi-kai (Philippines)  
Watada-gumi (Japan)  
Yamaguchi-gumi (Kobe)  
Yamaguchi-rengo  
(Federal District of Colombia)  
Yamada-gumi (Osaka)  
Yamashita-gumi (Korea)

## THE OLD SCHOOL AND THE NEW WAY

The oldest and most established gumi (kumi) are conservative organizations whose members are lifelong criminals born and raised in the Yakuza—sometimes for generations. Born to wealth and privilege or brought up from the streets in a stable organization, young kumi-in are exposed to traditions that date back centuries, xenophobic ultranationalist ideals, and a sense of superiority over other criminals, gaijin, kawaruhito, and women. Old School gumi are also the protectors of Yakuza traditions and

rituals, the final proponents of ninjo, and firmly grounded in giri and jingi. These organizations have been slow to adapt to the Sixth World, but their extensive contacts and public support have secured their place in the underworld.

The New Way embraces metahumans, magic, and technomancers. Women and non-purebred Japanese are also tolerated, even accepted. These are new gumi, more businesslike and concerned with making nuyen than following the precepts of jingi. In their youth and arrogance they make old mistakes and engage in bloodshed where negotiations would be more peaceful and profitable; with new eyes and aggressive celerity they carve out new markets and overcome stolid old Yakuza grown entrenched and predictable.

Of course, these are generalizations. Every gumi is different, and even the kobun in a gumi have their own beliefs and opinions on what is right and proper. When you get down to it, whether any given gumi is “New Way” or “Old School” or even “Unaligned” depends on the whim of the Oyabun or kumicho. If there are any Yakuza so superstitious and out of touch to not include magicians in the 2070s, then I do not know of them. Even some of the most racist or misogynist gumi have one or two female, metahuman, or half-Korean members—look at the Shotozumi-gumi with a female wakagashira-hosa in Seattle!

The conflict between the Old School and the New Way is real and ongoing, but it is a difficult ideological conflict that concerns all the Yakuza, and none of the gumi are quite on the same wavelength. One New Way gumi that admits Japanese metahumans might be dead-set against women or half-breeds joining, while an Old School gumi might accept the odd women, metahuman, or half-breed but only if they're a direct descendent of former gumi members—it's all in how you look at it.

- Yeah, but eventually these guys have to settle things out and pick sides, right?
- /dev/grrl
- It's not that simple. New Way and Old School aren't exactly political parties or P2.0 clubs; the different policies involved touch on a lot of important matters to the Yakuza—old racisms and ninjo sure, but also the Emperor and his “Kawaru” reforms vs. the more conservative Japanacorp that the Yakuza work hand-in-glove with, the new ethnic syndicates from Korea and Vietnam, the impressive reputation of the Oni-Do-Kai—and the most important factor of all: trust. One of the driving forces behind any ethnic crime group is the sense that you can more easily trust and police members of your own tight-knit cultural group. With the billions of nuyen that the gumi bring in, the Oyabun don't want to spend their golden years in prison because a kobun they thought they could rely on spilled his (or her) guts to Interpol, or the police, or corporate security.
- Mihoshi Oni

## THE WATADA-RENGO

The largest rengo on the planet encompasses most of the gumi in Japan, the Philippines, Australia, and Europe. Unlike a traditional rengo, the Watada-rengo acts as a sort of gumi: the Oyabun of the Watada-gumi leads the organization, and each of the other Oyabun and kumicho in the rengo pays a small percentage of their profits to the rengo. In return for these

## BETWEEN WARRING DRAGONS

Posted by: Frosty

The story goes that shortly after he woke up on December 24<sup>th</sup>, 2011, the Great Dragon Ryumyo made contact with the Oyabun of the Watada-gumi, then the most traditional and well-established gumi in Tokyo. No one knows what they talked about, but since then it has been understood that the Watada-gumi, and by extension the Watada-rengo, has enjoyed the patronage of the Great Dragon Ryumyo. The wyrm is also known to have established connections with many other gumi unaffiliated with the Watada-rengo, but it seems clear that the Watada-gumi makes up the bulk of his influence among the Yakuza.

Perhaps to counterbalance this, many of the Chinese Triads, particularly the Red Dragon Association that has been so active in Japan lately, enjoy the assistance or leadership of the Great Dragon Lung. The relatively young Great Dragon Masaru, who also opposes Ryumyo and the Japanese presence in the Philippines (including the Yakuza), is said to be Lung's vassal or apprentice and has some influence over the Huk pirates. The long speculation that the Ryumyo and Lung were rivals of some fashion was validated by an internal Draco Foundation document leaked into the Matrix a few years ago.

This doesn't mean that either great dragon controls their respective crime syndicate completely, not that I put that beyond their capabilities—I just believe that if either was directing the actions of a syndicate, then the organization's presence would be much more substantial and their direction less profit-oriented.

- Unless that's what they want you to think.
- Icarus

What it does mean is that conflict between the various dragon-influenced syndicates tends to flare more often and over things that syndicates normally wouldn't interfere with—the construction or demolition of a certain street that affects the geomantic landscape, territory that includes a certain shrine built over a power site, and really obscure things I can't even guess at the purpose of.

monies, the Watada-rengo is obligated to protect and assist its members. Oyabun Maasaki Watada organizes cooperation between gumi, settles disputes (only when absolutely necessary), provides information and contacts, and provides material aid and support to handle any violent conflicts in which Watada-rengo members find themselves.

- A bit like being Emperor of dozens of squabbling daimyo. A thirty-second sample of the datatraffic coming into the Watada-gumi's private satlink would make you a dozen fortunes and as many blood enemies.
- Pistons

Each gumi in the rengo is independent—Oyabun Watada insists on an oath of loyalty from Oyabun but does not demand that his fellow Oyabun become his kobun—but otherwise the Watada-rengo is nearly the largest gumi in the world. The member gumi can request assistance from the Watada-rengo at any time, though such requests cause a significant loss of prestige. Aside from these kinds of assistance and protection, the Watada-rengo does little besides foster cooperation and the sharing of information among its members; international schemes are not decided on as a group but rather invented and carried out by small cliques of Oyabun who socialize through their Watada-rengo connections.

Oyabun Watada frowns on the New Way, and so his gumi lacks women, metahumans, and half-breeds; all of the gumi the Watada-rengo follow suit to greater or lesser degrees, and Watada quietly supports and endorses the traditions and rituals of the Yakuza by electing new Oyabun for leaderless organizations from his own pool of supporters. This practice increases the loyalty of the member gumi to the rengo but can lead to dissent among the ranks. For this reason, Oyabun Watada is very careful to balance his mandated replacements with greater freedoms or awards.

- Translation: When the new boss comes in, he makes a point of giving generous gifts to wakagashira and other senior kobun, sometimes even letting them split off and form their own gumi. If the Watada-rengo ever got its act together, Watada would be the first Oyabun-no-Oyabun. Unlikely given how independent and close-minded the Old School Oyabun are, but the possibilities are enticing.
- Kia
- You rarely see anyone sporting the Watada-rengo mon, but when you do you know that person is on rengo business. Something to keep an eye out for.
- Rigger X

## THE SHOTOZUMI-RENGO

Most of the gumi in the Americas belong to the Shotozumi-rengo, led by Oyabun Hanzo Shotozumi and the Shotozumi-gumi of Seattle. While an Old School Yakuza himself, Shotozumi broke with the Watada-rengo because of how the members were treated by Oyabun Watada. While some attempts at reconciliation have been made, it looks as if only blood will settle the matter.

For their part, the Shotozumi-rengo is much more in line with a classic rengo: each member is completely independent, and only Oyabun Shotozumi's wisdom and leadership (not to mention the sheer power of his gumi) keep the organization together. There are no demands of the member gumi—some are New Way, some are Old School, and some are simply interested in making money.

Shotozumi-sama is very persuasive, however, and has made extensive shows of support for the other gumi and encouraged them to do the same. In this way, he has begun to foster a spirit of cooperation and web of obligation between the members of the



INCOMING FEED.....



MAJOR SYNDICATES.....

gumi. Of course, he isn't the only politician in the rengo; Oyabun Honjowara of the Nagato Combine in New Jersey has been a vocal supporter of the New Way and offers incentives through his holdings in the Nagato Corporation to any Oyabun that adopts New Way policies.

- Of course, what Nagato really wants is to become the next MCT, but that's not going to happen anytime soon. The Nagato Corporation only just broke AA status this year, and even that required the friendly buy-out or merger of a number of Yakuza-owned businesses and the dilution of the Nagato Combine's stock holdings to 51 percent. If they float any more stock, they run the serious risk of losing control of the corporation altogether.
- Mr. Bonds
- Of course, the problem is Hanzo doesn't have a great dragon backing him up. NorthAM has a couple to choose from. I wonder if Ghostwalker won't get an offer one of these days.
- Frosty

### THE FOUR OYABUN

MCT is far from the only corp with ties to the Yakuza, but it is unique in being the only AAA megacorp where the largest block of shares is held by four Oyabun. The story's a little complex, but about 45 percent of Mitsuhama Computer Technologies is actually owned by a loose rengo of four Oyabun: Samba Oi (13 percent), Shin Yuruyasu (11 percent), Saigusa Oguramaro (10 percent), and Uehara Akae (10 percent). These old men went from being syndicate bosses to some of the richest metahumans

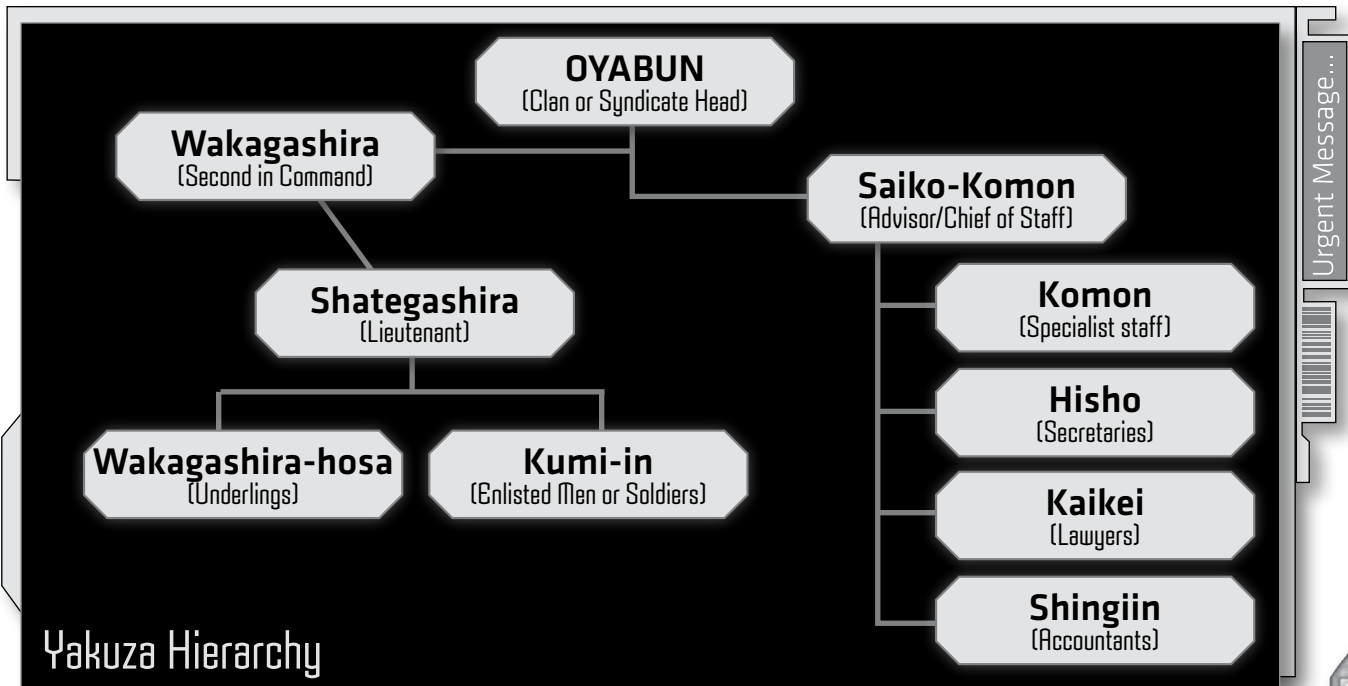
on the planet practically overnight, but they still have their obligations and so could not cut all their ties with the Yakuza—even if they wanted to.

The Four Oyabun are solidly neutral in the ongoing ideological conflict. What's left of their gumi have been pretty solidly absorbed into MCT or their household staffs, and they're too big for any other Oyabun or rengo to muscle. So, the Four Oyabun could care less about what the other gumi do because they are powers unto themselves. That means that Mitsuhama deals with any Yakuza whose territory or operations overlap their own interests. Managers who use the Yakuza aren't as untouchable as the Four Oyabun of course, so they have to be polite and exercise their own discretion about who they deal with, but the Yakuza recognizes the asset that Mitsuhama represents, and few Oyabun or kobun would be stupid enough to spoil that arrangement, though they might compete for certain favors.

As far as what Mitsuhama and the Yakuza do for one another, MCT utilizes the Yakuza much as any Japancorp does—to upset smaller corporations, have certain assets conveniently go up in smoke so they can claim the insurance, provide protection for outlets during periods of conflict, and dispose of excess stock in a profitable matter. In exchange, Mitsuhama acts as one of the largest money laundries in the world, selling corporate bonds and MCT scrip for the ill-gotten gains of the Yakuza—after all, as an extraterritorial corporation it would take an act of the Corporate Court to stop such practices. Less scrupulous managers also use the Yakuza to acquire metahuman subjects for certain lab tests, dispose of bodies and witnesses, field test new pharmaceuticals, spells, and weapons, and things of that nature.







Urgent Message...

- Gee, is that all? What about all the MCT managers that are Yakuza?
- Clockwork
- There aren't that many. Company policy officially forbids membership in criminal organization to any MCT citizen (bow, wink) and frankly most of the people in any position of influence in MCT are more likely to be Yakuza affiliates than actual members, padding their retirement funds or making sure the local gumi is paid off to avoid problems.
- Mihoshi Oni
- You can't tell me the Four Oyabun don't have their kobun in there somewhere.
- Clockwork
- Sure, at the very top in some cushy senior-vice-president-of-doing-sweet-fuck-all position. The Four Oyabun just own MCT, they don't run it. They hire the best people they can find to do that, which is why MCT is an AAA megacorporation instead of yet another unrated Yakorp. I've never been privy to their inner councils, so I couldn't tell you for a fact that they take the top boys aside and explain the benefits of doing a favor for their Yakuza friends every now and again, but the Four Oyabun mainly keep a hands-off policy and enjoy their billions.
- Mihoshi Oni
- <sigh> If only all investors could be so understanding and professional.
- Mr. Bonds

## FATHERS AND SONS

The Yakuza hierarchy is based on the Oyabun-kobun relationship, the symbolic bond of loyalty and duty between father and son, or between a sempai and kohai. This loyalty is on a one-on-one basis, like a personal and private contract between the two Yakuza members. The highest-ranked members in a gumi or kai are tied by sakasuzi to the Oyabun and are his kobun. The kumi-in, wakagashira-hose, komon, and shingiin have shared sake with the wakagashira and saiko-komon and are their kobun, and so on and so forth, with some very large Yakuza organizations having as many as six "levels" of sakasuzi from the lowest kumi-in to the kumicho.

What this boils down to is that loyalty in the Yakuza is a complex thing. You owe first allegiance to your immediate boss, the guy you shared sake with—but you also owe allegiance to anybody he's shared sake with in a quasi-feudal paradigm. Emphasis is placed on cutting family ties and treating the gumi as your family—all sons of the same father. Now, if this sounds like a ripe organization for brotherly infighting or an underboss splitting off with his kobun and joining up with another organization by sharing sake with somebody else, or to just form their own little gumi, you're right. Of course, the kobun that does that had better be sure he leaves with his boss's blessing, or it's liable to be war.

- It's worth mentioning that in Japan (and the Japanacorps), this sort of arrangement is very common and practically ingrained on many levels of society; it's part of jingi. Many non-Yakuza Japanese organizations involve a voluntary senpai-kohai (senior-junior) relationship, where the elders (i.e., those that have been members the longest) are due deference from newer members, even if this reverses the relationship the two have outside the organization. Some people take advantage of these relationships, even sexually, but that is usually frowned upon.

- Kia



Now, because every kobun can turn around and enlist other kobun, Yakuza gumi have the potential to grow very quickly, and at some point someone will fuck up and recruit an idiot, mad-dog-killer type, or informant. For this reason, Oyabun or other bosses typically impose limits on recruiting except when desperately in need of warm bodies. The first and most common limitation is part of the swearing in as a Yakuza: breaking ties with your family, including no recruiting of brothers, sisters, or close cousins.

Sons and daughters, on the other hand, are another matter. The gumi is supposed to take the place of a Yakuza member's family, but there's nothing stopping them from marrying and having kids, especially in clan-based gumi. Hardboiled Yakuza tend to frown on settling down and sprogging as it just generates targets for your enemies, but for the most part the practice is tolerated—until the Oyabun tries to pass the running of the organization down to his son or daughter instead of one of his very deserving kobun. Of course, it's more complicated than that—some traditional clan-based Yakuza really are hereditary, and that's how everyone likes it as long as things work out okay.

## RENGO

A rengo is the highest level of Yakuza organization, an alliance of gumi who agree to cooperate on certain matters. Each rengo is a little different in terms of how they work—most of them have some sort of vote system, others are just there to share information and don't or can't issue any rulings as such, while others are dominated by a single powerful clan or gumi. Unlike other organizations, rengo are traditionally very loose: each gumi is a voluntary and independent member of the rengo, and they can bow out at any time. That means that kobun are always loyal to the gumi, not the rengo.

Rengos were rare in the past but they are very common thanks to the manipulations of the Great Dragon Ryumyo, who backed the Watada-gumi in its bid to absorb all Yakuza gumi into a single rengo with Oyabun Watada as the first Oyabun-no-Oyabun.

- You have to admit, it was worth a try. As things are, he's still in control of the biggest Yakuza organization in history.
- Icarus

The name of a rengo can come from a variety of sources, sometimes from the dominant gumi, as is the case for the Watada-rengo and Shotozumi-rengo, or from a common source like the Kihara-rengo, or even from a common metroplex or region where the rengo operates.

## KUMI AND KAI

The two most basic Yakuza organizations are the kumi (family) and kai (association). Kumi (more commonly known in the bastardized form as gumi) are normally based around a single clan or enforce the concept of the Yakuza as a surrogate family structure more strongly, while the kai tends to be more focused around an ideal or symbol (making money, sticking it to the police, staying out after curfew, etc.). Sometimes a Yakuza organization takes its name from a given family name, such as the Watada-gumi led by the Watada clan, and sometimes they take symbolic names such as the Ginryu-kai (Silver Dragon Association).

Each kumi and kai is an organization into itself, with Oyabun-kobun relationships that bind its members together, and

it makes its own rules for its members and has its own territory or nawabari (literally, "roped-off area"). Individual kumi make alliances with each other or go to war as needs dictate. Some kumi are very traditional and are very strict about admitting women, metahuman, and non-Japanese; others follow the New Way and have different policies.

## Oyabun

Every Yakuza organization has one primary executive, the Oyabun. The father figure of the clan, the Oyabun secures his position by bonds of loyalty, tradition, and a reputation earned through steel and pain. To be the top dog in an organization like the Yakuza requires intelligence, ruthlessness, and ambition. Not all of the Yakuza Oyabun have the education provided by Ivy League universities or the contacts in business and government that the largest, oldest, and most entrenched kumi do—there are several kumi today whose Oyabun built their organizations brick by brick, taking on and taking down all contenders. Dedication and ability are rewarded with cred the likes of which a sarariman will never see, power to rival or exceed corporate executives and government officials, and whatever vices in life the Oyabun wants to indulge in.

The largest and most ancient clan-based kumi can operate effectively without an Oyabun for extended periods of time because their secondary officers—the wakagashira, shategashira, and saiko-komon—are efficient in their duties, but without central leadership a kumi will eventually stall as no central vision controls expansion and consolidation, forcing someone to take the helm or the gumi to break apart into smaller organizations.

- I've seen that happen. The Kihara-gumi of Nagasaki had their entire leadership taken out back in '60, and the rest of the organization just kept plodding along doing what they could for a while, with no one stepping up. The senior kumi-in were suddenly keeping all the money from the operations they were running instead of kicking it upstairs and living large, but without central authority nothing new was coming in. Dealers were running out of BTLs, gunrunners had holds full of AK-97s that nobody had the cred to buy in bulk—it was a mess.
- Kia
- So that's why the Detroit mob managed to monopolize the Apollo Orbital station. Huh.
- Orbital DK
- That's fairly rare though. The Yakuza organization makes its fairly easy for clean breaks—any senior member can just take those kobun personally loyal to him and they've got a small but ready-made organization set for whatever needs to be done. The Kihara-gumi's senior kobun each formed their own kumi and allied as a small rengo.
- Mihoshi Oni

There is Oyabun-no-Oyabun. Hitori Hanzo claimed the title for less than two days before being eaten by a dragon, and his successor Oyabun Maasaki Watada had the good sense not to press the issue. These days when people talk of the Oyabun-no-Oyabun, they mean Akira Watada, the greatest Yakuza to ever live, who never claimed the title while alive.





### THE NAHEKA-RENGO

The feathered serpent Naheka is a vassal of the great dragon Ryumyo and his representative in Hawai'i and the Philippines, or so the shadowlore goes. What I know is that in 2066 he formed the Naheka-rengo out of the remains of the Australia-based Saiki-rengo. The rengo now consists of the New Way Kawaru-gumi (Australia, Hawai'i, Russia), the Old School Sumiyoshi-kai (Philippines), and the Unaligned Hidenaga-gumi (Aztlan). The Sumiyoshi-kai is also a member of the Watada-rengo, while the Hidenaga-gumi is a member of the Shotozumi-rengo; read between the lines and it looks like Naheka, whether at the behest of Ryumyo or not, is making an effort to create a barrier between the Shotozumi-rengo and the Watada-rengo—or at the very least create an organization that can deal with both of them.

The Naheka-rengo is headed by Oyabun Naheka, who currently heads the Sumiyoshi-kai and has its claws full dealing with the Huk pirates and the Great Dragon Masaru, but he's really only first-among-equals—all decisions the group makes require a consensus of the attending Oyabun, and Naheka has never attempted to force an issue as far as I am aware. Generally, the gumi work together on new smuggling routes and take advantage of local price differences, such as when the Kawaru-gumi sold tempo at cost to the other gumi in the rengo in exchange for goods that were worth considerably more in Hawai'i.

### THE KAWARU-GUMI

What became the Kawaru-gumi started out as a group of disparate Yakuza ousted from their kumi when

they Goblinized and then shipped off to Yomi island as part of the Japanese government's campaign of quietly sweeping metahumans under the metaphorical rug. On that hellhole in the Pacific, the ousted kobun were forced to band together to survive on the island.

Once the Kawaru-gumi got back to Japan, they went into business for themselves, mainly smuggling goods between Russia and Japan and dealing in some black-market software with a now-defunct data haven, which was destroyed by the Watada-rengo as part of an attempt to exterminate the metahuman kumi. With connections to the metahuman-friendly Yamatetsu Japancorp (which would become Evo), the Kuwaru-gumi survived the hit and moved on, establishing itself in Vladivostok, and began providing all of the services that the Yakuza traditionally provides to Japanese corporations—protection, black market goods, warehouse fires to claim insurance, smuggling materials in and out of the country, etc.

Since then, the Kawaru-gumi has spread along its trade routes to Hawai'i and Australia (mostly in Queensland), focusing primarily on smuggling, protection rackets, and prostitution. Unlike most Yakuza they have a fairly robust Awakened population, so they do a brisk business in the "Magic Triangle"—buy a talislegger's shipment in Australia, take it to their Hawai'ian fetish factories to be made into magical goods, then sell the finished products in Russia where they're worth twice as much as elsewhere. The Kawaru-gumi is also the sole distributor of tempo and deep weed in

*Continued on p. 59*

## Kumicho

An equivalent title to Oyabun is kumicho (head of family). The traditions regarding whether you're kumicho or Oyabun are currently in flux and depend a great deal on the individual kumi. The one or two female Yakuza bosses prefer kumicho, as do people that stand-in for the Oyabun when he's indisposed. For example, the Mita-gumi in Neo-Tokyo is lead by a kumicho because the designated heir to the last Oyabun is a 13-year-old boy, so his 'Uncle' Hiro is acting as a kind of regent.

## Wakagashira

The second-in-command of a kumi is the wakagashira, or first lieutenant. Depending on the organization the wakagashira could be primarily an underboss, warboss, or administrator type, but generally speaking the wakagashira is in charge of the kumi-in and serves as the Oyabun's left hand of darkness, backing him up in all things and enforcing his policies. It is important for the Oyabun to be able to trust his wakagashira, as the bulk of the kumi may well have sworn loyalty to the first lieutenant. A number of Yakuza organizations have fractured when a disagreement forms between the Oyabun and the wakagashira, often over matters of who will succeed the Oyabun when he dies or retires. For this reason, the Oyabun sometimes diffuses the wakagashira's power with a saiko-komon or shateigashira.

## Shategashira

The second lieutenant is a small step down from the wakagashira, usually a regional boss who is given a degree of independence because his operations are some distance away from the rest of the kumi, particularly in international operations nowadays. The shategashira is usually still answerable to the wakagashira, but sometimes they answer directly to the wakagashira instead. The shategashira's direct underlings are shategashira-hosa, and act much like wakagashira-hosa.

## So-Honbucho

In Japan and other places where the Yakuza operate fairly openly, they maintain a public headquarters where the public can come to if they have problems—even the police. It can range from a small storefront in a strip mall for the smallest kumi to a large office building. The headquarters chief is a senior kumi-in trusted to manage the kumi's public face, day-to-day public relations, press releases, that kind of thing. Yakuza headquarters generally have no illegal operations whatsoever, though kumi-in hang around to provide security and take care of any legitimate or semi-legitimate business that comes up—loans, negotiations on protection rackets, problems in the neighborhood, and so forth. The so-honbucho's assistant is the so-honbucho-hosa.

- Of course, most Yakuza also have a real headquarters where their accountants keep their books, the soldiers can relax, and the Oyabun can keep track of his businesses. Headquarters are handy in that all your operations become centralized; the problem is that they're very vulnerable—which is another reason to have a public HQ, since it throws people off from looking for the real nerve center of your operations. At least, that's what I would do.
- Traveler Jones

- So Mihoshi, what do they call an armchair Oyabun in the Yakuza?
- Baka Dabaka

## SAIKO-KOMON

The Yakuza has a fairly strict division between the "soldiers" (kumi-in) and non-combatants (komon, shingiin, etc.) with parallel chains of command—the wakagashira controls the kumi-in, and the saiko-komon (senior advisor) is in charge of the hisho, kaikei, komon, and shingiin.

- And horishi!
- Sticks
- Quiet, you.
- Mihoshi Oni

The saiko-komon is still nominally answerable to the wakagashira, but in most cases the two positions work in tandem to see that the Yakuza operations are handled properly. Of course, some kumi don't give the same authority to the saiko-komon, mostly to avoid conflicts between the saiko-komon and wakagashira. Many New Way and modern Yakuza see it as a needless complication.

- Consigliere analogue?
- /dev/grrl

• You don't give up, do you? In this case, it depends. The saiko-komon has to be an administrator knowledgeable in several different fields to coordinate everything correctly and efficiently, but they're predominantly responsible for the back-end running of the kumi, not the street-level operations that make the nuyen and reputation that sustain Yakuza. They're the ones that make sure every Yakuza member gets paid, the rent is in on time, the bail bonds get posted, Jimmy Kimono isn't skimming off the top, that sort of thing. Basically, if the komon are the Yakuza equivalent of sararimen, the saiko-komon is middle management.

- Kia

## WAKAGASHIRA-HOSA

The wakagashira is the kumi's second-in-command, and the wakagashira-hosa are his immediate underlings and assistants—the exact number depends on the size of the kumi, but typically there aren't many because there are many other specialized positions at the same "level," though the wakagashira-hosa has greater authority than the others.

- Okay, this is sounding like a capo. I thought you said senior kumi-in were capos.
- /dev/grrl

• A wakagashira-hosa is closer to the lieutenant of a caporegime ... but even that's doing a disservice, as the Mafia and the Yakuza really don't have equivalent ranks, and the Yaks have more formal positions that they fill or create as the kumi gets larger and fills out. You can have a senior kumi-in do the same job as a wakagashira-hosa in a smaller kumi, but he probably isn't controlling the same number of kumi-in, territory, or operations to justify the title. The title denotes greater status and authority.

- Mihoshi Oni



## THE NAHEKA-RENGO (CONTINUED)

the Hawai'ian islands.

Ever since the assassination of Oyabun in '56 splintered the Tokudaiji-gumi, the Hawai'ian Yakuza has been a mess, mostly small groups of kobun from larger kumi in Japan and North America associated with one or more corporations operating in the kingdom. Taking advantage of the disorganization, Hawai'ian nationalist terrorist organization ALOHA struck a blow to oust the corporate influence from Hawai'i government by eliminating the leaders of the various corporate-friendly (and metahuman-unfriendly) Yakuza. The Kawaru-gumi went behind and picked up the pieces, giving the kobun the choice of joining up or jumping in the volcano. Most joined up.

- Everyone knows Naheka is behind ALOHA, and he just happens to form his rengo and the Kawaru-gumi sign up right away? Subtle as a brick to the face.
- Baka Debaka

### OYABUN: MEGUMI AOI

**Race:** Oni Ork

**Gender:** Female

**Birthdate:** 01/19/1999

**Eyes:** Brown

**Hair:** Black

**Distinguishing Marks:** Full body suit tattoo.

Oyabun Megumi Aoi is the boss. A macromanaging workaholic, Aoi trains the right people for the positions she needs so that she knows she can rely on them and move on with expanding her kumi and its influence. Oyabun Aoi delegates local operations to wakagashira and gives them very broad orders, which she expects fulfilled—she has no time for subordinates who can't take charge of a situation and pester her about every little decision, and such individuals don't make it far with her. In this way, Oyabun Aoi keeps up a perpetual momentum, moving from market to market while keeping tabs on the operation as a whole toward the goals she envisions, guiding individual efforts toward larger goals.

Of course, Oyabun Aoi didn't do this on her own—she had help from the Evo megacorporation and then the feathered serpent Naheka. While she doesn't enjoy being obligated to two such powerful entities, these alliances have given her the power and stability needed to see her kumi thrive and even expand.

Oyabun Aoi isn't impressive to look at, which sometimes leads people to underestimate her. Don't. If you don't have any respect for somebody who survived thirty years on Yomi and built up her own international criminal organization from scratch, then at least respect the fact that she is trained in ninjitsu by the Oni-do and survived multiple assassination attempts. Even at her age she's paranoid, violent, full of restless energy, and has the most keenly developed sense of ninjo of any Yakuza I've ever met.

• But is it true she had the bastard son of Yuri Shibanojuji, chairman of the board for Evo? Inquirer newsmagazines around the world want to know!

• Baka Debaka

• At her age? It's possible, but I doubt it.

• Mihoshi Oni

### WAKAGASHIRA-HIDEO NAHEKA

**Race:** Human

**Gender:** Male

**Birthdate:** 03/23/28

**Eyes:** Brown

**Hair:** Black

**Distinguishing Marks:** Faux-dragonscale bioware graft to arms, blending into dragon tattoos on chest and back.

As wakgashira of Oahu, Hideo's immediate interests are split between the kumi's local operations and the kumi's international smuggling in and out of the kingdom through Oahu. The local ventures he predominantly leaves to his three very capable wakagashira-hosa—he was careful to align their responsibilities with their personal interests and generally only has to get involved when those interests conflict—and the day-to-day details of operation are delegated to the saiko-komon, Genjiro Yousei. This leaves Hideo free to manage the import and export for his corner of the “Magic Triangle” trade that is the entire purpose of the Kawaru-gumi's presence in Oahu.

Hideo is of mixed Korean/Japanese ancestry and one of the founders of the Kuwaru-gumi; the kumi-in often address him as “Uncle.” While he sometimes gets some shit from the latest metahuman kumi-in recruits, his direct kobun are always deferential and quick to correct them. With the rise in pirate activity and Hawai'ian police and Interpol attempting to crack down on the Magic Triangle, Hideo is very security- and intelligence-conscious, and he uses old ties with the Korean National Intelligence Service to keep ahead. If I had to guess, I'd peg him as the son of one of the Korean Yakuza that got ousted in the Schism.

• An astute observation. Many of the Korean Yakuza had ties with the K-NIS; I strongly suspect the Yakuza's ultra-nationalist ties and their conflict with Japan had much to do with the Schism.

• Fianchetto

Hideo changed his name when they joined the Naheka-rengo as a mark of respect and to help ease the transition among the rank-and-file. Before that, he just went by Hideo Kawaru. Whatever his real name was, I think he left it in Japan.

*Continued on p. 61*



A wakagashira-hosa is the warrant officer of the Yakuza, if you'll excuse the military metaphor, the buffer between the street-level operatives and the higher-ups, able to interact with both. These are about the last people that'll really get their hands dirty on a regular basis, and the kumi-in on the streets tend to know them by sight rather than just a name on an office somewhere. Nine times out of ten, if the order is given the wakagashira-hosa is the one the kumi-in can point to as the one who gave it.

- Which makes it a very stressful position! These are the people that run the real risks, and the kumi puts an enormous amount of faith in them—a wakagashira-hosa doesn't just know where the bodies are buried and who buried them, they received the order from their boss and handed the guys the shovel.
- Rigger X

## HISHO

Secretaries to the Yakuza members in positions of power and influence, everyone above the wakagashira-hosa has at least one hisho, and sometimes more. A number of secretaries can also work in the kumi's headquarters under the so-honbucho. It should be added that these secretaries are not there just to manage the Oyabun's appointments and give him somebody to diddle during the lunch break; secretaries are keepers of secrets and buffers that protect the boss, prioritize things as they come up, arrange meetings and transportation, and stall the police if they come in the front door. Many of them are fully qualified bodyguards and carry headware to protect the secrets they carry.

- Hell, some of the higher-up hisho have bodyguards of their own because the Yaks realize how much they know. They say Shotozumi-sama's hisho has multiple redundant cranial bombs just in case he goes missing.
- Kay St. Irregular

## KAIKEI

Most kumi keep a couple lawyers on retainer to get their people out of jail, but the kaikei are actual members of the kumi that dole out legal advice. They look for loopholes to let the Yakuza operate in quasi-legal grey areas, and new opportunities and markets for the kumi to expand into. Kaikei educate the new kumi-in on what to do when they get arrested (while their kyodai emphasize what will happen if they talk), and visit the Yakuza members in prison to arrange for contraband, conjugal visits, and other amenities.

## KOMON

For a Yakuza to operate, sometimes they need specialists—chemists for drugs, programmers for BTLs and casinos, film directors for pornos, hackers for SIN and credit forgery, doctors to treat prostitutes and bullet wounds and implant illegal augmentations, Awakened troubleshooters, and so on. These advisors are almost universally non-combat roles, but essential to the operation and to the kumi.

## SHINGIIN

No major syndicate these days can operate without accountants, and in the Yakuza that's the shingiin. Aside from keeping the books, modern shingiin manage the details of the kumi's invest-

ments and perform quarter-by-quarter market analyses, financial projections, cost-benefit runs on new ventures, and every other nasty trick that corporate business can pull.

The most notable of the shingiin are the sokaiya, a unique form of protection racket where the Yakuza buys a few shares in a corporation and then disrupt shareholder meetings until they're paid to go away. In exchange for regular payments, the sokaiya will also protect the corporation from threats from other syndicates and sometimes handle little extralegal problems as they crop up.

- In particularly racist corporations, New Way Yakuza send metahuman sokaiya to the board meetings. They don't even have to act up—the sight of a trog or a halfer in a suit is enough to send some of those people into hives, and they can't kick them out because they're shareholders.
- Mr. Bonds

Some kumi denounce sokaiya, at least publicly, on the principle that they prey on the local businesses—usually, that's just another tactic to extort protection money by having the kumi “rough up” the sokaiya and send them packing. Of course, the sokaiya come up with other interesting tricks, like playing white knight to a corporation facing a hostile takeover or buying a deciding interest in a corporation under the disguise of being individual stockholders so that the sokaiya can extort cred out of the company.

- Horishi
- Kumi that can afford it keep a traditional tattoo artist, or horishi, in the family. The apprenticeship to become a horishi is long, and preference is given to Awakened candidates who are skilled at enchanting and sorcery. Horishi commonly take on handles or tattoo names, typically incorporating the word hori (ink) and in some form. Some names are actually passed down, so you can have Horisaka III and names like that.

Given the relative rarity of magical talent, natch, the horishi sometimes gets co-opted as general magical advisors.

- Sticks
- I'm noticing a bit of a pattern here. You got a bit of a thing for pigment-based personal augmentations, Sticks?
- Plan 9
- When you've been inked as much as I have ...
- Sticks

## KUMI-IN

The kumi-in are the lowest-level operatives of the Yakuza, the hustlers, gambling joint and brothel owners, loan shark collectors, street soldiers, enforcers, bodyguards, sub-lieutenants, lieutenants, and captains. Kumi-in organize themselves based on who they've sworn loyalty to; the highest-ranked kumi-in in a gumi answer directly to the wakagashira-hosa, wakagashira, saiko-komon, Oyabun, or kumicho, depending on how the gumi is structured and how hands-on the boss feels. Oyabun that raise themselves up from the streets tend to have the highest-level kumi-in as their personal kobun, and these enforcers are effectively underbosses.

Following the family-structure of the standard kumi, higher-ranked kumi-in are referred to by their subordinates as kyodai (big brothers), while lower-ranked kumi-in are called shatei (little



**THE NAHEKA-RENGO (CONTINUED)****SAIKO-KOMON: GENJIRO YOUSEI****Race:** Elf**Gender:** Male**Birthdate:** 08/01/14**Eyes:** Brown**Hair:** Black**Distinguishing Marks:** Bobbed ears.

As saiko-komon, Yousei-sama manages the bureaucracy and logistics of the Kuwaru-gumi: shipping tables and manifests for smuggling operations, bribes to government officials at the city, island, and kingdom level, checking the macadamia nut farms the kumi uses as money laundries, calling everyone's hisho to arrange meetings, arranging sokaiya demonstrations, that kind of thing. He's efficient if not inspired, and if not for the fact that he's an elf I'm sure many kumi would love to have him.

- Yeah, his current position has absolutely nothing to do with the outstanding charges for tax evasion in Japan and the 2032 conviction for statutory rape that led to his deportation and the revocation of his passport. Yousei is stuck on Hawai'i for the foreseeable future of his very long life, and he's making the best of it.
- Baka Debaka

Yousei is effectively subordinate to the wakagashira Hideo Naheka; the two have a good working relationship, but Yousei visibly chafes in his static position. For years now Yousei has been building up favors with the newly enlisted kumi-in, building up bonds of giri—probably so he can break away and form his own smaller kumi, but possibly so he can make a bid to become shateigashira of one of the other islands. A small step down, but one with more possibility for advancement.

Genjiro Yousei projects the aura of a suit and the demeanor of an accountant, even when he's in the loudest Hawai'ian shirt possible and wearing khaki shorts and sandals. It's just the way he is, like every second his math SPU is figuring out how much each second of this conversation is costing you. He's Japanese by birth, and he apparently had a little trouble with his SIN at one point because I don't think he has one any more, and Yousei is definitely not his real last name (it's Japanese for fairy or elf). When the Kuwaru-gumi moved to Hawai'i from Vladivostok, Yousei-sama was already here and waiting to join up.

**WAKAGASHIRA-HOSA: MIKE KANAKA****Race:** Human**Gender:** Transgender**Birthdate:** 03/05/21**Eyes:** Grey**Hair:** Black**Distinguishing Marks:** Androgynous appearance, crab tattoo on lower back.

Mike (s/he answers to both the American male name and the Japanese female name) Kanaka started out as a wakagashira-hosa in Seattle's Shigeda-gumi and was forced out after s/he started her treatments. One of three wakagashira-hosa on Oahu, s/he is in charge of the mizu shobai (water trade)—that basically means every massage parlor that offers hand jobs and erotic massages, every strip joint and lingerie store that handles sumata, everything short of penetrative sex that's for sale on the island falls under Kanaka's purview.

Kanaka's hisho keeps spreadsheets that track the projected earnings of each establishment and the weekly payments received from kumi-in collectors, Kanaka handles the executive business of dealing with the kumi-in who run and/or collect each establishment, dealing with intrusions into the sex market, and expanding the kumi's current share of the mizu shobai with various ventures. As a cover, Kanaka owns a line of erotic toy boutiques and a sex club called Emmanuelle in Paradise.

Sex tourism isn't what Hawai'i is most known for, but Oahu is getting a certain reputation among American and Japanese tourists thanks to Kanaka's efforts. Right now Kanaka's immediate competition are the other two wakagashira-hosa; I expect soon enough s/he will try to expand her operations into actual prostitution and in a few years she'll be in a position to succeed the current wakagashira.

**HORISHI: HORIHAMANA THE SECOND****Race:** Changeling**Gender:** Male**Birthdate:** 06/15/50**Eyes:** Brown**Hair:** Black**Distinguishing Marks:** Four arms with seven fingers on each hand, and seven toes on each foot, modified full-body suit of tattoos.

Horihamana II is the tattoo master for the Kuwaru-gumi. Word is he was apprenticing under Horihamana I in the Philippines but the Sumiyoshi-kai didn't approve of a changeling, so the Kuwaru-gumi invited him to Hawai'i and he accepted. Right now he answers directly to the saiko-komon, who's been controlling access to the horishi by the other kumi members, ostensibly to keep Horihamana from wearing himself out—honestly, I think it's to curry favors with the elder kumi-in.

- Shiva arms are pretty rare outside of India, aren't they?
- Sounder
- Yeah, but not unheard of. The polydactyl extremities are much more interesting; I wonder if he had 'em before he changed or after?
- Plan 9

*Continued on p. 62*

**THE NAHEKA-RENGO (CONTINUED)****KUMI-IN: REN ASAWA****Race:** Koborokuru Dwarf**Gender:** Male**Birthdate:** 03/13/49**Eyes:** Brown**Hair:** Black**Distinguishing Marks:** Hair removed on back to reveal full tattoo of a Chinese lion, missing first two joints of smallest finger on left hand.

Ren Asawa is your typical muscle, the low man on the Kawaru-gumi totem pole. He was a member of the Yomi Ryu in Neo-Tokyo, a gang of metahumans with aspirations to become an actual metahuman kumi, until I recruited him for the Kawaru-gumi last year. He settled right into Hawai'i—wears flower-print shirts with his silk suits, drinks kahlua with his sake, and has a little menehune wife that's barefoot and pregnant in a Honolulu apartment. He's a little charmer and a vicious rat-bastard, depending on how he decides to approach you at the moment

As one of the newest kumi-in, Ren answers directly to an elder kumi-in, who answers directly to another elder kumi-in, who answers to the wakagashira-hosa in charge of the protection rackets. Right now he mostly does collections and the occasional bit of muscle work for the hard sell. Basically that means walking around to all the shops in Honolulu and explaining how the gumi's protection racket works—and he doesn't take no for an answer. I've seen him bully hotel managers into submission with nothing but a desk drawer and flip a troll bodyguard over a balcony with a judo throw. His missing fingers make most people think he screwed up a couple times, but he actually lost those to a stray bullet in a firefight. I think he hasn't replaced them because they help his image as a tough cookie.

Speaking from experience, I can say that Horihama II is young but very good at the traditional bamboo-needle work. By necessity he has to make his own tools and mix his own inks (I'm pretty sure he gets the reagents from Hepualaha'ole), and he tends to add Polynesian elements to the traditional Japanese style, which re-

ally stand out. Given his skills and abilities, I have him pegged as a mystic artist adept.

- I met him a couple times, though we don't run in the same social circles. His real name is "Kit" Moto. Quiet kid, very intense, very shy. I think the tattooing helps him get over how body-conscious he is about his change.

- Mihoshi Oni

**AFFILIATE: HEPUALAHA'OLE****Race:** Human**Gender:** Female**Birthdate:** 09/03/45**Eyes:** Brown**Hair:** Brown**Distinguishing Marks:** None

A native Hawai'ian, Hepualaha'ole runs a small talismonger/head shop on Oahu, The Smoking Volcano. Hepu plays bikini-clad kahuna to the haole tourists and moves a lot of tiki necklace fetishes, pakalolo, and lust potions (one part eX, one part water); under the table she's a fence for local talismongers and a clearinghouse for black-market magical goods like combat-spell fetishes and weapon foci. Sometimes she takes special commissions from the Kawaru-gumi; sometimes business is bad enough she asks if they have any work for her.

Hepualaha'ole has paid the Kawaru-gumi to protect her and to allow her to run her business since the second week she owned the place, when a hairy dwarf and two hulking trolls came by and explained how things worked. Earlier this year she got burned on a shipment of orichalcum and had to take out a loan from the Kawaru-gumi to keep her place. Now, instead of just accepting a weekly deposit in an escrow account, the Yaks have asked for a certified credstick with six thousand nuyen and ten percent of her weekly profits—six large for the loan and ten as the cost of doing business—so that they have an excuse to send one of their kumi-in to pick it up and ask how their investment is doing. I think the personal attention is starting to rattle her a bit, but Hepu can't afford to complain.

brothers). This terminology holds true no matter what position you hold. Some kumi have very few members, arranged into a kumicho, kyodai, and shatei, but each of the shatei is a kumicho of their own small kumi while the kyodai are kumicho of a larger kumi. In this way, you can have a very extensive tiered Yakuza organization without even factoring in wakagashiras or komon.

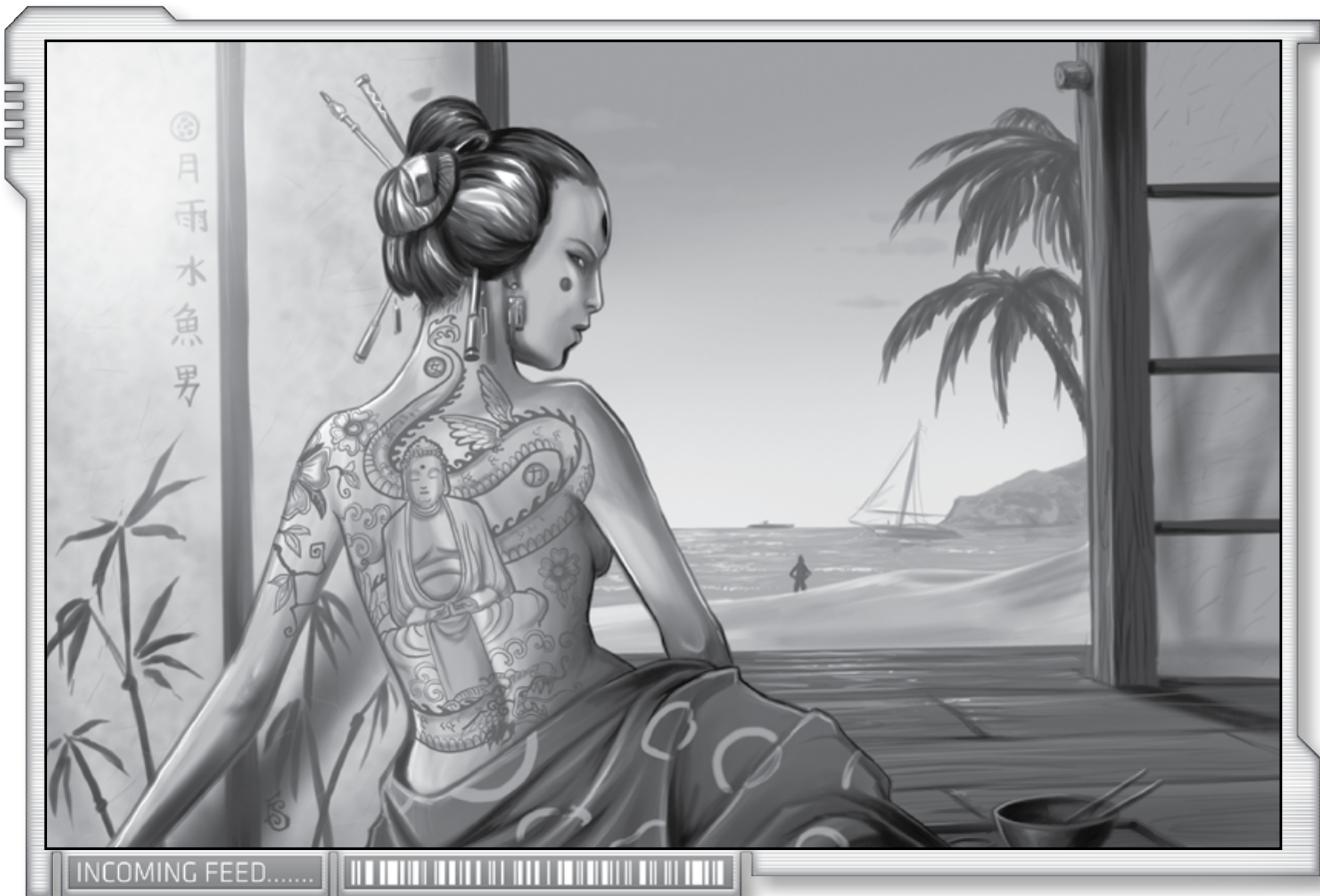
Kumi-in are the Yaks on the streets, the soldiers of the criminal empire. An Oyabun might speak to his wakagashira about sending a message, but it's the kumi-in that hit the streets with guns and knives to deliver it, and the kumi-in that go to jail for murder and assault. For any but the most senior kumi-in, the Oyabun is little more than a name and a painting on the wall—their personal loyalty lies with their brothers and sisters in the kumi-in.

It bears mentioning that for most shadowrunners, the kumi-in are the limit as to their involvement with the Yakuza—barring any personal debt of giri owed to you, the kumi-in are going to be your Mr. Johnson, your back-up, and the contacts you have on the street. The upper levels of Yakuza management just don't dirty their hands unless they have no other choice—for example if the business is personal, or if it would be difficult because of the loyalties of the kumi-in.

**O-NEE**

Women still aren't common in the Yakuza, and you can bet that the few who are members worked their pretty little asses twice as hard to get the same amount of power and respect as their





male counterparts. Yakuza kumi-in treat their female members as sisters (no incest jokes, please) and call them as such—O-Nee-san (elder sister) is used when referring to most female kumi-in, while “O-Nee-sama” (revered elder sister) would indicate a higher-ranked female kobun.

- You also hear the higher ups called “uncle” (and, for the very rare female who makes it that far, “aunt”), continuing the whole family symbolism.
- Kia

### AFFILIATES AND EMPLOYEES

When it comes to the bulk of the Yakuza organizations’ low-level legal and quasi-legal businesses, like selling clothing with the gumi’s mon sewn into the holoweave (merchandising), operating independent pachinko parlors (gambling) or massage joints that offer a little frottage (prostitution), the Yakuza don’t run the operations themselves but treat them as part of their protection racket, taking a percentage and keeping an eye out for trouble. Most Yakuza frown on blowing away civilians, so keeping these operations at arm’s length is actually a way for the Yakuza to protect their moneymakers during a conflict.

- Not to mention it provides a nice way for streetwise Yakuza to “retire” and still keep their hand in. More than one kumi-in has reached the point where they’re a little too old for muscle work but not really cut out to lead, so their gumi sets them up as the owner or manager of their own little side-business.
- Baka Dabaka

### NINJA

Closely affiliated to the Yakuza are the ninja, a group of mercenary assassins, spies, and saboteurs with a history dating back to feudal Japan. Before you get any stupid ideas, these are not the pajama-wearing, katana-brandishing figures of twenty thousand Hollywood films. Ninja are the homeless people you look away from as you pass, the janitor cleaning the room unseen behind you, the faceless security guard moving through the crowd—the people you don’t see, the people you don’t want to see, the people you avoid because you hope they don’t see you.

From all that I’ve been able to uncover, they have a simple, robust organization independent of the Yakuza but tied to it through tradition—after all, the Oyabun are some of their best clients and targets, and the two groups move in some of the same underworld circles. Different ninja societies have their own philosophies on augmentation, magic, and modern armament, but from all I’ve been told they are fairly practical people and willing to take any edge.

- Ninja, like “samurai,” is a fairly loaded term in the Sixth World, especially the shadows. I can’t count the number of people that claimed to be ninjas.
- Cosmo
- If they claimed to be a ninja, they weren’t.
- Ma’fan

## STUDENTS

Ninja schools recruit from among the SINless dregs of society, usually street folk who won't be missed. The ninja are egalitarian, willing to accept women, metahumans, gaijin—anyone, really. Recruits need to show potential and adaptability, and the training regime is like an unending boot camp to toughen body and mind. I don't know the full curriculum, but it includes training in stealth, disguise, acting, and various weapons and martial arts, including shinobi-jutsu or ninjitsu.

I've never heard what happens to those who fail out of ninja schools, which leads me to believe they don't survive.

- I can go walk down the street and buy six different ninjitsu skill-softs, none of which are worth a damn next to my Renraku-Ryu Karate proggie.
- Hard Exit
- I have seen true ninjitsu in action. In Kyoto, in an embassy building. I was expecting someone to come that night; you don't need to know why or how. His movements were very natural, his reaction time startling. He was on to me before I knew it, and our contest lasted moments. I fell unconscious, he escaped. My cybereyes captured everything. His style was not on record, though there were elements of different Japanese arts; it even informed his method of running.
- Fianchetto
- Wait, you were unconscious and your cybereyes recorded his escape? You sleep with your cybereyes open and recording? Clever bastard.
- Ma'fan

The lowest rank in a ninja society is the genin, the actual assassins and spies that do the work of the ninja society. A little further up the chain of command are the chonin, who are either middle managers that hand out the assignments and handle the training or are specialists in some area. The head of the organization is the jonin, equivalent to an Oyabun or kumicho.

## NOTABLE NINJA SOCIETIES

I'm sure that the ninja have their own traditions, rituals, and ways of keeping people from talking to the government, but I'm not privy to them. But as secretive as they are, some info about ninja societies has to get out somehow or they'd never get any work. I've done my best to weed out the posers from the real deal, but no promises.

## KOGA

Allegedly a survivor of the original ninja clans from the Koga and Ida mountains of Japan, the Koga are an independent organization led by legendary assassin Ryochi Musashi. Koga assassins only work for individuals with a personal relationship with Musashi, including senior executives in Hisato-Turner Broadcasting and the JETRO group, and Oyabun like Maasaki Watada and Hiro Yamajima, kumicho of the Mita-gumi. The Koga are known for their mastery of the traditional skills of stealth and infiltration and their preference for easy-to-conceal mundane members.

## ONI DO KAI

The Oni Do (Goblin Way) is a strictly Sixth World phenomenon, Awakened assassins raised from Japan's faceless metahuman

population. Despite their seeming oddness, the group can be tied to the historical practice of recruiting ninja from the dregs of society. Oni Do assassins are typically adepts or mystic adepts of the Invisible Way, enhancing their shinobi-jutsu training with magical methods of concealment and murder. The clan is led by Jonin Daiken Tengu, who maintains a network of safe houses in (and underneath) Kyoto where new students are brought to train. Most students are not considered genin until they have been initiated (in the magical sense) into the Oni Do Kai.

The Oni Do are at once mercenary and idealistic; I've known them to work for any corporation or kumi that could meet their price, and I've known them to drop their fee to almost nothing for causes that further the status of metahumans in Japanese society in some way. It should come to no surprise that the Oni Do work extensively for New Way clans, Evo, and the Imperial Household.

- I am divided as to whether these are pretenders or wishful thinking; while it is well known that even the most racist Yakuza has no difficulty hiring metahumans to do their dirty work, the idea of a league of ork and troll assassins skilled in the ancient arts appears ludicrous. One would almost imagine the Old Man of the Mountain came down from Alamut and chose a dwarf child off the street to be the most feared killer in the world!
- Goat's Foot
- The Oni Do Kai is real; I've worked with them and seen what they can do. Of course, there are still rumors about them that even I don't credit, like Awakened martial arts that let their chonins kill mundanes by ripping off their auras.
- Mihoshi Oni

## YAGYU RYU

The Yagyū Ryu is a quiet but publicly accessible dojo that has supposedly trained the greatest swordsmen in the world. Many prominent martial artists are known to have attended the school, including several Western adepts. This is the public face it presents to the world: a private institution for teaching martial arts including uncommon adept powers related to swordplay.

In truth, the Yagyū Ryu also serves as the primary training ground for a Renraku-sponsored espionage and assassination program, the Red Ninja. A failed candidate calling himself Broken Sword told me that the school's training regimen is authentic, but augmented by delta-grade implants and memory manipulation technology provided by Renraku to enable the Yagyū ninja to assume long-term deep-cover roles.

- Okay, I've heard of the Yagyū and the Red Ninja, but I've never heard of the two being conflated. Sure you aren't pulling our leg here Mihoshi?
- Ma'fan
- I'm more concerned about what you get when you mix magic and delta-grade cyberware. Six million nuyen cybermantic assassins, anybody?
- Smiling Bandit
- Being a ninja is cheating.
- Slamm-O!



## THE TRIADS

Posted by: Sticks

Lei Kung recapped Hong Kong Triad activities last year, so FastJack asked for a different point of view on them. With my mom's involuntary Triad membership, I got tapped. In keeping with this file, I'm giving a high-level overview, but I'm going to focus more on the day-to-day pragmatic information. If you're trying to infiltrate a Triad, the high level stuff's important. But that's not our biz. I'm focusing on what you need to know when you're knocking skulls or trying to figure out who's behind a scam.

### INTERESTING TIMES

The Triads have been around for a fucking long time—nearly 400 years. However, they're not the same organization now that they were at the beginning. During that time, many Triads were exterminated and many others were created. Their organization is flexible, and their descent isn't just linear. That's an important part of why they've lasted that long. In short, the world has changed, and they've kept up.

According to legend, the Triads began when a monastery full of Shaolin monks did a favor for the second Manchu Emperor in 1674. They did such a good job on that favor that the emperor decided to exterminate them—apparently, Mr. Johnson's just following an ancient tradition. Well, that emperor did a shitty job: five of those monks survived. The survivors made it their life goal to overthrow the Ching dynasty. To do this, they started five groups that evolved into the Triads.

- The fine details on that legend vary depending upon whom you ask. Different Triads tend to place the location of the monastery or the lodge where the monks swore their oaths in different places. Some versions don't blame the monastery attack on the emperor, blaming his advisors instead. It boils down to the basic fact that this is an oral history. Different people told the legend differently, and most of them wanted their Triad to be in the center of the story.
- Snopes

Of course, the monks had even worse luck against the Ching dynasty than the emperor did against them. The dynasty ruled China until 1912. By that point, the Triads had become an integral part of Chinese culture. A little thing like having their *raison d'être* eliminated wasn't going to bring them down.

A rebellion needs covert funding, secrecy, and flexible morality. That list sound familiar? With those qualities, making the transition into a criminal organization was pretty easy. As rebels, the Triads had lived as outlaws for ten generations. Sticking with what they knew was a whole lot easier than trying to change.

### RED SCARE

After the overthrow of the Ching dynasty, things were pretty rosy for the Triads. The Republic of China government had a rough time getting on its feet, and also had to contend with a number of warlords trying to establish their own nations. With all the instability, the Triads had a steady flow of opportunities. Their membership skyrocketed, and their profits soared. Many hailed them as heroes, which they leveraged into making their movement seem patriotic.

Aetherpedia Search: Mythic Names

The legendary monks who founded the first Triads, did so at the Red Flower Pavillion. On the evening when they began their mission to overthrow the Ching Dynasty, the sky was very red. They took this as a sign and named themselves the brothers of Hung. Hung was the name of the first Ming Dynasty emperor, and also means the color red.

The now common term, Triad, comes from a British identification of Chinese religious beliefs. The sacred order of heaven, earth, and man was generally symbolized with a triangle. When the British saw this symbol associated with secret societies, they began calling them Triads. Some Triads are more traditionally identified as the Society of the Three Dots, the Three Harmonies Society, or the Heaven, Earth, and Man Society.

Most modern Triads have names with traditional mystic associations. The 289s chose theirs for the numerological association with profit. The Black Chrysanthemums tie into a Taoist philosophy about the relatedness of all existence. While these meanings may not be obvious to an outsider, every member of a Triad learned them during initiation.

This success ended abruptly when the Communist Party took charge of things in 1949 and began cracking down on criminal societies and activities. The Triads chose the better part of valor and moved most of their business and membership to Hong Kong. From that era on, membership in the Triads was explicitly and enforcedly illegal in the People's Republic of China. Those Triads that continued activity in the PRC had to go even deeper undercover. Their added level of secrecy sent membership and profit margins into a nosedive.

In contrast, Triads in Hong Kong, Macao, and Shanghai really started thriving in this era. Many of them became specialized, and had virtual monopolies on control of different portions of legal and illegal market sectors. The government went so far as to found new enforcement branches specifically to deal with Triad crime, but none had much success. Sure, some of the smaller organizations were crushed, but the Triads had developed a culture of corruption and influence peddling so pervasive that the organizations as a whole could not be eliminated. Triads had become an integral part of Chinese culture. Removing them would require a global cultural change, and that's not likely to happen.

- Hong Kong remains the Triads' central power base. All of them are pervasive there, and everyone from gangsters to corporate executives knows it. They're influential in other places, but in Hong Kong, little happens without their consent. The Hong Kong Triads don't have global authority, but they sure set an example.
- Ma'fan

### GROWTH

The Triads follow a viral propagation pattern that dates back to their founding. Members that rise rapidly through the ranks and show promise are often sent to establish new organizations. These new Triads might operate in a different region or in



a different market. For example, a Triad member who'd gained control of the prostitution business in the red light district might be sent to establish a red light district in another city. Alternatively, he might be told to establish a new Triad to take control of a different market.

- A new Triad can take a variety of approaches to getting started. Some will buy out legitimate businesses, and slowly worm their way into a community. Other times, a whole crew of enforcers will immigrate together and take a brute force approach. I've also seen established gangs generously bribed into affiliating with a new Triad.
- 2XL

Sometimes these newly founded Triads are expected to send a percentage of their take back to their parent organization, but that practice has become less common. When the Triads do tithe, the Lodge Master of the new Triad generally keeps a position in his former Triad. This maintains a link between the two Triads, but still leaves the new one as a functioning independent organization.

This pattern made it easy for the Triads to grow rapidly. Becoming so deeply ingrained in Chinese culture also made it easy for them to spread out. When the Chinese Diaspora emerged in the mid-nineteenth century, the Triads spread with them. Soon, almost every city with a substantial ethnic Chinese population also had at least one Triad present. That growth pattern has continued ever since, turning the Triads global.

- Triads are no longer just a Chinese phenomenon. Some organizations, in Southeast Asia and globally, that identify as Triads don't have any ethnic Chinese members. In places with a large Chinese population, Chinese members are generally higher ranking. However, Triads are pragmatists. If good recruits don't meet the ethnic qualifications, they can be inducted and can advance within the Triad.
- Ma'fan

Triads often begin their recruiting through relatives, but they also depend heavily on recruitment from active street gangs. Most often, the ethnically Chinese tongs provide the largest number of newly initiated members. Quite a bit of evidence suggests, in fact, that many of the tongs only exist as recruitment centers for Triads. Tongs in bed with a Triad usually get financial and material support from their patron organization.

- Tongs backed by one of the bigger Triads can be a lot more dangerous than you'd expect. A lot of them have access to milspec hardware or Triad knock-off versions that are just as deadly.
- Red Anya

During their induction, new Triad members swear a lengthy series of oaths: some related to loyalty, others to respect, and all with brutally explicit consequences for violating them. These oaths are performed in a ceremony that's tied together with elements from Taoist and Buddhist religious traditions. In modern times, for many of the Triads, the oaths—sometimes called bleeding oaths—are made mystically binding. The consequences of violating the oaths are very real.

- There's no question about that lethality. I've seen informants bleed out from the death of a thousand cuts. That's not pretty. What's even more dangerous is if you happen to be standing nearby when an oath breaker undergoes the death by five lightning bolts. A teammate died of electrocution and I had to replace a nice 'link.
- Pistons
- The Ten Thousand Lions were the first society identified as magically enforcing their oaths a few years ago. In the past couple of years, that technique has really spread. Many of the Triads, including the Red Dragons and their affiliates, have begun this practice. If anybody asks you to start swearing oaths of allegiance, make sure you've got a buddy to watch it on the astral.
- Jimmy No

It's worth mentioning that the Triads' growth pattern works really well. In some sprawls, there can be a whole lot of Triads with a whole lot of members. A large sprawl might only have a couple thousand Mafia members. Triad membership gets a whole lot higher than that. Some historical estimates have put Triad membership as high as one in six among Hong Kong residents. That means you're talking about over a million Triad members in that sprawl alone. They may not all be active felons, but they're all sworn to protect and aid the members who are felons.

## ORGANIZATION

Unlike most of the other syndicates, there is no central power behind the Triads. When Triads disagree, they can't appeal to a higher authority. They first try to solve things verbally. When that doesn't work, they go with a more direct and violent approach. This lack of central authority partly stems from their viral growth pattern. Before we get into the fine details of that, it's probably worth covering the supposedly standard organizational scheme. Keep in mind, of course, that few Triads will perfectly mimic this set-up.

As the Triads have spread out, they've also diluted some of their traditions. While anyone raised in Hong Kong will intuitively understand the value of numerology, the same can't be said for a new recruit in Metropole. All of the Triads value their traditions—their oaths prove that fact—but they don't always implement them the same way. Triads don't generally limit their membership based on gender, culture, or metatype. So keep in mind that if you learn a local Triad's procedures, those same procedures won't necessarily hold true when dealing with a Triad from a different cultural background.

## RUNNING THE NUMBERS

Triad traditions tie in tightly with Chinese numerology. Almost every number has a meaning, generally drawn from a Cantonese homonym. That meaning gives the number additional power. A hundred years ago, that might've seemed quaint. Today, we know that those mystic associations hold real power.

- When a Triad sponsors a job, they're very careful about the numbers involved in the hire. If five teammates show up for the job, it's wise to convince Mr. Johnson that there's a sixth watching from the Matrix—they don't want to hire a four- or five-member team. The amount of the payment is also crucial. Sometimes that means



they'll enthusiastically haggle away from an auspicious payment amount. Other times it means you'll take away a payment amount that doesn't end in zeroes. Usually, they'll closely watch both the price per person and the total team payment.

- Lei Kung

There's one simple way to explain why Triads avoid working in groups of four or five members. Four means "death." Five means "not." In practice, though, that's just a starting point. If a number has multiple digits, it can be read two ways. Sometimes the digits together might make up a phrase—that's why the 289s are the Easy Money Gang. Similarly, while five and four are separately unlucky, 54 means "not dead," so it's a good number. Other times, the numbers can be added together to create an entirely different number. Triple-six is considered a great number, because it means that things will go three times as smoothly. Added together, it forms 18, which means certain prosperity. For that reason, you'll see 666 posted in the windows of Chinese businesses—a fact which tends to spook some Westerners.

Triad organization keys in on this numerology, but not always the way you'd think. Every rank in a Triad has an associated number. Taking it from the top down, a veteran leader of a Triad is a Shan Chu. This is sometimes translated as a Lodge Master, a Mountain Master, or the Dragon Head. His number is 489. Now, going by the common numerology, the best meaning you could come up with for that is "eternal prosperity through death." That might sound a little weird, but it adds up to 21, which is "easy confidence," and sounds better. And then there's another explanation for this number that completely ignores all the other numerology. Remember how I mentioned that the Triads were traditionally the society of Hung? Well, the character for 21 closely resembles the top of the character for the word Hung. So the guy tagged as 489 is symbolically significant as the top of the society. Meanings within meanings within meanings.

#### Aetherpedia Search: Numerological Meanings

These are the Cantonese associations. In places where a different language is commonly spoken, the numerology can change substantially. (For example, in some dialects, four can actually be a lucky number associated with good fortune.) Just knowing the number a Triad's using isn't always enough. Sometimes you need to know the Triad's ethnic background to understand it properly.

- 1—certain
- 2—easy
- 3—live
- 4—death
- 5—not, never
- 6—smoothly
- 7—ghostly, spiritual
- 8—prosperity
- 9—eternal
- 10—highest of the earthly numbers, perfection

Advisor ranks work in a similar fashion. The Lodge Master has posts for a number of advisors—which won't all necessarily be filled in every Triad. All of these share the number 438, which could mean "prosperity in life through death." It adds up to 15, "never confident," which doesn't sound much better. So, again, it falls back to looking at the character for Hung. The characters for the 3 and the 8 match up with the left and bottom parts of the one for Hung, which means the advisors are supporting the Lodge Master.

- One of these advisors, the Incense Master, merits special mention. He oversees Triad initiation, maintains traditions, and often is the major mojo slinger in an organization. Quite a few Incense Masters proudly claim to have studied under Lung. Those who make this claim usually depart slightly from the typical Wuxing path. As none of the people who make this claim have mysteriously vanished, it seems likely that this is true. There are rumors that Lung maintains a small school specifically for spreading the magical training that's involved in keeping the Triads active.
- Jimmy No

The next batch of ranks is the underbosses. The three types of underboss have the numbers 415, 426 and 432. Again, literal translations of these numbers don't look very good, so it comes down to looking at other mathematical tricks—like equations. An example:  $4 \times 15 + 4 = 108$ , which refers to the number of members of a legendary band of Sung dynasty loyalists. Or  $4 \times 26 + 4 = 64$ , with 64 being a reference to the number of legendary original characters from which Chinese script is derived. As for 432,  $4 \times 32 + 4 = 132$ , which is a reference to the number of members who performed the original service for the second Manchu emperor that eventually led to the founding of the Hung society. There are other interpretations of these numbers as well, but that'll do for starters.

Deciphering the numbers for the last two ranks isn't a whole lot easier. The number 49 identifies rank-and-file members of the Triads. The best guess for this one is that when multiplied, they yield 36. That correlates to the number of oaths a new Triad member must swear when joining up. Finally, a 25 is a spy within the Triad. This number seems to have come into use more recently, and probably relies on the "never easy" literal translation. Aside from the fact that 25 is the only rank designation that doesn't start with a four, it's also come to mean traitor.

- Tagging a person with an ARO that proclaims him a 25 is a quick way to eliminate a target in some areas. Twenty-fives carry an enormous bounty on their heads, and there are always those looking to collect.
- Lei Kung

Keep in mind that the numerology for titles just scrapes the surface of its usage within Triad society. Numbers are pervasive, and their obvious meanings are rarely the actual ones. The number of crates in a shipment, the number of goods per crate, and various mathematical derivatives of both of these can all combine to spell out a message that has several meaningful connotations to a member, but is indecipherable to an outsider.

- That's a great example. A few months back, I was running overwatch for a team that needed to pick up some crates for a Triad Mr. Johnson.





INCOMING FEED.....

The team expected three boxes. Instead, there were four. They scratched their heads for a moment, and then decided to just take all four. As soon as they decided to move one, I lost all the nearby feeds, and picked up the sounds and lights of an explosion from a further camera. Apparently, the extra box was a message to the recipient.

- Slamm-0!

## PHILOSOPHIES

The Triads obviously have a rich history and quite a few traditions that go with it. Because of that, it's worth covering how they think so you can guess how they might act. Now, if a particular Triad doesn't follow what I'm going to tell you, don't blame me. I'm dealing in generalities here. Local groups can and do vary.

One of the core tenets of the Triads is the harmony of man with heaven and earth. In spite of their illegal activities, they see themselves as philanthropic organizations. They'll go into a war zone and make sure the refugees have the supplies they need—of course, they won't do it for free. They've organized rebellions against totalitarian regimes—though they made sure to take their cut afterwards. It's not what you'd call traditional philanthropy, but, if you try to wrap your brain around it, it can almost make sense.

- That's trading one devil for another. They're not philanthropists, they're just more upfront about their criminal nature.
- Aufheben

They count many otherwise law-abiding SINners among their membership, and treat their members like family. A thoroughly

dysfunctional family, granted, but also a family that's mystically compelled to aid one another. This creates a sort of safety net—almost an insurance policy. Of course, not everybody wants to pay the premium, but the protection they offer is tangible.

It's a generalization to say that the Triads are racists, bigots and sexists. However, they typically have a hierarchical system. The Han Chinese dominate most Triads, with other Chinese ethnicities outranking other Asians. Westerners are generally ranked lower. Ethnicity is typically more important than meta-type. Metahumans have held positions of power in a number of Triads globally. In most cases, men are valued over women, but there are female Shan Chus. These hierarchies hold true in virtually all Triads that tithe to a parent Triad in China. Organizations without a close ethnically Chinese tie may be more liberal.

- Some of the Han Chinese have their own secret society within the Triads. I suspect that they're a mutual aid society, but they might just be focused on keeping purity and tradition alive. Either way, they're global and include members from many different Triads.
- Ma'fan

Awakened members are almost universally favored over mundanes. It's common for a Shan Chu to be either an adept or a full magician. In the larger Triads, this is almost always the case. Many Hueng Chus don't like the idea of members with physical augmentations. In exceptionally conservative cases, the Heung Chu will assense a candidate before initiation and exclude augmented candidates from membership. Numerology and feng shui will play into almost every Triad activity.





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:: user Lei Kung //

Rank 3+ Officers only

### COMMON TRIAD RANKS

Established Triads are generally led by a **Shan Chu** or Lodge Master. This person frequently has little to no contact with rank-and-file members. Instead, most Shan Chus lead a comparatively mundane existence as small business owners. The Shan Chu's connections with the Triad are ostensibly similar to someone who serves as head of a policlub. The title tends to be reserved for someone with many years of experience. It's considered ostentatious for someone establishing a new Triad to call himself a Shan Chu.

Under the Lodge Master is the **Fu Shan Chu**—the highest-ranking 438—who is the deputy Lodge Master. This person handles most of the day-to-day logistics for a Triad. While the Lodge Master establishes the big picture, his deputy is responsible for making things happen.

