

# ROTTEN TO THE CORE

*Julia Martin*





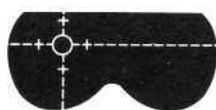
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Hunger...

# ROTTEN TO THE CORE

*Corruption at the Beanstalk's Root*



*Julia Martin*

## 2300AD

SINCE 1973



P.O. Box 1646  
Bloomington, IL 61702-1646

*For my mom and dad, Rosetta and John,  
who have always believed in me, and for Eric W. Haddock,  
who helped me in countless ways.*

**Rotten to the Core** is a Sourcebook and adventure on Earth for the **2300 AD** science-fiction roleplaying game and the **Earth/Cybertech Sourcebook**, The **Equipment Guide** and the **Ground Vehicle Guide** are also recommended, but are not required.

Material on the black market is based on an article by Matthew S. Prager in **Challenge 44** and is used with his courteous permission.

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*Lookit this, you Net-heads. I downloaded it from the APL public relations department just for chuckles. They haven't posted it to the public access files yet, so I thought you might have a few suggestions for its "improvement."*

—Ice Man

*Who writes this boring drek, anyway?*

—Sunset Samurai

*Some PR wage slave. You've never heard of her.*

—Ice Man

*Her brains must have turned to corporate mush long ago.*

—Sunset Samurai

*"Protector," "guiding hand," "aegis"—France?! Those cold, efficient government types would eliminate halt your bodily limbs as redundant and make you donate half your internal organs as a public service if they thought they could get away with it.*

—The Sing-Sing Kid

*18 million souls—yeah, lost souls.*

—Sunset Samurai

*Modern ingenuity—How many ways can you spell wage slave, kiddies?*

—The Sing-Sing Kid

# Libreville: Your Corporate Haven

Raised from relative obscurity to the exalted height of the center of Earth's multiworld economic community, Libreville is a thriving community in the French Metropolitan Department of Gabon, Africa, a proud member of the French Empire,

## HISTORY

Libreville (literally *free town*) was founded at the mouth of the Como River in 1849 by slaves released from a slave ship captured by the French. Libreville enjoyed moderate growth and prosperity for many years. During the period of the Twilight War, Libreville, along with most of Central Africa, was affected mainly by the global repercussions of the severance of global communication, transportation lines, and global commerce.

Although not subjected to the horrors of nuclear attack or invasion by its neighbors, Gabon was overwhelmed (like the rest of the world) in the unprecedented global depression that followed the 1997 nuclear attacks. The government was forced to become increasingly totalitarian in order to retain control, and finally broke down altogether for several years. This regrettable chapter in human history came to a close by 2010, however, and local law and order reestablished themselves under the guiding hand of France, the nation's traditional protector. As Gabon had originally gained independence from France in 1960 and had never left the French economic community, retreating under the aegis of the only country to come through the Twilight War relatively unscathed came naturally. The only trace that remains of those unpleasant times is the monument to the victims of the Twilight War, located in Mouvagha Park and dedicated to the billions of lives lost in the unfortunate years of 1995-2005.

Gabon applied for and was granted status as a department of France in 2143. In 2289, when France, financially supported by most of Earth's nations, pioneered the construction of Earth's beanstalk, Libreville was chosen as its site. To place the beanstalk directly on the equator, Libreville, at the time only of modest size, was moved from the northern banks of the mouth of the Como River to a location on its southern bank. With this move began Libreville's renaissance. The construction of the beanstalk and the port which serves it pushed Libreville full-steam into the modern era of international and interstellar commerce in which we live. Completed in 2299, the beanstalk soars from the midst of Libreville into the heavens, a physical metaphor of the soaring aspirations of humanity.

## LIBREVILLE TODAY

Modern Libreville is populated by almost 18 million souls, and her work force is able to meet any challenge in the business field with the cutting edge of modern ingenuity and know how. The greater Libreville metropolitan area has expanded around Gabon Bay to touch the Atlantic from the northern banks of the mouth of the Como River to its southern banks, re-embracing the location which was Libreville's original site and absorbing many former towns and villages into its districts. Every major corporation and organization has an office at hand in Libreville. The corporate edifices of the Niyazawa International Bank, AmeriCo, Trilon Industries, and Hyde Dynamics, to name a scant few, grace our city's skyline. The land transportation network of Africa and the global transport net of the entire world converge upon Libreville, Day in, day out, de-



pendable as clockwork, the beanstalk ferries goods and people to Gateway, our sister city in space and gateway to the stars.

## **A XANADU ON THE ATLANTIC**

Libreville is not only *the* commercial center of Earth, but is also a significant cultural center. Several universities have campuses in or near downtown, Museums, the Rawiri Planetarium, the Lepandou Aquarium and Oceanographic Research Center, the Libreville Metropolitan Opera House, and the Essimengane Dome, the world's largest sports arena and exposition center, are all located within the golden crescent of Libreville's heart. Libreville's skyline is one of the most beautiful in the world, and her night spots eclipse those of any other city, with their excitement, glamour, gourmet foods, and pampering service. The famous and exclusive Aqualight Club cruises Gabon Bay nightly, providing every amusement and pleasure imaginable for the elite of Libreville, rivaled only by Fantasia, a medieval fairy castle on the water.

## **COME TO LIBREVILLE**

Liberal development packages are available to companies desiring to transfer their operations to Libreville or to establish a corporate branch here. Many sites can be built to suit, and real estate near the beanstalk, in the heart of Libreville, is an investment in Earth's prosperous future. Abundant, cheap, clean solar power is easily accessible, generated by the solar power collectors sheathing the beanstalk. Many raw materials are present in abundance here in Gabon, including wood, oil, uranium, manganese, iron, and borite. The exotic flora of Gabon's rain forests is a treasure trove for pharmaceutical and chemical concerns. Labor is also no problem, as the willing workers of Africa are eager to join in any profitable economic venture, and the outstanding names in management and research are attracted like bees to Libreville's honey of prosperity. Transportation of almost any kind, to virtually every place on Earth or in orbit, is available day or night. And Libreville's sophisticated communication net rivals that of any nation, providing instantaneous transmission of any kind of data.

For further information, contact Le Groupe Amenagement de L'Administration du Port de Libreville (The Libreville Port Authority Development Group), 1-LIBREVILLE-753-9896 (Gabon area prefix is 1021) by Net or FAX. Viscom is available at (1021) 2-LIBREVILLE-753-9896-1414.

*So Libreville's rich in culture. Maybe. But you can only see it if you're just plain rich first. I think I'll start a benevolent society to benefit me. Just send all contributions to: Corporation for the Advancement of Sing-Sing Haya-wara. That's C.A.S.H.*

—The Sing-Sing Kid

*Translation: Come to Libreville! Oppress millions rather than piddly thousands! Make big bucks! Spend big bucks! Pay us taxes! Make France richer through eliminating all your competition, one way or another. After all, it's just Shrewd Business Practices, right?*

—Sunset Samurai

*Aw, come down off your hobbyhorse. Sunset.*  
—Delia Detroit



# Sightseeing

Libreville is a city of immense wealth and utter poverty—a physical embodiment of the dichotomy which exists on Earth in 2300. The gulf between the wealthy and the poor is immense. The slums of Libreville teem with millions of poor who fight for survival while a handful of the ultra-rich live fantasy lives only miles away.

## THESE MEAN STREETS

Libreville is divided geographically into three sections: downtown, corp town, and mudville.

### "Peel Me a Grape, Beulah"

Roughly centered around the beanstalk and its terminal, downtown is the abode of the wealthy, the lair and playground of the jet set. Downtown are found the luxury penthouses, security-fenced estates and exotic mansions of those who can afford to buy almost anything and anyone. The corporate offices are all located downtown, and most of the corporate employees commute via airfilm to them (except for the immensely wealthy presidents and senior executives, who can afford to have homes in corp town and an apartment or home downtown, also).

All of Libreville's tourist and cultural centers are located downtown: the art and science museums, institutes, theaters, opera house, sports stadiums, and like structures. Here also are found the fashionable and exclusive clubs and bars which lend spice to Libreville's night life.

Downtown is a city designer's dream of the future come to life. It has slide-walks, landscaped parks, and pedestrian walkways gracefully connecting buildings stories up in the air like fairy bridges. Masterpieces of the architect's art stand on every corner. Mainly a pedestrian atmosphere, with restaurants, shops, and airfilm terminals in easy walking distance from workplaces, what traffic is here is carefully controlled and coordinated to prevent unsightly and stressful traffic jams.

### I'm a Company Man

A corp town is where the corporate workers live. Each company with an office in Libreville has built its own subdivision—its own corp town—where its employees live pretty much the entire time they are not at work or on a special vacation. Most corp towns are constructed like (amazingly regular) spacious suburbs, with large, roomy houses, well funded schools, medical facilities, corporate country clubs, suburban malls and shopping centers, convenience stores and fuel stations, theaters, parks, restaurants, local bars, and clean, well maintained airfilm terminals.

Crime, other than the occasional case of shoplifting, is almost unknown in corp town, and frequent and regular patrols are made down the streets and alleys by corporate security and/or Libreville Metropolitan Police officers to keep it that way. Many corp towns go so far as to erect an enclosing fence and security barrier (some are rumored to be mined) complete with armed guard stations/checkpoints at the major arteries leading into the corp town to keep "undesirable elements" out.

### "Caught Between Fire and Magic, We Long to Be Free"

Drawn by the magnetic pull of the wealth associated with the beanstalk,



millions of poor, unemployed and unskilled people have congregated within the slums of Libreville (known collectively as *mudville*). Each hopes that, if not himself, then his children will be able to partake of the incredible wealth which seems to lie just beyond fingers' reach in downtown and corp town. Driven by the fire of their hopes and dreams, and tantalized by the glimpses of the fairytale existence of Libreville's wealthy, mudville's inhabitants are caught in an impossible loop of manic frustrations and deep depressions. Months can pass in the slums with nothing in particular going on, life centering around survival at a basic level. Then—whoosh—like a brushfire that grows into a firestorm, a stream of riots can be touched off by a fistfight outside of a storefront liquor store brought on by the 10th successive day of over 90° weather.

## I GET AROUND

Transportation within Libreville is usually accomplished by foot, by airfilm train, or by private vehicle. Most inhabitants of downtown and corp town own their own vehicles, although corporate workers usually take the airfilm train (riding the special corporate shuttles which identify corporate employees by their credcard) to the office. If a mudville dweller owns a vehicle, it is often a motorcycle or hovercycle (but not always).

It is also possible to take a hovertaxi or water taxi, either of which is very expensive. These will take a person all the way to the door of his destination rather than a couple of blocks away as an airfilm ride will. Only certain taxi companies will come to some locations, such as most of mudville—or even outside of the downtown area in some cases.

Many international airports (which handle planes, supersonic planes, airships, high-speed trans-atmospheric craft, shuttles, and even scramjets) litter the countryside within city limits and in the vicinity of Libreville. And, of course, the beanstalk itself can take either people or cargo into orbit from the heart of Libreville itself.

Average prices for transportation are summarized on the Transportation Costs Table; feel free to adjust these for different air services, luxury accommodations, special requirements, charter service, or seasonal fluctuations such as holidays, the "off season," or the tourist season.

### TRANSPORTATION COSTS

| <i>Destination</i>    | <i>Transportation</i>                 | <i>Cost</i>    |
|-----------------------|---------------------------------------|----------------|
| Libreville metro area | Airfilm train                         | Less than Lv1* |
| Libreville metro area | Hovertaxi                             | Lv1 per km+    |
| Libreville metro area | Water taxi                            | Lv1.5 per km+  |
| Intercity             | Airfilm train                         | Lv5 per 100km  |
| Intercity             | Surface ship                          | Lv5 per 100km  |
| Intercity             | Airship                               | Lv10 per 100km |
| Intercity             | Aircraft                              | Lv10 per 100km |
| Intercity             | Supersonic aircraft                   | Lv20 per 100km |
| Intercity             | Trans-atmospheric high-speed aircraft | Lv25 per 100km |
| To orbit              | Beanstalk                             | Lv500          |
| To orbit              | Rocket plane or scramjet              | Lv3000         |
| To orbit              | Shuttle                               | Lv4500         |

\*Ticketvending machines will issue a ticket chit for the correct amount, round trip or one way, after destination zone is selected from a display. Weekly and monthly unlimited ride passes are available; weekly: Lv40; monthly, Lv135.

+Minimum fare of Lv5.



## THE MAPS

The following seven pages present various maps for adventuring in Libreville. The map of Gabon shows the location of Libreville in relation to the rest of Gabon and lays out Gabon's transportation network, some of its geographical features, and its administrative boundaries.

Next, the Libreville Map shows the city at a smaller scale to include districts, train routes, and important features.

The Downtown Libreville Map presents a portion of downtown at a small enough scale to distinguish many streets and landmarks.

Finally, geomorphic sections of Mudville and Corp Town are provided. The street-scale geomorphs are for use in generating typical streets for adventure episodes such as chase scenes. They are numbered for easier random selection (when desired). The block-scale geomorphs are provided for quick determination of the characters' immediate surroundings when they stop or wish to take particular notice of the structures along a certain route (rather than just going from point A to point B). The relative scale of the block geomorphs to the street geomorphs should be adjusted to the situation at hand. Streets on the block geomorphs should be assumed to lie between or beside geomorphic sections in whatever manner is appropriate to the selected street geomorph they relate to.

## ENCOUNTERS IN LIBREVILLE

Libreville is a *huge* city. Multitudes of people performing myriad tasks walk its streets. Here are some random encounters for use at the referee's discretion. Pick an encounter which piques your interest, or roll 1D10.

| ENCOUNTERS |                               |                               |                       |
|------------|-------------------------------|-------------------------------|-----------------------|
| 1D10       | Downtown                      | Corp Town                     | Mudville              |
| 1          | Libreville metro police       | Teenagers                     | Gang members          |
| 2          | Wealthy person and bodyguards | Corporate employee and family | Gang members          |
| 3          | Tourists                      | Corporate employee            | Frightened inhabitant |
| 4          | Corporate executive           | Corporate security            | Neutral bystander     |
| 5          | Corporate employee            | Gang squad in car             | Mugger                |
| 6          | Corporate security            | Stray pet                     | Pickpocket            |
| 7          | Pickpocket                    | Corporate security            | Streetwalker          |
| 8          | Mugger                        | Lost kid                      | Rumormonger           |
| 9          | Souvenir vendor               | Broken vehicle                | Street musician       |
| 10         | Street musician               | Gardeners                     | Wanted person         |

### Downtown

Libreville Metropolitan Police: These officers are either on patrol, on break, or investigating suspicious PCs. Descriptions of standard officers are on page 19.

Wealthy Person and Bodyguards: This could be a media star, a member of the upper crust, or a reclusive eccentric.

Tourists: A group of 1D10 tourists either on a tour, taking holopics, or lost.

Corporate Executive: Waiting in a limousine with the passenger window rolled down, this corporate executive looks worried and keeps checking his watch.

Corporate Employee: The employee is on lunch break, doing some shopping or running an errand. Or he may be meeting some suspicious-looking people.

Corporate Security: These security types are protecting someone or something. Descriptions of Trilon security guards are found on page 19.

Pickpocket: This pickpocket is very slick; he'll try for a loose object.

Mugger: He must be desperate and dangerous to risk working downtown.

Souvenir Vendor: Would you like to buy a neon plastic beanstalk holocube?

Street Musician: This musician is both good and in the know.

### Corp Town

Teenagers: A group of 1D6 teenagers being annoying or flirtatious.

Corporate Employee and Family: Out for a walk to the park or drive to the mall.

Corporate Employee: Walking for exercise or on the way to a friend's house.

Corporate Security: On a standard patrol unless alerted previously.

Gang Squad in Car: 1D6 gang members out on a dare to scare people.

Stay Pet: A cat or dog which has wandered off; its owner may be following.

Lost Kid: A little kid standing and crying for his mother; he can give his address.

Broken Vehicle: May still have the family in it, or Dad may have gone for help.

Gardeners: Lawn tenders, complete with a truck full of fertilizer spray.

### Mudville

Gang Members: 1D6 gang members looking for some "fun" and cash.

Frightened Inhabitant: Scared silly of you, he yells for help if you say a word.

Neutral Bystander: Watches you pass. Won't answer; won't help; won't move.

Mugger: If you look worth it, he and his 1D6 friends will try to rob you.

Pickpocket: Did somebody bump you just then? Hey, where's your...?

Streetwalker: This person is looking for lucrative companionship.

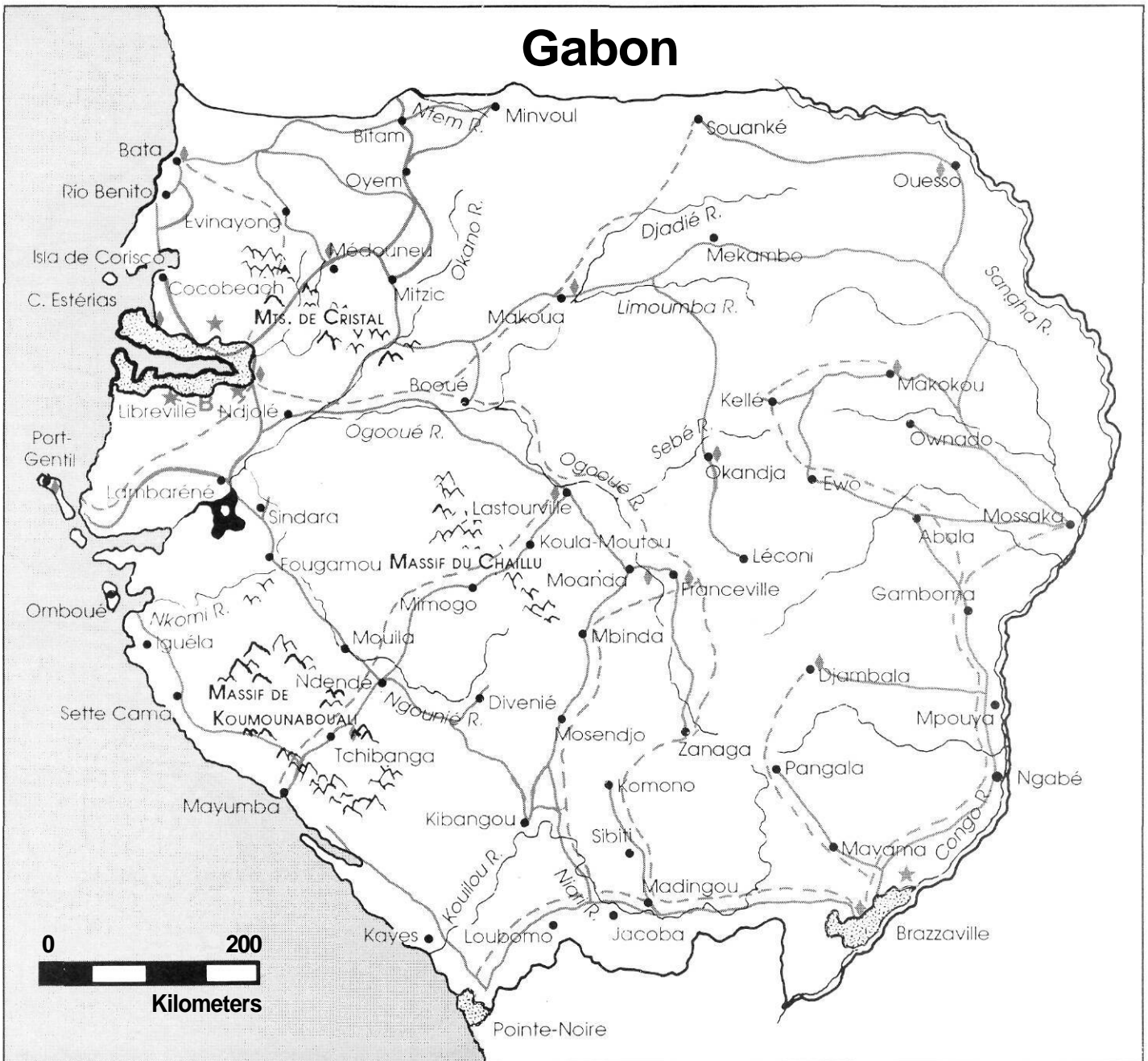
Rumormonger: If you could spare a Lv5 or Lv10 note, I might have heard something interesting about that, or I might know someone who has.

Street Musician: Of only so-so skill, this guy knows the local gangs hangouts.

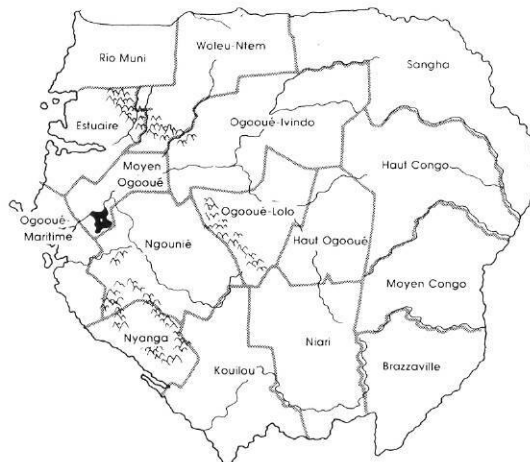
Wanted Person: A person who appeared on the news recently as wanted.



# Gabon

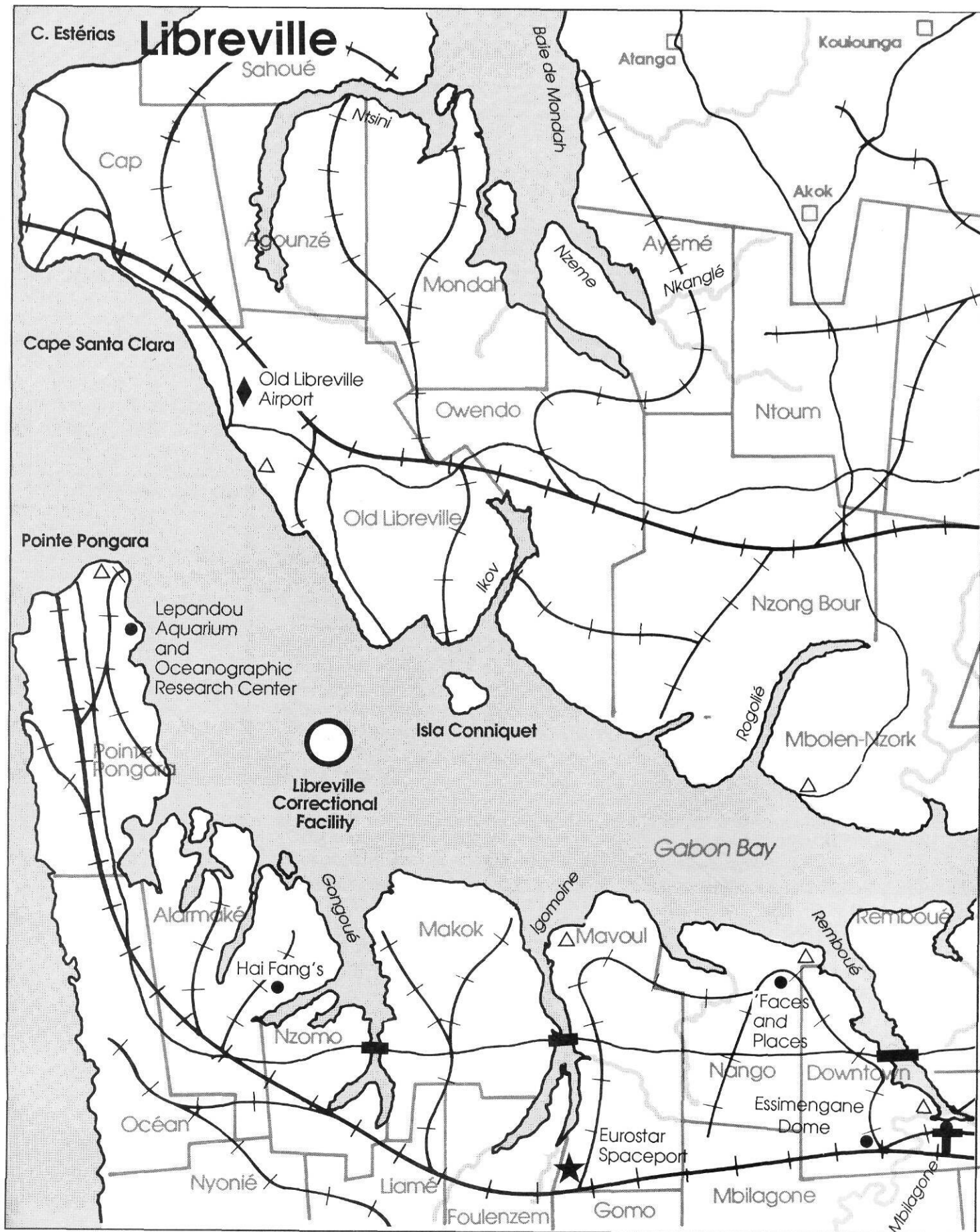


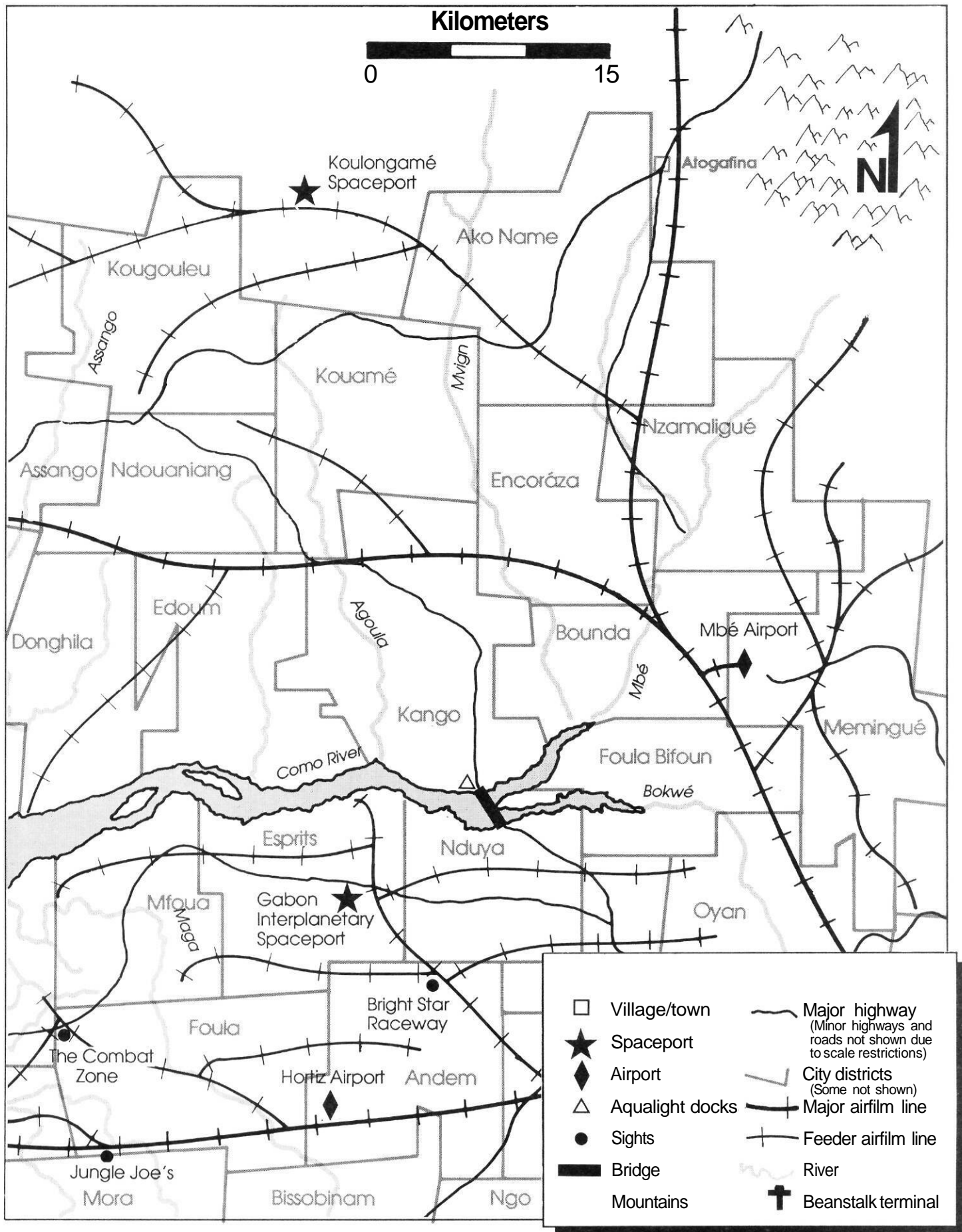
## Administrative Districts of Gabon



## Key

- Rivers
- City/town
- Large city
- Mountains
- Highway
- Airport
- Spaceport
- Beanstalk
- Airfilm lines







