ANDROID

SHADOW OF THE BEANSTALK

SCIENCE FICTION CAMPAIGN SETTING

GENESYS

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WELCOME TO THE SHADOW OF THE BEANSTALK

In the shadow of Earth's largest and most ambitious feat of engineering and science, among the packed streets of Earth's greatest city, the teeming masses of humanity go about their daily lives. Most do their best to keep their heads down, enjoying the luxuries they have and trying to stay out of trouble.

A few have no choice, because trouble finds them.

These individuals find themselves caught up in events much greater than themselves. Corporate intrigues, government cover-ups, feuds between criminal organizations, battles between street gangs, and the massive unrest of a civilization on the cusp of upheaval can throw these people into chaos and danger. And what happens then?

Many die, caught in the crossfire between things they can't truly understand, let alone stand against. They end up on the nightly news, innocent bystanders reduced to statistics in the eyes of most of New Angeles' half a billion inhabitants. Others fold. Maybe they flee and keep their heads down, or perhaps they throw themselves in with whatever side seems to offer the best chance of survival. They may become the dispossessed, society's castoffs, or the lackeys of powerful interests following orders for the reward of a comfortable life.

However, some people stand up and fight against the forces that upend their boring, predictable lives. Though their chances are slim, they try to ride out the chaos and struggle to save themselves and the people they care about. And maybe, in the process, they become stronger, braver, and generally better than the people they used to be.

The only question is, which person are you?

ROLEPLAYING IN THE WORLD OF THE FUTURE

Hello, and get ready to step into the **Shadow of the Beanstalk**! This book is a supplement for the **Genesys** game line that lets you use our Narrative Dice System in the futuristic and morally gray worlds of the Android setting! In **Shadow of the Beanstalk**, you'll become a resident of the biggest, greatest, and most terrible city on Earth: New Angeles. Your ordinary life is about to be shattered as powerful forces from common criminals to megacorps throw your small corner of the city into chaos. You'll have to rely on your contacts, your tech, and all the luck that you can beg, borrow, and steal just to survive—much less thrive—in this fast-paced, mercenary city.

If you're already familiar with **Genesys** and want to get started, go ahead and skip to page 20 for more information about making a character, or to page 142, where we delve into the city of New Angeles. Otherwise, we're going to spend some time explaining what this book is, how you can use it, and give you a quick overview of what's inside. So, if you're new to roleplaying games (or just new to **Genesys**), read this first.

WHAT IS THIS BOOK, AND HOW DO I USE IT?

Shadow of the Beanstalk is a sourcebook—or expansion—for the **Genesys** Core Rulebook. That means you'll need a copy of the Core Rulebook as well as this book to play a game set in the Android Universe. You'll also need some **Genesys** Roleplaying Dice. You can pick up a pack of them from your local game store or www.fantasyflightgames.com, or by downloading the **Genesys** Dice App onto your PAD (or if you're relying on yesteryear's tech, your Android or iOS device). You should also consider picking up the book **The Worlds of Android**, which presents a detailed description of the entire Android setting.

Shadow of the Beanstalk serves as a backdrop for the stories you'll tell using the **Genesys** game. It is basically a more detailed example of the settings found in **Part II** of the Core Rulebook, so you'll use the basic rules found in **Part I** of the Core Rulebook combined with the rules presented here. The rules in **Shadow of the Beanstalk** are designed to supersede those in the **Genesys** Core Rulebook—so whenever there seem to be contradictions, use the rules in this book.

For example, the **Genesys** Core Rulebook has the rules for character creation, and you'll still follow the seven steps presented there when making a character for this game. However, **Shadow of the Beanstalk** provides different choices when you follow those steps. To expand this example further, during Step 2, you select an archetype or species that you want your character to be. The Core Rulebook provides four human archetypes to choose from. In **Shadow of the Beanstalk**, you get to choose from six archetypes, some of which vary wildly from what we think of as "human."

Basically, **Genesys** is the engine that runs your game. **Shadow of the Beanstalk** fleshes that engine out into a game of regular people struggling against faceless corporations and governments while trying to beat (or at least cheat) the system.

WHAT IS THE ANDROID SETTING?

We go into a lot more detail about New Angeles and the Android setting in the introduction of this book (and even more in Chapter 4). So here let's just cover the basics.

The Android setting is what many would consider "hard" science fiction (or if you prefer, *science fiction* rather than *space opera*). This means that while the setting is very much fictional, we try and take some steps to make sure the setting is at least loosely grounded in scientific realism. This means that you're not going to see any faster-than-light space travel, teleportation devices, or heroic starship captains sipping cups of tea as they fight aggressive alien invaders. However, there's still plenty of room in our setting for the strange, the marvelous, and—sometimes—the disturbing.

The Android setting takes place in the relatively near future. We don't specify the century, so you can decide just how much time should pass before we build a tower to the stars and flying cars take over the skies. Humans still live on Earth, although now we also live on the Moon (commonly

called Luna), Mars, and some space stations and asteroid outposts throughout the Solar System. The world is a lot more crowded, but the timely invention of reliable fusion power means that—for most people—life is pretty comfortable.

Corporations are even more powerful in the Android setting than they are now. Governments still exist as well, and when they work alongside one another, there's often a wary tension between them. Nowhere is that tension more evident than in New Angeles.

New Angeles is the biggest city on Earth, occupying a fair chunk of what used to be Ecuador and housing at least half a billion people. New Angeles is important because it has the single most valuable asset on Earth: the space elevator, commonly referred to as "the Beanstalk." The Beanstalk is the cheapest and easiest way to get to and from space. More importantly, it lets humanity bring the helium-3 mined on the Moon to the Earth's surface quickly and reliably. Since we need helium-3 to run the fusion plants that power Earth's society, the planet depends on the Beanstalk to survive and thrive.