The **Heung Chu** (Incense Master) and the **Sin Fung** (Guardian) are the next ranking 438s, and are considered to be peers. The Incense Master is generally an initiated mage who follows a path similar to Wuxing. This person is responsible for seeing that the Triad's traditions are followed and that the ritual induction of new members happens according to the appropriate ceremonies. The Guardian assists the Incense Master in many ways, but also works in recruitment—especially in identifying new gangs that could provide future inductees.

The lowest-ranking 438s are the **Sheung Fa** (Double Flower). These are members who have shown exceptional promise or aptitude, or have given years of good service. The Double Flowers are most often sent out to establish new Triads. They rarely play an integral role in daily administrative work, and so a single individual might be a Sheung Fa in an established Triad while holding a higher rank in a younger one.

The **Hung Kwan**—Red Pole, or 426—is the military commander of a Triad. He or she coordinates the actions of multiple underling gangs when they need to work together against an external threat or to take advantage of a larger opportunity.

The **Pak Tsz Sin**—White Paper Fan, or 415—is the Triad's accountant. Aside from making sure that the books look clean, all Matrix activities fall under their jurisdiction. The importance of this position depends quite a bit upon whether or not the Triad is focused on Matrix crime.

The **Cho Hai**—Grass Sandal, or 432—is a middleman. To most gangers and many independent businesses, the Grass Sandal is the public face of the Triad. This job entails collecting and paying almost all of the bribes and grafts that keep the Triad profitable.

All the remaining members of a Triad are identified as **Sze Kau**, or 49. These are the enforcers, sworn to mystical oaths of loyalty. Some are newly promoted from street gangs, others are veterans hoping to advance within the Triad, and still others have little actual involvement in the Triad brotherhood—they serve as seemingly innocent supporters of the organization.

- At least some Triads value technomancers in the same way that they value their Awakened members. I've seen resonance signatures that were recruiting for technomancers to take immediate officer-level positions in at least one Triad.
- Netcat

the wiser. Members also won't identify their society as a Triad. Instead, they'll call it by its specific name, or refer to the whole system or organizations as the Hung Mun or one of several other appellations. Of course, the subtlety and secrecy won't stop them from making a messy and obvious example when necessary.

Most Triads deeply value their traditions, and this can become a liability. In some areas, they've been following the same procedures for generations. If conditions change, they can be slow to adapt. They're not oblivious to the changing world around them, but they often have a wait-and-see approach. Remember, it took them well over 200 years to overthrow the Ching dynasty. They thoroughly understand the value of patience.

- It bears repeating that oath breakers make for the very messiest of examples.
- Jimmy No

Tying in with patience, they also value subtlety and secrecy. The Triads began as a secret society and became criminals later. Many of their members maintain this secrecy and do nothing overt to display their membership. It's believed that the Triads have an undocumented language made up entirely of hand and facial gestures. This can enable veteran members to carry on an entire conversation in the presence of outsiders, with none being

Instant Message...



#### "Need a linguasoft?"

I've got a Triad gesture linguasoft developed from analysis of several thousand hours of security footage. Interested in testing it? - Ma'Fan



## Honor Among Thieves

While Triads generally deeply honor their philosophies, they remain a pragmatic lot. An established Triad will fiercely protect its territory from competition—whether another Triad or a different syndicate or independent. However, a Triad that begins operations in an area that includes other syndicates must be more selective about resource allocation. Consequently, they will quickly move to establish working relationships with other syndicates whenever possible. Sometimes these are as simple as a verbal agreement to avoid direct competition. Other times, the agreement establishes the different organizations at different levels in the supply chain.

These initial agreements only last as long as it takes the new Triad to become established. Triad philosophy dictates that they must expand and establish a monopoly. Once their resources permit it, they will do whatever it takes to eliminate or, in some cases, incorporate the competition.

This holds true for other criminals: gangers, fixers, dealers, shadowrunners, et al. A Triad will work with them when they're the best resource available. However, once the Triad can expand, they'll promote a member to directly compete with their rivals' contacts, which may make life awfully short for that contact—or, if the contact qualifies, the Triad may attempt to recruit them.

This expansion is a gradual process, as establishing an expert in a new field takes time. While a Triad may quickly corner one market in a region, it may be decades before they come into conflict with every other organization in that region.

## VARIATIONS ON A THEME

While all Triads share their mystic history, viral growth patterns, and symbolic names and numbers, they don't all work the same way. Not only can they be operating in completely different cultures, they can also vary quite a bit in how closely they follow their traditions and how they interpret them. Some of these variations tie into the local cultures of their turf, but, often, they depend just as much on the personal beliefs of the Lodge Master and his advisors.

For example, the Eighty-Eights of Seattle really devalue mysticism. Members often have implants, and their Shan Chu, Rick Wu, is not Awakened. While the organization still follows many of the usual traditions, including primarily Asian membership, they also are dramatically less secretive. Wu lives an ostentatious lifestyle incredibly distant from the prototypical humble businessman.

- That misrepresents the way Wu handles things. While he's certainly in the limelight, not all of the Triad's activities are. Some of their rackets are nearly invisible.
- Kat o' Nine Tales

In contrast, the Four Winds Gang of Phnom Penh is dramatically more focused on mysticism. Nearly half of the members are Awakened. Of the rest, most are metahumans, but some are nagas. It's an understatement to say that their hierarchy is quite different from what's been observed elsewhere.

Hong Kong's 289's push things in another direction entirely. These Triad members are almost universally young and tech-savvy. While they don't ignore mysticism, they positively embrace the Matrix. It's believed that they've aggressively recruited technomancers into their society and include a technomancer guild. Among the 289's, prestige is far more important than secrecy. They revel in their membership and in their successes.

- I'll confirm that. I've dealt with members of 100100001—the affiliated network. They're greedy bastards, but they're more than just competent.
- Netcat

In Bangkok, the Nine Tigers Organization, while still secretive, has forsaken their rebellious stance. Instead, they've managed to worm their agents into positions of power in what passes for the Thai government and the military. This way, their opium growing and smuggling activities need never fear government sanction.

- Other Triads have undergone similar philosophical changes in the corporate world. There are several small corps that could be called Triad fronts, but really are perfectly legal organizations. Sometimes legitimate business is more profitable than crime.
- Mr. Bonds

## GLOBAL TIES

Large Chinese enclaves are a global phenomenon that expanded beyond Asia hundreds of years ago. From Johannesburg to Vancouver, from Melbourne to London, and, of course, Metropole, the Chinese have developed significant immigrant communities. Over the centuries, Triads have become an integral part of Chinese culture, so in just about every global city with a Chinese presence—and many without—Triads have been established.

In most cases, Triads had to compete with a pre-existing syndicate. In those situations, they worked to either corner a market that wasn't previously available—usually gambling, smuggling, vice, or drugs—or to eliminate the competition. In some cases, these newer syndicates received funding and support from their contacts “back home.” In others, they established themselves independently through dedication, a lack of morals, and good old-fashioned violence. In either case, they generally triggered intense underworld wars, some of which have lasted for generations.

- Conflicts between Yakuza clans and Triads are legendary throughout the Pacific Rim. Outside of Hong Kong and Neo-Tokyo, almost every city in that hemisphere has at least one group of each faction in direct conflict. Los Angeles and San Francisco are the exceptions. I'd love to know how the deal was negotiated, but decades ago, the Triads took LA, and the Yakuza took San Francisco. It's been stable ever since.
- Sunshine

In these foreign cities, Triads need to work harder to keep their traditions alive and to maintain their ethnic purity. As a consequence, they often fail to accomplish either of these goals.





INCOMING FEED.....

MAJOR SYNDICATES.....

In order to blend in to the city as a whole, a syndicate often needs members who look native. This is a key factor in the common loss of Triad ethnicity. In addition, people who didn't grow up constantly exposed to Chinese culture don't have the intuitive understanding of numerology, feng shui, and related concepts. Upshot is, many of these Triads are disavowed by the organizations in Hong Kong and the other Chinese states.

- A disavowal doesn't always mean that the Triad is eliminated or that they suddenly go out of business. They'll still identify themselves as Triads, and they can still be completely viable syndicates. I've seen organizations identifying themselves as Triads that are clearly oblivious to the signs and symbols. Many of those completely ignore the importance of numerology.
- Traveler Jones

However, that doesn't mean that the native Chinese Triads will turn a blind eye to opportunities for profit. As a consequence, even where they don't get along well with foreign Triads, they still cooperate with them on smuggling rackets. Everything from drugs to pirated media to knock-off weapons and fashions travels through the Asian Triads to international locations.

## OPERATIONS

Most Triads are flexible enough to find the most profitable opportunity and exploit it. However, Triads love their traditions, which lend themselves to a number of crimes. Triads tend to gravitate toward these.

## COMPUTER CRIME

Triads have been involved in computer crime for decades. Generally, they deal more with identity theft and false identities than with high-profile datasteals. This line of work ties in with people trafficking. After all, once somebody makes it across a border, they won't need their old SIN, and they'll certainly need a new one.

## CONTROLLED SUBSTANCES

While they dabble in BADs, the heart and soul of the Triad drug market is opiates. The Triads buy and process the crops from hundreds of thousands of acres of opium poppies annually. These are processed into bliss and a few other drugs and distributed globally through smuggling networks, often to Triad organizations in foreign markets.

- Some Triads have established opium dens, turning hard drug use into a social outlet. While different locations cater to different clienteles, their "pharmacists" are constantly introducing new combinations. In combination with tempo, some of these dens host theme nights—orgies, brawls, animal fights—that intensify tempo's emotional feedback.
- Lei Kung

In addition to bliss, the Triads control most of the world's BTL production and distribution. While production can happen at nearly any location, most of the distribution happens through the Matrix—often through the same sites as their pirated media. This provides an easy gateway to hook new customers. People who are looking for some cheap entertainment can "accidentally" be sent a BTL instead.



- While it seems reasonable that software piracy would cut into BTL profits, piracy of Triad BTLs is fairly uncommon. There are two reasons for this. First, Triad BTLs are dangerous and inconsistent. Pirates usually target higher quality BTLs. Second, Triads are experts on software piracy. They're familiar with warez sites, and they tend to take extreme actions when their material is pirated.
- Turbo Bunny

## BRAND COUNTERFEITING

Even during their time as revolutionaries, the Triads were involved in counterfeiting. Triads were known to be aggressively counterfeiting coins and producing duplicates of valuable rare books in the nineteenth century, if not earlier. Since then, they've broadened their horizons. The latest fashions, electronics, weapons, and media are all lucrative targets for duplication.

- Ironically, they're usually less involved in counterfeiting money. The mark-up on a replica Vashon Island piece is apparently good enough that they'd rather copy it than risk trying to deal with counterfeit nuyen or scrip.
- Mr. Bonds

In many cases, a Triad-produced plan for a desktop forgery is available on-line hours after a new gizmo is announced—before it hits stores. Of course, there's no assurance that the plan will work, or if it does work, that it'll produce a fully functional product. On the other hand, with clean feedstock and a comparatively inexpensive plan, Triads can be selling items globally before the corps that designed them.

- Be very careful if you get your gear from an armorer or fixer with Triad connections. A firearm might look and act like the real thing, until you run a few dozen magazines through it. It's inevitable when you're in the field and things have gotten hairy that the replicas fail.
- Black Mamba

Similarly, any media production is available from Triad nodes within minutes of, or even before, a general release. The Triad propagated version is probably of slightly lesser quality, might have some translation problems, and could be virus laden; however, it probably costs 10 percent of the price of the legitimate release.

## GAMBLING

Triad gambling houses tend to focus on traditionally Asian games, especially mahjong. They're often discreet, exclusive, and very high-stakes. Entrance usually requires an invitation or a large up-front buy-in. These houses typically have extensive magical and Matrix security measures. In addition, they tend to remain inconspicuous, in spite of being located in higher-traffic areas.

While Triads offer a number of Matrix-accessible gambling houses, these are less common. While these can be lucrative, easy global access means there's a lot of competition in this arena. That sort of competition hurts the bottom line.

## PEOPLE TRAFFICKING

Constant political instability in the Chinese states means there are always refugees looking to escape to a better life. A number of Triads are involved in moving these refugees to other locations—sometimes

for an exorbitant upfront fee, other times into a life of indentured servitude at the other end. Of course, not all of the refugees make it to their destination. Sometimes it's easier to scuttle refugee cargo at sea than to deal with an overly rigorous inspection. Other times, a corp or another syndicate needs cheap labor, and there's more profit to be made by delivering the refugees into another hellish life.

- No matter how desperate things seem, don't try to use Triad services to get across a border. The risk just isn't worth it. There's always a safer way to get there.
- Traveler Jones

## PROSTITUTION

One of the most common ways for a smuggled refugee to pay off transit fees is working in a Triad-run brothel. There's little to differentiate Triad brothels from any others, except that most of their employees have been illegally smuggled across a border and their target market is usually working-class. They tend to be fairly vanilla establishments; installing cyberware or performing biosculpts doesn't provide an adequate return on investment with their clientele's budget. The Triads' success in people trafficking has made these low-end brothels a fairly common global phenomenon.

## PROTECTION RACKETS

As an organization ostensibly founded to oppose tyranny, the Triads can claim that they've always got the best interests of the common man in mind. For them, the protection racket is a perfect fit. Of course, there's a whole lot of irony there—but somebody who makes a protection payment to a Triad generally does get something in return. If another syndicate, a street gang, or even a corp tries to intimidate a Triad-protected business, the Triads will respond. They won't hesitate to use overwhelming force or the magical resources that are often considered their hallmark.

- This happens. I've seen it. It's messy and fast.
- Hard Exit

That's not to say that the Triads are public servants. Their protection prices are often higher than average. If they don't like a shop or an owner, they won't hesitate to run them out of the Triad's turf. Ethnicity, metatype, and even the type of business often play a key role in their pricing, which often ties into a desire to keep an enclave ethnically pure.

## SMUGGLING

Triads are experts at smuggling goods into and out of war zones. Typically, survival gear travels into the zones and refugees, teslas, and other valuable rarities come out. In addition, they'll often have contacts in the militaries of both sides to supply gear to the troops—both combat and vice-oriented.

- Having a Triad contact in this environment can really make things easier. I don't know how they swing their bribes, but I've seen a hot LZ go cold just long enough for a smuggler to complete an airdrop.
- Picador

War zones aren't the Triads' only area of smuggling expertise, of course. Between their drugs, personnel, weapons, electronics,



## Hong Kong Police Memorandum: The Kowloon Massacre

The tempo phenomenon had a huge effect on two of the Hong Kong Triads. The Black Chrysanthemums branched out of their usual organlegging and human trafficking trades to secure tempo distribution in the city. It's believed that, by prior agreement, the Smoke Circle Society was the exclusive BAD distributor in Hong Kong—the Black Chrysanthemums had BAD distribution rights to the Coastal Provinces. Apparently, the tempo opportunity was too good for them to pass up.

When the Smoke Circle Society saw the Black Chrysanthemums infringing on their business, they took action. Initial attempts at sabotage by both sides raised the stakes. Eventually, a brutal conflict erupted that saw both sides unleashing dangerous spirits and arming addicts. Our forces sealed the Kowloon City district for five days as the two Triads unleashed all their resources against one another. Uncontrolled spirits rampaged through Kowloon as military grade explosives shook the district. Estimates show that tens of thousands died from the battle and the associated fallout.

In the months since the massacre, neither side has been eliminated, and their conflict continues, though at a lower intensity. Both Triads have been badly weakened. Best estimates have the Black Chrysanthemums at 30 percent of their strength prior to the conflict and the Smoke Circle Society at 50 percent. At this point, it's likely that one of the other Triads—especially the Red Dragon Society—might muscle in and eliminate or subsume the survivors of one or both of these organizations.

and brand counterfeiting rackets, the Triads have by necessity become experts at smuggling goods across international borders. In many cases, they can count on the presence of affiliated organizations on the other side of the border—often even working the docks. Where they don't have an affiliated Triad waiting to receive things, Triads will generally make contact with another syndicate far in advance of the shipment to handle deliveries.

### NOTABLE TRIADS

Remember that different Triads follow very different procedures. Most of the city guides that have hit JackPoint have talked about some of the specific ones, but it's worth mentioning a few more that haven't been highlighted yet and going into the global approaches of others.

### RED DRAGON TRIAD

The Red Dragons are arguably the largest, most powerful, and best globally positioned of the Triads. Based in Hong Kong, they have affiliate branches in dozens of other cities around the world, including locations in the Americas, Australia, throughout Asia, and even a few in Europe. While most of those branches are fully functional independent entities, they all tithe back to the Hong Kong chapter led by

Shan Chu Hsiao Wai-Gong. This leaves the organization incredibly well funded and capable of starting up new organizations anywhere that they can identify a market and a community.

- With the damage to the Smoke Circle and Black Chrysanthemum societies, dozens of rumors are circulating about the Red Dragon taking over either one of those groups. However, the Red Dragons have traditionally avoided a lot of the trades that those two Triads practice. There's also the fact that the Red Dragons remember well their war with the Yellow Lotus and aren't anxious to run the same risks again. If anybody merges, my money's on the Ten Thousand Lions.
- Ma'fan

In most ways, the Red Dragons are the archetypical Triad. They deeply honor their mystical heritage and philosophy. They employ all the traditional ranks, and the officers at those ranks are walking stereotypes. Most of the members are males of Han Chinese descent. The highest-ranking members are frequently Awakened, and the Incense Masters always are.

The JackPoint Hong Kong article detailed the main branch's activities—protection rackets and gunrunning—but that barely touches on their global approaches. The global organization is simply too large to limit themselves to just a couple of areas, no matter how lucrative those businesses are. While they almost always run a protection racket, they're also open to just about any kind of smuggling and counterfeiting. They produce and deliver a huge variety of fashion, electronics, and weapon knock-offs. If their child-labor factories can't produce a reverse-engineered, look-alike product, they'll steal the manufacturer's plans or shipments.

Persistent rumors tie the Red Dragon's leadership to the Red Great Eastern Dragon Lung, suggesting that Hsiao Wai-Gong is merely a puppet. There's no hard evidence to support this, but there's also none to disprove it. The name makes for some great evidence, but the name predates the Awakening by several decades.

### LARGE CIRCLE LEAGUE

Based out of New York City, the Large Circle League struggles to control any market in a city dominated by corporate interests while competing with the activities of many other syndicates. The end result is that they've ended up with a very small slice of a whole lot of different pies. At the same time, most of their members also have connections with one or more of the corporations that run Manhattan.

Soon Shan, the Grass Sandal of the Large Circle, is also a middle-management employee of Shiawase. His Triad activities are a sideline rather than a career. Not surprisingly, most of the other gang members hold similar positions. This has allowed the Triad access to a broad variety of information that they use to further their own strategies and also sell to interested parties.

- The Large Circle hasn't just infiltrated Shiawase. They've got members working for all of the corporations on the Manhattan Development Consortium and quite a few AAs that have offices in New York. They don't know all the big corporate secrets, but they know an awful lot of small ones. If you're doing legwork, they're a very good place to start.
- Haze





INCOMING FEED.....



In addition to information dissemination and blackmail, the Triad is actively involved in drug and BTL distribution. Most of the drug trafficking is in opiates—the New York Mafia control most of the other trades. Attempts to secure gambling failed when they ran up against the Toki-gumi back in the '50s.

### SAPPHIRE CRANE SOCIETY

Operating out of Los Angeles, the Cranes work a town that's always been dominated by the Mafia. However, when the Twins hit, the town became just the sort of wasteland that the Triads have worked in China for generations. Their Shan Chu, a nasty guy named Wing who's probably Awakened, managed to take advantage of that. He's been smuggling supplies in and refugees and salvage out for the past few years.

That smuggling gave him the resources to try to oppose the Mafia more directly. He's put out hits on several Mafia capos. If this continues, the city could easily be in for a nasty syndicate battle.

The Sapphire Cranes are also the source for a lot of the pirated media that the Triads distribute globally. It doesn't seem likely that they've got the Matrix resources to hack all of this. My best guess is that they use old-fashioned social engineering to obtain copies from employees of the various studios. By bartering BTLs, drugs, and gambling debt, they obtain rough cuts of upcoming releases before they even hit the Matrix. Don't be surprised if Horizon steps in and takes direct action against them.

- Horizon might be provoking an underworld war as a means to eradicate the Cranes. The P2.0 ratings for an underworld war could generate fantastic advertising revenue. Eliminating an established media piracy group at the same time would be a bonus.
- Plan 9

### VORY V ZAKONE

Posted by: Zloba

- Outside of the Motherland, the Vory v Zakone are mostly thought of as violent thugs. This leads people to underestimate the cunning leadership and organization behind the syndicate. Today, they can be found in nearly every sprawl. The fact that they aren't the most powerful, doesn't mean they aren't the most dangerous. Following FastJack's requests for a new look at the underworld players, I asked Zloba to share her insights.
- Red Anya

Privyet. When dealing with the Vory, you need to forget everything you think you know. We are not the Triad or Yakuza. Compared to those other groups, we are rabid dogs on a short leash. Unlike dogs though, we don't allow anything to get in the way of our goals. The success of the Vory in expanding our territories over the last two decades has come from a willingness to be patient and ability to strike with violence and ferocity. We might be new to the game, but we have learned quickly and made our own rules rather than living by others.

### THIEVES OF THE CODE

History is the activity of men in the pursuit of their own ends. To understand a Vor, you must understand the means which brought us to those ends. We are the Thieves of the Code. Others will tell you they began a thousand years ago in myth and legend. We got our start in the Russian gulags. The social dissidents of the Bolsheviks were crammed side by side with us thieves and murderers. Both groups saw that life outside was changing rapidly and to survive, they would have to change as well. Our "grandfathers"



**From:** Red Anya**RE:** Vory versus Avtoritet?

The traditional Vor worked his way up to his position and bartered his soul away for ruthless efficiency and fortitude. An Avtoritet on the other hand was quite often an ambassador or well-appointed minister living in foreign countries and in touch with the organization through a group of well-trusted lieutenants who gave orders and got involved when examples must be set.

By 2070, the terms Avtoritet and Vory have become synonymous—referring more to a difference in MO than organization. There are still Vor who deal with the hands on, bloody aspects of the business and Avtoritet who sit in positions of power and wield political and economic control over large areas, but that has mostly changed. Due to their differences in scope, most of the Avtoritet run larger organizatsi than their Vory counterparts. This leads an Avtoritet to occasionally have multiple lideris running a city, which has a Vory v Zakone presence but does not need the ruthlessness of a Vor to manage.

agreed upon a code to allow both sides to thrive and work together against the rising government.

Outside prison, the bosses, or Vor as they were called, built up groups of criminals and brought the Code with them. A century later, in the chaos surrounding the fall of the USSR, we fed on the corruption of government. With a government too pre-occupied to make any effort to stop us, the Vory grew into a legend within the streets of Russia. Bloody conflicts were waged and anyone who didn't pay the protection fund was killed—messily. Violence was also unleashed against warring groups of the Vory—the code called for meetings between leaders to settle arguments. Disagreements that could not be settled peacefully turned into blood in the streets.

With violence all around them, new groups of Vory spread throughout Europe. We formed communities in every major city after Berlin. By the end of the 1990s, any city with more than 300,000 people had a group of us in their immigrant quarter. Spread apart and living amongst foreigners in the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, the code changed drastically. Previous restrictions from serving in the army were dropped and former soldiers of the Red Army swelled our ranks. With the collapse of the USSR, a brisk black market was setup for weapons trafficking. We were the reason that Kalashnikov became a worldwide name. Soon our rising star was noticed and the Avtoritet joined forces with us in 2016. While the Vory handled street level violence, the Avtoritet controlled the black markets and arms smuggling. Due to the Avtoritet needing more structure, the smaller communities had their operations quickly combined and consolidated.

- Many of the Avtoritet are actually new money—up and rising families or businessmen who thought they could get rich faster by breaking a few laws. This left them with one foot in the shadows and one foot in the world of business. It's a dangerous tightrope to walk but one that can pay off in aces when everything is said and done.
- /dev/grll

Then along came a spider named Kropunin. He was the General-Secretary with a vision of Mother Russia returning to all of her former glory. To do that, the G-S needed money, which meant taxes and controlling the arms-trade. You can see where the problem is, да? The Avtoritet were politicians and diplomats who had their own private army in the Vory. Beyond the criminal enterprises, they controlled the local police and Army. So the General-Secretary undertook another Night of Broken Glass. When Kropunin started his criminal purges in 2026, there was a hard line. No negotiations and no bribes. Most of the Vory fled into Western Europe, the Middle East, and North America. But there were traitors who betrayed the Code so they wouldn't need to move. The Avtoritet who stayed and allied themselves with Kropunin are called the "Red Vory." All of them are cowards and murderers.

- There is substantial bad blood between the "Western Vory" and "Red Vory". The betrayal hasn't been forgotten and will likely never be forgiven.
- Red Anya

With their homes destroyed, the Vory followed the same paths that other Russians had after the Berlin Wall fell. Small groups grew into full organizatsi and expanded their businesses. La Famiglia was the first group to clash with the new Western Vory. Following the Crash of '29, the Mafia's infrastructure was crippled. The Western Vory thrived in the aftermath and were able to gain a solid foothold. Once the EuroWars got underway, the Vory with a larger scope of vision granted by the Avtoritet, began supplying all sides with weapons. In some cases, they sold weapons back to armies, which had been stolen years before.

In Europe, the only thing that stopped the encroaching Vory advance was the Alta Commissione. The Commissione gave the Mafia a solid front to hold back the Cossack horde. By 2064, there was war in France between the Vory and Mafia. A bloody, messy war which was smothered by the Second Crash. There are whispers, and in some sprawls outcries, as the hostilities draw nearer in the wake of the awakened drug, tempo.

Across North America, the Western Vory are strangers in the house. They have built a presence in each major metroplex, but so far have had minimal impact. Their biggest problem is that they stand divided, no one willing to work with the others. An example would be the four Vory bosses in Denver—each has claimed a sector but none have the power to take down the other syndicates.

- That's old news lady. One of them cracked and another is sleeping with the enemy. If it wasn't for the dragon, the mob war out here would be boiling over.
- Hard Exit

The Red Vory have their own issues as internal strife builds up. Moscow has been the traditional seat of power for the Red Vory. With uprisings in the native areas of Caucasus and Turkistan, the Red Vory have called razborka and sent in metahumans—mostly orks and trolls, to crush the rebels

## RECENT EVENTS

The world is a very busy place right now. Currently, four cities have the most activity within the Vory. Moscow has the traitor Petschukov and his Red Vory. Power struggles and political instability throughout Russia in 2064, caused the Red



## Seasource Fastfacts

NEW QUERY :: Fenya

Fenya is the Russian word for Thieves' Cant. They have developed an entire lexicon to enable them to discuss business without others understanding what is being spoken about. Here are some examples and commonly used words:

**Nohsh** [Нож]—Literally knife. A swift attack or ambush of a rival organizatsy.

**Pohtyeryaht** [Потерять]—Literally to lose. To impress street gangs into service.

**Razborka** [Разборка]—Literally dismantling. Infrequent but bloody fights within the Vory organizatsya.

**Shoom** [Шум]—Literally noise. A protection racket, or the threats made to an individual behind on paying the protection.

**Skodka** [Сходка]—Literally gathering. Large, formal gatherings between all the Vory leaders in an area. These meetings bring both the Vor and Avtoritet bosses together to discuss strategies and problems that affect all of the groups.

**Strelka** [Стрелка]—Literally arrow. Meetings between two groups of Vory to resolve conflicts between leaders.

Vory stopped their advance into Europe. Andrei Petschukov, the Avtoritet boss in Moscow attempted to hold the line against the Alta Commissione, but lost ground across all of central Europe. The new General-Secretary Viktor Kamendin used Petschukov's support to secure his election. Since then, the avtoritet has focused his efforts along the Pacific Rim.

While Petschukov focused on internal matters, the Lobatchevski syndicate in Scandinavia has been under attack. Vasily Romanenko, the leader of the St. Petersburg Vory made his move. He called on the assassin group Chimera to kill Luka Jankevitch. With Jankevitch dead, the Scandinavians have found themselves more closely tied to St. Petersburg and the Western Vory. The extensive infiltration of the Scandinavian government and influence peddling has given the Western Vory a chance to rebuild the corruption they used to have in Russia.

- I heard some chatter about reprisals, course my Russian isn't that fancy. Luka was very close with Petschukov and it is just a matter of time before he strikes back himself. War is coming.
- Traveler Jones

Instead of politicians and assassins, Vladivostok has restless natives. There is a brewing civil war in Siberia and the Vory are being tied into it. Sergei Byelmodin, the nominal leader has been unable to control the other two Vorys in the area. Now, Burugar Yunggart, a Siberian sympathizer who runs the smuggling operations, has clashed with "Bloody" Otsana Kovalenko, a nationalist boss. Byelmodin has tried calling for a strelka but the other sides have ignored him. While they bicker like old women, the Rings and Triad have secured nearly all the wireless crime and made inroads to the smuggling. Kovalenko has been seen meeting with

Triad leaders. She says to give them a final warning, but an alliance of practicality could be afoot.

We can't forget your precious North America. Seattle is the new home to Petschukov's old lap dog enforcer. Aleksander Bilotkiy was sent to Seattle in order to open the doors to smuggling from Mother Russia. He has been fortunate that the Yakuza were burned with the fallout of tempo and syndicate violence. Now, the Terminator, is trying to grab as much of the action as possible. His methods are direct and lack the finesse of an avtoritet. A complete run-down of the Povryejhda Syndicate will be attached to the end of this file.

## THE CODE

We are a pragmatic people. Over the last two centuries, the code has changed because the world has changed. Still, the old ones will tell you that the core remains. Honor amongst thieves. This is not the honor of knights or the hypocritical Yakuza who espouse that they have set their people free. The Code keeps us alive. It keeps us who we are. Rules that kept us out of society are gone. Now, the Vory have families and homes. We are no longer beholden to the traditional scorn for the trappings of normal society. We have evolved and our new code is based on the philosophy of "do what works."

The prison culture that rewarded time spent in lock-up is gone. We keep the distribution networks and control in prisons that we have had before. Fifty years ago, you would have seen leaders running the organizatsy with a Pocket Secretary and phone line. Now, the leaders never set foot in prison. Other Vory try to spend as little time imprisoned as possible. When a bojevik is caught, he will become the new voice to recruit thieves and murderers from the inside.

Every member of the Vory supports the organizatsi by funding the obschak and maintaining a public image. The idea of a matched mark or uniform is stupid. These groups are just telling the police who they are. Our people can be anywhere. Each Vor can wear a suit and blend into any boardroom or sling a rifle and body armor to match the frontlines of war. We are everywhere and infiltrate gangs and AAA corporations.

- Remember that many of the Avtoritet come from business backgrounds. How many ladder climbers would love that extra edge to secure their next promotion? The Vory make dealing with smaller corps nearly as dangerous as dealing with a AAA.
- FastJack

While they are loyal to each other, those on the outside are dealt with ruthlessly. Insults are met with swift punishment ranging from maiming to execution. Members of the Vory who betray their own are dealt with—often tortured and then killed. That's not to say that every violation of the code spells instant death, but pain and violence are much more common.

## RANKS

Tsar (vor or avtoritet), is the official title for the leader of a single group. Organizatsi which are powerful will command the respect of nearby, smaller groups. This does not mean that they run their business like the mafia and their joint ventures. Instead, each group works alone, forging alliances when needed and otherwise staying out of each other's way. A tsar can call for skodka if they want to expand and combine efforts. Most tsars are on par with a mafia capo. Smaller organizatsi tsars are on the level of Seoulpa

Ring leaders. The largest organizatsy, like those of the avtoritet are run like a corporation with boards of directors and everything.

Assisting the tsar is a sovetnik. He serves as an advisor to the Tsar-part gumi, part priest. Beyond that, the sovetnik is also a professional. With training in a legitimate business interest, the sovetnik sets up the money laundering and makes sure the lideri are doing their jobs. The sovetnik also maintains connections with the prison systems that have incarcerated members of the Vory, reaching out to the bojeviki.

Below the sovetnik are the project managers or lideri. The lideri manages the day to day business and make sure we get paid. Each one has their own specialty-protection funds to bank fraud which they organize and coordinate. While many of them work together, occasionally, their interests conflict and deep in-fighting for resources can occur. As a group, the lideri also oversees the gruppa obespechenie.

Think of the gruppa obespechenie as accountants. They control the obschak, a communal fund which we use to run our businesses. Everyone pays the obschak—if you get a job, part of your money had better be given. You don't want to see what happens to thieves who don't pay. The obschak is how the Vory takes care of incarcerated members or their families. We pay death benefits to widows and children or bribe guards to allow for visits. The gruppa are well-connected to the tsar because they do the grunt labor of accounting and act as quartermasters. Getting one of these guys to owe you a favor is, excuse the reference, like playing Russian roulette. Sometimes they can get you what you need, other times you get shot in the face.

Shestiorkas are the lowest members of the organization who actually count as Vory. They are bagmen or gophers. We use them for things that cannot be trusted to an outsider but require minimal skill or savvy. Normally a shestiorka is recruited as a teenager—they are pulled in with promises of power and money. Successful ones move up in the Vory, either becoming part of the gruppa or if violent enough a bojevik. The unsuccessful ones end up dead.

- A lot of shadowrunners who do jobs for the Vory, work exclusively through the shestiorka. They aren't given much leeway to negotiate, so the first price you get is often the only price available as far as cred goes. Remember these guys can get their hands on some heavy mil-spec gear though. Working for cash-equivalent can net you more than the cash itself is worth.
- Sticks

The last of the Vory are the directly dangerous ones. The bojeviki are a group which has existed for years and recently taken on their own role. They are soldiers and enforcers who are loyal to the Vory above all. Bojeviki are used when contract labor (read: shadowrunners) or the allied street gangs are unsuitable and we need a hand that we can trust. Of all the Vory, these soldiers spend the most time in prison. There they work as recruiters and when needed, they kill prisoners who have turned to informants. Additionally, bojevik work as middlemen between the Vory and our local gangs. These enforcers supply weapons, armor and money to the gangs.

Even though the street gangs are not really Vory, they are important to us and our operations. Gangs serve as outsourced muscle for the Western Vory. We recruit, or kill enough of their leadership to control, several small and mid-size gangs. The gangs do small-time protection and distribution of drugs and BTLs.

Generally the gangs are paid a fixed rate, but some groups negotiate for a cut of what they sell.

- My cousin got her hands on a couple BTLs that the Vory gave her girlfriend. Behind the pretty lights is a Pavlovian conditioning program to build loyalty to the Russians.

• 2XL

- I don't suppose you have a copy of the programming handy?

• Snopes

## TACTICS

Posted by: Red Anya

- As I didn't trust Zloba to be completely unbiased, I did some searching. Here's an article I dug up briefing Interpol on Vory tactics based on undercover work and investigation.
- Red Anya

The Vory v Zakone are the most violent and efficient crime syndicate operating. Their efficiency stems from a willingness to do whatever works. They are no longer the prison culture that developed in gulags, but have adapted to every stage of the intervening years. The Vory have embraced the technological advances at a run and kept moving. With the joining of the Avtoritet into the mix, both groups have gotten a taste for how the other side lives and adjusted accordingly.

## INTIMIDATION

Whether it is the direct breaking of bones or a more subtle technique, the Vory v Zakone use intimidation to ensure obedience and cooperation. A favorite technique of the Avtoritet is to stop by a man's house and talk to his wife and children. During this interaction, the boss is extremely polite and amiable. Later, when the man comes home, he will find his wife sitting at the dinner table with the Avtoritet—depending on how obtuse the man is, the Avtoritet will make it clear that he can hurt this family at any moment. The unstated threat is that failure to comply will result in the man's family being hurt rather than him directly. In contrast, a Vor will send several bojeviki down to the house. They will park their car across the street and simply watch the house, making it perfectly clear that they know where the man lives and can break down the door at the drop of a hat.

Strong arm tactics extend to businesses as well as individuals. The Vory have been known to go into a bar, throw everyone out and have an extended "talk" with the proprietor. In these cases, violence and pain are used in the intimidation, but the enforcers do their best to not kill anyone. Dead people can't pay the protection fund.

## BRIBERY

With roots in the corrupt and unstable regions of Russia and Eastern Europe, the Vory are well practiced at bribing officials or greasing palms to get what they need. More than one politician has died under unusual circumstances, only to be replaced by a successor who is able to be bought. The Obschak supplies the funds for the bribes and there are politicians on the payroll who may never directly aid the Vory, but they never get in the way either. Beyond direct cash on the barrelhead, Avtoritet are known to purchase expensive gifts for the spouses and lovers of politicians





INCOMING FEED.....



and key figures. These gifts in kind serve as tokens that can later be called in when the Avtoritet needs something.

Some of the older Vors and Avtoritets take a *longue dur e* look at their operations and infiltrate companies or security firms. They begin grooming a *shestiorka* for a position and a decade later have their own man on the inside. To streamline the process, these tsars often bribe promotion review boards to fast-track candidates. In order to not show their hand, the candidates that are fast-tracked are not always the *shestiorka* infiltrators. Instead they can be bought men and women who now have a vested interest in helping the Vory or staying out of the way.

Beyond law enforcement, there are Vors that lead double lives themselves in mega-corporate roles. The Tolo Vory in Hong Kong is an example of a leader being fully-entrenched in both spheres of influence. By running the Marine Authority for Evo, he is well-placed to warn his people about crack-downs by local police forces. It's rumored that Evo knows of his involvement and turns a blind eye to it. The benefits for both sides can be enormous, with the AAA and the syndicate both scratching each other's back.

## BIGOTRY

Racism is ingrained deeply into the psyche of every Russian and is passed through a mother's milk to each new generation. Unlike traditional racism, against trops or halfers, the Vory draw their lines ethnically. Jews, Mongols, and Tatars are all looked down upon – a Red Vor will trust a Moscovite ork before Tatar human. This extends to all of the ethnic groups throughout Mother Russia. Due to their role as “a stranger in the house,” the Western Vory have shed this pattern to some degree; even outside the motherland though, they still recruit from Russian ghettos when given a choice.

- This is for the group as a whole. Individually, the Vory can be just as stupid and discriminatory as any other person.

- Arete

- Anyone know where they stand on the technomancer problem?

- Clockwork

- There's no “final solution” for us if that's what you mean. The Vory don't have any racial bias against organic commlinks, so I would presume that it is based off the ethnic guidelines like everything else. As long as the VK is Russian, everything should be just fine. Practicality wins with these guys.

- NetCat

## THAUMATURGY

There is a minimal awakened presence or tradition within the Vory. Magical ability was historically for the Russians in the providence of ostracized cultural groups such as the Mongols. Since the Awakening, many Russians with magical talent have been swept into state service. This has created a sense of distrust to further drive a wedge between the non-Awakened and Awakened populations. In the few documented cases of Awakened members of the Vory, they are rigidly hermetic and conditioned for loyalty to the Vory. Some evidence of psychotropic conditioning has been found as well.

## SPECIALTIES

The Vory have very diverse business interests and talents. While other syndicates may meddle in our affairs, some of our endeavors are unique.



## DATA BROKERAGE

Tracking the logistics of who is working for whom, can be difficult but worthwhile. During the initial exodus into Europe, the Western Vory began developing networks of informants and freelance watchers. Paparazzi without the glitz, these watchers follow an individual and collect information about their lives and habits. The pay scale depends on how secure the target is, and whether or not the Vory are able to resell the information. Exclusive rights to findings can be purchased, but they come with a high price tag.

This process was in many ways aided by the Second Crash. Now, agents and hackers track down and monitor their targets through the Matrix. With a member of the Vory following the mark physically and overwatch, the amount of information that can be gathered in a few days now used to take weeks. Sorting through the information that they gather, and cross-checking against who is buying, creates a web of intrigue that has helped several of the Avtoritet stay a few steps ahead of danger.

## LOAN SHARKING

The Vory have money. When people like you borrow money from us, we tell you when the nuyen needs to be paid back. The problem comes when you can't get the money or you don't think we're serious. That's when Sergei and Ivan break your legs. Beyond letting our enforcers play with new punching bags, loan sharking helps us launder money. When we invest in businesses who need our help, they pay us back and the cred has gone through enough hands that it can't be traced.

When businesses who are under our protection fall behind on their loans, we use shadowrunners. Sending one of the bojeviks gives a mixed message and let's them think we aren't doing our best to protect them. The runner's job is to get the money or make as messy an example as possible so that others know what happens when you don't pay.

- These guys play for keeps. An old buddy of mine borrowed money to pay for an upgrade to some 'ware. When he didn't pay it back, they repo'd his cyberware. They didn't ask if he was done using it yet.
- Traveler Jones

## MATRIX CRIMES

Beyond the hybrid data-brokerage, relying on meat and matrix presences, the Vory dabble is just about every Matrix based crime that there is a law against. From denial of service to credit fraud, they extort money from small business owners and individuals. Few of the other syndicates have embraced the wireless matrix as thoroughly as the Vory have. The Western Vory, combine their digital warfare with strong-arm tactics to ensure cooperation. Due to the prolific nature of the Matrix, it is possible for groups to work across factions—utilizing a local spotter to sniff out an Access ID, then have a hacker in another country bounce through proxy nodes and do the actual hack.

A growing industry is e-hijacking, intercepting of physical shipments by altering the shipping manifests. The Vory v Zakone discovered the profitability of this a few years ago and have been quietly shifting contents ever since. By altering the delivery manifest and the quantities, hackers re-route shipments in whole or in part to a new location. Due to the increased automation, these technological crimes can go unnoticed for a week or more, by which point the goods have already been distributed through the black market.

- Obviously this is bad for business. The corps write off a certain percentage to loss every year, but when you cross the threshold, the corps begin to investigate. Using nearby locations that are unoccupied during normal delivery hours can throw off the hunt. That also means that the delivery address is rarely where you will find the product an hour later if you are hunting it.

- Danger Sensei

## PRISON ECONOMIES

With roots in Russian gulags, the Vory have never forgotten the prison systems. Since their beginnings, they have made deep inroads into prison economies. The Red Vory have sunk their claws deeper into the Russian prison system than the Western Vory have been able to do with local prisons—due both to the corruption of the Russian system and the time that they have been in place. In nearly every prison, the Vory have control over tattoos, shivs, and home-brewed drugs. They also are able to smuggle items into the prisons, making both the guards and the prisoners' lives easier.

This economic control of the essentials, helps put incarcerated Vory higher up the food chain in prison life. They rarely do work in the prisons, an act which was taboo under the old code, instead trading the work assignments for access to prison staples. Within Russian prisons, this control even can extend to the guards, by bartering prohibited items that the guards want, an imprisoned Vor can arrange for access to a private cell or commlink. In the older days, a Vor could run his entire operation from behind bars by providing the right goods to the right people inside the system. The Western Vory have never had this level of control, instead buying the loyalty of bruisers within prisons to carry out tasks for them.

## PROSTITUTION

In contrast to the more glamorous Yakuza parlora with geisha or the technological bunraku parlors, the Vory prostitutes maintain the classics. Joytoys walk the streets, in the docks and red-light districts. Each of them is tagged with prices for their services. More established organizatsy, run cheap motels and coffins, where you pick your room and are charged by the minute. Certified funds are paid to the pimp or the house and the John gets his joytoy. The houses are each protected by the bojeviks and local gangs. The gangs are paid in cash and trade at the house.

Pandering to the basic human needs, the Western Vory also do home deliveries. They bring in custom toys for special clients and guarantee confidentiality. Many of the prostitutes used, are pulled out of z-zones, former squatters who are willing to trade their bodies for three squares a day. Some of the prostitutes are implanted with sim-rigs. This enables the Vory to get a double use out of their toys, both as whores and sim-starlets for the sim-porn productions that push out low-grade, cheap BTLs.

- The working girls in Seattle have two options: Prophylactics or Tamanous. Most of them pick the first, but the young and stupid ones end up in the organ banks.
- Butch
- Time ripens all things. No man is born wise
- Picador



## PROTECTION

One of the first things that a new organizatsy sets up is a protection racket. Why, because protection is easy. People pay us and we make sure the thugs don't hurt them. Refuse to pay, and well, gang violence is everywhere. Each group is slightly different in how they provide protection. Most of us let the local gangs know who is off the list. There is no reason to leave marks on doors or AROs. AROs are like matching tattoos, we're criminals not sorority members. If a gang rolls one of the shops protected, the gang pays back the protection fund.

- Protection rackets are prosecuted by the old RICO act in the UCAS. If you are hired to "collect the rent" watch your back. The Vory have been known to set people up when an investigation is closing in.
- Kay St. Irregular

## SMUGGLING

Within Russia, the Red Vory control almost all black market and smuggling operations. They utilize a similar structure to mega-corporate supply chain. The Avtoritets track purchasing trends and move a gross of assault rifles, the same way a Stuffer Shack orders another case of Soykaf. Similar to the Stuffer Shack, the Vory don't care who they are selling to. Loaded down with the latest and greatest toys out of the military-industrial complex, the only thing they care about is how much you are willing to pay.

- Affiliates from rival organizations can buy from these guys under the right circumstances. I've seen Yak and Triad riggers pick up their share of hardware and ammunition from Vory run black markets. As long as your employer doesn't catch wind of it, you're in the clear.
- Rigger X

Without the deep inroads into the military that the Red Vory have, the Western Vory smuggle narcotics and BTL chips produced by other groups into areas that they control. Arms smuggling still happens on a smaller scale than the Red Vory, due to stockpiles of weapons left from the EuroWars and hijacking of weapons shipments from law enforcement agencies, like Lone Star, on their way to destruction.

## WHITE COLLAR CRIME

The avtoritet run this stuff. Their organizatsy are set up like corps, and so they do the crimes the corps do. Lideri bring in new investors. The books all show the company is solid and a "prime investment opportunity." For a few months, the gruppa manages the capital flow and even gives money back to initial investors as a return on investment. This is to get more people to invest rather than actually holding up the bargain. I'm told that the money paid out is from new investors putting money in, so the obschak is never touched. When enough money has come in, the lideri siphon the money out and dump bad debt in. Soon enough the holding company is dumped and the investors are all out of luck.

- Has anyone actually heard of a runner doing this? Beyond our silvered abacus...
- Slamm-0!
- Everything I've ever heard is anecdotal, "friend of a cousin" stories.
- Snopes

## POVRYEJHDA SEATTLE

Posted by Red Anya

- Following Mihoshi Oni's post about the crime syndicates in Seattle, I did some digging into the Terminator and his crew during a lay-over. Since our friends have profiled some of the other syndicate players I thought I'd do the same. Some of you will remember that Bilotkiy used to be a bogeyman in the shadows of Moscow. The question of how he got to run his own organizatsya intrigued me.
- Red Anya
- Povryejhda translates to broken or damaged. With a heavy like Bilotkiy who isn't used to taking shit from anyone running the show, it's easy to see why he chose that name.
- 2XL

## TSAR ALEKSANDER BILOTKIY

The former hatchetman to Andrei Petschukov, Bilotkiy still goes by his nickname the Terminator. He has extensive implants and was trained by the Red Army Special Forces. An imposing figure at 2.1m, Aleksander has a well-tanned physique and obvious cyber-eyes. Bilotkiy has undergone leonization therapy and appears to be in his mid-thirties, despite being almost fifty. The Terminator has a slow-burning fuse for his temper. He is extremely loyal to the Red Vory and Moscow's Avtoritet boss, Andrei Petschukov. Since coming to Seattle, the tsar has cleaned house, eliminating several members of the Vory who sided too closely with the Western ideals.

Rumors continue to circulate as to why he is in Seattle and not at Petschukov's right hand. It is believed that the Avtoritet is trying to solidify the Pacific Rim to make up for losses in Europe to the Alta Commissione, but one thing is to be certain—don't mention Judas program. Bilotkiy caught wind of a few shadowrunners who said that he had spyware implanted with everything else and that Petschukov no longer trusted him. They were found three days later, hacked into pieces and left in a box at the Crime Mall.

- Any malware which could have been implanted would have been purged during the software update or just be plain non-compatible with Matrix 2.0. It still makes me wonder though how true the rumors may have been...
- Beaker

The Terminator has spent a lot of time recently in closed meetings with former Red Army officials, most of whom worked in boot camps. No one has talked about the topics in those meetings, but if Bilotkiy is going to bring in drill sergeants then it's only a matter of time before he starts training soldiers. Be on the lookout for any remote land purchases of a few hundred acres.

## SOVETNIK SERGEI ANTONOV

Chief advisor to Aleksander, Sergei Antonov is an accountant. To him, alliances and street gangs, weapons and vehicles are all numbers—means to an end. Every action and outcome has a price tag which needs to be reckoned. This dehumanizing approach ended his marriage in 2057. Since then, the Sovetnik has made infrequent use of the prostitutes kept by the Vory and found the simple business transactions more to his liking.



Antonov is 1.7m tall and nearly as broad-shouldered as Bilotkiy. He works as a liaison for the Russian petroleum refining company NOR which delivers to the Tacoma docks weekly. With this cover, Antonov is able to maintain constant connection with Moscow without raising suspicion. When the sovetnik is not working, he spends his time in the gym as an amateur body-builder. Middle-aged, Sergei keeps his balding hair trimmed to stubble.

- The voice behind the curtain is often more powerful than the man in front of it.
- Axis Mundi

## LIDERI PIOTR KIRILSKIY

The highest educated, formally, within the organizatsya, Piotr studied International Business and Law at the University of Kiev. He served seven years in prison for a number of charges. While inside, the elf studied money laundering and racketeering with the Vory he was imprisoned alongside. After his sentence was completed, Kirilskiy worked in the gruppa for several years before taking his position as Lideri. Hand-chosen by Sergei Antonov, Piotr left Moscow with the other members of the Povryejhda syndicate to manage Seattle.

In his late thirties, Kirilskiy is thin and book-educated. He has light auburn hair, trimmed in a short business cut and is always seen in three piece suits. Piotr is married to a CAS woman, whom he met at the University. So far this hasn't proven to be a liability for him, but he has made it clear that she is of Russian descent if not birth. The lideri and his gruppa dine together every Friday night, with Piotr's wife making Russian ethnic dishes.

The lideri has worked on organizing Povryejhda to be more of a corporate structure but there has been resistance to the movement so far. He has butted heads with the tsar more than once, over timelines. So far Bilotkiy does not believe they are firmly enough established in Seattle to begin white collar crimes. Kirilskiy has put out feelers but is impatiently waiting on approval. He has tried convincing the sovetnik to weigh in and support a high-rolling scope but has been unsuccessful thus far.

## BOJEVIK LYUBOV KIRILSKAYA

Piotr's niece, Lyubov has made a name and reputation for herself rather than riding on nepotism. She began as a shestiorka in the streets of Vladivostok, running packages and smuggling small items on her person as a mule. Her parents moved to Moscow when she was fourteen. She graduated from gopher to gunhand after shooting a business owner who refused to pay the protection fund. Since then she has helped with armed robbery, extortion and racketeering.

In her mid-twenties, Lyubov has undergone extensive body augmentations. Bone-lacing and reaction enhancement has kept her ahead of the men she grew up with. Despite her elven heritage, she has a plain face and augmented musculature, trusting a surgeon's knife more than her genetics. Kirilskaya has no aspirations of higher education, though she is quick to learn new tasks. The bojevik has recently discovered the benefits of tempo and frequently indulges in it when she is not working.

- Plain faced is a nice way of saying she was hit in the head with a shovel as a child or at least looks like it. Seriously, she is the ugliest

elf I have ever seen. Next time she's under the knife, it wouldn't hurt to add a nose job, some cheekbones, anything the doctors can do.

- Haze

Her tempo addiction is known amongst the shestiorkas but the knowledge hasn't climbed up the chain yet. She has threatened to kill any of the teens who know if they tell her uncle. When she is not strung out, the bojevik manages the protection rackets and works closely with the Vory's pet gangs in the area. Lyubov is known to spend time in Denver with Irina Klavikova, another Vory enforcer.

## SHESTIORKA KONSTANTIN VALEROV

Born in the Russian ghettos of Seattle, Konstantin used to run with the Ragers. When the Vory showed up and had shestiorka moving up and down every side street along the Tacoma docks, he saw this as a chance to trade up. Though he was born in Seattle, Valerov speaks fluent Russian and even has a muddled provincial accent. The shestiorka is only a teenager, but the last few years on the street taught him to grow up quickly. When he told the Ragers that he was out, they jumped him out in much the same way that they jumped him in. Konstantin had a black eye, three cracked ribs and bruising down the length of his left side when he showed up at the warehouse the bojeviks were using. He didn't let that stop him from asking for a job.

At fifteen, Konstantin is still lanky, but the ork is showing signs of growing into his shoulders and filling out. Nearly black hair and a fair Seattle complexion, make him look more at home with the urban sub-cultures than a criminal syndicate. Valerov is an eager kid, looking to make a good impression. He watches trid-flicks whenever he has the spare cash, but making sure that he has food in his belly is always the first priority.

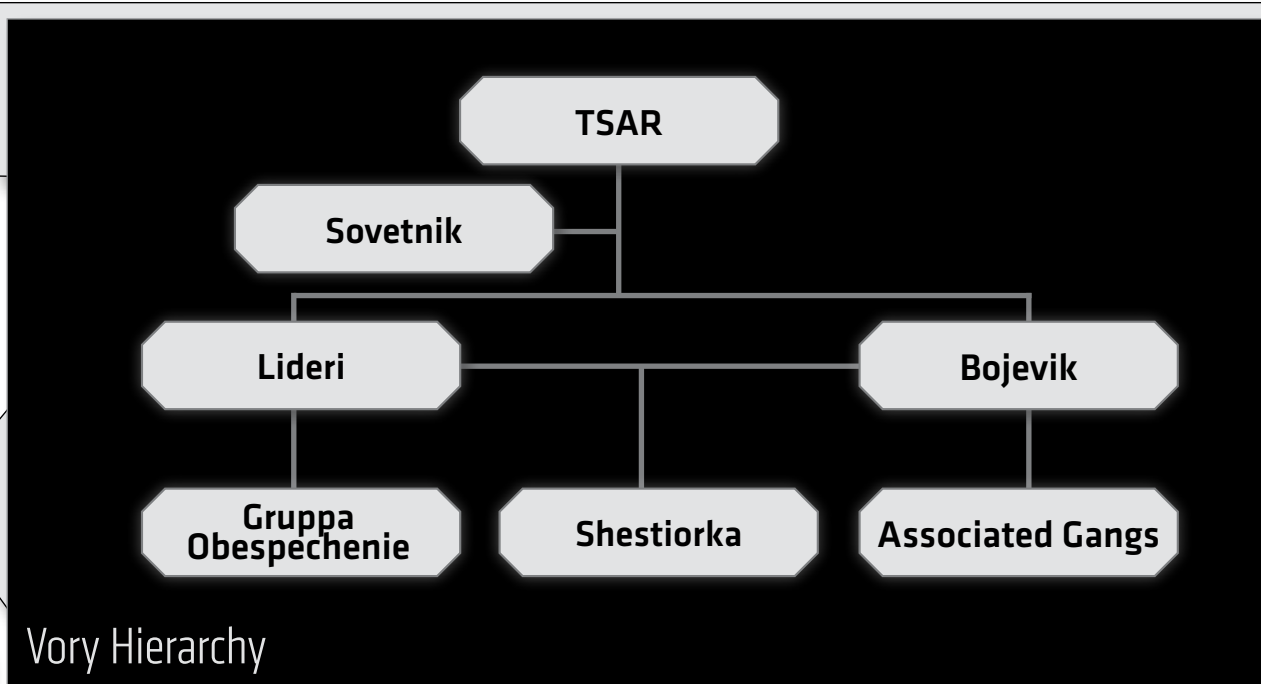
- Konstantin still has friends in the Ragers, friends who let slip a few things about tempo sales that they shouldn't have. While the Vory aren't getting their hands on large supplies any time soon, the Sovetnik is putting things together to make a bid for a large piece of the action.
- Hannibelle

## LOCAL OPERATIONS

The Seattle Vory are primarily based out of the Tacoma dock area. While the area had been a hot bed of activity between the Yaks and Mafia, Bilotkiy and his people waited until both groups were looking the other way and grabbed everything from Pier 87 south. Since their daring grab, various sections of the docks have traded hands a dozen times. Street violence, gun play and the occasional fire-bombing are all part of the life in Tacoma. "The Terminator" and his bojeviks are dug in deeply though and won't give up the area without an all-out war.

Along the docks, local prostitutes and joytoys strut their goods. Each of them is tagged with an embedded RFID to display the prices of each service and what fetishes are available. The tags also serve a dual function of tracking down any strays that may try to leave their pimps without cashing out for the night. Most of the joytoys working the streets in the docks are local, either new talent pulled out of nearby zones or old pros who used to walk the same streets for the Mafia. The Povryejhda Vory have an arrangement with a local motel that rents rooms by the hour—joytoys take their clients there if the John doesn't have a local flat. Each John is expected to pick up the tab of the room, as well as, their entertainment's fee. The Vory see a cut of the profits as part of their protection racket.





Beyond prostitution and pandering, the Vory use the dock area for smuggling. Ships coming from Vladivostock bring in weapons and body armor, straight out of the military surplus yards. These are then sold to the highest bidder or bartered as payment to local gangs for their services. I've also heard rumors about designer drugs, particularly combat drugs coming in with the military hardware, but can't find any proof to back it up. What is clear though, is that BTLs are shipped in from Hong Kong. The Tolo Vory in Hong Kong is always willing to sell what they can't distribute themselves. This keeps the profits in the organization and encourages peaceful negotiations between the two groups. Freelance smugglers are allowed to operate in the docks that the Vory control for a five percent docking fee. Because the fee requires the smuggler to let the Vory know the value of their cargo, some smugglers have tried to short change the Russians. While a few have probably gotten away with lying, Bilotkiy set a firm example the first week he had control. Three crews which had lied were summarily executed, their bodies chopped up and thrown into the Sound.

Further inland, the crime shifts from the travel and hospitality industries to protection and cybercrimes. Unlike most protection rackets where the threat of danger comes afterwards for anyone who doesn't pay, the scene in Seattle had a surge of gang violence first. When Lyubov Kirilskaya was given the job of laying out the foundation for the protection rackets in Tacoma, she decided to reach beyond the norm. The gangs that were being courted for a piece of the action in Vory territory were given a list of targets to vandalize and harass. Two weeks later, Lyubov showed up and said that she could curb the violence for a small fee. This gave the bojevik a chance to see how effective the gangs were. Additionally, the shop owners were more prone to paying to remove a current threat than a fictitious one which had not yet manifested. She has continued this technique in each of the areas that they have run protection rackets.

Part of their expansion plan is knowing what is going on in other parts of the city. The organizatsi has put out feelers and informants throughout the metroplex. Downtown is a good example of their techniques. With the heightened security presence, they have gone completely low-tech. Shestiorkas and snitches work in restaurants and retail outlets where they listen and jot notes into their commlinks during breaks. Agents run on commlinks, sampling network traffic and grabbing Access IDs to corroborate what the shestiorkas tell their higher-ups. Here, the information that is being transmitted openly due to security measures in place to keep the public safe can be gleaned quickly. This chatter is cross-referenced with information gleaned from more high-tech solutions and analyzed for patterns of weakness or areas where the Vory can exploit vulnerabilities.

- Not everything in Downtown is low-tech. ShadowSea has found a half-dozen different agents crawling quietly through secure systems. It looks like the Vory is trying to piggy-back several systems and infest nexus-points with data-trawlers for later analysis. As long as it stays autonomous, they won't pose a big threat but a skilled hacker or worse a sys-admin on the take could screw up the network integrity of a dozen different mesh points in the area.
- Slamm-0!

### MANPOWER

So far the Povryejhda have managed to recruit a handful of small gangs to watch over small bits of their operations and provide an excuse to business owners to pay the protection fund. These groups are barely worth the title, but have proven to be an effective source of unskilled labor. The gangers come from the street and may have eventually grown to be thorns in the side of the Ragers or other more pronounced gangs. Shestiorkas and bojevniks have been working overtime to get these raw recruits trained in the bare minimums so that they aren't a liability to the Vory. While thus

far the overtures to the Ragers and the larger gangs like the Spikes have been unsuccessful on the whole, some members have signed on with the Vory, forsaking previous ties.

- Bilotkiy lucked out with the Spikes—right now, the gang is having some problems finding a long-term survival plan. Every predator has enough instinct to know when it's about to become prey.
- Hannibelle

The Vory are just over a hundred strong with actual soldiers and enforcers that came from Mother Russia. Many of these are former Red Army or street thugs who weren't disciplined enough for MET2000. This group forms the backbone of Bilotkiy's strength and they are his right and left hands in the street. A rising soldier, an enforcer blurring the edges between shestiorka and bojevik, has a lot of chances to prove himself. They travel in small packs of three to five, scouting out opportunities within the sprawl to assert themselves.

- Another Night of Long Knives could be in the works here. With this many gun-hands and the rising threat level on the streets, it's only a matter of time before escalation and ambush.
- Snopes

In addition to the muscle, there have been recruitment attempts in the digital and astral realms as well. Early plans to impose their will on a matrix gang were kaboshed when the question of enforcing loyalty to the Code came up. Recruiters were ousted for ShadowSea when strong-arm attempts were made in the matrix against some of the more popular followers. They learned their lesson and sent up a digital white flag. Since then, the Vory has been allowed to have representatives online but the leash is still kept short. This has left recruitment to either hacker hangouts where the occasional individual signs on, or relying on qualified talent to be shipped in from Russia. The Vory have taken to using local spotters in Seattle and coordinating attacks with hackers in Moscow, Vladivostok and St Petersburg for the actual hack job. This has a set of limitations which Bilotkiy and Antonov are working on overcoming.

Unlike the matrix gangs, the Vory had a measure of success with impressing a wiz-gang. Two bit gangs like the Ear-Bleeders have joined up with the Vory in exchange for magical tutelage and knowledge of more advanced meta-magics. The Povryejhda Vory coerced an old professor from the University of Kiev to immigrate to Seattle. Professor Lyodor Kovska has taught his new "pupils" the basics. The gangers lack restraint at time, often hitting their targets with everything they have without realizing what the repercussions will be. They are blunt instruments but definitely capable. One method that is being used to control the gangs is by restricting their access to information. They are being taught the big flashy magic, leaving subtlety and control to Russian born mages.

- They've never heard of generic spell formulae huh?
- Fianchetto
- Control is an illusion to deceive oneself.
- Axis Mundi

## GHOST CARTELS

- It's been a pretty wild year for the Ghost Cartels. I figured an update would be in order, because, well, seems to me these guys were responsible for shaking up the status quo. Might as well find out what they're up to. Anyway, I've pulled together some files, so feel free to add in whatever you know. Share and share alike, eh?
- FastJack
- So, gotta do these boring reports for school. This one almost got me a full-on session with the principal and my folks, as well as a recommendation for counseling for my anti-social tendencies. Hey, somehow those files got deleted from the school's computer ... they should really invest in a better firewall. Anyway, here you go, straight from tenth grade AP History.
- /dev/grrl

## A HISTORY OF THE GHOST CARTELS

Posted by: /dev/grrl

The South American Ghost Cartels have a long and colorful history, one that often neglected by the patronizing fuckheads who write the whitewashed history texts approved by our illustrious school board for dissemination into our corporate-owned brains. The cartels had their beginning in the mid-twentieth century, brought to life by the old USofA's policy against free-flowing mind-benders. By legislating various pharmaceuticals out of the public marketplace—at the call of big industry lobbyists who were hoping to control access to the active agents in their drugs and squash independent importers in a fine example of capitalism—they created a huge demand for illegal methods to obtain said pharmaceuticals, subsequently raising the prices—and hence, profits—of the drug trade.

Springing into the market, the Central and South American drug lords began to rake in the profits, growing larger and more organized to combat the weak-assed efforts by the various marketplaces to stop the free trade. By the 21<sup>st</sup> century, before the Awakening, the various drug lords had transformed their organizations into the equivalent of large (and very profitable) corporations, with profit margins that would make even today's mega-corporate bean counters weep with joy (profit margins starting at 500% for the cheaper drugs). They diversified their holdings, investing in legal and quasi-legal endeavors, using their huge drug profits to fund their other investments. This wasn't, as has been suggested, a money laundering effort (since the lax or non-existent government controls in their hometowns made laundering drug money unnecessary), but rather an effort to figure out what the hell to do with so much money. It has been suggested that by the turn of the twentieth century, profits from these legal endeavors were still overshadowed by the phenomenal success of the cartels' various drug income, which have been estimated to be as high as 100 million dollars a month for the David cartel alone (The Drug Game, Samperson, 2063). In fact, the drug trade at the time was a trillion-dollar industry that would have ranked as the third most profitable enterprise sector on Earth (Journal of Economics, May 20<sup>th</sup>, 2063, p. 78-89). With the illegality of the drugs artificially inflating the prices and allowing the drug cartels to avoid pesky things like income taxes, licenses, or import fees, the drug lords (and ladies) had nothing to gain by deregulation and legalization of their products.

In 2007, a major milestone was reached. Three of the larger drug cartels—the Medellín, David, and Masaya—formed one large



conglomerate. This corporation was spearheaded by Juan Ortega, the head of the Medellín cartel, and under his direction, the various cartels pooled their resources and purchased a small company, which they renamed ORO. Due to some fancy footwork with mineral rights (which turned out to be worth billions and billions of nuyen) and a great sideline in selling computer software they stole from other corporations (and sold at a discount to rock the market), ORO became unbelievably wealthy. The cartels continued their drug trade, but even that profitable industry paled in comparison to their other efforts. Of course, while this was going on, the cartels took control of the governments of most Central American governments, including Costa Rica, Nicaragua, Panama, Honduras, El Salvador, Columbia, and Venezuela. In 2022, ORO renamed itself Aztechnology and became the number-one supplier of consumer crap that we all need to buy today (Aztechnology, Inside the Pyramid Scheme, 2059, Denver Nexus Archived Files, [link](#)).

As the years passed, the various cartels that made up the original founders of Aztechnology were pressed out of the drug trade by the David cartel, headed by Julio Ramos (the “R” in ORO). With the powerful backing of ORO, and then Aztechnology, Ramos went about trying to eliminate the rest of the drug cartels, giving their jefes the option of joining ranks with him or being slaughtered like pigs.

Those that decided to give Ramos the finger eventually had to flee their home grounds, re-naming themselves the Ghost Cartels, to symbolize their elusive ability to avoid destruction by Aztechnology. They continued to grow, process, and distribute various biological drugs, raking in profits and driving the David cartel crazy.

As technological brain-benders came on the market, the Ghost Cartels found themselves with the first real competition for their products. As their profit margins dwindled, the David cartel put even more pressure on them, with its own business insulated from the drug slump by Aztechnology (and the fact that most drugs the cartel produces are as legal as aspirin in Aztlan—no market slump there). In self-defense, the Ghost Cartels linked up with governments in South America, investing gobs of money in legal businesses in Ecuador, Columbia, and Brazil, gaining political sway over the local governments, and positioning themselves. They also worked out a deal with the fledgling Amazonia, undermining local governments and softening countries up in advance of Amazonia invasion in return for certain privileges. When Amazonia formed and became Aztlan’s #1 Most Hated, the Ghost Cartels gained immensely. Amazonia’s rapid gobbling of territory north countered Aztlan’s push south, ensuring the Ghost Cartels weren’t completely consumed by Aztlan expansionism. The cartels struck a deal with the Amazonian government, providing arms, funds, and military training, helping to stabilize the fledgling economy, and, of course, getting a safe haven from Aztechnology interference.

For twenty-five years, Amazonia has been a safe haven for the Ghost Cartels (although Amazonia maintains appearances by “forcing” the Ghost Cartels to keep their HQ off Amazonia soil, while at the same time ignoring their extensive operations in the country). Recently, the joint Interpol-Aztechnology strikes in Ghost Cartel territory (primarily the neutral cities of Caracas and Bogotá) threatened that safe-haven. By all accounts, Aztechnology severely hurt the Ghost Cartels. Still, they’ve survived this long by being elusive and having the ability to regenerate, no matter what their losses. Experts believe they will continue to operate, and undoubtedly even thrive, despite the recent setback (Interview with Glasswalker, 03-14-2072).

- Well, that paper probably gave your instructor a heart attack.
- The Smiling Bandit
- Yeah, well, I only got a C, since the stupid tutor-soft agent couldn’t verify one of my citations. Like it’s my fault it couldn’t hack into the Nexus to verify one citation? That and it said the profanity was inappropriate. \*rolls eyes\*
- /dev/grrl
- Glasswalker, you give school interviews now? How cute.
- Marcos
- Weren’t you the one who said you had a thing for pointy ears and freckles? Two more years and she’s legal, omae.
- Glasswalker

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**NEWSNOW! BY HOLLY HASKINS**

The recent drug-related violence that stormed through our city, and across our nation, seems to have finally been eradicated. NewsNow! is interrupting our normal programming to take you live to a conference by Governor Brackhaven, standing with Lone Star’s Seattle VP, Charlie Hammerstein. The governor has the stage.

**Governor Brackhaven:** We are proud to announce that in the last month, drug-related crime has been reduced an amazing 35%. Lone Star and the National Guard have worked together to take our streets back from the gangs and the South American drug lords. As you may all know, Interpol’s Drug Enforcement Agency—IDEA—has identified the South American drug cartels as the source of the highly addictive drug—known as tempo—that was responsible for the storm of violence that rocked our city this past year. IDEA, together with Aztechnology, has attacked the drug cartels in their South American strongholds, destroying their growing fields and cutting off the source of this damaging drug.

Now, I’ll take questions.

**Reporter:** Governor Brackhaven, now that IDEA has destroyed the cartels, can you tell us when the National Guard will be removed from our streets?

**Governor Brackhaven:** I can tell you that we have a staggered phaseout planned. However, due to the amount of tempo Lone Star is still seizing from drug houses, dealers, and smugglers from the Salish-Sidhe nation, it is clear that our city still has need for the brave soldiers of our National Guard.

**Reporter:** Is tempo still being smuggled into the city? If so, how are you addressing that?

**Governor Brackhaven:** Our information shows that there is still a sizable inventory of the drug in circulation. We believe most of the drug to be coming in through smugglers in the Salish-Sidhe. We’re actively working with the NAN to find and stop these pipelines. However, as you know, the NAN has a different “definition” of drug than we do in the UCAS. Rest assured, now that Interpol has destroyed the drug cartels, they tell us there will be no *new* tempo grown or distributed. Every bust our brave officers make gets us closer to our “zero-inventory” goal.

**Reporter:** Governor Brackhaven, what about the existing tempo addicts? Haven’t we seen a surge in crime as the prices of tempo already on the streets continue to rise? Won’t that just get worse as the amount of tempo decreases even further?





INCOMING FEED.....



MAJOR SYNDICATES.....

**Governor Brackhaven:** Rest assured, Seattle's social services are actively helping tempo addicts. Any addict who seeks help will receive it. Also, in partnership with Horizon, we've set up virtual chat rooms and support groups for those family members of tempo addicts. Those addicts already in the custody of police are being treated. We recognize that drug addiction is a medical condition, and we hope to treat the poor, unfortunate souls who've been affected.

**Reporter:** What about your niece, Tiffany?

**Governor Brackhaven:** First, I'd like to thank everyone for their prayers, well-wishes, and the amazing support this city has shown for my niece. Tiffany is currently in treatment. My niece is a strong young woman, and I have every hope she'll pull through. When she's recovered sufficiently, I also expect her to fully testify against those criminals who forcibly exposed her to this very addicting drug. We're working with the Salish-Sidhe government right now to establish Seattle's right to extradite those criminals.  
// end attachment //

- Wait a sec. Did Brackhaven just say that IDEA destroyed the cartels?
- Turbo Bunny
- No, cagey bastard that he is. He said that Interpol says they destroyed the cartels. Gave his voters some confidence that they'd seen the last of tempo, but he also gave himself some wiggle room. He can blame any problems that crop up on Interpol's incompetence, not his.
- Dr. Spin
- Joey D's done her best in a smear campaign against the rat-bastard. Him outsted would have been the silver lining in the tempo cloud. Damn.
- Pistons

• Oh, don't give up hope yet. Crime hasn't dropped by 35% this month, drug busts have. Brackhaven's playing a word game. He's still going down like a sinking ship. But, I want to know what's really going on in South America. All that talk, imminent war between Amazonia and Aztlan, bombing cities, Interpol agents on the ground ... and then, bam, no news. What's going on? Is there really no more tempo coming up? Because I can tell you, things are getting bad as the current supply dries up. I hate to see what'll happen once it's all gone...

• Kat o' Nine Tales

• No, the Ghost Cartels aren't gone. Remember, folks, the Ghost Cartels aren't one giant entity, easy to destroy in a few strategic strikes. They're actually dozens of organizations loosely affiliated for their own mutual profit and protection. You may think of them as a single crime syndicate, but down here in Latin America, we sure as hell know the difference between each of them. Even if IDEA destroyed the Olaya (which they didn't), there would still be the Andes, the Morales, the Cachoeira ... You get the picture. Aztechnology may have beheaded a couple of them in the Baltimore Towers strike, but they're like the Lernaean Hydra—cut off one head, and more grow back. I can see I need to explain a bit just what the cartels are and how they work. Here, let me load up a nice little document on the Big Baddie, the David cartel (courtesy of Fian-o), and then I'll post some things Pyramid Watcher sent me.

• Glasswalker

## DAVID CARTEL

Posted by: Maija Wright

- One off the largest cartels around is the David cartel, based in Aztlan. Yes, in all of Aztlan. Technically, the David cartel is not a part of the Ghost Cartels, but since they have such a long and intertwined history, I felt it appropriate to include them here. A few of you may know Maija Wright, previously the head of Interpol's Drug Enforcement Agency. I've been helping her out while she's on leave from IDEA, and together, we've uncovered quite a bit of dirt on the cartel. This little gem is something she put together for her superiors, right before they put her on "leave of absence" due to "stress."
- Fianchetto

The David cartel is a wide-reaching criminal organization based out of Aztlan. It is almost 100 years old, but it has evolved considerably from its roots as a "simple" drug cartel. Originally, the cartel operated out of the city of David, in Panama. It was one of three cartels that founded ORO, which would later grow into Aztechnology (see attached file [Aztechnology, History](#)). Meanwhile, as the corporation grew, so did the nation of Aztlan. As the years went on, the other two drug cartels ([Medellin](#) and [Masaya](#)) eventually faded out, absorbed by the (semi-)legitimate business side of their investments. Today, only the David cartel remains functional.