## Key



Bridge



Airlift line



Major highway



Point of interest



Hospital

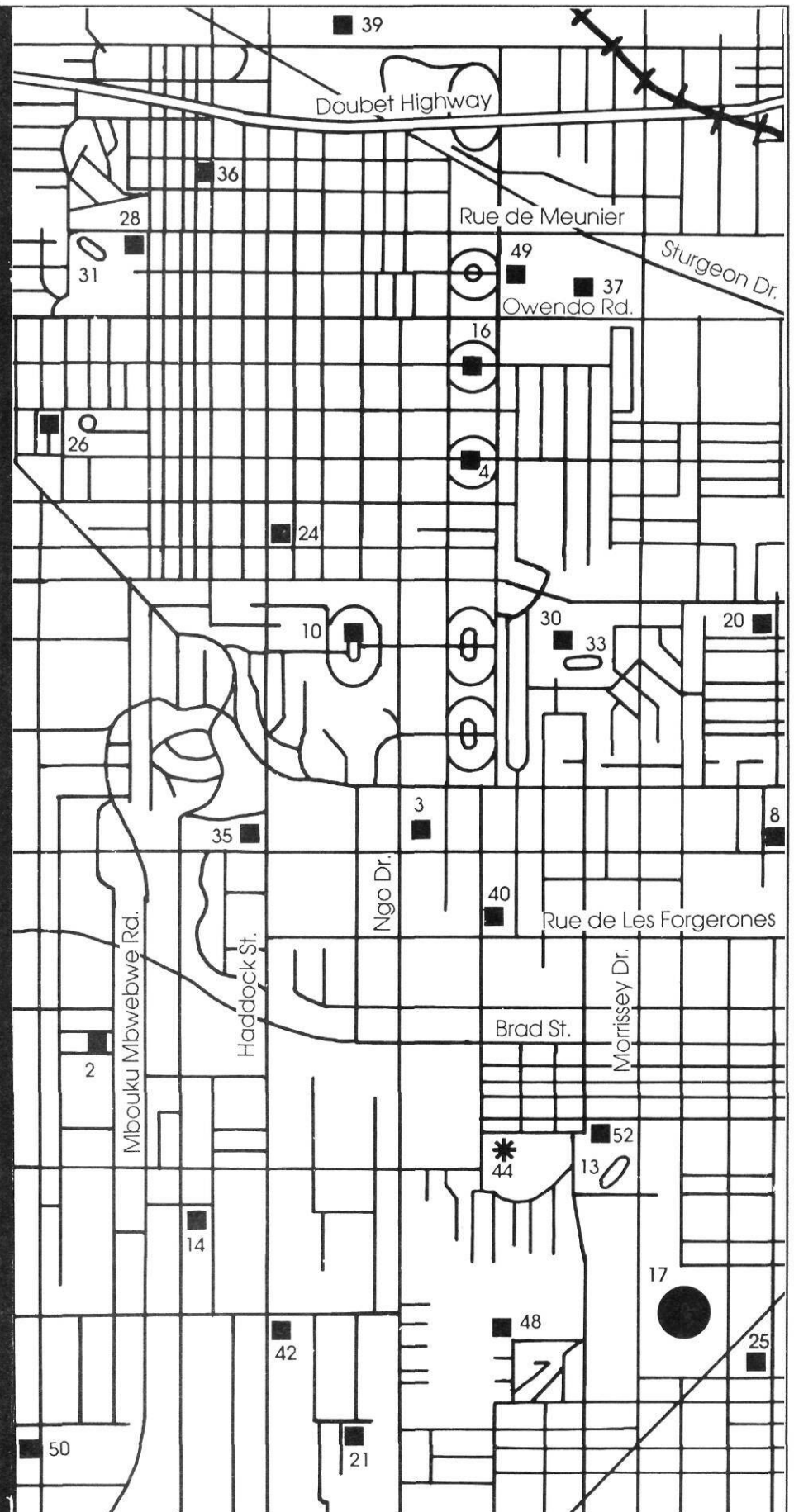


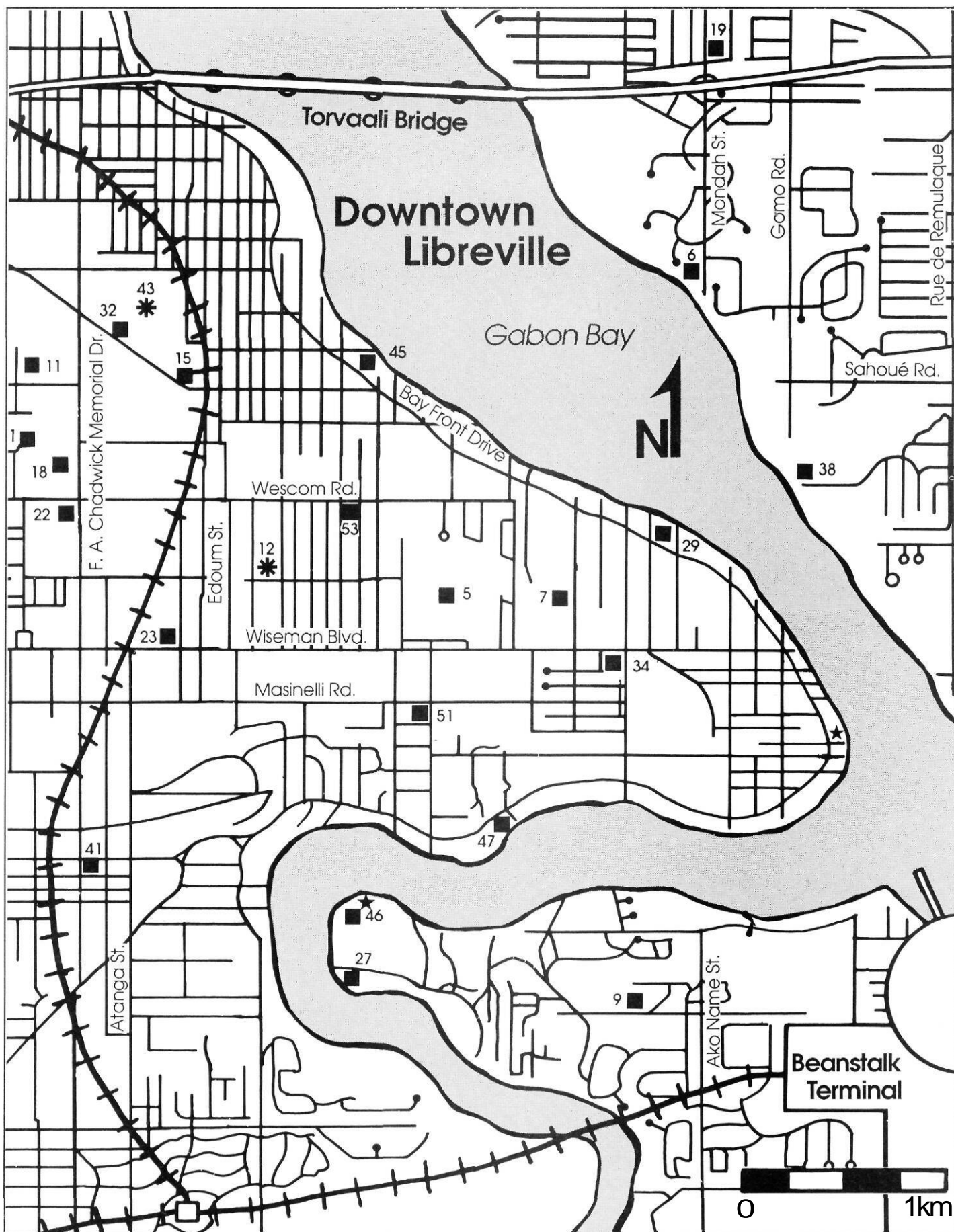
Stadium



Aqualight Club dock

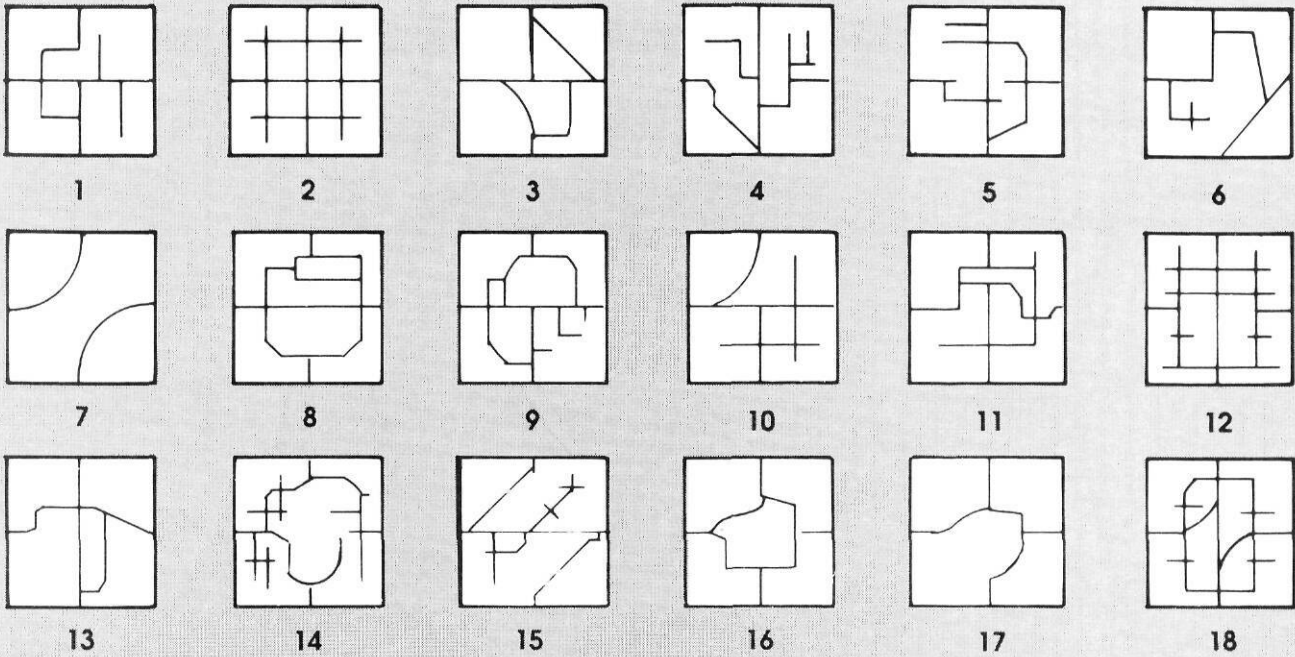
1. Academic dei Lincei
2. Alberta Farmers' Cooperative
3. Alvarez/Kelly
4. AmeriCo
5. Andromedia
6. Ariel St. Simone
7. Asterbank
8. Astronomischen Rechen-Institut
9. Baustoffe, GmbH
10. Bayerische Biotechnik, AG
11. Bridgeport Swift
12. Brun Clinique
13. Bryant Stadium
14. Clara Devereaux
15. Daibei Fine Arts Museum
16. DeLambe Frere, SA
17. Essemengane Dome
18. Financia, AG
19. Foundation for Practical Knowledge
20. House of Fire
21. Hyde Dynamics
22. InterComm, AG
23. L'Hibou et La Minette
24. L'Institut des Etudes Xenologiques
25. La Cible
26. La Grenouille at La Peche
27. La Riviera
28. Le Paradis des Peaux-Rouge
29. Libreville Metropolitan Opera House
30. Life Foundation
31. Martin Stadium
32. MBM (Merchant's Bank of Maputo)
33. Meier Stadium
34. Mighty Casey's
35. Momotaro Technologies
36. Neon Tetris
37. North American Research League
38. Pulsar
39. Rawiri Planetarium
40. Razor's Edge
41. Royal Society
42. Sabrina's
43. San Rafael Hospital
44. Santa Maria Hospital
45. Sebastian's on the Waterfront
46. Spindrift
47. Tamerlaine
48. Tao Biogenics
49. Trilon Industries
50. Tunghus Robotics
51. Vannoccio
52. Xenozoic Fashions
53. Zapamoga



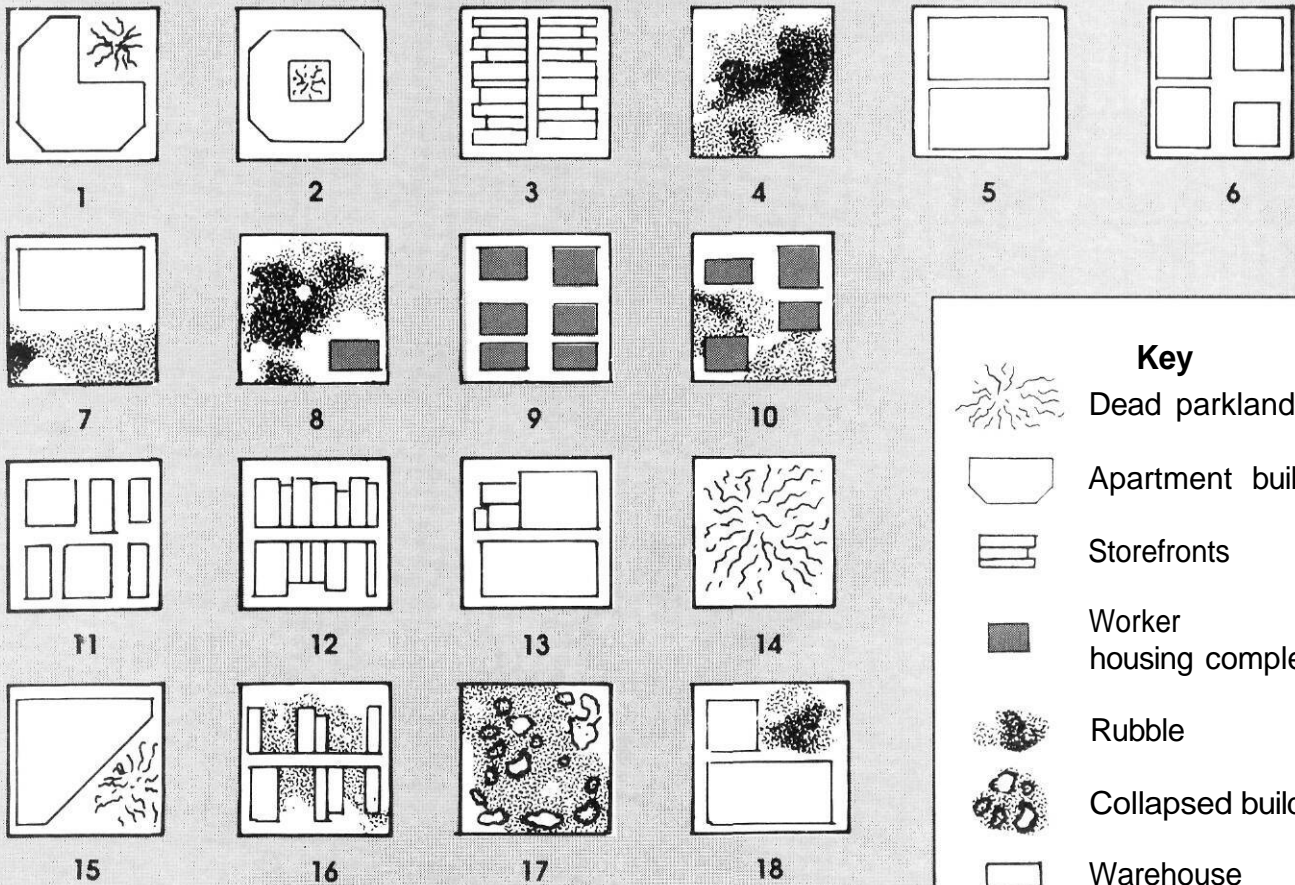


# Mudville

## Street-Scale Geomorphs



## Block-Scale Geomorphs



### Key



Dead parkland



Apartment building



Storefronts



Worker housing complex



Rubble



Collapsed building

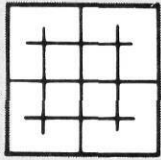


Warehouse

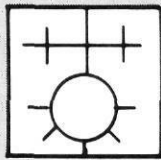


# Corp Town

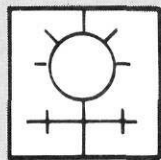
## Street-Scale Geomorphs



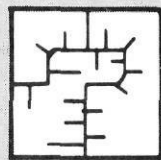
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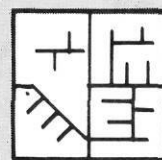
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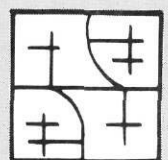
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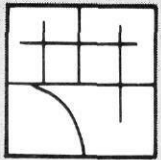
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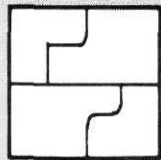
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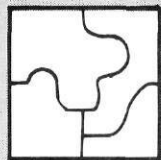
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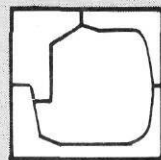
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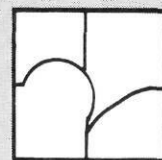
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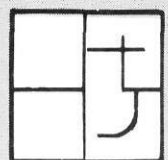
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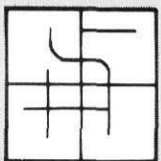
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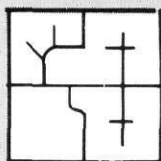
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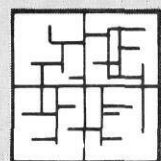
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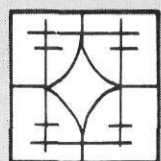
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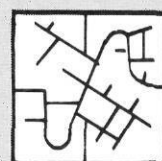
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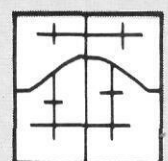
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16

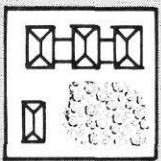


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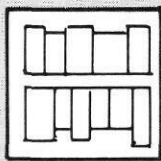


18

## Block-Scale Geomorphs



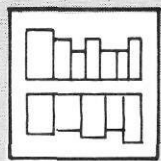
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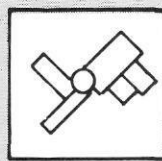
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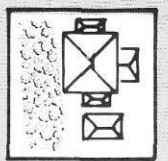
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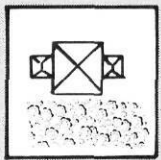
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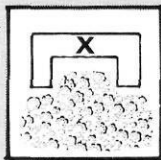
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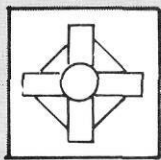
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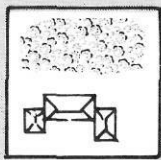
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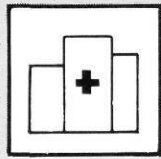
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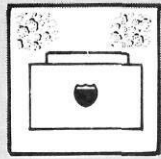
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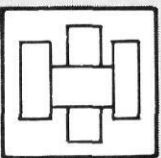
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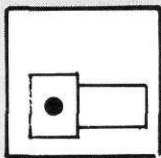
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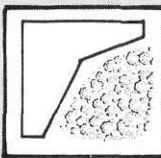
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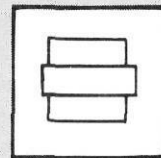
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16



17



18

### Key



Trees/parkland



House(s)



Storefronts



Hospital



Mall



School



Police department



Fire department

## THE UNDERWORLD

Libreville also has an unofficial government.

*Mob:* One of the organized crime associations within Libreville is the Mob. The Mob has strong connections with AmeriCo, and is into smuggling, drug running, protection, loan sharking, numbers, and all of its "traditional" occupations. It has strong holdings in other corporations aside from AmeriCo, owns a dozen or so city councilors, and has a small infiltration into APL.

*Yakuza:* The yakuza is the Oriental version of the Mob, participating in many of the same activities in its own areas of Libreville. The yakuza is more involved in the smuggling of high tech and biotech than the Mob, and some brotherhoods have connections with Provolution. The yaks are also heavily involved in black market body parts.

*Gangs:* Gangs rule the streets in much of mudville and have sliced mudville up like a pie into their turfs. Gangs sometimes cooperate with the Mob or yakuza, but they most often pursue their own interests—maintaining their territory against other gangs, acquiring funds through robbery and mugging, and using the money to get more of whatever their particular gang's code sees as a status symbol (often weapons, clothes, vehicles, illegal substances, or occasionally cybernetics).

# Government

Libreville lies beneath the overlapping jurisdictions of many differing governmental bodies.

## DEPARTMENTAL

To get a feel for who controls what in Libreville, it is helpful to look at the structure of government in Gabon. Gabon is a metropolitan department of France. It has a status analogous to a state in the United States or a province in Canada, and all of its citizens are French citizens, with all the responsibilities and privileges that status entails.

To make administering Gabon easier, the department divides Gabon into administrative districts. Libreville is part of Le District Estuaire, technically, but in practice the administrator of Le District Estuaire only worries about the administration of territory outside the greater Libreville metropolitan area and leaves Libreville to its own devices.

As a department of France, Gabon has a governor as its chief administrator and executive—Sophie Tchioba. Much like the situation between New York state and New York City in the 20th-century United States, the governor of Gabon has much less political clout within Gabon itself than the mayor of Libreville does. The governor of Gabon has greater jurisdiction over the countryside and smaller towns and cities than over the large cities (such as Libreville, Port-Gentil, Pointe-Noire, Brazzaville, and others).

The departmental government of Gabon can establish and enforce its own taxes, tariffs, and laws to a limited degree, and has its own police force, Les Gendarmes Gabonais, which enforces state law. The departmental government of Gabon is primarily concerned with the upkeep of the department-wide transportation network (roads, airfilm, and railroads), the departmental education system, public health services (with a concentration on providing and maintaining drinkable water sources), and the preservation of the rain forest which still covers over 85% of Gabon.

## METROPOLITAN

Libreville has a city government, run from city hall by the mayor, Lin Natora. The mayor and lieutenant mayor (who serve for a six-year period) perform the duties of the executive branch of city government. The city council is composed of three councilors elected once every three years from every city district (districts must be officially recognized by the council as city districts before they may send councilors), plus three voting representatives of the L'Administration du Port de Libreville. Corporations and organizations may send non-voting representatives to the council if they wish. Members of the judiciary are appointed by the mayor and confirmed by the city council, and they serve for life.

The Libreville city government is concerned with "maintaining and enhancing the quality of life of the citizens of Libreville." What this amounts to is supervising the operation of the corporations which supply public services to Libreville's inhabitants, running the city hospitals (all six of them), supplying and maintaining the Libreville Metropolitan Police and its several district headquarters, and coordinating the work of the many arts and festivals councils. The city government can establish its own taxes, tariffs, and laws, but rarely does so. Currently, the only taxes are on the sale of alcoholic beverages, snack foods and snack beverages (as defined by the council), firearms, and vehicular transportation of any kind. Carrying weapons and firearms of any type without a li-

cense is illegal, as is operating a vehicle capable of sustained or limited flight at altitudes below 1000 feet and above 20 feet without having a registered flight plan or having declared an emergency.

On the whole, the city government is totally corrupt. Public services outside recognized city districts are sporadic at best and more commonly nonexistent. Libreville Metropolitan Police will only leave downtown or a corporate subdivision if pursuing a wanted person, and then only in force. Crimes which take place in mudville must normally be dealt with by the inhabitants themselves, if at all. Bribery and patronage positions (consisting of a title and no real work) are common in the city government. For instance, the warden of the Libreville Correctional Facility, an island in the midst of Gabon Bay, has seen his nominal "place of work" once—from the seat of a comfortable plane doing a flyover. Acquiring permits and licenses takes forever, with applications being "lost," "accidentally deleted," and "unavoidably delayed," unless the applicant knows someone, is owed a favor, or greases the wheels with livres.

### **LIBREVILLE CORPORATE BOARD**

The Libreville Corporate Board, which is composed of one representative of each corporation with an office in Libreville, is one of the two true governmental powers within Libreville. The current chairperson of the board is Elias Mantaka of InterComm, AG. The corporate board members accept no pay for serving on the board; they are salaried senior executives with the corporations they represent. The corporate board cooperates with the city council on the promotion of the fine arts and the regular presentation of a variety of city festivals held downtown. However, this area is the only one in which the two bodies can really be said to cooperate. For the most part, the corporate board dominates the city council indirectly, as its various corporate members "own" most of the councilors.

The corporate board is geared toward assuring its corporate members nearly complete autonomy in regard to their property and employees. If two corporations are in conflict, the corporate board is the forum in which they are supposed to air their grievances and arrive at a resolution to their problems. (In reality, most intercorporate strife is resolved in many other ways—corporate takeovers, executive "accidents," and assorted covert activities.) The board does, however, effectively coordinate the establishment of corporate medical and park facilities, and other public services utilized by corporate employees. It provides for their maintenance in the most cost efficient manner possible without infringing on the independence of its members. The board establishes procedures for the mutual respect of corporate subdivisional boundaries and regulates the intercorporate defense of those boundaries. Each member company of the corporate board has its own security force, with jurisdiction over its own company's employees and property. Depending on the resources available to a company, the corporate subdivisions in which a company's employees live may be patrolled by company security, Libreville Metropolitan Police, or a combination of the two.

### **L'ADMINISTRATION DU PORT DE LIBREVILLE [THE LIBREVILLE PORT AUTHORITY]**

L'Administration du Port de Libreville (APL) is the body which governs and regulates all activities having to do with the beanstalk and the area of the beanstalk terminal in Libreville. As an adjunct to this, APL (often pronounced *apple* by the citizens) functions as bay and air traffic control for the greater Libreville metropolitan area (with a limited security force), and coordinates customs and illegal/dangerous substances control with Orbital Quarantine Command in Gateway.

APL is run by a director appointed by Emperor Nicolas Ruffin of France. The current director is Andrea Beresford. The director reports to an international



While Libreville is, for the most part, rotten to the core with corruption, APL is probably the least infected. Andrea Beresford, at least, is above reproach.



advisory council which supervises APL's activities, with members from all nations which contributed to the beanstalk's construction. Beneath the director, APL is composed of various administrative groups which fulfill different functions and whose supervisors report to the director.

For example, one of these groups is Le Groupe Amenagement (the Development Group) which is responsible for bringing new economic growth to Libreville. Individual field agents employed by the groups are referred to as APL officers. Employees of APL, except for the director, are hired by APL after passing a competency exam and are all considered employees of the French government.

APL interprets its duties liberally and upholds them stringently. It is concerned with anything which impinges on the beanstalk and its use, including the power distribution net which flows from the beanstalk outward over Gabon and Africa. While APL is limited in its activities outside of Libreville, within Libreville it is one of the two most powerful governmental bodies, the other being the Libreville Corporate Board.

APL is maintained out of appropriations from the docking fees, cargo handling fees, and other taxes and tariffs involved in the use of the beanstalk and its facilities. APL has a very large budget, but is still limited in that it must justify its expenses to Emperor Ruffin. (It must justify its actions to both the emperor and the advisory council, when necessary.) While Libreville is, for the most part, rotten to the core with corruption, APL is probably the least infected. Andrea Beresford, at least, is above reproach.



## TO PROTECT AND TO SERVE

Below are jurisdictions and responses of the police organizations in Libreville, Les Gendarmes Gabonais: Les Gendarmes are the state police, Technically, they have jurisdiction anywhere in Gabon, but they are rarely seen within metropolitan Libreville, They serve search and rescue functions within the Gabonese countryside, enforce conservation laws, act against poachers, and become involved in the capture of criminals fleeing beyond the boundaries of a city or town or across national boundaries. They are a combination of well trained traffic cop and forest ranger. Les Gendarmes will attempt to capture a criminal for trial under departmental and French law. They will only use deadly force in reply to the same,

Libreville Metropolitan Police: Libreville Metropolitan Police, whose jurisdiction encompasses the entire greater Libreville metropolitan area, range from poorly trained to extremely well trained, from slovenly to almost dress military in bearing. Most Libreville policemen come from overworked headquarters, which are understaffed and under equipped (the only exceptions being those headquarters in the corporate subdivisions which utilize the Libreville police as part of their security force—there the city budget and salaries are supplemented by the corporation). Many Libreville policemen are "on the take" from an assortment of organizations, corporations, and underworld groups. Libreville police are supposed to only use deadly force when presented with deadly force, but many interpret this in a very liberal fashion. If a suspect is known or thought to be cybernetically enhanced, most will shoot first with the largest gun handy and ask questions later, Criminals captured by the Libreville police are taken to holding cells located in the various police district headquarters and suited to the dangerousness of the suspect,

Corporate Police/Security: Every corporation has its own security force, which follows the directives laid down by its corporation and has jurisdiction over company-owned property and company personnel (often companies own the land the corporate subdivisions are built on and even the houses their employees live in, which gives corporate security almost frightening latitude to work within), Corporate security forces are extremely well trained, have good morale (they know they'll be almost resurrected from the dead if hurt) and excellent equipment, and they use their knowledge of the home terrain to their advantage. Many had previous military service before joining the company's forces, Corporate police responses vary, but in general most will ask questions, cautiously at first (often requesting ID), because many corporate executives and employees do things which appear on the surface to be peculiar. If an alert has been sounded, security guards will do as instructed (either apprehend alive or kill), If orders are unclear, most will shoot first and ask questions later, figuring a dead trespasser can do less damage to corporate property.