Finally, the Android setting is in the midst of a massive social revolution. About thirty years ago, two major corporations invented the first true androids: robotic humanoids called bioroids and vat-grown human clones. Both are now being made in droves, so androids are flooding the solar system with cheap, reliable, and totally obedient labor. On the one hand, this means people don't have to do some of the worst, most dangerous jobs anymore. On the other hand, a whole lot of people have lost their jobs. And that doesn't even begin to touch on the bigger questions: are we building better tools to make our lives easier? Or are we creating a new population of enslaved beings who, at their core, are basically human?

WHAT WILL I FIND IN THIS BOOK?

We split **Shadow of the Beanstalk** into six chapters. Some of these are going to be more useful for you if you're the Game Master, while others are going to be more useful for you if you're a player. Let's briefly go through each.

In **Chapter 1: Characters**, we provide all of the rules you need to build a player character for your game. This includes any character creation rules that are different from those in the **Genesys** Core Rulebook, as well as new talents and skills that your characters can use. It also includes rules on the various factions in the setting. Your character is probably going to owe favors to some of those factions. But don't worry! Some of those factions may owe your character favors in return.

In **Chapter 2: Weapons and Equipment**, we provide an exhaustive list of the types of items that your character (and their adversaries) may be using. This includes weapons, armor, gear, cybernetics, and genetic modifications. It also includes attachments that let you customize your weapons and armor, and some of the vehicles you may find in New Angeles or on the Moon.

In **Chapter 3: The Net**, we talk about the Network, the successor to the Internet that links the world in a web of data. The Net makes up a major part of most New Angelinos' daily lives, and manipulating it is a really useful skill. This chapter has all the rules for running, which is the only effective way to hack the Network.

In **Chapter 4: New Angeles and the Moon**, we take a long, deep look at New Angeles, the Beanstalk, and Heinlein (humanity's primary lunar colony). This chapter is mostly setting information. It lets you explore the city, and it also gives you an idea of what daily life in New Angeles is really like.

In **Chapter 5: Adversaries**, we provide Game Masters with a large number of non-player character (NPC) profiles with which to populate their games.

Finally, **Chapter 6: The Game Master**, has a number of adventure outlines that Game Masters can take and turn into adventures (or even full-fledged campaigns). In addition, we spend some time with some Android-specific game-running advice. New Angeles is a fascinating and unique setting, so we give you some tips to make that setting really come to life for your players.

CAN I USE THIS TO MAKE MY OWN SCIENCE FICTION SETTING?

Absolutely! We designed **Genesys** to be a toolkit for you to use to make your own worlds, and that remains our goal with this book. **Shadow of the Beanstalk** can be a valuable tool for building your own science fiction setting instead of using ours.

For example, most of the gear we present here is appropriate for any science fiction setting. The same holds true for our archetypes (for example, bioroids can be used to represent any robotic humanoid, while Loonies could represent any humans who grow up in a low-G or zero-G environment). We also take the hacking rules from the **Genesys** Core Rulebook and expand them. If your setting has a prevalent Internet equivalent that you want your players to interact with, you should find those rules really useful.

So, that's an overview of the book and how to use it. We wish you the best of luck trying to survive the streets of New Angeles, and we hope you enjoy your adventures!

WHAT TOMORROW LOOKS LIKE

Wake up, and you're connected to the worlds. For the average citizen of New Angeles, the day begins with a chiming of alerts from their PAD, reminding them to do everything from pick up gifts for their loved ones to bet on their favorite sports team. A quick scan of the NBN Netcasts catches them up on events unfolding across the system, from a Human First rally in Broadcast Square to terrorist attacks on Mars. Already, their friends, family, and coworkers are in their ear, each person connected to their life by a latticework of data stretching across the planet. The ride to work, whether it is on the whispering magnetic tracks of the tube-lev or in a clone-driven hopper, weaves through an urban landscape that stretches from horizon to horizon. Spread out around the base of the monumental Beanstalk, the space elevator that connects Earth to the stars, New Angeles is a world of light, transplas, and gleaming carbosteel.

On the streets, humans of all kinds and modifications rub shoulders as they bustle about their day. Naturals push past g-mods with their too perfect (or startlingly inhuman) physiques and cyborgs with chrome and steel gleaming in the rain. Then there are the true artificials: Bioroids, mechanical facsimiles of humans that follow their masters on errands or weave through the crowd with unnatural grace, their bodies and faces too perfect for biology to emulate. Clones blend in a little better, but conditioning and branding means they too stand out in the crowd, their servile air hiding the potential of their expertly engineered forms.

Arriving at work—a corporate conference room, a shop floor filled with clone workers, or an NAPD precinct—a New Angelino logs into a whole new network that can link tens or even hundreds of thousands of employees. Information flows between workers at a tremendous rate: AIs review quotas and resumes as quickly as those quotas are filled or workers fired, and cops solve crimes that may have occurred half a city away. Meanwhile, corporate employees work in tandem with thousands of their peers to complete projects of dizzying complexity. To live and work in the world of tomorrow is to be bombarded by information, constantly connected to everyone around you, yet at the same time be utterly alone in a sea of data and people.

CORPORATE CONCERNS

The Weyland Consortium, NBN, Jinteki Biotech, Haas-Bioroid, Fahari Trans-Victoria, MegaBuy, Globalsec: these megacorps and others are the gods of the future.

Once, long ago, governments kept corporations in check. Their leaders competed over resources and spread ideologies, seeking to dominate the globe. But with time, the tides of power have shifted. While the world may still be split into nations and states, corporations have the money. The influence they buy can be felt everywhere, and their spiderwebs of subsidiaries control the wealth of the system.

Citizens' lives are made possible by the megacorps, who make and sell anything anyone could need. The Beanstalk—the Weyland Consortium's greatest marvel—constantly reminds those who live in its shadow just who is responsible for these heights of civilization. NBN is even harder to ignore, its constant stream of media tailored specifically to the viewer's preferences by powerful AI and psychographic algorithms. Jinteki and Haas-Bioroid have a stake in countless products vital to a citizen's daily life, the twin benefits of genetic and mechanical engineering respectively providing everything one could want—not to mention the benefits of clones and bioroids that continue to take over jobs that used to belong to the lower and middle classes.