Julio Ramos began the David cartel. His son, Domingo "Ding" Ramos, took the helm of the David cartel, as well as his father's shares of Aztechnology and a seat on the board of Aztechnology, almost thirty years ago.

Estimates put Mr. Ramos's shares of Aztechnology at between 5 and 10%, but they could be even higher. Mr. Ramos has expensive tastes, in everything from his mistresses to his cars, and he enjoys many of the finer things in life. While his lavish lifestyle seems to indicate he's content to fritter away his time and money, our in-country assets speculate that it's just a front. Reliable assets say that in reality, he's very active on the board of Aztechnology, and he runs the David cartel with a hands-on approach.

- Ding is a complete asshole. You can just ask his 5 ex-wives, his numerous mistresses, his two dozen-plus children (that he knows of), and the various other women he's exploited or abused over the years. It's even been said he hosts multiple people (mostly women) in his private serail on his huge villa outside Concepción in Panama, where he enjoys torturing them both mentally and physically. He's earned a nickname as the Panamanian Marquis de Sade; apparently, he enjoys feeding off the darker emotions of fear, shame, and horror that his "guests" provide through their full-simsense recording units. He has special equipment so he can capture it. If any man deserved to be gelded, he does—preferably without benefit of pain medicine. I'll do the honors if I ever see him again.
- Kat o' Nine Tales
- Ding's also over seventy years old, according to his public birth records ... Of course, he's an elf, so you put that together. Makes you wonder, doesn't it?
- Winterhawk
- You're not the only one.
- Frosty

After removal from Denver, and following the Yucatan peace accords, Aztlan turned its attention to cleaning up inside its borders. One of the first things they did was crack down on crime inside the country. They all but eliminated the Mafia and Yakuza, hunted down the fragile connections the Ghost Cartels still maintained inside Aztlan, and before long, the David cartel was the only criminal syndicate operating within the nation. Although Aztlan refuses to acknowledge it, repeated examples (compiled in files [X9743-734-mw/DC](#)) show that there is still significant crime present in Aztlan, and the majority of it is attributed to the David cartel.

Currently, the David cartel has a monopoly on every type of traditional, and many non-traditional, crimes in Aztlan. Still, they specialize in drugs, both organic (like coke) and technological (BTLs). Since these drugs are legal in Aztlan, they primarily export their drugs abroad, trying to undercut the Ghost Cartels to eliminate their competition. This policy wasn't simply the result of rivalry between the different cartels; it was also strong national policy, since the Ghost Cartels funded rebels within Aztlan and are big supporters of Amazonia. By cutting into the Ghost Cartels' profits, they were effectively cutting off funding to those who would oppose their nation.

With the recent crackdown on the Ghost Cartels—led by Aztechnology—the David cartel has seen skyrocketing profits due to their ability to step into the void left by the strategic removal of several Ghost Cartel leaders and the general chaos following the tempo storm. I have hypothesized that the assistance Aztechnology lent this organization was motivated largely by the David cartel's long-term goal to eliminate the Ghost Cartels and assume their portion of the staggeringly profitable drug trade.

Currently, outside the drug trade, the David cartel is involved in everything from Matrix crimes to arms dealing, protection rackets to drug smuggling. They are responsible for kidnappings, murder-for-hire, and other violent crimes ... but only against those whose deaths or damage would benefit Aztechnology. In fact, it's been said by many that the David cartel is Aztechnology's biggest deniable asset, both in and out of Aztlan.

- It's also been said that Aztechnology is the David cartel's biggest legitimate asset ... It's hard to know who's pulling whose strings in that incestuous relationship.
- Marcos

There's little to no data linking the David cartel to the tempo storm of last year. However, records show that Domingo Ramos was present, as an Aztechnology board member, when Aztechnology made their offer to this organization and the Corporate Court for assistance in tracking down the Ghost Cartels. Since Aztlan does not officially recognize the David cartel as a criminal syndicate (at least, not that they report to Interpol or any other international police agency), the truth may never be known by the public. However, our own intelligence officers within Interpol's Division of Organized Crime have provided numerous reports, occasionally sacrificing their own lives to get the incriminating data to us. I have uncovered a systematic policy of suppressing these reports and reprimanding the officers involved. The IDOC has never shared this incriminating data with IDEA, nor with me in my capacity as head of the department. In particular, the intelligence linking Domingo Ramos to a sizable drug cartel was purposely withheld.





As an officer of this agency, I am officially filing this report with both my superiors and the head of the agency. In addition, I am requesting a full internal investigation to expose what appears to be a link between the David cartel and officers within Interpol.

Respectfully,  
M. Wright

- Okay. Here's the real scoop. Maija's as straight an arrow as you'll find. She's earned my respect, even while I've had to occasionally dance around her ethics—and I know a lot of European runners will say the same. She told me that she was tipped off to the potential leak around Ding when he showed up in Caracas during the Interpol-Azzie raids. Maija couldn't officially request any surveillance on Ding, being that he was a board member of the very corporation providing the manpower for the raids. When a body was found at Graciela Riveros's villa in Caracas, burned beyond recognition, dental records and DNA testing was used to identify the deceased as Riveros; the DNA records were provided by Aztechnology, who had apparently had a file on Riveros that included a DNA sample. Maija doubted the veracity of the report, especially since, before that discovery, she had been unaware that any DNA records existed for Riveros. As Maija said, "Riveros could make a monkey look like the President of UCAS. She couldn't tweak her own genes?" When she brought up these reasonable concerns, her superiors told her to drop it. When she didn't, and did more research, finding the link between the David cartel, Ding, and Aztechnology, they put her on a leave of absence.
- Fianchetto
- Are you saying that Maija Wright believes Graciela is still alive?
- Nephrine
- Yes.
- Fianchetto
- So where is she? Wasn't she the mastermind behind tempo?
- Nephrine
- Wait, I think I can guess this. We were all surprised when Salazar escaped Aztechnology's wrath, wiggled out of any personal responsibility for tempo, and managed to wiggle out of any legal (or otherwise) consequences. Maija thinks he sold out Graciela to Aztechnology in exchange for them supporting him on the Corporate Court?
- Kay St. Irregular
- Yes. And, she also believes that Graciela will continue to produce tempo on behalf of the David cartel. That the David cartel (and Aztechnology) couldn't pass up the opportunity to control the wildly profitable drug. She believes—and has told her superiors—that once the stockpile of tempo gets whittled down, and the addicts become desperate, then the David cartel will step in with sky-high prices on their own tempo. Supposedly, the stockpiles of tempo in Caracas were destroyed—by Aztechnology employed specialists. Maija's determined to discover if Aztechnology really did destroy the tempo, or if they took it ...
- Fianchetto

- Look, I respect Maija as much as you do. But if she decides to pursue this, she's signing her own death warrant. I hope you can convince her that some battles just aren't worth the fight.
- Kay St. Irregular
- And some battles are.
- Picador

## SOUTH AMERICAN POLITICS AND CRIME

The Ghost Cartels, forced out of Aztlan territories by the David cartel, made a strategic decision to align themselves with the enemies of Aztlan. The old saying the enemy of my enemy is my friend could be their motto when it comes to dealing with the political mess that is South America. By funneling money, arms, and manpower to the emerging governments, they accomplished two goals. One, they got the political clout to operate unhindered in their home territories. Two, they ensured the countries they resided in would be strong enough to resist the empire-building ambitions of Aztlan, keeping them safe from their primary enemy. In return, the David cartel attempts to undermine the Ghost Cartels by undercutting their prices for drugs, strategic assassinations, and—most recently—using the public face of Aztechnology to wage war against the Ghost Cartels on their own soil.

When the Awakened forces took over the country of Brazil, the Ghost Cartels struck a deal with Hualpa and his draconian friends. The Ghost Cartels actively undermined and corrupted governments to pave the way for the Amazonia takeover. In return, some countries were left to the cartels as client states of Amazonia, such as Ecuador, Bolivia, and Paraguay. The cartels can operate as normal in those countries (as long as they follow "green" growing practices), and the cartels also provide much-needed industry and stable economies, as well as a "non-affiliated" line of defense against Aztlan.

The cartels have also become the primary backers of the Great Columbia Policlub, an organization dedicated to restoring Colombian independence, hoping someday to reform the country as an autonomous nation (and buffer state). They run on a strong anti-Aztlan platform, which is immensely popular with the people in the area.

- Right. The name may be changed, but it's pretty obvious that Amazonia is the major push behind this. Get the policlubbers to unite the territory, then sweep in with their eco-radical policies and gobble up yet another section of South America.
- Dr. Spin
- Actually, doc, Glasswalker's on the ball here. The cartels have much of their business based in the old territory of Columbia, and they'd like it to be all theirs. Why bother bribing government officials when you can just be the government? Amazonia may be cautiously supportive of this, but that's got more to do with the idea that there'd be a nice buffer zone between the two Big A's. Well, and, of course, it'd drive Aztlan buggy to have the Ghost Cartels as a major neighbor.
- Marcos
- Uribe was one of the major figures of the Great Columbian Policlub. Now that he's out of commission, the policlub isn't faring too well. Of course, that could be because Aztlan declared the members



terrorists years ago, and when they went into the territory armed for bear—looking, of course, for drugs—they just “happened” to raid a few meetings and bomb a few known leaders’ homes. Guess they must’ve been growing tempo in their basements.

• Glasswalker

As to the other countries and their relationship with the cartels, Argentina’s conservative government is fighting against the cartels; of course, it helps that Argentina’s major backer is Aztechnology. However, the cartels have a good relationship with (read: provide money to) anti-government rebels. In addition to funneling them drug profits and training, the cartels have a profitable business in running guns and supplies to the rebels from Amazonia. I could speculate that because Argentina’s government is pro-corporate rights and has numerous strip mines, factory towns, and heavy industrial pollution, along with a slew of corporate “investments,” Amazonia might be providing funding for the rebels as well. However, if they’re doing so, they’re doing it through the cartels and keeping their hand out of it. Well, mostly.

Chile, with its long stretch of coast, impossible-to-patrol mountains, and isolated towns makes for a perfect smugglers’ haven. The Chilean government turns a (mostly) blind eye to the cartels’ traffic, as long as the cartels continue to grease the palms of the various politicians and police.

Peru still has a strong Japanacorp presence, even after the Marine pullout in ’65. Despite this, Peru is a cartel stronghold. This dichotomy makes things strained at times, with the government balanced between cartel interests and Japanacorp interests. The cartels work hard to ensure that the government remains favorable to them—and many cartel leaders are visible as political figures, prominent high society members, even judges.

Ecuador, on the other hand, has a strict government and is attempting to crack down on the cartels, which has placed their politicians in a dangerous position. Assassinations and kidnappings are frequent, but so far, the regime has held firm to their anti-drug cartel commitment. Rumors that Aztechnology is subtly encouraging the “just say no” campaign have been around for quite a while, but they were spectacularly confirmed when Aztech troops were welcomed on Ecuador soil. The troops have remained, using Ecuador as a staging ground for excursions into the disputed territory around Bogotá. Amazonia is having fits over it, but with Peru between them, they can’t exactly roll out their own troops to fight. Instead, the cartels are actively working to undermine the situation, and doing so with Amazonia’s blessing (in my not so humble opinion). However, with Ecuador’s capital Guayaquil as the homebase of the Olaya, you know the cartels must be sweating to have their old enemy in their own backyard.

For years, Paraguay, pinched between Argentina and Amazonia, has relied on Amazonian strength to keep it free of Argentina. This fits those of us who call Paraguay our home just fine. With a high percentage of Awakened citizens, a strong commitment to environmental management systems, and the Awakened Christian Church as a national religion, Amazonia and Paraguay get along just fine. The cartels use Paraguay as a stopover point to run drugs, arms, and supplies to the Argentinean insurgents. Quite a few of the cartels also call Paraguay home, especially since Asuncion (the capital) has a strong scientific community and state-of-the-art biotech lab and corps, making the city a great place for cartel laboratories and R&D facilities.

And Bolivia ... well, what the hell can I say about that hellhole? Between the neo-communist regime, the corporate exploitation, and a fierce hatred of Amazonia, they are happy to take nuyen from anyone who’ll keep them in guns and ammo. The cartels have vast growing fields and processing plants in Bolivia.

## THE ANDES CARTEL

Based out of Guayaquil, Ecuador, the Andes cartel maintains operations primarily in Peru, southern Amazonia, Argentina, and Caracas. Manuel Tamayo, the head of the Andes cartel, was killed in LA in December, one of the casualties of what the press has begun calling the Ghost Council Takedown. The Andes also had significant presence in southern Aztlan, at least until the David cartel and Aztlan put the pressure on them and drove them mostly out of the country. Tamayo was almost rabid in his hatred of Aztechnology, after the corp was responsible for the murders of his wife, children, and parents. His hatred was a significant motivation of his cartel. His death has thrown the cartel into shock. Vicious infighting has been happening at the upper levels, as other leaders fight over the top position. In the last few weeks, it appears as though the succession will go to Maria Theresa Tamayo, a distant cousin of Manuel’s who has managed the cartel’s Amazonian business interests for the last several years.

Theresa is a cold-hearted dwarf with connections to Amazonia’s government through her seat on its senate. According to what I’ve heard, she’s brought together most of the (surviving) leaders under the banner of revenge on Aztechnology for the Ghost Council Takedown. Those who disagreed with her, or thought themselves better candidates to inherit the billion-nuyen business, have disappeared .... and then been found minus several important body parts, like their heads. Rumors have always persisted that Theresa is a pajé but I’ve personally scanned her aura, and it appears mundane. She’s either great at masking or the rumors are just that, rumors. Her ability to survive a variety of assassinations bolsters that rumor, no doubt.

## PRODUCTS

The Andes are the stereotypical drug cartel, more so than any of the others. They specialize in producing organic drugs, like all the cartels, but they produce them on a much larger scale. They’ve also dabbled in the bioengineered awakened drug (BAD) market, but Manuel was hesitant to commit to those. Theresa, on the other hand, was practically slaving over the immense profits of tempo, and I would guess that the Andes will be putting many more resources into developing their own BADs in the near future. She’s too savvy a woman to not recognize that the taste of tempo has whet the appetite of the global market, and she wants the Andes to be the ones to reap that profit.

In addition to their massive coca plantations—which makes them the biggest novacoke movers in the biz—the Andes also heavily invest in Awakened drugs, such as the ever-popular Overdrive and Trance. They export these drugs around the globe to their distributors, namely affiliated gangs and other criminal syndicates. Most of their exports go via mules and smugglers. The Andes cartel has a sophisticated shipping organization, with agreements with a variety of pirates and smugglers and contacts with multiple small—but legitimate—corporations that allow them to hide their product among shipments of other goods.



- Quite a bit of their product also goes directly to corporate labs, especially the Awakened drugs. The cartel knows the corp boys can't reverse engineer the drugs, and not a lot of corporations can get into the Awakened Amazon to get to the base ingredients. Instead, they buy the processed drugs from the Andes (or whichever cartel) and then cut it into corporate-approved pharmaceuticals. Corporate hackers and eggheads get their corporate prescription of Overdrive via totally legal corporate pharmacies.

- Nephrine

- Of course, when those same wageslaves need even more of a fix and don't want their masters knowing, they turn to the dealers. So, the cartels still get their business. Sweet deal for them.

- Glitch

- The other product the Andes cartel pushes is weapons. They trade their drugs to arms dealers, in exchange for guns, ammo, and other tools of the trade. Then, they supply the various factions, armies, and crazies in South America. They're a big supporter—some suggest the biggest supporter—of the Great Columbian Policlub. They also arm the rebels in Argentina. I happen to know that they actually have the contract to provide arms for the majority of the Amazonian army. Of course, realize that many in the Amazonian army don't rely on firearms to kill folks...

- Picador

## MORALES CARTEL

The Morales cartel is based out of Paraguay, with major interests in Bolivia and Peru. Oscar Callente, the spokesman for the cartel, died in the LA attack. However, the Morales cartel seemed to absorb his death almost seamlessly, no doubt due to their very different structure from the other cartels.

## ORGANIZATION

The Morales cartel operates much more like a corporation, with a board of directors who each control a certain percentage of "shares" of the cartel. The generally accepted rumor is that there are five members on this board (some rumors do list up to seven members). I only know of three of the members—Callente, Beto Carillo, and Nicolás Gimenez. Rumors that one of the mystery members is a free spirit have been around for years. Each board member is responsible for "grooming" a handful of potential successors, whose names are given to the other board members. Upon the death of any particular board member, the remaining members choose from the established succession plan. Unlike the other cartels, death is no excuse for an interruption in business. The succession plan is kept secret from the rest of the organization, although, as you can imagine, it is the target of considerable interest and intrigue.

The cartel's corporate-type structure continues all the way down the line, with each "division" responsible for a certain amount of profit and staying under budget. They give some leeway to individual divisions, but for the most part, the board is very hands-on. Another interesting aspect of the Morales is that they prefer to pay many of their members on a commission-based system, with bonuses depending on meeting certain goals. I know that they do biannual performance reviews on their members (and I also know that failing to meet your goals results in having your position eliminated—very, very messily and very publicly). Despite their

vener of professionalism, they still run their cartel with absolute control and aren't afraid to get blood on their hands. Literally.

- When it's budget review time, the Morales tend to bump up their use of runners, as competing "managers" attempt to discredit their competition, get other divisions to have budget over-runs, make a big push into new markets—basically any job that'll make them look more profitable and the other managers less. I know runners who travel to Bolivia and Paraguay every six months just to get in on the action. The competition to get onto the secret succession list is cutthroat.

- Marcos

## FRIENDS AND NEIGHBORS

The Morales cartel controls almost all of Bolivia's drug exports. In that country, they are the dominant cartel, and the only other cartels operating in their territory are smaller, opportunistic ones that are willing to risk their wrath. Needless to say, those little cartels don't tend to last very long. Bolivia's neo-communist government is happy enough with the arrangement, especially since the Morales aren't great friends with Amazonia. Bolivia is in an odd place in Latin America, hating both Amazonia and Aztlan. Not many other countries on the continent have successfully avoided alliance with one of the two superpowers. Bolivia owes part of that to their stubborn, nationalistic pride. The other (larger) part is probably their relationship with the Morales. The Morales cartel brings in more nuyen than many countries' GDP, certainly on par with any A or even, perhaps, AA corporation. They've invested heavily in Bolivia, owning numerous small corporations, controlling a variety of industries, and dabbling in even more. The city of La Paz is renowned in South America for its pharmaceutical industry, and the Morales own a variety of up-and-coming corps. They also have a strong hold on the "intellectual import" market for Bolivia, Peru, and Paraguay.

- There are worse places to end up as an extracted scientist than Paraguay. Seriously. If they only had a beach...

- Kay St. Irregular

- The Morales are closely linked to the neo-communist's government's military and provide a portion of the recruits, arms, and training for its forces, as well as funding for merc contracts. It's hard to say where the government leaves off and the Morales begin, actually.

- Picador

## CACHOEIRA CARTEL

In direct competition with the Morales, the Cachoeira cartel is also based out of Paraguay, making their home base in Ciudad del Este. They have extensive interests in Amazonia, including the vassal state of Uruguay, and Argentina, running under the radar of Argentina's strict government while helping move resources to the rebels from Amazonia. They have a pipeline that runs through Paraguay into Argentina, which they use to smuggle drugs, arms, and people.

The Cachoeira cartel is known for their investment in the high-tech sector of Paraguay's industry, blending old-fashioned drug lord know-how with high-tech science. Chances are, most



wage-slaves who get their prescribed allotment of approved drugs have gotten it from a pharmacy owned and operated by the Cachoeira. The Cachoeira are a magic-heavy group, more so than any other cartel.

- The next memo is one Pyramid Watcher sent me, in exchange for a favor I did him a while back. Fian-o, your ... friend ... Maija might be interested in this one.
- Glasswalker

//begin Uniformat file attachment :: user Glasswalker :: 02/22/72//  
**Intracorporate Memo**

**To:** D. Ramos  
**From:** H. I-A.

Sir, I have completed my assessment of the current standing of the Olaya cartel. I hope that the following brief will answer the questions you raised in our meeting last week. I remain available to meet to discuss your next steps at your convenience.—H. I-A.  
// end attachment //

## OLAYA CARTEL

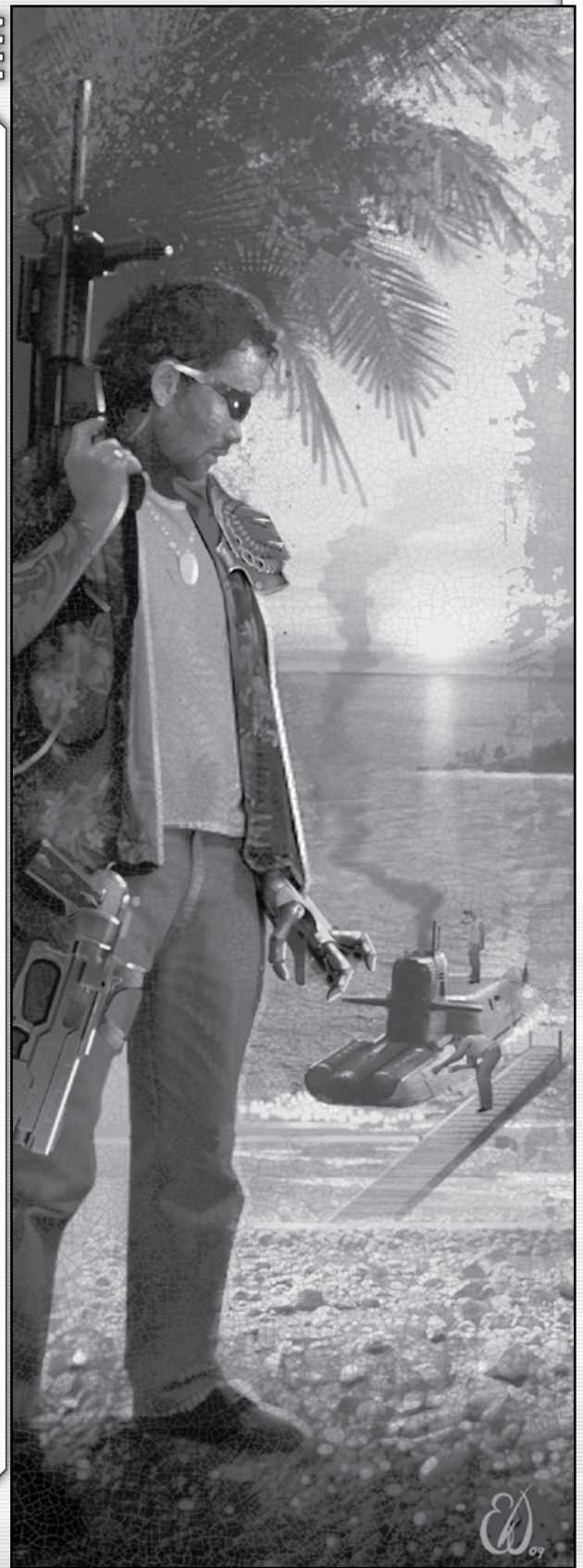
As you had hoped, the Olaya cartel has suffered severe setbacks after our actions in the last several months. They have diverted the proceeds from their sales of tempo to bolster their remaining business interests. They show no signs of continuing the production of tempo. As per your agreement, Jaime Salazar does not appear to be transporting tempo out of his South American strongholds. It remains to be seen whether this is because we were able to confiscate the majority of the stockpile, thanks to Ms. Riveros' intel, or if he's funneling it through more discrete channels.

Jaime Salazar still controls the Olaya, although the cartel has been severely weakened, and many of its key leaders were killed during our actions. There are quite a few rumors on the "street" speculating on Salazar's apparently miraculous survival of the crackdown. I suggest ignoring the rumors of a deal cut between Salazar and Aztechnology; if we take action to squelch the rumors, it will simply lend them credence. Alternatively, we could still target Salazar for assassination. With his cartel gutted, the scavengers—including the other cartels—have been picking at the edges of his organization, taking advantage of the weakened state. It would be easy enough to make it appear the assassination was due to another faction (I've taken the liberty of elaborating contingency plans to this effect for your analysis.

There are also significant rumors in the shadow community regarding KondOrchid, Salazar's AA corporation, and how it escaped retribution by the Corporate Court for his involvement in the tempo trade. These rumors continue to be confined to the shadow community and have not (as of yet) come to the attention of the media. Your PR branch is working diligently to ensure that continues to be the case.

- Although it was blatantly obvious to some of us that KondOrchid was used to ship tempo around the globe, the corporation got off lightly—IDEA and local law enforcement agencies raided their

INCOMING FEED.....



MAJOR SYNDICATES.....



facilities and apprehended vessels to seize tempo shipments, but by now, those facilities and vessels have been returned to corporate control. Some guys get all the luck, no?

- Marcos

Salazar has been spotted in and around Bogotá and a few other cities, but mostly he's been keeping a very low profile. The other Ghost Cartels would clearly like to see Salazar out of the picture all together, but none of them has gone so far as to put a price on his head. They still are honoring the unspoken laws that link the Ghost Cartels together.

With the majority of his tempo stockpile destroyed or confiscated, Salazar appears to be subsisting on a few reserves (as well as monetary reserves) to sustain the Olaya cartel. The Olaya cartel is still a primary producer of other drugs in South America, such as novacoke and other biological drugs. As tempo addicts look for a replacement substance, it is projected they will turn to other biological drugs, unless another bioengineered awakened drug can be produced to fill the void. My research confirms that his off-off-shore accounts are still very well endowed, possibly with reserves, and that seems to be proven by the way he's funneling nuyen into branching out the Olaya. Reports are that he has invested significantly in some pharmaceutical startups in Amazonia, and I'd surmise that Salazar is desperate to find a replacement to tempo before the last of the Olaya reserves run out.

With the recent intense scrutiny of KondOrchid, the Olaya have lost a primary method of shipping and distributing their drugs. Salazar's connections among high-placed government officials around the globe have been severely damaged. I would suggest that continued pressure on their shipping and distribution systems, as they struggle to build a new network, would be the most effective method of destroying the organization.

KondOrchid itself is still thriving, and KondOrchid stores and warehouses are popping up in sprawls all over the place. They appear to sell a mix of novelty import-export type goods, miscellaneous junk that is immensely appealing to the middle-to-upper class consumers. I'd personally call it a waste of money, but then again, as you know, I hate shopping.

- These Orchid Import stores are the new hot thing in Seattle and the rest of the West Coast, from Vancouver to LA. You can get fresh fruit, shipped straight here from sustainable farms in the Amazon and, gorgeous furniture, made of real hardwoods (again, supposedly sustainably harvested and hand crafted by indigenous craftsmen), priced quite reasonably. They sell amazing chocolates, a variety of coffees and wines, hand-blown glass, interesting toys for kids, herbal supplements ... it's very eclectic, very appealing, and very popular. And, did I mention the chocolate?

- Kat o' Nine Tales

- Heck, they have their "Trader Carlos" chains, too, for those of us without your budget, Kat. Cheaper versions of what they have in the fancy places, plus a variety of clothing and a big push on the herbal supplements. One-nuyen baskets full of cheap gadgets, trial size toothpastes, pretty little soaps...

- Beaker

- So the big, bad drug cartel has been reduced to selling chocolate and soap?

- Slamm-O!

- Have any of you actually considered what's in that stuff? According to a friend-of-a-friend, the fruit they're importing is gene-tweaked stuff. Here in the CAS, the DEA doesn't regulate those herbal supplements, so it's no big deal if they lace a little coca in with the toothpaste. In addition, I've done some tests on the lotions, soaps, makeup, and other "topical" supplements. They have weird proteomes, things I don't recognize. Supposedly, it's all-natural flowers and shit like that from the rainforests. But, after what they pulled out of those rainforests to make tempo, I don't think I'd believe for one second that these "transgenic epigenous fruit" are benign.

- Nephrine

It also appears that KondOrchid is shipping more than just fruit and hardwood tables. Rumors in Caracas are that there's a whole new market opening up for munecas—bio-modded sex dolls—outside the Caracas sex industry. Speculation is that munecas are being shipped out of the sprawl—although, I haven't heard where to, yet. So, the Olaya cartel appears to be moving even more into the "flesh" trade, albeit in an unusual way. With the loss of Graciela Riveros, head of the Caracas biosculptors and gene tweekers, it would have seemed likely that the Olaya would have lost their market share of the sex trade in Caracas. However, it appears Jaime Salazar had some backup plans, and he's apparently subcontracted with a variety of other firms to provide the wares. The industry appears to be decentralized at this time, in response to the void left by Riveros.

- It seems the Yakuza have been displaying a new level of pre-programmed bunraku dolls in their NeoTokyo parlors, as well as custom-made dolls for clients. I know there's a large population of Japanese in Amazonia, and the Yakuza has a strong foothold. Could be the Olaya have made an agreement with the Yaks and are using KondOrchid to smuggle the dolls into NeoTokyo.

- Glasswalker

- Yeah, and you can even get a "natural sexual stimulant" in the parlors now. Some sort of Asian Awakened drug. If you ask me, it's got tempo cut in, but the Yakuza are being very careful not to associate the two. Business is certainly swelling. :)

- Rigger X

- It does have tempo in it. I've seen a few of these munecas, and they look like tempo addicts do after months of hard-core use. The thing is these girls have only been in for a few weeks. My guess is they're keeping the munecas on a permanent high, until they burn them out. Of course, with all the gene tweaking and bio-sculpting, the munecas don't last very long anyway, and the drug could certainly be accelerating the process.

- Butch



Due to heavy losses among their leadership, the Olaya appear to be particularly vulnerable right now to hostile action. Henry Uribe, the cartel's eminence gris, is still recovering in a high-security medical facility. There does not appear to be any news on where that facility is or when he's expected to be released. In fact, I picked up on some doubts that he may ever recover enough to assume his position as the Olaya's spokesperson.

Antônio Cordoba has returned to Caracas to meet with Salazar, and he's begun to oversee the cartel's operations in Caracas and Bogotá. Fortunately, his personal vices make him unstable, and there is the potential that he could do serious damage to the cartel, if he was pushed in the right direction. He also has little credibility in Amazonia, due to a political scandal, and his ability to lead the Olaya is hampered by the shadow of that disgrace.

Mário Gomez has stepped into Uribe's shoes while Uribe is recovering. Gomez was personally groomed by Uribe and is almost as politically savvy as his mentor. He has strong connections with political figures in both the UCAS and CAS. In addition, it appears as though he made a strong alliance with the Koshari during his tour of their territory last fall. He's become Salazar's confidant, as well as the Olaya's spokesperson to Amazonian interests. Gomez would be a high priority for assassination if we could reach him, but his personal security has, as of yet, proven capable. In addition, I believe he may employ a virtuakinetik in his personal security, since electronic surveillance has been problematic, even with our extensive resources.

Rodolfo Cardoso has risen quickly through the ranks due to the deaths and imprisonment of other, more senior Olaya leaders. Our history on Cardoso is spotty; it appears as though he was originally a para-military member of the cartel. He is now in charge of the cartel's drug productions, overseeing the vast network of growers. It is believed he meets frequently with Salazar. Cardoso could be developing something new in conjunction with another cartel.

In summary, the Olaya are still a viable organization, despite our efforts. However, their presence in the drug trafficking industry seems to have fallen significantly. There is some evidence to show that they're introducing their preferred drugs (novacoke for example) in legitimate consumer goods. There is also significant reason to believe they continue to ship drugs and other contraband via KondOrchid.

Urgent Message...



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The mountains were brown, sharply rising folds of rock, sand, and struggling dry plants. A caravan rumbled into the makeshift camp, dust from the trucks swirling up in ochre clouds, making Pistons sneeze. Across from her, balanced on a stack of rugs, Netcat reached over and pulled Pistons' headscarf over her face.

"Tell me again why the fuck I'm here with you?" Pistons asked, her dark eyes glaring.

"Because you owe me a favor?" Netcat offered, hopeful. "Because you're curious? Because you're too nice to leave me alone out here?"

"Honey, you burned up that favor back in GeMiTo," the hacker replied. "And I'm not the curious one. I didn't even like that asshole Puck. Don't know why the hell I'm so nice to a straight girl."

"You're hoping I'll suddenly see the light," Netcat said.

Their taciturn hosts stood, rifles at the ready, as an ork man, skin burnt dark by the sun, got out of the lead truck. Against the brown hills and filthy trucks, his colorful robes were a splash of brightness.

Their Grey Wolf guide met the ork man, talking, waving his hand over the piles of goods they were exchanging: stacks of rugs and crates of electronics. And the two women. The ork gave a sharp nod. At his signal, more men piled out of the trucks, unloading plasticrete crates and then loading up the new goods.

The ork sauntered over to the two women.

"Ramani says you need a lift," he said in Pashtun, lip curling over his tusks. "All the way through our territory."

"We're traveling to Kolkata," the technomancer replied in the same language.

"We do not travel there," the man replied, contemptuous, turning to leave.

"It is said you have the contacts in India, through the Mansur Brothers," she said, causing him to pause.

He ran his eyes over her, assessing. "Two women, traveling alone? No. I do not take," he said, and began to walk away.

"I told you this wouldn't work," Pistons hissed to her friend. Netcat shook her head and took a few steps after the man.

"I ask for Melmastia," Netcat said, stubbornly, raising her voice so the other colorfully dressed men could hear. Pistons followed, shaking her head. "Your hospitality, to two strangers, who are in need. We have great enemies, and we are only two women. We ask your kahol for nanawatai," she said.

The man stood, his hands on his hips, while his men watched on. Finally, he gave a sharp nod. "My kahol will shelter you."

"Thank you," Netcat said. The man gave her another look, then turned to finish overseeing the loading of the smuggled goods.

Pistons surveyed the scene. "A sub-orbital would get us there in four hours. Why the fuck we're gonna ride with the Maffiya for the next two weeks?"

"No data trail," the technomancer replied.

"I'm not worried about the cops finding my data trail," Pistons said.

"It's not the cops we're hiding from," Netcat replied grimly.





- The transnational operators may be everywhere, but there's a little slice of the pie for everyone. The big-time syndicates may be better organized and better connected, they may have more resources and more fingers in different pies, but pretty much everywhere around the world there are local operators and ethnic syndicates intent on carving their own slice from this big fat pie. Some operations are rooted in minority communities, others are born from the same sort of ethnic or cultural kinship that birthed the Mafia, others yet are local idiosyncrasies that have found fertile ground for their operations. Each is distinct and each has its own culture and mores. I've gathered a few friends to provide a sampling of some of these small-time syndicates and their operations.
- Red Anya

## FANTI PIRATES

- Europol's Organized Crime Division recently began investigating the Fanti "Ethnic Syndicate" when a sting confiscated a significant cache of arms from a terrorist group operating out of Lisbon. They fingered the Fanti, a group of modern day pirates and sea-based smugglers ... from Africa. Made me a bit curious; what's an African syndicate doing selling arms in Lisbon? I've attached some information courtesy of a "friend" in Europol. Comments are, of course, welcome, especially since I have a feeling Europol's ingrained prejudice when it comes to threats from Africa may be blinding them to just how powerful this group may be.
- Fianchetto

//Begin Attached Document//

Director Reynold,

As requested, I've gathered information from our various contacts on this new smuggler operation. This, coupled with intelligence gathered from careful questioning of subjects apprehended on 17-02-2072, has led me to the conclusion that this smuggler group should in fact be classified as an emerging Ethnic Syndicate. As such, any further action regarding this group should be coordinated through this office.

To summarize, the Fanti are an ethnic tribal group based in the Fanti nation, west of Asante. After the VITAS epidemic collapsed the governments and infrastructure of most of Africa, the Fanti asserted themselves to create their own nation.

Overall, the Fanti nation is a small slice of West Africa. Their immediate neighbor, Asante, is an almost-first-world country, with a stable government (a tribal monarchy), well developed industry, corporate investment, and a membership seat in the UN. In comparison, the Fanti nation has no national governing body, little-to-no corporate development, no recognition by any world organization, and a population that primarily exists on subsistence farming, piracy, and raiding their more wealthy neighboring countries. In the last fifty years, the Asante have repeatedly attempted to annex parts of the Fanti nation in an attempt to address this threat to their nation and to bring aid and hope to the poverty stricken Fanti tribe. Unfortunately, the Fanti have proved too difficult for the Asante to govern and have managed to remain independent.

- Right. Bring aid to the Fanti. That would be more accurately stated as "wipe out every last man, woman and child of their historic enemies"... or, in short, genocide. The last large scale conflict between the Asante and the Fanti was in '54, when the Asante began a wide-spread genocide campaign. It failed when they found the Fanti to be much better armed and trained than they'd expected, and the Fanti "villagers" were able to push the Asante back to their border. The turning point came when the families under attack put out a call to their kin elsewhere, and the Asante, instead of facing a few disorganized villages, found themselves confronting a small army of trained, ruthless pirates and warriors. The Asante haven't tried since; their losses were staggering.
- Black Mamba

The Fanti nation is actually more of a group of territories, each controlled by a family group. The most prosperous of family groups can number in the thousands and fill a small town, whereas the youngest families can be as small as one man and his wife. The most prosperous families either sail the seas or live on the coast. The interior is mostly poverty-stricken families who survive on subsistence farming and trading with the coastal families for necessary supplies.

There is no central king or leader for the Fanti, although they do have a Council of Elders—representatives from the twenty most wealthy families, along with what our sources have called a "War Council," which supposedly is also made up of the twenty most experienced patriarchs of the families. Kinship is a complicated and surprisingly convoluted social system; ties of kin are kept through oral records (although in the last twenty years, they've also begun recording their lineage via online records) going back hundreds of years. The Fanti view marriage as their primary method to make alliances with other families, or even merge families into a larger, more powerful group. Women appear to have little or no rights in the tribe and a Fanti man frequently has multiple wives and numerous offspring.

- Oh, it's obvious this bureaucrat has no idea what he's talking about. It's true that the Fanti that sail the seas do so under the command of the eldest man, or the patriarch, the most experienced sailor and father. However, the Fanti are actually a matriarchal society. Inheritance is passed down from a mother to her daughters. Men are the warriors, the hunters: they are restricted to the arts of war. But a man holds no wealth in the Fanti. Everything a family owns is managed by the senior matriarch, who in turn distributes the wealth to the younger wives and the family's daughters. If a girl leaves her family to get married (usually, men join their first wife's family, and secondary wives then join that matriarchal line), her mother provides her with a dowry, which supports her and her children until her husband can provide for the family. A man can only have as many wives as he can support, and marriages are negotiated by the women of the tribe—although the man is right in that marriages are often social and political arrangements, designed to tie families together. It's a complicated social system, one that is very misleading from the outside.
- Goat Foot





INCOMING FEED.....



• Oh, come on, don't blame the short-sighted Europol man. A lot of people make the same mistake; the Fanti encourage the misperception. If you wish to understand the Fanti, though, you should know that any real negotiation goes on with the senior wife. If you want to get smuggled somewhere, buy some imported drugs, or have some goods you'd like to trade, talk to the women—if you can get onboard, that is. The married women rarely leave the ships outside Fanti territory, so chances are you'll have to attempt to negotiate with a man. Just remember nothing is final until the matriarch on the ship says so, despite what the men might tell you. Tribal commerce is handled the same way; the elder women barter between families. Such negotiations can take hours, as the elders recite their matriarchal line back for ten or more generations—until they find a common ancestress to establish their kinship.

- Picador
- When it comes to fighting, the men are the ones in charge. That's as far as most people ever see into the Fanti.
- Black Mamba

The Fanti are much more powerful on the sea than land, though. They appear to be notorious as pirates and smugglers. They are the dominant group in the Gulf of Guinea and regularly sail from the tip of Cape Town up into Mediterranean Europe. Traveling overland in Africa is extremely perilous, and flying takes a lot of resources—not to mention the serious lack of usable landing strips in most of the continent—so most of the biggest cities are based on the coast, where shipping provides the majority of traffic. Accordingly, the Fanti are

one of the most powerful groups in the area. It appears they've been expanding into the Mediterranean for the last several decades, although they rarely act as pirates in our more well-patrolled sea. With the high numbers of smugglers operating in the Mediterranean, especially around the problem island of Cyprus, it may be assumed that the Fanti were not seen as an organized, cooperative ethnic syndicate prior to this recent investigation.

The families often sail in a group of boats, even larger ships, often clustering five or more together. When they raid other ships, they do so using fast, surprise attacks. The Fanti appear able to use both technical tools *and* magic, with great effectiveness. Most families include at least one magician, and frequently several hackers or riggers. Hacking a corporate ship, while having a sea-spirit conceal the smaller, fast moving pirate ships, appears to be a favorite tactic.

- And if you've ever been on the receiving end of that ... sailing a clear sea, your sensors telling you everything's fine, when suddenly the entire ship's system goes dead, and ten speed boats suddenly appear out of fucking nowhere, and open fire. Damn pirates.
- Rigger X
- Shit, that's nothing. Let me tell you about the time I— [post interrupted by sysop]
- Kane
- Focus, Kane. Focus.
- Fastjack

- The Fanti don't just use magic. They arm themselves with environmentally modified weapons, stolen or bought from top arms producers. Ares Arms is a favorite of theirs—although that could simply be the result of having Lagos so nearby.
- Black Mamba

Entire families sail together, with the patriarch and his wives and young children commanding the largest boat, while his sons and their families crew the smaller boats. Kwesi and Kofi are two patriarchs who our sources indicate were involved in the Lisbon arms trade. Careful research among the smuggling groups operating out of Cyprus indicates that Kwesi is an older human, approximately 50 – 60 years old, who sails with over thirty male family members. Kofi is reported to be younger, 30 – 40 years of age, and sails with a smaller family group of around fifteen men. When they raid, either on land or sea, the women and children stay behind while the men take the fast, maneuverable boats in for the attack.

- \*sigh\* The married women and children under the age of 13 stay behind. Boys and girls over 13 go along, they're considered adults by the tribe. And a woman can keep fighting alongside the men until she marries. Of course, many of the kids are married before they turn 14. Still, it's not uncommon for the Fanti women to marry late, or not at all, and crew her own boat. Of all the tribes in West Africa, I actually like the Fanti; they don't have any problem with a woman who can fight better than most men.
- Black Mamba
- The Fanti have a high respect for various arts, and consider war, and fighting, to be the only true art a man can master. Accordingly, the Fanti men train from the time they are young boys. Cyberware is popular among the men, bioware less so, outside the most prosperous families. Adepts are highly valued. They even have some of their own specialized martial arts, but you won't find them teaching anyone outside the tribe... no matter how nicely you ask.
- Picador

## INTERESTS AND INCOME

The Fanti are first and foremost a smuggling group. They are welcome in many ports on the African coast, especially the smaller towns, where they are often the only visitors bringing necessities, luxuries, and news. They sail all the way to Morocco and other Mediterranean ports, as far away as Cyprus. To the south, they dock at Cape Town, although they generally leave the Indian Ocean and the pirate-infested waters around Madagascar alone. With their expertise on the waters of the South and North Atlantic off Africa, they are the dominant smuggling group.

They also earn quite a bit of profit in their pirating. Corporate vessels are a prime target, especially in the Gulf of Guinea. Since the advent of the wireless Matrix, they've exploited the advantage of having wirelessly enabled, drone-operated ships. Multiple families have been known to come together to attack the larger corporate vessels in a brazen display of piracy that is costing shipping corporations millions of nuyen a year. These groups also have a lot of contacts in the larger ports, such as Lagos, where they pick up intel on shipping schedules, cargo, and crews. Although they prefer easy-to-move cargo, things they can resell at ports of

call up and down the African coast, they've been known to take more exotic cargo, like metahumans being trafficked across the Atlantic.

- The Fanti are perfectly fine with dealing with the flesh-traders, selling off crews of ships they've hijacked. They'll take metahuman cargo (for a price) for another organization, like the white-collar slave trade in West Africa, or funnel prospective "donors" to Tamanous in Lagos. Chances are, though, unless they decide to take your boat, you're just as likely to be left alone. Although if they think you can offer a ransom for yourself (or someone else will pay on your behalf—like a corporate bounty on your head), they'll be much more likely to take you. But they treat their hostages according to their own brand of honor and their hospitality is generous. More than one corp has found itself paying the Fanti for their employee's lives, after the Fanti have made off with the corp's ships and goods. Lagos is often where the ransom-for-crew exchanges happen.
- Black Mamba
- Yeah. I lost a crew member that way once, handsome dwarf with a certain reputation with the ladies. Carlos got captured by the Fanti, told them I'd pay his ransom to avoid getting turned into shark chum... but by the time I got the "ransom" together—a full cargo of medtech—he'd caught the eye of some Fanti girl—and the ransom ended up being added to her family's wealth. Kat and I attended the wedding. The Fanti really know how to party.
- Kane

Some rumors say that certain corps have made deals with the Fanti, generally by "hiring" them to escort their ships in. It's a take on the classic protection racket, except that in the Gulf of Guinea, at least, they appear to actually earn their fee fighting off other pirates.

Unlike other syndicates, they are not involved in land-based vices, like drug dealing, gambling, or brothels. They seem to limit themselves to ferrying the drugs, tech, and people to and from the other syndicates, gangs, and black marketers.

- This protection racket also extends to the Fanti acting as an unofficial corsairs with "letters of marque" for nations (or even corporations) to hunt vessels belonging to their enemies. I'm pretty sure they've got that sort of arrangement with Wuxing, at least.
- Rigger X
- The Fanti have contacts with fixers and black marketers in Southern Europe, and they're also heavily used by the Mafia and other crime syndicates. If a Mafia family needs a significant amount of black-market arms, they can give the Fanti a cargo full of, say, medicines. In turn the Fanti take that cargo down to Lagos, trade it for a couple of shipfuls of Ares Arms goods, and get it back to the Mafia in under two weeks. Quite a few families also just do regular smuggling, getting a variety of goods and stopping at a dozen different ports, like a traveling black-market salesman.
- Red Anya
- When a customer wants something even faster, the Fanti can deliver. They've got a few families who use spirits to make their boats go very, very fast.
- Black Mamba



- The Fanti will work with anyone, from religious fundamentalists to corporate black-ops teams. They don't care at all, as long as the nuyen's good. The only exception is the Asante—if the Fanti come across an Asante, whether in the Gulf of Guinea or walking the docks on Cyprus, they'll attack. They are also fierce in attacking other pirates in the Gulf of Guinea, and they show no mercy. Elsewhere, they will generally steer clear of other ships and pirates, unless they're planning a raid. Even then, they frequently just take the cargo and leave the crew alone (unless, of course, they like your ship... in which case, you may be swimming for home).

- Rigger X

- The Fanti actually prefer to be paid in goods, rather than nuyen. Nuyen's great and all, but there's plenty of places on the coast of Africa where electronic cred is worth less than the memory it's kept on. Goods, from medicines to foodstuffs, weapons to textiles, are what makes the economy work in their area of the world. You are more likely to get somewhere with the Fanti if you can offer them a few crates of medkits or water purification systems than an electronic cred transfer. Just something to keep in mind.

- Kane

While it appears that the Fanti do not command the wealth or resources typical of the ethnic syndicates in Europe or North America, research has revealed that they account for a significant amount of losses by corporations and individuals in the Gulf of Guinea and South Atlantic. In addition, as evidenced by the amount and quality of munitions they provided for the terrorist cell we apprehended, they have access to high-priced items with a limited street inventory. Where the earnings are going, or how they are able to procure contraband in such quantities, and of such quality, is a question that this office believes warrants further investigation.

Accordingly, I am recommending that three agents within the Organized Crime Department be reassigned to further research.

Respectfully,

Senior Agent Toliver

//End attached document//

- Hey, Toliver may be an idiot, but he's got a good point. I saw a little memo from Shiawase saying that the Fanti had made off with 13.8 million worth of goods in the last month in one attack in the Gulf of Guinea... sure, it was a big tanker, but still—one hit! What are they doing with their "earnings?"

- Mr. Bonds

- Well, they invest quite a bit in their boats, tech, and arms. But after that... I'm at a loss. Anyone else know?

- Picador

## GREY WOLVES

Posted by: Red Anya

Standing with one foot in Europe and the other in Asia, the Grey Wolves are an ethnic syndicate that combines the worst of both worlds into one savage criminal organization.

The Grey Wolves are the ideological descendants of hardcore national militias that—in the past—were covertly supported by the Turkish secular government and military following World War I. With government sanction, they attempted to cripple foreign interests—particularly criminal and covert operations that were a threat to Turkish sovereignty. Eventually, they became unofficial government hit squads, sent after criminal organizations, foreign intruders, even Islamic factions. From the beginning, they were organized along paramilitary lines, operating with a military hierarchy and recruiting heavily among those with military training and backgrounds. Eventually, they formed a working relationship with the Turkish maffiyas.

- "Working relationship" might be better phrased by saying "Consumed the existing maffiyas in a bloodbath."

- Clockwork

As the century drew to a close and Turkey shifted back to democracy, the Grey Wolves gradually lost their government backing—although they retained their close ties to the military—and began to develop criminal operations to finance their activities, from wetwork to bank heists, still frequently targeting foreign interests. Their military training, organization, and penchant for ultraviolence—plus their reputation and contacts—meant they were very successful. Over time, criminal endeavors became their primary focus.

The rise of the fundamentalist Islamists regime in Turkey brought strict Sharia (Islamic laws) to the country, and the criminal Grey Wolves were targets of the new regime. Cut off from their military and government contacts, many of the leaders were forced to flee to Greece and further. When the Jihad began, sparking the Eurowars, the Grey Wolves aided the Greek Resistance and struck up alliances with the Alta Commission syndicates (particularly the Sacra Curona Unitá operating out of Trieste and well connected in the Balkans). With the war, they found a lucrative market and used their surviving infrastructure to smuggle grey and black market goods into occupied Greece and Islamic Turkey. Eventually, the Alliance for Allah forces fell, leaving a power vacuum in Turkey—a vacuum that the Grey Wolves filled with a vengeance. Grey Wolf support was a critical element in returning Turkey to secular rule and the organization still benefits from government "good will" there... as well as a Robin-Hood image in many parts of Turkey. Behind the image, though, the Grey Wolves' extreme violence and excesses are only exacerbating the tensions in the nation.

- Just a note on the state of affairs for Turkey. Turkey (West Turkey) is currently more closely aligned with Europe. The government is pro-corporate, and strict restrictions on religious influence in the government have been a prime reason for corporate investment. After the jihad of the EuroWars, which originated in Turkey, the people were so wary of religious extremism that they turned their





INCOMING FEED.....



ETHNIC SYNDICATES.....

backs on religion altogether. Today, atheism is the predominant standard, and the secular government pushes that to their Western counterparts to help erase the stains of the EuroWars. East Anatolia (East Turkey) is controlled by the dominant Sunni Muslims, labeled “religious terrorists” by the government of Turkey, and the conflict divides the country into two. Although they all call themselves Turks, they essentially live in two completely separate countries.

• Goat Foot

As things grew worse in Turkey in the early ‘60s, refugees poured into the Balkans. With them came the Grey Wolves, challenging the Vory and upsetting the underworld balance.

### CURRENT AFFAIRS

The Grey Wolves are controlled by their Commander—which is both a position and a title for their leader, since the identity of the Commander isn’t known. What we do know is that the current Commander has been in control of the Grey Wolves since late 2063, which makes him one of the longest lasting leaders of the syndicate. He’s rumored to be a moderate Muslim man, but like many Turks, refuses to let religion dictate his approach to profitability. The Grey Wolves membership is predominantly Sunni Muslim, although they are very casual about it, especially compared to the East Anatolian Turks. And while they will work with the religious fundamentalists in the region, they hold themselves separate from the various religious

strifes. This has allowed them to prosper and has also allowed them to play both sides of the conflict.

- The Commander uses religion as it benefits him. If he’s brokering a deal with a faction in East Anatolia for munitions, he’s all about observing the strict Sharia. If he’s up in Paris meeting with the Alta Commissione, he’s drinking wine and playing the sophisticated European. The man is a social chameleon.
- Fianchetto
- Yeah, and his European associates often underestimate him. The Grey Wolves are just a “junior organization” in the Alta Commissione, but they’ve increased their territory and profits immensely under this Commander’s guidance.
- Clockwork
- The Commander is a hands-on leader and he has an uncanny ability to know just what’s going on in his organization. His second in command is his long-time friend and advisor, a man simply known as Ilhami. Ilhami is the Commander’s voice when he’s not available, and occasionally functions as assassin and expediter for him.
- Stone

### TERRITORIAL RIGHTS

The Grey Wolves split their base between Greece and Turkey. They are particularly strong in the port town of **Izmir**, where they are the de facto security and police force for the port. Izmir is a



hotbed of criminal activity, but the streets and docks are actually very safe for most people. There is an unwritten law that forbids mob violence in the streets, and the Grey Wolves' reputation is frightening enough to keep all the criminal elements in check.

- Izmir is a prime port on the human trade routes and drug smuggling routes from the Middle East and Asia into Europe. Pirates, smugglers, and corporate shipping vessels berth side-by-side. Despite the heavy underworld use, you can feel relatively safe walking the area, even at night. The Grey Wolves are more efficient than any security I've seen from KE or Lone Star.
- Elijah
- In Izmir, the Grey Wolves roam the streets wearing heavy military-grade armor, grey with black piping, and carry heavy weaponry. They don't scan for IDs, and they don't care what you're carrying, as long as you don't use it. They'll walk right by a drug deal on the street, but if someone starts kicking up a fuss, they're there, instantly. They've got an almost preternatural instinct for smelling trouble and violence—folks in Izmir, and other places, say they're part wolves themselves. It's a reputation they encourage. (Less superstitious folk might attribute their "wolf-like instincts" to well-deployed drones, spirits, and surveillance systems.)
- Picador
- I may not have made it sound like this, but Turkey does have regular government-employed police. In Izmir and other cities, though, those cops know they're no match for the military training and equipment the Grey Wolves carry. If a pack of Wolves wants to step in to settle a dispute between gangers and drug dealers, the cops step right aside.
- Red Anya

**Istanbul** is a free city, maintained by a UN selected board of governors. The Grey Wolves have a heavy presence in the city, using its well-designed wireless Matrix to run their businesses, controlling a variety of opium dens, brothels, and underworld gambling sites. You can buy almost any brainbender—natural or man-made—from their drug houses, or order online through their secured Matrix systems.

- The 10,000 Daggers, a merc crew, is based in Istanbul, and subcontracted by the city to provide policing and security. The Grey Wolves and the Daggers have had a few very bloody run-ins, until Ilhami supposedly had a meeting with the board of the Daggers. Now, there's an uneasy truce. The Daggers are responsible for keeping the city clean, and the Wolves control most of the filth... whether Ilhami paid them off, or made some other unholy agreement, isn't known.
- Clockwork
- The Daggers are not simply a merc crew. They're a multinational mercenary corporation with several thousand troops at their disposal and an income that's probably just shy of an A level corp. They're professional, well-equipped, and well respected. Yet in any city you're going to have crime, vice, and the riffraff. By making their alliance with the Wolves, they know who's controlling the crime. If

things get out of hand, they know exactly where to go. As long as the Wolves keep things in check, they'll let the Grey Wolves operate. The Commander is too canny to blow that great of a deal. He gets the Daggers cracking down on any operations besides his, and the Daggers get the Grey Wolves weeding out the violent independents who hurt their business. It's a strategic solution that makes everyone happy.

- Picador

**Cyprus** is a pirate haven, a smuggler's paradise, and a big base of operations for the Grey Wolves. It was bombed to hell during the EuroWars, and no one's bothered to ever go back and rebuild. The few remaining metahumans on the island either live in heavily fortified ghettos or provide support to the various criminals and pirates that use the island as a base. Smugglers use it as part of the pipeline to get guns from the Balkans down to Gaza, and drugs from Izmir into the rest of Europe. It's one of the stopovers on the drug and people-peddling routes, and as such, the Grey Wolves have it locked down.

From **Greece** the Grey Wolves run a variety of interest: smuggling, drug dealing, and thefts. They have a heavy presence on the port cities, where their smuggling ships dock. They're also prevalent in the tourist hotspots, catering to both tame and exotic tastes. Surprisingly, many of their profitable enterprises in Greece are legitimate, like the tourist casinos.

**The Balkans** are the newest territory to come under attack by the Grey Wolves, although so far they've only managed to take Sarajevo and the Dinaric Republic as beachheads for further expansion. The Balkans are their gateway to the rest of Europe, and the Grey Wolves like that juicy plum. They primarily handle refugee flows to and from the Balkans (since Corporate interests handle the flow of goods and supplies). Human trafficking is a very profitable mainstay of their business interests. They also move significant amounts of arms through their pipelines and a cornucopia of drugs. They have extensive contacts with the Kabul Maffiya in Central Asia and exchange stolen goods, such as electronics or munitions, for drugs produced in Afghanistan and Turkestan. Through the Kabuls, the Grey Wolves also have a direct pipeline for some of the Awakened drugs produced in Asia and the Indian Subcontinent. These drugs are shipped via the Grey Wolves to other members of the Alta Commissione, and thereby to the rest of Europe.

- The Grey Wolves extend beyond the Balkans. In Munich, for example, the local Mafia is run by a Croat family, who owe their allegiance to the Grey Wolves. The Commander is taking his time, but he is moving to get some control of other territories... we'll see how long it takes the Alta Commissione to recognize the threat.
- Fianchetto
- The Grey Wolves are going to have a tough time of it. They've got a long history of trouble with the Albanian mobs and the fundamentalist Islamics that already have a strong foothold in the region.
- Goat Foot
- In addition to the Balkans, the Grey Wolves have subtle presence in the AGS, along with other areas with a strong Turkish population:



Germany, Netherlands, and parts of Austria. They're not more widespread because many of those areas are already claimed by the Mafia, the Vory, and smaller Albanian mobs. They're looking to expand, and they're going to end up stepping on some toes to do it. Syndicate wars may be profitable for some, but I'm dreading it; smuggling pipelines will be shot to hell if it comes to war.

- Red Anya

## TRADING CULTURE FOR NUYEN

Many ethnic syndicates have a defining set of values and cultural mores. The Grey Wolves, like many Turks, have had their cultural roots ripped up by contradicting desires—to be more Western, and worship at the feet of the almighty nuyen, or more true to their Islamic heritage, and shun their Western ties. You can see this battle played out daily in the Sprawls of Turkey, as religious fundamentalists from East Anatolia spam citizens' inboxes with rhetoric, or even make strategic hits against the government and corporate strongholds. The Grey Wolves, with one foot in both the East and the West, maintain a precarious balancing act, one they've struggled with for decades.

When they are interacting with the western world, they dress the part and speak the lingo. When they cross the border into East Anatolia, or further into Kurdistan, they meld into those cultures as well. The Grey Wolves are unlike many of the ethnic groups in the region, who as they've been displaced have clung to their cultural roots. Instead, the Grey Wolves appear to quickly adapt to the culture and peoples where they are.

Unlike many other ethnic syndicates, the Grey Wolves welcome both men and women in their ranks, without discrimination. Metahumans, changelings, and the Awakened are all accepted.

- The Grey Wolves pretty much ignored the technomancer and AI "coming out" in 2070. Rumors are that they already had some technomancers in their ranks and had already been utilizing their skills. Just proof that these guys don't care shit about what or who they use, as long as it makes them nuyen.
- Clockwork

## ANATOMY OF A WOLF PACK

Ask someone to describe the Grey Wolves, and invariably they'll say "fierce," "ruthless," and "savage." They have a reputation for being close-lipped, and harshly punish anyone—in their organization or outside it—who talk about their internal workings. And their reputation for torture is second to none in the region.

The Grey Wolves organize themselves into smaller units—using their paramilitary training and organization is one of their strongest points. (Both in and out of the organization, many refer to the smaller units as "packs.") Each pack is lead by one man or woman, the toughest and fiercest person of the group. They are heavy users of technology, especially lingasofts and knowsofts. At the lower ranks, skillwires and other combat oriented cyber-and-bioware is common. They believe in every man and woman on their crews being able to do multiple jobs. Rarely will you find a hacker who can't handle a variety of weapons, sail a small craft, and patch up his crewmates. Muscle are expected to be able to do more than just shoot and fight; they're expected to be skilled in other ways, too.

Most packs consist of ten to fifteen members. Most packs include a combat hacker and a drone rigger—the smuggling crews *always* include these roles—again, like a high-threat military unit. Some smuggling crews are primarily water based, traveling the Mediterranean or Black Sea, while others are solely land based. Each pack has its own territory, which is strictly respected by the other packs. Before someone from one pack crosses into another pack's territory, they contact them for permission. Violating this rule is punishable by death. (And the Grey Wolves have made an art form out of *death*.)

Some packs are stationary, working in one city or neighborhood, like those that control the ports of Izmir. Others are nomadic, following the smuggling routes. The smuggling routes are neutral territory for the packs, but going into or through a city requires that the packs contact the residents, generally by virtual dropboxes and their own private networks.

- It used to be a declaration of war when one pack crossed into another's territory without notice or requesting permission. Nothing could scare the locals more than hearing a rumble was about to start—collateral damage was always high. The most recent Commander has controlled this to some extent, since having the various packs at each other's throats is bad for business. Under his direction, warring factions have made truces, and cooperated to coordinate along smuggling pipelines. However, heaven knows it's like leashing wolves... they may look tame but they certainly are not.

- Fianchetto

## KABUL MAFFIYA

**Posted by: Goat Foot**

- Anyone who has traveled through Central Asia—speaking generally, the region extending from Turkey through Iraq, Iran, the Russian 'stans, Afghanistan, and to Pakistan, with ties to the Middle East and even Southwest Asia—has probably seen the influence of the Kabul Maffiya. They're one of the most secretive ethnic syndicates around. Luckily for you all, I've got a friend who is married to a distant relation of Babrak Amin.
- Goat Foot

The Kabul Maffiya is an organization that first coalesced in the '40s. It is currently controlled by Babrak Amin, a strict and strongly religious man, with extensive business interests and a large personal fortune. He has a large family, mostly in Kabul, and many of the various interests of the local *maffiya* are run by his older

### INTERPOL FASTFACTS: KABUL MAFFIYA

**Base of Operations:** Kabul

**Principle Figures:** Babrak Amin, Abbas Amin, Bahram Amin, Dagar Amin, Ghazan Amin, Hewad Amin

**Main Operations:** Smuggling (Arms, Drugs), Drug production/distribution, Assassinations, Data Brokerage

**Territory:** Turkey, Iraq, Iran, Afghanistan, Pakistan.

**Secondary territories:** Middle East, Southwest Asia, sprawls with significant Pashtun populations



sons. Babrak splits his time between Kabul, a few of his homes in the mountains, and the occasional business trip to oversee his concerns. However, last year Babrak suffered from a supposedly mild heart-attack, and since then his three oldest sons have been doing most of the travel and business negotiations for him.

- His sons are at each others' throats, each trying to prove to the old man they should be his heir, while they're being courted by different groups who have an eye on changing the status quo of the region. They've begun hiring outsiders to carry out their plots and provide them with deniable assets. International crews are being paid high wages for their services. Escorts and bodyguards are also in high demand for travelers who want to venture into the region. Anyone looking for work, give me a ping.
- Elijah

As you'd expect from the name the Kabul Maffiya are based out of Afghanistan (they essentially control the country providing mediation between the various warlords and providing the only independent authority recognized by all). They have a standing presence among the tribes of Karavan, and consider its mobile nature and the immunity granted to the roving city by the governments of the land they traverse to make the perfect cover for moving miltech and other restricted technology. They also control the crime-for-pay in significant parts of the Middle East and Central Asia, like neighboring Turkestan, and Iran. In fact, the only area the tribe does not claim to control is Kafiristan, the Hindu Kush Mountains, which are said to be haunted by demons and infidels. Whatever the truth, the men of the tribes do not venture into the mountains and so the people who do live there are free from the yoke of the *maffiya*.

- The Kata tribes live up in the mountains. Apparently there's some pretty serious mojo up in the mountains, rumors of evil spirits and whatnot... lots of rumors of lost treasure. Treasure hunters go up there but not many return sane.
- Elijah

The main trade route traveling through the area is Saeder-Krupp's trans-Afghan highway, which runs from Pakistan to Turkestan, where it meets up with the new Silk Road. It was built by SK, is maintained by an extensive garrison of SK paid mercs (housed in Kabul), and is the primary smuggling route used by the Kabul Maffiya through Afghanistan. My friend tells me that Babrak Amin had extensive dealings with SK representatives, which is why the corp and the *maffiya* co-existed so well in Kabul. With Babrak's poor health, that may be changing. It is well known that some of his sons have much less tolerance for the European corp's interests in Afghanistan. For now, the status-quo remains, but if Babrak is unable to rein in his sons, there could be serious fireworks in the region.

## MODERN CRIMES

The Kabul Maffiya controls the majority of the drugs, arms and organlegging trade, and smuggling through much of the Central East and Southwest Asia. In fact, they're well known for being able to get people and cargo—of any type—anywhere in

Southwest Asia, no questions asked, as long as your nuyen's good. They're the principle supplier of the drugs that go into Eastern and Central Europe and much of heartland Russia. Of course, with arms in high demand across the region, they've got a lot of contacts and resources in that field. Their smuggling includes anything that's in high demand in the region, as well as a cornucopia of goods that flows between the area's wealthier neighbors.

## DRUGS

The Kabul's have had decades of experience in moving the brain benders produced in Afghanistan through Southwest Asia and beyond. With their close-knit communities in Russia, the Middle East, India, and Southwest Asia, they have the types of contacts needed to do large-scale smuggling. Their normal drugs include Awakened opium they move from the Afghanistan poppy fields and the variety of Awakened drugs from growing fields of Asia.

The Kabul Maffiya has been affected by the tempo shake up as much as any other syndicate. For years now, they've invested heavily in transporting drugs for the Golden Triangle syndicates of Southeast Asia and their own Afgan Awakened poppy fields into Europe and the Middle East. With the dominance of Awakened drugs in the region, the Olaya didn't bother with putting them on their market list. A few upstarts tried to move onto Kabul territory with tempo—and were promptly taught the error of their ways.

- Yeah, I saw those pictures. Along a major freeway, apparently the Kabul's caught some drug mules in a few transportation trucks loaded with tempo. They decapitated the batch of them, put their heads on pikes lined neatly up beside the freeway... then sent their goons to hunt down the mule's bosses. Over the next month, new heads were added to the display as the Kabuls caught the upstarts. Unfortunately for the Kabuls, a couple of those heads belonged to a SK executive and his family. Supposedly the guy wasn't aware that a few of his underlings were using SK resources to transport the drugs, but the Kabuls executed him—and his wife and two toddlers—anyway. Word is the head-wrym is out for blood.
- Frosty
- Babrak wasn't involved in that killing. One of his sons—Hewad—the-impulsive—ordered it. I wouldn't be surprised if Babrak turned Hewad over to SK as an appeasement offering... although if he does, he'd be violating their code of honor. If he doesn't, SK's likely to rip the organization apart in revenge. Babrak's caught in a tough spot.
- Goat Foot

Now, as other syndicates have been struggling to fill the void left by tempo, the Kabuls have been able to continue business as normal. If you want to purchase a drug in Kabul Maffiya territory, your best bet is to go to one of the shady tea-houses or drug dens that flourish in the back alleys of the crumbling cities. If you need to move a few crates of drugs, look for the Kabuls.

## ARMS

The Middle East, Central Asia, and Indian Subcontinent are not known for being particularly peaceful areas. Accordingly, guns, weapons, and military toys are always in high demand. The Kabuls control the pipeline and have made nuyen hand-over-fist







INCOMING FEED.....



ETHNIC SYNDICATES.....

arming the various armies, factions, warlords, and terrorists in the area. They can deliver anything from a few crates of assault rifles to APCs and anti-air missiles. Rumors say they've also got some bioweapons and depleted uranium rounds hidden up in caves and bunkers in their mountains. They arm everyone from warlords in Central Asia to European blackmarketeers who resell in the feral sprawl of GeMiTo. But while they'll arm anyone who can buy the goods, they do not actually participate in the terrorism or radical religious wars, like the New Islamic Jihad was known for. They prefer to stick to the paying crime, rather than the ideological type. As such, they tend to stay off the radar of most counter-terrorism task forces, including Interpol, which has allowed them to (quite cannily) benefit from the constant turmoil without facing some of the repercussions.

- The Kabul Maffiya arms the merc units that are stationed in the area, too, as well as providing some choice goodies for the corp sec goons that protect the few secured corporate enclaves there. Most mercs have learned to play nice with the Kabuls, since they're the supplier-of-choice. Hell, they're pretty much the only supplier, if you're stuck out there.
- Picador
- There's a few organizations who'd like to know if the Kabuls really do have bioweapons hidden in some cache. Horizon's Dawkin's Group has been poking their noses around the region, for one.
- Fianchetto

## SMUGGLING

If you want to get from Dubai to Turkestan, the Kabuls can get you there. Russia to India? No problem. Want to take some of the lucrative SK jobs out in the middle of nowhere, Kurdistan? The Kabuls can get you there, get your gear there, and bring you care packages from home. For a price.

Because Afghanistan is an important connection to South, Central, and Southwest Asia, they are ideally positioned to profit from all those areas. They also profit from their nominal inclusion in the Middle East.

- In fact, many "experts" have differing opinions on whether Afghanistan is really part of the Middle East, Central Asia, or South Asia. I guess it depends on where you're standing, ne?
- Rigger X

Many of the large cities in the Middle East, Southwest Asia, and the Indian Subcontinent have small but stable communities of Pashtuns. They are all connected by the traveling sub-tribes, which do everything from transporting messages from far-flung families, to smuggling luxury items, contraband, and drugs to isolated enclaves. They not only know the secret roads through the deserts and mountains, but they control them. The Kabul Maffiya has extensive contacts with other local syndicates—like the Indian Mansur Brothers, and can, through their contact network, get you almost anywhere in Asia.

The Kabuls also provide an outlet for the various (and few) industries in Afghanistan. A few enterprising warlords have

established extensive factories, created large skillwired workforces, and have very profitable contracts for churning out “name brand” goods, from electronics to clothes. They sell these counterfeit goods to massive retailers in Europe and Asia, using the Kabul Maffiya as their primary transportation. The Kabulis take a cut of the total profit and everyone comes out happy.

- Remember folks, just because the RFID tag in that 50¥ jacket says Zoé, does not a Zoé make it!
- Kat o' Nine Tales

## ANCIENT CULTURE

The Kabul Maffiya are solely Pashtun, organized by a patriarchal segmentary lineage (simply explained, tribal), an important fact to remember. As the old saying goes, “Me against my brothers, my brothers and I against my cousins, my cousins and I against the world.” Which means a man will fight against his cousins, unless they are threatened by outsiders, in which case all the tribes come together to fight a common foe.

Since many believe the Pashtuns to be one of the largest familial societies of this type, it's very important to keep in mind. You may see two Kabul Maffiya fighting against each other, even killing one another, in a street fight. But if you—an outsider—were to swing a fist at a completely unrelated person, you might find every man on the street united against *you*. They'll fight like dogs amongst each other, but any threat—no matter how mild—can unite them all to fight against an outsider.

## FOLLOWING THE CODE

To understand the Kabul Maffiya, you must first understand the *Pashtunwali*, the code of honor they follow. It's an ancient tradition, dating back over 5,000 years, that every true Pashtun follows. Despite being such an old system of honor, it's very flexible, and adapted much better to the Awakening than Islam in the surrounding areas.

- While most people believe the Kabul Maffiya to be an Islamic organization, the truth is that while they follow Allah, they do not follow the Sharia law. And if you're female, metahuman, Awakened, Emerged, or an outside, you should be very thankful for that!
- Netcat

The code emphasizes the concepts of hospitality, justice and revenge, asylum, and protecting their land (or assets). What does this mean to an outsider? You may ask for hospitality from a Kabul Maffiya member, and they are honor bound to give you shelter, food, and water. Of course, that means you must be willing to give in return... at any time they ask. Justice (or revenge) is a large component of their code, and even a simple verbal insult requires that justice be sought—often by the shedding of blood. If you aren't available to take revenge upon, they'll seek out your nearest male kin, and time has no effect on this. This can—and does—lead to multigenerational blood feuds within the tribe. This is also one reason the Kabul Maffiya have such a fierce reputation in the areas they control. However, anyone, even a man's worst enemy, can seek asylum with another from *his* enemies. In this case, the asylum seeker will be protected at all costs. It also dictates

the elaborate ways one man goes about apologizing to another, conceding a feud and being forgiven. And the last of the four central tenets is protecting their land and assets. They will all unite to protect their land, and this has evolved to include other more nebulous assets—Matrix space, trade routes, political power, sales contracts...

- Which you will see immediately if you try to cut into one of their trade routes or steal an arms contract from them.
- Rigger X
- If you do run afoul of a Pashtun's nang (honor), you can immediately perform nanawati, which involves a large dose of humility and a bit of begging of forgiveness... an honorable man is bound to forgive you for all wrongs, no matter how severe. Of course, they don't believe much in delaying revenge, so you gotta talk fast before they extract their pound of flesh.
- Elijah
- Kabul Maffiya assassins—the Chalweshti—are rumored to be some of the scariest SOBs out there, dedicated to defending the precepts of Pashtunwali and carrying out the death sentences handed down by the tribal elders. They're tasked with leaving the tribe to hunt down those who've escaped revenge. They train from childhood in a special compound up in the mountains—or so the rumor goes—and consider themselves keepers of the entire tribe's nang. Interpol keeps a file on suspected assassins, but you never know how much is rumor and how much is fact. I do know that one prominent businessman, who supposedly had dealings with the maffiya and supposedly shirked his bill, was found decapitated, his head on a pole outside his Paris flat, his bodyguards all dead. Interpol's files attribute it to the Maffiya. Maybe true, maybe not.
- Fianchetto

There are a few other tenets that the Kabul follow, such as the protection of the Pashtun women (at all costs) and the strict adherence to speaking only the Pashtun language. To speak to them in another language *can* be considered an insult.