Apple Officers: APL maintains field agents which function much like customs officers or illegal substances control officers, depending on their assignment, They also serve as low-profile security in the beanstalk terminal. Rumor has it that a special branch of APL has been formed to deal with suspected corporate conspiracies. But its existence has never been confirmed, and it is scoffed at by the many corporations which deal on a day-to-day basis with APL. APL officers have jurisdiction in the area of the beanstalk and the beanstalk terminal, on Gabon Bay, in the airspace over Libreville, and in matters concerning the use or misuse of the beanstalk (such as terrorist activities). Suspects apprehended by APL are tried under French federal law. One of the more insidious methods APL can use to encourage cooperation is to shut off the power of uncooperative people or corporations.

Le Legion Etrangere: The French Foreign Legion is present as a security force only at the beanstalk terminal, especially around the beanstalk itself. Foreign legion members have orders to shoot anyone suspected of tampering with the beanstalk, They have, and they will,

**Foreign legion members have orders to shoot anyone suspected of tampering with the beanstalk. They have, and they will.**

Most people  
become very  
talkative  
under the  
effects of J.



### **"WE HAVE YOU SURROUNDED" OR WHAT HAPPENS WHEN SOMEONE GETS CAUGHT**

Sometimes suspects are killed in the process of being caught—how often this is the case depends on the police force attempting to do the catching. If a suspect does not die while being apprehended, what will happen next to the mouse also depends on who the cat is:

**Corporate Police/Security:** If a corporate security force catches someone alive, they will hold him for questioning by corporate interrogation in a corporate medical facility; most people become very talkative under the effects of J (see the Equipment Guide, page 12). After any useful information has been gleaned, trespassers are turned over to the Libreville Metropolitan Police.

**Les Gendarmes Gabonais and APL Officers:** Les Gendarmes and APL will hold a suspect in their facilities and attempt to question him, providing him with both adequate medical care and access to counsel if it is desired. Suspects will be tried under French national law, in French national courts. Libreville does not have anything but preliminary hearing facilities. With the establishment of Libreville as the location for the international beanstalk, it was felt that retaining dangerous federal prisoners in the area for long would prove a risk to the beanstalk, so the federal facilities for trial were moved to Franceville. Suspects who go to trial are transferred to the French national facilities there.

**Libreville Metropolitan Police:** The Libreville police will hold a suspect in their headquarters (if he can afford counsel, he can obtain it then—there are no public defenders in Libreville) until his trial and sentencing. These usually occur at the same time, unless charges against him are dropped (the real culprit turns up; someone is bribed or disappears; the company is forced to drop charges because someone will reveal inconvenient information about it—whatever). Sentences are commonly very high fines, public service at the waste treatment facilities for a set amount of time (read "forced labor"), banishment from Libreville (with a shoot-on-sight prerogative if the offender returns), or, for those deemed exceptionally dangerous or annoying, imprisonment at the Libreville Correctional Facility.

**The Rock:** The Libreville Correctional Facility is located on an island in the middle of Gabon Bay which has been artificially built up so that it possesses high cliffs. Some subsistence-level, barracks-style accommodations were constructed when the island was finished, along with a large cistern for catching rain water; their current state of repair is unknown. No prison administration, buildings, or guards are present on the island. Prisoners are "dropped" with basic survival gear onto it to fend for themselves. Supplies of food and water for 500 are air dropped weekly onto the island; food scraps are dropped daily into the water surrounding the island to encourage sharks to stay in the area. What conditions are like on the island no one knows (but most can guess); while escape is possible (and has probably occurred a few times), no one who has escaped has ever been encountered by the Libreville authorities.

## PUBLIC SERVICES

The following public services/utilities are provided to the citizens of Libreville, Many of these are included as part of corporate contracts and housing rental,

**Libreville Metropolitan Police:** Some people would consider the police to be more of a crime than a service, They will not go into mudville unless in pursuit of a fleeing suspect,

**Fire Department:** Fire control and rescue services are provided to Libreville by Alert One, Inc., a subsidiary of Baustoffe, GmbH. Its services are retained by yearly contract or can be raised in an emergency with proof of credit balance large enough to cover two hours of work for a standard fire/rescue team (Lv10,000), AlertOneisrequiredtorespondfreeofcharge to any "uncontrolled blaze or man-made hazard which the city council, corporate board, or metropolitan police deem large enough to be a general public hazard," This clause has been invoked more times than Alert One likes, but it has found no way out of it as yet,

**Power:** Power to Libreville is provided by the beanstalk power network and is regulated by APL, Power is the cheapest utility in Libreville, but those who offendAPLmayhavetheirpowercutoff,Powerhijackingiscommoninmudville, Lines are often run from the power mains shipping power out to the more distant carp towns or from other power lines still running through sections of mudville which were once corp towns or beanstalk construction worker housing,

**Ambulances:** Libreville has 25 different ambulance services, all privately owned, Ambulances often will not enter mudville except to stop at an EZ1 Stop (explained on page 27) or for an exorbitant increase in rates, Ambulances which do enter mudville often do so armed or with an armed escort, Some ambulance companies have a working deal with certain gangs to allow them access to the gangs' turf in exchange for free or reduced rates for gang members; these gangs often also turn up deals in fresh spare body parts for the ambulance services.

**Water:** Water purification and maintenance of incoming water pipes are taken care of by Eidelweiss Clear Water Corporation, a subsidiary of AmeriCo, Eidelweiss only turns on water to those locations it logs as having a contract for its services, Waterhijackingis as common as breathing in mudville, Also common is tapping water mains through makeshift hydrants and then allowing them to shower a block or so while children play in the water for amusement. Eidelweiss frowns on such flagrant water theft but is rarely able to catch the perpetrators, Rumors occasionally run through mudville that AmeriCo is drugging the water for various fiendish reasons, These are categorically unfounded, so far,

**Sanitation:** Garbage collection, waste processing, and maintenance of outgoing water pipes and storm drains are provided to Libreville by On-Site Sanitation Services, Garbage trucks go armed and armored through mudville, but they do go, as allowing the accumulation of a large amount of untreated garbage in mudville would result in serious health hazards to contiguous corp towns, The On-Site waste treatment plant receives free labor as a public service from criminals sentenced to work there by the Libreville judiciary.

**Telephone, Vidcomm, Net Access, and Cable/Satellite Television:** The contract for these basic services is currently held by InterComm, AG, although annual bids are taken each year, Premium options and channels, downloadable subscription programs (subscription soap operas are the most popular), and bulletin board systems are all available at extra cost from the companies which run them; InterComm only charges an access fee for the first option added.

**Gabon Bay Traffic Control:** Bay traffic control is provided by one of the APL groups, Every ship, pleasure craft, and hovercraft which goes out on the bay is required to carry a transceiver to facilitate in locating it in case of emergency and in coordinating the control of bay traffic, Each area airport also has APL air traffic control officers which orchestrate interface and air traffic,

Some people  
would consider the  
police to be more  
of a crime than a  
service.

*Well, my fellow wire-heads, here is yet another installment in the ongoing PR deluge from Apple. I can't believe they pay people to write this stuff. They could get better out of a hundred genegineered monkeys randomly punching keyboards.*

—Ice Man

*Neo-Arrrgh, Post-Late-Almost-Original, and Gag Me Gothic are more like it,*

—Sunset Samurai

*You have no culture, Samurai.*

—The Sing-Sing Kid

*Well at least I have more class than to rip off the U.S. Constitution for my rhetoric.*

—Sunset Samurai

*Point well taken.*

—The Sing-Sing Kid

# Cooperation and Competition

Intercompany competition to be the best and the most successful is what Libreville is about. Libreville is the hub of global and interstellar commerce, the trunk from which the branches of all of humankind's labors grow. Every major or up-and-coming national and international concern has established an office in Libreville, and many companies maintain their headquarters within sight of the awe-inspiring beanstalk, symbol of humanity's aspirations toward the stars and the future. While all the members of the business community in Libreville must compete on the global and interstellar markets, less aggressive forms of intercompany competition exist within the boundaries of Libreville itself, such as the ongoing rivalry between corporations to construct offices which best symbolize their concerns, their company spirit, and their corporate vision. Architecturally, the sleek sky needle styling which evokes the shape of the beanstalk, the root of Libreville's prosperity, is the most popular, but some companies have recently chosen to engage the cutting edge of Earth's new architects, resulting in newer construction of all sorts, from Neo-Aztec to Post-Neoclassical to Renaissance Gothic, all of it tastefully done (of course).

But cooperation is also a key element among the fraternity of businesses in Libreville. The Libreville Corporate Board, to which each member of the Libreville international business community sends one representative, coordinates efforts between the corporate neighbors of Libreville to provide a secure atmosphere of law and order, promote the general welfare of Libreville's citizenry and a sense of civic pride, and preserve the blessings that free trade can bring to the arts and sciences and to the budding fine arts of this community.

## CORPORATIONS IN LIBREVILLE

Some prominent members of the Libreville business community include:

**Alvarez/Kelly:** Headquartered in Jamaica, A/K specializes in investment banking throughout Central and South America, as well as in the Mexican, Texan, and Argentinean colony worlds. Alvarez/Kelly has the guts to go with many ventures in what other, more conservative banking firms have considered high-risk or unstable areas. A/K feels that it is its corporate duty to give spunky new ideas the wherewithal to grow, and so far that philosophy has paid off in spades for this gutsy firm.

**AmeriCo:** AmeriCo is well known for having begun its corporate existence as a beverage bottler. From there, it branched into light manufacturing, consumer goods, and health and beauty aids. AmeriCo is now involved in such a diverse assortment of activities that it would beg a computer's patience to list them. Its first product, Refresh™ carbonated soft drink beverage, is still the most popular beverage in the Core. Recently AmeriCo acquired Food Extruders™, the only food bar to have outlets everywhere—literally. Undoubtedly this will strengthen AmeriCo's already tight grip on the consumer convenience food market.

**Andromedia:** A multimedia entertainment firm, encompassing holofilm, tri-D video, books, magazines, games, and every other form of conventional print and electronic entertainment, Andromedia owns five of the nine major book publishing houses, two of the seven trivid networks, four of eight major music-disc labels, and more than a dozen major toy and game companies. Andromedia sponsors the annual Andromedia Olympics and the Globalbowl world soccer championships, and is the originator of *Morty and Me™*, the immensely popular audience-participation cartoon show.

**Asterbank:** Asterbank ascribes to the old-fashioned, but not outmoded. solid,



secure, fiscally responsible approach to banking, Investors in Asterbank portfolios may not see their investments triple overnight, but they will see a guaranteed minimum growth in value from 10-15% per fiscal accounting period. Asterbank's office in downtown Libreville is considered to be a masterpiece of the Post-Neoclassical style of architecture, designed by Julio Chin himself, complete with fluted marble columns and a Grecian pediment featuring a sculpture of the Greek goddess of wisdom, Athena, and the god of forethought, Prometheus.

**Baustoffe, GmbH:** Formed from a plethora of smaller materials technology firms to manufacture the cable for the Terran beanstalk, Baustoffe is now a major player in worldwide financial circles. This umbrella firm includes over a dozen smaller companies of seven nationalities. It is one of the main sources of high-tech construction materials of all varieties, including the carbon monofilament cable and resin matrices used in everything from bicycle frames to starship hulls. (Nobody but the colonies uses metal anymore.) Baustoffe is a regular sponsor of driving teams in the Libreville 500, the top-fuel, formula 7 racing event held annually downtown. This year's event will allow neurally-jacked competitors for the first time.

**Bayerische Biotechnik, AG:** A medical and pharmaceutical products firm with both nanotech and genengineering divisions, Bayerische Biotechnik manufactures replacement organs for transplants and cosmetic work, drugs, autodoes, nanosurgical equipment and supplies of all types. It is one of the largest manufacturers of pharmaceutical products on Earth or off of it. Its humanitarian efforts in the bioengineering of cheap, quick-reproducing artificial blood compatible with all blood types (and by its nature, free from accidental impurities of viral, mutagenic, or bacterial origin) won it the Nobel Prize for Medicine.

**Bridgeport Swift:** Plainly light-years ahead of any others in the design and construction of automobiles, military and civilian ground vehicles, agricultural machinery, cargo aircraft, and railroad equipment, Bridgeport Swift is most famous as the manufacturer of the workhorse Songbird hoverjeep and its military version, the Warbird.

**DeLambe Frere, SA:** A Flemish-based genetic engineering firm, DeLambe Frere has pioneered the way for future interspecies business cooperation by joining in partnership with several Pentapod groups. DeLambe Frere specializes in food synthesizers, genengineered pharmaceutical products, and simulated organic materials (Nu-Wool™, Synthesilk™, and Nere-fur™ are some of its most popular brands). It also manufactures Frute-Tabs™, the most popular children's vitamin in the known worlds, and Ext-Wude™ brand extruded artificial wood-like construction material.

**Financia, AG:** Another big league player in the world of high finance, Financia supplies banking and credit services to the common man, and reliable credit information to manufacturers, retailers and wholesalers throughout the Core. Financia's easy-to-qualify-for personal loans have helped many people through short periods of temporary financial difficulty, and provide a valuable and profitable service to all. A good credit record with Financia is the sign of a customer or a company to be trusted.

**InterComm, AG:** InterComm thinks of itself as drawing all of humanity closer together. With its trivid network, the Radon and Felus Dangereuse music labels, Scholastic Eternabooks, and Prisma Holobyte holofilms, InterComm contributes more than a little to the global communications net which unifies humanity.

InterComm encourages the youth of today to become more familiar with global events and the international nature of the modern business community through its yearly Tour the World™ competition, into which grade school children from around the globe enter essays and interviews. The lucky winners receive all-expense-paid, two-year tours of every nation, during which they receive exclusive personal tutoring.

*Who you think's going to win the 500 this year—the yakuza car. the mob cor, Baustoffe's car, or that pretty rich boy, Cameron Whitehall?*

—Delia Detroit

*My money's on the yaks. They've got more territory this year. Of course, if Whitehall wins again this year, they'll grease him. Only his connections at Niyazawa saved his behind last year.*

—Ice Man

*Oh sure, they made it for purely humanitarian reasons. Gigabucks of purely humanitarian reasons.*

—The Sing-Sing Kid

*DeLambe Frere—fake furs, designer drugs, and kids' vitamins. What a schizo corp.*

—Ice Man

*They're all like that. There aren't any real "good guy" corps. The only morals they have are profit margins and cost efficiency ratios.*

—Sunset Samurai

*Financia—another word for in debt for life.*

—Delia Detroit

*Yeah, but only after you've signed on iron-clod contract to work for them when you graduate. And they "relocate" your family to one of their corp towns to make sure.*

—Delia Detroit

*Friend of mine ran into one of Tao's "enhanced" pit bulls once. Talk about frightening. Thing took eight slugs from a Stracher P-11, had no hind legs, and was still trying to gnaw his leg off at the knee when what was left of its brain finally took a dive. The medical bill had him in hot water for six months.*

—Ice Man

*"Basic foodstuff and organic proteinates" It's fish meal—why doesn't Trilon just admit it?*

—The Sing-Sing Kid

*Because fish meal doesn't have a good "consumer response index" in the product recognition category of the PR handbook. Translation: It sounds yucky.*

—Delia Detroit

*Well it tastes worse than it sounds.*

—Sunset Samurai

**MBM (Merchant's Bank of Maputo):** Started with the funds gained from the Mozambiquan tantalum mines, 18% of MBM is still owned by the government of Mozambique, MBM is a major investor and insurance underwriter for financial projects in the colonies, and many an investment banking firm takes a close look with an eye toward joining in when MBM is known to be involved in a venture,

**Momotaro Technologies:** Momotaro, a giant in the field of electronics, specializes in computers, cybernetic interface technology, CAD-CAMS, starship sensors, and communications equipment. This Japanese firm has made a commitment to the generations of tomorrow through the establishment of its Horii Scholarship Program, through which the entire college educations of a dozen of the most promising young people in Libreville are paid in full,

**Tao Biogenics:** This Cantonese firm is attempting to improve life at the most basic organic level—the genes. Tao's boosted strains of seed have improved crop yields and provided disease resistance and increased resiliency. Tao's new breeds of farm stock and experimental animal-cybernetic systems are expected to even further benefit agriculture and yield the solutions to specialized problems preventing profitable colonization of half a dozen worlds.

**Trilon Industries:** Although Trilon industries' famelies in its being a premier force in spacecraft design, space exploration and off-Earth mining, it should not be forgotten that Trilon is also intimately involved in business activities on Earth. For example, within the Libreville metropolitan limits, Trilon is the major supplier of basic bulk foodstuffs and organic proteinates. Without Trilon's efforts, over 90% of Libreville would find it difficult to enjoy a good meal.

**Tunghus Robotics:** A Manchurian manufacturer of industrial robots, control systems, and materials handling systems, Tunghus' subsidiary, Wu-Beijing, manufactures armaments and is one of the only companies currently marketing a combat walker, Tunghus, for all its involvement in heavy machinery, has a very human touch when it comes to the arts, and maintains a Lv1000,000 yearly endowment for what it judges to be the artist who best incorporates traditional and native ethnic influences in his works,

## ORGANIZATIONS IN LIBREVILLE

Not only the international business community makes use of the location and profitable atmosphere in Libreville; many respected organizations have offices here, and most of them have also become involved in the growth and development of the city and its surroundings. The Academia del Lincei is involved in the Arts Council and has established a fine arts museum downtown. The Foundation for Practical Knowledge is a patron of the Lepandou Aquarium and Oceanographic Research Center, NARL is intensely involved in coordinating projects of any environmental impact to the tropical rain forest which covers Gabon, as it is part of one of the largest remaining rain forests left on Earth,

### ORGANIZATIONS WITH OFFICES IN LIBREVILLE

| Corporation                        | Nationality  | Interests   |
|------------------------------------|--------------|---|
| Academia dei Lincei                | Italian      | Antiquities, artifacts, knowledge                                       |
| Alberta Farmers' Cooperative       | N. American  | Agricultural shipping, support, and markets                             |
| Astronomischen Rechen-Institut     | Bavarian     | Interstellar exploration  |
| Foundation for Practical Knowledge | Wellon       | Research, data collection on frontier                                   |
| L'Institut des Etudes Xenologiques | French       | Xenobiology, xenopsychology, any research on extraterrestrial organisms |
| The Life Foundation                | A. Centauri  | Colonization  |
| North American Research League     | Interstellar | Ecological and moral issues, arbitration and negotiation                |
| The Royal Society                  | British      | Colonization, research aimed toward forwarding Britain                  |
| Zapamoga                           | Interstellar | Refugee and colonist relocation aid, transportation, direction, tools   |

## CORPORATIONS WITH OFFICES IN LIBREVILLE

| <i>Corporation</i>           | <i>Nationality</i> | <i>Product</i>   |
|------------------------------|--------------------|--|
| Alvarez/Kelly                | Jamaican           | Investment banking, colonial investments   |
| AmeriCo*                     | American           | Beverage bottling, light manufacturing, consumer goods, health and beauty aids (smuggling and other underworld activities)   |
| Andromedia*                  | International      | Multimedia   |
| Aquitaine Corporation        | Canadian           | Remote sensor drones (space), intelligence services, cyberdecks, holoviewers, and trivid reception towers and units  |
| Arno                         | Brazilian          | Armaments; Gonzalves-Brazilia is a wholly owned subsidiary   |
| Asterbank                    | American           | Banking  |
| Baustoffe, GmBH*             | International      | High-tech construction materials   |
| Bayerische Biotechnik, AG*   | German             | Medical and pharmaceutical products  |
| Black Scorpion Company       | International      | Private mercenaries, work on Earth and off   |
| Brandt                       | French             | Electronics, sound reproduction and recording equipment, computers, specialized armaments (sonic stun pistols)   |
| Bridgeport Swift*            | American           | Automobiles, hover vehicles, agricultural machinery, railroad equipment, cargo aircraft  |
| Darlan Optophysique          | French             | Power satellites, satellite focusing mirrors, scientific instruments, armaments (plasma)   |
| DeLambe Frere, SA            | Flemish            | Genetic engineering, synthetic foods, Pharmaceuticals, synthetic building materials  |
| DunArmCo                     | Australian         | Armaments, spaceship weapons   |
| Financia, AG                 | International      | Banking, credit services and information   |
| Gatinhos da Seva             | International      | Private mercenaries, work on Earth and off   |
| General Service Transport*   | French             | Spaceship design, passenger service to colony worlds (the Tall Ships line)   |
| Gorman Systems, Ltd          | British            | Manufacturing  |
| HydeDynamics                 | American           | Power plants, engineering, space missiles, lasers, fighter craft; a subsidiary, TerraFuse, produces fusion reactors  |
| Infodyne                     | American           | News Network 27, pay-per-view satcable events and series, SenseNoir™ sensory holodrama trivid cassettes  |
| InterComm, AG                | International      | Communications and telecommunications, multimedia  |
| Julian-Tauran Services*      | Swiss              | Consulting think tank  |
| L'tage. Ltd.                 | French             | Spaceship design and engineering; owns Guiscard, which manufactures missile systems and other defense systems  |
| Madsden Group                | International      | Consulting firm, think tank  |
| Merchant's Bank of Maputo*   | Mozambiquan        | Investments, insurance underwriting  |
| Momotaro Technologies*       | Japanese           | Computers, cybernetic interface technology, CAD-CAMS, starship sensors, and communications equipment   |
| Niyazawa International Bank* | Japanese           | Banking megacorporation (family owned and operated)  |
| NeuralNet, Ltd.              | Canadian           | Computer programming and consulting, commercial software and cyberdecks  |
| Pentapods                    | Pentapod           | Bioengineered products   |
| Pichot Industries            | Australian         | Heavy machinery  |
| Pratt-Nagoya-Suharto, Ltd.   | International      | Banking  |
| PsiTechCorp*                 | International      | Medical equipment, advanced sensing equipment, cybernetic implants   |
| Quinn Optronics, Inc.        | American           | Fiber optics, communications equipment, computers, optical focusing elements, satellite uplinks and downlinks, armaments (plasma, sonicstun restraint); Allen (a subsidiary) makes space laser weapons |
| Rexford-Norris Enterprises*  | International      | Armaments; subsidiaries include Rockwell (British), Mueller-Rivera (Argentinean), Jaschonek Fabrikant (Austrovenian), and Kurita Arms (Japanese)   |
| Ramirez-Abruggo              | Brazilian          | Pharmaceuticals, bulk foodstuffs, armaments  |
| Rebco and Rebco SAR*         | International      | Financial services, troubleshooting, security, search and rescue, consultants  |
| Rorttmann                    | German             | Military and industrial lasers, armaments  |
| Sistemas Domesticas*         | Catalonian         | Complete household management systems, computer control systems, semi-independent robots   |
| Sortech Enterprises          | American           | Robotics (repair and rescue robots, remote-controlled drone, manufacturing robots)   |
| Sumatro-Fabrique             | Indonesian         | Zero-G bearings, stress-free castings, zero-G extrusions, armaments  |
| Stracher                     | Austrovenian       | Armaments  |
| Tao Biogenics                | Cantonese          | Genengineering, improved farm stock and seed production, animal-cybernetic systems   |
| Traylor Arms                 | American           | Armaments, military and civilian transport vehicles, military and civilian sensing equipments (seismic, radar, sonar, ladar); Hancock armaments is a subsidiary  |
| Trilon Industries*           | American           | Spaceship design, space exploration, mining, bulk foodstuffs (fish meal)   |
| Tunghus Robotics             | Manchurian         | Industrial robots, control systems, materials handling; a subsidiary, Wu-Beijing, manufactures armaments and combat walkers  |
| Vannoccio                    | Italian            | Automobiles, clothing, beverages   |

\*Corporations with an asterisk are part of the Investment 100 list of megacorporations. They own significant portions of other corporations, and have multiple and diversified interests.

**FOOD EXTRUDERS™**  
*Home of  
theFoot-Long  
Hard-Boiled Egg*

Food Extruders™ is a chain of autovending food bars. A Food Extruders outlet is usually a small storefront (or large alcove, when the franchise is located in a mall or starport). One entire wall consists of the food extrusion machinery, the food selection menu, and the payment station, which accepts the local currency (and credcards on Earth). Sometimes a few heavy-duty chairs and tables, constructed of plastic and bolted to the floor, are present "for your dining convenience."

A customer makes his selection from a limited menu of typical fast food and snack cuisine, and the food is extruded through assorted dies onto disposable dinnerware. The food is all basically constructed of the same protein pudding base which is colored, flavored, texturized, and heated or cooled according to the dish desired. Food Extruders outlets can be recognized by their universally recognized sign: Their media impact personality, a large, cartoonish man in an old-fashioned chefs hat with a cleaver in his hand, stands by a huge, complicated piece of machinery out of which a meters-long hot dog is being extruded simultaneously with its bun. Food Extruders is proud to have a franchise in every starport in human space.

# Going Shopping

The characteristics of shopping for items in Libreville depend on where a person is doing the shopping and whether he is employed by a major Corporation,

## CORP TOWN

In the corporate worker residence sections of the city, basic necessities and manufactured goods are available from familiar outlets: chain convenience marts, fuel stations, supermarkets/superstores (incorporating grocery stores, pharmacies, florists, small appliance stores, and delicatessens), clothing stores, hardware/tool stores, electronics stores, etc. These stores exist because a significant portion of the middle-class citizenry still enjoys "going out" to shop, utilizing shopping as a form of entertainment. Ordering via computer is unappealing to many of them at a basic level; they need to see and touch the product in person.

Usually no more than one or two of each kind of store is found in a corporate employee subdivision, however, as many corporate wage slaves do their shopping via tri-D catalogs, punching in their orders at home by computer over the phone net. When an order is taken, the consumer slots in his credcard for purposes of identification and to instruct the order-taking computer of his bank account number. He then enters a seven-digit PIN (personal identification number). The company taking the order checks on the existence of the account, its current balance (or credit limit) and the card owner's employment status, and ensures that the PIN matches the account number indicated and that the order request is indeed coming from the indicated phone number. After a few moments, the transaction is confirmed, at which time the consumer can have a receipt printed out and/or can instruct his computer as to where to record the transaction in its accounting logs for tax purposes.

Shops in corp town are geared to run off credcards. Even fast food shops, fuel stations, and convenience stores are slotted for credcards, although they will usually take cash. Except for these three types of store, though, no shop in corp town will take cash (for all practical purposes). (And even they will call the police on a cash customer who does anything in the least suspicious, including hanging around for more than 10 minutes.) People who try to pay in cash are regarded with suspicion and asked to leave the premises, forcibly if necessary.

In corp town, if it can be regulated and/or taxed, it already is. Permits, licenses, parking stickers, prescriptions and other such forms of authorization are the general rule. Purchasing guns is legal only with a permit, and then only sporting models are available. Licenses are required to drive (a credcard can carry this information). Proof of insurance and a license to drive must be shown before a vehicular purchase is allowed, and permits are required to park in many areas.

## DOWNTOWN

In downtown Libreville, near the beanstalk and the corporate offices, the city-scape is sprinkled with a few chain restaurants for the wage slaves' lunch breaks. But most stores are either very expensive limited franchises (Du Jour's, Rio) or exclusive "name" boutiques. Prices for *everything* downtown are outrageously inflated—add 100-150% to the normal prices given in 2300 AD, the Equipment Guide, or Earth/Cybertech Sourcebook. Even basic upkeep prices are inflated in this manner. To be allowed into many of these exclusive places, one must either be "known" (a media star or well known millionaire), be the guest of a regular, offer a bribe, or have an appointment (to get an appoint-



ment usually requires one of the first three conditions or breaking into the store's computer system to change the appointment book). No place downtown will take cash except for the beanstalk terminal itself (passengers arriving from Gateway are *strongly encouraged* to open an account with any of Libreville's fine financial institutions, a process which takes about half an hour to allow for the recording of all the data needed, after which they are immediately issued a credcard).

Even worse than the general inflated prices are the prices charged by the few really "in" restaurants and designers. Here prices are not printed on the holographic designer menus (usually part of the tables), and heaven forbid that one should ever see a *price tag*. Some of these establishments are described in Lifestyles of the Rich and Shameless,

## MUDVILLE

Shopping in mudville is an "interesting experience," in the worst connotation of that phrase. The only chain stores are EZ1 Stops™, a worldwide chain of fuel station/convenience stores, and Food Extruders™ automated food vendors. The Food Extruders chain is discussed to the left, EZ1 Stops handle most transactions through automation (they take cash and credcards). EZ1 Stop personnel in mudville are actually armed security personnel, not service attendants. They spend most of the time seated behind bulletproof, wire-meshed, embedded plastic watching their favorite sports programs and pay-per-view soap operas (they get them for free, one of the job's few perks). They must be communicated with through intercoms or, as the intercoms are frequently broken, hand signals. Unlike most EZ1 Stops worldwide, EZ1 Stops in mudville do not have rest room facilities; instead, they have lightweight machinegun emplacements. As patrons who attempt to rip off mudville EZ1 Stops either through robbery or failure to pay often become organ donors after being shot, EZ1 Stops are some of the only places in mudville frequented by ambulances.