Of course, being ruled over by faceless corporate giants only works as long as a citizen is happy to fit the mold. To some, the corporations' benevolent rule of humanity is nothing less than a commercial dictatorship where people are just one more data point, making and spending their money to make their masters that much richer.

TWO LIVES

The Network overlies the real world like an insubstantial spiderweb, linking everyone to everyone else with strings of glowing data. In the worlds of New Angeles, Luna, and Mars, to exist is to have a presence in the Net, and from birth every aspect of a citizen's life is recorded, cataloged, and stored. A simple scan of a person's PAD or their facial features, DNA, or implants can reveal an entire history of childhood ailments, awkward teenage parties, failed jobs, and petty crimes. Secrets are all the harder to keep in an age so saturated in data, and for most people, meeting someone new means going on a FriendNet mining expedition rather than actually talking to them.

Cultivating and protecting these virtual selves is a big business for the corporations. Many crimes against citizens take place on the Net, often without their knowledge, as their images and information are hacked or stolen. The poor can only keep their presence small, hoping for anonymity to protect them from such attacks, since it is practically impossible to live without connection to the Net. Those with wealth on their side, however, often employ people to maintain, groom, and defend their Network presence and virtual profile.

The average citizen is always connected to the Net, and even when they are not actively looking through catalogs of the latest simwear or contemplating a trip up the Beanstalk to Midway, their Net presence is out gathering shows they might like to watch, ensuring their apartment is kept at their preferred temperature, or looking up old friends who might have come up in conversation during a recent online chat.

CITIES OF LIGHT AND DATA

Once, the surface of the Earth shimmered like a sea of stars, concentrated into the islands of light that were humanity's cities and broken by the few stretches of darkness where oceans, mountains, wilderness, and deserts held sway. Time has seen that sea dwindle to scattered points as urban sprawl retrenches and the rural communities fade away. But those islands of light are now blazing continents of brilliance that herald the dominance of the megalopolis. The majority of Earth's population lives within these megacities, surrounded by the security and comfort provided by advanced technologies and fed upon a steady diet of data.

A merging of cultures and the rise of rapid transport have seen cities transformed. Where once the differences between New Beijing and New York might have been stark, now they both sport the same NBN broadcasts and Weyland corporate logos, and vidscreens scream the same messages out into the dark. Cities too have merged: SanSan, BosWash, and Mumbad are just a few places where urban centers have joined to become a single country-sized megalopolis.

Despite the wealth of these megacities, poverty still endures, from the Rabotgorod slums of New Angeles to the old domes of Heinlein, where even air is bought and sold at a premium. However, for the most part, humanity enjoys a time of plenty like never before. Most governments strive to protect the basic human rights recognized by the Universal Nations. Citizens can travel freely and swiftly around the globe. Overpopulation, limited resources, and an ever-increasing hunger for energy has forced humanity beyond Earth's atmosphere, and now the countries of the Universal Nations only thrive because Luna, Mars, and the outer colonies provide them with a steady supply of helium-3 and other vital resources they need to survive.

This need for resources has transformed the solar system, especially Luna, Earth's closest celestial body. Once a cold, dead rock, it now glitters in the night sky, its cities shining like a latticework of jewels upon the reflective orb. Tiny stars glide to and fro from the top of the Beanstalk, a testament to constant traffic between Earth and the Moon. Luna is another jumping-off point for ships traveling out to Mars, the Belt, and Jupiter's Trojan asteroids. And as the bounty of space returns to Earth, it all comes down the Beanstalk.

ABOVE AND BELOW

New Angeles sprawled out below him, a neon rainbow reflected in the hopper canopy. An unbroken horizon of steel, carbosteel, and transplas reached out to the edges of his vision and beyond. Even now, in the dark and rain-streaked night, he had to admit it is a wonder to behold. Its towering arcologies reaching up among a forest of starscrapers; each cylindrical monolith a city in its own right, and filled with thousands upon thousands of citizens all hungry for whatever the corporations were feeding them.

Raymond Flint leaned back in the hopper's passenger seat, unconsciously pulling a cigarette from the pocket of his overcoat. Before he could fumble for a light, the pilot extended his hand with one. Flint gratefully accepted, glancing over at his companion. Face lit by the green glow of the aircraft console, the Tenma clone's fingers danced over the controls with inhuman speed. His employer could have hired a human pilot, but clones made the best drivers. No room for human error.

Without a word, the Tenma edged the hopper down into the maze of gleaming spires and wet, dark city blocks. Flint knew all too well what lurked down here in the darkness. He caught a final glimpse of the reason New Angeles existed: the Beanstalk. Looming out of the darkness, still kilometers away, a light-studded ribbon unspooled from the megalopolis into the sky. Points of light drifted up and down the Stalk, each a beanpod carrying scores of people or tons of cargo. The Beanstalk connected New Angeles to the stars, and that connection made New Angeles' glittering elite—and Flint's employer—filthy rich.

The hopper dove between two starscrapers, past the flashing signs and raised slidewalks of the plaza level, and through an access port rimmed with yellow hazard lights. For a moment, they flew through a carbosteel tunnel. Then the hopper shot out into a dark canyon of plascrete and carbosteel. Hemmed in by the monolithic foundations of the starscrapers above were mazes of abandoned buildings, crumbling streets, salvaged shipping containers, and scrap metal shanties. The undercity.

The craft touched down, turbines whining and sending up sprays of stale water, and Flint stepped out from under the open, gull-wing doors. He reached back into the hopper and grabbed his MR-72, checking the pistol's charge before sliding it into his shoulder holster. "Time to go see a man about a run," he said with a wry grin.

The Tenma said nothing, its friendly, human eyes fixed on the rain-washed street.