- Yeah, and good luck finding a useable Pashtun linguasoft. Supposedly the Chalweshti have attacked those corps that have attempted to create Pashtun linguasofts, using a combination of hacking attacks, strategic assassinations on scientists and contributors, and even bombings to destroy language labs.
- Pistons
- That's because the Chalweshti believe transcribing their language to linguasoft violates some obscure tenet of Pashtunwali. But there's hundreds of thousands of Pashtuns living in sprawls all over the globe. It's easy enough to find someone who'll give you some language lessons.
- Goat Foot

However, unlike the intolerant Islamic cultures in neighboring countries, the Pashtuns have a (relatively) relaxed view of Awakened individuals, especially towards adepts (with warrior adepts often being high-ranking individuals within their tribe).



Remarkably, they also revere those Awakened called to artistic paths, and their poets, dancers, and musicians are highly honored. You may encounter shamans in some of the rural areas, but the Pashtuns are most accepting of mages. Spirits are considered with high suspicion, and those Awakened who call “evil spirits” are subject to execution. Metahumans are tolerated, barely, and are more frequently seen in the urban settings, rather than rural villages. Technomancers are unheard of in the rural tribes, since outside of Kabul and along the trans-Afgan highway, there is almost no wireless Matrix available for Afghanistan. In the far-flung urban enclaves of the Pashtun, they seem to have accepted technomancers within their organization with none of the hysteria seen elsewhere in the past.

Women are rarely allowed to be leaders within the *maffiya*, although I have heard of a few women who have made an exception to that rule. They were all based in urban settings, however—the closer you get to Afghanistan, the less likely you are to find a female of any status or rank.

Still, regardless of your metatype, gender, or abilities, the Kabul Maffiya will gladly take your money and do business with you, as long as you act honorably and have the nuyen. They are not prejudicial when it comes to making money.

## FAMILY TIES

The primary organization of the Kabul Maffiya are small, related “sub-tribal” groups, which the *Maffiya* call *kahols*. Interpol labels these groups as cells, although that has certain terrorist connotations and does not reflect the familial relations within the groups. Each *kahol* operates independently of one another, controlling a specific territory, route, or industry. The *kahols* are each affiliated with a larger *Pllarina*, which in turn identifies with a sub-tribal group (or *Khel*) and finally with the larger tribe. The problem often arises that each *kahols* may cooperate with, compete with, or even be outright hostile to another, even within the same kinship.

Although Babrak controls the *maffiya* (or did before his health issues), the largest and most powerful *Khels* all have an elder on a group council that supposedly advises Babrak of their individual needs and businesses. This group is supposed to control the various bickering and infighting as best they can—generally by negotiating complex deals to end blood-feuds when they get out of hand (which means they’ve gone beyond the *Pllarina* level). They also make strategic decisions and can negotiate travel rights and business support for the various *kahols*. Make no mistake though. The elders have limited control over the *kahols* and tend not to interfere with the blood feuds, as long as each family follows *Pashtunwali*. With Babrak’s continued poor health, the various elders have been throwing their support to their favored successor, hoping to gain more influence when the heir is finally chosen.

When one *kahols* decides to expand its business, the elders of the Kabul Maffiya will lend it the necessary resources, be that manpower, arms, or nuyen. When the *kahols* has successfully taken control of their new endeavor, they must pay the *maffiya* back with their first profits. This allows the Kabul Maffiya to enter into new markets with minimal risk to the entire organization, while at the same time completely overwhelming any competition in the new market. It’s been remarkably successful.

- Yeah, like when the Kabulis took over the crime in Tashkent Sprawl, on the New Silk Road in Turkestan. They took the local Vory and the Red Lanterns, the Chinese Triad in the city, by storm. Recruiting the local Turks, who the Vory and Triads had always treated like second class citizens, was the big turning point. There was a huge under-world war for most of ‘64 and ‘65, and the Kabulis never seemed to run short of manpower or arms. They even outdid the Vory for sheer ruthlessness. By ‘66, there wasn’t enough Vory or Red Lanterns left in the city to offer opposition, and all the extra forces seemed to just trickle away. Now they control 90 percent of the crime in the city. The existing criminal leaders who chose to align themselves with the Kabulis have made a fortune. The rest have been brutally killed, with their heads left up on pikes as a traditional warning to others. Successful? Hell, yeah.

- Red Anya

- That principle of recruiting outsiders is called Hamsaya, attaching yourself to a protector, a Naik. Any attack or insult on the hamsaya is considered an attack on the Kabulis’s honor, and they’ll avenge it accordingly. It’s more than a protection racket—the Kabulis Maffiya really will fight to the death to defend their hamsaya—not just the one kahol, but the entire kinship group. Of course, it goes without saying that the Kabulis basically own their hamsaya...

- Goat Foot

## THE KOMUN’GO SEOULPA RING

Posted By Riser

This one’s for Fatima. As someone who has family outside the biz I took it hard when she went down. Most of you know she lost her life trying to protect her brother. But it turns out there’s more to the story than that. After Pistons posted the information she had on the group responsible, I decided to do some more digging, maybe work out a revenge scenario. As it turns out, I was looking at the wrong bad guy. The Komun’go have managed to become serious players over the last few months. The keys to their success? The capital they raised by selling off the last of their Tempo, and taking advantage of the distractions caused by a massive syndicate war. That tells me the Komun’go organization is deadly, manipulative, and ambitious—traits that have made them very good employers to folks like us. Consider this read a heads up. The Komun’go is only going to get bigger if they survive this war. They are flush with cash but short on bodies, so the syndicate will be looking to us to see that they pull through. So read on, and consider the question: are we better off with them or without them?

- I can answer that. We’re better off without them and the First Nations. Their recklessness is what got Fatima killed and Haze hooked on their shit.

- Pistons

- Fatima got Fatima killed. She was sticking her nose into biz she didn’t understand. We can’t fault the First Nations for taking a crack at a rival gang. It’s what gangs do. All the Komun’go did was give them a reason. Fatima on the other hand, she was fucked up and stepped in the middle of a gang war for what? To muscle the guy who was selling her brother shit?

- Butch





INCOMING FEED.....

- Fuck you, Butch. You can't even begin to understand what its like to lose someone. You're just protecting the Komun'go because you're on the payroll.
- Pistons
- Butch, there's no point in speaking ill of the dead. Pistons, I understand that you think this is your fault but it isn't. You couldn't have known what Fatima was getting into. Now both of you need to calm down or take it somewhere else.
- Fastjack

### KOMUN'GO

Threat rating: 2.8 (of 5)

**Size:** 60+

**Primary Contact:** Tadjji

**Organization Style:** Seoulpa Ring

**Known Associates:** Choson Seoulpa Ring, First Nations, Dogmen, Ancients, Blood Mountain Boys, Tamanous

**Active Threats:** Shotozumi-gumi, Kenran-kai, Koshari, Ragers, Cutters

**Notes:** Be aware of Tadjji's ulterior motives. He may be a Ring member, but he's still a Haida terrorist, which means the jobs he has you hire for aren't necessarily for the Komun'go.

### A BRIEF HISTORY LESSON

The Komun'go, as it exists today, is the result of Yakuza efforts to exterminate all of the Seoulpa rings. Tensions between the Japanese-led Yakuza and its Korean offshoot are legendary, especially here in Seattle. After the Yaks went to war with the Rings there was almost nothing left of them. The majority of freelance Korean gangsters latched on to the surviving Choson Ring for support. The Komun'go should have been done. But then a strange thing happened. The group's half-Amerind leader Chulsoon Gray-Wolf opened membership to Amerinds. The effect was a jolt of X-cyte to the veins of their operation. The Komun'go were able to capitalize on the local Amerind population for membership as well as contacts. With the help of the Dogmen, they were able to expand their body shop operations far beyond the Seattle ghettos, presenting them with a fairly strong revenue stream. Things went from good to great when an underboss named Kaz Yakamura hooked up with a Tempo supplier. In order to throw the scent off themselves, the ring started moving drugs through subordinate gangs like the First Nations, the Blood Mountain boys and, for a time, the Ragers.

Didn't take long for the Yakuza to catch on to who was really running Tempo. The Kenran-kai were sent to finish what Shigeda started all those years ago. This is where we get into manipulative and deadly—not to mention ballsy. Just when everyone though Chulsoon was going to fold, the Yakuza imploded. The Kenran-kai Oyuban and the chief *sokaiya* of the Shotozumi-gumi died in a casino bombing perpetuated by the mob and the Seattle Sprawl descended into a gang war. That brings us to today. With the

Yakuza battling the mob and the Seoulpa Rings, Chulsoon Gray-Wolf has had a chance to put his house in order.

- "The Mob did it" is the official line, but Numbers Chiarnello, a mob underboss, was among the casualties of that bombing. The mob isn't so sloppy as to kill their own—neither are the runners the mob usually hires. Those who are quickly find themselves the proud owners of plasticrete boots. Someone else had to be behind it.

- Snopes

- Despite rumors to the contrary and one uncomfortable run-in I had with my former Yakuza friends, the Smoker's Club didn't do this hit; neither did Chimera or any of the known hitters. Who ever it was, congratulations, you just made a name for yourself. Now stay as far away from Seattle as possible, because the Yakuza are looking for you and payback is a bitch.

- Kai-lin

The syndicate formed an alliance with the First Nations gang and the Haida Dogmen, a smuggling syndicate with roots in the NAN. The three groups might as well be one, considering how entwined the leadership structure is. The Komun'go remains at the top of the heap and the other two groups, though much larger in size, support the Seoulpa Ring by doing its dirty work.

## THE SHAPE OF A RING

Here's the ambitious part: The Komun'go hardly considers itself a small time race-based syndicate. Unlike the quickly growing Choson Ring, they've stuck with the traditional small group structure. There are less than seventy certified members of the syndicate, most of whom are consecrated muscle called Stand-Over Men. Their singular role in life is to make sure the leaders don't get dead, and they are very good at their role. The small circle of Komun'go leaders each command other groups, be it gangs, teams of shadowrunners, bookies, street docs, what have you. The Komun'go leadership has become the board of directors for what is essentially a shadow corporation looking to jam its fingers into every profitable aspect of the underworld.

Four members of the Komun'go leadership we know. Chulsoon Grey-Wolf runs the group, Ju Kon is the primary prostitution and bodywares man, Sutton Lao, a Mudang, handles magical contract work, and Kaz Yakamura is chiefly responsible for the drug operations. In fact, all of the Komun'go operations are diversified in this fashion. Each leader of an industry sits at the round table with a rank of lieutenant, same as his counterparts. The only way to make the board is to become an industry leader. Right now there are eleven of them, including the ones mentioned above. When the Komun'go joined with the Dogmen and the First Nations, leadership from both groups sent members to the Seoulpa Ring and vice versa. Not foot soldiers, but lieutenants; men that could make decisions. The Dogmen are represented at the table by Tadjji, a former Haida activist. The First Nations sent their top shaman, Sally Littletree, to the table. In exchange they received the twin adepts Goh and Yeon Park from the Seoulpa Ring. There is also a hacker among the known members of the leadership council. The rest of the members have managed to stay off the radar.

- I know an additional member named Eric Kon, cousin to Ju Kon. He's been running a business similar to the Yakuza *sakaiya* operations. Kon is an old school money man from Korea whose gambling problems overseas landed him in Seattle on the run from some serious underworld players. The Komun'go bought his debt, which means they own him.

- Mihoshi-Oni

## THE BIZ

The syndicate made its mark in the body parts trade. They operated the Body Mall in Seattle until the Yakuza almost burned it to the ground. They also worked with the Dogmen and Tamanous to establish regular routes for parts and sometimes people. The Komun'go primarily deals in human parts and used cyberware. Some of it comes from Tamanous, some of it from the various other operations they're associated with, such as kidnapping.

- Sales have taken a beating without the Body Mall to act as a central hub for the operation. The Komun'go has been trying to spread out by subcontracting shadow clinics as far afield as Portland and even eastern Salish Shidhe to push their wares. The Dogmen have been overseeing the logistical end of the operation, shuttling parts across the borders. However, there aren't too many operations willing to do business with them knowing the Yakuza heat it will bring.

- Butch

Seoulpa Rings thrive in larger criminal fields where the major syndicates won't notice their impact on the market. This includes prostitution, racketeering and strong-arm muscle work. The Komun'go is a creative group. They find new ways to approach age-old markets. In the sex trade the group has moved from pimping to pushing life-like sex dolls, primarily provided by Korean distributors.

- They've also dipped into the sex slave trade. Komun'go muscle snatches the girls off the street then the Dogmen smuggle them across the UCAS. Their targets are lower class Redmond types who won't be missed.

- Pistons

- Some of those sex slaves that don't meet client needs end up as parts to be sold wholesale or gifted to Tamanous. They use local street docs to do the cutting. In exchange the doctors get the supplies they need to stay in business.

- Butch

- Careful, Butch. Your lack of conscience is showing.

- Mika

Today the gang is best known for Tempo, the drug that sparked this entire syndicate war. The Komun'go remain the area's chief supplier of that drug, but there is hardly any of it left to sell. The Ring distributes what little supply they have left through a number of gangs, including the Ancients who've given them access into the hard-to-breach Tir Tangire. The supply of Tempo is all but exhausted, and considering that the new Olaya Cartel spokesman prefers the Koshari over the Komun'go, it is unlikely the Seoulpa Ring will be getting resupplied anytime soon.



Urgent Message...

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## BREAKDOWN IN TEMPO SUPPLY SPURS STREET VIOLENCE

By Stephen Hawke

Brackhaven's decree to rid the city of Tempo may have had an unfortunate side effect. For the third straight month, Lone Star is reporting a better than four percent rise in the number of violent crimes reported in Seattle. Most of the increase is being attributed to a drop in supply of Tempo, a drug that burst onto the Seattle scene nearly fourteen months ago. Now thought to be the work of Yakuza chemists, Tempo is a powerful hallucinogenic narcotic, which has led to the death of several heavy users. Mayor Brackhaven used the successes of his joint task force in combating Tempo distribution as a campaign platform to ensure his reelection. However in the wake of that success, violent crime rates have soared as users react to being deprived of their drug.

Task force commander Kyle Raintree stated Monday, "Tempo users continue to be a problem in the inner city. We are doing our best to contain the situation. The demand for the drug has increased dramatically and led to some unfortunate criminal acts, but the key is making sure we keep Tempo out of our city. We need to pass the legislation required to give us the powers we need to find those who are bringing this drug into this city." This week Mayor Brackhaven is expected to look at a bill that would require corporations to allow Lone Star unfettered access to containers being shipped in and out of the city. The bill has met with strong corporate resistance and is viewed as a breach of corporate sovereignty law.

One thing is certain: the Komun'go is looking to branch out. They survived in a niche market for years before the Yakuza flushed them out. Tempo gave them a rebirth, but it pushed them out into the open where they had to contend with the big boys. Now they are looking to new markets to exploit and are looking to us shadowrunners to fight their wars for them. The money is certainly good, and the Komun'go have been known to supply certain 'fringe benefits' to their workforce. So, I ask you again is this the sort of organization you want dipping into our shadows?

- The group has been using their Stand Over Men to destabilize a seven-block section of Tarislar. They hit a location, driving down property prices with violence, and soon after a company called PetroKinetics gobbles up the cheaper property. Its not a far leap to figure the syndicate is working for the corporation. Maybe we should add corporate thugs to their long list of activities.
- Mr. Bonds

## THE KOSHARI

Posted by: Lyran

Recently, there've been several tantalizing Koshari rumors on JackPoint. They're branching out, so now's your chance to learn about your new neighbors.

The Koshari started as an offshoot of the Kachina Society. Begun almost 60 years ago, the Kachina Society is a historic preservation society dedicated to Zuni and Hopi traditions. The Society also advised and guided the newly formed Pueblo Corporate Council.

Several Kachina members were followers of Koshari, the spirit of mischief, gluttony, and entertainment. Initially, Koshari's lessons served as a warning of the danger of excess. However, about 50 years ago, the Koshari members' excesses forced the Kachina Society (and the Pueblo government) to disavow them.

- Publically, at least.
- Man-of-Many-Names

Left to their own devices, they rapidly turned to illicit activities. BTLs, drugs, smuggling, and prostitution provided a steady income. However, their niche market was talislegging. The well-established crime syndicates in the area were behind the times when it came to magical tesmas. The Koshari essentially found an open market. Despite this, they remained confined to the Pueblo. This situation might have continued had recent events not broadened their horizons.

- Pun intended?
- Slamm-0

## RECENT EVENTS

In the late 2050s, the Koshari began a massive expansion. They controlled most organized crime ventures in the Pueblo, but greater profits required growth.

The Ute, with their severe restrictions and repressive laws, was their first target. Unfortunately, it was Comanche mob territory. They weren't about to just roll over. The Koshari went to work, smuggling, extracting talent from Comanche-allied corporations, and warring with abandon. Practically overnight, streets were bloody. Formerly peaceful border towns were confronted with 'big city' problems. SINners fled to places with effective security. Many border towns were simply abandoned, giving the Koshari even greater latitude.

- Wasn't there friction between the Ute and Pueblo prior to this? I recall heated deliberations in the Sovereign Council about the disposition of Anglos and transfer payments. It's not surprising that was their first target.
- Sunshine
- Let's not forget the 'border skirmishes' back in '38, '41, and '48. Old grudges die hard.
- Man-of-Many-Names

However, Koshari operations weren't very successful. Smuggling rings were frequently discovered, the Comanche



fought off incursions, and several extractions were thwarted. Koshari losses were considerable.

Meanwhile, crime rates in the Ute increased as the influx of illegal guns, drugs, and BTLs skyrocketed. Security forces were overwhelmed by the proliferation of crime. Corporations complained about the waste of time, money, and manpower due to talent extractions. Worst of all, the Ute constitution hampered effective response by miring security in red tape.

In 2061, the Pueblo annexed Los Angeles. The Koshari moved in and set up shop. However, problems soon arose. They found themselves up against the Larraga and Gillespie Mafias for the BTL and CalHot rackets and against the Triads for talislegging. In addition, The Burning Angels (a street gang with Anasazi ties) targeted them for supposed ancient rivalries. They carved out a niche, but it was small.

Back in the Ute Nation, conditions got steadily worse. Crime was at an all-time high, political infighting had mired a number of infrastructure projects in red tape, and inflation was skyrocketing. Then, in mid 2063, the Ute surrendered. Citing crushing financial burdens and a lack of adequate work force, they arranged to turn control of the Nation over to the Pueblo.

- That doesn't make sense. They weren't bankrupt; several corporations, including Aztechnology, were actively supporting them.
- Glitch
- Maybe there were other reasons.
- Elijah

Meanwhile, bio-engineered Awakened drugs (BADs) began making the scene in LA and other major cities. The Koshari secured rights to import and sell them wholesale and signed up the LA Ancients for street-level distribution throughout CFS.

This was the turning point for the Koshari. In the former Ute Nation, smuggling operations became harder to find. Talent extractions dropped off, and the Comanche mob found itself targeted by several PuebSec organized crime investigations.

In LA, BADs' popularity skyrocketed. Pueblo laws protected the traditional use of natural drugs like peyote. Because BADs were a variant of these, many importers and dealers escaped justice. The Koshari's success was staggering.

- It would seem the Koshari's 'unsuccessful' campaign was, in fact, quite successful.
- Icarus
- You have no idea.
- Lyran

Rumors arose about an alliance between the Pueblo and the Koshari. Local trid reporters began looking for anything to link the two. More than one reporter had a nasty accident. Instead, trid of a purported meeting between Pueblo bureaucrats and the Koshari Outer Circle surfaced. It was never authenticated, as the host nodes were known hotbeds of political dissent and Ute sympathy. However, before further research could be done, a rapid series of coordinated hacks obliterated all traces of it.

- Not quite all. If you wanna take a gander at the proof, PM me.
- Plan 9
- I've seen the "proof." It looks like someone needs to update their editing program.
- Glitch

In a highly publicized, media-orchestrated investigation, PuebSec looked into allegations of collusion. The investigation took almost two years, millions of nuyen, and thousands of man-hours. In the end, they found insufficient evidence for further investigations. After that, the matter was quietly dropped.

## LAS VEGAS

Eventually, the Koshari expansion reached Las Vegas. The Comanche, hounded by PuebSec and backed into a corner by the Koshari, attacked with abandon. The fighting reminded many of the Koshari's initial forays into Ute. PuebSec was slow in responding, despite the fact that the violence was interfering with tourism nuyen.

- Let me see if I understand this. The Koshari start a war with the Pueblo's old enemy. While not profitable, they maintain it for several years. It taxes Ute resources and exploits loopholes in their government structure. When the Pueblo steps in, suddenly, the Koshari find they have carte blanche. Meanwhile, the Koshari's enemies are hounded by PuebSec. Whether that trid is true or not, there's still a question of a Koshari/Pueblo alliance?
- Kay St. Irregular
- Publically, at least.
- Man-of-Many-Names
- Do you really think the Koshari/PCC alliance is what this is all about? Is controlling vice in the PCC really that lucrative? You're not looking at the big picture.
- Haze

Currently, the Comanche mob has been reduced to a large street gang with a few holdings in Vegas. The Koshari control a piece of virtually all Hopi and Zuni-run business in the Vegas sprawl. During this, the Verontesse chose to stay neutral. At one point, they offered armed escorts to and from their casinos. However, most tourists simply went elsewhere, and those rich enough not to be put off already had armed escorts. Their neutrality was costly. Several smaller Verontesse casinos are now Koshari property. The Mafia is still top dog, but the question is, for how long?

- Als sie die Komanche geholt haben, habe ich geschwiegen. - denn ich war ja kein Komanche.
- Aufheben

## LOS ANGELES

Despite distribution problems, the Koshari have a lock on the BAD trade. Flush with cash, they've given the Burning Angels some payback. Tse Ye Mu, head of the LA Koshari, is personally backing





INCOMING FEED.....

many ops against them. Because of the ongoing legality issue with BADs, Tse Ye Mu has been able to operate with a much higher profile than typical for most drug smugglers. Thus, he's making himself at home in Hollywood. His P2.0 rating is through the roof, and he's been seen with all the right people at the right parties. Typical of up and comers, he counts several Hollywood elite among his personal associates. However, it's not all good news.

The LA Koshari are flush with cash, but that's all. They don't have the manpower to topple the big boys. Doing more means buying help. That's expensive and possibly problematic.

In addition, Tse Ye is very high profile. He's been caught more than once taking more credit than he deserves.

- That is a decidedly unhealthy attitude.
- Mika
- If it's for real. After all, sowing internal strife is an effective weapon.
- Dr. Spin

## ORGANIZATION AND OPERATIONS

Now we get to the nuts and bolts. How do the Koshari get things done, and what do they do?

### LAYOUT

The Koshari are organized as a series of non-overlapping circles (similar to the Hopi world symbol). These 'circles' can represent anything from street gangs and criminal organizations to areas and cities. The number of individuals in a circle varies by

function. (Auto-theft circles may have a few members, while street gangs could have a hundred or more.) Ideally, every circle should function without influence from above. Circles are allowed to create relevant rules, recruit, and discipline at will. In addition, each circle is expected to have one member speak for them at gatherings. These gatherings vary according to need, but they could include all circles in a city or all circles involved with BTLs, etc. Gatherings are used to direct operations, exchange information, and mediate disputes. The manpower the Koshari can mobilize vary widely by location. In Koshari strongholds like Santa Fe, it could be several thousand, whereas in general, it could be only a few hundred.

This organization gives equal representation to all members. The street-level crews have an equal say in their area. The areas cooperate to run the city, and the largest cities have representatives in the Outer Circle.

- And the sky is filled with rainbows, and unicorns and puppies frolic in the flowers. What a load of bullshit.
- Cosmo

All Koshari are expected to cooperate. This seems to come not from altruistic motives, but necessity. While they control most crime in the Pueblo, they are outnumbered everywhere else. For proof, look at Denver, LA, or Las Vegas. Circles in the same geographic area focus on different crimes to minimize potential conflict.

Interestingly, the Koshari pay dividends. A piece of every operation is placed in a general fund that pays out quarterly.



## MAJOR RACKETS

Until recently, the Koshari's major source of income was talislegging. However, they usually farmed out transportation to T-Bird crews out of Denver or LA. The Koshari focused on the harvesting, collecting, and poaching aspects of talislegging. The high proportion of mages, along with plenty of wide-open spaces, allowed them to work with little risk. With that established, they branched out into weapons, drugs, BTLs, and CalHots. Additionally, they were involved with blackmail, protection, and prostitution rackets.

Recently, they've expanded. Las Vegas marked their introduction to illegal gambling. LA introduced their most profitable operation to date, BADs.

## PERSONNEL

At the top of the Koshari food chain are the representatives of Santa Fe, Phoenix, Denver, and Las Vegas. Collectively, they are known as the Outer Circle.

## THE OUTER CIRCLE

This circle is responsible for directing and coordinating the organization. It mediates disputes between cities or any issues irresolvable at the local level, and it establishes rules as needed. It is responsible for seeking out and making or dissolving treaties with other organizations. Most importantly, it decides whether new cities have earned the right to representation in the Outer Circle. Despite the influx of nuyen and its importance, LA has not been given this offer.

## SANTA FE

Alo Wukoanu is an 80-year-old Amerind human male. As the eldest member, he unabashedly refers to himself as leader. These days he frequently speaks on his imminent death. At Circle meetings, he focuses on the survival of the 'old ways.'

- Seems a lot of dancers choose to go out this way.
- Man-of-Many-Names

The Santa Fe Koshari are a sedate and civic-minded group. They couch their extortion and blackmail rackets in terms of civic responsibilities or neighborhood improvement projects. BTL and BAD distribution take place only in the 'unsavory' parts of town.

Unfortunately, this civic-minded attitude is becoming problematic. Several street gangs, go-gangs, and even rival organizations aren't showing the proper respect. They do business without permission and flaunt the rules. The Koshari may soon find their oldest city slipping through their fingers.

## PHOENIX

Catori Kwayo is a 45-year-old Amerind human female. Despite Alo's ramblings about control, Catori is the woman with the plan, and her voice carries a lot of weight. Catori is only interested in two things, accumulating power and spreading Koshari influence.

The Phoenix Koshari are the most organized, militaristic, and successful. They routinely contribute the most to the general fund. While it is the largest city, Catori closely monitors and

controls virtually every crime. There is no room for improvisation. Everyone lines up behind her, or else.

When the Larraga Mafia came to Phoenix, they bought themselves a world of hurt. Within the first few weeks, three mid-level Larraga hit men caught lead poisoning. Within the first month, authorities started finding bodies staked out in the desert. Recently, Catori approved the taking of Larraga scalps within city limits. Needless to say, it's been a few years, and the Larragas haven't made it far. If they stay to the fringes, they aren't worth her time.

- Your sources are a bit dated. The Larragas have spread a lot of goodwill to the gangs in Phoenix, everything from weapons and drugs to advice and hideouts. Everyone knows they are uncomfortable with Catori. The gangs' backing could sway things in the Larragas' favor.
- Marcos
- Doubtful. They don't want to run afoul of Catori's new venture, supplying Amerind raw material for the Tamanous.
- Hannibelle

## DENVER

Joshua Kawaibatunya is a 40-year-old Amerind human male, the black sheep of the Outer Circle. Many of his decisions rankle his peers, who view him as shortsighted. Despite opposition to his policies, Joshua expends little energy defending himself. Most attribute it to not wanting a battle on more than one front.

- Or, it could have to do with pale-skinned skeletons in his closet. I hear his grandfather wasn't choosy about bedmates.
- Glitch

The Kosharis' control of Denver is tenuous. The PCC sector's underworld is a lock. However, they've had to make several concessions to 'get along' in the Front Range Free Zone. Recent events in the Treaty City have shaken up numerous local crime organizations, but the Koshari fared as well as could be expected.

## LAS VEGAS

Ayawamat Chua is a 38-year-old Amerind ork male and the newest member of the council. Quiet yet decisive, he hasn't made his presence known. However, he's steadily taken more control of the city, using tactics compared to chess. That's apt, because he's an avid player.

- I hear he once released a captured mafia hitman because the guy won a game.
- Riser
- Urban legends at their finest.
- Snopes

Until his promotion, he was Catori's right hand. She secured his nomination using audacity, bribery, and blackmail. When he took charge, everyone assumed Catori would be in control of the Outer Circle. However, recent heated disagreements imply otherwise.



## RECRUITING

Joining the Koshari is simple. Get noticed. The Koshari espouse results. Street-level crews are free to recruit at will. Because they are often outnumbered, soldiers watch for talent. Experts then monitor for suitability. If there is a need and the individual fits, an offer is made. Consequences for refusing the offer vary. However, rarely are refusals grounds for death. Most often, the individual is warned away from working Koshari territory.

Scratch below the surface of the 'talent-over-pedigree' rhetoric, and the Koshari are like most ethnic gangs. Talent will only get you so far, and bloodline matters. Admittedly, the Koshari are more egalitarian than many. They'll hire metas, Awakened, cybered, what have you. Talented members can go higher in the organization than most. However, once you look at members of the Outer Council or their aides, you'll notice many shared characteristics. All have Hopi or Zuni heritage, and all are powerful shamans.

- So, what about Tse Ye Mu? I hear he has some Amerind blood but not much. How'd he get to be head of the LA Koshari?
- Glitch
- Quite simple. He isn't. As head of magical operations in LA, he's in charge of importing and distributing BADs throughout the Pueblo. Because of that, he's been given a lot of leeway.
- Lyran

## INITIATION

Koshari initiation is a simple affair, and it happens with some frequency. Whenever a member is promoted (to foot soldier, representative, or Outer Circle), they go through an initiation. However, most members are unaware that the initiation and its purpose vary by the member's importance.

Low-level initiations (joining the Koshari, becoming a circle representative) usually take place at a typical meeting area or safe house. However, it's not unheard of to initiate a new member wherever is convenient. Details vary, but they all involve the same general structure. The other members surround the initiate. The initiate introduces himself using his real name (which is never uttered again outside initiation ceremonies) and his street name. He then makes pledges of humility, cooperation, respect, and loyalty to his fellows. The assembled acknowledge his efforts and make similar pledges. Then, there is a short welcoming ceremony.

Individuals who make it past the glass ceiling go through a second, more solemn, initiation. The new member is brought to one of several secret locations. There, they are ushered into a sunless room. Inscribed on the floor is a sacred Hopi Circle. Surrounding the circle are many high-ranking Koshari members. The initiate begins in the center of the circle and, following the path, moves to the outside. At each of the cardinal points, he stops and repeats the pledges he made upon joining. This time, rather than pledging himself to his fellows, he pledges his loyalty to Koshari. These pledges are more than just purely ritualistic; they are magically binding.

- I hear there are even rumors that Koshari is a Free Spirit who is the unspoken fifth member of the Outer Circle.
- Axis Mundi

- Another über-powerful Free Spirit who's secretly in charge? Care to show even a scintilla of proof?
- Ecotope
- Well?
- Ecotope
- That's what I thought.
- Ecotope

## ZOBOP

Posted By: **Abacadavre**

In the Carib League, the Voice of Ogon holds more power than any pirate gang, government, or corporation. Here, the gods walk among their people, and their priests, the houngans and mambos of the Voice of Ogon, call down the loa to mount their serviteurs and bless them. Marcus Cross, head houngan of the Carib League and leader of the Voice of Ogon, has seen his organization grow and become the preeminent force in the islands, dedicated to serving the people's religious needs, preserving their culture, and furthering the study of voodoo and its related magical traditions.

The Zobop is the dark side of the Voice of Ogon, where bocors sell their services for the greedy and the hateful, obeahmen follow the Petro rites and deal with shedim in defiance of Cross' commandments, and back-country vodouisants rule communities through fear and the threat of magical reprisals.

- My researches show that 'zobop' criminal gangs have victimized Haiti, and possibly other Caribbean islands, almost since the development of voodoo. Originally, each gang was independent, comprised of the devoted followers of a single houngan or mambo, and used harassment, social stigma, and sometimes violence or the threat of supernatural retaliation to enforce the strictures of the local house or temple.
- Winterhawk

The root of the problem with the Zobop is that their existence is implicitly permitted by the Voice of Ogon; many of the fine and upstanding members of our order are secret members of the Zobop, or are willing to overlook their activities as necessary to sustain the faith of the people and the power of the Voice of Ogon. Voodoo as a religion has always accepted the dark with the light, and vodouisants are a pragmatic lot that are reluctant to throw away any tool—even the shedim-summoning Petro that the Zobop harbor—and some of the more mystically inclined believe that to outlaw or deny the darker part of our nature would lessen or destroy us.

- T'be fair, no one has ever proved shedim can be summoned or bound by metahuman magicians, those rumors just started up in the CAS shortly after the shedim came through Dunkelzahn's Rift in '61—and the CAS isn't particularly friendly to voodoo types. The rootworkers in New Orleans picked it up as a mudslinging tactic, and it spread as an epithet for unsavory practices like sacrifice magic and necromancy.
- Sticks



## ROOTWORK AND SLAVERY

Through the influence in Carib society, their magical power, and a network of serviteurs and other non-magicians acting as muscle and mules, the Zobop have toppled nearly every major criminal enterprise in the region except for the pirate gangs, and have begun to expand their operations beyond the Carib.

- The Zobop keep out interlopers who pry too closely at the workings of voodoo, and make examples out of those that defy them—like tying them to trees with barbed wire and setting flaming tires around their necks...or worse. In Papa Doc's day, his zobops were truly feared, and that's the kind of response the Zobop aims for.
- Sticks

In their communities, the Zobop deal in protection and extortion rackets, encouraging the natives to join and practice voodoo religious ceremonies—and, when possible, the darker rites of the Zobop as well. The bocors rely on the belief and fear in their powers and authority to enforce the silence and compliance they need to operate.

Unlike the Voice of Ogoun, the bocors of the Zobop are always willing to perform some magical task—even illegal ones—for those willing to match their price; once someone has accepted their help the Zobop has a hook into them that they can use at a later date, offering their assistance again or even making demands and threats now that the worm that hired them knows how effective their magics are.

Alone among the houngans of the Carib, the Zobop will deal in the creation and exploitation of zombies, corps cadavres, and sukuyan slaves, using control spells and Awakened drugs like deepweed, zubembie powder, and shade to enslave the living, the dead, and the undead to their wills. Of course, the Zobop are also in league with the Carib pirate gangs who smuggle their Awakened drugs and slaves throughout the islands, and to ports around the world.

- Sukuyan are the result of a mutated HMHVV-1 strain, a vampire very vulnerable to some of the Awakened compounds and poisons obeahmen can brew up—their owners keep them drugged to the gills to sap their will and keep them obediently addicted.
- Sticks

Beyond pandering magical favors and trafficking in drugs and slaves, individual houngans often engage in other criminal activities designed to increase their personal wealth, status, and power. As focused as they are on black magic and crimes that aid it or are aided by it, the Zobop has virtually no hand in Matrix crime, financial crime, white collar crime and the like—the League doesn't have the infrastructure or opportunities for it outside Miami and Havana.

## THE HOUSES OF THE LOA

Each city that the Zobop operates in, or sometimes each island, belongs to a house of a certain loa, usually a petro loa, who serves as its patron. Typically, the patron loa of a house is the same as the *main tete* of the houngan or mambo that heads the house. Each house has their own traditions or commandments, typically five in number, though the number and exact commandments can change from house to house.

### Commandments of the Red Tower of New Orleans

Never speak well of the Head Houngan.  
Respect the head of this house.  
Do not defile a cemetery or house of worship.  
Respect your brothers and sisters in this house.  
Attend the rituals at least once a week.

- In this context, "house" could be interpreted as temple—a physical shrine that serves as meeting place, safe house, and place of worship—and as an organization equivalent to a Yakuza gumi or Mafia family.
- Winterhawk

Under the 'roof' of a given house, any number of krewes operate, gangs of criminals led by lieutenants that operate the house's illegal operations or engage in their own ventures and 'pay up to the roof,' or give a portion of their profits to the house each week. The more hands-on papas and mamas run their own krewes to take care of critical operations.

Second-in-command of a house is a warlord, sometimes called a steppin' razor by Jamaican-influenced houses. Adepts are preferred for this position, but it is common for augmented mundanes to take the position instead. The warlord is always made a serviteur, a prepared vessel for the loa to ride when the house goes to war. In times when the houngan or mambo is dead or gone, the warlord has command of the house.

- Most Zobop houses have two magicians—the houngan who heads the house and the adept warlord. Not all of the Zobop houses are led by a full complement; magical talent is just too rare for that to work out right, but they try. Many smaller houses are run by a gangan—a minor magician or a mundane serviteur obedient to a houngan or mambo in another, larger house, and who supports their position with bought magics, especially magical compounds and spirit services "on loan" from other positions. Some particularly powerful houngans command multiple houses in absentia, letting their mundane warlords handle the day-to-day operations, while the Cardinals have several houngans or gangans in their house, organized by degree of initiation and ability.
- Sticks

The head of each house is mostly independent in their actions, and the houses sometimes go to war with one another or cooperate in their enterprises. The most powerful houngans hold control of many houses, and have many gangans and lesser houngans that obey them; such powerful bocor style themselves as bishops. All of the houses answer to the Red College, a coalition of the most powerful bishops, known as cardinals. The college serves both political and religious purpose; each seat is dedicated to one of the loa, and each cardinal is a houngan whose *main tete* corresponds to the loa whose position they symbolically take. Bishops who wish to become a cardinal must first defeat the current cardinal of their loa, or convince the college to accept their *main tete* as a new loa.

Currently, there are nine cardinals: Agwe, the tempestuous sea; Damballah Wedo, the primal serpent; Erzuli Ge Rouge, the jealous red eyes who cannot be loved enough; Baron Samedi, lord



INCOMING FEED.....

of graveyards and his wife Maman Brigitte; Carrefour, the abysmal night; Ogoun, the iron warrior; and Baron Zaraguin, king scorpion and lord of assassins.

- Because of their position as the dark underbelly the Voice of Ogoun, the Zobop's hierarchical symbolism is primarily based on Haitian and New Orleans Vodun/Voodoo, but it isn't limited to that by any means. Many houses in the CAS, Carib League, Amazonia, and even Aztlan and French Guiana are centered around Candomblé, Obeah, Umbanda, and Santería, and use the names of those religions instead.
- Sticks

Instant Message...

**From: Sticks**

**Subject: Voodoo Passports**

Traditionally, when a Zobop travels from her house's territory to that of another house, she carries a passport—a bit of spirit writing that identifies her as a member of another house. I honestly don't know how it works. The writing looks like something between gibberish and the scrawled drawing of mental patients. But I've never known for any forgery to actually work. Supposedly, a passport is drawn by a possessed ser-viteur and read by another one; I suppose that might account for it. Hope that helps.

It is said the Red College does not meet on this plane for fear of the discovery, but many in the Voice of Ogoun believe they meet in Guinee, the Island Under the Sea, the metaplanar seat of the Loa, where the cardinals may discuss matters freely and consult the petro loa together.

### Papa Zobop, The Pope of Voodoo

The head of the College of Cardinals is Papa Zobop, the Bocor Supreme, the Black Pope, the blasphemous counterpart to the Head Houngan of the Voice of Ogoun. Supposedly, no one outside the Red College knows who the head of the Zobop is, but many believe Claude-Michel Faubert, the former leader of the Voice of Ogoun, to be the power behind the Zobop. Faubert gained his position in the Voice through trickery and deceit, and was ousted by Papa Cross not long after his followers managed his release from imprisonment in the CAS; the bocor has not been seen since.

- Of course, what's really interesting is that traditionally the Black Pope is supposed to be a woman. The New Orleans krewes believe it is Marie Laveau herself, or one of her great-great-great-great-granddaughters—or at least that's the word around Nawlins.
- Kane

Papa Zobop's *main tete* is Carrefour, and his krewes wander at his will in an effort to expand the Zobop's territories and consolidate their control. The Bocor Supreme himself has no direct

control or ownership in Zobop activities beyond this, having divided his houses among the other cardinals and kept only his trusted lieutenants to himself. This tradition serves as a check on the Black Pope's power, and prevents the mindlessly greedy from seeking to become head of the Red College.

## A RISING DARKNESS

The Zobop controls much of the organized crime in the Carib League, and is currently in a phase of expansion. New houses are being founded around the world in communities with a strong cultural bias, and some isolated cults may have been started in disparate sprawls. Local voodoo-themed gangs and organizations, such as the Yardies in the United Kingdom and the voodoo gangs of New Orleans are being co-opted or destroyed as the Zobop eliminates its potential rivals. While still relatively small, the Zobop are poised to gain international attention from law enforcement—and the other transnational syndicates.

### Cayenne, French Guiana

*La Maison de Saint Joseph* is a gang of Obeahmen catering to the thousands of impoverished French Guianese in Cayenne. Obeah is less a religion than a system of native folk magic melded with the very popular Roman Catholic religion, and the *Maison* preys on the superstitious. Doctor Colbert runs the house, and his lieutenants are gangan who use mystical healing as often as first aid and surgery to heal the sick; and more often than not addict their patients to deepweed and zubemie powder imported from other Zobop houses in the Carib League. They also have a small business in smuggling, primarily getting black market artwork out of mainland France, talislegging out of Amazonia, and into mainland France.

### Merseysprawl, United Kingdom

*Red Eye House* has taken over all of the prostitution in Merseysprawl over the last eighteen months. Every pimp and streetwalker answers to Granma Chat and her steppin' razors Peg the Leg and Colm "Ogoun's Razor" Ives. Every knocking shop is full of her boys and girls, and half of the police force is in her pocket every week for a handful of nuyen and a bit of quim. Despite rumors spread by her enemies in the Merseysprawl underworld, there is little evidence that Red Eye House engages in unnatural acts for special clients—though no one who knows her would put it past the old bitch to call down a spirit of lust or reanimate the body of a valuable prostitute for her own amusement.

Papa Zobop has taken an interest in Merseysprawl, which is ideally poised to gain further influence with the Jamaican voodoo cults among the British Yardies and provide further inroads into the United Kingdom and Europe.

### Metrópole, Amazonia

Several houses call Metrópole home, split by geography and religion. These are all small operations, little more than a single houngan or gangan with their krewes, trying to compete against both the Ghost Cartels and larger, more organized Umbanda gangs, Candomblé cults, and Santería practitioners selling their magic for whatever the market will bear. The Zobop in Metrópole are less

interested in BADs or prostitutes or fleeing their flocks—the competition is too fierce—and more interesting in appropriating as much magical lore as possible. Artifacts, treatises, spell formulae, and accounts of initiation rituals are valuable currency amid the Zobop, used by bishops to augment their personal power and to bribe other houngans into joining their house.

- While distinct, all of these syncretic magical traditions share elements that make the tedious work of translating formulae from one tradition to the next a little easier. In a big-picture kind of way, this is a very good thing for voodoo as a whole because it can diversify and advance quickly—blood magic, symbolic linking, and improved ritual magic techniques are all fairly widespread in the Zobop. I wouldn't be surprised if the Zobop was trying to make similar connections in West Africa.

- Sticks

The local houses assume the outer façade of Santería cults and terreiros intent on providing semi-legal magical services—blessing, healing, divination, and the odd curse. Many of these cults already fleece their followers and use the leverage gained over them to influence local and State politics to a scary degree, but the Zobop take a more unified approach to it, offering their services directly and discreetly to politicians and police in a position to enable their organization to grow. While they haven't asked for many return favors yet, they are slowly building clout in the sprawl.

- One gangan, Calvo Salim Vascos, is a practicing snakehandler who has initiated some of Metrópole's naga as serviteurs of Damballah, and uses their venom in his ceremonies...and sells some on the side.

- Sticks

### Miami, Carib League

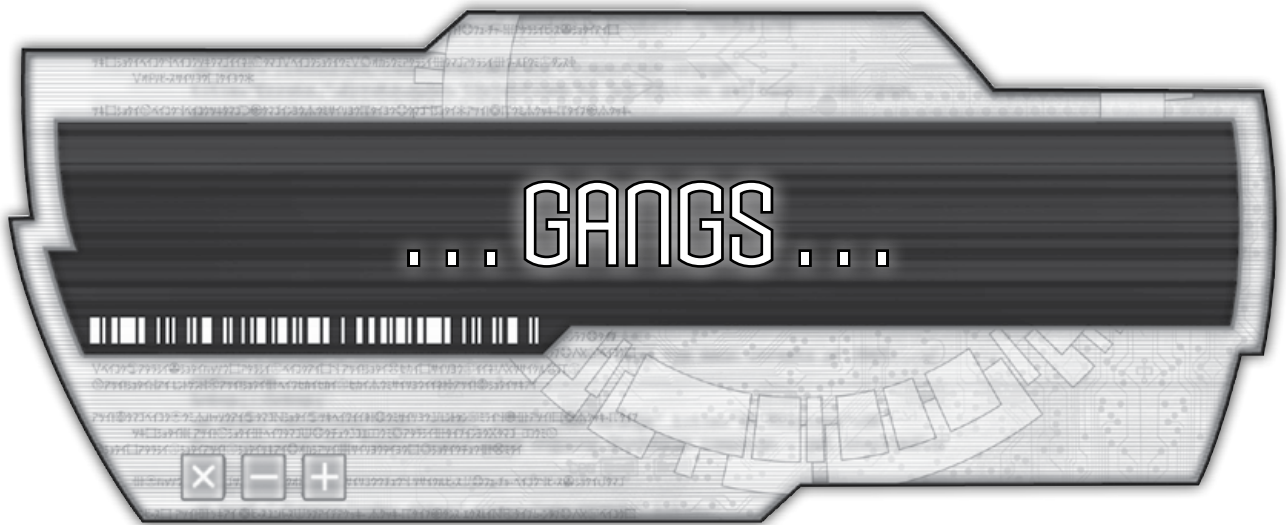
The House of Jah was a Jamaican Posse in Miami until 2068, when steppin' razor Aaron Maldives came in from Kingston and single-handedly gutted the former boss and all of his lieutenants. The House of Jah served as the focal point for tempo being funneled into Atlanta and the rest of the southeast CAS, in cooperation with the Gingerbread gang of Carib pirates, who ran the drugs up from the source in Latin America. Without a houngan, Maldives and his lieutenant Eight Ball have oriented the gang more along the lines of a warrior society than a neighborhood cult, identifying and training young adepts to serve as his lieutenants.

Because of the importance of Miami to the Zobop's continued drug trafficking in the region, many in the zobop would like to see a houngan or mambo running the operation. Maldives's master, however, Henri St. James, Cardinal of Shango, has so far held them off.

- You can damn bet Maldives knows how precarious his position is and is looking for some manatech or other options to give him an edge. Word has it he's been eyeing Gingerbread's sukuyan bride a little too closely...an undead Jamaican warrior adept might be on the horizon.

- Kane





Peep stood outside the club, shivering in the cold and trying desperately not to. He didn't want the guys to see; they'd just razz him or, even worse, send him away. They weren't cold; they had heavy synth-leather jackets and armored black pants without any holes. When you were an Ancient, you probably didn't even feel the cold. Hell, you didn't even feel pain. Everyone knew that.

They were passing around a bottle, casually holding their Supermach 100s with the easy confidence of men who know they're the fastest on the street. Peep knew they'd gotten the guns a few weeks ago; they'd gone out for target practice on the 405 Hellhounds right after the delivery. The men kept drinking and talking, ignoring him. Sometimes, they'd ask him to run an errand. Once, they'd let him fire a Supermach, laughing when it knocked him on his ass. It was getting colder, the rainfall heavier. No matter. It was better out here than at home, where his mom's latest boyfriend would just use him as a punching bag. When he was an Ancient, he would toss the creep out of the tiny room they all shared, with his gang at his back to make sure the man crawled away like a dog.

"Hey, Peep," one of the men called, breaking into his fantasy. Peep trotted over, looking up at the elf, with his cool black glasses, streaked hair, and a dozen gold hoops decorating his eyebrows. "We want some chow. Run down to the Stuffer Shack, tell the SOB there that Bravo wants a dozen soyburgers for him and his men. And fries."

Peep nodded, turning to go sprint away. The ganger stopped him, putting his hand on his shoulder. "Get yourself something, too, kid, 'k?" Peep took off running, flying now that they'd noticed him. The prospect of a hot burger made the ten block sprint easy, and Bravo's name got the fat clerk to hand over two bags of food.

After he'd delivered the food, the gangers let him eat his burger with them, under the meager awning of the club, and they even gave him an Ingram to hold.

And when the sleek black Rover 2068 pulled up, followed by a squad of bikers, the men didn't even make him leave. Two men and two women stepped out of the SUV, looking like simstars: handsome, tough, well-fed. They swaggered past the men at the club doors, who were standing tall, menacing, Supermachs at the ready. Peep stood tall, too, at Bravo's back, his eyes wide.

A flurry of motion, and the four were past them, into the club, without even looking at any of the gangers at the door.

"You stick around, kid, and someday you might be the one in there," Bravo said, after they'd passed by. The other men laughed, but Peep burned with the desire to someday be among those select few at the top of the gang, kings and queens of the world.



## GANG LIFE

Posted by: Riser

- It's probably a toss-up as to what's changed gangs the most in the past decade: the wireless Matrix, the availability of secondhand 'ware, or the tempo insanity. Either way, gangs are a permanent fixture in the crime scene of most sprawls. A lot of runners tend to look down on the gangs, a potentially fatal misstep. Riser's the man in the know on gangs in the UCAS, and he did a bit of digging for us on the international scene as well.
- FastJack

### A PRIMER ON GANG LIFE

The news media these days would have you believe that gangs are all hard-core, street-wise men with a face full of urban tattoos, who spend their nights dealing drugs and driving around in stolen cars, toting AKs, and fighting turf wars. Popular media portrays them as a brother- (and sister-) hood of leather-clad, bike-riding urban knights, controlling their turf in epic battles and then partying the rest of the night away with buxom babes and pounding 'tunes.

Bullshit.

The modern gang is like any other group in the Sixth World, fighting to cut out its own little power block, living and dying at the fringes of the corporations and the ruling elite. They exist because the corps want them to, because the police are too overwhelmed to stop them, and because no one else has the power to control the slums and barrens of today.

At the top of the pile are the big boys, the elite, motivated by profit. At the bottom are the street scum, desperate and vicious, interested in defending their turf and enjoying their twisted pleasures. In between are hundreds, thousands, more. They rise from the slums, true, but also from the pristine urban enclaves, from the dry deserts of the NAN, from the far-flung corners of the wireless Matrix. The big gangs make millions of nuyen a year, reinvesting their profits in hardware and tech that would be the envy of any merc crew. The little fish live and die by the whims of the bigger fish, always fighting, always looking for their opportunity to jump up in status.

### GANG CULTURE

There's a lot of talk in the police and security world about gang culture. Numerous conferences, seminars, and online meetings are dedicated to understanding the "culture" of these street criminals. Having attended my share—what, you think the cops are the only ones who infiltrate their opposition?—I can tell you that they're frequently a waste of time. Gang culture is just too diverse to readily pigeonhole it; to attend a two-hour seminar on the topic and call yourself an expert is ludicrous. Each gang has its own culture, its own mores and values, its own bonds of brotherhood, its own *raison d'être*. To label the Halloweeners as a group interested in profits would be ridiculous, and to label Los Angeles Ardientes as petty crooks and pimps is just as misleading.

Many police organizations have realized this problem and have gang-specific task forces within their organization, to better understand and combat individual gangs. That works well enough for the big gangs, sometimes called organized gangs or multinational gangs, but not so well for the little turf gangs, which get

lumped all together. Oh, well. If the cops were perfect, we'd all be out of a job.

Too many people seem to think gangs are made up of angry teenagers and troubled youths. While kids are common, particularly among the themed gangs and turf gangs, once a gang reaches a certain size and level of organization, things take a distinctly different turn. Most of the big gangs are "for life" organizations, and leaders and members are active into their thirties and forties, before "retiring" to auxiliary roles (if they survive that long). Police organizations have shifted from looking to simply address the "troubled street kid" image to specifically focusing on the older, experienced, and dangerous lifetime members—many of whom are older than the cops arresting them.

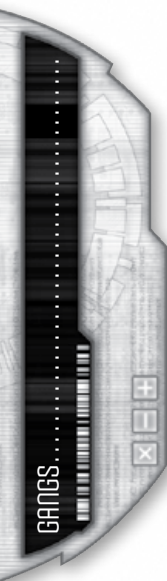
Each gang has its own defining culture. This may be a result of the members' common ethnic or racial heritage, their common neighborhood, their common socio-political stance, or shared goals. The culture is reinforced by certain rites and rituals in the gang, and members who stray too far from their cultural base or their code are punished. Shared experiences cement the bond between members, and shared enemies keep them focused outside of their gang, rather than tearing themselves apart from the inside. Many started by attempting to defend their territory from other similar groups, forming a group to become stronger than the others in their area.

Insight can often be gained by looking at the basis for the gang, how or why it formed.

### RACIAL/ETHNIC GANGS

Gangs that align themselves on racial or ethnic lines—such as the **First Nations**, a Native American group in Seattle and the NAN—come together to provide an identity to disenfranchised youth, an environment with social support that fits their paradigm of the world. In many cases, these racial or ethnic groups are the minorities in their area, often with little to no legitimate opportunities for education, careers, or livelihoods. Some gangs may be both ethnically and racially oriented, such as a purely Latino ork gang. Others form on ethnic lines, such as the **Area Boys** in Lagos, consisting of young men from the Igbo tribe. And of course, there are those that form solely on racial lines, such as the **Ancients**, which is an elves-only club. Frequently, ethnic or racial gangs come together because of the composition of their neighborhood, especially in the lower-class neighborhoods of today's modern sprawl. Minority groups are often shoehorned into certain areas, which helps give rise to these types of gangs. In the case of ethnic gangs, many of their customs arise from their ethnic heritage.

This group also includes the thrill gangs—mostly youth gangs of troublemakers and disaffected teens—and the so-called "corp gangs." Corp gangs and other such cliques view gangbanging as edgy fun as opposed to an organized criminal activity. They use their corporate identity in place of a racial or ethnic one. There are all sorts of things wrong with this—the kids generally *do* have legitimate opportunities for education and careers that a street kid would kill for—which tends to mean that on the streets, these gangs are looked down upon. They typically indulge in violent street crime and crimes of opportunity, and they are rarely particularly tight or united. However, they can be excellent contacts (albeit unreliable ones) for those of us in the shadows, since they have access to corporate goodies, like daddy's passcodes...





## TURF GANGS

Turf gangs (also known as Territorial Gangs by the cops) are those that began in one specific neighborhood or area. They often are formed by youths seeking to band together to protect their homes and territory from other, similar groups. Because of the diverse population of most sprawls, many turf gangs are made up of a variety of races and ethnicities. These are often the small-time gangs, confined to one neighborhood, street, or even apartment block. They attempt to control the crimes in their area by being the dominant drug dealers, pimps, and such. Occasionally they'll make their way up to casual protection rackets, but that requires a level of power and commitment that, frankly, many turf gangs just don't have. Exceptional turf gangs, like the **Crimson Crush** in Redmond, occasionally rise. These powerful gangs *do* have the firepower and skill to lock down their turf, and even the cops won't go into their territory. Turf gangs face challenges from other encroaching turf gangs, the crime syndicates, and the cops, so there is a lot of turnover in the street-level players.

## ACTIVIST GANGS

Some gangs form because the members all share a similar ideal. While the media often paints them as entirely racist—like the **Iron Crosses** out of LA—the truth is they exist for a variety of reasons. The **Desolation Angels**, for example, exist to hunt down bug spirits. The reasons behind these gangs are as diverse as the gangs themselves, and anyone dealing with a gang organized by social or political lines should keep that in the forefront of their mind. Profit is almost always a distant second to furthering their cause. If you can help them, they'll use you. If you stand in their way, they'll eliminate you. This is exceptionally important to remember with the virulently racist gangs out there. You certainly don't want to be an elf and run across the **Spikes** in Seattle, or a human wandering into the **Los Verdugos** territory in LA.

## FOR-PROFIT GANGS

Some gangs come together—or more commonly, evolve into—gangs that are organized strictly for profit. While this is rare with the lower-tier gangs, it is increasingly common the higher you go. At the highest levels, most gangs operate solely on a profitability theory. Many Matrix-based gangs also are in it for the money. These are the gangs we shadowrunners frequently run into, and they can be valuable contacts ... but watch yourself. These are also occasionally called “corporate gangs” to emphasize their business-like approach to crime and organization. Members often eschew the typical colors, symbolism, and territorialism present among the ethnic and turf gangs, preferring to identify themselves via etiquette and behaviors. Members who violate the etiquette are harshly disciplined. Membership is lifelong, and many members are active into their thirties, forties, or beyond, before taking on an auxiliary role in the gang. At the highest levels of leadership, for-profit gangers are generally cunning, highly intelligent individuals and successful career criminals—many of whom have been in the gang for twenty or more years. While these gangs earn the highest nuyen in their criminal endeavors, they aren't generally the ones highlighted by the media, since much of the street violence the media loves to sensationalize is played out by the lower-level turf gangs.

- That's not to say the big gangs aren't violent or dangerous. They'll tangle with other gangs, and they often have the resources to make a big impression. But, they also balance their moves with the concept of risk and reward. The Ancients may hear about a load of electronics they want to steal. They go there and find the Cutters have the same idea. Sure, they'll exchange shots; that's obligatory. But the leaders will know tactically which team has the better chance, and if the Cutters have 10 men with heavy assault rifles and a couple of elementals torching things, and the Ancients have half their number, you can bet the Ancients are gonna back off. They don't go into fights emotionally; hell, they've got some of the best tac-softs out there to help them figure the odds. I've seen confrontations where two major gangs show up, size each other up, and then both leave, without a single bullet fired—the prize just wasn't worth the fight. These are gangers who know how much it costs to replace a member, right down to the armored jacket, and they take that into consideration before entering a fight.

- Sounder

- Accountant gangers. My kinda people.

- Mr. Bonds

- Well, as long as you remember that reputation has a defined value to them ... and they'll put a *lot* of resources into defending that rep. Disrespect or infringement on their income streams will be met with their full force.

- Riser

- They're still violent, dangerous, and ruthless. But they exercise *calculated* violence. Personally, I find that more intimidating than the random go-gangers on the streets.

- Slamm-0!

//upload Uniformat text attachment :: user Riser:: 02/19/72 // INITIATION

An initiation is a rite of passage, often ceremonial in nature, signifying the acceptance or entrance into a specific group, tribe, or organization. Frequently, it is used to mark the passage between childhood and adulthood.

See: **Gang**, Magical, Metaphysical, Philosophical, Religious, Tribal Initiation

### Sub-article: Gang Initiation

Gang initiation is the method used by prospective gang members to enter into a gang, thereby proving their worth to the gang membership and gaining the respect of the membership and leaders. While many street gangs attract a large number of metahumans, only those who have passed the initiation ceremony are considered full or core members. These members are expected to abide by the rules and codes of the gang and are generally considered lifetime members. Initiation rituals are usually designed to underscore the membership-for-life aspect of the more organized gangs. Once a member passes initiation, they are bound to the gang for life; in ways, this resembles other criminal organizations (see [Mafia](#); [Yakuza](#)).

Gang initiation rites vary from gang to gang. Many have been classified as extremely violent, with the violence directed toward



either the member or outsiders. Gangs based in the Matrix may require a significant hack as an initiation rite. Gangs with high numbers of Awakened members may require a specific ritual spellcasting or summoning a great spirit for initiation. Street gangs frequently require an act to prove a prospective member's strength, toughness, and endurance.

Initiation provides a common bond between members, linking them with a common experience and making them feel equal to the others in the gang. For more on the psychological and sociological implications, see *Psychological Implications of Initiation Rites*.

**Endurance/Submission:** A common initiation method among street gangs is called "beating in," where a prospective member must allow the other gangers to physically attack (beat) him or her for a certain length of time. Other tests of a potential member's endurance and/or submission might involve violent hazing rituals, self mutilation, group-afflicted mutilation, or enduring sexual assaults. Many of these initiation rites leave permanent physical scars that are proudly displayed as a gang symbol. They also leave psychological scars and can lead to permanent disease, disability, or handicaps.

**Task Oriented:** Prospective members are required to fulfill a task set by the gang leadership or established by gang culture. Matrix-based gangs often display task-oriented initiation rites. Street gangs may set a certain "kill count" to become a full member or require the death of a specific person (such as a peace officer or rival gang member). Some gangs may require prospective members to perform multiple challenges prior to gaining acceptance.

**Merit Based:** Prospective members who reach some sort of goal or level of proficiency are considered full members. This might be as simple as serving time in a prison for not selling out another member or betraying the gang to the cops. It might be reaching a certain level of proficiency, such as becoming a magical initiate for an Awakened gang or being able to break down a bike in under an hour for a go-gang. A Matrix gang might accept members who are able to break through a firewall in a specific amount of time or can break into another member's record.

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## MEMBERSHIP

Membership in a gang grants a person a variety of desirable things, the promise of which is a large part of how the gang attracts new members, elevates their status in their society, and ensures continued loyalty. The most fundamental of these are fraternity and a sense of belonging. In failed social settings, the gang becomes the extended family—or the only family—of the membership.

- Often, those who've grown up in privileged society underestimate just how powerful the need to belong is among kids in the slums, and they don't realize that those kids will do *anything* to be part of a family.
- Haze

In addition to the promise of a surrogate family, gangs offer employment, safety, and a sense of purpose. The most successful gangs offer to fulfill the desires of the members—material, social,

## UNDERSTANDING IS THE KEY TO PREVENTION

© YMCA's Gang Prevention Outreach

Imagine a young boy coming home from school and seeing his mother with bruises rising on her face. She ignores her own children's cries, her own self-defense mechanism, as her latest boyfriend—perhaps her pimp—takes out his temper on the other children in the house. Hoping to escape, the boy leaves the home and takes to wandering the street. A gang member approaches him, offers him something—food, a kind word—and instantly, another child has been lost to the stranglehold of the gang. They've offered him something his own family does not, something that society does not: a haven, a place of respect, a sense of belonging. Acceptance.

Gangs provide these things to lure in the disenfranchised youths marginalized by society. In their eyes, the image the gang promotes—strength, belonging, respect—becomes the ultimate goal. With a society that cannot even guarantee the child a basic education, much less a job or career, the gang also fills the role of providing employment, a means to support himself.

The failing social system provides the gangs with their members.

At the YMCA's Redmond Outreach Center, we are striving to break this cycle of violence and despair. By providing a safe, wholesome environment where young boys and youths can enjoy supervised sports, educational support, and friendships, we provide an alternative to the lure of the gangs. Adults become positive role models, showing the children that there are other options for a prosperous life.

You can help make our city a safer place by confronting the plight of our city's children!

Donate today!

Volunteers welcome.

or even spiritual. Wealth, family, acceptance—these are all powerful lures that gangs throw out, and their continued success shows just how effective this is. Gangs offer a career or vocation for those youths who don't want to submit to the Man and join the legions of brain-washed wageslaves. While some are press-ganged or peer-pressured into a gang, for more, it is a stepping stone out of the hole (this includes many runners). If a kid doesn't have the studies or skillset to join a corp and isn't connected enough to get an underworld job, becoming a "professional ganger" is an appealing career move. The more organized gangs emphasize this in their recruiting and training methods.

Urgent Message...



## LITTLE FISH, BIG POND

Gangs are often seen as the smaller players in the underworld. For most, this is true (with perhaps the exception of the few gangs that make it to the top tier). At the lowest level, gangs are nothing more than street toughs with attitude, easily ignored, used, or destroyed by the larger players. At the highest level, the gangs rival the criminal syndicates in power, profit, and reach.

- And on the fringe are those gangs that aren't organized criminal operations but simply outlets for the disaffected, the disenfranchised, and—the ones I hate the most—the idle rich gangbangers. They vent their aggression, and the closest they get to a “criminal agenda” is planning to get high and break a few heads that night. Thrill gangs are occasionally like this, and those stupid rich-kid cliques.
- Beaker
- True, they're at the bottom of the pool. But the bigger gangs occasionally use them as recruiting grounds. The specialized gangs—Reality Hackers, for example—tend to use those fly-by-night gangs as farm teams.
- Sticks

Larger criminal organizations, be they ethnic syndicates, organized crime syndicates, larger gangs, or even certain megacorps, often use the smaller gangs. The smaller gangs benefit by having an alliance with a stronger player, getting themselves both protection and access to better gear and tech than they could procure on their own. In exchange, the larger criminal organization gets disposable assets with a minimal investment. Things work great as long as both groups remember their places and their part of the deal.

- Things get messed up when a gang figures out they're just cannon fodder and splits with their patron. Then they've got to be both be strong enough to survive on their own *and* strong enough to survive any feelings of betrayal from their ex.
- Kat o' Nine Tales
- The First Nations are an example of a gang that did just that—left the Yaks to strike out on their own. The Yaks had promised the gang a cut of their chip profits if the First Nation could prove themselves worthy ... only nothing the gang did ever seemed to be enough. Fed up, they split. Tempo was their ticket out, and they played it well. Now, they've got an alliance with the Kumun'go, though, and we'll see if they learned anything from their previous association.
- Mika

Some smaller gangs don't pick up any particular patron, but they'll accept jobs from anyone with the cred. They might provide muscle for the Mafia one week and run protection for a convoy of electronics for the Yaks the next. The big syndicates don't trust these guys beyond line-of-sight, but they use them nevertheless.

Second-tier gangs have a more tenuous relationship with the syndicates. Too large to be lackeys, too small to challenge the syndicates, they exist in a perilous in-between state. Often, the gang might have hundreds of members and control a chunk of a sprawl, but they lack the clear organization or abilities of a syndicate. Challenging a

syndicate is a good way to get busted back down to third-tier status or broken up altogether. Knowing that, they often work around the edges of the syndicate, controlling crime in areas the syndicates won't go or working for a syndicate as distributors, middlemen, and muscle. Their size commands some respect.

- Shadowrunners often discount these gangers as below them, but the fact is, they're big enough to be a threat. If one of their brothers (or sisters) gets gunned down by some runners, the rest of the gang will be out for blood. On the other side, these gangs can be good contacts for getting some gear, guns, or drugs, or laying off some hot merchandise you liberated...
- Kat o' Nine Tales
- The falling cost of cyber, and the abundance of second hand cyber on the streets, means that a lot of street-level punks have 'warez. I see kids who are trying to pick between getting a bike or some not-so-insignificant wires. It used to be you only saw the booster gangs or the big players who could afford to get their muscle some black-market implants. Now, a lot of the small fry are picking up the 'warez, getting an edge. Moral of the story: you never know what you're facing on the streets these days.
- Butch
- Picking up some secondhand wires or other cyberware is particularly popular among those “career” gangers, the ones looking to rise up in the ranks.
- Riser

At the highest level, the gangs rival the criminal syndicates themselves. While they might work with the syndicates, they tend to expect to be treated like equals ... which, of course, the syndicates are loath to do.

- Nothing personal, Riser, but c'mon. No gang is going to rival the Mafia or the Yaks. Seriously. Sure, I'm careful when driving in the wrong part of town, but the gangers I see can't even match a well-armed runner team.
- Kay St. Irregular
- Right. Maybe they're gang-bangers who hang out on the corner and like to spray graffiti, harass the mom and pop shops, and occasionally beat someone up with a crowbar. But, that doesn't mean they're all like that. I'd hesitate to commit any of my units against a squad of Ancients. And, I'd consider my contacts within the Cutters to be some of my most valuable in North Am or Western Europe. Hell, I've had regular suppliers unable to get my units gear, but a quick call to my Cutter “sales rep” (as he calls himself), and I had a next-day delivery.
- Picador
- Many gangs consider it normal to enlist some of their members in the military, getting training and a contact in the service who can help get gear and arms out. When the ganger is released, he uses his training to help train others in the gang—and these are men and women who've been given the best training the UCAS has to offer. I'm not talking about just the Ancients, either—smaller gangs, like



the First Nations, have members who've served as Salish Rangers. Think about *that* the next time you figure you and your buddy, with your Colt Manhunters, can take down six gangers on your own.

- Mika
- The beleaguered Armed Forces have actually come to think of gangers as one of the few reliable sources of manpower. They've developed programs to ensure that the best recruits stay on—an apparent win-win for both sides. The CAS, in fact, offers monetary incentives to target gangers who encourage their fellow gangers to enlist. Brothers-in-arms and all that.
- Hard Exit

## KING OF THE MOUNTAIN: TOP-TIER GANGS

The FBI classifies a top-tier gang as one that has a membership in the thousands, a transnational scope of operations, a wide variety of revenue sources, and an annual income in the hundreds of millions. For once, the FBI is actually fairly on the ball. The biggest gangs are powerful, rich, and utterly ruthless.

## PATINA OF LEGITIMACY

You might be wondering what differentiates these top-tier gangs from a crime syndicate. Often, when people think of gangs, they think of scruffy jerks with stolen assault rifles dealing drugs and stealing cars, not groups that makes *millions*. The line between a criminal syndicate and a gang definitely gets blurred at this level. What really differentiates them is what I'll call the *patina of legitimacy*. The Mafia and the Yaks are often seen as businessmen, frequently with legitimate interests and investments. They're the old blood aristocracy of the criminal underworld. They often hobnob with corporate executives and political figures. They spend a percentage of their profits to own politicians in the highest level of the government, and they work hard to ensure that they own choice executives in certain corporations. They run their operations to target the rich, the wealthy, and the pampered. At a black-tie DC event, you're likely to see the high capo of the Mafia hobnobbing with the ambassador from Malaysia.

The most wealthy and powerful gangs—regardless of their immense wealth and far-reaching power—don't have that level of influence in the political and corporate realms. Their income sources are still directly tied to the street, as is their powerbase. They may own cops, even minor politicians, but rarely do they exchange Christmas cards with a UCAS Senator. Of course, they do wield power and have infiltrated political, military, and police organizations. They just haven't meshed themselves in that realm of old-world wealth and blue-blooded criminals that are socially acceptable. Regardless of the media's romantic portrayal of gang life, the movers and shakers of the world still look down on the gangs. They lack the shine, the class, the acceptance ... not that the gangs mind.

- For all those times you've wanted a score card, here's just the thing. I've rated the following gangs in five categories, four of them on a scale of 1-5, with 5 being top in the field, and 1 being punk-ass wannabes.

**Resources** covers what they can bring to bear, be it firepower, magical power, or sheer number of gangers. A gang with access to mil-tech equipment and initiated mages would rate a 5 and be

## BEFORE KING OF THE MOUNTAIN

If you want to form a good working relationship with a gang, be smart and be careful. Take the time to learn the intricate etiquette that defines the gang. You're not going to find any knowsofts out there that'll tell you the real details. And, depending on some wage-slave's etiquette activesoft is likely to get you killed. Sorry, *omae*, there's just no substitute for the real thing. The consequences for screwing up are often fatal. The little gangs, the corner turf gangs, don't have much reach outside their neighborhood, or perhaps their city. But the mid-level gangs often have deals with bigger gangs and syndicates, and they'll flex their muscles to hunt down a runner who's disrespected them. The big gangs have a long enough reach to follow you around the globe (or hire someone who will). Likewise, runners who get a reputation for wiping out the little gangs are likely to get black-listed by the other players in the sprawl. A word to the wise: gangs generally like to make examples out of people. The Yardies, for example, are fond of teaching "respect" by spraying battery acid in your face.

As to why you might deal with the gangs? Gangs—particularly the big ones—can be reliable contacts and useful for buying—or selling—a wide variety of gear. Gangs are also employers, hiring runners to deal with issues beyond their capability or in territory they don't control.

If you want some pointers, I'm happy to oblige.  
—Riser

Urgent Message...

able to go head-to-head with a military unit or professional mercs. A gang with a 1 probably uses their fists or a handy iron crowbar for fights and is probably ripe pickings for a tougher gang.

**Threat Rating** is how seriously you should take these guys, their reputation. A gang that fiercely defends their turf, to the point that even the heavy Lone Star SWAT teams won't go in there, would have a Threat Rating of 5. A gang that's less formidable, less determined, and less dangerous gets a lower score.

**Numbers** is the estimated manpower figures for the overall gang. For the bigger gangs, I include a typical metropolitan chapter. This is simply the fully initiated members. Often, the peripheral membership (trainees, hangers-on, "retirees," members currently incarcerated, joygirls and joyboys, dealers, street docs, pimps, etc.) can be anywhere from two to five times larger than the core group.

**Professionalism** is how serious they are, how likely they are to honor a deal, and how, well, business-like they are. A gang that consists of insane cybermonsters who go on killing sprees for fun, can't be reasoned with, and care nothing about profit gets a 1.

**Training** is just that. Are they kids who know how to fight in a back alley? Are they para-professional bikers with military-like training on heavy assault rifles? You get the point.

- Riser





INCOMING FEED.....



## THE ANCIENTS

One of the most famous of gangs in North America—and beyond—this elven gang has been called the media darlings of the 70s. And the 60s. And 50s ... well, you get the point; there's something to be said for eternally looking twenty. Their image is only enhanced by the fact that they're all elves and apparently ageless (although that is also the major weakness of the gang, as I'll discuss later).

### Organization

The Ancients are militaristic in organization—which fits, since they certainly boast miltech equipment and training. At the top, they have a general. There are colonels who oversee each region under Ancient control. Within each region, there are captains who command all the Ancients within a city. Each captain

has a handful of lieutenants, who themselves command between five and ten street-level squads. The squads are led by a squad leader, who is frequently the most experienced ganger within the squad. In each sprawl, certain specialists are also given the title of lieutenant, such as the bike master, head magician, or weapons master, and they report directly to the captain.