Most stores in mudville are small, and of the local, mom-and-pop type. They all pay protection money to the local gang, the representatives of organized crime, and sometimes the Libreville police to get them to show up when a robbery attempt occurs. Barred windows, small, poorly lighted, and dirty interiors, and improvised alarm systems are the general rule. Many shopkeepers have the traditional shotgun underneath the counter; their demeanor is typically fearful and suspicious at best and outright hostile at worst. Liquor stores, drug stores, and grocery stores predominate, with occasional storefront auto-docs (usually vandalized), chapels, and neighborhood greasy spoon eateries (no one asks where the food comes from or even looks too closely at *what it is*). Pawn shops are the general stores of mudville. Quite a few items that normally can't be found in mudville might be available in one of these pawn shops. Pawn shops in mudville frequently fence stolen goods, if approached in the right manner. It is considered incredibly stupid to ask a pawn shop keeper where any of his goods came from.

In mudville, credcards are almost never accepted—in the eyes of the shopkeepers, anyone using one in mudville has undoubtedly stolen it, and would only draw undue attention to the shop if he were caught trying to use it. (Most shops are operating on a fringe-legal basis at best and have no business permits, safety verifications, or board of health certification. They are hoping to avoid paying bribe money to the bureaucracy to have these facts overlooked.) In addition, the electronic hardware necessary to read credcards is often too expensive for the strained, skin-of-their-teeth economics of mudville shops to buy or maintain.

Goods obtained in mudville are of mediocre quality at best and are frequently cheap knock-offs or liberated from delivery trucks headed for corp town. To get anything of quality, residents of mudville have to buy through the black market. The black market is covered on pages 30-31.



*Task: To avoid a computer trace: Difficult. Security Systems or Computer (and Accuracy). Instant.*

*Referee: A mishap means that the system has traced the user to his current location and transmitted the data to the authorities. Depending on the distance the police must travel and the terrain they must cross, they will arrive in three minutes to over an hour (referees should use their discretion). A user does not have to have a cyberdeck to perform this task, but normal computers get no Accuracy asset. If a computer is not being used simultaneous to the credcard usage, Security Systems skill should be used, and an electronic security systems kit is required. If no computer or electronic security system kit is used, the task cannot succeed. Rumor has it that some megacorporate mainframes use modified Grapple or Bondage programs to hold illegal cyberjockey users in cyberspace until the authorities arrive.*

## CREDCARDS

While paper currency and coins are used throughout Libreville, most people have (and prefer to use) credcards. Credcards are about the same size as 20th century credit cards, but are twice as thick. They are manufactured of a durable flexiplast and have high-density optical laser recording surfaces on roughly two-thirds of their reverse sides. A credcard contains its owner's name, Personal Identification Number (PIN), digitized signature, digitized handprint, digitized photograph, basic physical description (when unenhanced by cosmetics, hair dyes, etc.), basic medical facts (such as blood type, allergies and important notes), any licenses and permits (gun license, parking permits, driving license, etc.), a record of employment status and current employer, bank account numbers which can be accessed by the credcard and those accounts' computer Net locations, and assorted encoding which establishes the legitimacy of the credcard.

Credcards are usually issued whenever a person opens any type of account with a financial institution. They can also be issued purely for identification purposes by various national, local, or corporate bodies, and sometimes serve a similar purpose to magnetic keycards for certain corporate facilities. They always prominently feature the logo of the body which issued them. While credcards are usually issued in the form of an ongoing account, with credit against future salary allowed up to two corporate paychecks in amount (normally), credcards can also be issued for a specific amount of cash which has been deposited at an institution, in which case credit is obviously not allowed.

Credcards are only really of any use on Earth and, in a more limited manner, on Tirane. Trying to buy anything on the Frontier with a credcard will only get you laughed at. On Earth, though, having a credcard is almost a necessity, as in many places using paper currency brands you as either unemployed, of low class, or in the process of doing something illegal.

## Using a Stolen Credcard

Credcards which turn up missing are reported very quickly by those who lose them, at which point they become unusable—the institution which issued them transfers the funds involved to a new account number and issues the account holder a new credcard. After the old account is closed out, any use of the old credcard is flagged by the financial system's usage program. A trace is automatically issued, and if the user's location can be locked down, a message is sent to the local authorities advising them of an attempted theft in process. If a player character tries to use a credcard which has been cancelled, have him roll for the task in the sidebar.

If, however, the previous owner of a credcard is deceased, the loss of the credcard frequently goes unreported. Due to the ongoing correlation of various sources (corporate employment records, city residency listings, tax filings, and other records) with those of all financial institutions, even credcards whose owners are deceased are rendered unusable after 30 days to a year.

### ILLEGAL CREDCARD COSTS (ALL BLACK MARKET)

| Service or Item                                    | Cost        |
|--|-------------|
| Credcard read/write drive                          | Lv2000      |
| Credcard blanks                                    | Lv500-1500+ |
| Read a credcard                                    | Lv15-Lv25   |
| Change a credcard                                  | Lv200+      |
| Stolen credcard (use at own risk)                  | Lv5-Lv10    |
| Stolen credcard (owner "guaranteed" deceased)      | Lv100       |
| Prechanged "guaranteed" credcard (PIN method only) | Lv400       |



One nasty side effect of the credcard system is that credcard owners who are mugged often don't outlive the experience. One sensible precaution observed by anyone forced to travel through the slums of Libreville without ample security is to take along at least Lv100 in currency, as muggers and gang members can often be bribed from fatally injuring a credcard carrier with the currency, which is more useful to them in mudville. Other sensible precautions include carrying a large gun, knowing how to use it, avoiding dark alleys, and watching your back.

### Falsifying a Credcard

Several difficulties hamper illegally using a credcard. Aside from the fact that it may be invalidated if its owner has reported it missing, an illegal credcard user has to deal with account number validation, the validation encoding on the card itself, and the other typical validation methods associated with the card: PINs, handprints, and signatures. Fortunately for credcard recycling entrepreneurs, few credcard validation requests by a given system ask for all of these. Most frequently a PIN is requested, and occasionally a thumbprint or signature correlation is made. Credcard forgers have two ways of approaching the credcard problem: either find out what is on the card (and in the computer system associated with its use) and give the validation request what it wants (usually a PIN or forged signature—handprints are difficult to forge), or change what is on the card to accommodate its new user. To either read or change the data on a credcard (see the tasks in the sidebar) requires a specially modified optical laser disk drive sized to accommodate the card—these cannot be bought commercially. They must be constructed or purchased on the black market (base price Lv2000). Alternatively, a new credcard may be forged if the right credcard blank, in itself a black market item, can be obtained.

**Task:** To read the data on a credcard: Difficult. Computer and Electronics. 2 seconds.

**Task:** To change the data on a credcard (uncertain, hazardous): Formidable. Electronics, Forgery, and one-half Computer. 7 minute.

Referee: A major mishap indicates that one form of validation (PIN, thumbprint, or signature) is now unusable. A total mishap destroys the credcard. If one of the functions of the credcard is similar to a magnetic keycard, Security Systems may be substituted for either Electronics or Forgery, if desired.

**Task:** To forge a credcard from scratch (uncertain): Impossible. Electronics, Computer, and Forgery. 2 minutes.

Referee: This creates a credcard usable for identification purposes only. Keycard abilities require that information about the lock to be opened be encoded (and the information must be obtained previous to the 'card's construction). Forging a new card which is usable for any kind of financial transaction requires entering the financial corporation's computer system to set up a dummy account for the 'card to use, and the referee may require cyberjockeys to do so.



## BLACK MARKET

One of the strongest markets in Libreville is not a legal one. The black market is not a specific place; rather it is a system of contacts, specialized basement labs and workshops, and illegal and unregistered warehouses serving the needs of the underhanded, the desperate, and those operating on the fringes of the law. Everything purchased on the black market in Libreville is expensive. Everything is for sale, and is bought with no questions asked and no guarantees.

### Contacts

Entrance to the black market is gained through contacts. Very few who deal with or are part of the black market can be trusted, as money is usually their sole motivation, not loyalty to any person or cause. An "honest" black marketeer is often defined simply as one who, once bought, stays that way. Black market contacts are NPCs who specialize in buying and selling particular goods or services that cannot normally be bought on the open market. These specialty areas include:

**Financial Manipulation:** These contacts can provide money-laundering services, special access accounts, and financial loans (at a very high rate of interest). They occasionally cooperate with credcard forgers (again, at very high rates) to provide credcards which can access a credit line.

**Medical Facilities:** Medical clinics which will provide discreet treatment or services to anyone who can pay in cash or by credcard (they employ special programs and services of electronics experts to keep credcard transactions from being traced to them). These facilities include the black market clinics that provide cybernetic implants or plastic surgery without all the paperwork that normally goes along with such operations.

**Drugs:** Drug specialists deal in both Pharmaceuticals and biologicals. Frequently these people are the only method for obtaining Herc, Bounce, J, Tesson Beta, Vassopressin-Y, anagathic regimen chemicals and other specialized drugs without a legal prescription. (Using the anagathic regimen without medical aid and supervision is *very* dangerous.) Some can also provide special labs for the analysis of contraband or mysterious substances.

**Arms Dealers:** These contacts deal in everything from surplus military arms to specialized weapons, including explosives. Various military vehicles can also be obtained through these contacts, although their use in a major metropolitan area like Libreville will be noted by the authorities, who will act promptly to curtail it.

**Hardware:** Dealing in electronic equipment, these contacts can provide special computers, cyberdecks, security equipment, security circumvention equipment and other items of this nature.

**Vehicles:** Untraceable vehicles of various sorts (nonmilitary) are available from these sources. In Libreville, these include cars, trucks, hover vehicles, motorcycles, and assorted boats.

**Information:** One of the most valuable commodities on the black market, this contact can provide dossiers on people, places, or things. This information can be one of three levels:

**Level One:** General information that is fairly easily obtainable. It presents little danger for the informant to obtain or the recipient to know.

**Level Two:** Specific information that requires a specialist to circumvent normal access security. Information obtained from the informant is more in-depth. Having this level of information become public could inconvenience a corporation, but would cause it no major damage.

**Level Three:** High-level corporate or military information. This information is highly classified, hard to access, and usually extremely dangerous for someone to possess, whether it be the end-user the informant, or both.

**Forgeries:** Specialists in falsifying official papers, documents, and credcards.

**Training:** These specialists can provide training in underworld, vehicle, and combat skills that cannot often be found elsewhere. These skills are not taught to just anyone.

**People:** A specialized employment agency, these contacts provide the right



people for the right job. This type of contact could also be a source of employment for characters.

**Finding a Contact:** To find a contact, the characters must spend some time looking for the specific specialist they need, (See the task in the sidebar.) Contacts are rated on a scale of one through 10. A 1 designates a very low-level contact, while a 10 indicates a very large organization. The referee should roll 1D10 to determine the contact's effectiveness.

Because black market contacts are so valuable to the player characters, they will be very important NPCs in an on-going campaign, adding both color and intrigue. Therefore, referees should spend some extra time in creating these NPCs. They should have a background, motivation, and skills to match their profession and the situation in which they operate. These contacts will normally occupy a recurring role in the game and can be either a great aid or a major hindrance to the player group.

Buying on the Black Market

Once a character has located the appropriate contact, he may attempt to obtain whatever he requires or desires. The referee must determine the availability of items. Generally, the more specialized an item is, the harder it will be to find. The table below gives a good indication of the availability of goods and services. To use this table, the referee rolls to achieve the success number associated with the indicated difficulty level on 1D10, then adds the contact's effectiveness. If the modified roll is successful, the item is available.

The price of an item will depend on the characters trying to buy it (see the task in the sidebar). The referee should roll 3D6, then multiply by 10% the difference between seven and the number actually rolled (ignore negatives). Use the resulting percentage as a positive or negative modifier to the normal base price of the item from the 2300 AD equipment lists, depending on whether the task was successful.

*Example:* A character wants to buy an item whose base price is Lv1000. The referee rolls a 3 on 3D6, for a result of 4 (7-3). This number multiplied by 10% yields a modifier of 40%, which becomes +40% because the task was unsuccessful. When this modifier is used with the base price, a final price of Lv1400 is indicated, and the character may purchase the item for that price. The base price for information is determined by using the Information Price Table in the sidebar, as follows: The referee rolls 1D10, then multiplies this number by the number specified in the Information Price Table.

Selling on the Black Market

Characters may sell items in their possession on the black market through their contacts. If the characters know a contact who normally deals in the items they have, they may sell them to the contact. (See the task in the sidebar.)

Selling is handled much like the purchase of an item. Generate a number on 3D6, subtract it from 7, and multiply the result by 10%. The result is a modifier to be added to the base price if the task was successful, or subtracted if unsuccessful.

Once the characters have become involved in the black market they will come to realize that anything can be had—for a high enough price!

**Task:** To find a contact. Difficult. Streetwise. 2 days.

**Task:** To purchase an item. Difficult. Bargain. 90 seconds.

INFORMATION PRICE

| Information | Base Price |
|-------------|------------|
| Level one   | Lv100      |
| Level two   | Lv1000     |
| Level three | Lv10, 000  |

AVAILABILITY OF GOODS AND SERVICES

| Item   | Difficulty |
|--|------------|
| General items and services, level one information, stolen credcards  | Routine    |
| Surplus military equipment and weapons, "guaranteed" stolen credcards  | Difficult  |
| Current military equipment and weapons, level two information, specialized items and services, prechanged "guaranteed" credcards | Formidable |
| Special-purpose items, level three information, credcard read/write drives, credcard blanks                                      | Impossible |

**Task:** To sell an item. Difficult. Bargain. 90 seconds.

## LIBREVILLE AFTER DARK

*Libreville after dark has a peculiar texture, like old holiday fruitcake—rich, spicy, slightly crusty, dowsed in mood-altering substances, and liberally bespotted with fluorescent fruits and nuts. The successful, the famous, and the truly eccentric seem attracted to Libreville like bears to honey. As one wise-cracking social holocommentator once proclaimed, "In Libreville, the outrageous is commonplace, but to experience the quintessentially weird, you have to go out at night."*

# Nightlife

Nightspots in Libreville segregate themselves along three lines: price, location, and fashionableness. Price and location are often intimately intertwined—bars and nightclubs in downtown are perforce expensive. But the elusive quality of a particular spot's fashionableness to a particular crowd can mean the difference between finding a good contact and being taken for a ride by a mouth who talks a rock 'n' roll ballad but delivers only hot air. Fashionableness seems, on the surface, to also be tied to price, but be not fooled—most often the pricey, glitzy joints are full of wannabees, not professionals.

Consider, as examples, just a few of the many nightspots, bars, cabarets, and exclusive clubs which dot Libreville's social landscape like glitter after a Mardi gras parade (categorized here by degree of fashionableness).

## ARE YOU KIDDING?

**The Grass Roots:** The Grass Roots is the largest bar/lounge in the beanstalk terminal. Almost everyone goes to the Grass Roots once, usually before or after riding the beanstalk. Occasionally, one is forced to return a second time to meet someone there. Although a neat and clean establishment, it fairly reeks of preprocessed and prefabricated everything: decor, food, drink and music. Speaking to anyone of having been to the Grass Roots brands one as a tourist,

## DEFINITELY OUT

**The Combat Zone:** The Combat Zone is located out on the airfilm line from downtown in one of the nearby corp towns. The decor relates to the place's name, and consists of pieces of hover tanks, shells made into ash trays, non-functional weapons, flags with burnt holes in them, and other such pieces of questionable military surplus or memorabilia, with camouflage paint as the color scheme. Billed as a "mercenary meeting hole," the Combat Zone is filled with muscular and intense-looking military wannabees, with a few peculiar has-beens thrown in as leavening. Some of the patrons sport cybernetic enhancements, but something about the way they handle themselves makes true fighters wonder if the 'borged here aren't either psychotic or living in the land of the lollipops. While someone could meet a real mercenary here, it would only be because this was his first trip to the Combat Zone.

**Faces and Places:** The 'Faces in this rather loud dance bar's title refers to *interfaces*. Located on the outskirts of downtown, 'Faces was supposedly once a very fashionable cyberjockey hangout. While it might do now as a singles bar, no respectable deck cowboy would admit his profession here. On the other hand, quite a few awkward-looking, rather clumsy people sporting what could be neural jacks (or could be glued-on toaster parts) frequent 'Faces claiming to be deck jockeys.

## POSSESSING A CERTAIN JE NE SAIS QUOI

**Hai Fang's:** Hai Fang's is not exactly out, but it's not in either. It has a very rough clientele, being located in mudville, but manages to acquire the best beer and scotch anywhere, excluding the exclusive clubs downtown. Newcomers to Hai Fang's frequently have to "prove themselves" before they are accepted by the customers. Hai Fang, who claims to be a former sumo wrestler, has a very polite and quiet demeanor, and a mean punch.

**Jungle Joe's:** Jungle Joe's is a solid, blue-collarish drinking bar catering to lift riggers and beanstalk terminal workers. It's a good place to pick up gossip about

the comings and goings of the famous, and problems with incoming and outgoing cargoes, The decor consists of old-style safari movie posters and black-and-white, dusty, framed photographs (yep, paper glossies) of safaris,

### **QUIETLY "IN" TO THE RIGHT PEOPLE**

**Mighty Casey's:** Mighty Casey's is where the real mercenaries, bodyguards, and freelance security specialists hang out. With its subdued lighting, cozy nooks, classical jazz music, and emphasis on living greenery for its decor, Casey's could be mistaken for a fern bar by those not in the know, Vernon Sanduski, the owner, opened this location as the third Mighty Casey's after the second one, located in mudville at the boundary between two yakuza brotherhoods' territories, burned down due to "faulty wiring," How Vernon, the man credited with sticking the slums of Libreville with the name of mudville, got the money to open in downtown is one of the many things he will not discuss, Mighty Casey's is considered neutral ground by almost all parties in Libreville; drawing a weapon in here will draw the ill will of many.

**The Neon Tetris:** The Tetris is the current cyberjockey hangout in Libreville, It is one of the few clubs in town with special tables equipped with cyberdeck jacks and access to the Net, It is also popular for its reputation as a quality night club, so not all its patrons are cowboys by far. Media stars sometimes frequent the Tetris incognito; bothering them will result in the Tetris' bouncer using you for a rubber ball, Big-name singers and groups occasionally play the Tetris when they are in town for old time's sake; because of the small size of the establishment, they never advertise or use their real name, Regulars of the Tetris always know what's going on and who's who anyway, so the club is still bursting at the seams on these occasions. The Neon Tetris is mapped out in full on page 34.

### **DEFINITELY FASHIONABLE**

**House of Fire:** House of Fire is the latest gimmick night club, featuring elaborate holography as its decor. It will probably be out within a year, but in the meantime media stars make frequent appearances, along with junior executives from major corps. House of Fire has had a run of good, up-and-coming groups playing it for the last three months due to the skills of its talent manager, Kyle Journeyman, a former Andromedia talent scout.

**Razor's Edge:** Razor's Edge is a neotech hangout—to be truly "in" here, you have to have incorporated at least some small item of cybernetics into yourself, Scanners near the doors keep the patrons and the bouncers aware of everyone's hidden talents. Don't bring anything here you don't want sophisticated scanners, and then everyone in the room, to see,

### **VERY EXCLUSIVE**

**Aqualight Club:** The Aqualight Club is in unquestionably good taste, A huge, floating club founded on one of the double-hulled ships build by Spindrift, the Aqualight Club is detailed further on pages 52-55. The club sails Gabon Bay every night, stopping at pre-established places at certain times, It includes an open-air patio restaurant, a floating garden, a casino, two stages, and numerous private rooms suitable for whatever divertissements the wealthy wish to engage in. Currently playing on the main stage is Angelique Lepandou, noted performance artist. The dance stage features the retro-rock sounds of Silk Viper,

**Fantasia:** Fantasia has been described as "a fairy castle on the waves." The sistership/club to the Aqualight Club, Fantasia is also a double-hulled ship owned and built by Spindrift. Fantasia's top hull is constructed to exactly simulate a French castle (in somewhat reduced scale), Offering many of the expected entertainments (a gourmet restaurant, casino, bar, and theater), Fantasia also features elaborate costumed balls and "haunted castle" all-night mysteries each once a month. Being newer and very theme-oriented, Fantasia is regarded as somewhat decasse by the diehards on the Aqualight Club,



## THE NEON TETRIS

The Tetris is decorated in neon signs and assorted static art screens which become vidscreens at the touch of a button against natural brick walls.

**Bar:** The bar here is well stocked with popular and classic drinks of both alcoholic and nonalcoholic natures. Glasses and pitchers hang from the ceiling on a rack over the bar.

**Kitchen:** The kitchen holds all the equipment to make food on the Tetris' rather limited, but tasty, menu. It closes at 11 p.m.

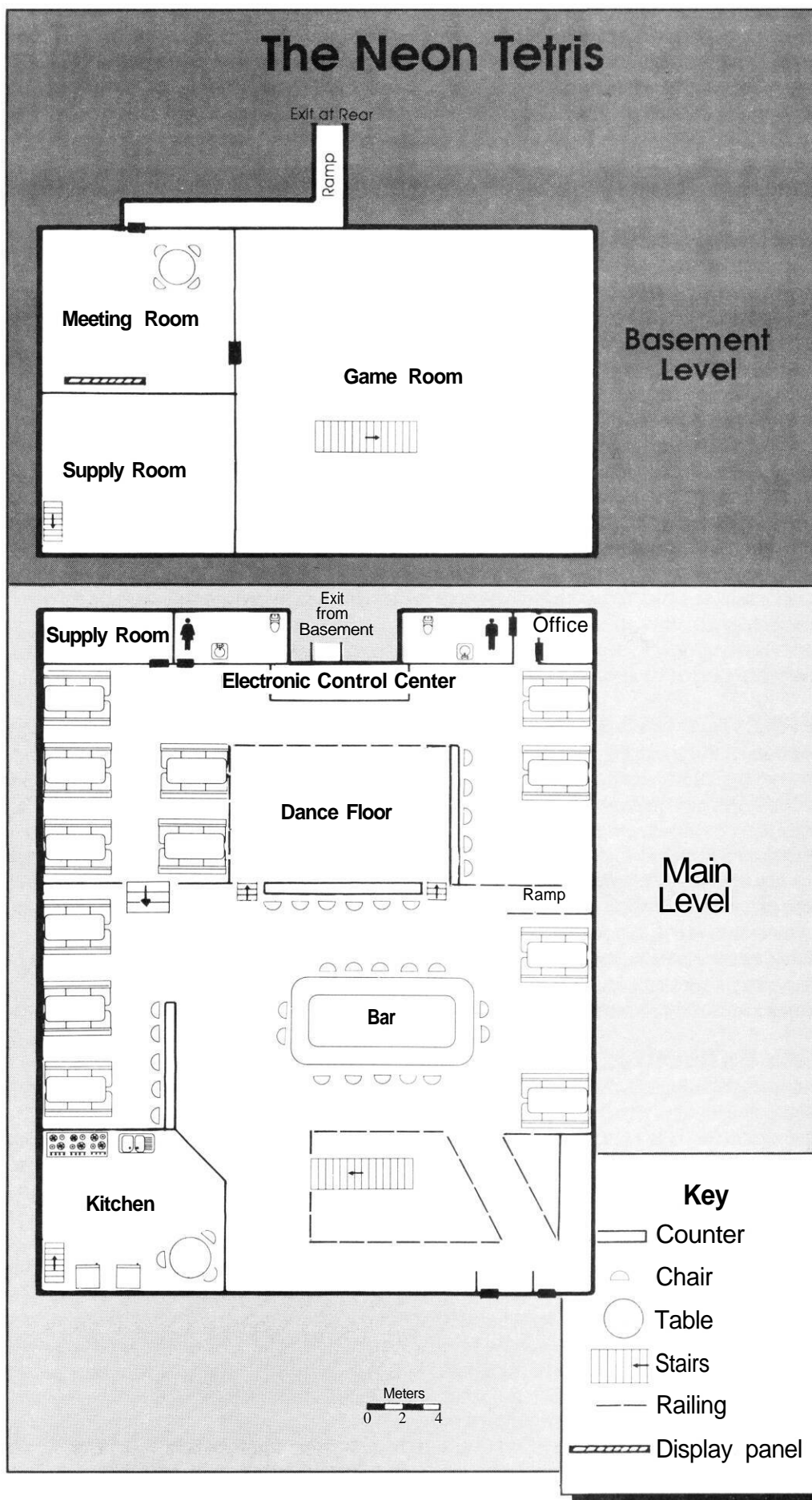
**Dance Floor:** The dance floor is only sporadically used. Some nights it is very crowded, but it is usually empty.

**Electronic Control Center:** This control center is locked behind glass to prevent casual fiddling and tweaking by the patrons. It controls the music equipment and vidscreens. The control center is movable and is relocated in the far back southern corner when a live act is playing.

**Game Room:** This room is filled with the latest holo-simulator games, plus traditional bar games such as darts and billiards.

**Supply Rooms:** Extra food is stored on shelves or in the freezer in the large supply room; utensils and other supplies, along with some cleaning equipment are in the other room.

**Meeting Room:** This room is available for use only with the permission of the owner. Regulars are aware of the "back door" here which allows exit without setting off an audible alarm, such as the one attached to the emergency exit upstairs.





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# Mudville

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Although the slums of Libreville are referred to by many names—rust city, sliderville, and losertown, to name a few—mudville is the name which has stuck in common usage. And life in mudville is as grim, grinding and colorless a hand-to-mouth existence as the name implies. But while the entirety of mudville may dwell beneath the umbrella term of *slum*, mudville comes in four broad physical configurations: former corporate housing, former construction worker housing, housing projects, and shantytowns,

## FORMER CORPORATE HOUSING

Every so often a corporation will build a new housing subdivision for its employees. Sometimes this happens because the corporation has a an increase in profits or in personnel. Sometimes the employees put pressure for change of abode on the corporation. Sometimes the company president (or several senior executives) gets tired of his house and wants a new one and wants to take the neighborhood with him. For whatever reason, a corporation vacates an entire corporate subdivision, taking everyone and everything portable to a new location.

The old subdivision is usually purchased by a "developer," who most often scavenges over the corp town for anything recyclable or resaleable, then proceeds to hire one or more "managers" to lease out the vacant housing shells to the inhabitants of mudville who can afford them to live in or to establish a small business/store in. This leads to all the usual problems associated with "slum lord" landlords—lack of maintenance (what maintenance?), erratic and arbitrary rent increases, erratic utilities, etc. Often the developer or his managers are affiliated with the Mob or a yakuza brotherhood, and start protection rackets for stores and neighborhoods, "lean" on people who fail to make rent payments on time, and coerce people into performing illegal actions to pay off their debts,

However, as this type of housing was originally made by a corporation for its own, it usually is the best type of housing available in mudville, and for all the lack of maintenance, holds up fairly well under wear and tear. Former corp towns usually have schools, maintained by department funding at the direction of France, and some sort of understaffed clinic to tend to medical needs (in addition to any black market one in the area). At least former corp towns have a height to eventually descend from, unlike shantytowns.

## FORMER CONSTRUCTION WORKER HOUSING

While the beanstalk was being built, Libreville had a great need for thousands of construction/factory workers to handle the demanding task of its construction. While some work could be preconstructed in factories in pieces, someone had to connect the pieces using machinery or his bare hands and a tool. And when an important component was finished, someone else had to check the work to make sure it was done correctly and lived up to the standards and stress tolerances established by the construction commission and its advisors. Humanity did not want any vast and globe-shattering tragedies associated with the beanstalk in the future, so more care and personal, human attention was paid to its erection than had been paid to the erection of any structure in over a hundred years.

Those thousands of workers had to be housed—if not luxuriously, then at least solidly and comfortably. So, vast numbers of construction worker housing com-

## WHY MUDVILLE?

*Opinions differ as to why the slums of Libreville are known as mudville. Some people hold with the obvious: The streets and homes of many parts of the slums are literally turned to a thick, gooey mud during the twice yearly rains, which last from February through April and from October through November. The rains drop an average of over 254 centimeters (100 inches) of rain on Libreville a year.*

*Others hold with the story that Vernon Sanduski, owner of Mighty Casey's bar, repeated the same joke about Mighty Casey's being the only joy in mudville to enough people over the nearly 10 years that one of the Mighty Casey's has been open that eventually the name stuck.*

*Most people think the entire question is only really addressed by those people who spend too much time philosophizing over the trivial in bars.*

## SLANG GLOSSARY

**Apple:** Corruption of APL the abbreviation for L'Administration du Port de Libreville (the Libreville Port Authority).

**Beaner:** Derogatory slang for beanstalk worker; a person of little worth or intelligence.

**Chopped:** Slang for mechanically enhanced; a person with artificial body parts.

**Crusher:** Corporate security guard. Also called goons, knee-busters and movealongs.

**Curly:** Dangerous but exciting. "It was pretty curly, fro. The crushers were all set to grease us, but...."

**Dead Heads:** Derogatory epithet for nondeckers.

**Drek:** (Euphemism.)

**Drektrek:** A useless endeavor; a waste of time.

**Face:** Interface with a datanet. Used only by the entertainment media and those who know no better. Despised by genuine deckers and those with any cool at all.

**Fro:** Friend, brother, fellow decker. A corruption of the French word frere.

**Grease:** Kill, especially in an unpleasant fashion, as in, "It was pretty curly, fra. The crushers were all set to grease us, but..."