NEW ANGELES AND THE BEANSTALK

New Angeles reaches out to the horizon in all directions, a landscape of starscrapers, arcologies, and winding canyons that cut down between the buildings to streets below. Meanwhile, at its heart, like a needle drawn through the fabric of the urban sprawl, the Beanstalk reaches up into the clouds, offering the promise of riches much like its fabled namesake. It is a true city of the future, one that didn't exist before the space elevator took root, and it has enveloped, obscured, and in many places covered the crumbling buildings of past centuries. New Angeles covers a huge swath of land that was once part of Ecuador, a sprawling cityscape built and paid for by the Weyland Corporation for the sole purpose of bringing its founder's ambitions to life: namely, the construction of a viable space elevator. Decades later, it is among the most prosperous of humanity's urban zones, grown fat upon the wealth provided by Beanstalk royalties.

As in all cities, its citizens are divided by wealth, privilege, and class. Eleven of its districts cluster around the city center (the twelfth being the district of Heinlein on Luna), the wealthiest enjoying easy access to the heart of New Angeles, while the poorest must be content to gaze upon the glass and steel mountains that rise up from the far horizon. The megalopolis's suburbs even spill over into Ecuador's remaining territory like an overflowing cup, and each year they spread even farther.

Perhaps most importantly, New Angeles is the headquarters of most of the great corporations, and the bulk of their wealth resides within the megalopolis. Although Weyland's royalties represent the most tangible rewards from the Beanstalk, all of the megacorps benefit from its presence. This concentration of wealth only encourages the thriving criminal element, from street gangs looking for their next hustle, to orgcrime outfits making millions off complex rackets, to white collar criminals stealing millions with a bit of creative data manipulation.

THE NETWORK

If Earth, Luna, and Mars are parts of the great body that makes up humankind, then the Network is the blood that runs through its veins. A person walking the streets of New Angeles might see only the neon jungle that stretches out around them; a sea of faceless people, heads bent to their tasks; or the gleaming peaks of starscrapers rising over the megalopolis, yet another immaterial world that swirls around them. Every person has their own reflection in the Net, every place appears there as a cluster of information and security protocols, and some landmarks, like the Beanstalk, blaze as brightly in the virtual world as they do in the real one.

In New Angeles, the Network forms an invisible bond between nearly every piece of technology that exists, from the towering arcologies to a person's chip reader or PAD. A person's status and privileges are also constantly monitored in the Network, and buildings, bridges, and tunnels need no one to tell them if a traveler can pass. A skilled runner can manipulate the megalopolis by deceiving these systems, changing their virtual appearance to travel unseen by security programs, fooling countermeasures, and even manipulating their surroundings like some sort of high-tech wizard. In response, areas with the highest security needs have become well defended in both the physical and virtual worlds.

Just like mythical realms of old, the Network is also home to strange and dangerous creatures, ancient secrets, and powerful individuals. Rumors persist of rogue brainmapping experiments creating free-willed AIs, or the ghosts of scrapped bioroids set free to roam the virtual lands of the Network. The deadliest forms of ice—intrusion countermeasures electronics—are "strong" AIs, which have a measure of sentience. These can sometimes slip their bonds and go hunting for prey in the wider Net. There are even tales of far-flung parts of the Network, created by forgotten corporations or scientists that have since died, filled with servers upon servers of forgotten data just waiting to be rediscovered.

ADVENTURES IN NEW ANGELES

New Angeles is mired in criminal plots, corporate interests, and everything in between. For the ordinary citizens of this vast megalopolis, individuality and identity can easily get lost in the tech-enabled chaos. Beneath the city's gleaming canyons and neon skies, humans and androids alike might easily vanish, like motes of dust drifting across a beam of sunlight: there one moment, gone the next. For many, it is all they can do simply to survive from one day to the next. Yet, there are those who make their mark upon the megacities, carving out a piece for themselves by righting the wrongs that the megacorps don't care about or don't even notice.

For some, this might mean taking up an NAPD badge, becoming a private security contractor, or even going into business for themselves as a PI. The city abounds in mysteries and crimes, missing people and lost data, and stolen technologies and criminal enterprises. Conspiratorial threads weave around one another in New Angeles. Pull at one thread, and there is no telling what might unravel—or become ensnared.

Then, there are those motivated not by the chance to solve a mystery or see justice done, but by self-interest and a chance to turn a profit. Crime is a staple of every city

humans have ever built, and New Angeles is no different. From petty street gangs carving out turf to crime lords taking a cut from the offworld black market, criminals of all kinds thrive like weeds in the shadows of the city. Often beneath the very noses of the NAPD, these nefarious individuals wage their wars of profit and murder; unofficial territories and unnamed businesses change hands at the point of a flechette pistol. It is a world within a world, one that hides in plain sight beneath the gleaming perfection of the future.

Technology has also changed the way crime and conflict is resolved. Whether someone wants to earn the favor of a corporate agent, or bring them down, the means now exist for a single individual to wage their own virtual war. Hacking can easily become the focal point for adventure plots in worlds of the Android universe. The exploits of runners, the near-mythical hackers of the future, can have far-reaching consequences, from taking down governments and starting wars to shutting down entire cities.

MORE HUMAN THAN HUMAN

Few things have changed the present like the creation of artificial life and intelligence. Bioroids and clones, two types of androids, have worked their way deep into human societies, where they function as servants, security, and laborers, often doing the jobs too dangerous or undesirable for humans.

Given the androids' pleasing manufactured looks, "perfect" bodies, and programmable (and sometimes amazing) intellects, some citizens can be forgiven for the distrust and suspicion these beings can conjure up. That most people don't give these creations a second glance—certainly no more mind than they give the automatic doors on the tube-lev train or the grav-porters that carry their bags—can make them seem even more sinister in the eyes of those who distrust them.

Bioroids and clones, and questions about their humanity, their programming, and their future, can all be core themes of adventures in New Angeles. Though Jinteki and Haas-Bioroid endlessly assure the public about the safety of their products, rumors persist of clone killers bred for assassination or hacked bioroids committing crimes before their short-term memory is wiped. In addition, there are stories of rogue units rising up against their masters and claiming their freedom from the artificial limits of their birth. It is an old fear among humans that their creations will destroy them, or at very least throw off the chains of the oppressor, bringing the world order crashing down with them.