- As a matter of respect, the lower-level gangers refer to their superiors by title, whereas equals use names. Outsiders should probably use names, since using a title would indicate an intimate knowledge of the gang ... and might be misconstrued.
- Sticks

In North America, their powerbase, there are five regions: Northeast (New York, Boston, Philly, Montreal, DC, and other sprawls), South (Dallas, Miami, Atlanta, New Orleans), Midwest (Chicago, Detroit, Cleveland, and the Sioux Nation), Southwest (Phoenix, Las Vegas, Denver, and most of the PCC), and West Coast (Seattle, Portland, LA, Vancouver). Across the pond, the old UK makes up a region (with main chapters in Glasgow, London, Cardiff, Dublin, and Belfast), Western Europe another (Amsterdam, Paris, Madrid, Lisbon), the Mediterranean a third, and then they have a colonel who oversees their tenuous presence in Eastern Europe (including a large chapter in the Dutchy of Pomorya, AGS).

While the identity of the general isn't common knowledge, the aliases of most of the colonels are. As you can imagine, the fact

Riser's Ratings: The Ancients

**Territory:** North America, Western Europe, British Isles  
**Colors/Symbol:** Green / Modified Neo-Anarchist "A"  
**Resources:** (Firepower) 5; (Magic) 4; (Personnel) 5  
**Threat Rating:** 5  
**Numbers:** Global: 15,000+; Seattle: 350  
**Professionalism:** 4  
**Training:** 5+

GANGS



**FBI NATIONAL GANG TASK FORCE**

Known leaders in the Ancients.  
[Detailed dossiers available.](#)

Green Lucifer (West Coast)  
 Lucky Liam (Northeast)  
 Ironwing (Southwest)  
 Spitfire (South)  
 Bombshell (Midwest)  
 Jolly Roger (British Isles)  
 Masque (Western Europe)  
 Sparafucile (Mediterranean)  
 Schattenengel (Eastern Europe and  
 other territories)

- I've met Spitfire before. She certainly deserves her name; she's a Cuban-American with a flaming temper and more cyberware than any one woman should have. She's rumored to have personally killed three undercover agents the CAS inserted into a New Orleans chapter and then sent their heads back to the Gang Enforcement Taskforce in Atlanta via FedEx.
- Nephrine

that these men and women are elves presents a problem within the gang, especially at the higher levels. Since they don't seem to be getting *old*, the colonels and even the captains tend to stay in their positions for a long, long time ... like, say, until someone kills them to get a promotion.

Rumor is Green Lucifer, the flamboyant captain of the Seattle Ancients, recently leveraged his success during last year's gangland wars into a promotion to colonel of the West Coast.

- Firethorn is the general of the Ancients. He's a temperamental red-headed mage, a true bastard, and coldly professional ... when he keeps his temper. He's an egotistical jerk with a severe elven-superiority complex and enough Talent to make him really dangerous. He commands the absolute loyalty of his men and women, which he holds through cunning, strength, and a large dose of fear. He's also—to the best of my knowledge—the only general the Ancients have ever had.
- Frosty
- Frosty, as long as you're here, any comment on rumors that the Ancients are connected to some high-ranking politicians in the Tir? In *either* Tir?
- Winterhawk
- Let's just say Firethorn has some old friends in high places, though many of them seem to have fallen from grace. Ironic given some of the rumors that have always surrounded the Ancients.
- Frosty

**PORTFOLIO**

The Ancients are well-known as go-gangers, deadly bikers packing heavy weapons. Past that image, however, they are involved in a variety of interests, including smuggling, drug dealing,

arms dealing, secured courier services, hijacking, and talislegging. They are also known to do protection rackets for transportation services—providing armed escorts to truck convoys or preying on those that don't utilize their services. While they are primarily land based, they do have some air assets, principally used for their own smuggling services. In the last decade or so, they've been expanding into hiring out units as mercs-for-hire, an almost legitimate enterprise. In fact, some branches have actually applied for and received business licenses to work as private security or mercenaries, allowing them leeway to transport arms and gear via legitimate channels. They also provide “security” for some all-elves enclaves and small neighborhoods, and there, they have legitimately crossed the line from protection racket to actual protection.

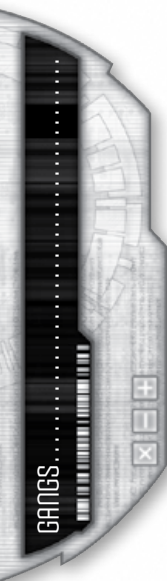
The Ancients are one of the strongest mid-level black-market arms dealers in North America, although they sell quite a bit of inventory to smaller gangs and organizations for distribution. If you need a couple of Ares Alphas, see your fixer or the local gang-banger on the corner. If you need a few pallets, see the local Ancients' captain. If you want to outfit an army, see Ares (or your local crime syndicate). Most gangs find cross-border smuggling a huge hurdle, limiting themselves to mules rather than a truck full of heavy weapons. The Ancients—and the Cutters, who, let's face it, are better at arms dealing—have gotten around this. They've developed some connections within various military and border groups, especially those up and down the I-5 corridor (PCC, Cal-Free, Tir Tairngire, Salish, and UCAS). They've also begun to license themselves as legitimate businesses (more the Cutters' speed there). They tend to know the back routes and the right people to bribe, and they utilize hackers to alter crossing records and hack remote surveillance drones on the fly. And finally, one favorite trick of the Ancients: getting hired on to guard some transport company's fleet, and their “payment” is the corp throwing in an empty truck or two for the Ancients to fill up, no questions asked. Quite a few smaller corps, just big enough to qualify for the Corp Accords but too small to afford a full-time security force, are willing to play ball with the Ancients.

They also have a principal lock on the Awakened drugs originating from the Tir, including Laes and its street drug Lael. With the new ability to download BTLs and CalHots directly from the Matrix, they've lost a major income stream in smuggling those brainbenders around North America and into Europe. Without the Matrix presence to capitalize on the new distribution, they've lost most of that business to the Yaks, Mafia, and other Matrix-savvy syndicates and gangs. However, tempo shifted their focus more towards the BADs; the West Coast chapters, at least, were neck deep in the tempo trade. With the market ripe for new BADs to fill the tempo void, rumors are the Ancients are working overtime to secure some new distribution contracts in the “all natural” drug trade.

**FRIENDLY RELATIONS**

The Ancients have ties to a variety of other criminal organizations. In the West, they have (mutually beneficial) dealings with the Koshari and the First Nations gang, as well as several other large NAN criminal organizations. They don't work well with most of the syndicates, especially the anti-meta Yakuza. The exception seems to be the Seoulpa Rings, especially Seattle's Komun'go, with whom the Ancients appear to have some strategic alliances.

Their relations with law enforcement vary by sprawl. In LA, they have a media star image and a popular following, even among



the Pueblo cops. In Seattle, Governor Brackhaven's office has bumped up Knight Errant's directives to apprehend any known or suspected Ancients (along with dozens of other "meta" gangs) as a result of the tempo crime surge.

## FIREPOWER

The Ancients have achieved their top position through their experienced leadership, their strength of arms, and the heavy training they invest in their people. Even the street-level gangers in the Ancients are expected to be experts on the bike, handle a variety of weapons, and integrate into their tac-soft networks. They are weakest in the Matrix, although they utilize quite a few combat-hacking tricks and have some capable riggers on their crews. They tend to be moderately strong in the magic department at the street level, and the further up the chain of command, the more prevalent magic is. With a long-term leadership, this isn't that surprising. Recruits are often tapped while they are still young. Promising members are plucked from the kids that run errands, deal drugs, or just hang about the fringes. Youths are paired up with mentors in the squads, learning how to ride a bike, handle themselves in a fight, and toughen up. When their mentor decides they're ready, the lieutenant puts them through their initiation. While they keep their initiation purposely secret, it's assumed the rites have something to do with their bikes. If they survive, they're officially given their colors and placed in a squad.

- They find Awakened members like many other gangs, among the street-kids and (in the Ancients' case) elven slums. But because of their structure and their well-coordinated leadership, chapters that are low on magical assets get "loaners" from other chapters until more members can be recruited. Kids in the slums or lower-class neighborhoods who show a sign of Talent are heavily recruited, then put through "training"—often the responsibility of the head magician in the chapter. In exchange, the Ancients support and protect the kid's family. Combining that protection with the popular media image and the "coolness" factor, they have a recruiting program that matches—even exceeds—that of many megacorps.
- Lyran
- I happen to know that the initiations happen in groups, with multiple hopefuls given a task or challenge, supposedly similar to the Tir's Rite of Passage. The one I observed involved hunting down a group of Iron Cross bikers and engaging them, while the other Ancients watched. The challenge wasn't over until all the Iron Cross bikers were dead ... or the Ancients kids were. Of the five that started the challenge, two survived. None of the 12 Iron Cross bikers survived.
- Sticks
- So how is Rosa Azul, Sticks?
- Kat o' Nine Tales
- Have you ever heard of a *private* life, Kat?
- Sticks
- Sugar, you shouldn't be screwing one of the top media figures in LA if you want *privacy*.
- Kat o' Nine Tales

## COMANDO VERDE

Amazonia's homegrown criminal organization, this gang is a mix of the old-school drug kings and gambling barons from Sao Paulo and Rio de Janeiro and the newly integrated Awakened citizens of the sprawl of Metr pole. They use the name Comando Verde, "Code Green," both to declare their emphasis on only "all natural" drugs and to honor the infamous Comando Vermelho gang from early in the century.

While Comando Verde faces stiff opposition from the Ghost Cartels, who consider all of South America to be their rightful territory, they've managed to hold their own. Since the odds have been against them, rumors of a mysterious, powerful backer continue to float around. This could simply be the result of the collusion of the original Comando Vermelho with the Awakened coup, which has historically gotten the gang a lot of government slack.

More recently, the tempo craze looked likely to finally finish the gang off. With the increased focus of IDEA and Aztechnology on the Ghost Cartels however, the recent (and likely worsening) shortage of tempo stockpiles, and the frantic infighting of the Ghost Cartels following the loss of so many leaders, it looks like Comando Verde have finally gotten the opportunity they've been waiting for. With their historical enemies weakened and the Amazonia government's attention firmly on the "Aztlan Aggression," Comando Verde is quickly expanding. In the market void left by tempo, they've been busily shipping off their own drugs to catch those addicts looking for a new high.

### Location

The gang is based primarily in Metr pole, Amazonia's largest city and the home of most of the country's metahuman population. They also have a presence up and down South America, from Argentina up to Caracas. Their stronghold is in the Rocinha *favela* (slum) in Rio de Janeiro.

- To understand just how big this gang is, first you need to realize that Metr pole stretches from south of S o Paulo to just north of Rio de Janeiro—a distance of almost 450 kilometers. The city is bordered by an impenetrable wall of Awakened jungle and grasslands to the east and the Atlantic to the west, forcing the city's growing population into an area that is not growing to match its needs. To help manage the immense population, the city is broken into four quarters: two in the S o Paulo state (S o Paulo and Campinas) and two in the Rio de Janeiro state (Volta Redonda and Rio de Janeiro). The entire sprawl is densely packed, with stretches of white-sand beaches and inner-city forests and gardens dedicated to those Awakened citizens who don't consider steel-and-glass high-rises their native habitat. The Amazonian government also did its best years ago to set things straight and level all the social inequalities, especially among the millions trapped in the ghetto towns, the *favelas*. The shanty towns were rebuilt, prettied up, and made "green." Still, the tensions of 200 million souls crammed into Metr pole put too much pressure on the *favelas*, spiraling them back down the slippery slope. So instead of shanty-town hellholes, these days, they're run-down, terraced, eco-friendly social housing hellholes.
- Glasswalker



### Riser's Ratings: The Comando Verde

**Territory:** Amazonia urbanized areas  
**Colors/Symbol:** Neon Green  
**Resources:** (Firepower) 4; (Magic) 5+; (Personnel) 4  
**Threat Rating:** 5  
**Professionalism:** 3  
**Training:** 4  
**Numbers:** 12,000+

While they prefer the *favelas* to the more policed areas of the city, the gang has exerted its tendrils into the wealthy enclaves of the city's privileged, and the numerous working-class housing districts the government has invested in. They have a particularly high presence on and around the Santos Port in the São Paulo state, where they piggyback on more legitimate shipping traffic to smuggle their goods in and out of the country. Many of the corporations that use the port pay the gang's protection fee, and it is well known that many of the very police who should be protecting the port ignore the gang's activities there in exchange for nuyen, drugs, and access to the gang's brothels. Many of the pirates in the South Atlantic have contacts within the gang, since the area around Santos is a prime pirate haven and port.

### ORGANIZATION AND MEMBERSHIP

Comando Verde is more disorganized than other top-tier gangs, relying primarily on their strength of numbers, brutal reputation, and the overwhelmed police forces of Metr pole. The gang is led by a vicious adept who goes by the name of Diogo C o. Rumors that Diogo is unkillable boost his reputation, and the truth is that he's survived several assassination attempts by members of his own gang. His second-in-command is a shapeshifter, a jaguar who's taken the metahuman name of Aitana.

- Aitana hosts a monthly "sparring" contest, a bare-fists fight to the finish, with suitable prizes for the winners. Some months she just watches and enjoys the blood, but when she thinks the winner is worth it, she'll jump in the makeshift ring and teach him or her some humility. She fights in her metahuman form and has yet to be beat. Most of the gangers live in awe of her, even the other shapeshifters and critters. Diogo owes his continued leadership to her and the respect she commands from the gang, not to his own merit. She could take the gang over, but for reasons unknown, she continues to defer to Diogo.
- Glasswalker

Like the rest of the sprawl, Comando Verde is a diverse. Census figures put Metr pole's population of non-metahuman residents at just over 18 percent. That includes shapeshifters, naga, centaurs, and other native sentient species. (I can never figure out where they classify changelings.) In fact, Metr pole is run by the Awakened, and they receive all sorts of preferential treatment. It's no surprise then that Comando Verde is made up of significant numbers of Awakened and paranormals. Just as they do in the nation's government, the Awakened hold an inordinate number

of positions of power within the gang. It also makes them more flexible and responsive to the city's population, since many foreign syndicates (who would love to break into that lucrative market) aren't prepared to deal with a naga or ghoul as not just an *equal*, but a superior. Comando Verde is open to all races and metatypes.

- Rumors are that the gang has not just its share of shapeshifters and naga, but also ghouls and other infected. There's also rumors that a few free spirits are members.
- Glasswalker

Particularly notable is the fact that gangers in Amazonia rarely sport "gang colors" or clear symbols of their affiliation. Instead, they are recognized by a combination of secret hand-signals and passwords. Old-school ink tattoos and scarification are quite popular among Comando members though—and provide them some measure of recognition and protection in Amazonia's prison system. Territory is usually marked by tags and graffiti.

### REVENUE AND EXPENSE

The gang makes a big chunk of its nuyen with gambling. In the favelas, they sponsor the "Jogo do Bicho," a form of the poor man's lottery. Amazonia has made gambling on sports, particularly football, illegal (as it tends to inflame tensions following big games and leads to violence between fans, even riots). Because of this, the gang makes a killing on providing gambling, especially for sports fans. Drug trafficking, money laundering, extortion, murder-for-hire, kidnapping for ransom, fraud, human trafficking, loan-sharking, racketeering, and black marketeering are also profitable operations and the Comando has a finger in each and every one. They also get kickbacks from the burgeoning prostitution trade. Another favorite scheme involves kidnapping tourists and holding them for "quick ransom"—at gun or knife point, forcing them to make a nuyen transfer from their credit accounts to the gangers. This is especially popular around the tourist hotspots, but they ply the scam on the fringes of the wealthier districts as well. Recently they've hijacked a bus full of sightseeing tourists.

- The gang actually has a fair bit of infighting over that. Many of the gangers prefer to just kidnap and mug a tourist for the quick nuyen, where other, higher ranking gang members would rather get the tourists *safely* inside a gambling den or whorehouse and get their nuyen that way. It's an example of the left hand not giving a fuck about the right hand, and it's one reason this group still hasn't made it to the big leagues of the Ghost Cartels and their like.
- Glasswalker
- This is a serious issue for the Amazonian government, and it has taken a lot of measures to ensure tourist safety. The conflict between the law and Comando Verde is being pushed into overdrive as some under-bosses act on their own, without official sanction—bound to happen in such a huge operation—and jeopardize the more established venues the gang controls, like the gambling dens. The only reason the Amazonian government hasn't done *more* is because of the flaring tensions up north. If Diogo doesn't get his men under control, the government is going to be forced to crack





down hard—something it really doesn't have the manpower to do. I've heard that there might be some work for freelancers if anyone's interested.

- Marcos

The gang is also heavily invested in Matrix fraud and is an international player in that realm—which is why the FBI's National Gang Taskforce has bumped them up from a large second-tier gang to a first-tier gang. They use the Matrix both for scams and money laundering and for luring in victims for other activities, such as their profitable human trafficking rings and brothels.

The only thing keeping them from getting any bigger is the bloody competition from other local gangs—usually smaller, leaner operations like Código 515 and Unidos da Barra—that survive by being heavily entrenched in local communities or boasting better organization than the Comando.

## GOVERNMENT COMPLIANCE

There are rumors linking the gang with some powerful political figures in Amazonia. They've been linked to a variety of political figures, but the biggest of these is M'Boi. It may just be a rumor, it may be wishful thinking of the gang themselves, but the rumor's been around for more than five years. Those who believe in it point to the fact that the gang hasn't imploded, despite a general lack of organization, an often competing membership, and pressure from the Ghost Cartels and police.

- I've heard about this. M'Boi wants some leverage with the underworld, and the Verdes have that in spades. Not sure what the serpent is thinking associating with these guys—maybe he is trying to copy his Eastern cousins.
- Winterhawk
- And then there are those who believe it isn't M'Boi, who actually appears too sane to work with these crazy SOB's, but SIRRURG. SIRRURG isn't particularly fond of Hualpa's method of governing and wouldn't shy away from using the gang to undermine the delicate balance of the sprawl. Of course, that's assuming he's got that as a motivation. SIRRURG isn't one for making his reasons publicly known.
- Frosty

## CHAOS ENGINE

Chaos Engine is a very new group on the scene, unlike the others that have been around for decades. With the ubiquitous wireless Matrix, it was only a matter of time before some group rose up to exploit the newest territory. Chaos Engine isn't the only Matrix gang around, but it certainly is one of the most powerful. None of my sources could tell me where they came from, or even where they're based, and really, it's hard to separate the facts from the fiction with this group. If anyone else wants to chime in, please do so.

Chaos Engine specializes in high-end Matrix theft, protection rackets, holding data or online personas hostage, info brokerage, and virtual muggings. They take in significant nuyen amounts through mass identity theft and data rape schemes, often reselling the data and IDs to other criminal organizations in package deals. They've also twisted the typical white-collar crimes of the Matrix

### Riser's Ratings: Chaos Engine

**Territory:** Global

**Colors/Symbol:** Everchanging

**Resources:** (Firepower-Online attacks) 5; (Magic) 0; (Personnel) ?

**Threat Rating:** 5

**Professionalism:** 3

**Numbers:** Unknown

**Training:** 5

into a violent parody of the worst crimes common in the barrens and slums today. A favorite trick is for a group of gangers to shred through an online VR meeting room, hitting the attendees with a soft Blackout or Blackhammer utility, jamming open their connections and preventing the terrified wageslaves from logging off. The gangers then typically demand a nuyen transfer from their hostages into the gang's own temporary black bank account. Anyone who doesn't comply is hit with a full Blackhammer, flatlining them. This isn't as profitable as many of their other avenues of income, but it catches headlines and terrifies folks, so it gets much more attention than when they electronically re-route a drone-controlled cargo ship to a pirate port and rake in the nuyen from selling off the cargo.

Because they are focused on Matrix crimes, the gang has attracted the attention of larger syndicates with Matrix interests—either because they're competing or because Chaos Engine has targeted them. The Scoupla Rings, for example, would dearly love to shut down the gang. While the gang doesn't seem to buy or sell the various downloadable BTLs and other brainbenders that the syndicates would like to control, the gang does participate in software cracking and distribution—not to mention ID thefts and forgeries that the syndicates believe should be theirs alone.

Chaos Engine is also a prime player in the field of viruses and malware, often entering a node and infecting the data with a worm or virus, or even a databomb, then demanding payment from the node's owners. If the payment is not received, or GridSec is notified, they detonate the bomb or release the virus.

According to figures I saw from GOD, they estimated that Chaos Engine was responsible for over 200 deaths in the last six months, and they have stolen an estimated 45-50 million nuyen, not including data that was stolen to be sold on the black market or their profitable sponsorship of pirated software exchanges.

- Incredible. Why haven't the GOD hackers wiped these snakes out?
- Winterhawk
- Couple of reasons ... I'd speculate that Chaos Engine has contacts within several international police agencies, either that or they have someone in their pocket, or significant blackmail or threats hanging over some important people. Another is that they operate by cells, with each cell unaware of what others are doing, where they're located, or who the identities behind the personas really are. The GOD hackers manage to find one cell, but then they can't go any further. Supposedly, the different cells forward a percentage of their nuyen on to anonymous bank accounts and receive their



instructions via anonymous downloads or virtual postings in innocuous chat rooms. Unlike other gangs, they never seem to use the same gang symbols or iconography—they change icons and symbols all the time, on some seemingly random basis. In the Asian gaming venue, being labeled as a Chaos Engine hacker is considered the ultimate, and the wannabes mimic what they believe the symbols or iconography is—which makes it damn hard for the Matrix cops to even figure out who's just a script kiddie with an attitude or a dangerous criminal. These people seem to have perfected the art of hiding in plain sight.

- Riser
- GOD started accumulating data on these guys about 2 years ago. Unfortunately, GOD's systems were hacked and the data erased. They then started keeping the data in a fully offline system, but the data mysteriously disappeared from there, too—and no signs that anyone broke in or tampered with the system. Since then, they've discovered they just can't keep data on these guys around... they've actually begun keeping files on old-fashioned paper. The kind made from *trees*. Half the time they attempt to email, fax, or electronically send data about Chaos Engine to another police organization, it disappears midstream. GOD has reverted to the dark ages, sending secured couriers with a briefcase full of paper across town (or the world) to get the data out. As you can imagine, it has severely hampered their ability to police this gang. It doesn't help that a number of the secured couriers have been assassinated in mid-run, their papers stolen. Those agents working on this case are seriously spooked. Rumor is that GOD has asked its ARM division to loan it some technomancers, to see if they can help. ARM's not cooperating, surprise, surprise—internal rivalries at their best.
- Fianchetto
- After what some GOD hackers did to a couple of technomancers on loan from Horizon, I doubt that ARM will ever oblige. They may be on their own or forced to hire “freelancers.”
- Pistons
- Rumor up the well is that Chaos Engine owns a couple of dedicated satellites—ones that went “missing” off the books during the Crash 2.0. Using satellites is a good way to prevent any backtracking, even if your speed suffers.
- Orbital DK
- I've seen it posted that one of the primary goals of the gang is to break down barriers; they want “a free-flowing, chaotic exchange of data, unstopped by the rules and laws and artificial boundaries of metahumanity.” Other places, their graffiti states, “Break the Dam, release the ocean of data!” and “Subvert the Dominant Paradigm!” and “Hack The Planet!” or other inane, anti-establishment clichés. Kinda hard to take them seriously with such stupid mottos.
- Slamm-O!
- Actions, not words, my friend. In Singapore, a politician had sponsored an effort to limit Matrix access for minors, restricting access for those under 18 to many of the VR games so popular in the region. He was found dead one day before presenting his bill, and the autopsy ruled his death a brain aneurism. (Mind, the guy didn't have a datajack and wouldn't touch hot sim with a ten-foot pole.) Within seconds of his death—before the police even found his

body—Chaos Engine was boasting on multiple message boards that they were responsible. I take them *very* seriously.

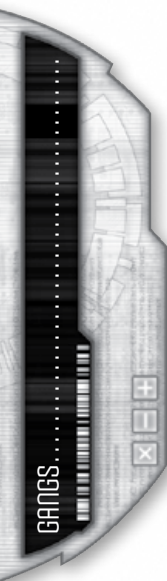
- The Smiling Bandit
- Believe what you want, Slamm-O!, these guys scare the hell out of me. I got called to look at a virus they created that had shredded a system. It wasn't made by any mundane programmer out there. The only thing I could say was that it was ... wrong. Destructive in a way that didn't even make sense, like they'd ripped up the ... hell, now I'm starting to sound like Netcat. Never mind.
- Pistons
- I ran into some of these gangers, I think. Hard to tell; they don't exactly announce their presence. But, they had something remarkably like sprites with them, and those buggers ripped through my buddy in about two seconds flat. I've never seen anything like it. If that's what you mean by wrong, well, then .... Shit.
- Glitch
- KivaNet is rumored to be actively hunting down members of Chaos Engine behind the scenes, sending out teams of their own technoshamans after certain members. I can't imagine why they'd do that unless Chaos Engine hackers were also technomancers.
- Mika
- KivaNet doesn't hunt down techomancers. They hunt *dissonants*. And it's not just a rumor. KivaNet lost two members to a Chaos Engine attack. The technoshamans are determined to hunt down the dissonants. The PCC is giving KivaNet some decidedly non-Matrix support with it.
- Netcat

## THE VIRTUAL BOOGIEMEN

Not a lot is known about the leaders of Chaos Engine. It's rumored that someone named Cortex leads the gang, or is at least a high-ranking member. He/she/it—hell, it might not even be a metahuman—supposedly coordinates the gang via second- and third-hand methods. Only a handful of people have ever even seen Cortex's icon; most communication is done by agents, messages, and postings on message boards. What is known is that everyone who's ever crossed Cortex has ended up a burnt-out husk.

Chromophobe and Maelstrom are two other suspected high-ranking members, enforcers, and primary assassins. Maelstrom's icon is a humanoid shape, but within the vaguely human outline, there is just a constantly swirling storm of colors and no other features. Chromophobe's icon is a stark black-and-white multi-limbed humanoid shape, again featureless. It's impossible to know if these are two single people or multiple people using the same handles and icons, but sightings of the two are common—if frightening.

While they are an international gang, limited only by the reach of the Matrix—meaning practically unlimited reach—they seem to have higher concentrations in Asia, specifically the trendy VR gaming sites so popular in Korea, Japan, Hong Kong, Singapore, and Malaysia. They seem to recruit from these sites, challenging experienced hackers to single combat for the privilege of becoming a recruit, or watching and grooming talented young gamers to bring into the gang. Chaos Engine is a popular





INCOMING FEED.....

fad in gaming circles, idolized by many of the gamers and kids who revolve around that world. Speculation on the gang is a hot topic on chat boards and message rooms, with thousands of people logging in to see what the latest gossip is, what recent hits or hacks the gang has carried off, or even the ever-popular subject of trying to guess the gender and romantic relationships of the known Chaos Engine leaders.

Chaos Engine hackers frequently hang out in the virtual gaming worlds, hacking their way into the internal code of the most popular games. They change their icons to mimic those of the game's constructs, assuming the shape of, say an ogre in a sword & magic fantasy world. Unlike the virtual constructs, though, Chaos Engine hackers delight in coming to life and really killing the people jacked into the game—gaining a reputation as the boogiemens of the virtual world.

## THE YARDIES

Rather than a single gang, the Yardies is the name used for a loosely organized group of Afro-Jamaican crews and gangs that have plagued London and several major British sprawls for going on a century. The Yardies combine lethal street-smarts, non-sense violence, and international smuggling know-how.

Frequent clashes with each other, other British street gangs, larger organized crime syndicates, and the police would wipe their membership down to almost nothing, periodically wiping out entire gangs. There's certainly no lack of willing bodies in the Smoke though—especially in the urban desolation of the Squeeze—and the connections with Carib slums provided a steady stream of drugs and illegal immigrants for human trafficking.

In the last decade, however, a new leader has risen to the top of the pack: Rahshan. Born in the Squeeze, he rose through the various

street-kid gangs with ruthless cunning and a judicious application of extreme violence to those who refused to bend a knee to his plans. By 2065, he'd finished what he had begun—uniting the various splinter Afro-Jamaican crews of London together under a common banner. The repression that's followed the post-Crash 2.0 Emergency Act has only increased social tensions and reinforced the need for the gangs to stick together and coordinate their actions.

Rahsan's taken to calling his alliance the Yardies, consuming the title (and other gangs under the label). He re-established ties to the East Coast of the UCAS, and he firmed relations with their Carib League associates. By 2063, the Yardies were hitting every international police agency's hot list. In 2071, they have become one of the top-tier gangs, a newcomer to a field dominated by old-timers, and they've expanded into niches in mainland Europe (notably Holland and Denmark). No one is sure if their preeminence will last, but no one should discount them while they're on top. Even the other big players, like the Ancients and the Vikings, are giving these guys a wide berth, hoping that gang infighting will topple the threat from the inside.

## MANPOWER

Yardie crews are still relatively autonomous, and the overarching hierarchy is informal. The organization is structured like a stunted pyramid scheme with Rahsan sitting comfortably atop. Crew bosses need only Rahsan's blessing and each runs their own operation and rackets—as long as they kick back enough of the profits. Rahsan and his lieutenants in turn mediate between crews and ensure turf conflicts are minimized.

The Yardies are one of the few top-tier groups that still use more traditional, street-level methods of recruiting, initiating, and punishing members. The "projects," the LPO's sanctioned

## Riser's Ratings: The Yardies

**Territory:** British Isles (London), Caribbean League, UCAS (East Coast)

**Colors/Symbol:** Red or green on black, members sport multiple body modifications, tattoos, and noticeable cyberware

**Resources:** (Firepower) 4; (Magic) 3; (Personnel) 4

**Numbers:** 3,000+

**Threat Rating:** 5

**Professionalism:** 3

**Training:** 5

ghettos, are fertile ground for new recruits. Hopeful kids hang about the edges of the gang, running errands and performing grunt work, like dealing drugs or picking pockets. Initiation into the actual gang involves a vicious beating in, sixty seconds of agony, during which the hopeful cannot make a sound or move to protect himself at all. Survivors are left to recover on their own. Those that emerge whole, or mostly whole, from the initiation are full-fledged members.

The Yardies are big fans of cyberware, and a member often gets his first 'ware as a result of his initiation—a cyberarm, for example, to replace one that was shattered and amputated after the beating. They wear their modifications with pride, a symbol of how tough they are. Magic is non-existent in the gang itself—there's a serious dislike for all things magical given the establishment's links to the New Druidic Movement. Pragmatically though, Rahshan has taken to outsourcing for magical talent, using wizgangs and street mages to supplement his gang's physical might.

- This has been surprisingly successful for the Yardies. Given the restrictions the Lord Protector's Office has imposed on the unlicensed practice of magic in the UK, combined with the equivalent of martial law in effect, it is simply easier to use independent talent for magical support if or when you need it—and to not bother with the hassle of trying to train, equip, and support magical talent when you don't.
- Winterhawk

The Yardies are a Caribbean-British grassroots crossbreed, seeded from centuries of crossover between the two regions. They toe the line of an ethnic syndicate, but they fall a few steps short, primarily with their overall organization and lack of distinctive cultural mores. They don't appear to discriminate, and some crews even favor ork and troll members—though that could simply be a result of the (relatively) weaker humans, elves, and dwarfs not surviving the initiation rites. They are heavily skewed towards men though, with few women directly in the gang.

- Letting a pack of orks and trolls have at you with their fists and feet for even one minute tends to leave weaker beings dead or permanently maimed. As a human, it takes a lot of guts to stand up for it. Not to disparage the fairer sex, but few women can take the beating. And it's well known that the Yardies are twice as harsh in initiating women, elves, and dwarfs ... weeding out the weak, so to speak.
- Winterhawk

- Well, not all women are delicate little flowers, 'hawk.
- Beaker

- True enough, luv. Those who do survive the initiation tend to rise quickly in power, I'll give you that.
- Winterhawk

The Yardies also have a large prison presence in Britain and they're starting to show up in in the UCAS. In fact, the recent spread of Yardie activity to the Midwest has been attributed to prison recruiting.

- Lone Star's plan to reduce the gang's presence in its prisons by dispersing known gang members has severely backfired. Instead of weakening the gang, as hoped, the gang has instead spread like a virus through the other prison populations. Chalk one up for experience.
- Hard Exit

## BUSINESS INTERESTS

The Yardies make much of their money in drug trafficking, contraband smuggling, human trafficking, prostitution, and BTL sales. They make a significant portion of their earnings from moving and fencing pirate loot on the black market, and they control various pirate groups, splinter cells from the gang that owe allegiance to the Yardies, who smuggle drugs and people across the pond in exchange for protection and money. They also run loan-sharking and money-laundering operations using their tight-knit communities as cover.

The Yardies also use their considerable influence in the various prison systems to smuggle contraband in and out, making a profit and supporting their incarcerated brethren.

The gang is predominantly known for their drug trafficking. They began selling tempo in London and the surrounding areas this last year, raking in huge profits and quickly reinvesting that nuyen into themselves. Boosted by tempo profits, they began a campaign to systematically destroy or absorb the other street gangs in the Squeeze and challenge the syndicates in London itself. At the same time, they firmed up ties with the Zobop in the Caribbean, opening up an entire new network for themselves to import South American drugs into their territories. With the entrance into Awakened drugs and BADs, they've really begun to rack up the profits ... and their enemies.

Rumors are that the Yardies also deal in organ-legging, a rumor that's made their reputation all that more frightening.

- The Yardies are one of the most feared gangs around, simply because of their brutality and unpredictability. And, they've had the reputation for a *long* time; in one form or another, they've been around for more than 100 years. But age hasn't mellowed them, only honed their dangerous viciousness. If you make a deal with the Cutters, you're pretty much assured they'll stick to the terms. Ditto for the Ancients. But try to work with the Yardies, and you may find yourself paying more than you expected ... like, say, your life.
- Stone
- That's not completely true. They have a code of honor; it is just a very brutal one. Respect is the first and most important part. If



they feel disrespected, they're going to make an example of you, a bloody, painful example. But if you treat them with respect, they'll deal with you. Speak politely, don't challenge them, you know the drill. The second part of their code is not to hurt the very young or elderly, or the innocent. (Beats the hell out of me what they consider innocent, but I'm repeating what I've been told.) The third is to show no weakness—no pain, no pity, no empathy. Their motto is "Survival of the Strongest," and they live that motto every day.

- Winterhawk
- Yeah, many of the Yardies wear that motto as a tattoo, part of their gang colors. Generally, they get it when they've killed a certain number of opponents, like rival gangers, police, or crime syndicate thugs.
- Riser

## THE CUTTERS

- Riser left out this top gang, for whatever reason. Since I think the gang deserves to be included in the top tier, I've written up my own review.
- The Smiling Bandit

The Cutters are a North American gang, with active members in most sprawls, making them transnational. While they got their beginnings in drug dealing and street-level violence, they've evolved over the years into a pseudo-corporate force with the resources, income, and structure of a small corporation. Although they deal in goods and services that qualify as black-market or illegal in many jurisdictions, they do so with a primary concern for profit. Violence is a side effect of their primary for-profit goal, and this group is not involved in political or social terrorism.

The Cutters mimic corporate structure to the point that their leadership is called the board of directors, and they have a CEO who runs the gang, under direction of the Board. A CFO, CIO (Chief Intelligence Officer), and a VP of security all report to the CEO directly, while other parts of the gang are organized and labeled with similar corporate terms. For example, their Department of Logistics and Supply Management deals with cross-border smuggling as well as shifting goods from one branch of the gang to another. This organization has slowly evolved over the last two decades, as the gang has shifted from a more street-level, disorganized group into the top-tier gang it is today. And, in fact, the gang is so remarkably similar to an actual corporation that I've heard it isn't uncommon for some files to get misplaced or a shipment to get accidentally rerouted, so that the men-on-the-streets find themselves receiving a shipment of medkits instead of a crate of Ares Alphas. Supposedly, the field leaders are good at improvising and working with the inevitable mix-ups, so they simply restructure their plans and file a report to the appropriate department.

### LEADERSHIP

Unlike many gangs, the Cutters seem to prefer using their actual names as they conduct their operations. However, even my intensive data searches didn't reveal associated identities, SINS, or

### Bandit's Ratings: The Cutters

**Territory:** North America, British Isles, parts of Europe, parts of South America

**Colors/Symbol:** Gold and Green /Crossed Switchblades

**Resources:** (Firepower) 4; (Magic) 4; (Personnel) 4

**Numbers:** 10,000; Seattle: 350

**Threat Rating:** 5

**Professionalism:** 5+

**Training:** 4

backgrounds for most of the known members at the higher levels.

The CEO and chairman of the board is Jorge Mendoza, a mixed race man. There is little known about Mendoza, although it is reported that he speaks English, Aztlaner Spanish, and Navaho equally fluently. There are five board members. It's believed that these men and women are responsible for the strategic direction of the gang, unlike many organizations that rely upon one person.

LaDonnel Jackson is a black ork man in his mid-to-late twenties, rumored to have been recruited when he was in a Lone Star detention facility for juvenile offenders. There are no records of anyone matching his name or description in Lone Star's records, but that *could* be the result of data lost in the Crash.

Dr. Karina Oliveras is a dwarf woman. It's said she holds a PhD in finance from a top university in the CAS.

William Jennings is a Caucasian human man, a known high-ranking former officer from the UCAS military. He was educated at West Point and served for over twenty years before retiring with honors. It is unknown if he was affiliated with the Cutters during his years of service, but the FBI has a full profile on Jennings and is currently offering a 100,000 nuyen reward for information leading to his arrest. His current location is unknown.

Rachel Boyd is a mixed-race human woman who's rumored to have a law degree from Yale.

Alexander Pietre is a troll and is suspected of being Awakened, although that's purely speculation; I've never heard it confirmed.

- What, no comments on any of these people? Hasn't anyone on JackPoint met them?
- Sounder

### INTERNAL ORGANIZATION

The Cutters have their gang organized by departments, rather than geographically. Each department is overseen by someone given the title of VP. Their "Logistics and Supply Management" department coordinates moving their black-market goods, using their own established smuggling routes that supply all of North America and even reach into the British Isles and Europe. Their "Procurement" department is responsible for purchasing arms, vehicles, and drugs, while their "Sales" division coordinates everything from their large black-market arms sales to their street-level drug dealing. Due to this vertical organization, police organizations are often stymied, because the arrest of the



street-level members (the most likely to *be* caught and arrested) is the equivalent of arresting the accounting clerk—it doesn't even make a ripple in the overall organization.

- The Cutters do organize their gang very differently from any other gang out there. They aren't a family organization, like the Mafia, and members get promoted by their productivity (i.e., sales), leadership ability, and skills—you can't automatically assume the head of a specific chapter is the toughest, scariest SOB in that area. He may actually be the most charismatic and cunning, instead.
- Kane

Unlike many gangs and ethnic crime syndicates, the Cutters do not appear to discriminate on race, gender, or ethnicity in their membership—with the possible exception of elves. The few elves that they do have rarely seem to rise above the street level. The Cutters utilize Awakened talents in their gang and appear to be welcoming to changelings. Rumors of shapeshifters or other sentient creatures in their membership continue to circulate, although other information suggests the gang uses the rumor to boost its image on the streets.

- The Cutters put a lot of training into their members with potential. Rumors are they even have an academy, supposedly somewhere in Sioux territory or maybe in the PCC. A sort of business school, but where your CPAs also get trained on heavy weapons and torture methods. They also are rumored to sponsor members through some of the more traditional venues for higher education—Ivy League schools and top-notch military academies. But as much as they value higher education, they also place a premium on street smarts.

- Mr. Bonds

- They also invest quite a bit of their profits into their more promising members. With the street-level kids, they'll sponsor them for some secondhand warez, maybe some wires or the like. The guys and gals you see on the streets are most likely to be a few notches above the other gangers out there—faster, better guns, and with some kick-ass gear. The higher up they go, the better quality—and variety—they provide. The Cutters don't run their own medical facilities, but they do maintain good relations with street docs in their territories. I'd assume they invest just as heavily in their mojo folks.

- Butch

- Any ideas on their initiation rituals? How they recruit?

- Sticks

- Funny how quiet Riser's being, hm?

- Pistons

- Oh, don't tease him, Pistons.

- Netcat

### Profit Centers

The Cutters deal in drugs, arms, protection rackets, and other street-level crime. They also appear to interact freely with us independent criminals, acting as brokers, fences, and fixers.

They deal in extensive black-market goods, including smuggling metahumans into and out of UCAS for slave labor or sexual exploitation. I've also heard rumors that the Cutters have access to military-spec weapons, which they sell to other criminal organizations and street gangs. From what I've read in Interpol's Drug Enforcement Agency reports, it looks like the Cutters were not involved at significant levels in the recent tempo drug trade. They do, however, dominate the street market in many sprawls with other drugs and illegal substances, such as novacoke. Rumors also suggest they may get some—perhaps much—of their goods by working hand-in-hand with certain corporations to buy up production overruns, surplus stock, and fabricated “shrinkage,” and then reselling them on the black market for a profit. According to the UCAS IRS, they believe the UCAS-based Cutters see annual profits of 50–100 million nuyen.

- The Cutters don't generally deal directly on the street—they “subcontract” out their sales to other, smaller gangs, leaving those gangers to face the higher risks of dealing—the street wars, the cops, and the other dangers of street life. The Cutters operate as middle men and drug brokers, giving the drugs to their contacts for distribution and taking the larger cut of the profits. When one small-time gang gets mowed down by rivals, the Cutters simply step in and make a deal with the new kids on the block. It's all business to them. They know that at the street level, there's so much attrition to violence and the cops, there's no reason to put themselves at risk.

- Beaker

- And sometimes, if a street gang gets too big for their britches, the Cutters arrange for them to get cut back down to size... or eliminated altogether. The Cutters aren't real big on “re-negotiating” their contracts with their subcontractors.

- Butch

- Bandit mentions that the Cutters operate as fixers, which is an understatement. The gang is rather like one giant network in the shadows, I've often thought. Their higher-level members procure runners, broker jobs, and provide the arms, the tech, or the mojo needed to get the job done. Corps and even the big organized crime syndicates use the Cutters—they've got everything from raw newbies to prime runners on tap. Great employment opportunity if you're looking for work...

- Cosmo

- Yeah, if you're not an elf. They've got a big chip on their shoulder for “dandelion-eaters.” Probably from their rivalry with the Ancients, but they're real pigs about it.

- Haze

- Right. And the Ancients are just so welcoming and open to all metatypes themselves...

- Beaker

- Well, except for some minor racial prejudice—especially when compared to the Yaks or other syndicates—the Cutters make great contacts for runners. You can count on them to be professional in



their dealings, and they have a good rep. If a job goes sideways, it isn't going to be because your contact in the Cutters sold you out. That's a hell of a lot more than you can say for most corps.

- Kat o' Nine Tales
- The Cutters have a good relationship with many of the larger crime organizations. The big syndicates tap them for smaller procurement jobs or even as independent fixers when they need to "outsource" a job. Other big gangs use the Cutters for gear they can't get themselves. And, merc crews and shadowrunners generally speak well of the gang. The one glaring exception is the Ancients—the two gangs can't stand each other. It isn't exactly open war, because wars are just too costly (unless you're a supplier), but it's certainly close. And I happen to know for a fact that the Feds occasionally tap the gang for their own projects, like, say, getting arms to and from certain groups they'd like to support in the NAN...
- Cosmo

## SECOND-TIER GANGS

The FBI classifies a second-tier gang as having a membership in the hundreds, a presence in multiple sprawls within one nation (or within nations on one continent) or a significant presence in one large sprawl, and which is beginning to focus on profitability as a primary goal. Income might be in the tens of millions of nuyen annually. In the world of gangs, a second-tier gang is one that's fought its way up from the thrill and turf gangers but doesn't have the organization, resources, or leadership to make the big jump to the first tier.

There's a lot of movement between second- and third-tier gangs, as they move up in the world and then get chunks taken out of them by the syndicates, other gangs, or the cops. Often, a second-tier gang has a particularly strong or charismatic leader, and when that leader is eliminated, the gang falls back down into the squabbling mess of the third tier. Infighting can be just as deadly to a gang as being attacked by the bigger boys. The goals of a second-tier gang have begun to be more profit oriented; if they were simply interested in turf, they'd have stuck to their home ground. By spreading out to other sprawls, they've declared to the world that they're out for nuyen.

Second-tier gangs also frequently have a concentrated prison population, which makes them even more appealing, since you know if you go up the river, you've got brothers to watch your back. They might pay off the cops occasionally, most likely buying them with gear, drugs, or free blowjobs. Rarely will a second-tier gang get involved in politics or in manipulating the media.

- Occasionally, a small gang will get a powerful patron—a syndicate, a fixer, maybe even a free spirit—who elevates them up to a second-tier status. Wiz-gangs do this, too, being small in numbers but with enough mojo to intimidate all the other street gangs around. Lucky for us, the egos of wizgangers often exceeds their common sense, and those gangs rarely last more than a few months before imploding.
- Sticks

Gangs at this level need alliances to keep their place, but they are less likely to keep alliances—they are too unpredictable for many folks' tastes. Their lack of an established organization structure results in a lot of infighting and backstabbing, which means if you've made an alliance with, say, Bob the Ork, and he falls out of favor (i.e., gets his head blown off), then chances are, no one else in the gang will honor your agreements. This makes them less dependable for the syndicates but still useful to those of us in the shadows. We can afford to be more flexible—and we're probably not investing 1.5 million nuyen in drugs with the gang for distribution, natch. (If you've got that much nuyen, why the hell are you reading this? You should be on a beach somewhere with hard alcohol and soft women!)

- There are a lot more second-tier gangs than first-tier. Obviously, I can't list all of them here. If you've got questions on one that I didn't list, give me a ping. I'm always happy to exchange data for favors.
- Riser
- I can attest to that. :)
- Kat o' Nine Tales

## LOS ÁNGELES ARDIENTES

Based out of the flooded east LA, Los Angeles Ardientes (the Burning Angels) are a Latino gang with ties to the Anasazi in the Mojave. They're also rumored to be working with, or sponsored by, Aztlan, although that's never been, ah, proven. So far, they only operate within LA, which is why they've been stuck in the second tier. They were originally based out of El Infierno, the walled up hell-on-earth in LA. When the tsunami hit and flooded almost all the place, the Burning Angels spread out over the city. They make their safehouses and bases in the upper floors of flooded buildings and on the hundreds of small hills and plateaus that have become islands in the murky stew. They also have a presence downtown, although with Horizon's AIPS running the show down there now, they've been forced to adapt their tactics—the automated software recognizes known gang members as well as gang colors, clothing styles, and tattoos, and the PCC cops are summoned rather quickly. The Angels really consider most of the city their turf, and they clash regularly with other gangs to enforce their superiority. Most of the smaller gangs in the city don't challenge the Burning Angels when they come roaring through, since the Angels made a few very public, very gruesome examples of those that tried.

### Riser's Ratings: Los Angeles Ardientes

**Territory:** Los Angeles  
**Colors/Symbol:** Black and Red / Flaming Wings  
**Resources:** (Firepower) 5; (Magic) 3; (Personnel) 1  
**Numbers:** 150  
**Threat Rating:** 4  
**Professionalism:** 3  
**Training:** 5



## LEADERSHIP AND ORGANIZATION

The Burning Angels are headed up by a black-haired, black-eyed woman named Sage. Sage is a mystic adept with heavy scars that she displays proudly, supposedly earned on a pilgrimage out to the Mojave and the Anasazi tribe out there. She's an honorary member of the Anasazi tribe. In fact, her experience supposedly is what's responsible for making it so popular for the inner-city gangers to make a pilgrimage into the Mojave desert to prove their mettle.

- P2.0 and the media are enamored of the gang scene in LA. Sage's display of her impressive scars makes her a fascinating person to those beauty-obsessed people who follow the gang culture—that, and the skintight black tank tops she wears, so you can see every scar on her arms (as well as her other, ahem, attributes). As you might imagine, the fact that the two top gangs in LA are both led by women makes for wonderful media, and comparisons between Sage's savagely dark looks and Rosa Azul's ethereal elven beauty are made daily. The networks have offered increasingly high amounts of nuyen to the ladies for an exclusive fight between them, but so far, no go. Pity.
- Mika
- Yeah, and I heard they turned down Lucid Studios' latest offer (supposedly 2.5 million each) to co-star in one of Lucid's productions. Only in LA.
- Dr. Spin
- Well, we're not all as lucky as Sticks...
- Pistons

Sage runs the Burning Angels single-handedly, but she does have a core group of other gangers she relies upon. Fuego is her second-in-command, a troll man with flamboyant red cyberware, while Red Brome is the head mage of the group. Both are among those who've survived Anasazi initiation.

She's also rumored to have the assistance of a team of Jaguar guards who've been training up her gangers in true Aztechnology fashion. No one outside the gang is talking about *that* rumor, but the gangers have certainly been exhibiting some very militaristic tactics in their hits...

The Angels are suspected of having around 200 actual members and perhaps three times that in hopefuls, hanger-ons, and wannabes. The gangers are organized in squads of five to ten, and those groups live and train together, which is a new concept for the Burning Angels. Whether they're taking a page from the Ancients' book or their mysterious training source has suggested the new arrangement, it's working. Hits by the Burning Angels in the last year or so have shown a new level of teamwork that's making them the most lethal gang on the streets (and waterways) of LA.

- Which, of course, has the Ancients pissed. They've bumped up their gang presence in LA, bringing them more inline with the Angels.
- Sticks

## INITIATION

In the Burning Angels, there are two levels of gangers; those street-level members who've gone through the basic initiation ritual and an elevated group who have made the trek out to the desert and survived. This second group is all marked with an eight-sided star on their right cheek. These are the leaders of the gang, those trusted by Sage and looked up to by the other gangers.

- While Sage supposedly has a group of four advisors—Fuego, Red Brome, Chia, and Smoke Devil—any Burning Angel who bears the mark has the right to be present at the "War Council," where the gang makes strategic decisions and plots to wipe out the Ancients and other foes. They also have a variety of other rights: exclusive flophouses, first choice of the various combat drugs imported from the Anasazi, a cut of the profits of the gang, and other pleasures reserved for the elite. They also get to join P2.0, sponsored by the gang itself.
- Mika

For the first-level gangers, the initiation is straight-forward. After a potential member has three kills to his or her name, they can ask to join the gang. The actual initiation rite is quick and brutal. It's a "beat in" pitting the prospective member against five other Burning Angels, a free-for-all fight that takes place in a chalk-drawn circle. The hopeful can fight back but can't leave the circle. It lasts for twenty seconds—which seems quick unless you've had to actually get pummeled for twenty straight seconds, in which case it's an eternity. Those who show particularly good fighting or manage to endure without whimpering or pleading for mercy—which will get you killed right off—are in.

- The Angels broadcast their initiation rites, which is why there's so much known about it. Of course, not to be shown up, several other LA gangs do the same.
- Mika

## THE VIKINGS

Based in the Scandinavian Union, the Vikings are actually multiple gangs that are mostly autonomous, one part Viking raiding party, one part go-gang, and two parts social rejects and dropouts.

Each group follows the leadership of their *jarl*, who are fiercely independent and antagonistic towards one another. Supposedly, they follow the leadership of the self-proclaimed king, Kjartan Ulfesen, who is also the *jarl* (leader, or, literally, earl) of the Black Halfdans gang. In truth, while Ulfesen imposes his rule by force of arms and intimidation, the various gangs are no more united than they've ever been. The gangs themselves are made up of gangs from all corners of the Scandinavian Union, from the Norwegians to the Swedes. They number close to a thousand all together, but individual gangs are occasionally as small as ten or twenty members. The Vikings mix their history as the most dangerous of Scandinavian biker gangs with Norse magic and the revived worship of the Aesir. They are a strange combination of old Viking culture and urban tribalism, relishing the old ways and unplugging from modern society as much as





## Riser's Ratings: The Vikings

**Territory:** Scandinavian Union

**Colors/Symbol:** Vary by individual gang

**Resources:** (Firepower) 3; (Magic) 4; (Personnel) 2

**Numbers:** 1,000 (individual gangs of 25-100 members)

**Threat Rating:** 4

**Professionalism:** 2

**Training:** 2

possible. They have a serious dislike of those things that make you weak, and they disdain others' dependence on technology. Even their bikes and watercraft are stripped down of unnecessary tech, and they prefer melee weapons—especially their own fists—over firepower.

### LEADERSHIP AND ORGANIZATION

Following their Viking heritage, each gang is strongly loyal to their own members first, to the members of their closest clans next, and then to the overall leader of the gangs. Their *jarls* come together for a regular council, where each man (or woman) has an equal voice. Inter-gang feuds are—sometimes—resolved at these councils, new business deals and alliances set, and the various gangs compete to get the territories of other gangs that have been destroyed or absorbed into other gangs. The relationships between the various gangs are rather tangled, and for an outsider, it can be hard to know which gang is allied with, or fighting with, another.

Each gang also has a spiritual leader, their *gode* (a male) or *gydje* (a female), who is almost always Awakened. In addition to leading the gang's spiritual matters (which they take *very* seriously), the *gode* functions as an important advantage for the gang. They are particularly well known for using magic to ambush or confuse their victims, using the element of surprise to raid a corporate facility, ship, or settlement, then getting away before the victim realizes what's happened.

- The Vikings also attract more than their fair share of adepts, berserkers who enjoy the violent lifestyle.
- Red Anya

### ALLIES AND ENEMIES

The Vikings are frequently allied with the Vory, who control most of the organized crime in the Scandinavian Union. (No one in their right mind would ever label the Vikings as *organized*.) While the Vory concentrate on the big crime, the Vikings take care of their smuggling and distribution. This works great, except when it, well, doesn't. Every now and then, an individual Viking gang will decide to sell their goods out to the highest bidder (instead of the one the Vory promised the stuff to) or skim the profits for themselves. Then the Vory have to make an example of the gang...

- There's some speculation in the shadows about Ulfesen's connection to the Vory. The Vikings believe he's totally his own man, but I've heard some rumors that the Vory are actually controlling him.

So far, he hasn't stopped the individual gangs from crossing the Vory, nor has he stepped in when the Vory mete out punishment. If he were in bed with the Vory, I imagine the Vikings would be calling for his blood, king or not.

- Fianchetto

The Vikings have a much clearer relationship with the Alta Commissione: they hate them and actively work towards pissing them off whenever possible. While the gang is merely a thorn in the Commissione's side, they have caused some problems for them. Some of those in the know have speculated that the Vikings are being used as cannon fodder in the war between the Vory and the Commissione. Others suggest that the Vikings have some other deep-seated grudge against the Commissione.

The Vikings have other contacts through the region. They have tenuous contacts with the Grey Wolves and get some of the prime drugs that syndicate peddles, and they also have connections with the Kussundulola Cartel in Portugal, and through them, to the various Awakened drugs from South America and Africa.

### INCOME AND INTERESTS

Besides acting as the Vory's go-men and distributors, the Vikings are also known for piracy, raiding, low-level smuggling, fencing stolen goods (especially goods *they've* stolen), and dabbling in magical goods. Their advantage is in their mobility, be it on their tricked-out bikes or the speedy hydrofoils they use. Each gang has a master mechanic who is accorded the utmost respect—the third in leadership behind the *jarl* and the *gode*, in fact. If you ever need a *fast* ride in the Scandinavian Union, hook up with these guys. On the outskirts of the larger cities, the Vikings also dabble in protection rackets, muggings, and prostitution.

### THE COCOTONA

It probably isn't a surprise that Aztlan boasts one of the most disturbing gangs out there, the Cocotona. This group grew out of the violent Mexican and Central American gangs of last century, growing only more brutal with the Awakening. While the David cartel may control almost all the *organized* crime in Aztlan, the Cocotona control a big slice of the *disorganized* crime. They operate in places even the David cartel doesn't dare to go, the sprawling shacks and shanty towns that border the Aztlan sprawls. It's not easy to get information about these guys, and most of what I know comes from the other side of the border—the CAS is real uptight about the fact that the Cocotona are bringing their peculiar brand of violence and crime across the border. Aztlan doesn't officially acknowledge them or provide any intel on them.

- Aztlan doesn't acknowledge a lot of things, though, so no surprise there. These guys operate all through the country, vicious bastards who give even a hardened runner like me nightmares. Still, they're one of the few successful criminal groups in Aztlan, and they can be contacts. You could decide to deal with the David cartel, who are much more reliable and sane (in comparison), but you know what they say... from your mouth to Aztechnology's ear. Sometimes it's nice to operate in Aztlan *without* the Big A knowing your every move.
- Marcos



**NEWSNET NOW!****Austin, Texas**

A drone-operated semi-truck was found today north of Austin, with the bodies of 34 women and children inside. Authorities believe the truck experienced engine trouble and broke down midday yesterday, and that the bodies inside were all victims of heatstroke and dehydration. A regular patrol drone found the truck early this morning. Officials believe the women and children—who appear to be of various nationalities—were part of an illegal smuggling ring and destined for the UCAS. One official, who chose to remain anonymous, named the Cocotona gang as responsible for the deaths. Officials are currently attempting to identify the victims.

**INCOME AND INTERESTS**

The Cocotona appear to be primarily in the industries of organ and people trafficking between Central and South America and the CAS, UCAS, and NAN, local drug dealing, extortion, street crime, and kidnapping and ransom.

They possess several pipelines into the CAS and the PCC, which they use to smuggle drugs out of Aztlan and people into Aztlan, connecting with a variety of other gangs. Latino gangs in other sprawls are reacting to the Cocotona positively, looking to them for identity and with a sort of twisted hero worship.

- Several Lone Star prisons in the UCAS and CAS have incarcerated these psychos, who then recruited other Latinos to become affiliates of the Cocotonas—when those hombres were released, they took the message back to their gangs. The Cocotonas are manipulating the prison systems to spread their influence into other sprawls and countries.
- Hard Exit
- Knight Errant believes that some members are purposely getting arrested to get into the prison system, a bizarre type of missionary system, I guess.
- Sticks

In Aztlan, they also dabble in armed robberies, kidnappings, murder for hire, and ransoms. They are best known outside of Aztlan for their involvement with human trafficking, both into and out of Aztlan. In fact, other gangs involved in human trafficking in the UCAS and CAS have begun to feel the pressure, with some joining the Cocotonas as allies and others declaring open war on the Cocotonas and their allies. Those in the know are expecting to see a big shake-up among the gangs in the South soon.

- They've made some motions to get going in LA. Both the Ancients and the Burning Angels are vehemently opposed to *that* idea. Word on the street is that the two gangs may even cooperate to ensure the Cocotonas and their affiliated gangs get wiped out of the city.
- Sticks

**Riser's Ratings: The Cocotona**

**Territory:** Aztlan, with affiliated Latino gangs in CAS and UCAS

**Colors/Symbol:** Black and Gold/Piercing with black thorns

**Resources:** (Firepower) 3; (Magic) 4; (Personnel) 3

**Numbers:** 6,000+

**Threat Rating:** 4

**Professionalism:** 2

**Training:** 2

**LEADERS AND ORGANIZATION**

The gang is organized into a cell format, with each group operating semi-independently. A central leadership ensures that there isn't any unprofitable overlap among the individual groups. There's dozens of rumors as to who's in charge of the gang, from a disgraced member of the Jaguar guards to a secret spirit cabal.

- I don't know who's in charge of the gang, but I do know that they started getting more organized and branching out their interests after Aztlan began repopulating the Yucatan with hapless folk from the slums, part of their city clean-up effort. About six months after the first slummers were relocated, the gang started having a lot more power, firearms, and mojo available, and their crimes ramped up.
- Marcos
- Think the Ghost Cartels are funding them?
- Nephine
- I haven't heard anything from my contacts within the cartels linking them.
- Glasswalker
- There are other powers in the Yucatan who might enjoy the Cocotona's particular brand of madness.
- Man-of-Many-Names

Each sub-gang is responsible for a specific territory, controlling all the Cocotona's interests within that territory. The gang has taken advantage of the wireless Matrix to coordinate their activities without putting themselves at risk. Operating under the eye of Aztechnology is difficult, and the individual groups are kept unaware of members in other groups or higher up in the gang to prevent them from being wiped out altogether.

- Actually, Riser, that's not exactly true. Aztlan rounds up some of the gangers every now and then, making big, publicized arrests and sacrifices of some cells. But those are prearranged, the gangers captured sold out to the Azzie cops. See, Aztlan needs a reason to have their combat monkeys walking the street, and the threat of gang violence makes the law-abiding citizens happy to have the heavily armed National Goons around. So, yeah, the Cocotonas use the Matrix to provide a layer of safety for



INCOMING FEED.....

themselves. But they also sport very obvious tattoos and body modifications—piercing their earlobes, cheeks, and other more sensitive body parts with thick black thorns is a big one—that make 'em easy to identify. They certainly aren't playing cloak-and-dagger with the Aztlan government.

- Marcos

Disenfranchised Mestizos, the underclass shoved into the margins of Aztlan society, make up most of the Cocotona gang. Members prefer to carry sharp, wicked blades—they like to get up close and personal during a fight—but they're also skilled with a variety of firearms. Awakened members are welcome, as are a variety of metahumans. The gang is predominantly male, although there are a few all-female cells. Initiation is said to be particularly gruesome, with a potential member having to kidnap a particular person and then perform a twisted sacrificial ceremony, cutting their victim open and *eating* their heart. Supposedly, the stronger and more powerful the victim, the better the sacrifice, and the more likely the potential member will be accepted in the gang. If the sacrifice is accepted, the head of the gang pierces the new member's ears with black thorns, and they're a full member.

- The cops in DC interrupted something like that. Apparently, the Cocotonas are spreading their initiation rituals along with other aspects of their gang...
- Pistons

## THE NUMBERS GANG

The Numbers Gang is based in the Azanian Federation, specifically Cape Town and the surrounding communities. Originally a prison gang, it is now the dominant gang *inside* the penal system, and it's making inroads on being one of the top gangs on the *outside* in South Africa. Inside the prisons, the gangs are well organized (better organized than the actual prison system, which they basically run from the inside). They have a variety of strict ranks among their membership—somewhere around 25 or 30 distinct ranks—along with established promotional paths, their own legislative body, and elaborate rules of conduct. The gangs are system wide, so any member transferred from one prison to another simply presents his name and rank and is seamlessly integrated into the new facility.

Outside the prisons, the gang is a growing power. There's little true organized crime in the Azanian Federation. Private black marketers, pirates, crime lords, and gangs fight amongst themselves for power, but as of yet, no true syndicate has arisen. The Numbers Gang would like to change that by becoming the top gang in the AF and, eventually, the top criminal syndicate.

- Lofty goals, but the fact is that outside the enforced structure of the prisons, this gang quickly falls apart into warring factions. Dangerous, yes. Organized? No.
- Black Mamba

GANGS

**Territory:** Azanian Federation  
**Colors/Symbol:** Blue (10s), Red (20s), Green (30s)/  
 Extensive facial tattoos symbolize rank  
**Resources:** (Firepower) 3; (Magic) 2; (Personnel) 4  
**Numbers:** 10,000  
**Threat Rating:** 4  
**Professionalism:** 3  
**Training:** 4

## LEADERSHIP AND ORGANIZATION

The Numbers Gang actually consists of a variety of gangs, although perhaps branches of one gang would be a better description. Each gang, or branch, is known for specific activities. In the prison system, there are three: the 10s, 20s, and 30s. The 30s are the ruling body, the legislature, that supposedly controls the rest, and they are considered the senior gang. The 20s are the army branch, the members who enforce the code. And the 10s are the cunning, profiteering branch, the wheelers and dealers of the gang. Each of the three has its own symbolism, while standards of rank cross gang lines.

The leader of the 30s is a human male by the name of Jantis, a charismatic white-haired man with the bearing of a five star general. Ande the Ork runs the 20s, a tough man with cybermods coming out his ears. Finally, canny old Abraham Henrik runs the 10s. Henrik is probably the top reason the gang has been so successful this last decade, as he's forged alliances with any number of other organizations, from the Ghost Cartels to the pirate networks.

Outside the prisons, the gang is made up of dozens of affiliates, each loyal to a particular number, generally called the "named" gangs. The School Yard Bullies, for example, take their orders from the 20s, while the Hard Time Kids are affiliated with the 10s. There are dozens of named gangs in the Azanian sprawls, but most owe allegiance to one or another of the Numbers Gang. Some originated within the gang, and others have joined (or been consumed by) a particular number. However they are affiliated, the members must follow the rules and regs or risk punishment—in most cases, death. Rank is allowed in the named gangs, consistent with the overall structure.

## MEMBERSHIP AND INITIATION

The only way to join one of the three main numbers is to do so while inside prison walls. That confers a certain beginning rank, frequently dependent on your crime, which is automatically higher than any affiliated member from the named gangs. Someone in prison for murder, for example, would be sponsored into the 20s. Someone in prison for Matrix theft would get into the 10s.

- It probably goes without saying, but the Numbers Gang is a boys-only club—the Azanian Federation segregates genders in their prison system. Women can be in the named gangs, but they cannot achieve any rank or standing within the gang. "Daughter" organizations exist in the women's prisons and on the streets, but for the most part, the women in and around these gangs are considered victims or property—whores, drug dealers, razor girls.
- Picador

In the Numbers Gang, an existing member sponsors a prospective member. Initiation rituals are elaborate, and a prospective member's performance during the initiation challenge determines his starting rank. Members get tattoos on their face and body to indicate gang affiliation and rank. The 30s, for example, get a setting sun on their left cheek. Further tattoos indicate rank and are almost always tattooed on the face, so that outside the prison, the ganger's affiliation and rank are immediately identified. Part of the code includes never removing the tattoos—the gang is a lifetime gang, and the only way out is by death.

Membership is open to anyone, regardless of metatype or tribe or political party. There is a higher number of metahumans in the gang, but that is probably due to the high rates of incarceration for male metahumans in Azania (I saw a figure somewhere that 60 percent of Azanian ork men will spend time in prison before they turn twenty).

- The other reason there's so many metahumans in the gangs is that the Numbers Gang (and their named affiliates) actually sponsors a lot of community improvement. In the slums, where the government has basically abandoned all services, the gangs pay for schools and commlinks for kids, set up football fields, have community rec centers with games and trid, even provide food and housing for orphans. The gang polices the area, keeps a standing "army," and controls water, electricity, and wireless networks. They're the only social, political, or stable infrastructure in the slums on the fringes of the big cities. Since so many metahumans end up in those slums, it only makes sense that they end up joining the gang.
- Black Mamba

## INCOME AND INTERESTS

The Numbers Gang includes some of the primary drug dealers in the Azanian Federation. They also deal in telesma, robberies, protection rackets, human trafficking, prostitution, and basically every other vice known to mankind. The Hard Time Kids, an affiliate of the 10s, was the chosen distributor of tempo in the Azanian Federation, and the gang is still reeling in the profits from that. The rumors are that Abraham Henrik is very pleased with the performance of the Hard Time Kids and is looking to further the Numbers Gang's market share of BADs ... perhaps even teaming up with some corporate sponsors to get some new drugs on the market.

## FIRST NATIONS

Most of us on JackPoint are aware of the First Nations now, since they were so heavily involved in the tempo trade in Seattle. They are an all-Native American gang, although members can be from any of the NAN states or tribes. Led by Blood-of-the-Buffalo, the gang has exploded in both membership and profits since 2071.

The First Nations was originally a smaller gang, based on Council Island and allied with the Shotozumi-rengo. The Shotozumi-rengo had for years promised the First Nations the spot as their prime distributor of chips and BTLs in Seattle *if* the gang could just prove themselves. Nothing the gang ever did seemed to be enough, and finally, the First Nations cut all ties with the Shotozumi-rengo. Cut loose, the gang was floundering until they made their alliance with the Komun'go Ring. The Komun'go offered everything Blood-of-the-Buffalo wanted, plus he and Chulsoon Grey-Wolf shared a common ethnic heritage... of sorts.



**NEWSNET NOW!****Denver**

A violent street fight between rival street gangs has left fifteen dead and over twenty wounded in the largest gang conflict seen in the PCC sector of Denver in over three years. Witnesses report the two groups exchanged heavy gunfire, causing a number of casualties when bullets sprayed the fourth-street Saturday Market. PCC police are attributing the violence to a drug deal gone bad. An anonymous PCC officer identified several of the dead as belonging to the First Nation gang, a newcomer to the Denver sprawl.

Blood-of-the-Buffalo has made it no secret that he wants to make the First Nations the premier Native American gang in North America. He sees them as the Ancients of the NAN, or at least, that's his dream. He's done well enough recruiting from all over the NAN and smoothing over the traditional rivalries you'd expect from throwing so many different tribes and customs together. That's probably what keeps them from being an ethnic syndicate, really—the members are all Native, but there's a dozen different tribes, customs, and viewpoints. Word on the street is that Blood-of-the-Buffalo is either crazy or inspired.

- Mika

**THE UNHOLY TRINITY**

At the end of 2071, the First Nations made a decision that permanently changed the gang. Those of us who keep an eye on the streets are still waiting to see how it will play out. The gang accepted an offer from the Komun'go to become one large syndicate, with the Komun'go, the First Nations, and the Dogmen. These three have consolidated their power, their contacts, and their nuyen to aggressively take over the market.

In this alliance, the First Nations are the street-level assets. They're the dealers and the local distributors for the Komun'go drugs and tech. They're also in position to start Blood-of-the-Buffalo's dream push across the NAN, bringing the First Nations into sprawls in every Native American Nation.

- This has brought them into conflict with the Koshari, who are primarily in the PCC but have hopes of expanding into other NAN territories. The web of alliances is tangled, here. The First Nations have cut deals with the Ancients and consider them allies—as do the Komun'go. The Ancients' Southwest chapters—and, notably, the LA chapter—are allied with the Koshari. The Koshari are firmly against First Nations intruding into their PCC territory, even while they are attempting to expand into Salish-Sidhe Council lands. Both groups are flush with tempo profits. The Komun'go are

**Riser's Ratings: The First Nations**

**Territory:** Seattle, making inroads on Western NAN territories

**Colors/Symbol:** Blue

**Resources:** (Firepower) 4; (Magic) 3; (Personnel) 2

**Numbers:** 2,000

**Threat Rating:** 3

**Professionalism:** 3

**Training:** 4

pushing the First Nation to keep up the expansion, but everyone can see that if it comes to a fight, it'll be First Nation blood that gets spilled.

- Mika

- Denver looks like it'll be the first main battle, then. The Koshari and First Nation just made the news in a bloody fight there that left fifteen dead.

- Frosty

- Mika, I recently heard a rumor that the conflicts between the Koshari and the First Nations/Dogmen might be ramping up; supposedly, they're getting some better weapons and gear lately. Have you heard anything?

- Lyran

- I have. But what I heard is that a few "shipments" of some milspec equipment got lost—or redirected—in the PCC, the old Ute territory. Supposedly, it was being funneled through the Anasazi... but how it got into the hands of the Koshari and First Nations, I don't know. A couple of the rebel groups in the Ute are sporting some fine new arms, though.

- Mika

**RESOURCES AND PROFITS**

The First Nation is a gang that relies heavily on their strength at arms and their large membership. They've actively pursued having members gain military training via the standing militaries of various NAN nations. Those members, in turn, run "training camps" for the city slickers, teaching them modern urban warfare, urban survival techniques, and a variety of specialized fighting techniques, like the Sioux Wildcat martial art.

First Nation members have benefited from the profits of tempo, and their alliance with the Komun'go, who have organizing connections. Consequently, more and more First Nation members are sporting secondhand cyberware and even bioware. The armor, guns, and tech the gangers have now are also significantly improved. The Komun'go is quite serious about spreading their Korean-Native American syndicate across the West, and they're arming their foot soldiers appropriately.

## THIRD TIER: LIFE AT THE BOTTOM

At the bottom of the pile of gangs are the petty crooks, the gang-bangers, the thrill gangs, the pimps, the themed gangs, and the flat-out psychos. These are small gangs, generally limited to one neighborhood, block, or even housing development within a sprawl. When the media laments gang violence, these are often the culprits—or at least, the ones getting arrested. They are almost all territory-based, with the exception of a few small-time go-gangs. They have little internal organization. Instead, they often resemble wolf packs in the wild, with the members following the strongest until another (stronger) member rises to challenge the leader. Infighting is only one problem these gangs face. They're more frequently targeted by the police, since they are smaller, weaker, and easier to find, and their capture and conviction bumps up the public's perception that the police are controlling street crime. The larger gangs who want to take over their territory target them. The big syndicates use them and then casually toss them aside when their usefulness is over. They don't have any organization within the large prison systems and little to no standardized recruiting. These gangs rarely last more than a few years before being destroyed or absorbed by a larger gang. Those that *do* last tend to do so because of exceptional circumstances.

At this level, the gangsters are almost all street-level. They might sport some secondhand (stolen) firearms or maybe have some secondhand cyberware. Magic is limited, except in the wizgangs. They survive on street-level crime: dealing drugs or BTLs, robberies, carjacking, and casual protection rackets. Most of their profits go right up the noses or into the veins of their leadership (long-term, strategic investment of funds is *not* their forte). "Random violence" characterizes their level of planning and sophistication.

- Riser, man, your prejudice is coming through loud and clear.
- 2XL
- Sorry. These pissants are the reason that the big gangs get busted on so often. Do the Cutters or the Ancients go around shooting up school buses or doing drive-by shootings at the schoolyard? No. Do they gang-rape idiots walking through their territory? Hell, no; the Ancients have a policy that if any of their members does that shit, their captain cuts off their balls, literally. Do they mug old ladies for their cheap commlink and shoes? No. But that's the type of crime that the cops and the news media pin on the gangsters. A lot of the big gangs would just as soon wipe out these little wannabes altogether. The big gangs have even been known to work *with* the cops when these little shits get out of hand, shutting them down. They screw up profits for everyone.
- Riser

Unfortunately for us all, these third-tier gangs make up the bulk of gangsters in most of the large sprawls. Avoid them, work with them, or do the world a favor and donate some lead to their brains. Your choice.

## MATRIX GANGS

**Electric Knights** is a Matrix thrill gang, who enjoys spending their time and energy trashing corporate nodes, tying data bombs onto public access nodes, and other annoying (but occasionally deadly) pranks. They made headlines when they crashed Gridlink in Seattle. They seem to prefer the Seattle grid the most, although their graffiti has shown up in a variety of other places, like Denver and Phoenix.