**Ichiban:** Boss, patron, person in charge. From the Japanese word for first class.

**Juice Junkies:** Derogatory epithet for deckers.

**Kahuna:** A corporate patron. From the Hawaiian word for chief.

plexes were built in Libreville. Then, with the completion of the beanstalk, the demand for construction crews dropped to less than five percent of its height. The crews moved on and moved out, leaving empty complexes like ghost towns in the midst of Libreville. Now these ghost towns are inhabited by the dwellers of mudville.

Former construction worker housing is prefabricated in construction and modular in design. Construction worker complexes tend to be barracks-like or dormitory-like buildings of three to four stories with one- or two-room apartments opening off of a central hallway. Rooms which used to serve the purpose of snack vending, cafeteria/restaurant, entertainment, laundry room, and social lounge are located mostly on the first floor. Some of these buildings and complexes have landlords similar to the slum lords of former corporate housing; some are currently unowned, with the power and water to them ostensibly shut off (even the unowned, supposedly empty housing isn't, and its inhabitants find ways of getting the public amenities),

## HOUSING PROJECTS

A few public housing projects have been built around Libreville. Usually a large charity or philanthropy puts pressure on the city council and the corporate board for long enough or in an awkward enough manner that these bodies have to make some token effort to "do something for the homeless." Often these situations have occurred when an election year, a riot, and a media news drought happened to coincide.

Designs are submitted; bids are taken. The contract goes to the lowest bidder, and he is paid up front—with no provision for cost overruns. When construction costs turn out to be larger than predicted at the specified level of materials quality (and when have they ever been on target?), the corporation doing the building cuts costs by cutting quality.

Thus, the public housing projects are known for the sudden, catastrophic problems which plague them—floors of wiring going up in flames from overload, elevator cables breaking and sending their passengers crashing 59 floors to their doom, and entire roofs being blown off during the rainy season. Living in a Libreville housing project is a daily gamble against the odds installed by the contractor.

The housing projects tend to be designed along the lines of a about 20-25 very small, three- to four-room apartments to a floor; 30-70 floors to a structure; and three to 10 structures to a project (usually built around one or more communal courtyard/playground areas and one or two schools). Rent in a public housing project is not very high, but often the bribe money paid to various officials in the city government to stay in the housing or acquire it in the first place makes it cost only slightly less than former corporate housing in the long run.

## SHANTYTOWNS

Shantytowns encompass what remains of the Libreville slums. Shantytowns are built by their inhabitants and often wash or blow away in the twice yearly rainy seasons. Housing is constructed of cardboard, corrugated tin and iron, abandoned vehicles, holes in the ground supported by stolen timber and roofed by trap doors, or old-fashioned grass and wood lodgings constructed in the style of the original African inhabitants of the region. While the inhabitants of shantytown have no landlords to collect rent, they do face many other difficulties, such as finding basic sustenance—not to mention the problems caused by crime,

## GANGS

Gangs are the primary form of recreation, group activity and socialization that most of the youth of mudville experience. In the enduring traditions of gangs and gang behavior, each gang stakes out its own turf and defends it from other



gangs, Gangs in Libreville establish codes of behavior for their treatment of gang members, members of rival and friendly gangs, and nongang members. They cultivate a distinctive style of dress, whether elaborate costumes or simply a certain design and color of jacket. They develop status objects or activities that show by their possession or by their performance who stands where in the internal hierarchy of the gang. Even members of the most radically deviant gangs are incredibly rigid and predictable in behavior once their code of conduct is known. Some of the more distinctive and bizarre gangs in mudville are listed below. All of them are dangerous.

**Corpsmen:** The Corpsmen have taken on all the superficial trappings of a military organization. Each "platoon" wears the uniform of a different country's army. Their leader, known as "the General," wears the uniform of an SS officer of the 1940s. All of the Corpsmen love automatic weapons and grenades.

**Midnight Cavaliers:** The Cavaliers all wear wide-brimmed hats with plumes, high leather boots and swords (although few of them can use the swords). They think of themselves as the Robin Hoods of mudville, and pick a new family each week to "give" to. But they retain enough loot to keep themselves well supplied with ammo for their guns and with their favorite drugs.

**Celestial Dragons:** The Celestial Dragons would be fairly normal for a gang, except that they only accept members of Oriental descent, and they are at war with the yakuza brotherhood whose territory overlaps their turf. (It is unusual for the underworld and a gang to be so openly hostile.) The Dragons feel that the yakuza committed a heinous crime by killing the sister of their leader at her marriage ceremony to a minor yakuza operative. The yak side of the story has not come to light with the general public yet.

**Chrome Ronin:** The Ronin dress in Oriental martial arts costumes and are fond of black market neural enhancements and cybernetic limbs. Their leader is a former member of the Black Scorpion mercenaries. The Chrome Ronin are discussed at length on pages 58-59.

**Bushmen:** The Bushmen are heavily into smuggling. They take their name from the fact that all members must survive for a month in the rain forest as their initiation into the gang. Most Bushmen are black, but the gang is not racially exclusive. Gang members wear Australian bush hats with one side of the brim pinned up to the crown with a long, pine needle-like leaf from a native tree.

**The Headhunters:** The Headhunters are known for their kill signature, which can be gleaned from the gang's name. They paint their faces in a peculiar geometric fashion while on gang business. Members of the gang leadership structure often have their paint designs tattooed onto their faces to show their commitment to the gang. Most other gangs think the Headhunters are living too far out in left field.

**Lift Rigger:** Polite term for person who works on the beanstalk.

**Ma'man:** A corporate patron. Corruption of 20th century slang phrase "my main man."

**Meatware:** Organic portion of an enhanced body: hardware/software/meatware.

**Nanotech:** On the cutting edge of new technology. Also, to an extreme or extremely good, as in. "Tara MacKenzie's acting was nanotech, fra."

**Skoosh:** A distance less than 10 centimeters; a little bit, as in "Move it to the left a skoosh." From the Japanese sakushi for little.

**Top Gun:** A top corporate executive; a man of sharp business acumen and some importance. Top guns are sometimes also ichibans, but the two terms are not interchangeable.

**Tron Rider:** Short for electron rider. A decker. Used only by the entertainment media.

**Tweak:** To modify to suit personal tastes, as in, "It's a Gigaplex 40Z with the 6800S, but I tweaked the input jack, and now it'll do 300 kbs."

**Wage Slave:** Derogatory term for a corporate office worker; more broadly, any employee of a corporation who is not a security guard or a top executive.

**Wirehead:** Derogatory epithet for deckers.

## NEO-NOUVELLE CUISINE

*Neo-nouvelle cuisine is a phenomenon which many of even the most elite in Libreville wish would fade into obscurity. Unfortunately, it is all the rage with food critics in the know, media stars, and a few of the more avant garde of the old-school wealthy.*

*At least one formerly snubbed restaurant, La Grenouille et La Peche, has been catapulted into the limelight because of these people's sudden obsession with neo-nouvelle cuisine.*

*Neo-nouvelle cuisine consists of extremely tiny portions of numerous exotic concoctions (braised kangaroo with rattlesnake chutney and kiwi fruit marmalade, for instance) served with multiple extremely stylish garnishes.*

*It is considered terminally gauche to eat one's garnish and equally tacky to leave any uneaten food on one's plate; unfortunately, the garnish and the food have become so elaborate simultaneously that it is tricky to tell them apart. The end result of this is that in restaurants serving neo-nouvelle cuisine, most guests spend an amusingly inordinate amount of time covertly glancing at each other's plates to determine what everyone is eating and not eating.*

*Some truly appearance-conscious people have hired others to take mini-telecams into restaurants to tape the critics while eating so that they can later order the same dishes and then eat with confidence in front of their insecure friends.*

# Lifestyles of the Rich and Shameless

The upper crust of Libreville creates fine distinctions within itself. "Old money" despises new; those with titles of nobility look down on those without; all of the wealthy consider those who made their fortunes in sports or through the media "second class." But to all other inhabitants of Libreville (and most of the rest of the world) these artificial lines are mere scratch marks compared to the gaping gulf which separates the "haves" from the teeming masses of Libreville's "have nots." Of the almost 18 million inhabitants of Libreville, less than 1% control more than 70% of its wealth. The moneyed live in palatial estates near the offices surrounding the beanstalk or in penthouse apartments actually in the business district. They often have second homes in space cleared from Gabon's jungles and further residences worldwide.

## INDULGE YOURSELF

The rich of Libreville enjoy excesses and indulgences that would make any mythical 20th century oil-rich pasha envious. They can golf at the stately Libreville Country Club, Earth's only totally enclosed, climate-controlled, 18-hole golf course, located a mere 20 minutes from the beanstalk. They hold custom-catered, spur of the moment full-dress costume parties for which undergoing plastic surgery for a "truly authentic" costume is by no means out of the question. They keep a small army of psychiatrists, plastic surgeons, and allergists busy tending to their physical and mental health complaints, both real and psychosomatic. Style and being "in" are pursued with a passion normally reserved among other segments of society for religion or social causes. Exclusive boutiques and restaurants cater to their every desire. Some of the most exclusive of them include, but are not limited to, the following.

## Restaurants

**Sabrina's:** Sabrina's decor is traditional and subdued. The entire restaurant is carefully color-coordinated in greens, golds, and browns to be easy on the eye; all restaurant appointments are made of totally natural material. Several old masters (real ones, as in from the Renaissance) hang displayed behind glass. The cuisine is also traditional French. A modest brunch can run Lv95 with no problem.

**La Riviera:** La Riviera has the best wine cellar outside of France. The wine server considers it a challenge to match the wine to both the dishes a guest orders and the guest's mood at the time. She is rarely wrong, but the privilege of her services ranges from Lv150 on up.

**L'Hibou et La Minette (The Owl and the Pussycat):** L'Hibou is a favorite dining spot of visiting media stars. Here one can glimpse Tara Mackenzie, star of *Chrome Runner*, sipping champagne, and Iziko Hakume, the nanoboosted jai alai champion, flirting politely with his wealthy admirers. The decor is very romantic—velvets and chandeliers predominate.

**La Grenouille et La Peche (The Frog and Peach):** La Grenouille serves international neo-nouvelle cuisine and is famous for Chef Jean-Claude Maret's grenouille a la peche, which can only be described as "something one must experience." The restaurant is subdivided into small serving rooms by translucent, paper-like material (similar to old-style Japanese sliding walls).

## Haute Couture

**Sebastian's on the Waterfront:** Sebastian specializes in men's apparel. His tailored line of duo-color business fashions is the item for the executive this season. His evening apparel features a very striking line of leather and suede (real) suits and trench



coats, styled in the nostalgic 1940s look which he popularized two years ago. Pieces in his normal line start at Lv1000; originals start at Lv2500.

**Xenozoic Fashions:** Xenozoic Fashions is run by a trio of designers: Felicia Marrow, Horii Damara, and Troy Hughes. They are known for conning up with the wildest designs worn regularly by the rich of both genders. Xenozoic, because it takes a design stance so far out on a limb, often cuts its own branch, and has a roller coaster history of being the hottest thing one season and utterly unmentionable the next. Right now they are in and are charging Lv1300 plus for designs featuring their latest gimmick: fiber optic, full-color display panels sown in as one of the construction pieces of a dress, coat, or shirt. The panel is connected to a small chip, often worn as jewelry (an earring or a brooch) which generates a preprogrammed image progression, by a fine fiber-optic cable. A chip can be programmed to react to temperature changes, sound pulses, or simply the passage of a certain amount of time in response to which it randomly changes the image displayed on the panel or displays a repeating sequence of images which merge into each other. Outer space themes—stars, nova bursts, etc.—and animals which mutate bizarrely into one another are popular, as are kaleidoscopic fractal geometric sequences.

**Clara Devereaux:** The house that Clara built (Clara has been dead 10 years now), still features in its line the simple, elegant lines which evoke classical principles of almost architectural form that Clara founded her design dynasty on when she began designing women's businesswear. Most design work is done by Clara's nephew, Etienne. All pieces feature strong, single colors with contrasting accents and are favored by the wealthy with a more conservative fashion taste. Eveningwear sometimes features daring plunges or cut-outs, but never anything glitzy. The Devereaux line starts at Lv1100, and originals start at Lv3000.

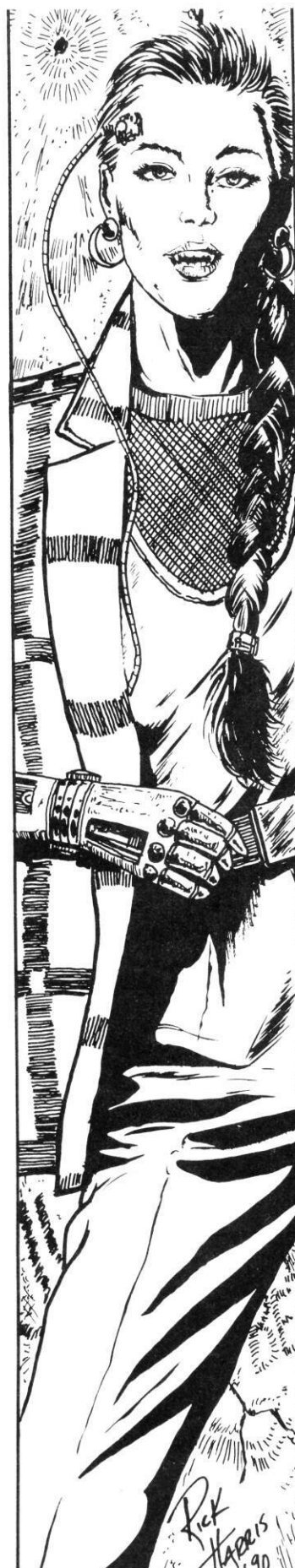
**Ariel St. Simone:** Ariel's fashion statements are gauzy and romantic. She prefers to work in silks and sheer fabrics, and she does not disdain the new synthetics when they fit the mood and quality of a piece. Her color choices run toward the pastels, and it is not uncommon to find precious metals and gemstones (such as pearls) incorporated into her fashions. Her line starts at Lv2000, and originals (she only designs six originals a year) cost Lv6000 on up.

## Chips 'n' Zips

Most members of Libreville's upper class can afford to have any cybernetics added that they desire in a clean, legal, medically supervised, clinical atmosphere. Most of them do not spend money on mechanical cyber enhancement, though. They prefer to perfect the flesh, instead, having multiple plastic surgery operations, muscle implants, or even neural sheathing treatments until they feel that they have achieved their "perfect" form. A recurrent trendy piece of plastic surgery involves the installation of genengineered "vampire" canine teeth for the true night stalker look. Occasionally cybernetic items become a fad with the hard-core fashion victims amongst the upper crust, such as the virtual epidemic of slasher installations last year. The most frequently encountered cybernetic implant amongst the economic aristocrats of Libreville is the neural jack, as many of them enjoy the "high" induced by directly controlling a fast-moving vehicle, such as those discussed under Transport, below. Overall, though it is much more common to encounter cybernetic implants in an aristocrat's security staff than in the man himself.

## Hardware

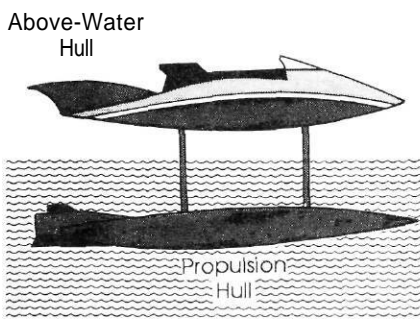
Every member of the hoi polloi either carries a weapon (discreetly) or more likely has one or more bodyguards who do. And it wouldn't do to own anything less than first-rate, top-of-the-line, just-out tech in the way of personal protection, now would it? No arms manufacturer maintains a retail outlet in Libreville (ever hear of Remington having its own store front?). But the two gun clubs in town—La Cible (the Target) and Le Paradis des Peaux-Rouge (the Happy Hunting Grounds)—have weapons shops which deal in all the major brands, customizable to taste (including jacked firearms). Almost anything can be obtained, provided you can (1) get in and (2)



## FOAMDANCER

Type: *Luxury double-hulled speedboat* Crew: *1* Driver Weight: *675 kg* Armor: *None* Signature: *1* Evasion: *9* Cargo: *Up to three passengers and 1000 kgs* Max Speed: *260 kph* Cruising Speed: *200 kph* Combat Movement: *500m* Power Plant: *0.18 MW hydrogen fuel cell* Fuel Capacity: *80 kg H<sub>2</sub>* Fuel Consumption: *4 kg/hr* Endurance: *20 hr* Price: *Lv12,000*

### Double-Hulled Boat



afford prices starting at double basic price before customization (and double that after customization for jacked weapons). Nothing can be obtained in quantity, though, and requests for current heavy military tech will be politely referred to a security service, as the person making the request obviously is looking for services better suited to such an organization.

## Transport

Members of the Libreville elite live life in the fast lane—literally. And the manufacturers of luxury and high-performance personal transport vehicles are aware of it. Franchises of Earth's high-class vehicle companies located downtown include:

**Vannoccio:** Makers of the Vannoccio 420-X, 460-X, 520-Z and the quiet but devastating 600-SL, Vannoccio has its largest dealership in Libreville. If you're not sure which car to drive to a social function, a Vannoccio is always a safe guess. The cheapest Vannoccio, the 420-X, costs Lv5000. (For statistics on the 420-X, see page 17 of the Ground Vehicle Guide.)

**Bridgeport Swift:** Bridgeport Swift, best known for its workhouse models and sedate sedans, also makes the highest-class luxury limousines, of which the Raven is one model. Important business executives, ichibans, kahunas, ma'mans, politicians, and multimedia stars often make use of the custom-built and appointed models that Bridgeport can have delivered the same day (in many cases) from its factory in Old Libreville. Armored limousines are Lv20,000+ depending on the passenger appointments desired. (For statistics on the Raven, see page 11 of the Ground Vehicle Guide.)

**Tamerlaine:** Tamerlaine is the company giving Vannoccio a run for its money with the new Amethyste 3000 gull-wing, high-performance automobiles and the slightly more expensive Saphir 5000 (available only by order from the factory). *Nanotech Times* recently compared the Saphir 5000 with the Vannoccio 600-SL and acknowledged that the Saphir's road-handling ability was superior. All Saphirs come direct from the factory with neural input jacks, for the automotive connoisseur who demands total control over the road. Base price is Lv6500 for the Amethyste 3000 and Lv9500 for the Saphir.

**Pulsar:** Pulsar's Libreville dealership markets its popular Kestrel line of small luxury prop-fan planes for the holostar on the go or the busy executive who hasn't the time to wait for a train or scheduled flight. The basic prop-fan craft runs Lv35,000, but who buys a basic craft, anyway? Add Lv5000 for each option: luxury appointments, advanced communications equipment, light armor, light defense weaponry, and increased endurance. (Use the statistics for military liaison and civilian light transport on page 59 of the *Adventurer's Guide*, using conservative discretion for changes in stats due to deluxe options.)

**Spindrift:** Standard luxury speedboats by Navstar and custom yachts of fairly traditional design by Poseidon are now being eclipsed in the eyes of aquatic speed addicts by Spindrift, with its radical new double-hull designs. The smoothly sculpted lower hull allows for exceptional aquadynamics, enabling the upper hull to be constructed in whatever fashion takes the fancy of the buyer without adding any appreciable drag. All designs except the Foamdancer small speed craft are available on a purely custom-order basis. Foamdancers cost Lv12,000. (See the sidebar for their stats.) Spindrift is the owner and constructor of the Aqualight Club, Libreville's hottest night spot, and her new companion club, Fantasia.

## Personal Services

The wealthy of Libreville have one big luxury which they take ample advantage of: cheap labor. While some misanthropic members of the leisure class prefer to automate, installing elaborate computer systems connected to robotic servo-mechanisms, most of the rich employ a bevy of personal servants to cater to their every whim. All the servants associated with a bygone era tend to their employer's person, pets, and home. Most are reasonably well paid and treated. Even if they don't like their situation, 10,000 applicants for their job will be waiting to interview the next morning, so the disgruntled rarely speak up.



In addition, the outrageously wealthy often employ specialized services:

**Fantasy Creations Unlimited:** Fantasy Creations specializes in providing fantastic environments to a customer's specifications. It can and does provide all the services and personnel typically associated with old-style film studios, including the acting personnel, costuming, and elaborate special effects. It has a sliding scale of fees. Providing "atmosphere" for a party runs around Lv300,000; a murder mystery or gothic horror weekend with all the trimmings is typically Lv750,000 - Lv1,000,000; and a full-production special order fantasy of a week or more starts at Lv2,500,000. Recreating epic fantasy and science-fiction novels is much-requested; price breaks are available for *The Lord of the Rings* and *Dracula*, among other classics.

**Gemini Incorporated:** Gemini provides doubles, either of famous people or of the person who engages their services. These doubles are useful for practical jokes (even the rich are not above these) or to attempt to fool one's fellow members of the upper crust if one has made claims beyond what is true about who one knows. The doubles are hired by customers who have made various commitments which they cannot (or do not desire to) now keep; they are often used to "save face." Doubles will be briefed on their parts, as well as any agreements they can make or actions they are allowed to take on their employer's behalf. They will provide a debriefing to their employer after performing their job. Doubles usually only utilize cosmetic appliances to execute their duties; requiring a double to undertake cosmetic surgery to accomplish his job costs quadruple the normal fee. Special requests require from a day to several months' prior notice. Fees, which must be paid up front, range from Lv1000 an hour for a frequently requested (stock) famous person who need not survive rigorous inspection to Lv100,000 a day to impersonate someone who is very difficult to imitate, has a very unusual physical appearance, or must withstand intense personal scrutiny. Gemini will only accept jobs in which a double is required to imitate a person known to be in danger (wanted by the police or in danger of assassination) for triple rates and if the employer deposits a Lv1,000,000 cash bond to be used toward medical expenses for the double (who must be informed of the conditions of the job beforehand; otherwise, he may quit immediately, with no customer refund).

## DARK CONTINENT SAFARIS

The Twilight War had a devastating effect on African wildlife. Elephants and several other native species now do not exist outside of zoos. But with enough money, anything can be done—Dark Continent Safaris breeds its own safarigame animals. Given sufficient notice, it can provide any paying customer with the chance to hunt, in the steaming jungle or the rolling veldt, any still existent animal species and even a few that never existed (unicorns are popular). Dark Continent will provide a customer with everything he could possibly need: animal handlers, trackers, transportation, chefs and servants, permits for any of seven locations on the dark continent in which to hunt, and much more. The cost of a hunt starts at Lv1,000,000.

Hey you dead  
heads!  
Don't you dare  
read this!  
This is for  
kahunas only.

# Rotten to the Core

## REFEREE'S SUMMARY

The following adventure is suitable for four to six characters of moderate skill.

### A Done Deal

The PCs receive a message from an old acquaintance of theirs, Jean-Francois Assele, who has done well and is now working at a middle management job at the Trilon Corporation offices. He has gotten ahold of something he is certain will make him and them very rich. He will explain everything to them if they come see him at his office at 9 p.m. the next day. He will leave notice for them to be given two-hour passes at the desk when they enter the building.

### To Live and Die in the Trilon Building

When the PCs go to the Trilon building at the appointed time, a suspicious guard asks to see their identification before giving them their passes. He also makes the PCs check any obvious weapons at the reception desk.

The PCs' friend greets them when they knock on his office door and ushers them in. He explains that he went back to the old neighborhood in mudville to see some friends this weekend and managed to get his hands on this briefcase. He's knows for certain that there is some high tech of great value inside. He wants the PCs to help him analyze it to realize its full potential, then re-market it to the most profitable group.

With that he opens the briefcase and is almost immediately killed by a needle trap on its lock. The contents of the briefcase—a crystalline cubic construction laced with interior circuitry, and a pocket secretary—fall onto the floor. His watch begins to beep almost immediately—apparently it is some sort of biomonitor. In response to the bleating biomonitor, alarms begin to sound in the building, alerting the inhabitants and security. The player characters will probably scoop up the cube and the pocket secretary on their way out. If they search their friend's desk, they'll find a removable erasable optical disk in his computer which may have information on it.

The PCs have no choice but to get out of the building. Once they have left, by hook or by crook, they can retire to a safe spot to investigate their loot.

### The Dingus

The circuit cube has a peculiar interface plug and is definitely valuable, but what it does is unknown. The electronic pocket secretary has no addresses recorded on it but has seven phone numbers. All the numbers belong to common businesses except one, which is an unlisted number. The optical disk has the friend's diary encrypted on it, among other things, and talks about how he got the briefcase from some old gang contacts when they acquired it.

The adventurers can try to figure out what the cube is through their own contacts or their own knowledge, or by phoning the unlisted number. Calling the number will get the players in touch with James "The Mole" Wilson. He will sell them the location of the girlfriend of someone he is certain can figure out what the cube is.

Angelique Lepandou works as an entertainer at the Aqualight Club. She's supposed to be the girlfriend of the Steel Cowboy, a master cyberjockey of years past. The Mole will also sell the fact that the PCs have the cube (which he has previously been told to look out for) back to Provolution, which lost the cube when one of its agents got careless and was mugged in mudville.



## I Hate it When That Happens

The PCs go to the Aqualight Club to talk to Angelique. While they are trying to convince her to tell them where Steel is, a Provolution assassin takes a shot at the PCs and Angelique (thinking she's involved). Then security recognizes the PCs from news bulletins which list them as wanted for questioning. The PCs have to leave fast, but the Aqualight is out on the bay. Fortunately, a water taxi is just bringing a couple of rich people in for the evening, and the PCs jump in.

The adventurers head for shore, but security has radioed the police, and a police speedboat heads off the taxi, forcing it to dock in a bad area of mudville. The PCs soon lose the police and are suddenly surrounded by the Chrome Ronin, the local gang. The PCs can shoot up the gang, or they can try to negotiate. If they do something to gain the respect of the Ronin, the gang's leader may help the adventurers by running interference with the police for them. If they haven't been personally disrespectful to him, the leader will also tell the PCs that Provolution has put the word out that the PCs have something it wants—a cube of some sort.

## The Cowboy

Either way, the PCs eventually reach Steel Cowboy's house. He will analyze the cube and tell them what it is. It's a custom-designed insinuating virus made to infiltrate Trilon Corporation's computer system, arranging for a huge shipment of fish meal to be contaminated with a bio-toxin which kills in minutes. (Fish meal is the major component in processed food eaten by over 90% of Libreville's inhabitants.) Trilon will seem to have been criminally negligent. If the PCs haven't waved guns in his face to get him to do the analysis, Steel will also tell the PCs that it is made with distinctively AmeriCo components. Either AmeriCo made it, or someone wants it to look like AmeriCo did when the cube is found. If the PCs threatened Steel or Angelique while Steel was around, Steel will notify AmeriCo and Trilon of what the PCs have and where they are as soon as they leave his house; otherwise, he won't.

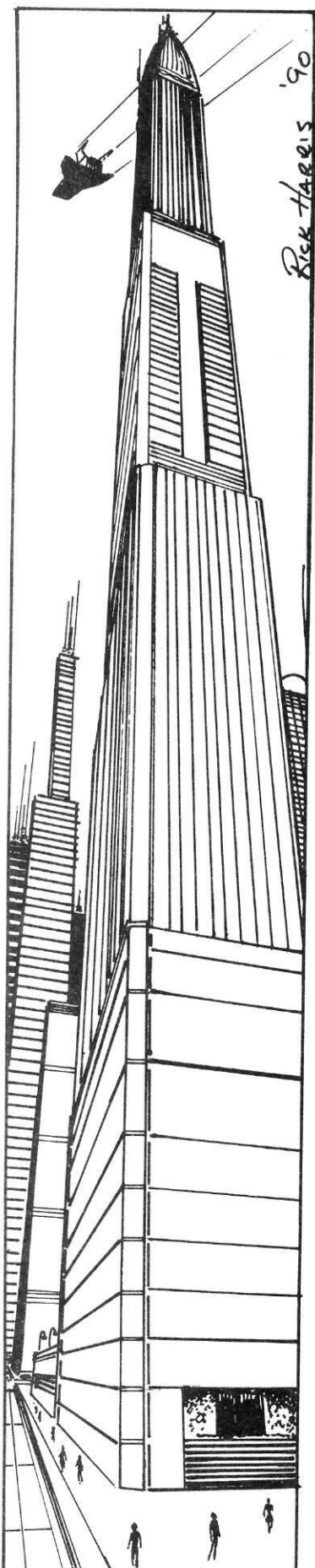
## The Big Meet

At this point, the PCs know what they have. They also probably know who would want it: Trilon, AmeriCo, and Provolution. They now need to contact the party they wish to sell the cube to and set up a meet. If the referee desires a shoot 'em up ending, the PCs can run into groups from the representative interests involved on the way to the meet. If the players have had enough action, the referee can allow the meet to go off quietly. Depending on the cleverness of the players and which party they sell to, the PCs can have all charges and warrants against them dropped, obtain some cybernetic enhancements, obtain other hard-to-get equipment, walk away with a fair amount of cash, and/or get in good with a powerful corporation, a rather creepy terrorist organization, or the equivalent of the interstellar mob.