While notions of a rise of the bioroids or a clone attack might largely be flights of fancy, the crimes committed against androids are all too real. Organizations like the lobbying group and union Humanity Labor and the terrorist/activist group Human First, which see bioroids and clones as new paving stones on humanity's road to destruction, actively oppose the creation of AIs. Fueled by the rhetoric and hate spouted by Human First's leaders, there are those in the organization who actively target and destroy the so-called "golems," the sites of their manufacture, and their living spaces, all to sway humanity from pursuing what they see as an ill-fated path.

THE MORE THINGS CHANGE...

For all the many advances in technology that have seen the full scope of humanity's knowledge and the breadth of the solar system brought to the fingertips of citizens, war and politics still shape much of the world of tomorrow. Rivalry between the corporations has woven itself deep into the fabric of New Angeles. Weyland's Beanstalk rises like a fortress from the heart of the city, while Jinteki labs, Haas-Bioroid factories, and NBN studios and comms satellites spread out around it.

Each of these corporate strongholds exerts its influence on the district around it, and those who travel in their shadow also come under their sway. Where two industries meet, the corps compete for the hearts and minds of the people, fighting over ad space, service contracts, and municipal licenses. For most, this is an invisible war in which no real bullets are fired and no one dies screaming in a gutter, but for others, the conflicts between the corps for New Angeles' soul can be a full-time job, one that is fought as often on the streets as it is in the boardrooms.

Then there are those who bring outside conflicts to New Angeles, whether they are Crimson Dusters from Bradbury, former Lunar insurrectionists who ended up on the wrong side of the Worlds War, or La Brigada Tricolor freedom fighters holding fast to outdated notions of government and land. The Earth and space beyond are filled with failed governments and lost causes, oppressed minorities and wronged families, all looking for a flag to wave and a method to make their point as empathetically as possible.

New Angeles has long been a favored target of these fringe elements and their foot soldiers, as there are no hunting grounds as rich when it comes to the major corporations and their interests. Helping or halting these groups can become a far-reaching adventure in itself, as the would-be terrorists face the monumental might of megacorps that are shielded and supported by the vast maze of humanity inhabiting the megalopolis. The stakes are likewise epic, with the fate of planets, peoples, and even technological marvels like the Beanstalk in play.

LUNA, MARS, AND THE COLONIES

Although humanity began its colonization of the solar system long ago, for decades the offworld colonies have been remote points of passing interest to the average New Angelino. Heroic stories of brave colonists struggling to tame the savage wilds of Mars make for good threedee holodrama material, but most citizens tended to be more worried about the upcoming Yellowjackets game or their next job performance review. Settling the solar system and creating civilizations on other worlds always seemed like something that would happen in the future.

And that was because the other worlds remained well out of reach for most of Earth's inhabitants. Luna only attracted a smattering of scientists, researchers, and corporate prospectors looking for valuable resources to exploit; few others could imagine wanting to live on a dead, airless world. The same held true for the asteroid bases on Earth's Lagrange points and in the Belt, and most of the space stations in Earth orbit.

Only Mars—a world with a potentially terraformable climate—held the promise of being a true frontier for those dissatisfied with life on Earth. Those early pioneers traveled to the Red Planet on months-long voyages in primitive spacecraft, knowing that whatever they found at their destination, they would have to deal with it using the tools and resources they'd brought with them. Such risks attracted the reckless, the dreamers, and the refugees for whom Earth held nothing but danger and loss. Their way was paid for by corporations who hoped to eventually profit from the exploitation of a new world. They advertised and promoted the adventure and excitement of taming a new frontier, all while contributing to the perception of Mars as some far-off place of fictional story that ill-reflected the realities of life in the colonies.

And most people would have kept thinking of Mars as something seen in advertisements and news bulletins, if it wasn't for the dreams of Jack Weyland.

THE STARS COME HOME

With the construction of the Beanstalk and the unlocking of He-3 fusion power, the Moon went from a backwater space rock to humanity's greatest economic boomtown. Corporations built their first company domes before the space elevator was even finished; once the first beanpods rose to the stars, the flow of goods and people spaceward increased exponentially.

Cities grew across Luna's surface, fed by the credits that came with Earth's insatiable demand for He-3. With that money came fierce rivalries between the various mining concerns and corporations, and the governments that backed them. The miners became caught in the middle of vicious sabotage attempts and corporate warfare that increasingly resembled a real war. However, most New Angelinos dismissed the unrest on Luna as someone else's problem and kept benefiting from the wealth that flowed down the Beanstalk and into their city—right up to the point where an open revolt on Luna made it their problem.

The Lunar Insurrection would become the first stages of the much greater Worlds War that would engulf the Moon, Mars, and Earth orbit. At its onset, New Angeles found itself on the front lines of the fight.

The Beanstalk was the single most strategically valuable asset in the war, which also made it the single greatest target for everyone who didn't control it.