- Annoying little bastards, mostly corp kids who spend daddy's nuyen on tech too good for them. However, their general anti-corp attitude means they're great contacts for getting the latest software cracked, as well as patches and the like. Plus, if you need a corporate node softened up with a mass-attack, these kids can do the job. Sometimes they even do it just for shits and giggles.
- Slamm-O!

**Bakuto no Bakuta** is a rigger/Matrix gang based out of Neo-Tokyo. They deal primarily in AR, although their members have been known to dabble in the VR gaming venues. They are huge on AR graffiti—which the locals appear to appreciate, since they do a bang-up job of it—and hacking into drones, vehicles, or other mechanical devices. They're the people to see if you have buggy software in your bike or speed-machine. They also have some cutting-edge tacsofts, which they use in their racing pursuits. They're supposedly free of Yak connections, making them a valuable contact for runners in Neo-Tokyo who've stepped on Yak toes.

- These kids go crazy over new toys. They seem to get prototypes for goodies I wouldn't expect with a gang this size. Corporate patron, perhaps?
- Rigger X

**Reality Hackers** is an unusual hacker gang based out of Puyallup. They specialize in infiltrations, getting in and out of facilities that are wirelessly secured, offline, or otherwise inaccessible to the Matrix. The gang numbers around 30 people, all hackers and all able to handle themselves in a fight. Considered good contacts in the Seattle runner scene, they've been known to help a team out in a pinch... for proper payment, of course.

- They have a great initiation ritual that involves hacking while fighting. Dirty tricks, like hacking your opponent's cyberware or smart gun, or blitzing him with sensory overfeed, are expected. They like to go up against a few of the booster gangs in Seattle, but occasionally they'll hit a go-gang and screw with their bikes or tacsoft networks. They don't go for the kill; apparently disabling your opponent is considered sufficient.
- Kat o' Nine Tales
- The other gangs would get pissed and take revenge, but they've learned that Reality Hackers have a way of making you miserable if you retaliate. Custom viruses, locking people out of their own cybereyes, flagging files in Lone Star's database, you name it. So, the other gangs grit their teeth and let it go.
- Riser



## GO-GANGS

**Iron Crosses** is a virulently racist go-gang based out of LA and the PCC. They claim parts of San Bernardino as their territory, plus the highways that stretch out into the Mojave and up into the mountains. They like to go about in groups of ten to fifteen bikers, on heavy hogs and armed with heavy pistols, chains, knives, and the occasional Molotov cocktail. They particularly hate metahumans, but, to be equal-opportunity hatemongers, they're known for attacking non-Anglos and women, as well. The gang itself is rumored to be between 100 and 200 members strong, but that might be a conservative number.

- These guys are apparently at war with every other gang they come across. There are rumors they're tied into some of the more rabid Humanis chapters, but that's probably to be expected. Supposedly, they have a gang hideout up in the mountains outside LA. If so, they keep it hidden pretty well. I'm pretty sure the Ancients would like to use these guys to paint the asphalt red, and if they knew where the headquarters was, it'd be up in flames.
- Lyran

**The Lynch Mob** is a go-gang that runs the I-5 freeway in Tir Tairngire. It's primarily a human gang, with a few orks thrown in. They burn up the road from just south of Portland to Albany, plus they claim a few other roads for their own, like 99E. They're well known for their silver and black bike leathers, along with the mirrored visors of the armored helmets they wear. These guys have been around for years, and they are mostly left alone by the Peace Force now. They've benefited from the opening borders of the Tir, and they dabble in smuggling... along with their old standbys of robbery, carjacking, and drug dealing. There aren't a lot of humans and orks in the Tir, but the gang is very appealing to those that are there; they even hold racing competitions on some of the back roads.

- Last count, the Lynch Mob took two races, the Ancients three, the Whirlwinds one, and in a surprise showing, the Caps took home two. These races are worth the pain of traveling into elf-land to watch.
- 2XL

**The Spikes** are a troll-only biker gang. (Yeah, that's a scary thought, isn't it?) Racist, particularly towards elves, the gang has a serious vendetta going against the Ancients. Their old leader, Lord Torgo, is serving five to ten at a Lone Star detention facility. Someone pulled some strings somewhere, 'cause the ganger got put in isolation, and the Spikes found themselves minus a leader. A faction within the gang, tired of the "let's just kill elves and not make any nuyen" philosophy of Lord Torgo, staged a coup. Now, a troll named Flip runs the gang. With just over fifty members, these guys run protection rackets, dabble in a bit of drug dealing (especially for orks and trolls), and hire themselves out as the occasional muscle. Word on the streets is that Flip is looking to expand the Spikes's business opportunities, and he's courting a few bigger criminal organizations.

## WIZZER GANGS

The **Thunder Boys** are a Sioux-based shamanic wizzer/go-gang. They make their cred by escorting smugglers, transporting drugs, and talislegging. Because of their firepower—and I mean fire literally—the other thirty plus go-gangs in the Sioux leave them the hell alone. Led by a shaman they call RoadRunner, the gang prefers to spend its time racing their bikes, terrifying long-haul truckers, and performing insane bike tricks. The gang also has several technical adepts in their ranks. They're particularly fond of a unique sport they call "counting coup." Many of the Sioux go-gangs compete at this, generally by tagging passenger cars or truckers in a (usually) non-lethal manner: tagging with their hand, sinking a knife in, hitting it with a paintball fired from a modified AK97, or taking a piece of the vehicle. The Thunder Boys like to take it a step further, using magic or their adept abilities to mark a vehicle.

- If you're a Native American or a grease-head, these guys make great contacts. They can get you through most of Sioux without any hassles. If you can ride a bike or just talk shop, look them up. Word is they've run into a technomancer or two, were impressed with what they could do to a bike, and are considering opening their ranks to "technologically awakened" members.

• Lyran

• Well, frag, as if they weren't scary enough!

• Mika

**Le Cirque du Sorciere** is a Paris-based wizzer gang made up entirely of adepts. These guys make the news with their freakish displays of acrobatics (and idiocy). When they're not showing off to the tourists, they're mugging the tourists, selling (or consuming) a variety of Awakened drugs, bashing in people's heads for nuyen, and beating up other gangs. They're not the sanest of gangs, but since they consider it a matter of pride to fight with their fists and blades, they're not shooting up entire shopping centers, either. They're a regular feature at the underground gladiatorial arenas in the old quarter cellars.

- You need an in on the underground crime scene, these guys can help. If they're not high-as-kites on some combat drug, that is. They have contacts throughout the city in the vice dens and are occasionally even hired to protect certain important people sampling the dark pleasures of the city.

• Fianchetto

**The Merlyns** are one of the longest-lasting wizzer gangs out there. Normally, the ego-driven wizzer gangs implode after a few months. These guys, however, have been a fixture of the Seattle scene for going on a quarter of a century. The entire gang isn't Awakened, but a core group of ten or twelve members, out of the fifty or so gangers, are. The gang has very close ties to the Finnegan family, to the point that the lead ganger, Saturn, is also an advisor to Rowena O'Malley. Although the gang is basically a subsidiary





INCOMING FEED.....

of the Mafia, they retain enough independence to do their “own thing.” With Rowena’s backing, and their heavy mojo, it’s not like any of the rest of the Mafia is going to be bossing them around, is it? The core group of Magicians is named after planets, while the second-tier members get the names of constellations, and the peripheral members are stuck with the names of comets, asteroids, and distant stars.

- Their names change as they increase in power and importance. However, the names of the core group are always the same. Their war leader is always called Mars, for example, despite having multiple people in that position over the years. To the best of my knowledge, Saturn is the same person who established the gang back in 2050.
- Ethernaut
- Saturn has always supported Rowena, and rumors are the Merlyns had *something* to do with her finally becoming the Mafia commander of Seattle.
- Cosmo

### THEME GANGS (AND OTHER PSYCHOS)

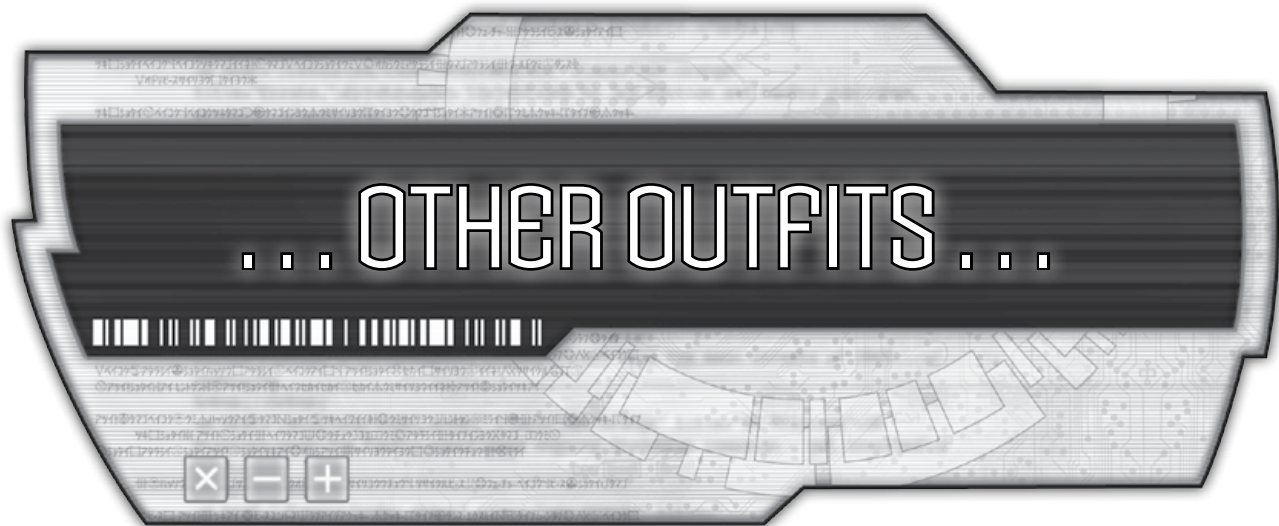
The **Halloweeners** are perhaps the poster-children for the psychotic theme gangs that plague the sprawls. A long-term staple of Seattle, this gang has managed to survive despite their disorganization, frequent leadership changes, chaotic violence, and their own peculiar brand of insanity. Most recently, they were almost wiped out by the Ancients, and only a handful of

members survived. Over 2070, they’ve managed to regrow their gang, largely made up of those who have some grudge against the Ancients or elves in general, and they are once again becoming a threat. They’re based in downtown Seattle, mostly on the docks, which has caused them some trouble as the security in the area has tightened up with the wireless Matrix. They mostly make their money with petty larceny, armed robberies, and the occasional raid on a warehouse or shipping dock. The rest of the time, they’re busy with vandalism, getting high, and the occasional murder-spree. These guys are all bat-shit crazy—and yes, that is a technical term—and I’d suggest avoiding them at all costs.

The **Steppin Wulfs** are a booster gang based in LA, made up of men (and the occasional woman) who have rebuilt themselves with experimental cybernetics. Whether the extensive cyberware has caused them to lose their minds or they were crazy to begin with, is one of those chicken-or-egg questions. Seymore the Invincible, a supposed genius cyber-mod doc who considers the gang his own personal guinea pigs, leads them. The gang does some minor robbery for funds and has some supposed ties to Tamanous, but otherwise, they generally occupy themselves with testing out their ‘warez by causing (and finishing) fights. If they can’t find a good target on their rampages, they’re likely to turn on each other.

- Rumors are the gang gets some funding from a few corps, who pay Seymore to “field test” experimental cyberware suites.
- Butch





*Butch's 'link buzzed and a pop-up showed that somebody was at the back door—the delivery door. She activated the camera and saw two trolls wearing Spikes leathers.*

*"What?" she snapped.*

*"We gotta delivery. Fresh goods," came the response along with a toothy leer at the camera.*

*Butch buzzed them in and headed back to the receiving room. When she passed through the plastic curtains, she saw the two gangers and two black 200-liter plastic drums brightly labeled as cooking oil.*

*"What the hell are those?" Butch asked, pointing at the drums.*

*"Last time you told us we needed to be sterile. We grabbed 'em from backa McHugh's. Figgered it was cleaner than garbage bags," the lead troll retorted with a smirk.*

*"Sanitary ain't sterile. Let's see the goods."*

*The troll popped the lid on one of the drums and the sour smell of rot immediately flooded the room.*

*Butch groaned and both trolls covered their noses.*

*"How long have those things been dead and in there?" she asked through clenched teeth.*

*"Just since this morning," said the ganger from behind his hand.*

*"It hit forty today. If those were in the sun, they're practically cooked." Butch edged closer and peeked into the drum. The ends of a few bones jutted out of the reddish-brown, bubbling ooze. "Fuck! That ain't a body, that's soup. What'd you do to it?"*

*"The boss gotta deal on some ex-ex," the troll said, managing to look embarrassed while still covering his nose with his hand.*

*"Cover that back up before you stink up the whole block." The two gangers fumbled the lid back on in a hurry, both anxious to do anything they could to subdue the stench.*

*"If you're using explosive rounds," Butch continued, "I can't salvage organs—I'm not a miracle worker. If you cook the body afterwards, the bio and cyber aren't going to survive either." As she said it, she grabbed a jar and tossed it to the gangers.*

*"Put some on your lip. It's eucalyptus. You'll still stink, but you won't smell this shit."*

*The gangers each smeared a glob on their lip and let out a sigh of relief.*

*"Thanks," was the relieved response.*

*"Look, I can't use these, but I'm guessing you still need to make them disappear."*

*Both of the trolls nodded.*

*"Gimme 20¥ and I'll vanish them and the drums."*

*The gangers looked at each other, the back one pulled out his commlink and with an annoyed expression, sent the money.*

*"Next time, gentlemen, try to keep the kills clean and the bodies cold," said Butch with a nod as she waved the two trolls back out the door. They nodded sheepishly and headed out.*

*"Fucking amateurs, rancid ain't cooked," she muttered as the door closed. With a smile, she triggered a call to schedule a Ghoul Liberation Front pick-up.*

## INTRODUCTION

Posted By: Slamm-0!

A jack-of-all-trades is a master of none. It's as true with crime as it is in medicine. A general practitioner won't perform open-heart surgery. A gang banger won't be able to get you a selection of Ming Dynasty porcelain or make the "accident" look just like a heart attack. When you need special treatment you see a specialist. This section of the file should help you determine which specialist you need and where to find them.

In nature and in business, specializing is vital. Organisms and corporations live or die based on their ability to find a niche that no one else occupies. In the underworld, the syndicates fill the role of the big fish. Specialist organizations generally cannot compete with the syndicates in terms of manpower or resources. Instead, their success depends upon their ability to utilize an uncommon skill set.

Sometimes their skills are ones that most people find distasteful, such as organleggers or assassins. Other times their skills are highly specialized, such as art thieves or computer criminals. Still others, such as smugglers and pirates, thrive because they work in environments for which the urban syndicates are poorly suited, these include smugglers and pirates. In all of these cases, there's a niche that large syndicates are poorly suited to exploit. Nature abhors a vacuum, and every criminal is always looking for the big scam. In the cases of specialist syndicates, those two factors combine to create a number of underworld niche markets.

Of course, not every specialist needs to be an independent. Sometimes a specialist organization is a part of an established syndicate (e.g., the Black Chrysanthemum Triad are dedicated Organleggers). Other times, a specialist works under contract with one or more big syndicates (e.g., the Nightingale Syndicate will happily work for the highest bidder).

If your contacts with one or more of the larger syndicates have failed you, then it's time to turn to these organizations. Alternatively, if you want the job done with full confidence of the professionalism involved, look for one of these groups. Sure, the Triads do some smuggling and organlegging, but they might not be smuggling the weapon or have the organ with the appropriate markers when you need it. Yes, the Yakuza often have access to pirated software, but they might not have something that was just liberated from a military research lab. You can unquestionably find a Mafioso willing to "rub somebody out," but the body might resurface at a terribly inconvenient time. These organizations are groups that are specifically dedicated to doing one thing and doing that one thing very well.

Finding these groups isn't always easy. We all know that criminals do their best work in the shadows. Specialist organizations, however, need to work in the shadows of the larger syndicates as well. That means that not every fixer will have the connections you need. That also means that you can easily draw attention from the wrong people when you try to get in touch with one of these organizations. The syndicates don't like competition, and, as their competitors, specialists go out of their way to keep their activities quiet.

Keep your ears to the ground and protect your sources. Specialists will do the job better and usually give you better value for their performance when you find them. But if they think you've sold them out, they'll make certain to take you down with them.

## ORGANLEGGERS

Posted by: Butch

Back in the early '60s, organlegging was bigger business than it is today. Type O organs weren't as readily available as they are today, so anyone who needed a transplant was either looking at popping immunosuppressants or waiting for someone to grow up a cloned organ. Even today, immunosuppressant treatment is dangerous. It sets you up for other infections, can jumpstart cancer, and even with it, a poorly matched organ can still be rejected by the body. Most patients and their physicians wouldn't consider that an acceptable risk if any other solution were available.

So, if a patient needed a part in a hurry, that meant they'd need to either accept the risks that went with an imperfect implant or they'd need to obtain a better match. If they happened to have a willing relative with a close match on a redundant part, then things could be worked out. If they didn't, that's where the organleggers came into play.

Back then, a well matched organ could easily draw 20,000 nuyen. With that kind of a mark-up, a body in decent shape could be sold to organleggers for at least 10,000 nuyen and could be parted out upwards of 50,000 nuyen in most cases. That kind of money led to an awful lot of interested parties. A mix of market conditions, secrecy, and unbridled brutality led to Tamanous's success in North America, Africa, and the Pacific Rim, the Body Bank in Europe, and the success of the Mansur brothers in central Asia. All three of these organizations raked in massive profits and expanded very rapidly—especially for organizations that were operating in the shadows of other syndicates.

- Desperate people make for incredibly high profit margins. It's amazing how generous somebody will get, and how quickly they'll compromise their morals, when their life, or a loved one's, is on the line. Some of the organleggers made just as much money out of loan sharking as they did off of moving parts. They'd have one guy go in with the price, and when the patient said he didn't have the money, he'd call up a friend to "loan" it to him.
- Nephrine

Type O organs along with gene therapy and nanite treatments have depleted that market. An above-board sale of a Type O organ only draws around 4,000 nuyen. It's a given that not everyone can get solid medical care and that not everybody can use Type O. However, even with commonplace heart and liver replacement, not everyone needs a transplant. Gene therapy and nanite treatments can correct many issues that previously required transplants. Which means that transplant candidates are largely limited to trauma victims and people who weren't getting regular treatment because they couldn't afford it. Trauma victims who have medical contracts almost always get Type O. Those who need to rely on alternative medical providers are the bread and butter of the modern organlegger.

Of course, that's not to say that the market is dead, it's just a bit depressed. Type O isn't always available—the corps probably under produce to keep prices from plummeting and it's not biologically or economically wise to keep a large stock on hand. Those who have quality medical care aren't hesitant to live a lifestyle that can destroy their organs—after all, they expect to







INCOMING FEED.....

get something back for their health care costs. Not everyone has good health care, and some of the people who have it don't want it known that they've had to replace an organ.

## HISTORY

Investigating any of the three big organlegging groups is dangerous. All are more than capable of making a body disappear and more than happy to find a good use for one. So, I've asked around, but I haven't pushed my luck too far. I've worked with **Tamanous** before—when you're trying to save a life, you do what you've got to. The folks I knew weren't anxious to talk about it, but they told me a few things and I've put some pieces together.

Back in the early '50s, there were quite a few organizations that dabbled in organlegging. In some places, gangers were storing bodies in meat lockers. There wasn't a whole lot of expertise, but there was a whole lot of enthusiasm. In the latter part of the decade, those groups started disappearing. Most people figured that Lone Star was had succeeded in putting the shops out of business or that Doc Wagon had just managed to up production enough that the organs that were needed were available.

It seems the truth of the matter is, as usual, a little more sinister. In North America, Tamanous took the initiative to buy out a lot of the smaller organizations. They did it quietly and as part of a large concerted effort. I haven't been able to follow the money trail all the way back, though my best guess points in the general direction of Asamando. I'm not saying Tamanous is a government project, but the syndicate does fulfill a need for the ghoulish nation, and the money has to come from somewhere.

- Tamanous is almost a public service in Lagos. They ship parts into Asamando, and they're the surest way to keep from having a shedim take over a dead relative. Their "farms" also infuse money into the semblance of an economy. I doubt they're directly subsidized by Asamando, but the money connection makes sense.

- Ma'fan

- This happens nearly everywhere. A squatter can get by for months on the money that comes from donating or growing a kidney.

- Sunshine

The **Body Bank** out of Geneva became the NEEC's premiere organlegger organization. They definitely have established a working relationship with Tamanous—I suspect there's a shared database of available and accessible pre-screened organs. They're the primary provider of tissues and organs to most of Europe's black clinics. However, the money trail here is even harder to track. While Tamanous bought up most of the independents, the Body Bank still contracts out to a lot of their acquisitions work. That means fewer big transactions and a bit more mystery.

- Rumors have been saying for ten plus years that the Body Bank is run by vampires. I haven't seen hard evidence in favor of it, but the rumors haven't gone away either.

- Aufheben

In Central Asia, the **Mansurs** aren't nearly as specialized as either of the other groups. However, they're every bit as brutal, and remain a powerful enough force in this market that they bear comment. Jamil and Ripoche Mansur got their start in Afghanistan as arms dealers but spread out their empire into any area that could yield a profit through bloodshed and violence. Their criminal empire is focused in Pakistan and the Indian Union, though they have connections throughout the Pacific Rim. While organlegging is just one of their markets, it's the one that has spread the furthest. Based on shipping manifests I've seen, they're also connected in with Tamalous and probably the Body Bank.

The Mansurs buy or take organs from desperate, dying, or recently diseased people all over central Asia. These are then packaged up and sold in bulk lots to redistributors globally. They don't bother checking all of the protein markers—that's what the redistributors are for.

## OPERATIONS

It's a poorly kept secret that the big boys don't produce enough type O organs to provide all the transplants that the world's hospitals need—especially the clinics that are off the books. Type O drove the price down, but cloning a body still takes expertise, expensive equipment, and resources. So, for a small clinic, especially an unlicensed one, it can be tough to get exactly what your patients need in the timeframe that they need it.

In the past couple of years, the **Casket Courier** VPN appeared. I don't know who runs it, but I suspect it's one or more of the established organlegging syndicates. The VPN has become a poorly kept secret among my colleagues. It works pretty easily. When you need a part, you upload your patient's markers and your required time frame. It quickly responds with organs that match up and their availability and pricing. When you find yourself with "extra" organs, you can upload their markers and your storage conditions. They'll contact you if they have a need for something that you have in storage. Either way, any time an organ is sold, the network providers get a cut of the sale.

The VPN works well, though they obviously contract out their deliveries. I've seen trucks and employees from major courier services, I've seen 'runners, and I've seen military choppers make and receive deliveries that were connected with Casket Courier. The packaging wasn't uniform and payment was never made in person. However, cred showed up in my account when they made a pickup and it was cleanly deducted when I placed an order. I've had no problems in dealing with them.

- I've hit Casket Courier before, and I'm not sure who's behind it. I poked around bouncing off of a node where I had some cameras watching, and left an obvious trail after liberating a few thousand nuyen and leaving a bit of a mess behind me. Less than an hour later, the building that housed the node was hit by a "weapons malfunction" off of an attack chopper. Whoever they are, they've got good connections.
- The Smiling Bandit

It's clear to me, that some of their organs come from this peer-to-peer street doc sharing system. However, I know that I take in more organs than I send out. That's why I can't afford to pay much for a body—I don't know if I'll be able to sell it profitably. So, I'm guessing that they grow a fair number of their own.

There are two ways to grow an organ—in a tube or in a body. In a tube's great science, but a clone is expensive. Between the chemical reagents involved and the constant monitoring, the costs add up fast. In a body's a whole lot cheaper, but you don't always know what you're getting. So, there are three work-arounds.

The first solution is to engineer a clone—usually a type O, in this case—and use a woman to grow it through gestation, then accelerate things from there. That saves thousands of nuyen, but the women aren't always thrilled about it. Some of the organlegging operations use women in fetus farming operations to take care of this. The women are kept imprisoned and fed whatever's cheap but will keep the clone healthy. Ork women are preferred for the larger litters and shorter gestations. In the "nicer" farms, the women are kept in VR for the entire pregnancy. It's better to not touch on what happens in the others. After birth, individual organs can be removed and growth can be accelerated to the size that's needed.

- I interviewed a woman who'd spent some time in one of the farms. The story was horrifying and I had a hard time just finding a place that was willing to distribute it. If you find one, do us all a favor, and burn it to the ground.
- Sunshine

The next solution is to keep tabs on people who might have a matching organ. This usually involves a data steal from a charity that tracks willing donors, a hospital, or the SIN registry. Those get increasingly difficult, but I've seen evidence that some of the organlegging groups have hit even the last one. Once they've got the data on their target, they can go and collect the organs when they're needed. The donors aren't generally willing.

Finally, sometimes, once you've got an organ started, you can implant it into a person, and let them finish growing it up. This means you need a healthy metahuman body and a cocktail of drugs to encourage the proper growth patterns. Generally these people are going to end up an organ short out of the deal, but if they're desperate enough—or comatose—it can be a viable option.

In any of these cases, leftovers can go right to the ghouls. Sure, there are rumors that ghouls are heavily involved in any organlegging operation, and they often are. However, their biggest roles seem to be on the disposal side of things. There is no central ghoul hierarchy, they're just a convenient extra tool.

- That's not the way I've seen it.
- Black Mamba

## CRACKERZ

Posted by: Hannibelle

As the centennial of cybercrime approaches, I believe now is the perfect opportunity to mention the two largest Matrix syndicates online.

### DEAD DECKERS SOCIETY

The Dead Deckers Society (named for the old-tech version of hackers) has a long and storied history of incredible hacks and outlandish pranks. Its legendary penchant for tomfoolery is matched only by its reputation for its highly professional interactions with those doing business with its members. Its influence is broad and deep across the Matrix, and its interests can be found in almost any aspect of unwired life in the modern world. It is as powerful in the Matrix as any other syndicate in the meat world can be.

- Wait, what? No! The DDS is a community of independent thinkers. They reach across borders with the goal of a world hacker community with free access and free information. What the heck is this noise?
- /dev/grrl
- Thanks for showing your naivety. The DDS did what any sane organization with that kind of resources would do: they grew up, and some posting here might follow that example. They diversified, and now they're very well-off. You go ahead and jump up and down yelling, "hack the planet," and the grown-ups will be playing over here.
- Clockwork

#### Dead Deckers' Inception

The group's origins can be found with a prominent Matrix runner known as the Dentist. He was a hacker in the old-school sense of the word, promoting the values of openness and free access to computing resources. Shortly thereafter, the Dentist was brainfried in a run against strong IC. The organization he left behind dedicated themselves to his ideal, and they named themselves the Dead Deckers Society in honor of the Dentist and all deckers that had died in the service of the ideal.

#### Life after the Dentist

The DDS adheres to the Dentist's philosophy of old-school hacking, that information should be free and the Matrix belongs to those with the most skills. They started to take contracts from outside entities, and its members challenged one another to more difficult and daring hacks. They added to their membership those who had proven themselves in the Matrix and had the ambition to push themselves further.

The Crash 2.0 barely slowed the Society's progress, although whether this was due to foreknowledge or deft handling of each catastrophe is a matter of conjecture. They were ready for the Wireless Matrix Initiative and were hacking it almost before it had been implemented. The DDS was the first organization to officially recognize and accept both technomancers and AIs as full members of society.

#### The New Hacker Syndicate

The Dead Deckers Society is now a powerful syndicate in the Matrix. It is run by consensus, a feat only possible through advanced communication tools created by the Society itself, with

### MATRIX OUTFITS

The meat world has its gangs, and so does the digital. These Matrix mobs occupy a similar niche as their physical counterparts: they gather socially, claim and defend territory, and run petty criminal operations. These are some of the services a Matrix gang could offer.

#### ID Forgery

Some gangs specialize in the cloning, theft, or outright forgery of identification information and licensing. Examples include the Slacker Hackers of Queens and the Hakkereita.

#### Erasers

Matrix gangs like the Tin Can Eko and, of course, the Eraser Heads specialize in removing digital traces and eliminating a client's data shadow.

#### Warez Pirates

If you need cracked software, gangs like the Midwest Pirates' Guild and the Matris Korsanilar will get you the goods.

#### Phishers

The Demaneurs specialize in digging up information about any topic, anywhere in the Matrix. The Cod Phishers offer similar services but specialize in the Eastern Seaboard of the UCAS.

different "taskforces" taking responsibility for various projects within the organization. Its core membership still engages in the most challenging activities, but there are a number of lower-tier taskforces that handle various forms of Matrix fraud, SIN and credit forgery, and other less demanding activities from which the DDS derives a revenue stream.

The members of the group are strictly businesslike with outsiders. They are formal and professional, whether negotiating the terms of a contract or turning your neurons into paste. The tone within the group, however, is informal and even familial. Even with business, the Dead Deckers Society still honors the Dentist's legacy.

- And they still know how to party.
- Netcat

### SCHATTENGESELLSCHAFT

There are a number of small-to-medium-sized criminal operations in the Matrix. Asgard, Hacker House, Necronomicorp, the Cracker Underground, Neo-Neo-Tokyo, and a thousand others are all independent undertakings, at least on the surface. In reality, many are part of a larger network called the Schattengesellschaft.

- Asgard is not part of Schattengesellschaft; that is an unfounded rumor apparently started by the competition. The Cracker Underground is only loosely affiliated, at least as of now.
- Snopes

Urgent Message...

OTHER OUTFITS



## The Birth of a Shadow

Schattengesellschaft is a syndicate in every sense of the word. It is part professional organization, part secret society, and part digital mafia. Its leadership is unknown, although it is rumored to be any of some three hundred well-known and less well-known individuals around the world, with the list including hackers, technomancers, shadowrunners, celebrities, politicians, and even AIs.

Schattengesellschaft came into existence sometime in the mid-'60s. The Wireless Matrix Initiative was rolling out, and smaller criminal Matrix outfits were being caught and shut down by NeoNET's Clean Matrix Program. A couple dozen organizations got together in a Berlin node and signed what is known as the Digitalvertrag, pooling their resources to survive against the corporate hit squads. What name the resulting alliance gave itself is not known for certain, but the popular name that surfaced on Matrix forums was Schattengesellschaft.

Now approaching a decade old, Schattengesellschaft has risen in power in the Matrix. It has exercised its influence over almost every business in cyberspace, legitimate and, more often, illegitimate. Even so, reliable information about how far the organization's reach extends, its operations, resources, and even how many member organizations it has is hard to come by. It is known that the higher one rises in Schattengesellschaft, the more one knows about its overall structure.

- That seems unlikely, given the Peter Principle. Incidentally, I thought information was supposed to want to be free. How can such a sprawling organization keep so many secrets?
- Winterhawk
- Rather than trying to hide their operations, Schattengesellschaft uses a "hiding a tree in a forest" approach, anonymously releasing hundreds, if not thousands, of pages of false information every month from various sources claiming various levels of authority on the topic. By the time anyone can sift through that much data to get something useful, the information is far out of date.
- Snopes

## SCHATTENGESELLSCHAFT OPS

Schattengesellschaft takes the role of a parent company to its constituent organizations. It is more of a network than an actual entity, with messages, money, and material (including bleeding-edge software) being passed between the network as a whole and its member outfits. Associated groups report to the network regularly and may also send requests to Schattengesellschaft. They receive support from the network, sometimes before they are even aware of their need. This support can come in the form of money, software, material goods, legal aid, personnel, information, and sometimes even shadowrunners.

In return, member organizations have some expectations. The network makes requests of its members about every month. It rarely asks more than a given organization can offer, but it expects the request to be fulfilled promptly and with no questions asked. There is little information about what happens to a member outfit that refuses to cooperate with the syndicate, although there are rumors the raid on the SprawlJack Geeks by the CAS government was instigated by Schattengesellschaft.

- Snopes? This file has been here for a while, and you haven't posted. I was hoping you had something on the SJG raid.
- Hannibelle
- I've got nothing. More accurately, I've got an enormous amount of conflicting information from variously reliable sources. I gave up on this one after about a hundred hours of work and another 500+ agent-hours. Your guess is about as good as mine.
- Snopes

Members of organizations belonging to Schattengesellschaft are as varied as one would expect. As far as is known, there is no code of conduct or expectations of individuals. This even applies to secrecy, as members of these sub-syndicates are apparently free to talk about Schattengesellschaft and its operations in relation to their groups. Although, given the state of information about the syndicate, the confirmation or denial of a group's participation in the Digitalvertrag by its members is nearly worthless data. From the outside, it appears that Schattengesellschaft takes no notice of the inner workings of each member group, but rather each group's capabilities and needs.

The method by which an organization joins Schattengesellschaft is a matter of conjecture. Some say the syndicate chooses its own membership. Some say an outfit must be invited by another, although if that were the case, Schattengesellschaft would be growing exponentially, which does not seem to be happening. Rumor has it that a group simply has to claim to be a member, and it will start receiving aid and instructions. One conjecture, based on observation rather than investigation, suggests that there is either a single entity or small group of entities that handles recruiting. In any case, all member organizations are signatories to the Digitalvertrag.

- That's weird. Most of the Matrix is put together using an object-oriented approach, and it's how I put together my own forms in my head. The way Schattengesellschaft treats its members, the way it communicates, and the single-entity recruiter conjecture sounds a lot like encapsulation, message passing, and abstract construction, which are all object-oriented features. Could it be that Schattengesellschaft is actually a program, or are the people in charge just that geeky?
- Netcat

Needless to say, Schattengesellschaft is Matrix Enemy Number One on a number of lists, most prominently the Corporate Court Matrix Authority's Grid Overwatch Division. For the most part, GOD is not interested in the small-time operators except as stepping stones to Schattengesellschaft proper. It has run a number of deep-cover and sting operations, although they have so far failed to block any but individuals and the smallest operations. In most cases, anyone who is actually given a fair trial usually escapes on some technicality. With such a decentralized structure, it is hard to imagine GOD getting anywhere with a direct approach; there are rumors that GOD is secretly sponsoring small criminal operations in the Matrix in hope of gaining membership in the syndicate, and more rumors that suggest it has succeeded.



INCOMING FEED.....

On the whole, Schattengesellschaft member outfits have good relations with other large syndicates. The Yakuza, in particular, are considered friendly, and many member groups are instructed to negotiate with oyabun rather than contest claims. Relations with the various Triads, on the other hand, are something of a mess. Schattengesellschaft members are rarely on good terms with any Triad but the Red Dragon, although relations seem to be improving with the Sapphire Crane Society, with whom the syndicate has recently ended a stalemate struggle over Los Angeles Matrix resources.

In any case, the presence of Schattengesellschaft is felt throughout the Matrix. A number of small Matrix operations owe their existence to it and thrive under its umbrella. Its requests take its members outside the network as often as they are kept within it, and it generates a fair amount of work for shadowrunners. Its accomplishments are many, even if you assume that only half the reports are true, and it is a force to be reckoned within the modern Matrix.

## FENCES

Posted By: Am-mut

I used to go to pawn shops when I was a kid. I had a straight job back then. Not a beggar running the streets of Cairo, but a *duka* with a fruit stand. This isn't to say I was an honest sort. The fruit I sold came from Bedouin boys who traded such things for kisses. Every Sunday I'd pull together a week's earnings and head for a pawnshop in search of jewels left behind by a down-on-her-

luck widow or thieves from Ein Shams. I thought I understood fencing back then. You bring a product to a fence, they pay you, and then sell your product to someone willing to pay more than what you sold it for. Immediately I knew what I wanted to do for a living. In no time at all I became a regular at the shops. I grew to know people. They in turn let me learn more about our biz. All the pawnshop owners know each other. I thought that strange at first, but as I came to know the biz I realized all fences operate as part of larger networks. Finding a buyer is only a part of the equation. Fences have to find a way to ship the product to that buyer without shaving too much off the profit margin. As I discovered, a fence is just the face for a deeper underworld support structure comprised of fences, syndicates, smugglers, bonded couriers, and even runners.

## THE SUPPORT STRUCTURE

When I think about the places I went to as a kid, I remember there weren't a lot of people who shopped there. I didn't understand how pawnbrokers could make money if most of the people walking into their shops were there to sell things. Economics 101: The price of any item is determined by supply and demand. Supply is how much of any given product there is. Demand is the amount of people who need it. You make money by selling where the demand is highest, but how does a fence isolated in her neighborhood make any money at all? You find another fence in another neighborhood with a buyer for what you are selling. It is in this fashion that fencer networks are formed.



- This principle applies to all black markets, though fencing is such a street level and middle-man racket that it is more important to stay a part of a network than it is with black marketeers. Moreover black marketeers usually deal in specialized goods while fences buy everything they can and then move it to someone better equipped to sell it.
- Mr. Bonds

What makes our job difficult is getting the product where the demand is without taking too much of a hit. I can unload a crate of Bolivian Colt M22A3s in Prague for 1,800¥ a unit, but the cost of smuggling them to Prague and then paying off all of the relevant parties reduces my net profit to 1680¥ or 70¥ apiece. That's no way to make money. So, what we do is use our network contacts to find out who is offering the most money for an item in a place where it costs the least to ship it. That shipping comes courtesy of a variety of network partners. Sometimes you'll find fences who use their own private riggers to move product, but usually the work is handled by individual contractors such as shawdownrunners, organized crime groups, off-the-books fed-ex outfits, even pirates move gear overseas for the right price. If the fence is the face then the smugglers make up the veins that move product throughout the world. A good fence will develop a working relationship with many of these smuggler types, so she has options when trying to get a package to where it needs to be.

### The Network Interface

Networks operate much like a stock exchange. When approached to by an item, fences link into the network and check its value. An algorithm attaches a value tag to any specific item based on factors such as how many queries have been made for the item over a predetermined length of time, local availability, and the risk involved in selling the product. If the risk factor is too high, like with a stolen Van Gogh or similarly unique or priceless object, the algorithm deems it unsellable and advises the fence to bump it up to a specialist broker such as a rare art dealer. The value tag sets local prices, but more importantly, it helps us avoid doing business that could bring the law down on us. In exchange we pay a small network membership fee each month.

- Sounds like a bit much for a back-alley pawn artist doesn't it?
- Snopes
- Street hustlers can't afford the buy-in to a network. These types operate independently, using personal contacts to move product, or running a cheap storefront. Sometimes you can get better prices from them, because bottom feeders are always looking to make a quick buck.
- 2XL
- Street hustlers aren't the only so-called independents. Many of the syndicate-owned fences either work alone, using their personal contacts to move product or they are part of syndicate-backed networks. Be wary of the syndicate networks. The only demand their prices are based on is the need fences have to report increasing monthly profits to their syndicate handlers.
- Mihoshi-Oni

Each market's data is stored on a localized hub, which downloads figures nightly to a centralized distribution server that determines product need and distribution across the globe. In the end a fencer gets regional and national pricing information, in the fashion that gamblers get the spread on a jai-alai game.

Private Message...

**TO:** Am-mut  
**FROM:** Hossenni  
**SUBJECT:** Your order

Good news, my friend! I have been doing some house cleaning and came by several Ruger pistols. Guns are not really my speed, so I was hoping you could take them off my hands. Fair market price, right? I'd prefer it if they ended up somewhere very far away. UCAS perhaps? If you can manage this small matter for me, I can arrange something more substantive for you to move.

- Hubs have as much IC around them as a real stock exchange. After all, you're dealing with clientele who chew IC for a living. Gods forbid someone with a hard-on for rare gems and a nova-hot deck should hack the system and decide to shift the pricing algorithm so the diamonds she wants are selling for loose change.
- /dev/grrl

### SELL HIGH, BUY LOW

If you're dealing with a fence you know, expect to get from 65 percent to 75 percent of street value for anything you're trying to liquidate. For new customers or those that have managed to wander onto the shit list, that percentage drops to 45 percent to 55 percent. Our primary job is to move products to black marketeers better equipped to sell them, or quickly sell them ourselves. We try to hold on to products for as little time as possible. It is dangerous to have stolen goods lying around. Furthermore, the money it costs to store the goods makes keeping them longer than necessary unprofitable. So, a fence will look to the easiest resale, be that selling to an out-of-area buyer or reselling an item to the person you originally stole from. Special considerations, such as ensuring your product is not sold to certain parties or is not returned to the original owner, costs an additional 5 percent to 10 percent.

### FINDING A FENCE

Not all fences own pawnshops. Not all pawnshops are fence fronts. Convention traps us into believing these stereotypes, but it doesn't serve any illegal industry to be that predictable. I happen to run a jewelry store. One of my close friends in the industry has a nail salon, but a majority of the fences we speak with don't have physical storefronts at all. Not much of what we move is off-the-shelf anyways. The legal, gray-market goods are sold openly either through a Matrix front, a store front, word of mouth, or brokered through the network. Specialized and illegal goods require more vetting of the person selling to us and especially of who we are selling to, because we need to be certain the sale isn't a set-up.

One convention that rings true is a pawnbroker's tendency to deal with fences at some point in time. When an Asad off the

Instant Message...

Saw your Ruger query. Any bodies on the guns? I have an organization in Vladivostok looking to outfit about dozen employees. Do you think you can complete my order? Hit me back. -Yankee

**User:** User015  
**Location:** Bahtim, Cairo  
**Item Search Return:** Thunderbolt, Ruger  
**Search Range:** Eastern Hemisphere  
**Search Limitations:** Top 10 UPO

### TOP 5 INTERNATIONAL FENCE MARKETS

1. Seattle, UCAS
2. Metropole, Amazonia
3. Addis Abbaba, Ethiopia
4. Vladivostok, Russia
5. Al Basrah (Bordertown DMZ), Iraq

Buyer	Requested	Your Lot Size	FMP	Unit Price Offered	Location
User017	0*	20	600¥	600¥	Sydney, Australia
User521	100	20	600¥	580¥	Champasak, Laos
User980	3	20	600¥	580¥	Canberra, Australia
<b>User063</b>	<b>79</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>600¥</b>	<b>575¥</b>	<b>Osaka, Japan</b>
User623	4	20	600¥	573¥	Kirdasa, Cairo
User147	13	20	600¥	571¥	Vladivostok, Russia
User092	1 (custom)	20	600¥	566¥	Tokyo, Japan
User111	6	20	600¥	560¥	Hong Kong, China
User489	22	20	600¥	550¥	Maadi, Cairo
User363	8	20	600¥	560¥	Yangon, Myanmar

Private Message...

**TO:** Hossenni  
**FROM:** Am-mut  
**SUBJECT:** Business

The market for that product isn't very strong right now, but for an old friend? I'm sure we can work something out. Come down to the store tomorrow evening after seven. Bring in the whole bushel and I'll get you 80¥ a head. Now what is this other business? You wouldn't be talking about those blueprints that went missing from Mitsuhama's lab last week would you?

### INFOBROKERS

On average, corporate sanctions for data trafficking are four times higher than if you were moving physical items. You can guess from those numbers what matters to corporations the most. Infobrokers play that dangerous game of finding data to be sold and giving it a new home. Their version of the fences' network is more of a closed loop, as they don't need middle men to move anything for them. Everything happens wirelessly on VPNs with broker, seller, and buyer only ever meeting in the virtual. In that sense, an infobroker is two parts fixer and one part fence. To be successful, you need to have an intellect evolved enough to filter out crapdata and to know who would most benefit from the genuine paydata. Along with that knowledge, Infobrokers need a well-populated rolodex. They generally take 20 percent off the top of whatever the data is worth as their brokerage fee. The number fluctuates based on the risk involved in making a sale.

street brings in goods that a straight store won't deal with they tend to bump the merchandise up to us—after taking a healthy finder's fee, of course. So, if you're new to town and looking for a fence, go see a pawn broker, or spend a few creds on the local gang. Street toughs tend to use us in order to move stolen wares out of the area. If you're connected, talk to a made guy. The syndicates also deal with fences to unload goods.

### HOT SPOTS

If you want to get the most cash out of your transaction, consider heading for a magnet city. You'll earn more than you would on your home turf. Maybe it's because the shadows are so thick in these cities that everyone is buying what they need off the books. When fences are making big money on sales we're paying more money to our suppliers. Keep these places in mind if you're looking to offload some ware.

- Feral cities are fence havens. Since the traditional markets don't really exist in these places, individuals are forced to get by through barter. Everyday items such as a few tubes of toothpaste might be exchanged for something more useful to us, like a combat knife.
- Mr. Bonds

- All it takes is one bum transaction to wind up on a do not call list. So, when dealing in data, make sure what you have is actually what you say it is. I've known too many runners who came out of a job thinking they scored top secret files and ended up with something as menial as wellness program usage logs. Decrypt it before you sell it.
- Slamm-0!
- Even that type of data is useful to the right person. A corporation trying to extract a salaryman would be helped out by knowing when the guy goes to the gym every week.
- The Smiling Bandit





INCOMING FEED.....

Urgent Message...

## REFERRED FENCES

Fences and Stuffer Shacks share one thing in common; we're ubiquitous. That being said, only a handful in any city are worthy of the name. A reputable fence earns her name by having the connections necessary to move product, but also by showing loyalty to the customers. Here are the bios of a few fences I've worked with that won't sell you out at the first sight of a credstick or a gun. To make it onto the JackPoint Filofax people need 3 referrals from users.

- These files have been tagged by someone on your network ...

### James Cartwright

**Location:** Seattle

**Notes:** Cartwright works out of the Underground and prefers doing business face to face where possible. His connections in the weapons industry are unmatched, but he's known for moving vehicles as well.

**Contact/Drop Point:** The Motherload, [\[Link\]](#)

- Cartwright is a grease monkey who hooked up with chop shops, armorers, and gunsmiths across the UCAS. He can move vehicles quickly, and is likely to have a line on any part you need dating back to the early twenties.
- Rigger X

### Gemstone Karl

**Location:** Capetown

**Notes:** Diamonds, of course. Karl also has built a reputation for moving animal organs, small arms, and drones. He's connected with the Ivory Coast pirates and the Carib league. Karl also works with many of the undersea facilities in the area.

**Contact/Drop Point:** [\[Link\]](#)

### Behahol

**Location:** Istanbul

**Notes:** It is still extremely difficult for Kurds to get a fair shake in this part of the world. Behahol stands out because he's managed to carve out a niche despite political pressures from the more radical factions of the underworld. His biggest buyers are out-of-network people. He has never been upfront about who they are.

**Contact/Drop Point:** Seraglio (Market stall 122), [\[Link\]](#)

### Torley

**Location:** Los Angeles

**Notes:** Torley has aligned himself with the Anasazi—a move that's put him at odds with a lot of local brokers, but increased his standings with local power players. A lot of corps get hit by the Anasazi, and Torley knows how to get them their goods back.

**Contact/Drop Point:** [\[Link\]](#)

**Jackal****Location:** Dubai

**Notes:** If you're willing to get your hands dirty, Jackal pays the most in the Caliphate. Here's the catch. He's tight with the remains of the New Islamic Jihad. The group is flush with cash and likes to use it in order to acquire rare items from their top fence.

Contact/Drop Point: [\[Link\]](#)

- I'm not sure if my gear ending up in the hands of terrorists sits right with me.
- Baka Dabora
- Get over yourself. Biz is biz. If we didn't supply the goods someone else would. At least this way I make a few extra creds.
- Ecotope

**Ambrosia****Location:** Europort

**Notes:** Ambrosia has survived this long in a corporate warzone because she knows how to play both sides against the middle. Be aware of that, or she will play you too. Being in a major shipping nexus, she has access to all manner of products and often hires runners to procure what she doesn't have on hand.

Contact/Drop Point: Hannover's Antiques, [\[Link\]](#)**Mr. Penny****Location:** Manhattan

**Notes:** Penny holds a day job as a Lower East Side real estate broker. He caters to a corporate crowd barely rich enough to afford the steep cost of city rent. So, in order to make up the difference they provide him with information and connections. He in turn provides them with a nice apartment, and us with very capable fencing services.

Contact/Drop Point: The White Rabbit, [\[Link\]](#)**Egungun****Location:** Nairobi

**Notes:** Egungun is considered an untouchable by the law not for his line of work but because he is a ghoul, and many of the Kenyan officials he deals with have been convinced that crossing him could bring the ghoul curse to their children.

Contact/Drop Point: Bubswami's Canteena (Nairobi), [\[Link\]](#)**Juanmi****Location:** Tenochtitlán

**Notes:** There are only a handful of reliable fences in this part of the world. Juanmi's governmental connections make him an ideal resource for unloading goods in the corrupt heart of Aztlan.

Contact/Drop Point: [\[Link\]](#)

- Governmental connections? The guy is a handler for Aztlan black ops teams. The fence gig is his cover. Sure, he's a good fence but do you really want the Aztlan government knowing what gear you're trying to buy and sell?
- Marcos

## OTHER OUTFITS

**Posted by: Slamm-0!**

Lone Star has nothing on me, which is kind of irritating considering the wicked data store they have on movers and shakers in the shadow world. They have a file the size of castle on you, FastJack. Since we were exploring the shadowy underworld I decided to pull a couple of the more interesting files I've acquired from them and add information I cobbled together over the years. If your crew didn't make my list, page me. Maybe I'll find you interesting enough to make an addendum.

//archive :: [Lone\\_Star\\_hacks](#)//

Report commissioned by Organized Crime Division Operational Command

### IAD UNDERWORLD INVESTIGATIONS REPORT

Shadowrunner operations represent a constant impediment to crime statistics in metropolitan areas under Lone Star contract. In the past, our decided course of action was to infiltrate the shadow community at all levels of operation. Through this strategy we expected to gather incriminating data on the major crews operating within these target areas. However, due to the disjointed nature of the shadowrunner fraternity, this strategy met with limited success. (see report *LSGD-204.11:17:68*). Our new surveillance program, dubbed Project Eris (see report *LSGD-009.01:03:71*), has resulted in substantially more usable data to

be processed by the Intelligence Analysis Department. Below you will find an IAD summary of groups we feel require closer investigation based on preliminary IAD analysis of the data collected.

- Anyone know what Project Eris actually is?
- Kay St. Irregular
- If you can believe it, Project Eris is not a what but a who. Lone Star techs have been experimenting with AIs for years, and the rumor at the bureau is they've recruited one to their service. Eris is supposedly a rogue AI who became aware sometime following the Crash. It developed a relationship with the LS techs who first contacted it, and has been processing data for them ever since. Other rumors indicate that Eris is actually a series of satellites launched in the late '50s and commandeered by Lone Star after the Crash. This network of satellites gives the law access, albeit illegal access, to far more personal information than they can obtain through normal means. Either way, Eris is bad news. If anyone gets more solid info let me know. I'll post it immediately.
- Fastjack

### Babel Network

Eleanor Sands and Keith McGovern worked for the special operations detail of the UCAS Central Intelligence Agency before going rogue in 2060. Since that time the pair has been photographed in cities throughout the UCAS providing false

#### LSDB-Brief: Babel Network

**Principle Industry:** Identity Manufacturing  
**Known Members:** Eleanor Sands, Keith McGovern  
**Known Associates/Connections:** Chimera, Horizon  
**Primary Location:** Unknown

documents to illegal operators. The pair and the other individuals that form the core of their organization refer to themselves as the Babel Network. The group provides a very high quality of false documentation complete with SIN background information indistinguishable from a legitimate identity package. Most recently the group was in the employ of the Horizon corporation, though the corporation denies any such employment ever occurred. It is clear, however, that Horizon purchased twelve falsified Aztlaner identities from the group. Neither the purpose of the identities nor their whereabouts is known at this time.

- I've worked with Babel before. They definitely score the cleanest IDs I've seen. Not only do they pass all the surface tests, but when ran against the national SIN database, the ID checks out.
- Hard Exit

#### Caduceus

Publicly known as the League of Independent Physicians, this group operates a series of free clinics located in the poorer sections of Seattle. While they have not broken any major laws, the group does not operate within the rules set by the UCAS medical association. This in of itself is not enough to warrant their appearance on this list. However, their operations do fit the modus operandi of the Universal Brotherhood, which precipitated the bug outbreak. This, in conjunction with their relationship with Tamanous leads us to believe there is cause for further investigation. A careful watch should be kept on this organization.

- It struck me as odd that a medical organization would mark itself with the symbol of a God associated with death, but when I saw the Tamanous connection I understood. Caduceus refers to a network of street docs operating in and around the greater Seattle area. These dozen or so doctors aren't murderers mind you—they are all top-shelf cutmen and surgeons, but in order to keep the supply room stocked they do assist Tamanous and other organizations in the body trade. The work Caduceus members do for these organizations is supposed to be cleaning and prepping parts and bodies for transport. Rumor has it a few take part in the collection phase, turning patients over who don't survive the table and even bringing in squatters who make the mistake of wandering into a 'free clinic.'
- Slamm-O!

#### LSDB-Brief: Caduceus

**Principle Industry:** Medical (Surgery, First Aid, Restoration)  
**Known Members:** Butch, Bones, Dr. Henry Cadmus, Dr. Heather Murphy, Dr. Samuel Brennan  
**Known Associates/Connections:** Tamanous, Crash Cart, Kumon'go  
**Primary Location:** Seattle

- Jesus, Butch. Is this what's gonna happen to me if I wind up ass up on your table?
- Baka Dabora
- If you're already dead, what do you care? You still don't get how tough it is to come by medical supplies. It's not like I can charge the outrageous prices corporate docs do. My clients don't have insurance to cover the difference. If I'm going to hold up the Hippocratic oath, then I have to do what I can to get what I need.
- Butch
- Sounds more like the hypocrotic oath to me.
- Pistons
- Fuck you, Pistons. See if I patch your narrow ass up next time.
- Butch

#### Chimera

Most of what we know of this organization comes from an information exchange with Russian intelligence. Chimera is composed entirely of ex-FSB operatives ranging in age from 20 to 60. There at least 17 active members of the group, each a highly trained assassin. Chimera specializes in high-profile target elimination. They have killed shadowrunners, corporate officers, political officials, and have been responsible for the deaths of at least seven high-ranking Lone Star officers over the past ten years. Their primary interest in the work they choose appears to be the difficulty of the job.

- These guys took a shot at my crew back in the Sixties. Some pencil pusher with a wry sense of humor hired both of us to do a hit. We got the job done first, so Chimera saw us as a challenge to their proficiency. It took two years and a truck full of bodies to get Chimera off our backs. They won't stop until the job is done or the cell assigned to do it is dead. Hell, even then they may keep coming after you if it's worth the blood.
- Riser
- Make no mistake—Chimera are top-of-the-line assassins. They're supposed to have been involved in old man O'Malley's death, UGB Secretary Lemontov's car crash, and the mysterious vanishing of former VP Nadja Daviar. Spirits protect you if they take a contract on your head.
- Stone

We know that Chimera operates through independent cells that answer to a senior administrative structure. Each cell is composed of three assassins. These killers train together for years before the cell is deemed ready to operate. As such, once a cell member retires or is killed, that member is not replaced. The cell continues to function with the remaining members until a time where they are no longer able to perform their duties. At this point members

#### LSDB-Brief: Chimera

**Principle Industry:** Assassination  
**Known Members:** Sergei Malenkin, Elena Kocyk, Denis Belofsky, Sergei Ivanovich, Petrov  
**Known Associates/Connections:** Vory Syndicate, Jonathan Blake, Evo, Humanis (Seattle)  
**Primary Location:** Seattle

#### LSDB-Brief: Hubbard's Crew

**Group Identification:** Hubbard's Crew  
**Principle Industry:** Kidnapping  
**Known Members:** Mother Hubbard, Cutter, Lt. Avery Watson  
**Known Associates/Connections:** None  
**Primary Location:** Team rotates between New York, Hamburg, and Europort

are either moved into the management structure or eliminated in order to ensure the secrets of the organization do not leak.

Project Eris was able to contribute additional associate information, as detailed in the brief. We believe an expansion of Project Eris involvement would allow us to follow up on some of these connections and discover the group's precise whereabouts. Given the skill of these killers, consideration must be given to hiring them as allies in our efforts against shadow operators.

#### Hubbard's Crew

K&R, as it pertains to shadowrunners, is usually contract-based work directed at relieving one corporation of a valued employee in order to deliver that employee to another corporation. Though unappreciated, this manner of corporate headhunting has become commonplace with dozens of crews performing this service. Hubbard's crew reached our list because of the differences in their K&R operation. Hubbard's crew operates a traditional kidnap and ransom business. They snatch corporate or private citizens and hold them until payment can be arranged. On several occasions the ransom could not be raised in time and the victim was killed. 'Mother' Hubbard serves as the contact person for this group. The street name matches that of an ex-CIA handler believed to have gone rogue a decade ago. Additionally, former Lone Star Lieutenant Avery Watson is known to be associated with this kidnap ring, making their capture extremely important to our PR efforts. Its founding member, a shadowrunner known only as Cutter, is reported to have been a member of the gang of the same name. It is unclear whether he still associates with the gang.

- Lone Star is a bit behind the shadow curve, because groups like this one are starting to pop up all over the place. Any major corporation will have K&R insurance on their executives. They'll pay too—hire an independent like me to broker the exchange and use insurance money to get it done. It is cheaper to pay a low K&R fee than it is to pay death benefits to a grieving family. Better from a PR perspective too.
- Cosmo
- Only to a point, Cosmo. If your employees are getting kidnapped on a regular basis then premiums are going to rise—if a K&R insurer will cover you at all. As more crews start grabbing corp figureheads, security is going to tighten the noose. I've even heard of corps leaving 'out of fashion' execs exposed as bait to catch a snatcher crew.
- DangerSensei

#### In-Secure

In the early 50's a team of B&E specialists efforted to legitimize themselves by forming a private security firm designed to protect small businesses and personal property from unauthorized

#### LSDB-Brief: In-Secure

**Group Identification:** In-Secure LTD  
**Principle Industry:** Burglary, Security Analysis (Cover Operation)  
**Known Members:**  
**Known Associates/Connections:**  
**Primary Location:**

entry. The company, In-Secure, was pitched as 'the only company capable of making you truly safe.' In order to prove the veracity of that statement the company would assign shadowrunners to break into a client's facility and afterwards explain how to prevent such intrusions. This strategy proved to be very popular with the clients. In-Secure remains a high-performing small security service.

Our evidence suggests the core members have accepted corporate leadership roles and left the B&E work to the local shadowrunners they hire on a freelance basis. This legitimization of what is essentially illegal work allows shadowrunners a clean stream of revenue. We are investigating the possibility that the company is operating as a laundering service for their freelancers.

- Someone want to explain how that works?
- Turbo Bunny
- It's all about the freelancer's fee, TB. In-Secure hires shadowrunners as consultants. We give them a number of what we want to charge and they pay us half of that fee. The other half we deposit in the bank is cred we made from shadowrunning. The money goes in dirty and comes out clean; looking like all the cred we deposited was money made as private consultants for an established security firm.
- Ma'fan

We are also looking into the possibility that In-Secure is being used as a front to broker theft operations. According to tax records, several dozen corporations have employed In-Secure over the past year. However, the company has only installed eleven security systems to date. This discrepancy shows that the company is being used as security consultants, but neither the company nor their employers are willing to disclose why.

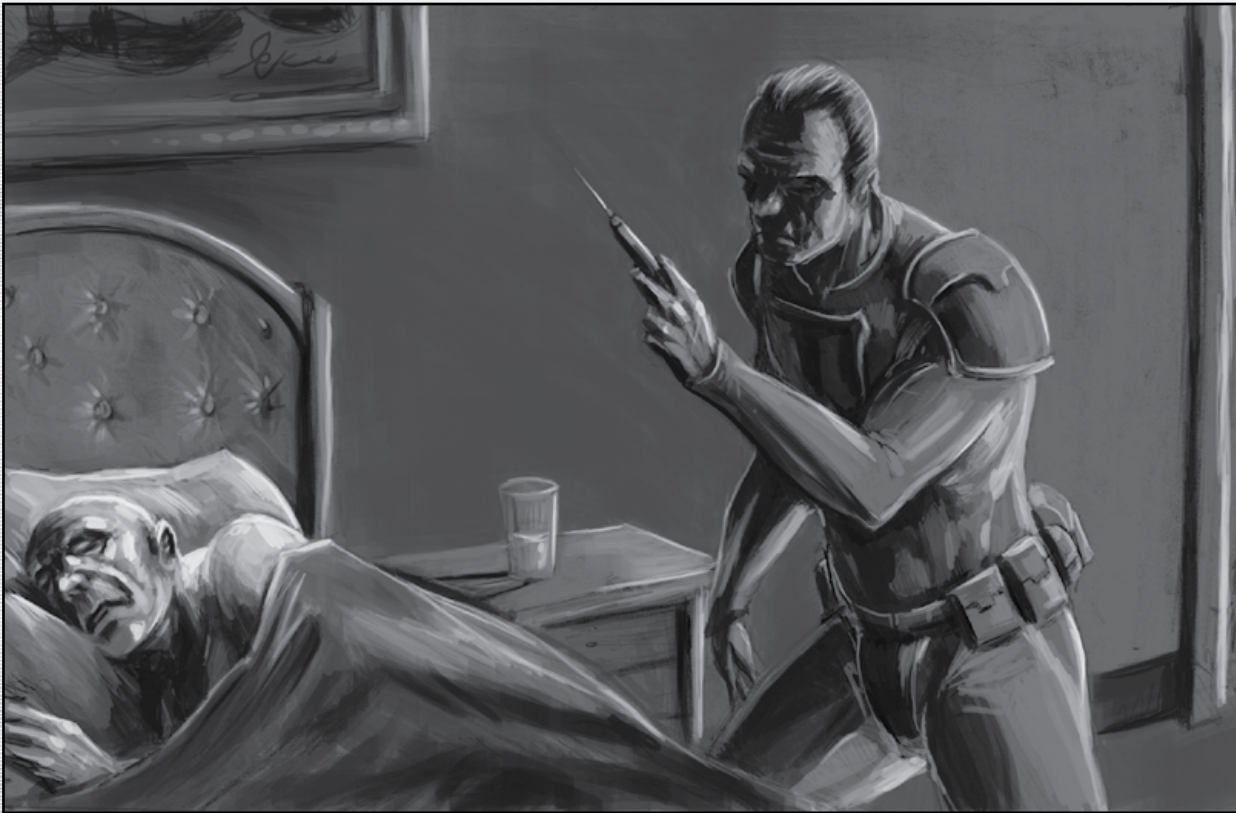
- I hear the freelancer turnover rate has been pretty high at In-Secure lately. Companies are hiring the firm to test security at top installations, and the runners doing the testing don't always make it out alive.
- Sunshine

#### Ya'mas

Rogue military units can be particularly problematic. Such groups are designed to achieve their objectives no matter what the cost to public safety or the environment. As of January 2072 there

#### LSDB-Brief: Ya'mas

**Principle Industry:** Asset Recovery  
**Known Members:** Issa Stavi  
**Known Associates/Connections:** Hasim Shakur  
**Primary Location:** Cape Town (suspected)



INCOMING FEED.....

were 15 unsanctioned military units operating on a global scale. Similar to mercenary outfits, these smaller units are called in from out of town to troubleshoot problems for corporations or private parties and when scruples and Merc Guild Rules of Engagement might be inconveniences.

Ya'mas, formerly Israel's top counter-terrorist unit, has performed operations in Caracas, Istanbul, and even Seattle. The team led by Issa Stavi broke from the Israeli establishment in 2060 following a botched rescue operation during which all seven hostages were murdered. After facing rebuke from their superiors, Issa Stavi lead his team into the shadows.

- Wait, are we talking about rogue Israeli special forces personnel working for Muslim extremists? I'm calling bullshit.
- Marcos
- It isn't as far-fetched as it seems, Marcos. In fact, there are thousands of Muslims living in Israel. Often the disparagement between Israel and its militant neighbors is more political than religious. While there are hardliners on both sides, many of the individuals unfortunate enough to discover some of the true reasons why the two sides are angry at each other become quickly disillusioned.
- Snopes
- That last mission where they lost hostages was a set up by their own government. Ya'mas went in under the guise of a rescue mission, but the government believed a high-value mage from Antifa Direct Action was on site. Someone up the chain felt it was worth more to hit the

location with a ritual spell, to take the target out, than to rescue the hostages. Once the Ya'mas team was in place, government mages triggered their spell. No one really knows what happened next. Magic destroyed the building, but most of the Ya'mas team survived and the Antifa mage escaped. No one else on scene survived. Afterwards, the government claimed Ya'mas botched the operation, allowing the terrorists to detonate an explosive and failing to protect the hostages.

- Aufheben
- Imagine spending your whole career believing you were protecting your government only to be sold out by your government. That's why it's easier to be a merc from the start.
- Picador

### Bang & Stick

Weapons trafficking is highlighted by the UCAS as a top national security priority. Finding and prosecuting offenders will help to increase the number of contracts we receive from governmental jurisdictions. Bang & Stick is known as both a trafficking and manufacturing operation. The group is lead by a pair of scientists formerly in the employ of Mitsuhamma. The pair aligned with a small group of smugglers and established a weapons manufacturing and arms-running operation. Since forming, Bang & Stick has outfitted dozens of organizations including gangs and crime syndicates. During the recent surge in Seattle gang violence Bang & Stick outfitted gangs on both sides of the conflict with high-velocity automatic weapons. The group is also known to provide armor and ammunition.

#### LSDB-Brief: Bang & Stick

**Principle Industry:** Specialist weapons manufacturing and delivery

**Known Members:** Dr. Hiroshi Sato, Dr. Raymond Ito

**Known Associates/Connections:** Pueblo Corporate Council, Shotozumi-rengo, Ancients, Burning Angels, Spiral

**Primary Location:** California

Bang & Stick guarantees delivery of their products throughout the Pacific Northwest. It is assumed they have the support of local smuggling organizations. We know the group does hire freelancers to move goods in exchange for free weaponry and armor. Penetrating the group would also provide us access to these smugglers.

- Pay close attention to that point. Lone Star isn't dumb. They understand that we're not the syndicates. Bang & Stick or any of these groups are likely to sell you out if it means they get to walk free. None of us are really safe, even in secured networks like this one. Who's to say one of us isn't going to rat to the cops in order to avoid hard time.
- Baka Dabora
- You say the sweetest things, Baka, but you're full of shit. I'm not so much of an idealist that I believe you guys will cover my back no matter what. Still, I know a little bit about cost to benefit ratio. We work through street names so we can't sell each other out. Bang & Stick operates the same way. They use a proxy—usually a fixer like Spiral—to negotiate the exchange. So, if they do end up selling you out, they wouldn't be able to provide enough concrete information about you to make it worth the cops while to let them off—and vice versa. If you should be worried about anyone, Baka, worry about your fixer.
- Rigger-X

#### Technitions

Though this group has left our jurisdiction, we believe additional surveillance is necessary to insure that their departure is permanent, and that no copycat groups emerge to continue their line of work. Technitions represent a very dangerous criminal

#### LSDB-Brief: Technitions

**Principle Industry:** Incident Staging, Assassination Staging, Asset Relocation

**Known Members:** Crash

**Known Associates/Connections:** None

**Primary Location:** Unknown (Formerly Texas)

aspect. They are self-described event stagers. Their primary responsibility is to stage disasters designed to attract security away from the scene of an impending shadow operation. These staged attacks result in extreme collateral damage and even death.

This pattern of shadowrunner activity is more dangerous to civilian security than the corporate assaults that they usually carry out. While our resources are spent putting down the distraction, the real mission is being carried out elsewhere. The Technitions are very diligent in their distractions. On multiple occasions Fast Response Teams responded to incidents only to see them turn into full-fledged firefights. Twenty-Seven Lone Star officers have been killed in these altercations.

We have only identified one member of the group thus far, a shadowrunner and smuggler named Crash. There are rumored to be over thirteen other members of this group. This size of group represents an organizational model we have not seen with shadowrunners before. Teams are usually small groups with each member reflecting a particular specialization. The Technitions, however, have a multiple members with overlapping skillsets. This pattern of shadowrunner activity is more dangerous to civilian security than the corporate assaults that they usually carry out. While our resources are spent putting down the distraction, the real mission is being carried out elsewhere. The Technitions are very diligent in their distractions. On multiple occasions Fast Response Teams responded to incidents only to see them turn into full-fledged firefights. Twenty-Seven Lone Star officers have been killed in these altercations.

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Private Message...

Slamm-0!—Here's some data on a group I know of. Put it in your part of the file if you think it fits.—Red Anya

#### The Faraday School

Two years ago I was hired to track a lost girl. She'd run away from her corpie parents and ended up on the streets—likely dead. What had actually happened to her I didn't expect. She was taken in by a Hamburg family called the Faradays. They pretended to run a school for gifted children, but the only gifts these kids had were extraordinary talent at infiltration. Some of the students were adepts, others just very skilled cat burglars. The Faraday School hones their talent by providing them with the opportunity to practice. Only, this practice is a live fire exercise. Faraday students perform real B&E jobs that correspond to their

skill level. The school, or whoever hires the school, keeps whatever is stolen while the kids continue to have a roof over their heads and three squares a day. When students graduate, they become Faraday alumni. They're on their own for the first time in their lives, but the school continues fixing high dollar jobs for them so long as they ask and provides fences to move what is stolen.

My girl washed out of the program. She broke the rules and pocketed a dozen or so chips from a job the school sent her to do at an R&D plant. She tried to sell her chips on the open market, which is how I found her. Unfortunately, the Faradays caught on to what she was doing before I could pull her out. They made an example of her. I finally found what was left of her in an alley in the Reeperbahn. The family insisted on a closed casket.





The pattering of rain against the window relaxed SnowTiger's mind as she enjoyed a quiet dinner. But thunder interrupted, crashing over the music, and the events of last week all came back. She turned on some music to drown out those thoughts. It didn't work. The memories came for her.

Tuesday had been a nothing day; no running, no work, just walking the Golden Mile and window-shopping. It was overcast, so SnowTiger adjusted her virtual weather as she walked down the street. She turned down Grandville road heading toward Belle Dai to see how she could pamper herself with cosmetics. Focused on the new European brand of eye shadow, she queried the shopping agent on pricing.

"The LORD gave, and the LORD hath taken away" the agent said.

"Great," she mumbled. Some hacker was messing with her. She'd make him understand his mistake quickly.

She loaded up some programs, put her commlink into hidden mode, and started looking around in AR to see what was up. Then, without seeing anything, she reacted, quickly diving to the sidewalk as something covered with flashing lights—was it a traffic drone?—crashed through the window where she was standing. The lights in the store went out. The store's AR stayed on, but instead of ads there were strange quotes floating all over the place.

With her back against a store counter, SnowTiger dove into the matrix. The Belle Dai's node pretty much looked just like the store, but she saw a green tinge spreading. A quick analysis told her what she already knew—malware. Around her, the store's agents swelled up, or melted, or simply crashed as the worms overwhelmed them. The worms had to have a source, and SnowTiger looked for it hidden somewhere in the store. She got a small movement of shadow in the node, then saw a small wink of light in the middle of the dark blot. Just like that, her commlink caught fire—Swisscheese was pushing into her firewall. SnowTiger got a medic working on the problem just as a black force thrown from the shadow hit her. She wobbled, dazed, and the VR world around her twisted. The thing hit her too hard, too fast, and she knew that right now flight was better than fight. She dumped out, and blood was dripping down her nose.

She staggered out of the store and down the street, and around her neon signs popped with a power surge. She moved faster, but she knew the shadow was keeping up, staying with her. Alarms blared and devices went berserk as she passed. Then, finally, she reached Dai Pai Dong's, where she just had lunch, and the madness stopped. She caught her breath, then reached for her commlink to check out the AR to see if she was still being followed.

She caught the tail of an odor. Rotten eggs. A digital menu popped up the special of the day: "And, behold, there came a great wind from the wilderness, and smote the four corners of the house."

She ran from the food market as the gas ignited. The explosion threw her over a car, but somehow she was still moving when she hit the ground. Adrenaline pushed her down an alley, and the shadow didn't give chase.

After that she had gone home and tried to forget. She had her food and her music to hold off the storm outside. She changed the channel and took a sip of tea. Doctor Xing told her she had a bad case of simsense vertigo and to take it easy for a while. But he didn't give her anything that would keep her from seeing shadows.

## Posted by: Fianchetto

When a crime is analyzed, someone logs the evidence. Repeat the process again and again, and eventually, someone is going to find a pattern. That pattern creates a profile, and then law enforcement has something to work from. This is how you get to be a wanted criminal. Do something well enough, heinous enough, loud enough, often enough, and someone will find the pattern. Stay active and free, and you'll find yourself here on Interpol's Most Wanted list, a collection of dangerous and independent criminals across the world.

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[Progress Report on the War Against Tempo]

## // Begin File Attachment // INTERPOL NEWS

### NOTICE To All Law Enforcement Departments:

New software suite is available. Package includes:

- **Carnivore Gold**—With improved word association and fuzzy logic improvements in identifying slang and foreign languages in both verbal and text recordings. Allows for context relation regardless of language.
  - **Gopher 2.4**—Gopher agent works with the security patch and has an improved algorithm in collecting relevant cases from other law enforcement departments.
  - **MonaLisa 5.3.1**—Improved emotion interpretation logic and faster facial recognition search. Compatible with Gopher version 2.2 and above.
  - **Spiderweb**—VR-enhanced interface for graphical representation relationships between case files and evidence. Allows real time connection with Gopher 2.4. This replaces MIND-FIND 8.4 Software.
- Interpol has been trying to encourage information sharing between its national and corporate members by providing tools for easy upload and download of the ICTD. Naturally, security corps are going to keep most of the crime and evidence data internal, so the new Spiderweb software allows "person of interest" links to corp info. These are basic profile information objects with reference links back to the law enforcement agency. You can get the basics on lots of people, but if you want the details, like specific crimes committed, you'll have to go through the bureaucratic red tape to get it. For people on my end of Interpol's gun, the system means you need to put in a little extra work to make sure the agency's Gophers can't tie information about you together.

- Slamm-0!

- The Spiderweb software is also handy to organize and reference all the bits of data you collect. Now my stuff is organized chaos instead of just chaos.
- SnowTiger

While you have six months to upgrade to continue federal support, security patch v.3.5.612 needs to be installed to keep references in sync with the ICTD, as well as maintain secured access. Also, please check with your Gopher if related case files already contain a Criminal Label or Name before adding a new one. This will alleviate confusion over cross-border criminals and number of suspects to look for. If it does occur, the case file with the earliest time-stamp gets the attention.