## I Hate it When that Happens [Mk II]

Once the big meet finally comes off and the adventurers are celebrating, they discover that this whole thing isn't over yet. Provolution didn't construct the cube for purposes of random violence; it had inside help. Levine Dorcas, security director at the Trilon building, has been selling Trilon stock short. He gave Provolution the crucial information about the Trilon mainframe so that it could construct the cube. With Trilon responsible for a mass poisoning and hundreds of deaths (at least), stock prices would have plummeted, and Dorcas would have cleaned up. Now he must pay the current price for the stock and will lose a lot of money in the deal. Dorcas is very irritated at the player characters, to say the least, and has arranged for a hit man friend of his to crash their party. The adventurers must now find out who still wants them dead—before he punches their ticket in a permanent fashion.





## JEAN-FRANCOIS IS DYING TO SEE YOU

Jean-Francois Assele is an old acquaintance of any one of the adventurers. One morning he leaves a message for the PC he knows wherever the PCs are currently staying (or on an answering machine). Jean-Francois, who grew up on the streets of mudville in Libreville, has done well and is now working at a middle management job at the Trilon Corporation offices.

Connect Jean-Francois and the PC in whatever way seems expeditious. He could have been in the service with the character, taken a vacation somewhere and become close friends with the PC, whatever. Jean-Francois writes (or says) that he has gotten ahold of something which he is certain will make him, his friend, and any backup his friend trusts to bring very rich. Jean-Francois has to hurry now, but he will explain everything if the PCs can come see him at his office at 9 p.m. the next day. He will leave notice for them to be given two-hour passes at the desk when they enter the building.

Jean-Francois can be whatever type of NPC the referee desires to best fit in with the campaign background. He will only live about 10 minutes after the adventurers (re)acquaint themselves with him, so no NPC statistics are given for him.

## Going Up

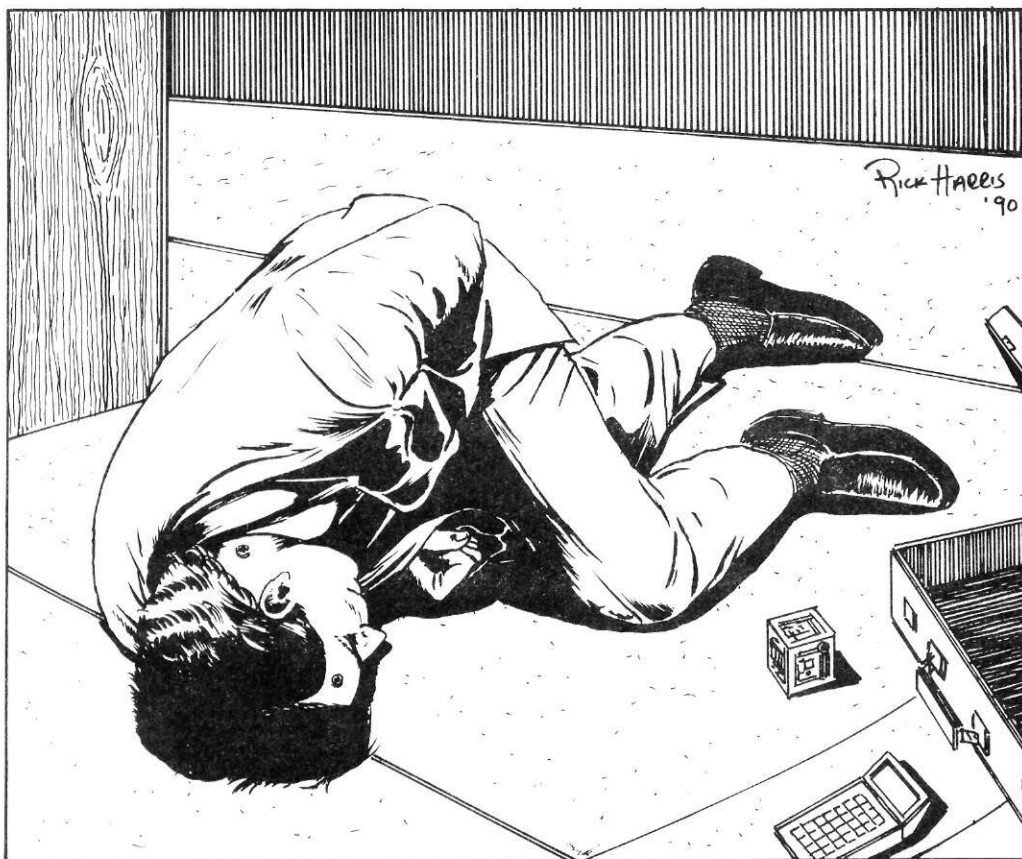
When the adventurers enter the Trilon building at the appointed time, they must check in at the reception desk. The guard on duty is very suspicious of the PCs entering at this time of the evening. He asks them all for identification, and records their names in the computer and in the check-in log in writing before he gives them the passes, which he validates by running through a magnetic reader. He explains that the passes are good for two hours, and if the PCs are found on the premises after the passes expire, they will be detained for questioning. He also insists that the PCs check any obvious weapons at the reception desk.

Jean-Francois' office is on the 17th floor. He greets them when they knock on his office door, and ushers them in. He explains that he went back to the old neighborhood in mudville to see some friends this weekend and managed to get his hands on this briefcase. He knows for certain that some high tech of great value is inside because his friends got it off a very well armed man carrying items identifying him as working for an organization dealing with cutting edge nanotech. He wants the PCs to help him analyze what is in the case, as they probably have more current connections than he does (and better technical skills). He also needs some help with arrangements and backup whenever a sale is scheduled.

The briefcase has been sitting next to Jean-Francois' chair. At this point, he lifts it onto his desk and clicks open its latches. As he lifts the lid, he curses as a small needle pricks his thumb. He brings his thumb to his mouth to suck on it in reflex to the pain, and a very puzzled expression crosses his face. He then slumps to his desk, dead. The contents of the briefcase—a crystalline cubic construction laced with interior circuitry and a pocket secretary—spill out of it as it is pushed off the desk by Jean-Francois' slumping body.

His watch begins to beep stridently almost immediately—apparently it is some sort of biomonitor. In response to the bleating, biomonitor alarms begin to sound: "Noxious biochemical exposure in office 22, floor 17. Employee down. Toxic leak suspected. Please police your areas using standard precautionary procedures. If a leak is detected, please push the blue smart alarm button nearest your area and move quickly to emergency exits. Leave a clear path for security personnel. Observe standard emergency procedure green alpha. Remain calm. Repeat: Noxious biochemical...."

This is the cue for the PCs to be leaving. Trilon security is more likely to see the adventurers as the cause of Jean-Francois' death at first glance, and at the very least, they will confiscate the contents of the briefcase. If anyone thinks to rifle Jean-Francois' desk before leaving his office, he will find a removable data storage device (a removable erasable optical disk) attached to his desk computer, along with assorted mundane odds and ends in the desk itself.



## Coming Down

The PCs now have to get out of the building. Two guards are already on the way to Jean-Francois' office because of the computer alert. They will arrive at the office in three minutes.

The guard who checked the PCs in knows which office they went to; with his suspicious nature, he will put two and two together in about 10 minutes and issue an order to detain the adventurers. This order will come over the guards' helmet communicators, so the PCs may be surprised when the first guard who sees them says, "Halt, and put your hands over your head," rather than hurrying them along like the other panicking employees.

The player characters can use the uncertain situation created by the alarm to sneak down to the first floor, avoiding guards and then creating a distraction near the exit to draw the lobby guards away. If they take the main elevators, they will be forced to stop at the eighth floor, as all the employees on break there have stalled all arriving elevators there (by constantly pushing the elevator buttons in their panic to leave).

Another option is for the PCs to shoot their way out. However, this course of action will definitely endanger the innocent bystanders working late (there are quite a few) and now leaving the building in various states of panic.

If one of the PCs is a cyberjockey, it is possible that he could jack into a jack-equipped computer station and get certain locks unlocked, shut off some security cameras in sequence to aid the escape, etc. Even noncyberjockeys with Computer skill can try to circumvent a small portion of the computer's security systems to get a building map, if they think of it. (See the task in the sidebar.)

If anyone pushes a blue smart alarm (they are located at convenient points in every hallway), the public address system will begin announcing: "Confirmed leak in corridor 3, floor (fill in the floor the alarm is pushed on). Clear the area. Biotoxin cleanup crew en route. Repeat: Confirmed...." In three minutes a squad of three techs in hostile environment suits will show up to try to clean up the problem.

## FACELESS TRILON CORPORATE SECURITY GUARD

All Trilon corporate security guards encountered are physically oriented Veteran ground military NPCs. They travel in pairs, and normally shoot to wound. If circumstances dictate that they are alerted to armed and dangerous intruders (not just "wanted for questioning"), they will double up (four to a group) and shoot to kill. Guards patrolling the building carry Mueller-Rivera P-3s. Guards who are posted to an exit door carry Mueller-Rivera F-7s. Roughly half the guards have undergone muscle implants which raise their physical task modifier to 4. All of them wear full-body inertial armor prominently bearing the Trilon logo, and helmets with built-in communication units.

## ENVIRONMENT TECH

The environment techs are mentally oriented Experienced core world NPCs. They also have Sidearm 1. They are wearing sealed hostile environment suits (complete with Trilon logo) with headset communicators, and they are carrying biochemical containment and cleanup gear along with Mueller Rivera P-3s.

**Task:** To call up a map of the building: Routine. Computer and Security Systems. 12 seconds.

## NEW PROGRAMS

Note that the *Foxfire* program must normally be initiated by a hostile system, but in this adventure it has been linked to be triggered by the *Claxon* program.

### Claxon

*Claxon* programs come at various ratings, reflecting their levels of sensitivity to intruders. When a *Claxon* program detects an intruder, it sounds an alarm that rings throughout the entirety of the computer being invaded. To pass a *Claxon* program without alerting it, a netrunning character must roll for the task below.

**Price:** Simple, Lv50; Routine, Lv150; Difficult, Lv400; Formidable, Lv1000; Impossible, Lv3000.

**Task:** To pass a *Claxon* without alerting it: Variable. Computer and Accuracy. Instant.

Referee: *Claxon* programs are rated by the level of difficulty required to pass them unnoticed.

*Claxon* programs are at times called "screamers." They have a Volume equal to the number required to pass them.

**Task:** To detect a PC cyberjockey: Computer and Accuracy. Instant.

Referee: Remember to subtract the Computer skill and Accuracy modifier of PCs trying to be stealthy from this roll. However, trying to be stealthy adds one level to the difficulty of passing the *Claxon* in the nexus.

## Trilon Building Security and the Trilon Computer System

The Trilon computer system is mapped out, in rough, on the facing page. It has dozens of regular terminal/desk computers networked to it (most of which have neural jack inputs, although not many are used). These are located in almost every room—except closets and bathrooms—which all connect to office computer subsystems, which in turn connect to floor subsystems. The Trilon computer is linked into the building's security cameras and door locks, and to the security gas systems loaded with doze (doze is covered on page 11 of the **Equipment Guide**) in the building's elevators, main lobby, and main computer room. It is also connected to the doors and corridors of sensitive areas. The locations of the security cameras are shown on the Trilon Building Map on pages 49-50. The referee will have to extrapolate from the given floor plans the plans for those floors not shown and the locations of security cameras on floors not shown. The referee should place posted security guards and roving patrols on the map where desired or logical.

The computer system is also connected to the smoke/fire/chemical sensors which are located in every room and periodically down every corridor through the floor subsystems and the climate and maintenance program. In addition, the climate and maintenance program monitors the rooms and halls of the Trilon building for the tones given off by the biomonitors worn by most Trilon employees (they look like wrist watches). At any of several given tonal signals, the climate and maintenance program dispatches medical aid to the biomonitor's location upon signaling and/or issues an appropriate warning over the public address system. The blue smart-alarms are connected to the climate floor subsystems, and from them to both the physical security program and the climate and maintenance program.

Suppose that the adventurers want to open the locked door to one of the executive elevators, turn off the security cameras inside, then turn off the cameras in the corridor where they want to get off. If a player character has Security Systems and Electronics skills and an electronic security systems kit or electronic repair tools, he can try to open the elevator doors as described on page 8 of the **Equipment Guide**. Turning off the security cameras inside can only be accomplished by breaking them or obscuring their lenses, with the same going for the cameras on the floor the PCs exit on. If a cyberjockey jacks into the system nearby, he can try to open the lock almost directly; he must then find his way to the elevator system from the floor subsystem and from there to the proper security camera and turn it off. If he then goes to the main physical security program (this is getting more risky), he can find his way from there to the proper floor subsystem, which in turn controls the cameras on the floor on which the PCs wish to get off the elevator.

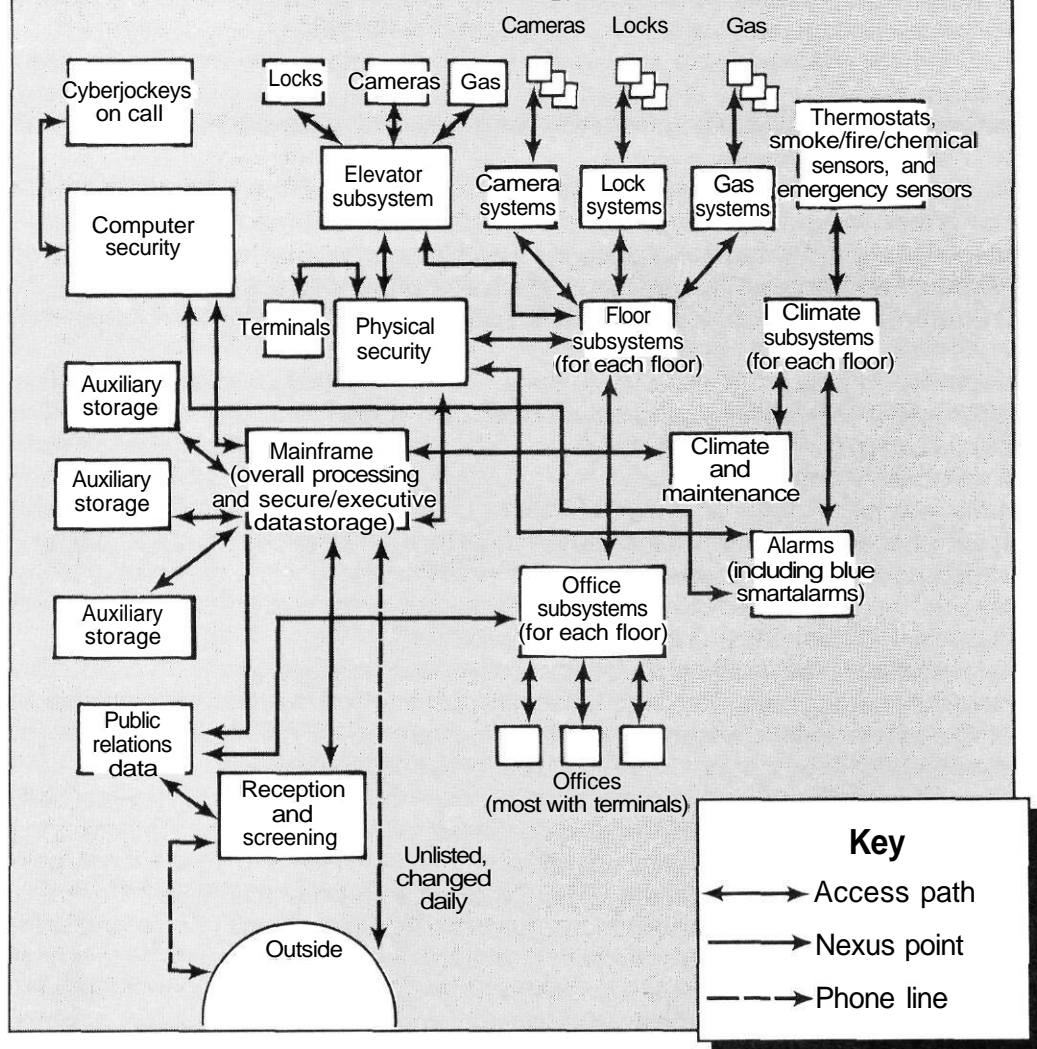
**The Computer's Defenses:** Every nexus point on the map has a *Claxon* passive defense program associated with it. *Claxon* is taken from the **Deathwatch Program**, and is repeated in the left sidebar for your convenience. The level of the *Claxon* program guarding the node is given on the map. If a *Claxon* program is triggered, it marks the cyberjockey in the computer system with the *Foxfire* program (see the right sidebar). This sets one of the defensive cyberjockeys that Trilon keeps on line onto the PC cyberjockey's tail (for purposes of this adventure, he will arrive in 1D6/3 rounds).

**Defensive Cyberjockeys:** Defensive cyberjockeys also prowl the Trilon system at random, aside from being summoned by *Foxfires*. For every nexus point a PC deck jockey moves through, roll 1D6. If a 1 is rolled, a defensive cyberjockey is present at that nexus point. The defensive cyberjockeys must detect the PC to "see" him (use the task in the sidebar). For every round a PC remains at a nexus point, the chance that a defensive cyberjockey will show up there increases by one (on round two it is 2 in 6, on round three, 3 in 6, etc.). The referee should roll for each round he stays; a 6 always means that the defensive cyberjockey does not show up (this round). The net effect is that it is more effective to move speedily through the Trilon system. Stationary targets become sitting ducks.

A Trilon defensive cyberjockey's deck has a Speed of 3, an Accuracy of 3, an Offense of 6, and a Defense of 6. They have a Volume of 50, and carry Fast For-



# Trilon Computer Net



wardx4, Leaperx3, and Jumpx1. These deck jockeys are Experienced NPCs. (Their effective initiatives are 9.) Their Computer skill is 3. A Trilon cyberjockey will spend at least one action calling for the help of another defensive cyberjockey (who will arrive at the nexus point his friend called from in 1D6/3 rounds) before calling on the mainframe for help. Cyberjockeys calling on the mainframe will usually call for Bondage first.

**The Mainframe Defense System:** Calling on the Trilon mainframe is the equivalent of calling in an artillery strike. Trilon Cyberjockeys may do this for one action only once every third round (except where specified below). They will only do so if they feel that they are losing. If the mainframe simply attacks at the cyberjockey's command, use its statistics. If the mainframe executes fast forward, the defensive cyberjockey gets to take all *his* actions right away. If the cyberjockey calls for Leaper or Jump, the mainframe makes the next attack (the one covered by the program) with its stats.

The Trilon computer system has a Speed of 7 and is equivalent to a Veteran NPC, for an effective Initiative of 15. The computer's Accuracy is 8. Its effective Computer skill is 6. Its Offense is 6, and its Defense is 10. It has, for all practical purposes, an infinite amount of Volume; however, the amount of its Volume devoted to special programs which defensive Cyberjockeys have access to is 144. These programs consist of: Leaperx10, Jumpx5, Fast Forwardx5, and Bondagex1.

## Foxfire

Foxfire "marks" the presence and location of an intruder. Defensive programs and Cyberjockeys on patrol in an invaded system proceed at full speed toward the location of an intruder marked with Foxfire. Foxfire can only be removed once it is activated, and then only if it is detected. Jacking out of a system does not automatically clear the Foxfire; 50% of the time the invaded system can relock on the intruder's distinctive electronic fingerprint unless the cyberjockey has succeeded in the task below. This is a one-shot program with a Volume of 6. (Trilon's system automatically installs another copy of Foxfire at the point at which any one is triggered; all Claxons will always be able to trigger a Foxfire, whether a PC has previously triggered a Claxon's Foxfire or not.)

Rumors hold that more difficult Foxfire program versions do exist. Other rumors speak of a combination of Foxfire and Molasses (see **Deathwatch Program**, page 37), known as Quagmire, which marks an intruder and slows his movement through cyberspace.

**Price:** Lv500.

**Task:** To detect an active Foxfire program: Difficult. Computer and Accuracy. Instant.

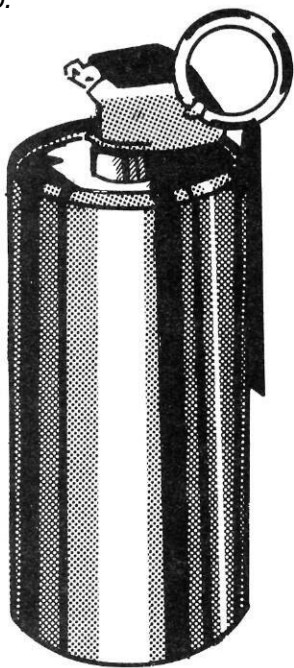
**Task:** To remove Foxfire while in a hostile system: Difficult. Computer and Accuracy. Absolute (1 action).

**Task:** To remove Foxfire when jacked out: Routine. Computer. 30 seconds.

## FORALINE GAS HAND GRENADE

Weight: .05 kg DP: As explosion (EP= 1) but no fragmentation. Releases foraline gas (fills 10 m<sup>3</sup>). Price: Lv25 per grenade.

For the effects of foraline gas, see pages 10-11 in the **Equipment Guide**. In brief, the gas produces a fear reaction which makes most people acquiesce to authoritative commands, such as feeling unable to resist and therefore surrendering when commanded to.



## Trilon Building

The Trilon Building is of the popular sky needle design. Its outside surface is composed of a material which gives one the impression it is chromed, although the silvery material is actually a mixture of building synthetics.

Although from the outside the building gives the impression that it has no windows, some of the panels of silvered synthetic are similar to the old-style "bronzed-glass" material used in 20th-century skyscrapers and serve as windows to the offices inside.

Surrounded by a half-acre landscaped plot of land which includes slidewalks and normal sidewalks to its doors and a small senior executive parking structure of three stories (employees take public transportation to work), the Trilon Building rises 28 stories. Four representative floors are given on the following pages.

The referee can extrapolate the appearance of other floors from the ones which are given.

**Sub-basement and Basement:** These do not conform to the building's shape in layout. They house the air conditioning equipment, generators, and other machinery, as well as a small mechanical repair shop (sub-basement) and the building's main-frame computer (basement).

Only the cargo elevators will go to the sub-basement. Only the executive elevators will go to the basement, and they require that an employee's credcard be inserted into a special slot and a handprint scanned before the elevator doors will open. Other stringent security measures, including a retina scan, are then required to enter the doors to the computer complex itself.

**1st Floor:** This is the main entrance floor to the building. The receiving area, at the rear of the building, has four cargo unloading bays, which are masked by a tracked, sliding pair of doors finished in a silvery tone to preserve the architectural look of the building when they are not in the process of receiving goods.

For all offices throughout the building, the usual office furniture is present (desks, chairs, desk computers, vidphones, etc.). The quality of the furniture, its size and its quantity increase in larger offices and higher up in the building. To see if any given computer has a neural jack, roll 1D10. On a 1-7, it does; on an 8-10, it doesn't.

**2nd Floor:** The security center and armory are located on this floor, along with a variety of normal offices. Offices with a window overlooking the main lobby are considered a perk. The armory holds extra Mueller-Rivera P-3s, Mueller-Rivera F-7s, full-body inertial armor, helmets with built-in communication units, doze gas cylinders for the gas security system, and a crate of a dozen foraline gas hand grenades (see the sidebar). Security officers will arm themselves with the grenades if the PCs begin shooting their way out.

**3rd-7th Floors:** More offices.

**8th Floor:** This floor contains the employee cafeteria, exercise rooms, gymnasiums, vidrooms where training vids can be viewed or recorded, and an extensive vid library. Some of the vids are of not strictly relevant topics (e.g. the Andromedia Olympics—if upper management only knew).

**9th-16th Floor:** A mixture of offices and research labs. Security is tighter in the labs.

**17th Floor:** This is the floor Jean-Francois has his office on. Otherwise, it is similar to floors 9-16, except that it contains a vending machine/snack room with free coffee, tea, and soft drink dispensers (along with food that must be paid for), and a stress abatement room. The stress abatement room is softly lighted and plays any of a selection of soothing musical compositions and sounds (the ocean, a breeze, wind chimes, a rain shower, etc). It is sometimes referred to as the "nap room," as the conditions in the room and comfortable lounge furniture often produce that very result.

**18th-25th Floor:** More offices.

**26th Floor:** Executive gymnasiums, spa, snack shop and restaurant.

**27th Floor:** Senior executive offices.

**28th Floor:** The top story is taken up entirely by the president's office, which is filled with every conceivable luxury.

# Trilon Building

## 2nd Floor

**M** Men's rest room  
**W** Women's restroom

◁ Security camera

▣ Elevators (4)

⊠ Cargo elevator

▤ Stairs

- 13.** Executive elevators (2)  
**20.** Open atrium with ceiling sculptures  
**21.** Office with window on atrium  
**22.** Secretarial cubicles  
**23.** Janitorial and storage  
**24.** Large offices  
**25.** Security center  
**26.** Armory  
**27.** Small office  
**28.** Security chief's office

## 1st Floor

**M** Men's rest room  
**W** Women's restroom

◁ Security camera

▣ Elevators (4)

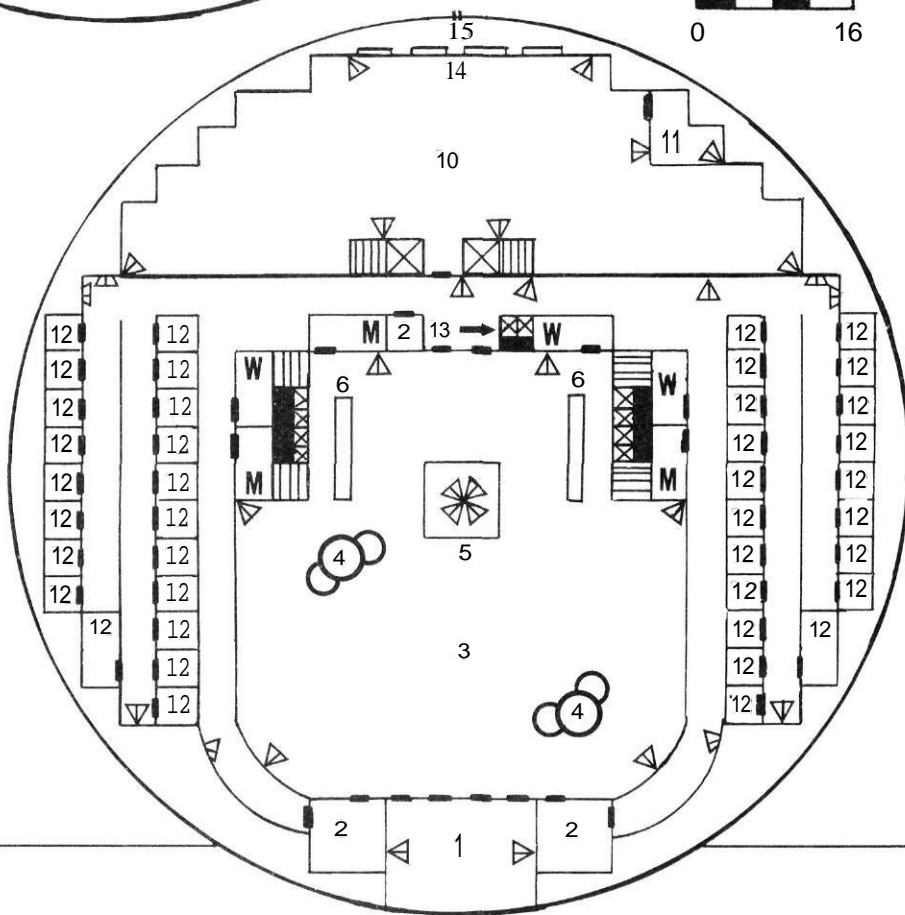
⊠ Cargo elevator

▤ Stairs

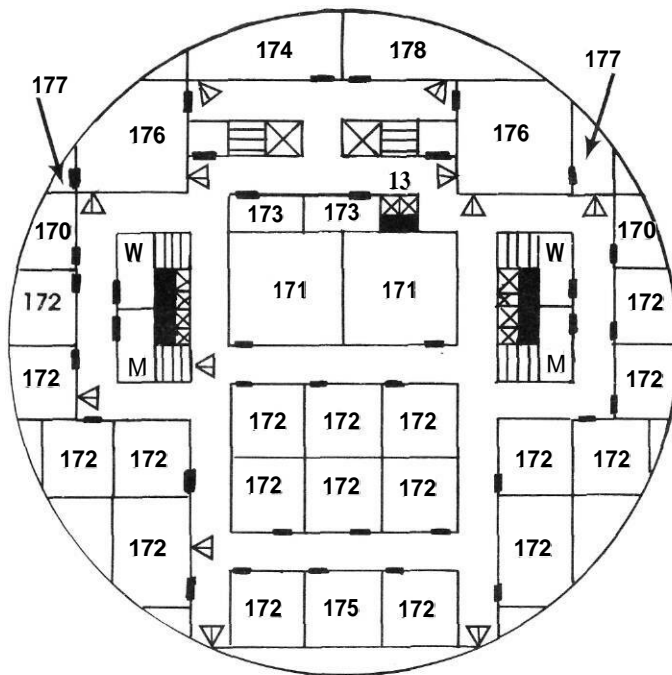
- 1.** Entryway  
**2.** Janitorial and storage  
**3.** Lobby  
**4.** Fountain  
**5.** Information and receptionist  
**6.** Lobby furniture  
**10.** Receiving area and shipping  
**11.** Receiving area office  
**12.** Small office  
**13.** Executive elevators (2)  
**14.** Cargo unloading bays  
**15.** Sliding doors

Meters

0 16



# Trilon Building



## 17th Floor

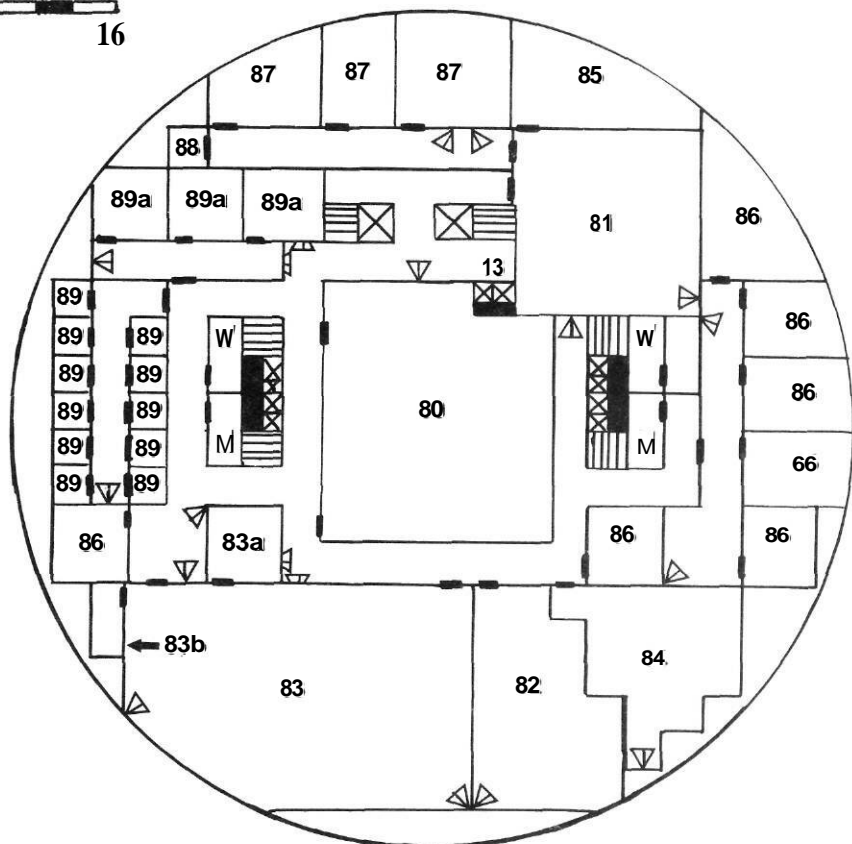
- M** Men's rest room
- W** Women's rest room
- Security camera
- Elevators (4)
- Cargo elevator
- Stairs
- 13.** Executive elevators (2)
- 170.** Janitorial and storage
- 171.** Conference room
- 172.** Nice office
- 173.** Small office
- 174.** Snack machine/vending room
- 175.** Jean-Francois' office
- 176.** Large nice office
- 177.** Closet/storage
- 178.** Stress abatement room

Meters



## 8th Floor

- M** Men's rest room
- W** Women's rest room
- Security camera
- Elevators (4)
- Cargo elevator
- Stairs
- 13.** Executive elevators (2)
- 80.** Cafeteria
- 81.** Kitchen
- 82.** Women's lockers
- 83.** Gymnasium
- 83a.** Large gym equipment storage
- 83b.** Gym equipment storage
- 84.** Men's lockers
- 85.** Cold food storage
- 86.** Exercise/game room
- 87.** Food stores and kitchen equipment
- 88.** Janitorial and storage



## WHAT IS THIS THING?

Once the PCs make it out of the Trilon Building, they will want to examine the loot.