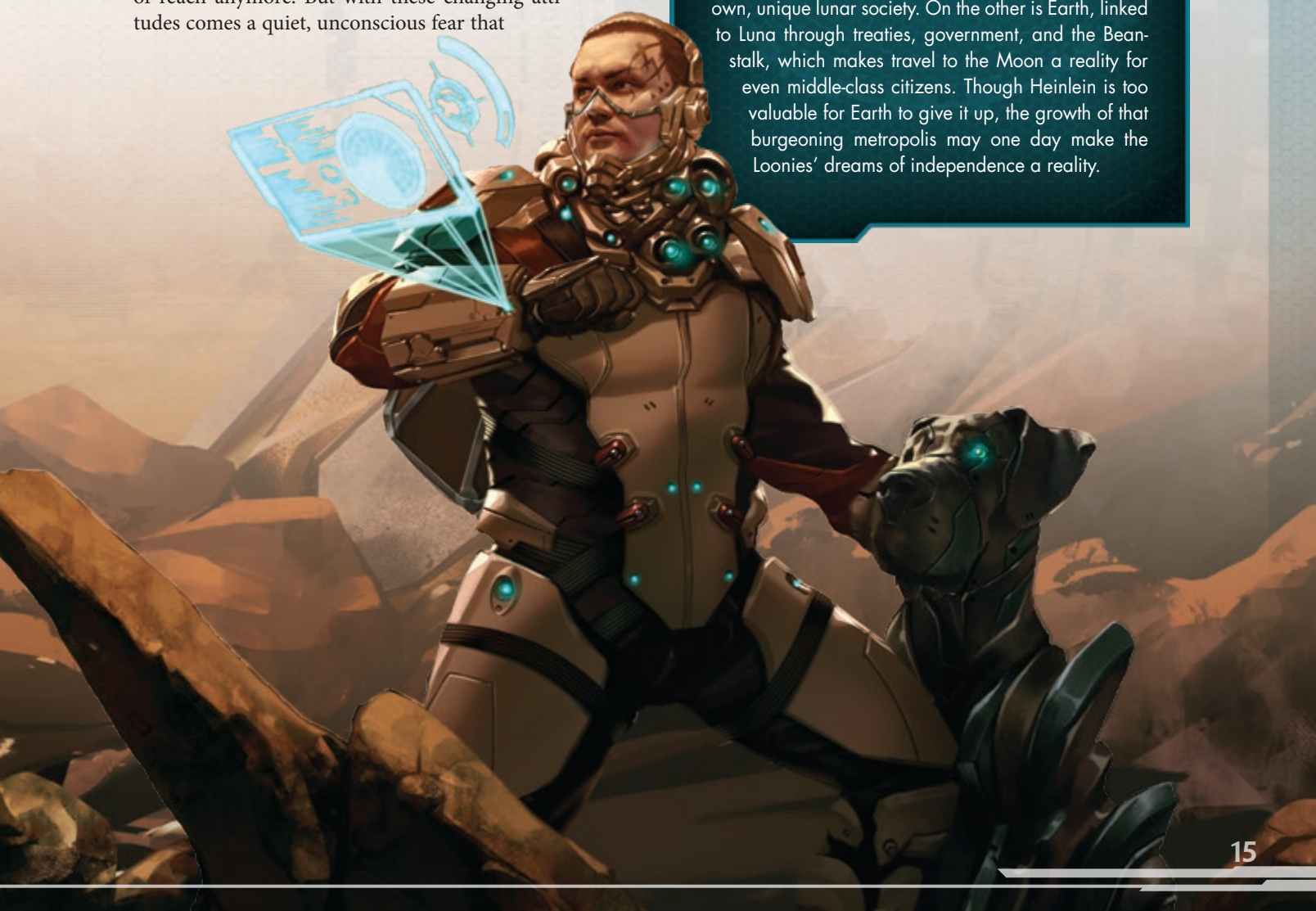
Locals watched as United States soldiers and corporate mercenaries boarded beanpods to retake the Moon (and later launch the invasion of Mars). They sent their best and brightest to join the fight and wage the first war among the stars. And then came the terrifying day when the Beanstalk was attacked by the combined fleets of Martian and Lunar rebels. Many New Angelinos still remember the alarms going off throughout the city, the evacuations of the Root and surrounding neighborhoods in Chakana, and the Space Elevator Authority actually suspending all traffic and shutting down operations. Some even claim to have seen the distant flashes in the sky as the military defended the Beanstalk from capture or destruction. The whole city held its breath, fearing that the Beanstalk might come crashing down at any moment—and then it cheered with the sight of rebel ships crashing off the Ecuadoran coast in fiery, forced reentries and the news that the battle had been won.

Now, the stars don't seem quite so distant for most New Angelinos. Travel rates to Heinlein on Luna are decreasing all the time, and many citizens think of Loonies as their oddball, unruly neighbors. Even Mars doesn't seem so out of reach anymore. But with these changing attitudes comes a quiet, unconscious fear that most do their best to ignore. So far, New Angeles is Earth's only gateway to the stars, and clearly there are some who would prefer that gate be shut.

LUNA TODAY

These days, He-3 mining is still Luna's most profitable industry, and it's likely to stay that way for the foreseeable future. However, with the advent of clone labor, most so-called "Loonies" no longer work for Melange Mining or one of its competitors. Instead, Luna has grown into its own burgeoning society. While Heinlein, the largest settlement on Luna, is technically a district of New Angeles, most Lunar citizens, both in Heinlein and elsewhere, assert their independence fiercely. They see themselves as a new, emergent culture that's just as defined by the war it lost as it is by the low-G environment that causes Loonies to be taller, thinner, and paler than their Earth-side cousins.

These days, Luna is a society caught between two equal forces. On the one side is the dream of many Loonies for independence and the creation of their own, unique lunar society. On the other is Earth, linked to Luna through treaties, government, and the Beanstalk, which makes travel to the Moon a reality for even middle-class citizens. Though Heinlein is too valuable for Earth to give it up, the growth of that burgeoning metropolis may one day make the Loonies' dreams of independence a reality.



TECHNOLOGIES THAT CHANGED THE WORLD

OUR WORLD AND YOU INSTRUCTIONAL TEXTS PRODUCED IN COOPERATION WITH HISTORIFACT, AN NBN SUBSIDIARY

There once was an old saying, "the sky's the limit." Thankfully, that's no longer true. We now live in worlds without limits, worlds where there are only challenges, not barriers. We've seen such great advances in the last generation, ones that no one would have believed possible not too many years ago. Just think about it…

We once worried about running out of energy—no more! With He-3 fusion, we have more and cheaper energy than anyone could have dreamed of back when people burned smelly hydrocarbs for fuel and polluted our skies and oceans.

We once dreaded the harsh labor of each day—no more! Now, there are plenty of helpers eager to aid us in any task imaginable, freeing us from dangerous and monotonous occupations so we can live better, safer lives. With androids, we don't need to worry about work.

We once worried that our Earth was splitting apart and that nothing would bring us back into one unified whole—no more! Now that wars are a thing of the past, <<...ask Mars about war. I'll wait.>> people everywhere are moving together as one with the Net. Questions are just a ping away from answers: answers that everyone can share. With the Net and corps to guide things along, life is improving all the time.