- And usually you don't have control on what the media and law enforcement call you. Go on several runs when you're drunk and can't remember what you've put on and you could be labeled as the color-challenged thief or something worse. You don't get to select the name that will make you notorious.
- DangerSensei
- Unless you got the brass to tell everyone what you did and make sure they spell your name right! Like I told the last reporter, "That's Kane with a 'K', as in 'Kick your ass if you spell it wrong.'"
- Kane

## INTERPOL'S MOST WANTED

### To all federal and corporate police forces:

Here is the latest list of wanted criminals organized by category of criminal activity. Please review the profile and associated cases of criminals on this list in your area. Interpol has issued [[practical guidelines](#)] on the type of information required to maximize apprehending criminals. Members and law enforcement are encouraged to report on all criminal activity such as weapons trafficking, falsified travel paperwork and SINS, and suspicious financial transactions as they may have links to terrorist activity.

- For those looking to see if they're famous yet, or wanting something for the old scrapbook, you can review the whole list on the ICTD. For now, I've taken the liberty of putting together twenty of these criminals that I think are interesting enough for JackPoint. They are in alphabetical order.
- Fianchetto

## BILLY JOE WALLACE

**Background:** Wallace is a high-ranking member of the [White Resistance](#) (anti-NAN, white American supremacists) wanted in connection with six bombings against NAN institutions and government buildings twenty years ago and, more recently, possibly orchestrating several armed robberies and break-ins in San Fernando, and the attempted kidnapping of Nisu Grey. He is a person of interest to Sioux Peace Force, Pueblo Peace Force, Eagle Security, and UCAS authorities.

**Modus Operandi:** Wallace has steered the White Resistance away from their traditional MO of bombing of NAN and CAS offices and other random terrorist acts. He and the group now finance criminal activities such as breaking and entering, armed robbery, and kidnapping. Multiple layers of deniability make it



**WANTED**  
DEAD OR ALIVE



**XIN LAO**

**ERIK DANNOVER**

**WANTED**  
DEAD OR ALIVE



**WANTED**  
DEAD OR ALIVE



**CASTLE GREY**

**WANTED**  
DEAD OR ALIVE



**MERODE NGOBOBO**

**WANTED**  
DEAD OR ALIVE



**NULL**

**WANTED**  
DEAD OR ALIVE



**LA AZU**

**WANTED**  
DEAD OR ALIVE



**TEACHDAIRE**

**WANTED**  
DEAD OR ALIVE



**KANE**

**WANTED**  
DEAD OR ALIVE



**BILLY JOE WALLACE**

difficult to tie these crimes back to Wallace, but evidence from interrogated subjects substantiates these conclusions (73 percent probability). The range of activities Wallace is involved in—as well as his long reach thanks to his many connections to special interest groups, mainstream activist groups, and covert factions in various governments—makes him probably the most dangerous member of the North American white supremacist organizations.

**Psych Profile:** Wallace's driving motivation ties to built-up anger and resentment from seeing his father—a major player in the Iowa union scene between 2003 and 12—lose everything during the forced relocations that followed the forming of the NAN and the realization that the government would not help. Wallace's father eventually died in a homeless shelter in FDC, and Wallace's course in life was essentially set. All indications are that Wallace seeks to avenge the breaking of his father, but he's managed to work up several other grudges against non-whites in subsequent years. His work ethic and style resemble those of his father, and he doesn't mind getting his hands dirty to complete a job. Wallace hates anything he perceives as Native in design—he won't go to any Native American club or restaurant. He has a peculiar dietary habit, presumably to recreate the rich farmhouse lifestyle from his childhood. He's very picky about where his food comes from, choosing independent manufacturers/growers.

**Description:** Surveillance shows Billy Joe Wallace is in his early fifties, Caucasian, human, male, and bald.

**Database Identification:** [Biometrics and prints]

**Known Aliases:** Billy Brawn, John Steel, Billy Gates

**Known Associates/Connections:** White Resistance, Stormfront Network, Sons of the Alamo

**Last Known Location:** Since the failed kidnapping of Nisu Grey, we believe that Wallace remains active in the California Free State, possibly exploring operations in the Pueblo-secured Los Angeles area.

## CASTLE GREY

**Background:** Castle Grey has been called the Dirty Cat Burglar because of the mess he leaves behind after a robbery. Grey is wanted for robbery, arson, manslaughter, and destruction of private property. After a previous arrest on robbery, Grey served five years, and he was released last year on good behavior. Since he's been out, cases have started popping up around New York matching his MO. In Brentwood, a penthouse caught fire and approximately 50,000¥ in jewelry was missing, with one unidentified body left behind at the scene. In Yonkers, a private home that held an extremely valuable art collection exploded from a gas leak, killing three private security officers and possibly destroying the entire collection—except those pieces that the perpetrator might have removed beforehand. Grey is estimated to have stolen 260,000¥ in artwork and jewelry and caused about a million in damages before his previous arrest.

**Modus Operandi:** Grey uses a combination of magic charms and electronic tools to break into private homes and showrooms. Astral signatures have so far proved untraceable. He then relies on less-traceable methods of destruction such as grenades or low explosive accelerants after every job. We don't know if his MO is adapting to help Grey move up to higher-profile crimes.

**Psych Profile:** Grey's overly showy and demonstrative MO suggests a deep need for attention. Interview data reveal that he

hails from a lower-class family, the third of five children. All siblings demonstrated above-average intelligence, and all competed for their overworked parents' affections. Our sources tell us that in this competition, Grey usually lost. While his siblings went on to college and successful corporate employment, Grey turned to drugs and alcohol at fifteen in a classic example of gaining negative attention when positive attention was unavailable. Attempts at rehabilitation during his incarceration had very little effect, and he seemingly remains incapable of leaving a crime without a destructive calling card.

**Description:** Grey is a Caucasian, male elf, 2.1 meters tall with short dark brown hair, weighing 85 kg. He has been abusing narcotics since he was fifteen.

**Database Identification:** [Biometrics, DNA, retinal and prints]

**Known Aliases:** Grey Fedora, Stronghold, James Larsen

**Known Associates/Connections:** Various groups and anarchist factions in the Greater New York area.

**Last Known Location:** Security identified Grey in Manhattan on the Me-Feeds at the Sea of Fools bar two months ago, but security forces were unable to apprehend him. Grey is believed to be using the remains of the underground system to move about Manhattan.

## CHARLIE WIRE

**Background:** “Charlie Wire likes to play with people like puppets on a string.” This was an audio recording a suicide victim who finally tied a name to the dark figure behind fifteen murder/suicide incidents—occurring at the rate of one incident per week—that all share the same pattern. Investigators have determined that in 80 percent of these cases, the deceased individuals did not know each other. In each case, the suicide victims were augmented—autopsies revealed recent surgery and cyber enhancements, along with recent drug use. The nature of many of these enhancements has not been determined due to the use of kink bombs in many of the incidents. Latest victims were a 32-year-old elf female exotic dancer with noted augmentations, and 44-year-old male Ork executive. The elf woman shot the man eight times before committing suicide outside WellMind Enterprises in Denver.

**Modus Operandi:** Charlie finds a target and kidnaps him/her, often choosing a victim who is tied in enough to the grid to generate a Missing Persons report. He reworks his victims to put them under his control, giving them the right combination of remotely-controlled cyberware and mind-altering drugs to make them vehicles for his will; our technical analysis tells us he is likely using dynamic skillsofts in combination with pharmaceutical effects that make the victims extremely suggestible—they become little more than drones, with Charlie Wire as their rigger. There is a high degree of commonality in the cyberware he implants in his victims: 90 percent of them have skill wires, 70 percent have commlinks, 50 percent receive cybereyes, while a small group (7 percent) are given cyberlimbs. There is no evidence of a Stirrup interface analog or similar technology being used, which in turn suggests the skillwire system is being subverted by hitherto unknown technology or software. Forensic evidence indicates all cyberware is blackmarket-sourced, second-hand wares, and originate from different manufacturers.

Charlie controls the victim's actions remotely; the victim finds a target (who is always the opposite sex of the initial abductee),



kills them, then kills him/herself. Sometimes the “suicides” are done with the same weapon as the murder, but on two occasions, the controlled people have been killed with small cortex bombs. The signatures of these bombs are still being traced, but investigators are not hopeful. Crimes with this MO have occurred in three cities—the bulk of them (twelve) have been committed in New Seattle, while two have happened in Denver and one in DeeCec. We are investigating travel data for any traces of Charlie Wire’s movements.

**Psych Profile:** Charlie Wire’s MO has left little data for building a profile, but our current data suggests an 85 percent chance that the subject is male, and additionally he is likely a human in his thirties. Charlie Wire clearly has a need to establish dominance and control over the world, which might stem from insecurity tied to an intimate relationship (note the male-female dynamic present in all the incidents). One common link between the victims is that they all have occupations that involve some degree of involvement with the general public (e.g., receptionist, exotic dancer, car dealer). This means that Charlie is likely to be meeting his victims in a public environment before he kidnaps them, possibly developing a fantasy relationship with before he eventually moves into action.

**Description:** No physical description of Charlie Wire is available. He clearly is knowledgeable about cybernetics and surgery, and it is very possible he has worked in the medical industry in some form (including the shadier, illicit operations).

**Database Identification:** [[Unavailable](#)]

**Known Aliases:** None on record

**Known Associates/Connections:** None on record

**Last Known Location:** Denver

## CHUPRA SANGRE

**Background:** ALERT! Profiling software has identified a series of cases relating to a new serial killer we have named Chupra Sangre. [[Link](#)]. These case files have all been tagged with this name. Eight victims have been found in the areas of Los Angles, San Diego, and Tijuana, and all of them perished from blood loss following severe contusions and lacerations. The latest victim was in the Pomona area, a 24-year-old human male college student studying magic at Caltech.

**Modus Operandi:** Since the first blood-drained victim was found, Chupra Sangre has been attacking regularly, generally leaving only seven to ten days between attacks. Chupra Sangre’s victims have been males under 25 years old who are exiting clubs or bars. While early targets were alone, later victims have been traveling in pairs (with the exception of the most recent victim, who was a licensed magic user), indicating a growing confidence on the part of the attacker. Chupra Sangre has a basic strategy—he ambushes his victim, beats them into submission, then cuts the neck or wrist. Some of the beatings involved blunt instruments such as a baseball bat, while others appear to have been performed unarmed. Evidence of saliva and teeth marks near the neck and wrist wounds indicate that Chupra Sangre is drinking his victims’ blood after he cuts them open.

**Psych Profile:** Experience has shown that most criminals experiencing clinical vampirism believe they will gain strength by drinking their victims’ blood. Chupra Sangre’s attacks are notable for their ferocious, chaotic violence, indicating that he favors

impulsive sloppiness over careful planning. He is likely completely alone and rootless; his MO fits the pattern of perpetrators who are operating away from communities in which they were raised. His attack on a magic user shows that he craves ever-increasing power and believes he is strong enough to obtain it; further escalation in his actions should be expected.

**Description:** No HMMV signatures have been found in samples of blood and saliva taken from Chupra Sangre’s victims [[Report](#)] meaning Sangre is neither ghoul nor vampire. Chupra Sangre is likely young, possibly early twenties, Hispanic (see [[DNA Report](#)] on Haplogroups), and not affiliated with any known gang. Bruising on the body of one victim has given us a shoe print size 12. Chupra Sangre has been following a northward path, moving from San Diego to Los Angeles, and will likely move farther north in the sprawl as his actions attract attention.

**Database Identification:** [[Biometrics and prints](#)]

**Known Aliases:** None

**Known Associates/Connections:** None on record

**Last Known Location:** Los Angeles

## THE CRIMSON MOON STALKER

**Background:** The Crimson Moon Stalker is the name given to the gruesome serial killer that has claimed four victims in as many months. The timing of each death has been linked to the full moon. The most recent victim of the Moon Stalker was 28-year-old Allen Smith, who was killed at a Stuffer Shack off of East Meridian in Edgewood. Lone Star officers investigated the scene, which necessitated sealing off an entire parking lot in order to locate all of Mr. Smith’s remains. Security footage from the Stuffer Shack is being reviewed by Lone Star, which is requesting additional security footage from other area locations in order to trace the killer’s movements before and after the slaughter.

**Modus Operandi:** The Crimson Moon Stalker obliterates his victims, thoroughly and brutally. All four victims have been ripped apart, and analysis indicates that some pieces of internal organs have been chewed and semi-digested. The strength and intensity of the attacks are far beyond an animal mauling, and body parts and blood are scattered over an area twenty meters or more wide. Footage from the Stuffer Shack killing showed no awareness on the part of the victim of the impending danger; the attack came before he could react. The Moon Stalker does not spend much time devouring its kill, taking only a few bites of various viscera and spitting out most of what he consumes. No pattern has been found in the identities of the victims—their ages range from 18-85, and they are of mixed genders and ethnicities. Each victim has been found in a public location in Seattle’s suburbs.

**Psych Profile:** The locations of the killings—a Stuffer Shack, a trideo arcade, a skateboard park, and a public swimming pool—suggest that the killer is someone who is familiar with locations where young people gather. The mess left after the attacks, as well as their fairly narrow geographic range, indicates that the killer may be marking his territory. The assaults could be about the Crimson Moon Stalker’s desire to establish dominance over a particular area. Efforts are underway to find a connection between the victims, especially focusing on any common acquaintances they might have had.

**Description:** The killer’s face was disguised in the footage of the Stuffer Shack killing, but data confirm what witnesses



have described: a tall (2.2-2.6 meters) creature with red hair, possibly a wendigo. Lone Star continues to process samples from the most recent crime scene and has found a blood sample that does not belong to the victim. This sample is HMVV-free, but it also does not belong to a wendigo [[Blood Screen Report](#)]. Lone Star is looking into the possibility of a changeling being the perpetrator while also looking at the role magic might have played in the attack.

**Database Identification:** [[DNA](#) (pending analysis)]

**Known Aliases:** None on record

**Known Associates/Connections:** None on record

**Last Known Location:** Edgewood, CAS

- I was at that that Stuffer Shack not too long ago and got a bad feeling in my gut that wasn't just the soy burgers. I consulted some of the spirits in the area, and IMHO Lone Star better get the Paranormal Division in on this. I believe the Shella is back.
- Axis Mundi

## ERIK DANNOVER

**Background:** Erik Dannover has turned a dishonorable discharge from the CAS military into a burgeoning empire of the kind of trades that prosper in war-torn countries. Weapons dealing, sex slave trafficking, refugee smuggling, and toxic waste dumping are all part of his activities. Dannover works with hopeless people, and he has used their desperation to put them in terrible, sometimes fatal circumstances. He is implicated in the deaths of thirty Chinese immigrants in a cargo container in Seattle, the collapse of a fifty-year-old bunker near Portland that exposed leaking canisters of PCBs, and the transport and eventual deaths of one hundred illegal immigrants from Cal-Free to Atzlan. The exact number of his crimes is difficult to track, as some of his clients are corporations who have been complicit in covering up his actions. He himself is also difficult to track, as he often operates out of a submarine that he acquired as part of his arms-dealing escapades.

**Modus Operandi:** Dannover is primarily a shipper who is distinguished by the illegal nature of his cargo and the vile, dangerous conditions to which he subjects them. He has a vast area of operations that covers much of the Pacific, including the west coasts of North and South America, the eastern sections of Asia, and some Middle Eastern nations. Dannover controls several cargo ships through different aliases, often moving legitimate cargo along with the illegal goods cargo. His operations are very fluid, and he almost never uses the same contact twice. Any contact used by Dannover that we have managed to compromise generally turns up dead in short order.

**Psych Profile:** Dannover has the simplest of motives—building an empire of wealth through the profits of his operations. He is a dangerous target to investigate, as he is ruthless in eliminating anyone who could be an obstacle to his work. Any subordinates he takes on stand an equal chance of either sharing a portion of his wealth or ending up dead thanks to the shifts of Dannover's mercurial temperament. While he was dishonorably discharged, Dannover's military medical profile contains no record of psychological problems. This speaks either to the lax nature of CAS military oversight or to Dannover's ability in manipulating psychiatric tests.

**Description:** Dannover is a 36-year-old, Caucasian, 130 kg ork with dark brown crew-cut hair and a right cyberarm.

**Database Identification:** [[Biometrics and prints](#)]

**Known Aliases:** Hedgehog, Drifter

**Known Associates/Connections:** Various pirate groups, Mafia and Yakuza syndicates.

**Last Known Location:** Satellite photos show a possible sighting of Dannover near the Hawai'ian Islands.

- Dannover will be almost impossible to catch as long as the corps don't want him caught. He can be quite useful to them, and they don't much care what he does unless it can be traced back to them.
- Kay St. Irregular
- Or the syndicates for that matter. Who do you think supplied them when Lone Star cracked down on arms running to quell the violence last year?
- Fianchetto
- Kinda pisses me off that Drifter used an old base as a dumping ground for waste. I don't want to go to ground in an abandoned bunker and find I'm knee deep in nuclear waste.
- Hard Exit

## FRIDA KOHLMAN

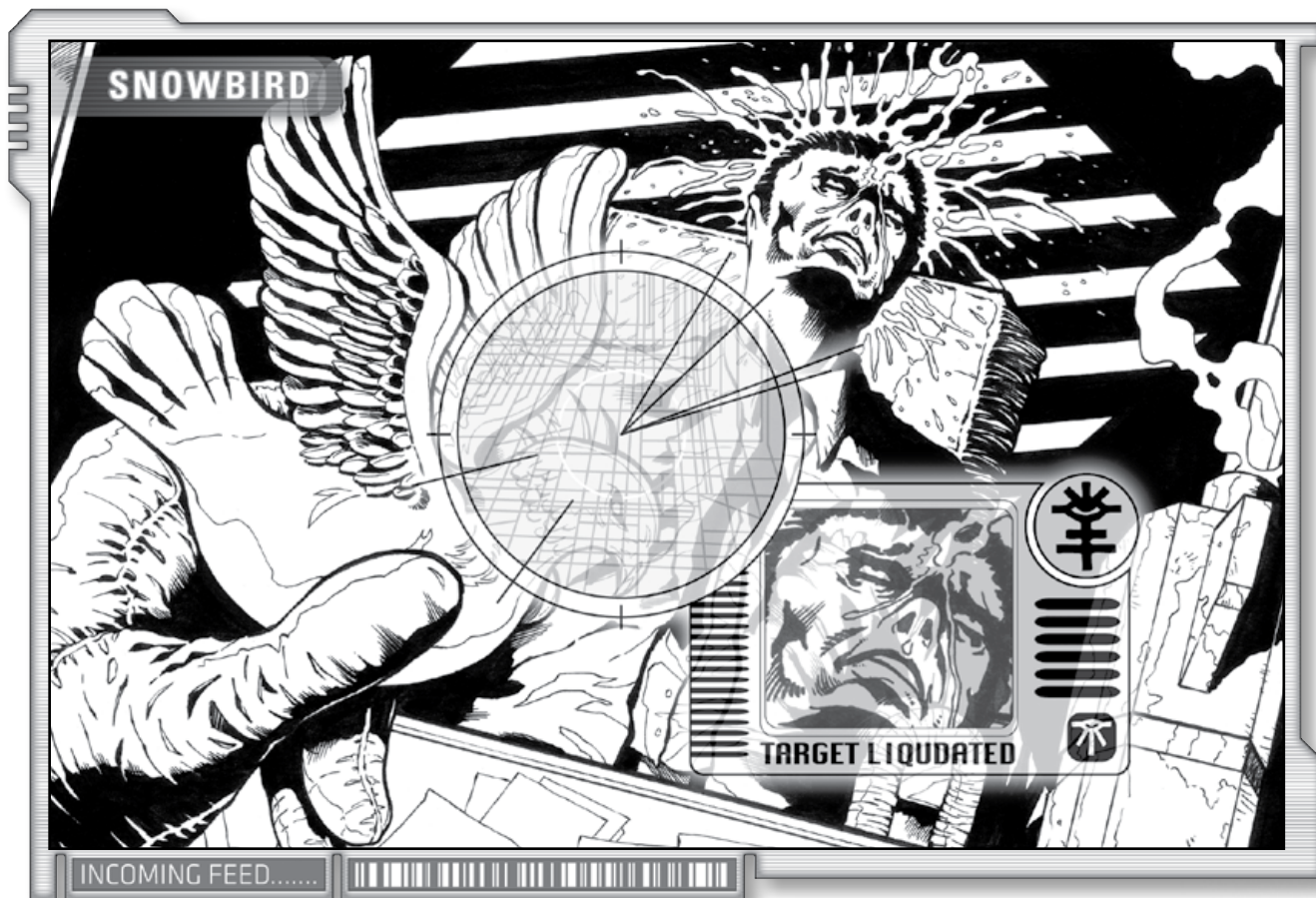
**Background:** Frida Kohlman, (a.k.a. Friday) is the only surviving member of the Norns, the leaders of the [Winternight](#) cult. Imprisoned in a high-security mental institution for the criminally insane for her role in the Crash 2.0 in 2064, Kohlman recently escaped and remains at large. She is considered very dangerous—and very marketable. She led significant advances in BTL technology for the Norns while also contributing significant technical expertise in drone construction and development of WMDs. Europol and Knight Errant are jointly investigating who may have abetted Kohlman's escape, looking at groups such as the [Viking](#) gangs, the [Cracker Underground](#), as well as [Asgard](#) and the vanished [Ex Pacis](#) Matrix terrorist group.

**Modus Operandi:** Diagnosed with pathological paranoid fear of the Matrix, it is uncertain how Kohlman will react; the Matrix is not the same as it was when she was imprisoned, and while she knows the fundamentals of BTL and drone programming, she is handicapped by the fact that today's tools are tied to the Matrix through augmented or virtual reality. Kohlman's ability to adapt to a new environment, and once again become a significant threat should not be underestimated, however.

**Psych Profile:** Kohlman exhibited signs of mental instability following the first Crash, which took everything she owned in a series of tragic circumstances. After meeting the individual known as Wednesday, the cult's leader, she joined Winternight and became fixated with him and his vision, to the point of trying to join him in suicide when she was captured by authorities. Kohlman was vigorously interrogated after her capture, and she did not respond well to the process, first becoming delusional and then falling into a coma.

Drug treatments have produced limited results in returning her to lucidity, and VR therapy failed due to her irrational fear of the Matrix. Her current mental state is unknown, but it is very possible that she is not yet fully functional.





**Description:** Kohlman is a 62-year-old Caucasian human, female, approximately 1.52 meters tall and weighing 45 kg. She has short white hair and blue eyes.

**Database Identification:** [Biometrics, DNA, retinal, and prints]

**Known Aliases:** Friday

**Known Associates/Connections:** Asatru sects, Viking gangs, Wednesday (deceased)

**Last Known Location:** Esquirol hospital, France

- “Vigrously interrogated,” eh? Nice euphemism. Let’s make it plain—Friday was tortured so that they could find out where the EMP bombs were stashed.
- Sunshine
- If I had to wager on who busted her out, I’d put money on a group in the Schattengesellschaft. There’s lots of false trails and spoofed video being generated to conceal Friday’s whereabouts, which is exactly how these guys operate.
- Snopes
- Maybe Puck has some insight? After all he used to be tight with Pax and her crew. Where is our resident otaku hasbeen? Oh wait, he’s been off the radar for a while now? I wonder what he’s been up to?
- Clockwork

## JOB

**Background:** Job’s name comes from his habit of leaving quotes from the Book of Job at his crime scenes. The work he’s put into causing malicious accidents has caused the death of 71 people and injuries to 130 others. Job’s stunts include hacking or shutting down traffic lights and sections of the grid in different parts of Seattle, and he shut down the safety protocols of a power plant in Texas, damaging the generator and causing a power outage. Job’s quotes have also been found on drones that have crashed into buildings in many locations across the UCAS. The biggest disaster he’s been responsible for is the hacking and collision of two maglev trains in France, and his latest target was Hong Kong, where he left two dead and five injured from gas explosions in the street food market off of the Golden Mile. His abilities to get in and get out of high-security systems without any detection is alarming.

**Modus Operandi:** Job’s targets are seemingly random in nature, but investigators are combing through reports of electronics devices inexplicably failing, hoping that a pattern will eventually emerge. The attacks that have been confirmed to this point have been fast and limited to an area. The motive of the attacks is unclear—we don’t know if Job is targeting specific people or commlinks, looking for data, or just trying to foster chaos. The recent Hong Kong attack serves as a good example of the way Job works. Everything happened on the length of a single street—first, drones were compromised and programmed to crash. Then Job hacked nodes, loaded them with all kinds of malware, and had his way with the system while it was too busy failing to notice. He left the system in such disrepair that it was impossible to tell what, if

anything, he was after. All the street's nodes could do once he was done with them was flash identical words up and down the length of a few ruined blocks: "Yea, the light of the wicked shall be put out, and the spark of his fire shall not shine. Job 18:5."

**Psych Profile:** Job's Biblical quotes indicate the possibility that he is operating out of a sense of religious persecution or even martyrdom, or that he is a narcissist seeking redemption. His attacks show extreme disregard for individual lives, and it is likely that he does not relate well to people on an individual level and has few if any close contacts.

**Description:** We know very little of the suspect as the data trail has been very sparse. The high level of hacking skill involved in the attacks has led to speculation that Job may be a technomancer. We are investigating both flight plans as well as network relay buffers for any commonality prior to the attacks.

**Database Identification:** [Unavailable]

**Known Aliases:** None

**Known Associates/Connections:** None

**Last Known Location:** Last attack was in Hong Kong

- I encountered him. It was scary to see how fast things were being hacked.
- SnowTiger
- I don't think it was a "he," I think Job is an "it," like an AI or Free Sprite. There was a rumor of a similar event in Denver.
- NetCat

## KANE

**Background:** The pirate known as Kane, a rigger from the CAS, remains living, and several bounties are still available for his detention or elimination for piracy and numerous related charges in twenty countries, now including Morocco and Azania. His sphere of operations is nearly worldwide. It is confirmed that he has a few airships at his disposal, meaning his next attack could occur virtually anywhere. His attacks have occurred across the globe, from his early raids against Japanese forces in San Francisco and Amalgamated Petrochem to his latest strikes in the harbor of Cape Town and the sinking of the Mont-Blanc owned by Esprit Industries in the Mediterranean. With his crew, he strikes at some bold targets for high profitability, and most, but not all, of his targets have been at sea. He has been known to hop from country to country, taking on risky targets. He is wanted by Lone Star, Knight Errant, Centurion, Eagle Security, the Corporate Court, and is a person of interest for more than a dozen corporations.

**Modus Operandi:** Kane strikes fast, relying on unpredictability and surprise. His jobs often involve considerable advance planning, as he must take into account how the target thinks in order to maximize surprise. Once he has obtained his objective, his exits are generally just as surprising as his initial entries; he may destroy the whole facility, or leave something behind that can keep security forces occupied while he slips away. He doesn't mind leaving his crew behind, as they rarely have any information he doesn't want Interpol to know.

**Psych Profile:** Kane is considered a sociopath with his disregard for the lives of his targets as well as of any associates that try to work with him. The only exception to this is his girlfriend Kat [Record]. He thrives on the media attention and will try to get

//upload Uniformat file attachment:: user Fianchetto  
:: 01/02/2071//  
Report by Detective Diamond

Dean Costello [See Criminal Profile] was released after evidence was found that one Tina Arbala, with the assistance of some other entity, employed better-than-life suggestive software and hypnotized a group of people to help her in her crimes. She is on trial for hacking into the LuCom and Karakuchi Corporate offices and murdering 24-year-old Alice Jensen and 41-year-old security guard Al Ethland, both employed by LuCom. The assisting entity was not apprehended.

Instant Message...

**TO:** Fianchetto  
**FROM:** Dean

Detective Jack Diamond is a little technophobic and not savvy on these things. The "entity" he refers to was a sprite. "Tasker," I believe it called itself. There was also something weird going on afterwards as a Yakuza casino, the Medical Health Corp, and the Penrose Psychology Library were hacked for data, possibly by the same sprite. Don't know if any runners took care of it or not.

Hey, come by the Hub sometime. I'll take you to the Tower of Babel for a drink.

it with every attack. He is concerned with his outward presence and reputation.

**Description:** Kane is male, human, approx 2 meters tall with black hair tied into a ponytail. He's in his late thirties to early forties, Hispanic-Caucasian, weighing approximately 135 kg.

**Database Identification:** [Biometrics, DNA, and prints]

**Known Aliases:** Doesn't believe in hiding his crimes with another identity.

**Known Associates/Connections:** Various pirate groups and Kat

**Last Known Location:** Miami. Carib League

- And the SOB still hasn't mellowed out in age.
- Stone
- What should I do now that I got money and the girl? Retire to Montana and be a juicer for passing T-Birds, while drinking Arnold Palmers? Hell no! I'm going to continue to burn the candle at both ends just like everyone else. I just happen to have a longer candle than most, if you know what I'm saying. BTW, who the hell alphabetizes a wanted list? It should be organized by most wanted! How many other people can say they are wanted in twenty countries? And for those wondering: that DNA and print set they have on file? They're two visits to Butch back.
- Kane



// upload Uniformat file attachment:: user  
Fianchetto :: 01/02/2071 //

### ARM Investigation into JOB

Investigation of Case #00044432. Unsub known as JOB. Special Agent Samuel dictating.

I had followed the persona known as JOB to the Hong Kong RTG when the data trail went cold. I sent Jerod and my own sleuth sprites, Nix and Pix, to sniff around. My suspicion is that JOB is an AI, possibly predatory in nature. I was able to find the remains of a church's node in Provo (or rather the references to it), as the hardware went up in an unexpected fire a year ago. Some data survived out in the Matrix referencing the book of Job. Whether JOB originated there or travelled through there cannot be determined. Nix just came back reporting finding a trace of JOB's trail. I called Jerod to meet me at Sector 4 of Hong Kong Traffic node, Physical location, Mile 8 of Granville Rd. My hunch is the Ecumenical Christian Building will be JOB's target. Will report after this search.

- Special Agent Samuel is at the hospital undergoing therapy. Special Agent Jerod flat-lined at the DeeCee Office. SnowTiger, you'd better send some flowers or chocolates, 'cause I bet that's who saved your ass back there. I'll forward you his hospital address.

- Fianchetto

- Does JOB blow up coffee pots? I had two different runs where coffee pots blew up when I was nowhere near 'em.

- Slamm-0!

### WALTER KRALT

**Background:** The stuff of many an urban legend, Walter Kralt is a second-generation murderer and creator of snuffer sims. His father, Abel Kralt, was the first producer of snuffer sims, neurorecordings of a person before and after death. Abel Kralt was arrested in October 2061 for the murder of ten young women in connection with his production of snuffer sims. All the sims were destroyed by police after Abel's conviction and death two years ago, but copies of those long-lost sims are now hitting the market. Lone Star attempted to question Walter Kralt about the matter but discovered he had vanished from his group home. A search turned up a rental storage unit with simsense equipment and three decomposed bodies. Authorities are monitoring the Matrix, looking for any trace of recordings of these victims. This case has gained a certain amount of notoriety, both because of Mr. Kralt's father and the macabre popularity of the snuffer sims, which has led to thousands of sales of Kralt Sr.'s sims.

**Modus Operandi:** Kralt has kidnapped, tortured, and murdered three young women. All of his victims have been young and

living on the street, either homeless or prostitutes (or both). If he follows the pattern of his father, he will get bolder in the selection of his targets as the demand and price of the videos go up. Kralt is calm and methodical when he carries out his crimes—the deaths of each victim has been slow, allowing for maximum recording time.

**Psych Profile:** Walter Kralt's childhood has been well documented in the files dealing with his father's incarceration. He was raised in a family where no one member emotionally connected with another. His parents' relationship was built primarily on decades of shared resentment, and he was often used as a pawn in their unending game of emotional one-upmanship. While his father was not physically abusive, he did nothing to help spur normal child development patterns in Walter. As he grew older, Walter developed an abnormal fixation with sims to fill the void left by his distant father. While Walter's issues were identified shortly after his father's arrest, therapy had little effect on the boy. Walter was put on medication and lived in a group home while he attended school, receiving entirely mediocre grades.

**Description:** Kralt is 28 years old, Caucasian, male, human, 1.63 meters tall, weighing 70 kg. He has short curly blonde hair and blue eyes.

**Database Identification:** [Biometrics, DNA, and prints]

**Known Aliases:** Both Abel and Walter Kralt, Sleepless

**Known Associates/Connections:** None, but someone is likely helping him distribute the sims on the Matrix

**Last Known Location:** Granger Group Home, Boston

### MERODE NGOBOBO

**Background:** Rebel General Merode Ngobobo (a.k.a. The CEO) does not belong to any corporation; he wages war against them and various other factions around what was Vurunga and Bwindi National park. Ngobobo controls what used to be the Lord Resistance Army of Uganda joined by the Tutsi tribe of Rwanda, and they fight the corporate exploitation of the land. Corporate Court security forces as well as the Congolese Army have been fighting Ngobobo in very difficult terrain and working to gain help from other tribes in the area. Ngobobo recruits assistance by appealing to those sympathetic to his cause—his first priority is the preservation of the mountain gorillas and mountain spirits in the parks. His methods have gotten national attention, especially the incident where he left an Ares executive's head (along with those of six others) in a bag of coal in Kampala.

**Modus Operandi:** Ngobobo is accused of using child soldiers, terrorist bombings in Kigali and Kampala, and hostage-taking in order to force corporations to leave the area. It is estimated he has several thousand rebels working with him. With the aid of shamans and spirits, Ngobobo can literally bring the mountain down on top of anyone attempting to take his fortification on Nyiragongo. Ngobobo doesn't have mercy on those that step into his territory and summarily executes all trespassers without question.

**Psych Profile:** Rebel General Ngobobo has a megalomania complex stemming from the power and fear he has over the people, hence the self-proclaimed title of CEO. He feels morally justified in his actions and will never yield to what he sees are unjust interferences with his righteous cause.

**Description:** Rebel General Ngobobo is a male troll, African, approx 2.7 meters tall and weighing 320 kg.

**Database Identification:** [Biometrics]

**Known Aliases:** The CEO

**Known Associates/Connections:** Tutsi and Bantu tribes

**Last Known Location:** Nyiragongo volcano, Congo

- The corporations are trying to spin this to their advantage, saying that using modern conveniences such as power plants would end illegal charcoal harvesting while corporate jobs would produce an influx of money to people for food.
- Picador
- No matter how they spin it, the war will go on, and new troops keep lining up. I've heard that some of the spirits of Mt. Kilimanjaro have reappeared at Nyiragongo volcano to talk with the CEO.
- Black Mamba

## MIKASA HEIHACHIRO

**Background:** During the Orichalcum Rush of '61, an island appeared off the coast of California, and the Wuxing corporation managed to mine two hundred kilos. of orichalcum (per the insurance report) from it. Unfortunately for Wuxing, the boat carrying the orichalcum was caught in dense fog, and a female pirate boarded the ship, disabling it and stealing the orichalcum almost single-handedly. She was reported to have killed five people (four guards, one crewmember) as she boarded the ship. While this isn't the largest orichalcum load extracted before the mining went dry, it is the largest theft ever recorded. Wuxing has placed a standing bounty on the pirate in question, Mikasa Heihachiro, and offered a reward on information leading to the stolen cargo.

**Modus Operandi:** The theft of the orichalcum was quick and well planned. Even in the fog, Heihachiro knew where the ship would be and how to disable it. Heihachiro is reportedly quite skilled with both swords and magic, and she used the full range of her abilities in the theft. Since neither the orichalcum nor Heihachiro have surfaced since the theft, rumors have spread that the pirate might have died soon after the theft. It would not be the first time, however, that Heihachiro was the subject of exaggerated rumors of her demise.

A licenced Miko in the Imperial army, Mikasa Heihachiro first surfaced in the world as an officer of the occupational force in California. She was supposedly killed (with video recordings and eyewitnesses testifying of her demise) when General Saito blew up the transport ship leaving port as ordered by the Diet. The orichalcum theft, however, seems to be clear proof that she survived and has taken on a new career.

**Psych Profile:** Evidence continues to mount that the orichalcum heist was a long time in the planning, meaning that Heihachiro is single-minded and capable of carrying out a long-term, detailed plan.

**Description:** Heihachiro is an Asian human female who prefers to dress in shades of blue. She had previously been referred to in case files as "La Azul" before her real identity was known. She has not been seen for more than 5 years.

**Database Identification:** [Biometrics, DNA, retinal, and prints]

**Known Aliases:** La Azul

**Known Associates/Connections:** None on record

**Last Known Location:** Fifteen miles west of Costa Azul

- 200 Kilos? In ten years, has anyone seen any of it hit the markets?
- Snopes
- It is believed that Heihachiro was setting up her own personal war against General Saito. I've heard two rumors on what happened to her after the theft. One is that she sank in the fog off the Baja peninsula after being attacked by another group of pirates. The second was that she was double-crossed in a deal with Atzlan, and her hideout hasn't been discovered. Note that Wuxing still has a bounty on her over the orichalcum. Makes you wonder if it was just orichalcum they retrieved from the island.
- Elijah

## MRX

**Background:** MRX is assumed to be the initials of an unknown forger of a broad spectrum of antiques. While forgers usually master one particular art form (such as painting or documents), MRX's initials have been found on paintings, stonework, pottery, and several other pre-21<sup>st</sup> century collectibles. His forgery was first accidentally found using an electron microscope to prove the age of goblets that were supposedly from 14<sup>th</sup> century Europe. The letters "MRX" were found made with stacked gold atoms at the base of each goblet. It is assumed that MRX has a vast shop of equipment and tools to be able to create the variety of antiques that have been found. While MRX could be more than one person, the level of detail and time it would take to craft even one artifact suggests a guild of masters rather than a factory operation. Additionally, while some pieces could be made by automation, the brush strokes done on the paintings have been said by experts to have been done by hand.

**Modus Operandi:** MRX's forgeries have fooled traditional authentication techniques of stylistic and historical matching of the artist as well as fooling scientific authentication techniques of thermoluminescence, radiocarbon 14 dating, and infrared spectroscopy. It is suggested that MRX has access to SOTA tools such as nanotechnology, since several textile forgeries have nanofibers woven into the artwork creating the infamous MRX letters. Discoveries of MRX forgeries have only occurred at the request and expense of a few collectors, so at this time it is not known how many MRX forgeries are in the market, nor is it known when or if an original has been replaced by a copy.

**Psych Profile:** MRX is an artist who takes pride in his work. The attention to detail is incredible, and many of the processes used in the forgeries require considerable patience and expertise. MRX also doesn't place his initials consistently, suggesting that he is playing a game with authenticators and likely craving attention. It could also suggest that MRX is an introvert and unable to express himself other than through his work.

**Description:** There is no description of MRX, as the only evidence of his existence is his work. We are investigating the forgeries and working out a timeframe of when they were switched and where. This may help pinpoint the country in which MRX is working.

**Database Identification:** [Unavailable]

**Known Aliases:** No name or other initials have been found on such forgeries. MRX could be referring to "MR. X" or a phonetic play on letters.

**Known Associates/Connections:** None on record



## TEACHDAIRE



INCOMING FEED.....



**Last Known Location:** Twenty of MRX's works have been found in collections throughout Europe, CAS, and UCAS

- Probably costs just as much as the real thing.
- Mr. Bonds
  
- Indeed. His skills are impressive, good enough to fool any museum.
- Winterhawk

### NULL

**Background:** While TerraFirst! operates in anonymous cells without leadership, one man stands out. Known as Null, this eco-terrorist runs training camps for TerraFirst!, Green Cell, and other environmental terrorist groups. Some of the biggest environmental crimes on record are attributed to him: The 2065 firestorms in the California Free State were caused by Null's arson attacks, killing 102 people, destroying over three thousand homes and structures and burning millions of acres, and the landfill fire bombings in the CAS that exposed nearby neighborhoods to toxic smoke and ash. Null's origins have been traced to Eastern Europe, in the area that once was Albania, based on information from two terrorist attacks in Patos a decade ago. The first was the placement of a water-soluble toxin in the grey water sprinkler system, killing eighty people as the toxin dried and became airborne. The other was a dirty bomb laced with ricin that exploded at a downtown apartment building, collapsing the building, killing almost two hundred people and contaminating the area, making cleanup and rescue highly dangerous.

**Modus Operandi:** Null is a very dangerous individual who justifies his work in the name of the environment. The fire bombings, for example, had two goals: to expose the waste corporations

covered up and to eliminate urban sprawl. Null is very efficient in his attacks, leveraging what's available in the environment to power his efforts.

**Psych Profile:** The most important thing to Null is the earth, which stands in opposition to his methodology of destruction and potential pollution. Humanity is nothing more to him than blight on the earth. Some recorded speeches from his training camps indicate that he wants to take down all corporate and government structures and start again with those that survive.

**Description:** Informers describe Null as a 1.7-meter-tall male ogre, Caucasian, in his mid-twenties, weighing approximately 105 kg. He has dark hair, dark eyes, and olive skin. He speaks with a slight Balkan accent.

**Database Identification:** [Biometrics and prints]

**Known Aliases:** None

**Known Associates/Connections:** TerraFirst!

**Last Known Location:** Amazonia training camp four months ago

### THE PIED PIPER

**Background:** The Pied Piper is a dangerous character. Information assembled from multiple sources tells us that the Pied Piper lures children away and sells them on the black market for sex, military impressments, experiments, even organlegging. The Pied Piper is more than just a kidnapper; the few children that have been recovered suffer from a range of psychological problems, ranging from Stockholm syndrome to schizophrenia. The Pied Piper has been connected to crimes including offering dozens of children to Merode Ngobobo as soldiers, the high-profile kidnapping of Lucia Johnson in DeeCee, and involvement with Tanamous.

**Modus Operandi:** The Pied Piper targets kids through the

189  
DANGEROUS MINDS

Matrix in various chatrooms or commlink profiles. He/she then works her/his way into the child's life, becoming their friend. The Pied Piper understands the price of gifted children and will work out contracts with organizations or corporations for such children. Once the children are identified as gifted (or not), the Pied Piper gets close enough to the victims or gets the victim to come to him/her. Once the child has been obtained, the Piper is generally able to sell them within 48 hours. We believe that the Pied Piper has access to psychological tools to rapidly condition the victim to prevent them from interfering with their own sale. The disappearances of ninety-six children have been connected to the Pied Piper; fourteen children were found before they were sold, while twenty-two of his/her victims were identified only through their DNA.

**Psych Profile:** The Pied Piper is extremely intelligent and persuasive. There is a high amount of arrogance in the Pied Piper's activities, including regular taunts of authorities trying to stop him/her. The Pied Piper has multiple online personas, so while one may be identified as the Pied Piper, another two sneak past any hacker investigation.

**Description:** The Pied Piper has not been definitively identified as male or female, but Mona Lisa analysis gives a 62 percent probability that the Pied Piper was originally female. Surveillance footage of the children being abducted show an assortment of fancy cars, but the face of the Pied Piper is always masked by enhanced image screens. Most of the buyers for the children the Piper sells use go-betweens for the actual transfers, so pinpointing the ultimate buyer is often difficult. One common theme has emerged in multiple surveillance feeds—the Piper has a definite liking of music featuring horned instruments (hence his moniker).

**Database Identification:** [Unavailable]

**Known Aliases:** None on record.

**Known Associates/Connections:** Tamanous, The CEO

**Last Known Location:** Atlanta, CAS

## SERGEI MALENKIN

**Background:** Sergei is a representative of a group of super-killers known as Chimaera originally started by old KGB hitters positioned around the world. His group is responsible for the assassination of Don James O'Malley, Doris Chan, James Rinchik, Joe Two-feathers, and the attempted assassination of Rowena O'Malley. The group's latest victim is believed to be Luka Jankevitch in Scandinavia. Members of Chimaera is difficult to track down, as they work alone and are only contacted through their handlers. Malenkin is the only handler that knows how to contact all of the Chimaera assassins.

**Modus Operandi:** Unfortunately, we have not infiltrated close enough to Malenkin to learn the identity of some of Chimaera's killers or how he contacts them, but surveillance of his movements and monitoring of his Matrix activities continues. Malenkin has supposedly retired from Chimaera and is now involved in legitimate businesses such as managing a recording company called Hez Music and partnering with Josif "Joe" Radek, a big name with the West Coast Vory. Using sources within the Vory could help us learn more about what Malenkin's current activities.

**Psych Profile:** Malenkin is a very paranoid individual who only meets with others in very controlled settings. Even video surveillance is difficult as he has his people carefully search a meeting site, or pull a "Crazy Ivan" and switch the meeting place at the last

minute. The observations we have made indicate that Malenkin may also be suffering from agoraphobia—he rarely leaves the various condos he owns, and when he does, it's only to places where his limo can enter a parking garage.

**Description:** Malenkin is a male human, approximately 40 years old and around 120 kg. He speaks with a Russian accent. Existing video footage of him is poor, but there are a significant number of recorded conversations captured while Malenkin was at his recording company.

**Database Identification:** [Biometrics, DNA, retina, and prints]

**Known Aliases:** None

**Known Associates/Connections:** Chimaera,

PetschukovVory, Hez Music

**Last Known Location:** Seattle

## SIR SIMON

**Background:** The grifter known as Sir Simon is a prolific con artist and counterfeiter. At different times in his career, Simon has forged both nuyen and fake identification to build a very luxurious lifestyle for himself—a lifestyle he has had to repeatedly abandon when his forgeries catch up to him. It is estimated that Simon has forged nearly one hundred million nuyen in valid currency, with an undetermined additional amount generated in fake property deeds and other info-crimes. Simon's most recent major crime occurred four months ago when he conned several people into investing a total of two million nuyen in a Heritage museum in Sussex. Sir Simon is wanted by the Corporate Court as well as governments around the world, as his falsified currency has damaged corporate financial credit and destabilized banks. Once Simon strikes, it takes months for a company to straighten out their assets. Sir Simon has outstanding warrants in Britain, France, AGS, CAS, Quebec, and Hong Kong; he is also a person of interest to Knight Errant, Lone Star, GOD, and the ZO-G.

**Modus Operandi:** Simon knows too much about the systems he hits to be just a run-of-the-mill hacker, and it's possible he has an inside connection for some of his jobs. Simon is a patient operator, as his cons often take months to plan and execute. He is meticulous in his planning, building in failsafes and backups including alternate identities and contingency plans. In one case, law enforcement had him under surveillance in a sting operation but came up empty a day later with no digital trail or any idea how he eluded police [See Sam Burger Case]. Simon is quite mobile, staying in a single area long enough to either con enough money out of the area or to spend some of his counterfeit cash, then vanishing. His Matrix data trail is untrackable. While Simon has been known to enjoy his ill-gotten gains through high living, he never keeps anything for long—any material goods he buys are eventually converted into cash for the next personality.

**Psych Profile:** Simon might be suffering from multiple personality disorder along with a loss of self-image; each aspect of his personality craves expensive indulgences. This is compensation for his insecurities and avoidance of needed social relationships. The personal story he tells his victims varies, though Carnivore software has helped us spot a subtle pattern in his tales.

**Description:** Sir Simon is a very charismatic person, though his description has varied in each crime. Most of the time he is described as human, other times elven, and rarely even ork. Color of hair and skin varies widely, and we are looking into cyber enhancements rather than surgery as his preferred method of disguise.



**Database Identification:** [DNA (pending analysis)]

**Known Aliases:** Simon Grottenburg, Jake Williams, Sam Burger

**Known Associates/Connections:** None on record

**Last Known Location:** London

- Now that's the life!
- Clockwork
- I've tried that once. While faking the lifestyle is easy, I found that the depth of a new personality and background is much more taxing than just faking a SIN. This guy also changes looks, which probably is some hardware that I just don't want to invest in.
- Pistons
- Is that how you got into Dante's in Hong Kong a while back? I thought I saw you out on the dance floor.
- Kat O' Nine Tales
- Indirectly yes. You know the saying, Perception is Reality.
- Pistons

## SNOWBIRD

**Background:** The assassin known as Snowbird has been active from coast to coast for more than ten years, leaving her calling card of a ceramic white bird with each victim. High-profile killings attributed to Snowbird include: [Antonio Casso](#) of the Bonanno family, [Frankie "Saturday Special" Pittard](#) of the Carnetti family, [Vincent "The Tusk" Regatta](#) of the Colombo family, [Joseph "The Musician" Purcisso](#) of the Genovese family, and the attempted assassination of [Rowena O'Malley](#) of the Finnigan family. Snowbird's services are in high demand; interestingly enough, she is often sought out by the very types she generally targets, so that she spends most of her time being paid by one organized crime syndicate to kill members of another.

**Modus Operandi:** Snowbird prefers to finish her jobs with a close-in kill, often with a silenced pistol or blade, so that she may leave her calling card. On some occasions, however, she has used a sniper rifle and left the calling card at her firing position for authorities to find later.

**Psych Profile:** The high proportion of Mafia victims in Snowbird's kills has led profilers to believe that some of her business decisions may be personally motivated—it is possible she carries a vendetta for Mafia capi. Noting that most of her victims have also been men (and those kills are among Snowbird's most violent work), there has been speculation that she carries an additional vendetta against the male gender. Beyond these two points of information, little has been surmised about Snowbird—she is a cold, professional killer, and profilers have seen such people emerge from many different walks of life.

**Description:** Case files contain no records of known face-to-face contacts with Snowbird. She uses the Matrix for all her business dealings, from initial contact to final payment, and there are no surveillance videos of her killings that provide a definitive shot of her. Hackers have attempted to follow the convoluted Matrix trails she has left, and while these efforts have not generated any physical descriptions, recorded conversations confirm that Snowbird is indeed female and has a Slavic accent.

**Database Identification:** [DNA and prints]

**Known Aliases:** Kat

**Known Associates/Connections:** Various organized crime syndicates have hired her over the years.

**Last Known Location:** We have reason to believe that Snowbird is currently in Denver, so local authorities are monitoring Vory activity to see if they are reaching out to her or already working with her.

- For the record: Despite the alias, this is not me. I'm not THAT old!
- Kat o' Nine Tales
- I've actually met Snowbird when we both picked the same vantage point for a wetwork job—great minds and all that. She's got a Slavic accent all right, but it's not Russian like the police think—it's Polish. And if they think she doesn't like the Mafia, they should hear what she says about the Vory. A charming woman; you'd like her, Kat.
- Riser

## TEACHDAIRE

**Background:** While Tir na nÓg continues to disavow any knowledge of this operative, intelligence agencies MI5, UGB, and CIA have all substantiated claims of Teachdaire's former affiliation with the elven nation. Interpol has reason to believe that Teachdaire has gone rogue, and is now hiring out to the highest bidder as a freelance terrorist and assassin.

His name means "messenger" in Gaelic, and he is believed to be the fastest living metahuman. His preferred weapon is a customized sniper rifle, but he has killed by other means. Generating a complete list of Teachdaire's kills is a difficult task, as eyewitnesses to assassinations that fit his MO generally have little recall of the event. It was thought for a time that these witnesses were simply intimidated by Teachdaire's reputation, but further experience has shown that there has been alteration of people's minds near the scenes of Teachdaire's kills. Some of them have had memories of what they saw completely erased, while others have had the memories buried deep in their own minds, in places they cannot access easily (hypnosis sometimes can help extract these memories). The most recent crime that has definitively been attached to Teachdaire occurred in February, when Yurgen Shuvalov of Horizon-affiliated RCNT was stabbed to death in the middle of a dinner party. Witnesses were slow to come forward, and when they did it was difficult to get them to accept the fact that anything out of the ordinary had happened that night.

**Modus Operandi:** Teachdaire has displayed two distinct styles in his attacks. The first, and somewhat more common, is the distant sniper-rifle attack, which allows Teachdaire to get a shot off and get moving away from the scene before most observers know anything has happened. For certain jobs, however, Teachdaire prefers a close-in attack, and it is believed he has announced himself to some of his victims before he kills them. It is likely that he uses magic to approach his victims, and magic is also involved in confusing or erasing the minds of any eyewitnesses.

**Psych Profile:** Teachdaire is not as reclusive as Snowbird, and case files contain several reports of contact with the assassin. These reports are troubling, as it seems that Teachdaire is becoming increasingly unbalanced, likely due to cyberpsychosis tied to his extensive augmentations. One of the few photos of Teachdaire



in existence shows some of his implants [link], and several informant reports detail his increasingly erratic behavior [link].

**Description:** Teachdaire is an elf, but it is likely he often disguises himself as a human when on the job. His age is unknown, but intelligence services have reports of his activities dating back over three decades. He is 1.9 meters tall and weighs 85 kgs. He has a 33 cm scar running almost the full length of his arm. The photo mentioned above shows him with blonde hair and blue eyes, but those characteristics are likely to change frequently.

**Database Identification:** [Unavailable]

**Known Aliases:** None

**Known Associates/Connections:** Teachdaire is assumed to still have many connections in Tir na Nóg.

**Last Known Location:** We have unconfirmed sightings in Moscow, Portland, and New York.

- Yurgen Shuvalov was rumored to be a Sovetnik of the Western Vory. Petschukov must be paying big money on such heavy hitters like the Chimaera and Teachdaire to buy time for him to consolidate power.
- Riser

## XIN LAO

**Background:** Xin Lao was one of twelve warlords who took control of the Gansu nation in a coup twenty years ago. Ten years later that number dwindled to six, with Shin Qao Hien in Haiyan and Xin Lao in Yumen as the strongest forces in Gansu. Xin had managed to build a facility creating weaponized toxins such as *shigella*, *ricin*, and *machupo*, and he is rumored to have removed three of the warlords through deployment of biobomb rats. Independent observers estimate the number of people killed through his use of bioweapons numbers to the tens of thousands. Four years ago in a joint effort, the other warlords deposed Xin, driving him out of his stronghold in Yumen—but not without cost. Xin left a parting gift of mustard gas and sarin, killing seven thousand people including most of his personal staff. Rumor has it that he seeded the countryside with biodrone swarms to elude capture. Xin Lao is wanted on several counts of mass murder and violation of the Oslo Accords against the use of biological and chemical weapons.

**Modus Operandi:** While in power Xin Lao developed and employed biobomb drones in order to establish control over the Gansu nation. He has no preference in toxin and was able to smuggle or manufacture a half-dozen of them. Power is his main goal, and intimidation and fear are his preferred methods of obtaining it.

**Psych Profile:** With all the drones serving as his eyes, ears, and wrath around the country, Xin Lao has developed feelings of omnipotence leading to megalomania. Characteristically, individuals of Xin Lao's profile have a few idiosyncratic indulgences, but we have not yet pinpointed what Xin Lao does to derive personal benefit from the power he has accrued.

**Description:** Xin Lao is a 58-year-old Asian human male. He has a few identifiable scars on his chest that he has tattooed into a dragon. Though he has been forced out of his stronghold, he still controls much of Gansu and must be considered very dangerous.

**Database Identification:** [Unavailable]

**Known Aliases:** Rat King

**Known Associates/Connections:** Various smuggling groups in the area.

**Last Known Location:** Xin Lao has possibly fled to Mongolia, offering his knowledge for asylum.

- When the other warlords finally got into his stronghold, they noticed that he had anticipated his overthrow and was already packed up and ready to roll.
- Rigger X
- It's been rumored that he had facilities built in Yumen to experiment in biowarfare weaponizing. The biobomb rats were just tests. If the other warlords had found Xin Lao's goodies, they probably would have used them on each other by this point, so no news is good news—Xin Lao probably took his toys with him. That's why he became even more wanted—now he's not just a threat, but he's got info and tech that some other powerful people would really like to see.
- Nephrine

Instant Message...

**TO:** Fianchetto

**FROM:** NetCat

Missed One Dangerous Criminal, Fianchetto:

### Slamm-0!

**Background:** I would describe to you some of the many cases that Slamm-0! has supposedly done, but all I found are bots and malware doing the work, and him taking the credit. I can't even call him a data pirate, as he shops at file sharing nodes like GamersUnite!

**Modus Operandi:** I couldn't find his handiwork in a mysterious slippage of odds at Grid 19 for a football game that worked out in his favor. Nor could I find any truth to the rumored cartoonish display hack on MCT's OS software a few years ago. And I definitely could find nothing about the recent run on Ares, where someone rode a lab rat's secret online love notes to an undisclosed lab location and pulled out a pair of SOTA autosoft specs that are so advanced they might have come from aliens.

**Psych Profile:** Childish and arrogant with a God complex.

**Description:** He's a young, ill-tempered, wannabe hacker who thinks he's a hot shit knowledge master on so many subjects, but we all know it's bullshit. Slamm-0! just sits around in his apartment in his boxers watching live-action anime [Photos from his Cleaning Drone]. And no FastJack, I didn't trace him from JackPoint.

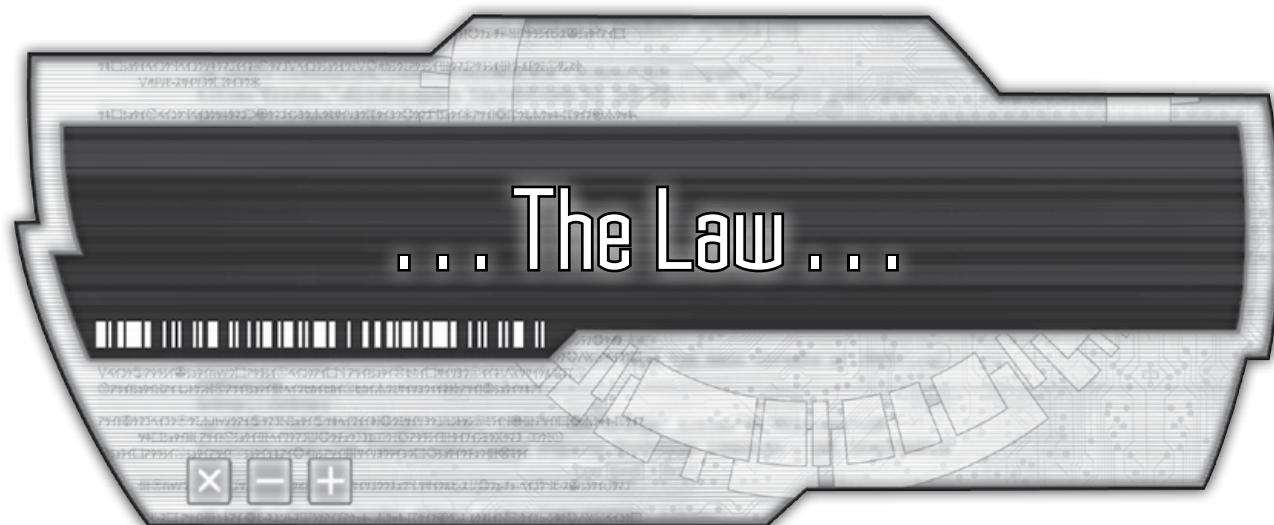
**Known Aliases:** I think it took him about five years to come up with the Slamm-0! alias, so we can't expect a new one from him for a while.

**Known Associates/Connections:** Can't find anyone who would say that they have worked with Slamm-0!

**Last Known Location:** JackPoint

- Aw. I knew you cared!
- Slamm-0!





Knight Errant was hiring, giving jobs to almost anybody who applied, as long as they had never worked for Lone Star. Not that the Lone Star people were incompetent—quite the opposite, really, some of them were the best available applicants—it just felt really good to stick it to them by keeping them out.

KE was hiring people to walk beats, people to install new surveillance gear across Seattle, and people to push electrons. And, of course, people to monitor these other people. People to hold meetings to talk about the people who did actual work.

Ralston Brookner was honored to be one of these new hires, and he was quite sincerely delighted to be in a meeting of the Discretionary Resource Committee of Knight Errant's new Seattle municipal division.

"Look, I know all the mobs and gangs are watching each other pretty closely right now, but we need to make some arrests," Brookner's new boss, Leslie Kroll, said vehemently. "We've gotta show we're not Lone Star. They fucked up on flipside. We'll show we're tougher on the pushers than they were. We should throw as much as we can spare at organized crime."

Brookner had been shy for the first half-hour of the meeting, but Kroll's fire had warmed him, and he was speaking freely. "Yeah, flipside was a disaster, but the corps make this town tick, and we've got to keep them as happy as possible."

"Corps have their own security," Myer Verlaine said with a sneer. Brookner had known Verlaine for thirty minutes, and he already hated him. "They can take care of themselves."

"Internally," Brookner shot back. "But they've got people on the streets just like anyone else, and they want their people safe out there. You know how much hell we'll catch if corp people start falling dead? Those are the people we need to look after."

Maureen Bledsoe, and older woman who wore glasses even though her cybereyes undoubtedly gave her perfect vision, leaned forward. The others fell silent in deference to her.

"It may be enjoyable to pretend we received this contract because we merited it," Bledsoe said in her slow voice, "but I'd like to think we are not that naïve. We got it through the same process that any corp gets anything of significance, and we have incurred a fair number of favors and debts to repay. The resources we control may be 'discretionary' in name only."

Kroll nodded. "True. But we can decide which favors to repay first."

"How about cracking down on some shadowrunners?" Brookner said. "It would make some district councilors happy. That may discharge some favors."

"We can do that," Kroll said. "Runners are generally easy pickings. But let's choose our targets carefully—make the biggest splash with the least amount of effort." She paused. "Any other factors we should be considering?"

Everyone took a moment to think.

"How about justice?" Brookner said.

That line got a good laugh. Brookner basked in it.

# KNOW THE LAW BEFORE YOU BREAK IT

Posted by: **DangerSensei**

Okay, folks. With all this very useful information on improving your criminal selves, I thought this would be a good time for a reminder that, yes, we are criminals and, yes, there are a few misguided souls out there who want to stop us. Play the game right and they'll be no more than annoying gnats in your ear. Screw up and you're looking at 10–20 with Bubba the Love Troll for a cellmate. This little primer should help you avoid spending any time with Bubba ... unless, of course, that's your thing.

Successful shadowrunners rely on skill, luck, and a working knowledge of legal loopholes. What is a crime in one place is perfectly legal in another; what is contraband in one country/city/neighborhood may be aboveboard a few blocks over. Knowing what laws you're breaking—before you do so—can mean the difference between getting shot on sight and getting to smile and nod at the nice officers.

The law that applies depends on where you are standing. Well, except for the legal nightmare of the Matrix, where the law depends on where you think you're standing. If you decide to steal some data from a Mitsuhamma R&D facility, once you've crossed back onto UCAS territory, you've broken no UCAS laws (and if you can get that data over to a Renraku lab, you'll actually be rewarded). Smoking a cigarette in public is perfectly legal on UCAS territory, but loading up a CalHot will get you in hot water. In Tir Tairngire, smoking in public areas is likely to get you fined (arrested if you're a non-elf), but you can ... well, hell, you can't do much that's fun at all in the Tir. In LA, you can experience all the moodies and CalHots you want, but downloading a BTL will get you 12 months in minimum security. In Nairobi, you can smoke, eat, or inject any type of drug you want, but summon a spirit, and you're likely to be shot on sight by the Corporate Council joint security folks. See what I mean? Things you may take for granted as legal where you live may be strongly prohibited, legislated, or regulated in other areas (or vice versa).

- Before you travel, you should always research the local laws and license needs. Know Before You Go, that's my motto.
- Traveler Jones
- Right. The only law Jones looks up before he goes somewhere is the legal age of consent.
- Elijah

It's not enough to just know the national laws—different cities and jurisdictions may also pass more restrictive laws (although they are rarely able to get away with less restrictive laws). Corporations with extraterritoriality have the right to pass and enforce their own laws and punishments on their property—as well as the right to ignore the pesky legalities of the country their facility resides in.

The second part of knowing the legal system is knowing the punishment doled out for a specific crime. And remember, corporations can dole out whatever punishments they deem fit for any offenses—there are no civil rights in a corporate environment. The punishment is generally related to the severity of the offense. In a corporation, like, say, Horizon, dealing otherwise illegal drugs (and they're pretty lenient) to your coworkers can result in a few

weeks at a team-building workshop. The same activity at Saeder-Krupp is likely to end up with you enjoying a 6 month sentence at a contracted detention facility. Most of the corps big enough to reach extraterritoriality are going to have similar viewpoints on the major crimes: embezzlement, industrial spying or sabotage, murder (of corporate citizens), kidnapping, and underperformance/disruption of workplace efficiency. All the big corporations have internal processes in place for investigating, prosecuting, and punishing/rehabilitating the offenders. All the Triple As have their own judicial systems in fact. Some, like Horizon, make big bucks off their prisons. Others prefer to dispose of offending employees with a single bullet to the brain ... can anyone say "KondOrchid?" And I hear Tan Tien's capital punishment is a one-way trip to the donor body clinic.

The important thing for us shadowrunners is that non-corporate citizens caught committing a crime on corporate territory can be dealt with as the corporation pleases, but remember, profit and loss trump justice...

- What DangerSensei means is that if you get caught on, say, Ares property with a few dead security guards, a pocketful of drone prototypes, and a commlink full of their proprietary data, they can (a) torture you without legal restriction, kill you, and donate your body to science, (b) ask you if you'd like to volunteer for a scientific research project (if you say "no", see option a), or (c) keep you as a pet shadowrunner, ensuring your loyalty with a kink bomb and a 24/7 monitoring device.
- Pistons
- While many corps might just shoot on sight, that's better than Horizon's reprogramming solution to "criminals."
- Cosmo
- Reprogramming?
- Butch
- Oh, just a running joke between me and Dr. Spin. A team of runners we knew were caught by Horizon, vanished for a few weeks, then reappeared—as Horizon employees, I kid you not—acting just a little "off." You know, forgetting certain people they used to know, forgetting past jobs they pulled, acting all righteous about their new jobs ... which they think they've held forever. They don't even use profanity anymore. Dr. Spin's a fan of flat-vids; he suggested this creepy movie called Stepford Babes or something like that...
- Cosmo
- Like psychotropic IC?
- Netcat
- Like, don't get caught by Horizon.
- Dr. Spin
- Hell, the fact is, most corps will just dispose of your typical low-end shadowrunners. The ones they tend to want to keep are the "special" kind—Awakened, virtuakinetics, talented hackers, or high-profile criminals they can trade to other governments for brownie points. If you're a run-of-the-mill gunbunny, your chance of bargaining your way out of certain doom is zero to none.
- Turbo Bunny







MONS. 94

## WHAT CAN THEY (LEGALLY) DO?

### M.O.M.'s Guide to Knowing Your Rights

In Seattle, Knight Errant peace officers have broad discretion in their rights when it comes to protecting the public. Although Knight Errant has corporate extraterritoriality, they are still contractually required to enforce UCAS law (and therefore UCAS civil rights). They can stop any individual or vehicle, at any time, to request identification and/or perform searches, with or without cause. They can perform astral scans or technological scans on persons or vehicles without a warrant, but entering private property for such searches (including in astral space) requires owner consent or probable cause. They can detain any individual (except for those with diplomatic or corporate immunity) for up to 72 hours without filing charges (the SINless can be held for up to seven days without charges, or for 72 hours after verifying a SIN and identity). If they have reason to believe your ID is false, they can detain you until they are able to verify your identity. Matrix searches do not require any warrants, although accessing bank or financial data held at an extraterritorial institution does require cooperation from said institution as well as a duly issued warrant. Most forms of surveillance in public areas, including passive surveillance measures such as traffic cams, CCTV systems, and drones, do not require a warrant, while anything on private property does (and any direct personal use of magical surveillance—for example, mind probes—require a warrant). In all cases, extraterritorial property, or diplomatic territories, require permission from the corp or country before any peace officer can perform a search, conduct surveillance, or enter the premises. Peace officers are also authorized to use any force necessary to prevent public harm, including injuring or killing any person they have probable reason to believe is an imminent threat to public safety.

- The tidbit about probable cause is important—an officer has complete discretion when it comes what constitutes probable cause... like, say, a funny smell coming from your apartment, or perhaps she doesn't like the color of your house, or maybe it's just something his

horoscope said this morning. Fact is, even the upright cops can—and do—create their own “probable causes.”

- Kat o' Nine Tales

- As is the amount of time the cops can detain you. Notice that if they think your ID is false, they can hold you indefinitely. They have no obligation to speed along a request for verification to the appropriate databases.

- Cosmo

- The corporate immunity clause is an interesting one (especially if you want to fake a corporate ID). Mr. Joe Wageslave doesn't qualify for corporate immunity, and his corporate citizenship doesn't protect him from searches, arrests, prosecution, or incarceration if he breaks a UCAS law on UCAS soil (and gets caught on UCAS soil—if he gets back to Mother Corp, UCAS cops have to go through an extradition process, which is a real pain in the ass). But every corp that qualifies for extraterritoriality provides some citizens with corporate immunity, just like other countries send diplomats to the UCAS. These generally are the high muckety-mucks, the men and women who have broad discretion within the corp and influence strategic direction—CEO, CFO, board of directors, those chaps. But let's face it, those guys have entire departments dedicated to cleaning up their messes, so if one of them does manage to commit a crime, all traces of the crime probably disappear before the cops ever get wind of it. Still, if Joe Wageslave commits a crime, Mother Corp is responsible for providing his legal representation, and in the UCAS, at least, the UCAS can bill Mother Corp for Joe's trial expenses and incarceration costs.

- Hard Exit

- Anyone else notice how the Brackhaven administration foisted off the worst of the tempo trouble on Lone Star and its slowness to react? Means that Knight Errant, the new kids on the block, are being extra hard on street crime and violence these days to look good in their new job while Damien keeps working his connections in Metroplex hall.

- Sounder

## THE BIG LEAGUES

The big criminal syndicates have their own ways of dealing with the major corporate and government legal systems. Since some of the syndicates are as large as corporations, make as much nuyen as a small country, and frequently span the globe, it only makes sense they'd have just as complicated methods for avoiding legal entanglements as the cops have for trying to ensnare them.

The big syndicates tend to avoid certain lower-level crimes that would bring them to the attention of the street cops (generally by using street-level proxies like gangs, independent dealers, fences, etc.). You don't see syndicate flunkies robbing the local

stuffer shack or mugging tourists. In this way, they automatically avoid a significant percentage of the “normal” police methods of reducing crime—the street surveillance, the patrol drones, the beat cops. In fact, the syndicates often replace the “beat cop” in the neighborhoods they control, providing both protection to the citizens within their territory, and freedom from the pesky oversight of the cops.

The types of crime, and the immense scope of their organizations, have resulted in most countries having a specific police force dedicated to Organized Crime. In UCAS, the FBI has its Organized Crime Division, while many state or sprawl police

forces also have a smaller Organized Crime Department attached to their city police (or contracted peace force). In Seattle, for example, Knight Errant has an Organized Crime Department (OCD). The local departments vary in their levels of competence and corruption, but as a generalization, most successful crime syndicates buy themselves a portion of the department involved in policing them. Call it insurance, investment, or simply gathering intelligence against your opposition, they all do it.

- DangerSensei doesn't spell it out, so. The FBI's OCD does not always play well with Lone Star or Knight Errant's OCD. They aren't related to each other, being that both Lone Star and Knight Errant are extraterritorial and have no obligation to share their info, data, or manpower with the FBI. Sure, most cities that contract with one or the other have a federal "cooperation" clause written into the contract. But you can bet your ass that if Knight Errant thinks they can get some glory by pulling off a big bust, they're not going to invite the Feebs in on the action. The syndicates understand this political dance well enough to exploit it.

- Cosmos

- The real fun starts when the FBI hires a runner to infiltrate Knight Errant, either by hacking or physical hit, in order to scope their intel on a criminal syndicate, because KE isn't sharing. Then KE does the same to Lone Star, hoping to screw with LS's intel and make them look incompetent, and snatch their contract. Then LS hires themselves some runners to scope out the Mafia ... and the Mafia then hires some runners to plant false data into the FBI's databases. You need a score card to keep them all straight sometimes. Still, just proof that crime does pay.

- Pistons

- You just like running against Damien's boys.

- Sticks

- Everyone needs a hobby.

- Pistons

Many times the FBI's OCD also works hand-in-hand with the IRS and the Federal Drug Enforcement Agency. This is often because of the completely screwed-up tax code in the UCAS, which demands a share of your income whether it was earned legally or not. Since the IRS can't collect taxes on the biggest income earners in the country (the extraterritorial corps), they must figure that they can go after the big criminal syndicates, which often have profits just as staggering as any A or AA corp out there. In retaliation, the big criminal syndicates employ entire armies of tax accountants. With the current cashless society, it is harder for the big boys to hide their immense profits. After all, those pretty little electronic nuyens leave a data trail ... and the IRS employs some of the hottest hackers on the planet.

- The IRS's "Department of Electronic Forensics" (DEF) is the nightmare of any big-time criminal. Even us smaller players get caught by them ... and I'd rather face a squad of Renraku's Red Samurai than meet up with the Feds. DEF doesn't get any press, but they could go head-to-head with any of the GOD hackers and win hands down. Damn bloodsuckers.

- Mr. Bonds

All the Big 10 have divisions within their corporate security to deal with organized crime. After all, organized crime cuts into their bottom line and threatens their citizenry ... so the corporations are going to be proactive in dealing with them. Some of the syndicates actually work with a major corporation, while other corporations firmly disapprove of the underculture. Others cater to the corporate citizens or live off copyright infringement and black market goods. The corporations and the syndicates are irretrievably linked.

- The David Cartel and Aztechnology are good examples of that synergy. Hard to tell where the interests of one stop and the other start. MCT is another example of a corp with significant underworld connections. On the other hand, both Ares and S-K have very strong anti-crime stances (for very different reasons).

- Glasswalker

One thing to remember is that corporations have their own laws and regulations for their citizens.

Many people assume those laws are similar to those of the UCAS or CAS, but that's far from true. This is important because it goes right to the very definition of what constitutes a crime to a corporation. Light drugs and moodie chips are perfectly legal in many corps. MCT has its own indentured geisha employees and bunraku parlors. Many recognize alternate forms of marriage or different ages of consent (Evo, for example, recognizes the "legal" age of consent at different ages for different metatypes: 10 for orks, 14 for trolls, 16 for humans and dwarfs, and 18 for elves).