**Cube:** The circuit cube has a peculiar interface plug and is definitely valuable—it screams cutting-edge nanotech—but what it does is unknown.

**Pocket Secretary:** The electronic pocket secretary—a sort of memo pad, address book, and calculator in one—has no addresses recorded on it but includes seven phone numbers, each with an innocuous notation like "good music," or "get laundry on Wednesday" next to it. These numbers all belong to various places of business (easily confirmed by a check through the phone directory). One number with no notation is not listed, though.

**Optical Disk:** The erasable optical disk has Jean-Francois' diary encrypted on it, among other dry, boring, and unsalable cost efficiency reports. The diary talks about how Jean-Francois got the briefcase from some old gang contacts when they acquired it after mugging a Provolution member who took a short cut through their turf without clearance. He toasted a half-dozen of them with a DunArmCo Close Assault Gun before they brought him to ground. While they easily found uses for most of his gear; they didn't quite know what to make of the briefcase and its contents (which they had ascertained by having the briefcase X-rayed at a black market scanning shop).

## Using the PCs' Resources

The adventurers can try to figure out what the cube is through their own contacts or their own knowledge, or by phoning the number. Their contacts can't tell them much—"You're too hot right now. Trilon's all over you, and they've got the metro police screaming for blood." Someone with high Electronics or Computer skill can tell that the cube is some sort of custom circuitry, but breaking into it to tell more would require a specialized lab setup.

## Calling the Phone Number

Calling the number will get the players in touch with James "The Mole" Wilson. He will want to see the balance on a slotted credcard before he answers any useful question. No matter how much the PCs offer him, he implies that their credit balances aren't very convincing. But he *will* sell them the location of the girlfriend of of the Steel Cowboy, a master cyberjockey of years past, someone he is certain can figure out what the cube is. Maybe she'll help them as a hard luck case. His girlfriend, Angelique Lepandou, works as an entertainer at the Aqualight Club. As soon as he hangs up, The Mole will also sell back to Provolution the fact that the PCs have the cube (which he has previously been told to look out for).

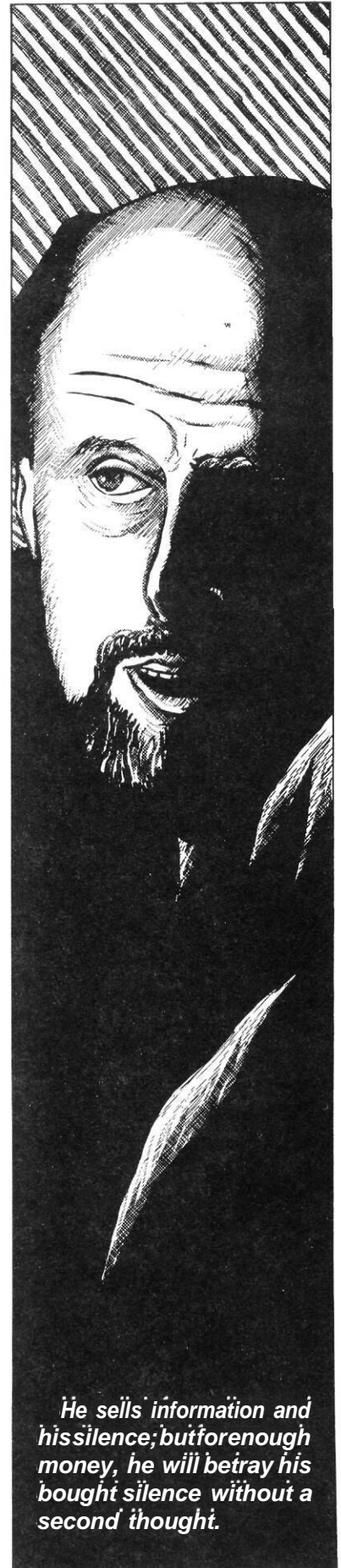
## James "The Mole" Wilson

James started out as a simple corporate keyboard puncher. He found that he had an unusual ability to dig out relevant and timely information, which his employers appreciated and paid him well for. But James was bored with a 9 to 5 job. Through connections he had developed during his five years with the company and using money he had saved, James quit his job and went underground to open his own business as Libreville's top information broker. He can find out just about anything you want to know—for a price. He refuses to meet with anyone in person, always communicating by a scrambled vidphone line in privacy mode (no picture) with his voice distorted.

James is a mentally oriented Elite core world NPC. He has Interviewing 3, Streetwise 5, and Sidearm 3, in addition to normal skills for his career and skill level. He speaks French, English, Japanese, and several Bantu dialects.

**NPC Motivation Results:** *Club 7:* James is not intimidated by threats of violence. He knows too much about almost everyone for them to be able to really hurt him.

*Diamond King:* James enjoys making money and the power it brings him. He is extremely greedy. He sells information and his silence; but for enough money, he will betray his bought silence without a second thought.



*He sells information and his silence; but for enough money, he will betray his bought silence without a second thought.*





*This... young man with a hair trigger temper owes Provolution for messing up....*



*Angelique is a famous performance artist.*

## TRIPPING THE LIGHT FANTASTIC

Eventually, the player characters should go to the Aqualight Club to talk to Angelique. The Aqualight Club sails Gabon Bay during the night, making only eight scheduled stops. Unless special preparations are made, the PCs will either have to go to one of the stops or catch a water taxi to the club.

## Love Those Livres

As they enter the club after boarding, the PCs will pass through a sophisticated sensor arch. This arch takes a video record of whoever enters and, linked to a computer, compares it to photos of dangerous criminals and undesirables. The arch also pinpoints weapons and cyberenhancements (it includes X-ray and metal detector functions, among others). When the adventurers slot their credcards to pay the exorbitant cover charge just like anyone who is not a member (Lv75), the computer systems check the cards to see if the PCs have permits to carry any firearms they have. If they do not, they will have to bribe the gate guards to get the weapons past them. They are used to being bribed by the rich and famous, so small amounts don't impress them—they only consider amounts over Lv100. The referee should roleplay this out with the players, but give them a reasonable chance to carry off the bribery. Cybernetic weapons and enhancements will be noted by the guards and will determine the way they treat the PCs and how much they expect in a bribe. But the guards will not forbid enhanced characters to enter the club. If the characters do not effectively bribe the guards, they will confiscate the weapons and have the characters sign for them, so that they can "retrieve their valuables when they leave the club."

## Encore

Once the PCs get past the gate (or at the gate, if they think of it), they can ask any employee in the club where Angelique is. She is about to perform her act on the main floor stage and will start as the adventurers enter. When she finishes, she will take her bows, exit the stage, then come out through her dressing room hallway (her dressing room is number 1) to speak to her fans and socialize. The PCs can try to elbow their way in to talk to her past raving socialites, or they can bribe (or charm) a server into giving her a note.

## Angelique Lepandou

Angelique is a famous performance artist who has been working a lengthy stint at the Aqualight Club. Her act draws upon her childhood, the cultural images of the Bantu tribes of Africa, the recurrent incidents of unrest in Libreville's slums, and a kind of Gothic horror atmosphere. The effect is rather difficult to describe, but has enthralled the jaded socialites who frequent the Aqualight Club to the extent that Angelique has quite a following among them. Angelique has a crew/employee keycard for the Aqualight's doors which will override the security shutdown on all the doors (she charmed it out of a now-fired guard).

Angelique has been sharing an apartment with the Steel Cowboy for about a year now. They are very close.

Angelique is a physically oriented Veteran core world NPC. She has Imaging 4, as her act uses video and holographic devices extensively. She speaks French and English.

NPC Motivation Results: *Diamond Queen*: Angelique loves the Steel Cowboy a great deal and would never betray him. (She does not consider bringing him a lucrative job betrayal.) *Spade 9*: She is ambitious and desires a certain amount of personal power—what performer doesn't? She will manipulate those around her to get the recognition she feels she deserves.

## Trigger Happy

While the adventurers are trying to convince Angelique to tell them where Steel is, a Provolution assassin (he made it aboard during Angelique's act) takes a shot



at the PCs and Angelique (thinking she's involved). Just prior to the shooting, news reports showing the PCs' pictures and noting them as wanted for questioning in connection with the death of a Trilon employee were being shown on the holovid, and the guards have recognized the PCs. They start looking for the adventurers and arrive all the sooner to the fight (statistics for the guards are in the sidebar at the right).

### Johnny Slide, Provolution Assassin

Johnny Slide is the lowest of the low. This frazzled, short, young man with a hair trigger temper owes Provolution for messing up before (big time) and is gung-ho to make that up. He is also not very good, which is why he messed up before. He doesn't care about bystanders, and will blaze away at the characters and Angelique. He is a physically oriented Experienced field agent NPC. He has neural sheathing (initiative +2), but is also in severe Tesseran Beta withdrawal, which, all told, simply cancels out the sheathing bonus in his case. He has two wrist blades and is using a jacked Stracher P-11. He is wearing an inertial armor vest under his scruffy-looking evening attire.

### Run Away, Run Away

The PCs have to leave fast. Standing and duking it out with security is not a good idea (deja vu, eh?), not to mention the fact that lots of screaming aristocrats keep getting into the line of fire. The players can go out the way they came in, in which case they will have to get past the assassin and four security guards in the dinner theater and bar area, plus the two guards at the entrance. Or, if the PCs are in bad shape or have charmed or started to convince Angelique (she's very susceptible to flattery), she will grab a character, utter a terse "this way," and lead the characters down the path indicated on the map. In this case, the adventurers will only have to deal with Tweedle Dee and Tweedle Dum at the entrance.

Of course, once the adventurers get to the docking bay, they will find that the club is out on Gabon Bay. Fortunately, a water taxi is just bringing a couple of rich people in for the evening. The adventurers can pile in, with Angelique, and she will tell the driver where to go ("Ngsangnam Wharf in Alarmake District, please—now!"). Or the adventurers can "commandeer" the taxi, leaving the driver on the Aqualight dock.

### FACELESS AQUALIGHT CLUB SECURITY GUARDS

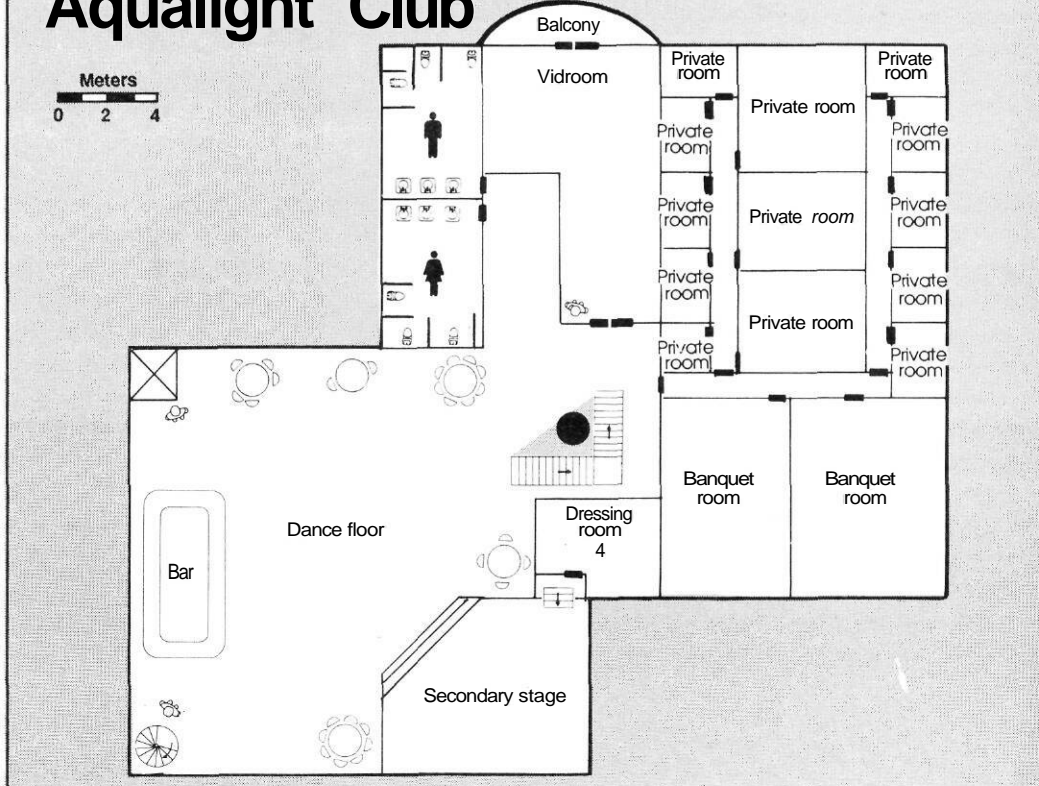
All Aqualight Club security guards encountered (the adventurers only run into six unless they stage a standup fight) are physically oriented Veteran sea military NPCs. Four of the guards carry Traylor Model 57s. Two of them also have wrist blades in their right wrist, and another one has a wrist gun in his left wrist. Two of the six also carry DunArmCo Close Assault Guns, which they will only use when they feel that they have a shot that will not endanger the club patrons. They wear full-body nonrigid armor (smartly tailored in high-tech fabrics to as closely resemble a conservative man's dress suit as possible). Three guards have undergone muscle implants (including one with a wrist blade), which raises their physical task modifier to 4. The other three have neural sheathing, which raises their initiative by 2.

## AQUALIGHT CLUB ITINERARY

The Aqualight Club itinerary calls for leaving its daytime dock near the Spin-drift dealership downtown at 5 p.m. It makes its first stop in a mere 10 minutes at its downtown pier near the beanstalk, just outside the jurisdiction of APL. The Aqualight Club then proceeds to seven other stops, docking at special piers at each. The club returns to the downtown pier at 6:50 a. m., and finally sails empty, except for the crew, to its daytime dock. The club does not travel at a constant speed—the captain has leave to wander the bay, taking advantage of the wind and weather to give the passengers the most pleasant voyage. The captain coordinates closely with APL traffic control, and anyone wishing to board the ship when it is not at a stop must take a watertaxi and locate the club through traffic control. Most passengers leave the Aqualight between 2 and 4 a. m., and many water taxis cruise its locale during this period of time.

| Place          | Time          |
|----------------|---------------|
| Daytime dock   | 7 a.m.-5 p.m. |
| Downtown       | 5:10 p.m.     |
| Nango          | 6:50 p. m     |
| Mavoul         | 8:50 p.m.     |
| Pointe Pongara | 10:20 p.m.    |
| Old Libreville | 11:20 p.m.    |
| Mbolen-Nzork   | 12:50 a.m.    |
| Kongo          | 2:50 a.m.     |
| Downtown       | 6:50 a.m.     |

## Aqualight Club



### The Aqualight Club

**Bottom Hull:** The bottom hull is totally submerged and is connected to the top hull by reinforced pylon/struts. These are hollow and often feature spiral staircases leading to the main level. The bottom hull contains the Aqualight Club's bridge, food and supply storage, the engines and engine rooms, the water heating and air conditioning machinery, and other such mechanical necessities which would clutter up the landscape unaesthetically.

**Main Level:** The main level is where most of the activity of the club takes place. Watertaxis drop off and pick up guests from the docking area, which also butts up against the special gangways which the Aqualight docks at. The entranceway features the best in electronic scanning technology to prevent unauthorized weapons from being carried aboard. Patrons can leave their wraps at the coat check room or drop off bulky valuables with the entrance guards to be stored in the secure room's safe. The security center coordinates the club's security. Viewing stations constantly scan security cameras throughout the club, along with a communications center and emergency door overrides for all the doors in the ship.

This level houses a romantic garden, complete with leafy bowers and dinner nooks, patio restaurant, kitchen, main bar, dinner theater and primary stage, and casino. The floating staircase and intriguing fountain holosculpture are the centerpiece of the bar area.

**Top Level:** The top level is reached via the floating staircase in the bar, the elevator, or the spiral staircase in the dinner theater. This level features a dance bar and dance floor, along with the stage where many famous musicians have appeared.












The vidroom displays the latest in amusement holosimulations and even has two of the newest direct neural hookup adventures—Chrome Runner (the licensed game version of the Tara MacKenzie movie) and *Ravenspire Overdrive*, the gothic horror adventure of jet set vampires.

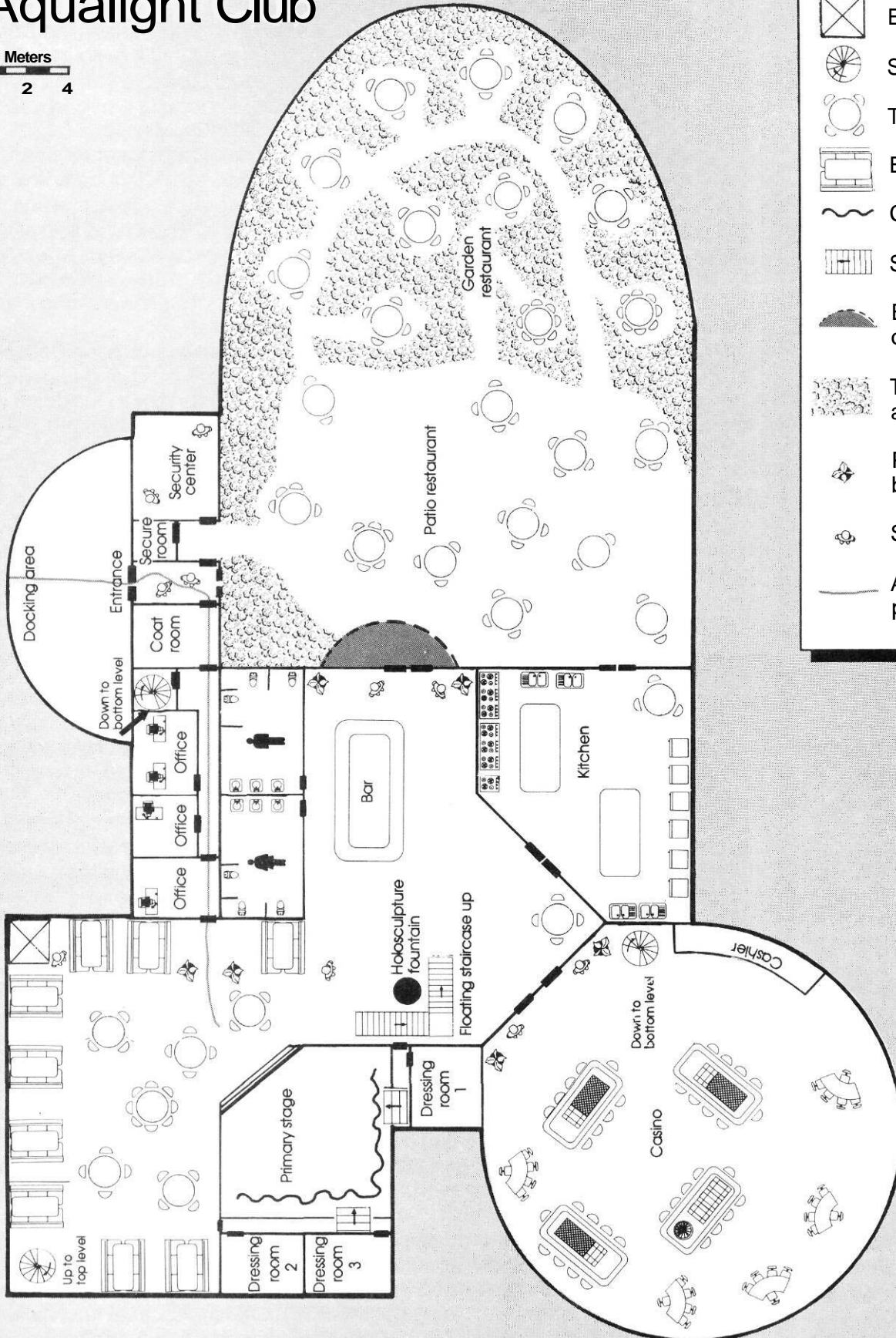
The top level of the Aqualight also features many private rooms for private games of chance or other indulgences. With only 10-15 minutes' notice, a room can be set up to almost any specification.

# Aqualight Club

Meters  
0 2 4

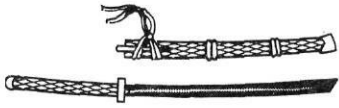
## Key

-  Elevator
-  Spiral staircase
-  Table
-  Booth
-  Curtain
-  Stairs
-  Balcony overhang
-  Trees and bushes
-  Potted bush/plant
-  Security guard
-  Angelique's path





## ORIENTAL MARTIAL ARTS WEAPONS



**Katana:** This sword is used one-ortwo-handed. Genuine antiques are too valuable to be risked in combat, but modern reproductions are carried by those with a romantic attachment to bushido.

Length: 1 m (Bulk=3)  
Weight: 1.4 kgs Melee  
Range: Long Melee Skill  
Modifier: +2 DP: 0.8 Price:  
Lv750



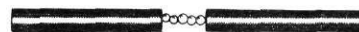
**Wakizashi:** Often carried with the katana. Usually used one handed.

Length: .7 m (Bulk=2)  
Weight: 1 kg Melee Range:  
Long Melee Skill Modifier:  
+2 DP: 0.6 Price: Lv500



**Tonfa:** A wooden baton with a handle at right angles.

Length: .5 m (Bulk=1)  
Weight: .5kg Melee Range:  
Short Melee Skill Modifier:  
-7 DP: 0.4 (blunt trauma  
only) Price: Lv35



**Nunchaku:** Length: .7 (including chain) (Bulk=2)  
Weight: .5kg Melee Range:  
Short Melee Skill Modifier:  
-1 DP: 0.5 (blunt trauma  
only) Price: Lv50

## A TAXI TO THE UNDERWORLD

The water taxi, a somewhat worn Seasprite Sedan, is no high-speed, high-performance boat. But it moves along at a decent clip. Unfortunately, the Libreville Metropolitan Police who the security guards at the Aqualight Club have called are riding in a Navstar Elite Assassin, modified for bay security use (big flashing red lights and a siren, among other things). They go much faster than the player characters' current craft, and they are also armed with a DunArmCo Mini-12.

If the adventurers let the taxi driver pilot the taxi, he will look over his shoulder at the PCs and say, "What's it worth to you for me not to stop? This looks like a very awkward situation developing." Once the characters resolve the question of the cabbie's tip (and it better be quick), he'll say that he can't outrun the police, but he knows a little-used wharf nearby where he can make a quick stop to let the PCs off. He'll then pull back out into the bay before stopping to let the police board him. However, the cabbie has underestimated the police boat's speed, and it gets to the wharf only a minute or so after the PCs disembark.

If the adventurers hijacked the taxi, they will be able to see that the police boat is gaining very fast, and they will hear the loud, staccato burst of a warning shot from the Mini-12. Off to their left along the shore, they can see a rundown wharf area, the only ready docking facilities for several kilometers. If they hurry, they can pull in swiftly and try to lose the police in the area's alleys.

## Hide and Seek

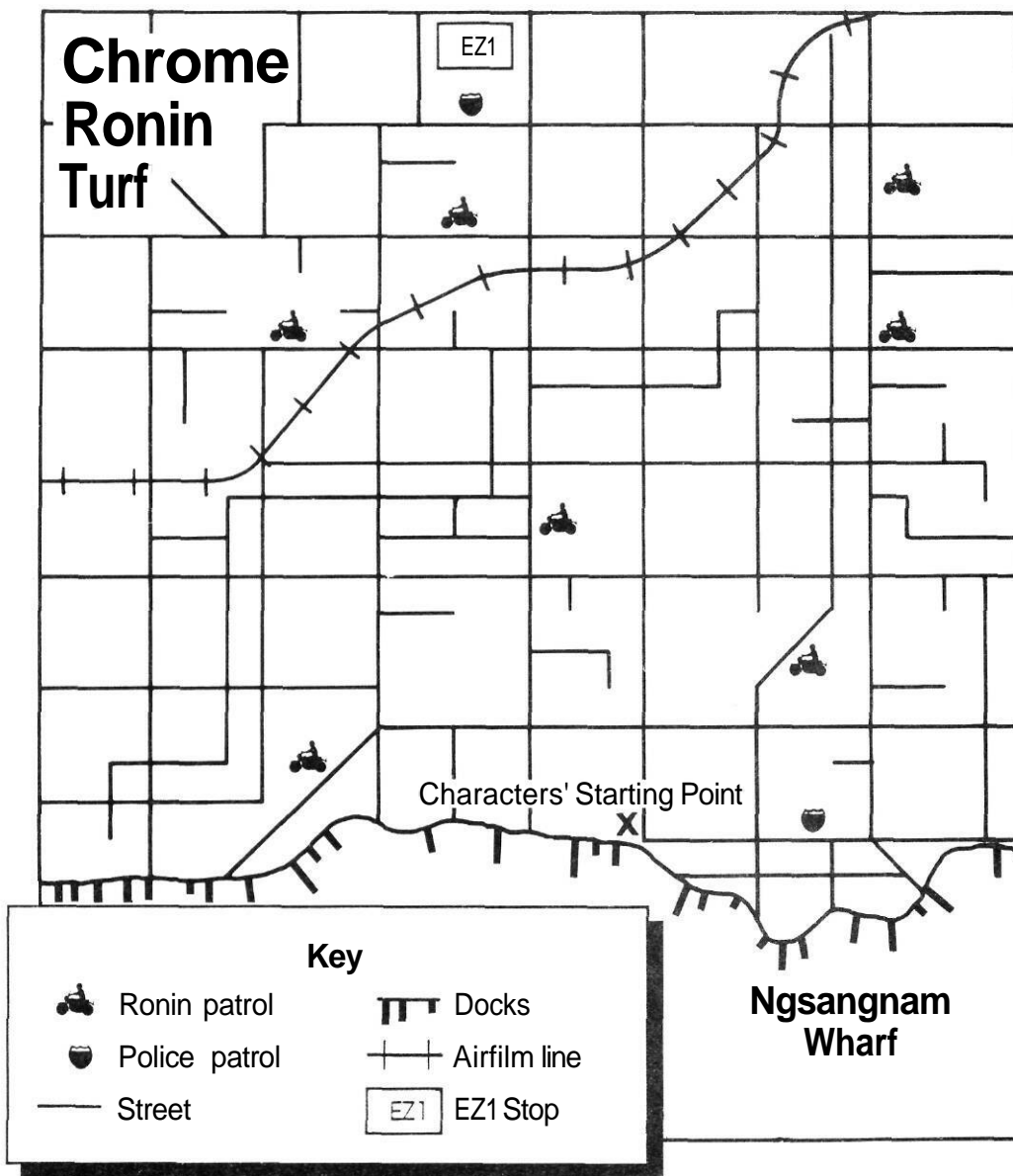
Give the adventurers a few anxious moments of dodging into alleys and running around corners while they lose the police. When the party reaches any of the appropriately marked spots on the Chrome Ronin Turf Map, they will run into a group of 10 Chrome Ronin (eight first tier members, one sergeant, and one lieutenant).