> "ALL YOU HAVE TO DO IS ASK, AND THE NETWORK HAS THE ANSWERS."

It's all thanks to technology that we have the life we enjoy now. Technology, and those who courageously created, innovated, and used it to propel us into the future. A future without limits.

For almost our entire existence, we were stuck at the bottom of a well with no way to climb out. We looked up, and saw the sky as remote and unreachable. Now we have a rope, one seventy-two thousand kilometers long, <<just long enough to hang ourselves with>> and that well isn't a problem anymore. And those limits? It's awfully hard to see any when you're that far above the ground.

HOW OUR WORLD WAS MADE

So how did we get here? It took a whole lot of people working on many different technologies, ones that all came together at just the right time. With each new technology, our lives have improved even more.

THE BEANSTALK

There was the Beanstalk, of course, and Jack Weyland. Many point at the Beanstalk as the launching point for the life we have now. Though the concept had been around for a long time, all the dream of a practical space elevator needed was one person's strength of vision to make it a reality. It took overcoming many challenges to make it happen, such as perfecting the carbon buckyweave material—which needs enormously high tensile strength—that composes the tether. The Earth-side anchor in Ecuador grew during construction into what many call Earth's most important city, the gigantic megalopolis known as New Angeles.

It took long years of exhaustive effort, but it finally went operational. Jack Weyland, though, didn't last much longer as the head of his own company, and he resigned soon after to explore other projects. He will always be remembered as one of the great visionaries of history, no matter what else he does in coming years, just for his role in the first space elevator.

With the Beanstalk, we now have fast, reliable, and cheap access into space. We turned our outposts on the Moon into shining cities, built a thriving colony on Mars, and have even sent people to live on and mine Ceres, Vesta, Pallas, and Hygeia in the Belt. There are still alternative systems for getting into orbit and beyond, but the vast bulk of what gets into space goes through the Beanstalk. With the Beanstalk, we've essentially achieved freedom from gravity, the cruel force that has kept us pinned on the ground until now.

FUSION POWER

As magnificent an achievement as the Beanstalk was, it had its share of problems early on. Not with the structure itself, but with its purpose. There were plenty of reasons to get things into space, but most didn't make anyone any money. The Beanstalk needed a more compelling reason, one that was very profitable, to really justify itself. <<After all, who has time for the betterment of humanity when there's a profit to be made?>>

It turns out that the answer was fusion power. We'd been working on fusion power for quite a while before the Beanstalk got started. However, to make fusion reactors that wouldn't irradiate everything around them, we needed an isotope called helium-3. The problem? There's no helium-3

on Earth. But it turns out there's quite a lot on the Moon. With practical helium-3 fusion, Luna suddenly had a very valuable resource in its gray surface dust. Mining on Earth's natural satellite took off, and the scattered scientific outposts grew to mining boomtowns nearly overnight. And all that incredibly valuable He-3 flowed right back down the Beanstalk and into the Earth's hungry fusion plants.

With clean and limitless energy, suddenly the improbable seemed a lot more possible. Fusion power provides the energy for everything from Earth's cities to probes at the edges of our solar system. It allows us to have thriving colonies on Luna and Mars and to sustain settlements on asteroids, while also allowing life on Earth to grow everywhere without the pollution of the past. We may not have been able to reverse the devastation wrought by climate change in the twenty-first century, but clean, cheap fusion power has allowed us to stabilize our home. There doesn't seem to be any worry about running out of He-3 fuel in the lunar surface anytime soon, and mining operations on Luna have become efficient and routine since Earth governments and corps decisively settled the disruptive labor disputes of fifteen years ago. With practical fusion now in our hands, better and more plentiful consumer goods reach everyone. We can now see a freedom from want on the horizon, where humanity finally has the power to achieve true greatness.

"WITH CLEAN AND LIMITLESS ENERGY, SUDDENLY THE IMPOSSIBLE SEEMS A LOT MORE POSSIBLE."

ANDROIDS

We've created not one, but two forms of artificial humanoids who now provide our worlds with helpful artificial labor and support. Both have become integral to our society, and it's hard to imagine life without them. That holds doubly true off Earth, where androids work harder and faster than any regular person, while using up a fraction of our precious resources.

Bioroids came along first, about thirty years ago, and these mechanical helpers quickly took the markets by storm. A variety of technologies go into making them, but the most vital are brainmapping and braintaping. The former was originally developed for detecting and analyzing brain disorders, while the latter allowed for creating close (though not perfect) copies, called braintapes, of a human brain. These neural-net (analogue) memories mimic human memory using fractal integration and quantum-derived fuzzy logic. All that means, basically, is that bioroids can grow and learn. Bioroids are the perfect workers, intelligent and obedient, and while their physical strength and disposability means we mostly use them to build our cities, staff our offices, and rescue human beings in danger, there's no telling what they could eventually do for us.

Clones, on the other hand, are fully flesh and blood. These came along after the bioroids had established the market for artificial labor, but they soon carved out a large share of it for themselves. They are made from (mostly) human DNA, and Jinteki accelerates their growth so they can compete with the assembly-line efficiency of Haas-Bioroid. While completely organic, clones are also classified as machines and accordingly have no rights. Like bioroids, clones can be grown to perform just about any task we need. Right now, they mine our He-3, pilot our vehicles, and teach our kids. Eventually, as with bioroids, we could have them do nearly anything. <<If they're so advanced, are they really "ours" to order around?>> Why, one of them (along with a couple of bioroids) even serves as a detective right here in New Angeles!

THE NETWORK

Today's Network was built to replace the insecure and unreliable connections of past technology, and its new protocols were developed to ensure that a disaster on the same scale as the Blackout would never happen again.

Some countries were too stubborn at first to embrace the future, but as more and more money became tied to using the Network, you either got with the program or got left behind. The Network now connects everything from our satellites and hoppers to our vacu-bots and refrigerators, even on our offworld colonies, and it gets better all the time. There are, sadly, some artists, criminals, and activists <<Hey, that's me!>> who continually attack the Net to steal our data and disrupt our lives. Fortunately, NetSec is there to protect us from these "runners," and its agents have adopted some of the same brain-machine interfaces, or BMIs, that these criminals use to operate in the Net.