Many corporations have legal prostitution services for their employees. By keeping many of these vices internal, the bigger corps can lessen the risk of some wageslave spilling their beans during some pillowtalk, being blackmailed over their novacoke habit, or getting snatched by external players during their weekly gambling session.

Of course, this causes the syndicates—who'd like to see that corporate nuyen flow into their own whorehouses, gambling dens, and drug houses—some frustration. Which means, of course, that the syndicates have to figure out how to top the in-house offerings for the wageslaves—targeting an Ares employee with bloodsport gambling dens, or an S-K employee with some tempo.

## THE MINOR LEAGUES

On the opposite end of the spectrum are the cops we're more likely to run into, those that investigate the disorganized type of crime. (You'll no doubt be proud to know that as shadowrunners, we fall under the disorganized label.) These include special units focusing on gang violence, drugs or controlled substances, street violence and public safety, paranormal investigations, and even "special investigations"—the brave cops dedicated to curtailing shadowrunners. A key difference between these divisions and the big players is that while most sprawls have units dedicated to these types of crimes, corporations generally don't. Corporations tend to lump all these under the ubiquitous "Corporate Security" label and expect their security forces to handle all of them. Internal Audit and Security departments handle much of the corporate investigations, rather like an elite detective force with considerably more leeway and considerably less regard for citizen rights.



Gang violence has resulted in special task forces in most cities. The UCAS maintains a special Gang Prevention Program as a department of the FBI. Lone Star has its Gang Response Investigation Team (GRIT), while Knight Errant has a Department of Gang and Street Violence (DGSV). These programs are almost always underfunded and overworked. They include investigative units, community outreach and youth prevention programs, and community education services.

- The cops who investigate gang-related violence are often out-gunned by the gangsters themselves. It's no surprise that the cops won't even go into the worst areas of Seattle, like the Redmond Barrens or parts of Puyallup. Knight Errant, like Lone Star before them, has a "Z-Zone" clause in their contract letting them out of policing those areas. Which just goes to show the balance of power between the gangs and the cops
- Sticks

• Some runners—those who've come up from the streets—take advantage of that and live in those wretched places. Paying off the local gang is a cheap price to get to stay in territory where the cops won't come looking for you. Of course, there are other drawbacks. Awakened types generally can't stand the background counts in the areas. Hackers get p.o.'d at the lack of reliable wireless signals. And for everyone else, lack of utilities, chiphead neighbors, and the ever-present worry that your gang contact might just be a little too high to remember your payment...

- Kat o' Nine Tales

## COPS FOR HIRE

Regardless of how careful you are, everyone comes into contact with the cops at some point. Here's a brief rundown on some of the players in the field of law enforcement, contracted or otherwise. About 75 percent of municipalities in the UCAS have privatized their public safety—up by quite a bit since this time last year as government police forces were overwhelmed by drug-related violence and crime.

## LONE STAR

Lone Star is primarily a North American firm, based in Austin, Texas, CAS. Originally a private security firm, it first began providing municipal police services during the widespread public service strikes in the '20s. Their first citywide contract was in Corpus Christie, Texas, in 2020, when the city police department went on strike. In 2023, the Seattle PD went on strike, and following precedence, Seattle governor Lindstrom controversially hired Lone Star to replace their services, a role the corporation continued to fill until their recent dismissal. In 2032, Lone Star was granted extraterritoriality. Currently, Lone Star holds an estimated 54 percent of available UCAS municipal contracts, down from 62 percent in 2070. In the CAS, it's estimated that Lone Star accounts for 78 percent of municipal contracts. Lone Star presence in the NAN is minimal, but it is making inroads in Pueblo as Pueblo forces become increasingly overstretched.

- Yeah, they really play on their "Texas Ranger" reputation and mop up the public opinion in the South. Down South, the highway patrol even wears cowboy hats. And I think being able to drawl "Yes, ma'am" is a job requirement.
- Nephrine

## LONE STAR SECURITY SERVICES INC.

**Corporation Status:** AA

**World Headquarters:** Austin, Texas (CAS)

**CEO:** Gerald T. Hampton

**Chairman of the Board:** James Wilson

**Core Businesses:** Municipal law enforcement

**Major Divisions:** Law Enforcement Services, Defense and Protection R&D, Security Consultancy Services, Penal and Correction Services, Licensing and Patent Administration

**Major Subsidiaries:** Gendarmerie (Quebec), LS Security Services Hong Kong, Silver Shield, Silver Dawn, Lone Star Correctional Services

**Global Presence:** UCAS, CAS, Quebec, Hong Kong, Nairobi, Scandinavian Union

• Lone Star's employment demographics are pretty skewed towards the male/human side of things. The officers on the street are over 85 percent human and male—and less than 4 percent ork. In the upper management, those numbers skew even further—over 90 percent men, and 98 percent human. They have a couple of elves and dwarfs, but no other metatypes (and changelings? Hah!). If you're female, the good-ol'-boys think you should be wearing a skirt and heels, and making the men some coffee. And if you're an ork or a troll ... well, they've got a place for those "types"—prison. Chauvinistic xenophobes ... that would describe the corporate outlook.

- Hard Exit

• The stats I saw had their corporate citizenship at 48 percent female. Perhaps your prejudice is showing?

- Mr. Bonds

• Don't forget that corporate citizenship includes wives and kids. Lone Star likes their men to be married and their women to be popping out the next generation of officers.

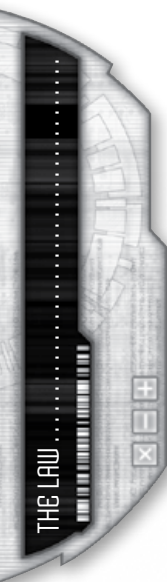
- Hard Exit

• Honey, you've got to let go of that grudge. Either that or start running against LS and work out some aggression. You know I'm always willing to help a sister in need of blowing off some steam. Remind me ... you are a sister this month, right?

- Pistons

The corporation also has the public protection contract in Quebec through their subsidiary, Gendarmerie, providing policing, customs, and border patrol for the country. They also have several insurance subsidiaries, consulting firms, and research divisions. And, of course, they provide private security to corporations and individuals, including Matrix, Security, and Magical protection.

Currently, the CEO is Gerald T. Hampton, a corporate "clean-up" specialist who replaced the previous CEO, Theodore Winslow, when the corporation had a big shakeup during the tempo crisis. Winslow had been CEO for almost 20 years and, according to the press, decided to "retire." However, there are rumors that the retirement wasn't Winslow's choice.



- The loss of so many contracts, especially the prestigious plum of Seattle, has Lone Star stock down 8 percent in the last year (although they scooped as many contracts from Knight Errant as the KE boys scooped from them). Tempo did a lot more than shake up the underworld. Lone Star (and other police corps) was caught flat-footed by the tempo craze—and not entirely through any fault of their own. Lone Star’s Drug and Chip Enforcement Division had regularly gotten the shaft in the annual budget battles. Now it looks like the CEO paid the price for that decision—axed by the Board and a new CEO installed just two months ago. Investors are still leery of the corp, though, and so far the stock hasn’t recovered. Hampton has a tough-as-nails reputation and he’s got a lot of military experience, to boot. We’ll see if he can pull this off.

- Mr. Bonds

## MAJOR DIVISIONS

The Division of Patrol includes Lone Star’s air, shore, highway, street, and traffic patrols, as well as their Fast Response Teams (heavily armed tactical first-response teams). These men and women (and drones) are the public face of the corporation, the friendly blue-armored officers who provide public service and are generally the first response to any public incidents. Except for the Fast Response Teams, the officers are generally lightly augmented, proficient with firearms, and have passed a six-month training course. More and more of their officers have skillwires, to allow for broader deployment opportunities, and their six-month training period has been augmented with the liberal use of knowsofts and linguasofts for their street patrols.

- With the increased dependence on drones and public surveillance, there’s been a lot of personnel cutbacks in the street and traffic patrols. Rumor is Lone Star’s planning to eliminate the traffic patrol division altogether, replacing it 100 percent with drones. If anyone wants to go play with the system, they’re field-testing it in Thunder Bay, Ontario; Pawtucket, Rhode Island; Hayward, Wisconsin; and Minot, North Dakota

- Hard Exit

- The Fast Response Teams (FRTs) are heavily augmented, and the twelve personnel always include at least one mage and/or astrally perceiving adept, a combat hacker, and two drone riggers. They also have some of the best tac-softs around ... but they also tend to rely a bit too much on their technological advantage. Their firewalls and hackers protect them from most Matrix threats, but a prepared technomancer can play merry havoc with their systems. Lone Star seems to be rather technomancer-phobic, though, and as far as I know, hasn’t addressed this weakness. Yet.

- Netcat

- Yeah, I heard their previous motto of “subdue the mage” has been replaced by “shoot the techno.”

- Glitch

Matrix Security is provided by their “GridSec” division, with hackers who have access to some of the better programs and hardware out there. They’ve also premiered some “public safety” spider programs, allowing entire neighborhoods to be controlled

by a spider. It’s still in beta-test right now, but reports are that the clients are highly satisfied. Their Special Tactics division handles high-threat issues; it includes bomb squads, riot control, and SWAT teams (which compete pretty heavily with their FRT counterparts). Their department of Investigations includes Forensics (including their corporate labs), Homicide, Organized Crime (OCD), and Surveillance—to name just a few.

- Lone Star knows that the more you see, the more you know, so they put lots of electronic eyes on the street. Wherever possible, they drop wireless drones and cameras on top of existing hardwired systems, then mesh the whole thing with a city’s GridLink. It’s tough to maintain such a big network, and in some neighborhoods the cameras get shot out or just stolen. These networks are hard to hack, but if you can pull it off, it’s oh so worth it.

- Slamm-0!

- Lone Star may not have their Seattle contract any more, but be aware: Their black-ops group, the Shadowriders, lives on. They perform black ops for the corp, and hunt down—and occasionally hire—shadowrunners. If they knock at your door, they’re probably there to hire. When they’re on the hunt, they don’t bother knocking.

- Sticks

Lone Star’s Correctional Services subsidiary is in charge of running their extensive prison systems. They generally have shared contracts with the municipalities they are contracted to patrol. Because they get paid by a “per-bed” system, having a high conviction and incarceration rate is beneficial to them—and so, the thinking goes, their other departments will work even harder to solve crimes. The cost-benefit ratio for detaining Awakened or Emerged criminals is low, so they tend to focus on detaining the normal scum of the earth. LS prisons are infamous for running sweatshop ops using detainees as labor.

- Rumors are that they also make some underground nuyen by removing illegal or restricted cyberware from prisoners, then reselling the warez on the black market. Supposedly the Cutters have an agreement with Lone Star to buy up the goods.

- The Smiling Bandit

Lone Star’s Department of Paranormal Investigations (or DIPs) is their magical investigations, licensing, policing, and security branch. They get a significant percentage of their Awakened personnel out of the UCAS and CAS militaries, and also recruit straight out of college. The majority of their Awakened personnel are mages, although they do have a good percentage of adepts. There aren’t a whole lot of perks being a DIP, not compared to the more lucrative corporate contracts, but they draw the idealists as well as those who enjoy the power trip of being a DIP cop.

- Most Lone Star precinct offices have a few DIP mages whose job is to lay on a cot, their body hooked up to medical equipment, and spend their full shift in Astral space, ready to respond—with a few elementals in tow—to any crisis in an instant.

- Lyran



## KNIGHT ERRANT

If Lone Star is synonymous with “cops” in most sprawls in the UCAS/CAS, Knight Errant’s nickname would be “CorpSec.” They are the ones we as shadowrunners run into (assuming smart shadowrunners avoid the city peace officers) as we merrily go about our business of violating corporate territory.

Knight Errant holds more than just corporate security contracts, they also are Lone Star’s main competition for municipal contracts, government security contracts, and subcontracted military. Knight Errant’s largest municipal contract is to police the city of Hong Kong, but they hold about 30 percent of municipal contracts in the UCAS, including their newly won Seattle contract, as well as a significant number of contracts in other countries.

However, their largest moneymaker is their private security contracts. In addition to providing security for Ares and its subsidiaries, they are the number one security contractor for smaller corps, from the little community shopping mall to the almost-mega AA corps. They also provide personal protection through their elite Executive Protection Services firm, made famous through their recent high-profile contracts with several simstars in LA.

- Yeah, their EPS teams are a real bitch. Six-person teams, 24/7 protection, and they always include a hacker and a magician. These are the elite teams, professional bodyguards through-and-through; they train together, work together, live together. KE runs applicants through extensive psych testing, vetting out personality traits that will be “less than optimally successful”—which is a nice way to say that these guys aren’t bribable. Extracting—or assassinating—someone under an EPS team’s watch is a pain in the ass.

- Kia
- Lucky for us, the 150k-per-month price tag is a bit steep for most corps to justify on anyone except their most valuable executives.
- Mika

Knight Errant provides full-service corp security, from the security guards manning a front desk, to highly trained spiders. They provide magical services as well, ranging from patrolling spirits to powerful wards, with the top-of-the-line contracts including 24/7 on-site magicians.

### KNIGHT ERRANT SECURITY SERVICES

**Corporate Status:** Ares Macrotech subsidiary, Extraterritorial

**World Headquarters:** Detroit, Michigan (UCAS)

**Executive VP:** Roger Soaring-Owl

**Major Departments:** KE R&D, KE Penal, KE CSI, KE First Response, KE Outsourcing

**Major Subsidiaries:** Executive Protection Services, Magister Security

**Global Presence:** UCAS, CAS, CFS, FDC, Tir Tairngire, Europe, Hong Kong, Japan, Russia, South Africa

### ARES’ HARD CORPS

A smaller security division of Ares, Hard Corps is the meaner, tougher, and less controlled face of their security forces. Long known to be a dumping ground for problem KE and Ares military employees, Hard Corps has a reputation for being among the “hardest” security forces out there. Hard Corps also runs Ares’ extensive prisons and detention facilities (which a variety of corporations and governments contract for their criminal offenders). They also handle public policing for less reputable cities and even small governments, crossing the line between corporate security and mercs for hire.

- This is a good place to point out that injuring or killing a security guard employed by KE—even if they’re not on Ares property, but just guarding the local mall—is a crime against Ares, not the mall, not the city. Ares—through Knight Errant—will investigate and has all the rights to prosecution. Something to keep in mind next time you come across an overweight security guard munching on donuts. There are always repercussions. KE is a subsidiary of an AAA. Their employees are Ares corporate citizens. And Ares gets real pissy when their citizens get whacked.

- Pistons

- On the bright side, Lone Star won’t extend KE any assistance at all in their investigations, so occasionally the corporate politics work for you.

- Kat o’ Nine Tales

- Breaking news! Roger Soaring-Owl has resigned as Knight Errant VP. The public press release suggests it was an amicable break, but I don’t see how it could be. It doesn’t make a lot of sense either. Soaring-Owl has had Knight’s back for over a decade, I can’t think what could have gotten between those two.

- Sunshine

- Soaring-Owl has had his eyes opened to what’s going on under his nose.

- Man-of-Many-Names

- Could you be any more cryptic?

- Sunshine

### SECOND TIER

There are a variety of other cops-for-hire out there. While Lone Star and Knight Errant get the lion’s share of contracts, these smaller players manage to compete, relying on aggressive marketing, undercutting their opposition, and being even more cut-throat than the big players.

#### Wolverine

Wolverine operates in a variety of North American cities. Their reputation as fearless and mean SOBs, especially in their gang violence units, has for years caused them problems for years.



This last year, however, they've turned that reputation into a major asset, gobbling up public contracts like Halloween candy.

Wolverine's gang violence units have always had a free hand, taking the approach of being tougher and better armed than the gangs they opposed. Their idea of "controlling" gang violence usually involved a heavy spray of lead applied liberally to the suspected gang members. The corp has been sued so many times for police brutality, it has become almost a running joke—among everyone except their equally fierce cadre of lawyers.

Still, this hard-line approach was just the thing many cities were looking for during the rise of gang violence. Wolverine had a stroke of brilliance when they hired Charisma Associates last year, which may be part of the reason they've gained so many new contracts.

Wolverine uniforms its employees in black-and-gray full armor, and the higher-end units get milspec armor. Employees are likely to be heavily augmented, and the corporation encourages this with subsidized loans and discounted surgery rates. Officers can get a portion of their loan forgiven after 5 years of service.

- Wolverine also provides full legal insurance coverage for all employees. They need it. They've got some of the busiest law sharks in the biz.
- Hard Exit

### Centurion

This A-level corp operates primarily in Europe and Africa. They have a variety of municipal contracts for smaller European sprawls, providing both full service as well as "enhanced" services—basically, providing the special units, like CSI or Awakened investigative teams, while the city provides the basic police forces and beat cops. It's a fairly lucrative niche, since they can charge prime rates and spread their workforce out over several cities.

In Africa, Centurion resembles more of a permanent merc force. They provide community policing in areas where the government is incapable—or unwilling—to provide unbiased security for its people. This includes areas of heavy tribal conflict, and Centurion is often called in after UN Blue Helmets have left an area "stabilized." Frequently, tribal leaders will hire Centurion as a condition to get corporate investment in an area—and just as often, corporate investors will front the nuyen to pay for Centurion's contract. Because of the unreliable access to cyberware clinics for routine maintenance, Centurion employees tend to avoid heavy use of cyberware, although bioware—especially bioware designed to help them survive harsh environments—is very popular. They also have a firm policy of never hiring locals to police locals—recruits are always assigned to locations where they have no vested ethnic or social connection.

- Recently, Centurion has been making tentative inroads into the South American marketplace. With their experience in violent conflicts, they may actually be able to hold their own against the Ghost Cartels, rebels, gangs, and uncooperative governments.
- Glasswalker
- Centurion trains and equips their employees more like a military force or a merc unit. They've even fielded a team for the last three Desert Wars. Did quite well, too—took third-place honors for their competition group last year. Of course, as any ex-military will tell

you, policemen make poor soldiers, and soldiers make poor policemen. Centurion struggles with the issue—which is why they don't take peacekeeping operations, but only move in after a situation is "stabilized."

- Marcos
- For all that, though, they don't consider themselves mercs. They consider themselves more than soldiers for hire. Great way to start a bar fight, if you're looking for some action.
- Picador
- Is there anything to the rumors that they employ shapeshifters and other sentient critters?
- Am-mut
- Yeah. Why anyone sees the need to give a shifter a heavy assault rifle and armor is beyond me.
- Black Mamba
- Perhaps the better question is why would any shifter want to be a cop?
- Kia

### Eagle Security

This North American corp took a huge hit to its reputation when it "lost" Chicago to the bugs. However, since then, it's made a comeback. They're currently the number three public security firm in North America, with contracts in UCAS, CAS, CFS, Sioux, and Salish-Shidhe lands. They even have a few contracts in LA, mostly doing private security for firms that want to piss off the PCC. (Can anyone say Azzie?)

Eagle Security has been successful in the NAN territories because of its open recruiting and promotional policies—they probably have the highest percentage of metahuman officers and they employ a significant number of Native Americans.

- Eagle Security also employs more shamans than any other security corp in North Am. They have their own dedicated initiatory group, the White Feathers, and recruit heavily from among tribal apprentices. They lure quite a few youths away from the tribes with blatant flattery, high salaries, and travel to exotic places. Not many corporations understand when an employee refuses to do something because it "goes against Eagle's wisdom" but Eagle Security seems to have made it work.
- Lyran
- Eagle Security also specializes in providing para-critter training, sales, and support to many of the other security firms and corporations in North America. Something to remember if you're planning on hitting a facility they guard—the chances of running into something not metahuman patrolling the grounds is high.
- Mika

### GETTING (AND KEEPING) A CONTRACT

The cops-for-hire aren't the only ones that have to worry about PR and marketing to get and keep a public contract. Government police forces (govpol) have to stay competitive to keep their government job. The strong marketing departments



of the corporate security firms are constantly trying to convince more municipalities that they can do the job for less nuyen, with better results, quicker response times, and higher conviction ratings. Hiring a private security firm also decreases the municipality's liability.

Most security companies offer a multi-tiered service package to their clients. At the base is their piecemeal service, where a client can pick and choose from a full menu of services. Some municipalities like to subcontract out their forensics, magical support, or other special fields they don't have the ability to cover in house. At the top are the full-service contracts, such as Knight Errant has with Seattle. They handle (almost) every aspect of law enforcement, from the beat cops to the high-tech bomb squads and terrorist response teams. They provide astral and magical support to the city, as well as full Matrix security.

- While Lone Star GridSec can patrol public Matrix space and some government sites—such as the library and the school districts—the majority of government Matrix hosts are patrolled by government hackers, due to confidentiality and conflict of interest reasons.
- Pistons

At this level, they also provide staffing for the courts (although in the UCAS, judges are still elected officials) and provide detention facilities and prison space for convicts. They are also responsible for parolees, as well as handling licenses and permits for restricted items. Knight Errant is a one-stop shopping center for any city's legal needs.

While Lone Star's troubles played a significant role, Knight Errant won the Seattle contract by offering a low bid while promising high-quality security along with the best customer service in the market (a claim everyone in the sector makes).

## TIME IS MONEY

Lone Star and Knight Errant both have sophisticated software that analyzes the "risk-return ratio" for specific crimes and assigns resources accordingly—their Dedicated Resource Management system, or DRM. It can look at a crime, compare recent data on the probability it'll be solved, the cost of solving it, and the payment (both in nuyen and in positive press) for solving it, and decide its net worth to the corporation; this is its Crime Risk-Reward (CRR) rating. A murder of a prominent citizen would have a high CRR rating for solving it, which makes it more important to the corporation than, say, investigating a car theft in Everett. Accordingly, the DRM would assign the murder case six experienced detectives, with approved 50 man-hours apiece, plus magical analysis, CSI, and laboratory resources. The stolen car might get all of 5 minutes of time from a rookie cop.

Crimes that have a high PR expectation—meaning the media will broadcast, or perhaps already is broadcasting to the public—obviously get more man-hours and resources than the low-interest crimes. Seattle and other municipalities exacerbate this method of "Commission Law Enforcement" by putting premiums on certain crimes for conviction rates. At the top of the list are murder, rape, assault, and other serious violent crimes. At the bottom are the

petty crimes—crimes without a significant metahuman impact, like shoplifting or kids selling pirated sims at school. Unfortunately for the cops, these petty crimes also include drug dealing, which is one reason tempo became a full-blown shit-storm right under their radar. It also means they don't always pick up on emerging criminal trends.

- This is how the corps make their profit. They pursue those cases that will have the greatest return-on-investment. Some jerk waling on his kids in the slums? Nothing they can do—it doesn't register a high enough CRR. Once the guy kills one of his kids, then maybe a detective will get 4.25 hours to investigate, make an arrest, and close the case. Hell, travel time takes up most of that. Now some druggie robs a house in Bellevue? High profile, so the cops are gonna get more exposure, and they'll actually have a chance at solving it. A lot of the idealists get burnt out on having the "Public Protector" taken out of the job, and the "Mindless Corporate Drone" put in its place.
- Pistons

- Yeah, well, it's just as well. Take a hint from organized crime and the pros. If you commit crimes with a low profile that need a lot of resources to solve, chances are your case will get shuffled to the bottom of the pile by the DRM.
- Cosmo

- Even better, hack the DRM and fiddle with some of the variables, and your case will all but disappear.
- Glitch

- Ah, Glitch? You ever hack the DRM?
- Pistons

- Well ... a man can dream, can't he?
- Glitch

- Mm-hm. That's what I thought. I didn't think you'd cracked thru that glacier.
- Pistons

The Seattle contract is based on a flat fee-for-service (a base rate) plus a commission for reaching certain performance targets (i.e., arrests, reductions in overall crime, etc.). This creates a certain conflict of interest for privatized law enforcement. After all, they can charge higher rates if the crime rate is higher, but they get paid more as crime goes down. To keep their contract—to keep the city officials and the public believing they are necessary—a certain threat level needs to exist. In other words, a high crime rate—with an equally high conviction rate—boosts their ability to negotiate for a more lucrative contract.

Lone Star and Knight Errant encourage high performance in their employees by putting most of them on a commission-based pay system. Detectives, for example, are paid by the number of successful convictions in their caseload. Captains are often paid a base rate, with performance incentives based on their underlings' performance. Almost every private cop is paid on either a partially or fully commission-based system.





- Supposedly, this encourages officers to do things “by the book” to build solid cases against us criminals. In reality, it has just encouraged abuse of the system—why not mind-probe some shmuck you know is guilty to find where he hid the loot? With evidence in hand, you can just “lose” the mind-probe and still close the case. This has changed somewhat with the overwhelming popularity of sousveillance on peace officers. It’s becoming a national pastime or something. Even the mainstream media is broadcasting some of the flagrant abuses. Like the Drug & Chip detective that was caught planting evidence in a car by four different cameras. Lone Star—and other police corps—have really had to modify their method of operation with so many cameras watching.

- Aufheben

- Kinda fun giving them a taste of their own medicine.

- Slamm-0!

## PUBLIC OPINION: WHAT YOU THINK MATTERS

Public opinion does matter—especially the public’s opinion of the threat level of crime. The appearance of a police force that has a handle on crime makes people—voters and taxpayers—feel confident. The appearance of rampant crime makes people nervous. If crime statistics and crime stories in the media become out of control, the city officials are likely to start shopping for a new police services firm. If crime falls drastically, then the public’s perceived value of the corp’s services will also drop, and they will no longer be able to command premium rates. It’s a delicate line they must balance.

- Yeah, and when something comes along that disrupts the balance—like the mob wars in the Fifties, or more recently, tempo—the Cop Corps get shaken out of their precious status-quo, and those of us in the shadows get to bear the brunt of their expanded efforts.

- Hard Exit

- Tempo ultimately cost Lone Star its contract with Seattle. Having the governor call out the National Guard to back up Lone Star’s cops was a very big blow to their reputation. The “Mayan Cutter” fiasco and other scandals certainly didn’t help.

- Cosmo

- Or perhaps Knight Errant had some info on Governor Brackhaven that he didn’t want to come to light.

- Dr. Spin

- If that’s true, Joey D. would love to know it. She’s getting a lot of funding to help her grassroots campaign to recall Brackhaven. I’ve heard that Ares is providing a good portion of that funding.

- Pistons

- Ares, Evo, Horizon ... they’re all funneling nuyen to Joey D. Hell, I made a contribution to her campaign to unseat Brackhaven.

- Fastjack

- Truth is, Lone Star PR put a lot of the blame squarely on the politicians and the cumbersome legal structure of the UCAS. Tempo wasn’t illegal, and it took forever to get the laws changed to make it illegal. Lone Star had their hands tied, and they played that card

in the press. A lot. Some sneaky little changes in their contract have been slipped in—like this one: “In exceptional circumstances that pose imminent threat to public safety, contracted Peace Officers have complete discretion to address the threat in whatever manner best protects the public’s safety and interests.” I’ll leave it to you to decide just what that means.

- Butch

## GOVPOL: HOMEGROWN COPS

Approximately 25 percent of municipalities in the UCAS still use government police agencies (GovPol). In addition, all federal security services are provided by GovPol. Other nations, like the PCC, depend entirely on their own police forces. In the UCAS, the local police agencies have a reputation for being underfunded and poorly trained, corrupt and callous. However, the complete opposite is true in the NAN. And I know that many of us have rued the effectiveness of the Feds.

## PCC COPS: AN EXERCISE IN EFFICIENCY

- Since many of us are familiar with Seattle and its contract with Knight Errant, it only made sense to use it to demonstrate how a contracted police force works. I figured using the PCC cops to demonstrate the opposite would be appropriate.

- DangerSensei

Many of the NAN provide their own police forces. Some are legendary—like the Sioux Wildcats. Others you don’t hear as much from ... until you’re in their territory and realize you’re SOL. The Pueblo Corporate Council cops are like that, doing their job with a minimum of fuss, but getting results.

Probably the main thing most runners think of when they consider Pueblo is its impressive Matrix security. Cutting-edge software and hardware, backed up by some of the best-trained hackers out there, make the Pueblo grid one of the best on the globe. That meticulous attention to detail extends outside the virtual realms and into the deserts, mountains, and sprawls of their country.

Pueblo divides its police forces into five divisions: Borders and Immigration, Public Safety (including their patrol divisions), Military, Regulatory, and the Special Investigative Division.

The Public Safety division is by far the largest, incorporating highway, air, traffic, and street patrols, public surveillance, the departments that deal with licensing and regulations, the CSI and police laboratories, and the various departments that handle homicide, vice, robbery, and other crimes. The PCC keeps a standing military (which is currently on high alert and actively recruiting). The Special Investigative Division deals with Organized Crime, industrial espionage (remember, the PCC is a corporation), and with Awakened threats, among other responsibilities. Also in the SID are the Pathfinders, a group that deals specifically with Awakened threats and Awakened beings, rather like magical UCAS Marshals.

- Yeah, the SID are also the ones who investigate and deal with terrorists and spies ... a label that generously includes shadowrunners. Their black-ops teams are assigned to the SID, fyi.

- Mika



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- Here's a little excerpt from Your Guide to your Preferred Shares, a publication the PCC gives to everyone who buys a preferred share in their corp/country. Since preferred shares also act as your entrance visa—you can't enter the country (legally) without purchasing at least one preferred share—this publication gives a general overview of the laws and regulations for visitors.

- Mr. Bonds

## KNOWING YOUR LEGAL RIGHTS

As a preferred shareholder in the Pueblo Corporate Council, you have certain rights and responsibilities given to you by your ownership.

First, you have the right to enter Council territory and to reside within it. [Note: Preferred Shares do not include voting rights, for more information please see [Purchasing A Residential Share](#).]

You have the responsibility to abide by all laws and regulations, at all times. The Pueblo Department of Public Safety (DPS) is responsible for enforcing the laws of the council, while ensuring all Residential and Preferred Shareholders are treated fairly and equitably. To ensure your visit to the council territories goes smoothly, there are a few regulations you should be aware of:

First, all metahumans are required to carry identification and can be asked, at any time, by any member of the DPS, to produce that identification. (For ID requirements for sentient non-metahumans, digital intelligences, and free spirits, please refer to section 8.b72.) All metahumans must also be able to produce their preferred share upon request. Any being without a SIN prior to purchasing the Preferred Share will be issued one by the council upon purchase.

DPS officers have the right to stop any person or vehicle, at any time, with or without cause. DPS officers also have the right to perform physical, electronic, or magical searches on any person, vehicle, or electronic device with or without cause. Refusal to allow a search constitutes a Class A misdemeanor and is grounds for being detained. (Note: all metahumans have the right to request a physical search of their persons be performed by a metahuman of the same gender.)

Certain items are restricted from use without the appropriate licenses. Click [here](#) for a comprehensive list.

All Shareholders have the right to receive emergency medical care at any public medical facility. Preferred Shareholders have the option to purchase medical insurance upon entry that will pay for a portion of their care.

- For those of you who want to visit the PCC (or really, any of the NAN), you should take note of the magical search clarification. The PCC cops use magic much more than cops in the UCAS. Not just mind probe—although they'll do that, in a heartbeat—but they'll use magic to detect guns or explosives, force you to speak only the truth or analyze your statements for truth, and even control a mob's mood or actions. Nothing disperses a riot faster than having a shaman decide to Command all the participants to "Go Home Now."

- Mika

- That's something you won't see in the UCAS. For all their eagerness to use tech to watch your every move, the laws are still firmly against using magic against the unwilling.

- Lyran

- I suppose I should also point out that a Residential Share grants you far more rights than a Preferred Share. Included among them are the right to attend Pueblo schooling, apply for business grants, get full insurance (for your business, not yourself), and get licenses for certain regulated items, like certain classes of guns or cyberware, etc. It also includes the right to have an attorney represent you if you're arrested—no such luck to preferred shares. Of course, you can't get a Residential Share in the PCC if you're a citizen of any other country or corporation—the PCC does not recognize dual-citizenships. Which, of course, means that the corporate executives who can normally get away with murder in the UCAS, and then wave their corporate credentials for their "get out of jail free card," get no such preferential treatment in the PCC, where they're required to hold Preferred Shares and held to all the standards that entails.

- Dr. Spin

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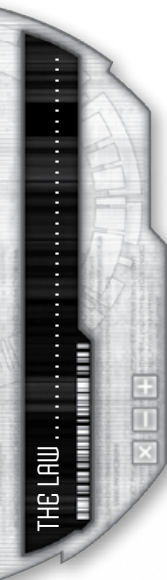
## SCOTLAND YARD: POLICING THE POLICE STATE

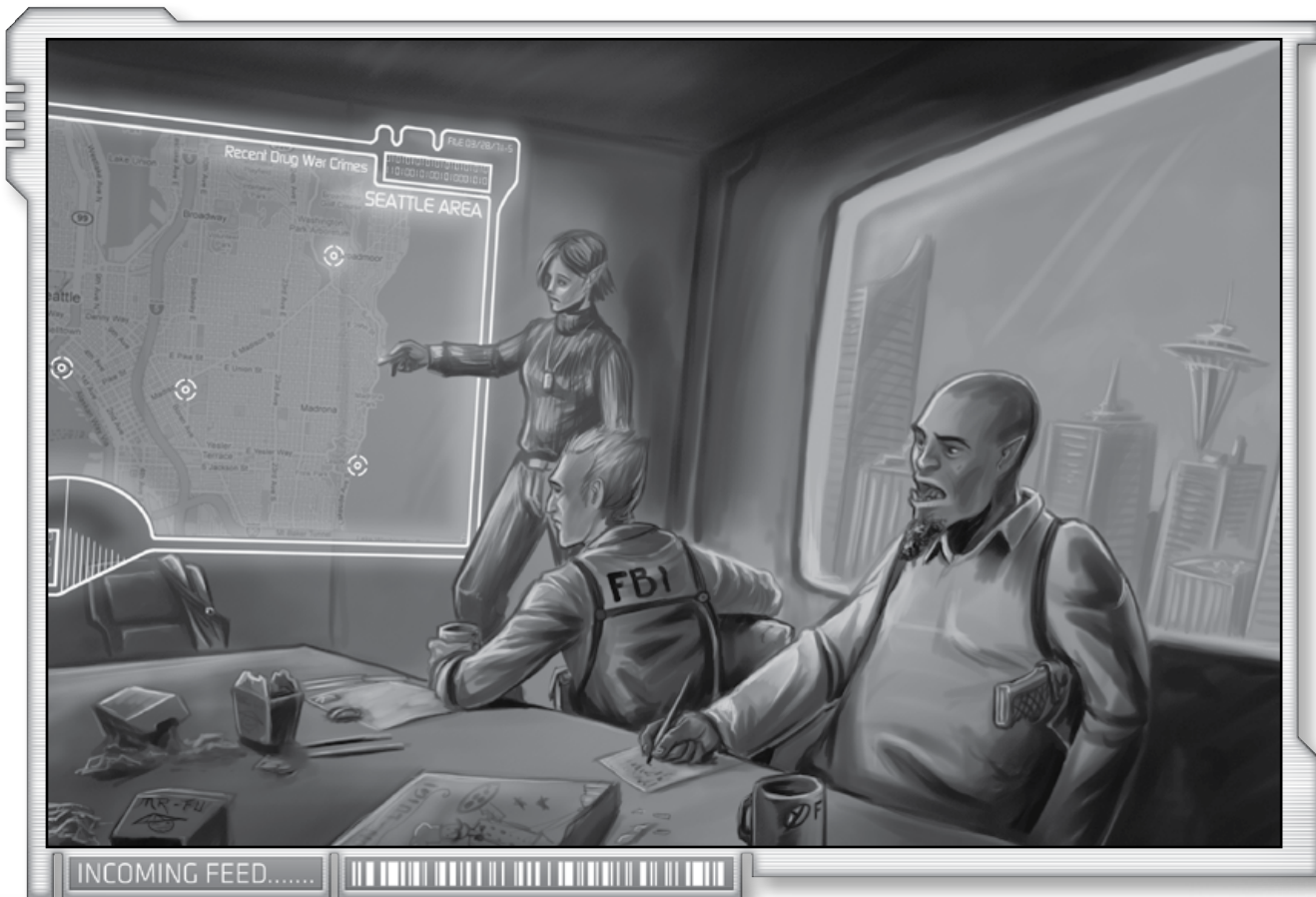
In the United Kingdom, police services are provided by Scotland Yard, under the oversight of the Lord Protector's Office (LPO)—of course, in the UK, everything is under the LPO's strict jurisdiction. The LPO has a variety of administrative duties: controlling the educational system, controlling the government Matrix system, censorship (on media and Matrix), and—every runner's favorite—licensing. Among these duties is the responsibility for public security and safety. Policing the police state is a hard job, since the list of restricted items, illegal acts, and seditious persons grows with every passing day.

The Scotland Yard officers are responsible for ensuring public safety. A separate division is responsible for investigating crimes, while a third controls the judicial system. All are firmly under the aegis of the LPO. They take their marching orders from the LPO, and unlike our police systems on this side of the pond, they don't have to worry about meeting quotas or being assigned duties based on the cost-benefit ratio.

The Street Safety division (a.k.a., "coppers") is responsible for patrolling the streets, by either foot or vehicle. They are generally the first on the scene in cases of public disturbances. These days, they're armed with standard firearms, tasers, and stunbatons. They are rarely augmented, and never Awakened. The Investigative Division (a.k.a., "Sherlocks") are the highly trained detectives whose duties are assigned by a bewildering array of superior officers. They are supposed to be the detectives who track down criminals and solve crimes. However, with the public unrest and political shit-storm that is the UK, the 'locks are just as likely to be tracking down suspected Underground supporters as rapists.

- It's no secret that you can bribe the Sherlocks to pursue specific people if you've got the right connections—especially if said person happens to be a minority metatype (i.e., anything but human). Ranking bureaucrats in the LPO consider the Sherlocks their own





personal clean-up crews. The tarnish on the Sherlocks' image is so thick, no amount of polish or media spin will ever remove it.

- Winterhawk

The police state has stripped most of the civil rights from the citizens of the UK. One of the more pesky new regulations is the authority for the Info Directorate to search any commlinks for illegal software or hardware. They've passed this directive on to the already-overwhelmed officers of Scotland Yard.

- What this means is that if you're in a police-controlled area (and those are shrinking under pressure by the various anti-LPO factions), the police drones or officers can "ping" your 'link for a list of software. If your firewall blocks their access, you'll be flagged and harassed. They want to ensure you've got all legal, properly registered software on your link. Of course, talented hackers can spoof the system. But it certainly cuts through the script kiddies with their cracked software and the real pros. Best bet, if you're traveling through, delete any incriminating programs from your 'link and reload them later.

- The Smiling Bandit

- The sharpest thing to know about Scotland Yard is that they are responsible for policing what is, in essence, a police state. They don't have to justify their actions to anyone outside the LPO. They have far broader discretion than their Yank counterparts—and an equally

inflated amount of egotism, self-justification, and racism. With no one to rein them in, or watch over their excesses, the corruption has spread so far that the police state is rotted from the inside out.

- Winterhawk

## NEOTOKYO POLICE: SAVING FACE

The NeoTokyo Police Department (NTPD) is a unique organization that reflects the cultural setting of their city. In NeoTokyo, face is the all-important consideration. The NTPD are probably the politest cops you'll ever meet. One large aspect of the NTPD is that they don't carry guns. (Seriously.) The standard weapon issued to their street officers is a modified tonfa, with stun-baton like contact points. Beyond that, they rely heavily on the fact that the average NeoTokyo citizen is raised to respect authority figures. A criminal apprehended by police is likely to simply surrender rather than resist.

- As an example: a street unit is called in for a domestic dispute, with a husband beating his wife. The police aren't going to just let him keep on waling on the lady, but as long as the man doesn't resist, they'll do what they can to help him save face. Instead of arresting him and dragging him out of the house in front of his neighbors, they'll instead have a cup of tea with the couple, then leave. Once they've left, the guy will drive himself down to police plaza and turn himself in.

- Jimmy No

- That only counts for their street-level officers. At one time, Japan didn't have a military. During that time, their police forces developed paramilitary aspects. The chain of command in the NTPD uses military ranks and titles, and despite the fact that the rest of the force is gun-free, their SWAT teams are loaded with the most cutting-edge tacnets, the best armor, and top-of-the-line guns and gear—lots of guns and gear.
- Mihoshi Oni

The NTPD has working relationships with people—criminals and corporate security alike. If a Yakuza commits a hit against a corporate target, there is a relatively good chance that the Yakuza boss will hand over the killer to police, and then the police would in turn hand him over to corporate security. If the killer runs, then all three agencies will cooperate to hunt him down.

The other issue in Neo-Tokyo is the fact that it is filled with extraterritorial corporations. However, most of those citizens have dual Japanese/corporate citizenship, so the NTPD has jurisdiction if they commit a crime on public soil. Generally, the NTPD is restricted to public streets, public airspace, and public/government buildings. They can enter and even raid some corporate buildings, but that would generally be done via quiet handshake deals and agreements behind closed doors with corpsec. The corps can, and do, sometimes insist on treating certain criminals or refusing to hand over criminals—but they have to retain a working relationship with the government, so that's rare and usually gets handled diplomatically.

Overall, the NTPD is quite small, especially compared to the per-citizen ratio of other cities. However, corporate security handles a significant percent of the city's security (as in, all security on corporate grounds). And the cooperative system of inter-reliance in the various agencies allows a smaller force to have a greater effectiveness. Of course, giri also means the cops are less bribable, more effective, and work longer hours than in other departments.

- Face and Honor also mean that if there's a major screw-up—a bust gone bad, a scandal with officers in the department, the NTPD Matrix division found to have violated corporate hosts illicitly—a senior officer will take the blame and resign. This is accepted practice in Japanese society. It is also accepted practice for such an officer to immediately receive a good job in some Japanacorp's security department, which of course helps improve corpsec/NTPD relations.
- Johnny No
- Don't believe that everything is politeness and cooperation. There's a dark underside to the NTPD. On top of the usual stresses of being a police officer, there's the constant stress of living in Japanese society and dealing with a system designed more for saving face than serving justice. Cops have to occasionally watch a murderer go free because he's a corporate executive, or because the oyabun had lunch with the captain today. The stress boils over eventually; then you get those cops who band together to kill a child molester and make the hit look like a Yakuza strike, or ex-military who end up chafing at the restrictions of the NTPD, or double agents seeded from other agencies or corps.
- Ma'fan

- Also, you should be aware that the NTPD is both racist and sexist. Perhaps no more so than the rest of Japanese society, but the NTPD have the authority to act upon their racism and sexism.
- Mihoshi Oni

## CORPORATE MASTERS

While the corporations police themselves, the Corporate Court is responsible for policing the corporations. Elected judges from each of the ten AAAs sit on the Court, up on the Zurich Orbital. They pass judgment on inter-corporate affairs, squabbles, and intrigue. When one corporation violates the Universal Business Accords (the rules that govern the power of corporations and their interaction with the governments of the world), the Corporate Court is the one power that can intervene. Accordingly, they have their own special police forces.

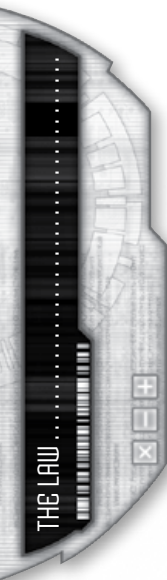
The Grid Overwatch Division (GOD) polices the Matrix. Because of their far-reaching power, GOD has its own special division to deal with Organized Crime—when it affects the interests of multiple corporations or threatens the Matrix itself. For crises outside the Matrix, the Corporate Court has their Crisis Coordination Committee (C5), which coordinates with corporate, government, and international police forces in the event of “international emergency.” For non-crisis matters, the Corporate Court has investigative agents who are responsible for “independently verifying” cases brought to the court. The Corporate Court also has their joint security forces, a military security force consisting of personnel on loan from all of the Big Ten. These joint security forces are used to police areas under Corporate Court control, such as Nairobi and the Kilimanjaro spaceport. For everything else, the Corporate Court relies upon the UN and its security forces.

## INTERNATIONAL POLICE

International police agencies work to ensure that crime affecting multiple governments is addressed—through coordinating various government agencies and through their own police forces. Interpol is the best known of these, with a membership made up of most nations and several corporations. These days, Interpol's job is more information liaison than actual enforcement, though several of its branches are still leading the charge in transnational investigations. Interpol was pulled into the international spotlight recently when it became the driving force coordinating the crack-down on tempo around the globe.

Europol focuses on those nations and corporations that have signed the Europort Treaty, primarily Western Europe. It acts as the federal enforcement division with specialized taskforces assisting local governments in the pursuit of transnational criminals.

Other international police agencies are tasked with specific goals. For example, the UN has their Terrorist and Activists Watchlist agency, responsible for maintaining reference databases on various groups that come up on their radar. Beneath that public façade, they also have highly trained operatives (many of whom are “off the books”) who are tasked with gathering intelligence on the target groups, disrupting the groups, or even infiltrating them. In the wake of Crash 2.0, the UN also set up an agency dedicated controlling the international trafficking of weapons of mass destruction, including weaponized genotech and nanotech.



## SIN VS SINLESS: IT REALLY DOES MATTER

Posted by: Aufheben

Most legal systems differentiate between citizens (those with SINS) and non-citizens (the SINless).

In Seattle—as well as the rest of UCAS—anyone without a SIN is considered a “probationary citizen.” They are not protected under the constitution, and so their rights are severely limited (some might say even non-existent). The police are not required to allow the SINless representation by an attorney if they’ve been accused of a crime, they are not entitled to a trial by their peers, there are no maximum sentences for their crimes, and they are not protected from self-incrimination (including mind-probes) during questioning. Although being SINless is not a crime, in and of itself, it often leads to crimes just in daily life: a SINless metahuman cannot have licenses (such as a driver’s license or gun permit) that many take for granted, and so the simple act of driving a car becomes a crime. The SINless have no rights to free speech, carry arms, gather peaceably, or vote. Some public and government areas require all people present to broadcast their SIN—simply entering the Seattle Zoo is therefore a crime for a SINless person.

In the PCC, being SINless is not a crime or a criminal offense. Many non-metahuman sentient beings have no SIN or ID but are accorded full rights under PCC law. Metahumans born in the PCC to one of the many tribes that eschew modern technology are given a SIN if (or when) they decide to enter into mainstream society. This more open organization of tribal society reflects the cultural diversity of the people within its borders. Of course, non Pueblo citizens—like obvious Anglos—are viewed as illegal immigrants if they’re found without a SIN, not as native citizens.

Instant Message...

**From:** Slamm-0!

**Subject:** [RE] ICTD???

The International Criminal Tracking Database (ICTD) a.k.a. the Big Nasty of Criminal ID systems, maintained by Interpol. It contains metrics such as digital renderings of DNA, fingerprints, and other biometrics on known criminals, as well as an entire “Unidentified” subsection for forensics gathered from crime scenes that haven’t been linked to specific IDs. Criminal SINS are recorded in the ICTD as well.

If you’ve accidentally left behind incriminating evidence at a crime scene, and are worried it may be uploaded into the ICTD, you have a few options. By far the easiest is to not leave evidence! Failing that, you can contract with a variety of ID rings that will—for a steep price—help erase your indiscretion. Alternatively, you can hack the ICTD yourself... but of course, Interpol makes off-line backups every eight hours, which are archived in their secured Paris facility... If you need some help with finding an outfit to erase your data, ping me, and I can point the way.—S.

Closer to home, the Sovereign Tribal Council established the Cooperative Council Defense Force (CCDF) in 2065 to help foster cooperation in investigating, pursuing, and curtailing threats facing all the members of the STC.

## COOPERATION AND (MIS) COMMUNICATION

With so many local, regional, and international agencies, plus the various corporate interests, the advantage they have over us criminals is mind-boggling. Or it would be, if they were better at sharing. Fortunately for us, there are plenty of cracks and shadows between these agencies, and that’s how we shadowrunners survive.

Exceptional cases aside (like the joint Azzie-Interpol-Corporate Court/UN cooperation against tempo), the corporations don’t like to share their information. Interpol will share some of its intelligence to member groups, like its International Criminal Tracking Database (ICTD). But that database is only as good as the intelligence members put in ... and you can bet your last nuyen that no corporation is going to be uploading the fingerprints and DNA scans of a runner team that hit their top-secret R&D facility. Hell, they’d have to admit there’d been a crime to put data into the ICTD. Now, on the other hand, police corps, like Lone Star and Knight Errant, will upload data into the ICTD, at least for crimes that happen in the public space.

The relationship between government agencies and hired security corporations can be just as competitive. For example, the FBI frequently has jurisdictional squabbles with Knight Errant in Seattle, and getting those two to cooperate—regardless of what their contracts or directives say—is a Herculean task. But, hey, when they’ve got more resources, more nuyen, more tech, and more magic than any shadowrunner could ever have, we need every little advantage we can get.

## IT'S A CRIME

The global power structure of the 2070s can be thought of as a wobbly three-legged table. In this model, two of the table's legs are nation-states and transnational corporations, which are powerful entities in their own right. The third contains an amalgamation of many powerful individuals: dragons, free spirits, and exceptional metahumans, for example, but the greatest part of the third leg is made up of criminal organizations.

Criminal syndicates directly and indirectly affect (and employ) large portions of the metahuman population. They influence economies both domestic and international. Shadowrunners encounter them constantly over the course of their careers. Megacorps and governments alike make deals with them, and they have connections within both corporations and governments.

*Vice* describes and explores many criminal syndicates, lesser organizations, and street gangs. Most campaigns in *Shadowrun* involve them at some point, either as employers or opposition. Each such organization has its own take on the world around it, and interacts in a unique way, as described in the previous pages of this book. Even with all of the differences, there are many aspects of the criminal organization that are similar or even identical between the groups. From the smallest gang to the largest syndicate, this chapter will help describe and define organized crime in *Shadowrun* for gamemasters and players. This information is intended to help you include or feature criminal organizations in your campaign—or even create your own. The turmoil engendered by the tempo-fueled gangland conflicts provide the perfect opportunity to change the face of the criminal underworld in your game.

## KNOWING YOUR PLACE

Syndicates occupy a unique niche in the economy of the Sixth World. For any economy to be strong, wealth must be free to circulate among its participants. Traditionally, this is accomplished through the middle class: professionals, expert laborers, supervisors, and small business owners who have incomes that exceed their needs. In the highly compartmentalized world of *Shadowrun*, there is a large gap between the haves and the have-nots. Most of those who would normally be part of a middle class have either been ensconced in a megacorp or driven into near-poverty. The megacorps and governments themselves have a working economy between them, but not with the rest of the world.

This leaves a large gap between the owners and the producer-consumers of the world, causing the global economy to stagnate. Or rather it would cause stagnation if organized crime had not filled this void nicely. Criminal outfits keep goods, services, and wealth moving between any and all facets of society—irrespective of constraining legalities or prohibitions. Each niche is filled (and in some cases over-filled) by gangs or syndicate operations. They can circumvent Sixth World laws, regulations, and policies that are designed to collect and preserve wealth for the top tier of metahumanity, freeing wealth that would otherwise not circulate within the economy.

Conversely, organized crime is a drag on a healthy economy. Criminal operations divert wealth from its natural circulation in a closed economy, much like a parasite on a living host. Such “businesses” are unwelcome in such discrete markets, whether it be a street gang running protection rackets in the poor but serviceable economy of the barrens of a sprawl or a syndicate running money laundering operations in corporate territory.

When including a criminal outfit in your campaign, consider its place in the context of the local economy. An organization that operates within the gaps between bastions of wealth and power may be seen positively, as useful tools or even as heroes. Operations that exist within closed, healthy economies would be seen much as they are in the modern world: threats and villains.

## COMPETITION

While there may be economic space in the Sixth World for criminal organizations to flourish, this does not mean that there is enough space for all of them. In fact, quite the opposite is true. While organizations try to keep their activities on the down-low, it is very rare for an operation such as one detailed in *Crime Pays* (p. XX) to persist long without some interference from competing gangs or syndicates (or both). For every racket, there will be at least one other player vying for the revenue stream.

Syndicates and gangs will sometimes work together. This can be done in conjunction with a temporary arrangement or as part of a lasting alliance. In areas where law enforcement or commercial forces are strong enough to resist any individual outfit's operations, criminal organizations team up for mutual benefit. These agreements can be complete, as in the case of two small gangs teaming up against a larger gang, or restricted in some manner, as with global syndicates working together in a single corporate enclave.

When including a criminal organization in your campaign or character back-story, consider the outfit's competition. Organizations are constantly struggling over territory, both literally (as with gangs fighting over turf) and figuratively (e.g., syndicates competing over drug sales). With whom is this organization currently feuding? Or is there currently a period of precarious peace, a temporary truce, or an alliance?

## ORGANIZED CRIME AND THE LAW

As has been mentioned, some criminal activity is helpful to the economy. This is a facet of organized crime that is not lost on law enforcement. While most police forces try to stop or at least discourage illegal activities, the governments and megacorps that sponsor enforcement have their own agendas. It is sometimes the policy of these sponsors to turn a blind eye to certain facets of organized crime. These governments and corporations may have unwritten or even unspoken agreements with gangs and syndicates as to the extent to which illegal operations are tolerated.

While this tolerance is commonly the case, it is rarely the rule. Most often, law enforcement is yet another element that a criminal organization must overcome in order to stay in business. In the absence of an overwhelming rationale against it, authorities combat criminal activities in the interests of simply maintaining order and the rule of law.

The relationship of a criminal organization to law enforcement can span a broad scope. It can be in collusion with the authorities, for example, because the powers that be have use for the gang or because a syndicate has bribed or extorted officers of the law. It could be at war with law enforcement, even to the point where there exists a special task force dedicated to find and apprehend the organization. Most fall in a range somewhere between these extremes. When including organized crime in your game, keep this range in mind, and decide where in this range the outfit you want to use currently sits.

## ALL IN THE FAMILY

Having already read the rest of this book, you know that criminal organizations are many and varied and can be found from every corner of the Earth and the Matrix and even astral space. Even with all of the many cultures and histories of such organizations, they share some similarities.

## KINSHIP

Criminal organizations often come with the sense of family. Sometimes this familial link is literally true, as each generation of an organization passes its power, wealth, and responsibilities to the next. In most cases this is a chosen family, where each member buys into the culture.

These bonds, whether genetic or merely emotional, are important to keeping the organization together. It engenders trust in its member-



ship and gives them an “us against them” outlook on the world. The specifics of this culture of kinship is different for each organization, but in all cases it creates a loyalty and strength in its people that serves the organization well in its operations.

## HONOR

Part of having a sense of kinship is sharing values. Every criminal organization has its own culture that defines its values and its taboos. Keeping to this code is an important part of being a member of such an organization. It determines your reliability and strengthens bonds of kinship with other members because they know that their comrades share their morals and ethics. The specifics of each organization’s code varies, but all contain both some form of “do what you say you will do,” and an unspoken rule to live up to the organization’s standards.

Another part of this sense of honor is the idea of face as something strongly valued. The need to maintain a sterling reputation is important in a criminal organization. This creates something of a shame society in which facade, social standing, and vengeance are common.

Good shadowrunners should be aware of the tendency of criminal organizations and their members toward revenge. Most shadowrunners can live without fear of reprisal from corporations, for whom revenge is not profitable, but not so with organized crime. A gamemaster may wish to use revenge, either against the PCs or another entity, as the basis for one or more adventures.

## DIPLOMACY

All criminal organizations have internal workings, and it follows that they have external affairs as well. No such organization exists in a vacuum. Syndicates and gangs keep channels of communication open between themselves and others, great and small. The system is much like diplomatic relations between nations. In the words of one pirate captured by Alexander the Great: “Except for the rule of law, what are nations but large criminal organizations, and what are criminal organizations but small nations?”

“Kleptocracies” like criminal organizations maintain relations not only between one another, but in some cases also with local or national governments and corporations. By winning over local residents, businesses, and even administrations, organizations can keep their operations running smoothly.

## CORRUPTION

While diplomacy can keep the cogs of criminal business turning, the grease on those cogs is corruption. Criminal organizations have a tough time operating when all hands are turned against them, and no such outfit can operate without at least some links to society. Where diplomacy fails, bribery, extortion, and even recruiting picks up the slack. Most criminal syndicates target law enforcement or the judicial system the most, but many of the larger syndicates are known to have a few legislators and board members in their pockets.

## CRIMINAL ACTIVITY

While it goes without saying that criminal organizations participate in criminal activity, this point is mentioned for two reasons. First, it belongs on a list of similarities between criminal organizations; it would be negligent to omit it. Second, this point is important to remember when including a criminal organization in your campaign. The main motivation of a syndicate or gang is to somehow prosper without regard to the law. Any such group in your campaign should be engaged in some criminal activity. The *Crime Pays* chapter offers a list of possible operations criminal organizations and independents alike might be involved in.

## DIFFERENT WORLDS

Even with all their similarities, the differences between criminal organizations are hardly interchangeable. Outfits have different beliefs, methods, and origins. The differences between each organization are broad enough to make them seem worlds apart. These are a few of the categories in which criminal organizations are most distinct.

## SIZE

A criminal organization can be defined by the size of its membership. In fact, a lot of what separates a small operation from a gang from a syndicate is simply the number of people involved. Moreover, a criminal organization’s size informs much of the rest of its features: operations, territory, diversity, and even culture. When using a criminal organization in your game or creating one of your own, determine how large the group is, whether it be a small gang of thugs or a world-reaching syndicate.

## SCOPE

A criminal organization tends to be in a state of equilibrium, which is to say that it operates at level just large enough for it to handle. Organizations whose operations are too small tend to expand, while those that are too large tend to collapse. The scope of an organization’s operations is based in part on its size, but also its resources and position relative to other entities of power, be they rivals, corps, governments, or even Mother Nature.

When creating or using a gang or syndicate, consider the scope of its operations. Most of the time, it will be in the equilibrium state mentioned above, but it may be in the process of expanding or being squeezed by outside forces. An organization’s scope might also inform its motivations in your campaign.

## RESOURCES

Highly related to both size and scope is an organization’s resources. This is not merely the liquid assets it has on hand, but also its equipment, personnel, and even diplomatic relations. An organization’s resources tend to fit with its size and the scope of its operations, although not always; a gang with more resources than its scope would suggest might be ready for a push to expand its operations, while a syndicate with more membership than resources may find itself with an internal power struggle or threatened by outside forces. When including a criminal organization in your campaign, keep its level of resources in mind: it will help establish everything from the degree of security at headquarters all the way down to how well its members are equipped.

## HISTORY

Part of what holds a criminal organization together is a sense of shared history. An organization’s roots are a source of pride and camaraderie to its members. A gang with a pedigree in blood magic will tend to hold to gory rituals, while a syndicate might pursue a grudge for no other reason than tradition. Get to know the history of the criminal organizations you bring into your campaign; you will be able to better play them from individual members to the actions of the whole group.

## CULTURE

Closely connected to its history is an organization’s culture. Each outfit shares a set of values and mores, and tend to react appropriately. Many Chinese gangs and syndicates, such as the Triads, adhere to Chinese numerology, the Dead Deckers’ Society believe in sweet hacks and strong drink, while the Ancients revere all things



fast and elven (preferably both). Along with a criminal organization's history, keep its culture in mind when determining the actions of the group as a whole or as individuals.

## ORGANIZATIONS

Criminal organizations never get very far if they are incapable of taking care of business. Every such organization has a power structure and a set of policies that are used to keep the entire institution running. While size is a determining factor in whether a criminal organization is a syndicate, gang, or independent operator or outfit, the way it is organized is more telling.

### THE SYNDICATE

A criminal syndicate is large or even huge, an economic entity unto itself. Like a corporation, it creates revenue streams and pays employees. Like nations, an employee of a syndicate is also an associate, a "citizen," a trusted family member for whom the organization works as much as he works for it. Syndicates are neither corporations nor nations, but they are the kind of criminal organization most resembling these entities and as a result it is organized much like one or the other.

One of the defining features of a syndicate is a hierarchical structure. Whether it be the informal advisory "council" of the Mafia, the dictatorial leadership of a Triad Lodge Master, or the oligarchy of the Ghost Cartels, a syndicate has a centralized nexus where policy decisions are made.

This centralized structure often makes a syndicate less agile than a gang. This is often somewhat mitigated by a certain amount of delegation, where smaller and more local divisions are given a certain amount of latitude to act. Even so, each local leader is answerable to a superior, and this tends to slow the reaction time of the syndicate as a whole.

### Mobsters and Racketeers

Syndicate members are not merely employees, but also members of the syndicate family. This membership and trust is what sets syndicate members apart. They have a home in their organizations, and do not have to live betwixt and between the way shadowrunners do, nor are they under constant surveillance like corporate or government operatives are. They work the shadows, but from a different angle. Syndicate members tend to trust their syndicate. This extends to their faith that the syndicate trusts them. Most members draw strength from this connection, even those bound by family connections or even a Triad blood oath.

### THE GANG

A street gang is a criminal organization that is much like a syndicate. Both are organizations, though gangs tend to be smaller. Both do business, although gang revenues tend to be more erratic. Both have membership that are considered family, although gangs tend to be more closely knit. To the uneducated, a gang may seem to be a miniature, inconsistent, and chummy syndicate, but this description is superficial at best.

One of the largest differences between a gang and a syndicate is the gang's lack of central organization. Where syndicates organize things on a massive—if not global—scale, the gang's leadership ends at the local level. While a single gang may have multiple chapters and share a fraternity between them, each chapter maintains its own operations and control.

Gangs also have a very unique set of customs and values that often fly in the face of convention. While gangs do operate in defiance of the law, their illegal activities stem from a clash with the local mainstream culture as often as they do from trying to turn a profit. Gangs

have their own customs, rituals, taboos, and values that set them apart from the rest of the metahuman society in which they exist. By the same token, a gang's status as a gang is based on its relationship to the culture in which it operates. What would be considered a gang in Neo-Tokyo or Manhattan would be a social club in Downtown Seattle or Europort and a laughingstock in Puyallup or Lagos.

### Gangsters and Hoodlums

Members of a gang have chosen to join a new family. This bond can be stronger than that of natural family for three reasons. First, it is for the most part the result of a conscious decision by the gang member. Second, the ganger shares the values and culture of her fellows. Finally, she rejects and feels rejected by "normal" culture, and has found in her gang a place where she is accepted; this sense of belonging should not be underrated when dealing with a gang member.

### INDEPENDENT OPERATORS

An independent operator can be a small group or even a single criminal mastermind. They are small and usually unaffiliated with outside groups. An independent operator could, for example, have a racket involving smuggling, distributing BTLs, grifting, or robbery. They pick their own targets, plan their own capers, and make their own money, all on their own initiative. Any number of crimes can be committed to turn some sort of profit.

Most of the time, the life of an independent operator is a race to stay just ahead of disaster. Whether it be a single talent or a band with overlapping skillsets, the independent operator's take is usually only slightly better than expenses. Independent operators maintain their own contacts and keeps their own relationships in their areas of operations. They usually have to take on targets that are larger or better equipped than themselves, and so they often depend on careful planning to pull off their capers.

In fact, for all intents and purposes, independent operators are shadowrunning teams, minus Mr. Johnson.

### BETWEEN WORLDS

Shadowrunning teams usually try to avoid becoming too entangled with organized crime, but one or more members of the team may find themselves deliberately or by some whim of fate a member of a criminal syndicate or gang. While such membership is not completely incompatible with life as a shadowrunner, there are many ways in which the character may find her life more interesting. The syndicate or gang would expect the character to act appropriately for a member of the organization, and demand her loyalty over her comrades, opening possibilities for drama and subplots within the campaign.

In most cases, a gamemaster and player can treat the character simply as a shadowrunner that is a member of a syndicate or gang. In this case, give the character the Day Job quality (p. 103, *Runner's Companion*), except that she need not have a SIN. The character should also have a group contact (p. 124, *Runner's Companion*), if the campaign is using that rule.

A PC may decide to join a syndicate or gang during the campaign. There are many reasons for doing so, possibly the most common being a steady income. Doing so is not without its risks, however. A character that joins a criminal organization risks losing some of the Loyalty of contacts outside the organization, especially if he is joining a gang. In most cases, an organization will demand some evidence of loyalty, either in the form of a job (which could be a shadowrun itself) or an initiation rite traditional for the group being joined. In any case, if the gamemaster agrees, follow the guidelines above, adding a contact or quality as appropriate.



A player character can abandon their criminal ties and fully enter the shadows. This is not without risk, as most syndicates and gangs do not take well to deserters. Unless the break is somehow made on good terms, such characters will lose all of their contacts related to their previous affiliation, and lose one Loyalty rating for contacts that are peripherally connected to the characters' former organization. If the split is at all hostile, the character may gain an enemy (p. 132, *Runner's Companion*).

## AN OFFER YOU CAN'T REFUSE

As employers, syndicates or gangs put their own spin on the usual shadowrun job. The following is a list of the standard adventure frameworks in *Shadowrun* in the context of criminal involvement, along with adventure seeds for gamemasters to use as a springboards for their own scenarios. This is not meant to be an exhaustive list, merely a starting point. Feel free to alter the details of any of these adventure seeds to fit your campaign.

## ASSASSINATION

Most of the time, when a criminal organization wants a person dead, they take care of it themselves. This is often done as a way of sending a message to those sympathetic to the target. Sometimes a person is simply in the way of a syndicate's or gang's plans. When the political situation is one in which the group cannot kill the target on its own, a shadowrunning team offers the criminal group an anonymous way to disappear people without getting their own hands dirty.

- A gang needs a certain city official to disappear quietly, but moving against her would threaten the unsteady truce the gang has with local law enforcement.
- A faction within a large syndicate or gang wishes to increase its influence in the organization, and hires the team to anonymously and violently remove an obstacle within its own outfit.

## BLACKMAIL

Most large criminal organizations can handle their own blackmailing rackets. Some smaller gangs and specialized syndicates may not have the resources to lean on certain targets. They may hire shadowrunners to pick up the slack.

- The chief of local law enforcement launches a new campaign against organized crime, and a large gang or syndicate hires the team to get dirt on the chief and convince him to find another facet of crime for his crackdown.
- An upwardly mobile syndicate member wants some dirt on his bosses to help solidify his position within the hierarchy.

## BODYGUARD

Criminal outfits consider as a matter of pride their ability to protect their own. However, sometimes it becomes prudent to have outside help handle the job, especially when the principal does not want his affiliation known. In some cases, a group may have its hands full elsewhere, and hire the shadowrunners to complement its forces.

- A syndicate member hires the team to protect a group of foreign dignitaries in their casino. The casino is attacked and demolished and the team has to shepherd the VIPs to safety.
- A gang leader is meeting with other gang leaders under a flag of truce. The meeting already has an air of mistrust between the gangs, but Ms. Johnson also fears that the truce is not very popular among her own gang. She hires the team to protect her.

## COURIER/SMUGGLING

Most members of a syndicate or gang are assigned to a specific area, either by intent or tradition. This makes it more difficult to find

travelers within its ranks, making shadowrunners an excellent choice for secure delivery services.

- A number of gangs are currently in the middle of a turf war in the barrens. One gang needs to send a crate of weapons to one of its allies, but the way is blocked by the territories of a number or rival gangs.
- A smuggling syndicate finds that it has booked itself beyond its capacity and hires the team as temporary help.

## DATASTEAL

Matrix-based syndicates and gangs would have no trouble handling these sorts of jobs themselves. Other groups, especially those that are specialized in other directions, must hire outside help for datasteals. Objectives could include law-enforcement procedures and plans, finding skeletons in the closets of politicians and corporate executives, purging information from members' records, and more.

- A mysterious icon in the Matrix hires the team to go after some data at a specified node. Unbeknownst to the shadowrunners, Ms. Johnson is actually a member of a Matrix gang that wants to test its security.
- A magical syndicate wants information on the layout and security of an auction house. Unfortunately, the only person that knows about it is someone the syndicate has a hard time touching magically: an AI. The team is hired to get the information.

## DESTRUCTION

Most criminal organizations can handle their own demolition work. Sometimes a job is too big for a small- or even medium-sized gang or syndicate. These jobs call for shadowrunners.

- A gang wants a bridge destroyed to halt incursions from a rival gang.
- A syndicate is looking to score in an insurance racket and needs some property destroyed by a third party in order to collect on the scheme. The team is hired to take out a store in a downtown mall.

## DISTRACTION

Syndicates and gangs are constantly working on generating revenue. Sometimes, it is best to have the powers that be looking the other way. The team could act as a diversion against law enforcement, a rival gang or syndicate, corporate forces, or other entities.

- An independent criminal organization is being investigated for a crime they recently committed. Mr. Johnson hires the team to commit a similar crime using his group's modus operandi in order to take off some of the heat.
- A syndicate or gang is planning a huge score against a corporation, but they will be using a lot of magic to do it. They hire the team to delay an investigation long enough for the astral signatures to dissipate.

## ENCRYPTION/DECRYPTION

Criminals usually arrange to have the tools they need for a job. When a syndicate or gang does not have the resources or brain power it takes to crack a particularly strange code, they can call on shadowrunners to track down an answer.

- A syndicate has recently purchased a book-making racket from another syndicate. However, not only is the accounting encrypted, but there is also a complex double-booking system in place. The team is hired to make sense of the operation.
- A gang has stumbled upon a hidden research station on their turf. They need help sorting out what they have found, how much it might be worth, and to whom.



## ENFORCEMENT

This is one task in which it is important that a criminal organization be seen as throwing its own weight around. Even so, a gang or syndicate may find that it needs extra muscle. Shadowrunners often provide excellent (and augmented) muscle.

- A street gang is expanding its protection racket, but it does not have the personnel to do all the leg-breaking themselves. The team is hired to intimidate some local business owners.
- A syndicate underboss is misbehaving, at least as far as Ms. Johnson is concerned. However, he has too many contacts within the organization for her to punish him effectively. She hires the team to send the message.

## EXTRACTION (KIDNAPPING)

This is a job that is customarily handled by the gang or syndicate. Not all groups have the kind of manpower to handle such a job, and some simply want the anonymity that comes with hiring shadowrunners.

- A particular syndicate leader fairly high in the hierarchy rules by keeping his subordinates struggling against one another. Lately, tempers have flared and violence may ensue. Mr. Johnson hires the team to anonymously give one particularly violent subordinate a time-out.
- A syndicate or gang member has decided that enough is enough, but has too many ties to her group to simply pack up and leave. She hires the team to help her defect.

## HOAX/COUNTERFEIT

Not all syndicates and few gangs have the sophistication necessary for these jobs. Shadowrunners on this job are more akin to contractors than mercenaries.

- A gang is moving its operations, and needs new documents for every one of its members pronto.
- A new syndicate in town is setting up a Matrix consulting business to use as a money-laundering facility. It does not have the local connections to handle the documentation, and hires the team to take care of the setup for them.

## INVESTIGATION

This is the sort of job at which criminal organizations are rarely adept. Most of the time, they are the target of an investigation, not the other way around. Often, they are simply too busy taking care of business to launch an investigation of their own.

- A syndicate is recovering from a wrecked operation. They are furious, and every member is out for blood. Unfortunately for the local boss, none of them know who destroyed their operation. She hires the team to sort out what happened and finger the right target before her people decide to take their frustrations out on her.
- The leader of a gang has been the target of several failed assassination attempts. He suspects the culprit is a member of his own gang, but cannot afford to be openly suspicious of his own people. He hires the team to discreetly investigate his gang.

## PLANT

Syndicates and gangs are more than capable of handling this job themselves. This sort of thing is best done anonymously, however, so shadowrunners are often hired for it.

- Try as it might, a local gang has been unable to push another gang out of competition. The gang hires the team to plant evidence against the rival gang that will bring law enforcement down on them.

- A syndicate member is locked in an internal power struggle. Unwilling to seem openly confrontational to a fellow syndicate member, she hires the team to implicate her rivals in scandalous behaviors.

## RETRIEVAL

While they are usually capable of handling their own jobs, gangs and syndicates are often limited by the territory they control. It is often cheaper in personnel and material to hire shadowrunners to fetch objects in other territories.

- A number of syndicates are holding a summit at a remote location. One of the delegations hires the team to steal a valuable object from another syndicate's home base and bring it to the meeting as a show of strength.
- A gang has a mascot, a domesticated (mundane) critter. Unfortunately, the mascot has been stolen by another gang, and the team is hired to bring the animal home.

## SECURITY

A criminal organization that cannot handle its own security does not last very long, but you can never have too much protection. Some specialty groups might have holes in their security arrangement at a special event, or during a critical window of time.

- A magical organization has received word of a raid on one of its operations. It is set for the raid, but it has a hole in its defenses when it comes to Matrix security. The team is hired to cover that deficiency.
- The child of a mob boss is getting married on short notice. Unfortunately, the syndicate does not have enough people on hand for security. The team is hired to provide additional discreet security, and is further charged with making sure the ceremony goes off without a hitch.

## TAILCHASER

Shadowrunners are ideal for diversionary missions. This allows the criminal group to run its own schemes unhindered.

- A gang hires the shadowrunners to distract a rival. The plan is to lure its forces off of its own turf long enough for Mr. Johnson and his gang to set up behind them.
- A smuggling syndicate plans to move some particularly large cargo. However, port security is too tight to bring it in without being noticed. The team is hired to bring in an equally suspicious and large cargo to deceive the guards and dilute their efforts.

## WAR

Nobody wants a mob war, but when one comes, it's best to have the biggest guns on your side. Shadowrunners will often be hired to work in conjunction with syndicate or gang forces against a particular target.

- The team is hired to help a gang eradicate a rival in open gang war.
- A corporate laboratory has encroached a bit too far on a syndicate's business. The syndicate wants it destroyed, and needs the extra firepower to make that happen.

## WILD THINGS

The majority of criminal organizations deal with metahumanity, and rarely find a need to deal with the paranatural world. When such a job arises, it is often easier to hire shadowrunners to deal with the problem.

- A syndicate has a scheme that it is setting up, but it has some odd details. In order to make it happen, it needs a wild paracritter that is both rare and dangerous. The team is hired to provide one.
- A gang leader once said to herself, "You know what we need around here? A pet hell hound!" The team is subsequently hired.