**Chrome Ronin:** Members of the Chrome Ronin have spent too much time watching old chop-sockey vids. They dress in gis and headbands like martial arts students and heroes of years ago, frequently accompanied by ripped T-shirts in urban camo patterns. Despite their Oriental flavor, members of all races can and have joined the Ronin. The Ronin are fond of martial arts weaponry, and carry nunchaku, shuriken, sais, and even katanas (see the statistics in the sidebars). They prefer to use the martial arts weapons and engage in armed melee when possible; however, they will answer gunfire with their Hancock Nine-Twenty-Three Enforcers.

The Chrome Ronin are organized roughly into three levels. At the bottom are the accepted, but uninitiated, gang members, Roughly 90 Green, physically oriented, thief NPCs compose this bottom tier of gang members, although they are never all present in one place at one time. The next tier includes those who have completed the initiation into full membership in the gang and achieved one of the gang's goals in emulating the martial arts heroes of the vids—blinding speed. The 35 or so "sergeants" of the second tier have begged, borrowed or stolen (mostly stolen) the money to undergo a black market clinic neural sheathing operation. Due to this operation, they have +2 initiatives. Aside from this bonus, they are normal, physically oriented, Experienced thief NPCs. The nine members of the third, and highest, rank of Chrome Ronin have acquired enough money and the contacts to undergo an operation to have one or two limbs replaced with cybernetic limbs (chrome-plated, of course). These limbs have Strength 15+ (if an arm) or Strength 17+ (if a leg). These "lieutenants" have also undergone the neural sheathing operation with its attendant bonus. Lieutenants tend to be rather cold, with peculiar senses of humor; they all use katanas as their preferred weapon. They are all physically oriented, Veteran thief NPCs.

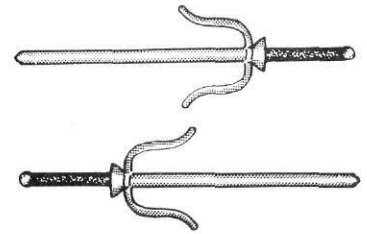
**Duck, Dodge, Hide!** If the adventurers are alert and taking some precautions, give them a chance to take cover or hide. If they do so successfully, whoever is closest to the Ronin group will overhear one gang member say something about "a big meet with the shogun tonight." The PCs have to work their way across the map to exit off its north side in order to leave the Chrome Ronin's turf. If they make it there without being detected by a patrol of gang members, they can call a taxi





at the EZ1 Stop to take them to Steel Cowboy's house at Angelique's direction. If the referee wishes, he can allow the party the chance to encounter a group of Libreville Metropolitan Police at either of the appropriately marked places on the Chrome Ronin Turf Map, giving party members the same chances to avoid the police as the gang. If for some reason the police and a gang patrol run into each other (one or the other is chasing the PCs, for instance), they will immediately engage each other in a firefight. Statistics for typical Libreville police are found in the sidebar on page 59.

**A Big Gunfight:** If any patrol of gang members detects the PCs' party, they will confront them, trying to engage the adventurers in hand-to-hand combat as a sort of "test." The PCs can, of course, simply try to mow down the gang members, in which case the gang members will take cover, return the gunfire with gunfire, and send one member for reinforcements (which will arrive in five minutes). If the adventurers decimate the gang members before reinforcements arrive, they can return to moving and hiding as they did before, but any gang members who went for reinforcements will remember the party. This may lead to an ongoing feud between the Chrome Ronin and the adventurers as any living gang member can identify the player characters from their appearance on trivid (remember, the PCs are on the news as "wanted for questioning").

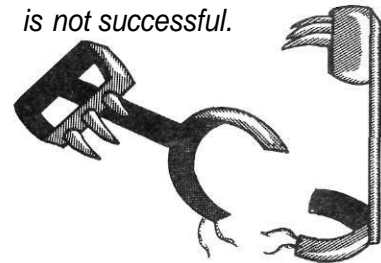


**Sai:** Used in pairs. The curved crossguards can catch the enemy's weapon and either snap the blade or flip it out of his hands. Not edged; ends are sharpened for a thrust. Disarming someone with these is a task.

Length: .3 (each) (Bulk=1)  
Weight: 1 kg per pair  
Melee Range: Short  
Melee Skill Modifier: 0DP: 0.3 Price: Lv75

**Task:** To disarm an opponent with sais: Difficult. Melee and Melee skill modifiers. Absolute (1 action).

Referee: Using sais to disarm someone with a long-range weapon makes the task Formidable. A successful block of this strike means a would-be disarm is not successful.



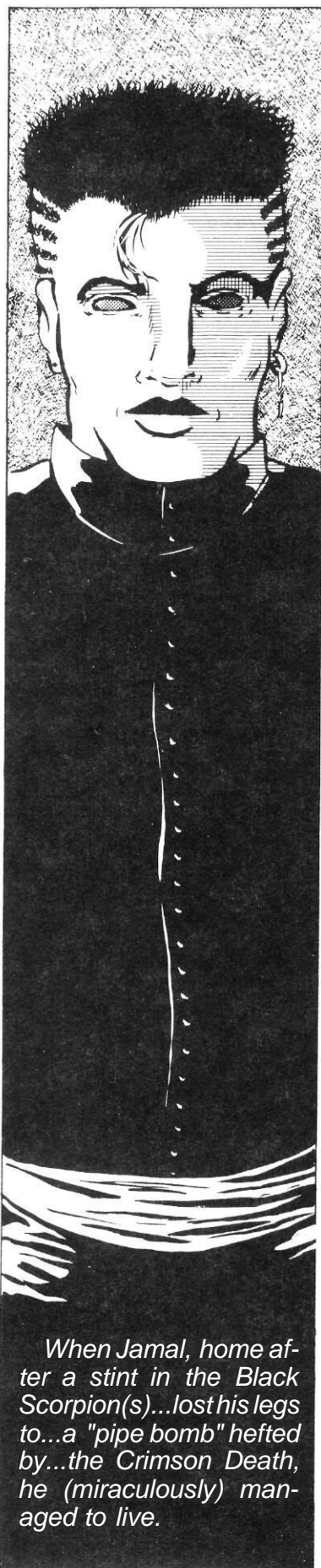
**Nekode:** Used in climbing or as a weapon.

Length: 5 cm (Bulk=0)  
Weight: Negligible  
Melee Range: Short  
Melee Skill Modifier: +2 DP: 0.2 Price: Lv40



**Shuriken:** Intended to be flung at a target.

Length: .03 m dia. (Bulk=0)  
Weight: .7 kg DP: 0.2 Price: Lv5



When Jamal, home after a stint in the Black Scorpion(s)...lost his legs to...a "pipe bomb" hefted by...the Crimson Death, he (miraculously) managed to live.

**A Strange Duel:** If the combatant PCs go through with the challenge, the lieutenant will pick a fight with the meanest looking character, then the sergeant with the next meanest, etc. until no more combatant PCs are left. (Angelique will not fight.) The gang members will be scrupulous in not engaging non-combatants while combatants are dueling, peculiar behavior for a mudville gang. The gang members will fight using martial arts weapons, or bare-handed if the PCs have no melee weapons. The lieutenant has a katana and wakizashi, the sergeant has sais; and the other gang members have tonfas, nekodes, and nunchaku. If any PC expresses a desire to use a weapon belonging to a gang member who has not challenged anyone, that gang member will smile at his fellows and then loan the PC his weapon with a funny little bow. The Ronin will then duel the PCs until the PCs concede or until the dueling gang members take a light wound. The lieutenant will have to be knocked unconscious before he concedes.

Whatever the result of the duel, the Ronin will be impressed enough to ask the PCs if they would accept the honor of meeting their most esteemed shogun, Jamal Kwan.

### Jamal Kwan

Above all the tiers of the Chrome Ronin stands Jamal Kwan, whom the Ronin refer to as their shogun. Jamal has built out of his gang's turf a small empire with himself at the head. Although other gangs occasionally poke fun at the rank and file of the Chrome Ronin, Jamal is respected and held almost in awe by even the Ronin's worst rivals. When Jamal, home after a stint in the Black Scorpion mercenaries, lost his legs at the age of 20 due to the explosion of a "home-brewed" pipe bomb hefted by a member of the Crimson Death, he (miraculously) managed to live long enough for arrival of an ambulance 45 minutes later. After cutting a deal with the ambulance driver, a member of Provolution, which Jamal still will not discuss, he emerged from the black clinics with two new chromed bionic legs (Strength 20). Jamal has had three further black market operations since then: a neural sheathing operation, the replacement of his right arm with a Strength 18 chrome arm, and his most recent acquisition, a pair of low-light, flash-proof bionic eyes (mirrored chrome, of course). Over the years, Jamal has built up the Chrome Ronin from a disorganized group of a dozen punks to the present organization which rules 20 square blocks of mudville, most of it former housing for the construction workers who built the beanstalk. Under his leadership, the Ronin obliterated the Crimson Death two years ago.

Jamal is a Veteran, physically oriented, ground military NPC. He has Melee 6, Tactics 4, Leader 4, Thrown Weapons 3, and Combat Rifleman 3, in addition to normal skill levels for his NPC type. He speaks French and Japanese in a deep, bass voice. When he fights, he uses his bare hands (and feet), a katana, or an FAM-90 when he has to or when the gang is planning a heavy assault. He sometimes wears a suit of custom full-body combat armor constructed to look like old-style Japanese samurai armor (it leaves his chrome limbs bare) when he feels it is necessary for him to make a very strong impression. At other times he wears an inertial armored vest under his gi and robe.

**NPC Motivation Results:** *Spade Ace:* Jamal is a charismatic natural leader who draws others to him and inspires extreme loyalty. *Heart King:* He is extremely honest and honorable in his own way, and once he gives his word, he will not break it. He expects others to live up to this same code.

### The Shogun Speaks

The Ronin patrol will lead the adventuring party to a meeting in progress between Jamal Kwan and a large contingency of his gang. The main topic of discussion is the sudden invasion of the gang's turf by the "gaigin metro police." When the adventurers (and escort) arrive, Jamal will ask the lieutenant in the patrol why he brought the PCs to the meet. The lieutenant will then give a fairly honest account of what happened previously and will tell the shogun he felt that the shogun should



## FACELESS LIBREVILLE METROPOLITAN POLICEMEN

All Libreville police encountered are physically oriented Experienced law enforcement NPCs. They carry Stracher P-11s and Brandt Audioniques and wear inertial armor vests. One out of four will have a Quinn Optronics Restraint Carbine. If news reaches the police that the PCs are heavily armed or using cybernetic enhancement, the police will use Mueller Rivera P-3s, carry two concussion grenades each, and one out of four will have a Traylor Model 10 Riot Gun. They will be wearing full-body inertial armor and helmets.

meet these people both because of their honorable conduct and because they may know why the police are here.

**To Tell the Truth:** Jamal will pick out the PC who looks like the leader (let the PCs put forth a "leader" if they want) and ask that person to explain why the party is here. If the PC tells the truth, Jamal will be glad to know what is going on. If the speaking character has not used a disrespectful tone, he will tell the PCs that Pro-volution has put the word out that the PCs have something it wants—a cube of some sort. If the adventurers wish to owe Jamal a favor, he will have his gang run interference for the PCs and loan them the use of a vehicle (a battered Houston Motors Rangestar 8—see page 7 of the Ground Vehicle Guide) to travel to Steel Cowboy's house. They can leave the Rangestar at any EZ1 Stop and give a message that it belongs to the Ronin to the attendant on duty, and it will get back to him.

**Lies, Endless Lies:** If the speaker lies consistently and convincingly about anything but the PCs' identities, Jamal will pursue the above course of action. If the speaker lies about the PCs' identities, one of the Ronin will say that he saw the PCs' pictures on holo-vid about half an hour ago and that those weren't their names. Jamal will say that he had taken the adventurers for honorable warriors, but he is now "very disappointed" in them. The patrol that brought the adventurers to Jamal will escort them back to where the patrol encountered them and then leave. The PCs will encounter no more gang patrols, but they will run a chance of encountering groups of Libreville Metropolitan Police at either of the marked places on the Chrome Ronin Turf Map.

The adventuring party can leave the area under the same condition as described under Duck, Dodge, Hide! on page 56.



*Steel's last haul made him ludicrously rich. He retired to intentional obscurity in Libreville; although he can afford just about anything he wants, he's just not fond of bells and whistles. He likes his whiskey neat.*

## "ON A STEEL HORSE I RIDE"

Whatever action the player characters took on the Ronin's turf, "honorable" or not, they will eventually reach Steel Cowboy's house. His home is located on the fringes of one of the corporate suburbs in Alarmake District. (When he retired, he felt it would be easiest to get "lost" in suburbia.) He will be reluctant to let the PCs into his house (he'll look them over via a miniature security camera), but Angelique will be able to convince him to do so. A map of Steel's home is provided as an example of (admittedly down-rate) suburban housing. Most suburban homes don't have additional basement modifications that Steel has had installed, though,

## Technomancy

Steel will agree to analyze the cube in his basement laboratory out of technical curiosity, if nothing else.

**The Nice Way:** If approached through his professional pride and/or an offer to split some of the take on its sale, Steel will cooperate more willingly in analyzing the cube.

If any of the PCs have Electronics and Computer skill at a greater level than zero. Steel will invite them to help him (but no more than two helpers—too many cooks spoil the broth, or rather, too many techs are all thumbs). Without help, it will take him six hours to figure out the cube. Cut an hour off of this time for each assistant Steel has. Working with Steel on analyzing the cube will give a character an extra experience point at the end of the adventure which can only be spent on increasing his skill in Electronics, Computer, Engineering, or Theoretical Sciences.

**The Stupid Way:** Steel will also analyze the cube if the PCs threaten him or Angelique, but this will have very bad repercussions for the adventurers. Obviously, he will not ask for assistants if he is working under duress. And as soon as the player characters leave. Steel will notify AmeriCo and Trilon of what the PCs have and where they are. He will then begin digging through the Net into their bank accounts to flush their financial liquidity down the proverbial rest room facilities.

## Hurry Up and Wait

While the adventurers are waiting for Steel to finish (unless they are helping him), they finally have a chance to tend to any companions who were wounded at the Aqualight Club or while travelling through the Chrome Ronin's turf. Steel has a lightweight automed in his basement (he can afford it, and old friends of his have a habit of occasionally showing up hurt on his doorstep). Neither Steel nor Angelique will try to stop anyone who is injured from using it, although they won't help the PCs find it unless they have been at least partially won over.

## A Deadly Device

Once Steel finishes his analysis, he will present his findings to the characters and Angelique. The cube carries a custom-designed insinuating virus hardwired into its circuitry made to infiltrate Trilon Corporation's computer system. Once it penetrates the computer system it will arrange for a huge shipment of fish meal, the major component in processed food eaten by over 90% of Libreville's inhabitants, to be contaminated with a bio-toxic ingredient used in synthetic construction materials which kills in minutes.

The fish meal will be stored in a set of vats which have not yet been decontaminated after being used to store the bio-toxin. The human loss of life will easily exceed 10,000. Trilon will seem to have been criminally negligent. It will probably be brought to court in addition to losing billions of livres in pending deals, stock price drops, and perfectly good stored fish meal which the authorities will order disposed of "just in case."

If the PCs haven't waved guns in his face to get him to do the analysis, Steel will also tell the PCs that the cube is made with distinctively AmeriCo components. Either AmeriCo made it, or someone wants it to look like AmeriCo did when the cube is found.





## Steel Cowboy

Everything in the sidebar about the Steel Cowboy (Henri Morgan) is true. An expert at computer programming and electronics, and no slouch at bio-electronics, Steel can identify and repair almost anything microelectronic using the tools in his personal workshop, if it suits his fancy to do so. Steel's last haul made him ludicrously rich even after he fenced the livres he made through banks in Hong Kong, the Cayman Islands, and Switzerland. He retired to intentional obscurity in Libreville; although he can afford just about anything he wants, he's just not fond of bells and whistles. He likes his whiskey neat.

While he is well off, Steel is always looking to make a little more cash. His past experiences have taught him that his current comfortable state may evaporate overnight if any of his old enemies happen to decide to go on the warpath.

Steel is quite in love with Angelique, but he is not the type to make a public fuss over anyone.

A mentally oriented Elite core world NPC, Steel has a Computer skill of 7, an Electronics skill of 6, and a Streetwise skill of 3. He speaks English, French, and some Japanese.

**NPC Motivation Results:** *Heart Queen:* Steel loves Angelique enough to sacrifice himself (or at least his interests) for her. She's probably the only person who could ever talk him into doing something over what his gut instincts tell him. *Spade 4:* He is not intimidated by threats. If he is threatened (or if Angelique is threatened), Steel will seemingly concede to any obvious demands, then look to turn the situation to his advantage later. He is fond of getting back at anyone who threatens him by subtle means—like totally wiping their credit account.

## YOU HAVEN'T HEARD OF THE STEEL COWBOY?

Roll for the task to see how much each player character knows about Henri Morgan.

**Task:** To recall the Steel Cowboy (unskilled): Routine. Streetwise and Computer. Instant.

**Referee:** Cyberjockeys receive a +6 modifier. Non-cyberjockey PCs from Earth receive a +4; PCs from Tirane receive a +2. (These modifiers are non-cumulative and account for the nature of the renown Steel has earned.) Each level of success encompasses previous levels.

**Failure:** Who?

**Flat Success:** Steel Cowboy is the cyberspace identity of Henri Morgan, one of the most famous cyberjockeys of the time when the Net and running the Net first really came into being.

**1-3 Over:** Steel made and lost millions of livres during his career as a deck jockey; his last haul is legendary and resulted in the corporate takeover of two minor cybernetics development firms by PsiTech-Corp.

**4-7 Over:** He hates being called "Henri" and only barely acknowledges "Morgan." Anyone who doesn't want to rub him the wrong way calls him Steel or S. C.

**8+ Over:** Steel has been known to do nasty things to people who threaten him, but never to their face. Appeals to curiosity and professional pride, or offers of money work better with him.





## ONE FROM COLUMN A OR TWO FROM COLUMN B

After Steel has done his analysis, the PCs now finally know what they have. Four choices seem to present themselves:

**Smash It:** The adventurers can destroy the cube. This will certainly prevent the deaths of thousands; however, it will not get them out of trouble with Trilon or the police, or remove Provolution from their tails.

**Sell It to Provolution:** The PCs could sell the cube to Provolution, which lost it in the first place. Depending on how well they bargain, they could get upwards of Lv50,000 and/or some black clinic operations. Of course, one can never tell what sort of "incentives" Provolution might install in people who had them over a barrel once. The PCs could probably also get Provolution to buy off the police or hide them until things cool down somewhat. This would take care of some of the characters' problems. However, selling the cube to Provolution would definitely result in heavy casualties amongst the population of Libreville—a case for major league negative renown, along with the possible loss of some people near and dear to the PCs. This would not be A Good Thing.

**Sell It to AmeriCo:** AmeriCo would love to get its hands on the cube. Although AmeriCo didn't construct it, it would pay Lv50,000+ to get the chance to analyze the tech (and find out something about Trilon's computer security system). It could also arrange for cybernetic enhancement operations in nice, safe clinics (right?), force Provolution to back off, and/or buy off Libreville's finest. Or perhaps the PCs would like training or a discount on some top-of-the-line equipment? As AmeriCo is close to being an interstellar version of the mob, it can probably get the PCs just about any toys they want, within reason (no spaceships, drive away tank fleets, military aircraft or interface craft). However, the PCs will still have Trilon annoyed with them. And they will probably have some AmeriCo field agents keeping tabs on their activities from now on.

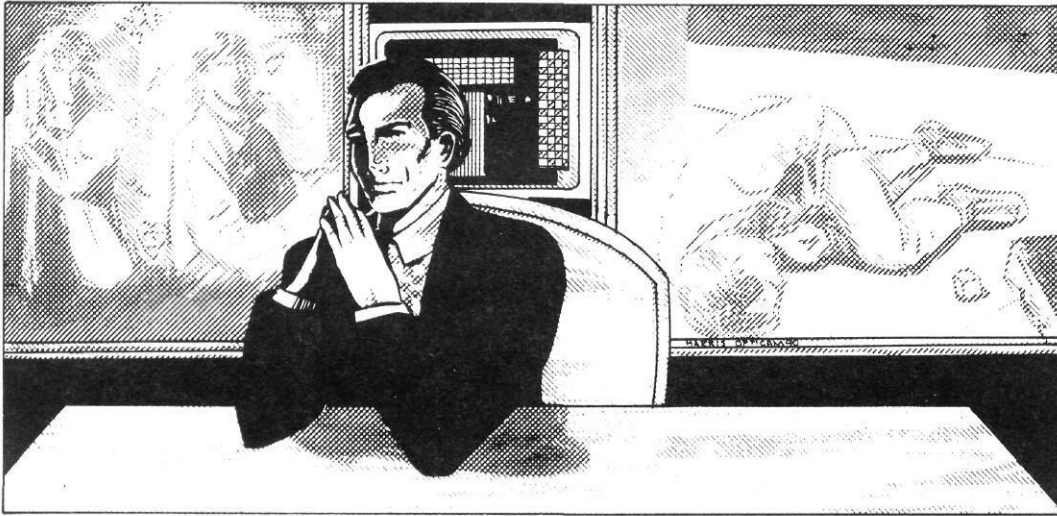
**Sell It to Trilon:** This solution would seem to be the ideal answer to the PCs dilemma. Trilon will pay Lv60,000+ (depending on the skillfulness of the PCs' bargainers). It can also arrange for cybernetic enhancements in the safe clinics the rich and famous utilize, provide most reasonable equipment requests, call off its security and the Libreville Metropolitan Police, and get Provolution off the adventurers' backs by proving that it now has the cube, not the adventurers. Trilon may analyze the cube's technology, but it will definitely not use it, as this would cut its own corporate throat. While Levine Dorcas will be aware of the PCs' actions, he will be unable to take any action against the PCs at any meet they arrange because that would pinpoint him as the leak in Trilon security through which Provolution got the information to construct the cube (see *Every Rose Has Its Thorn* on the next page). Rather, Levine will insist on personally supervising such a meet so that he can find out as much as possible about the PCs' plans, give them what they want, and then get them when they least expect it in return for ruining his plans.

## Levine Dorcas

Levine Dorcas is the security director at Trilon. He is a snake. A nice, amiable man in his forties, Levine is the kind of guy who will smile warmly and shake your hand, then as soon as you've left the room will order your assassination while straightening the creases in the cuffs of his Sebastian's on the Waterfront suit. Levine went to work for Trilon right after leaving the military at age 30, and he has held his current position for 10 years; he plans to continue to hold it—one way or another—until he retires.

Levine is a physically oriented Veteran ground military NPC. In addition, he has Security Systems 4. He speaks French, English, a couple of Bantu dialects, and some Japanese. He carries a Stracher P-11 and one reload. He normally wears a business suit, unless he is on duty and a first-priority alert is activated.

**NPC Motivations:** *Spade Queen:* Levine is utterly ruthless. On the surface he projects an aura of pleasantness, friendship, and company loyalty, but inside he is as cold as they come. *Diamond King:* Levine's first consideration after covering for himself



is always becoming even wealthier than he is. He will emotionlessly do almost anything to become even richer; he truly cares for no one but himself, and nothing except cold, hard credit balances.

### **DANGEROUS LIAISONS**

Once the PCs decide on their course of action, they need to contact the party they wish to sell the cube to and set up a meet (provided they haven't decided to smash the cube). They can make the arrangements before they leave Steel's or after. Since the player characters are in control of the variables for the meet, the referee will have to devise appropriate precautions and actions for whichever party or parties the PCs contact. If the referee desires an explosive finale, the PCs can run into groups from the representative interests involved on the way to the meet (use statistics for the assorted faceless goons in some of the previous sidebars in this chapter). Or if the players have had enough gunplay, the referee can allow the meet to go off tensely but quietly, emphasizing roleplaying and planning over action.

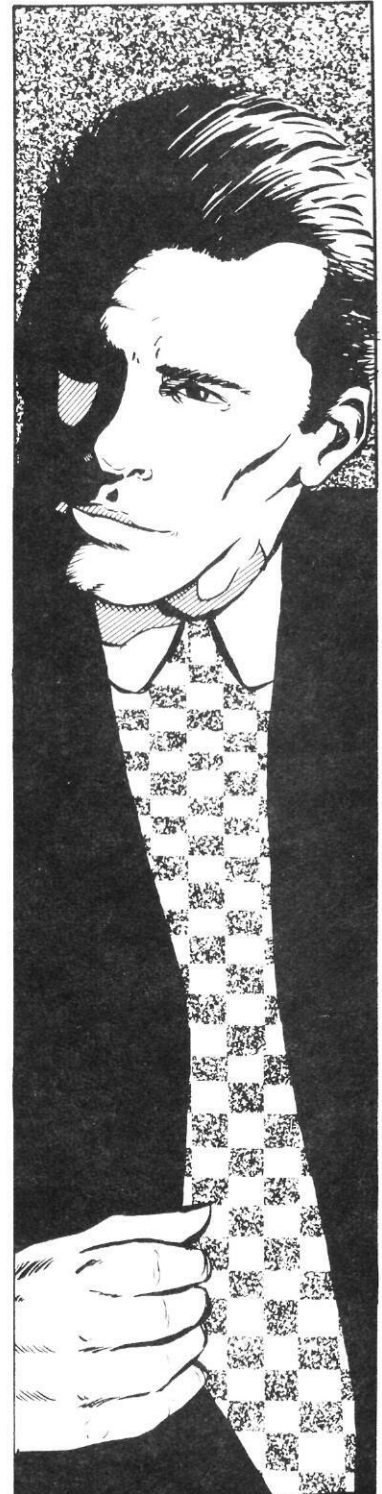
### **EVERY ROSE HAS ITS THORN**

After the big meet finally comes off, the referee should allow the player to think the adventure is in its wrap-up stages. Assign renown points and experience points. A base of five to seven episode experience points—which includes the one point for finishing the adventure—is recommended, plus any bonus points for role playing, drama, or good play. Allow the players to indicate how their characters are going to train, spend money, etc.

Although the players think their characters are now safe, their balloons are about to be popped by a visit from another hit man sent by Levine Dorcas. Provolution didn't construct the cube for purposes of random violence; it had inside help. Levine Dorcas, security director at the Trilon building, has been selling Trilon stock short. He gave Provolution the crucial information about the Trilon mainframe so that it could construct the cube.

With Trilon responsible for a mass poisoning, stock prices would have plummeted, and Dorcas would have cleaned up. Now he must pay the current price for the stock and will lose a lot of money in the deal. Dorcas has arranged for a hit man friend of his to visit the PCs wherever they least expect it. Plan the appearance of the assassin to surprise and disconcert the PCs, but give the adventurers a reasonable chance to foil his homicidal intentions ("bang, you're dead" is no fun). Generate statistics for the assassin based on what sort of NPC would be a challenge to the PCs (for a different kind of assassin, check out Medusa in the Deathwatch Program, pages 42-43).

To truly reach the end of this adventure, or rather to bridge into the next one, the adventurers must now find out who still wants them dead—before *his* fondest dreams become *their* worst nightmares.



*A nice, amiable man... Levine is the kind of guy who will smile warmly and shake your hand, then—order your assassination....*

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# ROTTEN TO THE CORE

## A done deal.

Jean-François told me it was a done deal. When the man who had stood back to back with me at seven different Speed Demon rumbles had a proposal, I listened. And silly me, I believed him. I should have learned Lesson #1 a long time ago: In Libreville, a trusting soul is a dead one.

All my friends and I had to do was to provide a little "expertise" and security while Jean-François arranged a buyer for a piece of hot tech that had fallen into his hands like a ripe apple. Just a matter of a phone call or two and a couple of low-profile meets.

Nothing is ever that simple. Now Jean-François is dead, a victim of forgetting Lesson #2: Never let your guard down, even among friends. And all of us who went up into the Trilon Building to meet Jean-François are now trying our best to get out alive—something which the entirety of Trilon security, both human and electronic, would dearly love not to see happen. This is turning into a Class A, #1 Bad Day. But what should I have expected in a city that's rotten to the core?

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