It's breathtaking just how big the Network is, though this is all in a virtual sense. Every bit of data, every image, every video—you can find them in the Network. Even information you didn't know existed is somewhere in the Network. With it, we get freedom from questions, for all you have to do is ask, and the Network has the answers.

PADS

And, of course, what would the Network be without your personal access device? There are lots of technologies that make modern life possible, but PADs make modern life livable.

PADs come in many forms, from old-school screens to holoprojecting jewelry, and they are essential to get through the day. They allow you to communicate, work, check the latest news, follow your fave megastars' daily lives, and participate in all the biggest media events. You can buy what you want, get the information you need, and share it all with your friends with ease. PADs gather so much information on their users that their built-in AIs can anticipate their users' desires, presenting prompts for the latest downloads, transportation options, medical advice, upcoming event information, and more. PADs even let you be a citizen reporter, transmitting news so everyone knows what's happening the moment it happens. There is little PADs can't do to help you manage your life, given all the information they contain about you and everyone you know.

It's more than just helping you live better, though. Your PAD has all the latest entertainment for you as well as all the news you need, with new offerings all the time based on your evolving profile. Any time of day, any place you happen to be, one simple glance at your PAD, and it's all right there for you. Your PAD gives you freedom from solitude and boredom all in one handy device. Try going a day without one and see how long you last! <<Finally, something we can agree on.>>

WHAT'S NEXT?

With everything so great now, you might think things can't get any better. However, you'd be wrong!

Remember the Beanstalk? How about another one? Or two? Plans for a second and third space elevator are near completion, one on an island in Lake Victoria and the other south of Singapore. Now that the technology has been proven to work, even more are sure to appear.

How about Luna and Mars? Heinlein is only going to get bigger as our He-3 mines expand. And in a few hundred years, you may be able to walk on the surface of Mars without a mask. Another Earth, thanks to terraforming.

And the Network. This could be the most fascinating frontier of them all. Already, people are talking about downloading their minds into a pure digital form, transferring their consciousness to the Net. It could be that the next decade sees the first people who don't exist in a physical sense at all…

/:... THE OTHER SIDE OF #PROGRE$S

So, now that you've had the government-approved grade-school lesson plan for our bright and sunny future, let me offer a modest rebuke. No reason why you shouldn't hear both sides of the story, right?

Technology certainly has grown by leaps and bounds in the past century, after we crawled our way out of the climate-induced malaise of the first part of this millennium. But alongside gems like He-3 fusion, the Net, and androids are some technologies you don't see people bragging about. How about the rising number of people hooked on new, designer-modded stim and other drugs? The rumors about the so-called "Chronos Protocol," an R&D program to see if we can use braintapes to modify or wipe a person's memories? The stories about inconveniently influential figures being quietly eliminated and replaced with loyal clones? Or how when you hook up to a BMI and your mind goes wandering in the Net, it doesn't always come back?

If you're going to remember one thing, keep this in mind: All of this amazing new technology is new. We're dealing with inventions that have only been perfected within the past few decades. In many cases, the pioneers who brought us the marvels we take for granted are still alive. Humanity is rushing along the edge of a precipice of progress. Ahead of us is a beautiful future without scarcity, disease, or even death. Below us is an abyss of oligarchical anarchy, exploitation, and dehumanization that'll make the twenty-first century look like an episode of Sunshine Junction.

So we'd better not trip.

[CHAPTER 1]
CHARACTER CREATION

Most of the inhabitants of New Angeles are just regular people living regular, boring lives. They wake up, go to work, order takeout from their favorite fast-food joint on their way home, then spend the evening with their families and friends, or logged into the Network enjoying an entire solar system's worth of entertainment. Then they go to bed—only to wake up the next morning and do it all again.

Yesterday, that could have described you. Tomorrow, you may wish it still did.

In **Shadow of the Beanstalk**, you play a (nearly) normal character living out their life in New Angeles. As a citizen of the largest and most metropolitan megalopolis on three worlds, you probably live somewhere between the ultrawealthy in their kilometer-high arcologies and the homeless, penniless *disenfrancistos* who live in the city's seedy underbelly. You may have been an average person struggling to get by, a wealthy ristie fallen on hard times and looking for a big score, a roughneck working to build civilization in space, or a hard-nosed private investigator who makes their living dealing with the worst society has to offer. You may even be a criminal trying to cheat the system, or a veteran working hard to forget the war you fought in just a few years ago.

However, while you've been working to get by in your daily life, forces beyond your control or awareness make moves that threaten everything you know and care about. Everyone has an agenda in the biggest city in the worlds, and being too small to register to most of the powerful movers and shakers makes it that much easier for them to crush you if you get in their way.

Maybe your block got slated for demolition to make room for a new arcology. Perhaps some unethical middle manager decided to turn your low-income clinic into a testing ground for a new weaponized contagion. A couple of local gangs could have gone to war in your neighborhood, and

now you're caught in the crossfire. Or maybe an escaped android came banging on your condo-hab's door in the middle of the night looking for safety, forcing you to take sides in the ongoing argument over what qualifies a being as "human."

Whatever the situation, your simple life has suddenly become a lot more exciting—and dangerous! Forget trying to defeat your foes—when your "enemy" might be a city-wide criminal enterprise, megacorporation, or even the government, beating your opponent may not be an option. Instead, you're going to have to use everything you know (and learn a lot of new tricks) to survive, and to ensure your friends and family survive as well. If you're really lucky, you may even be able to come out of the situation better off than you started. In the complex and often dangerous world of the future, that counts as a win.

So, in this game, you're going to be making a slightly above-average citizen of the greatest megalopolis on Earth. Once you get caught up in events outside your control, you're going to have to become a skilled and dangerous opponent of the forces that could destroy you. Success means your survival, and the survival of people you care about. If you're lucky, you could defeat your immediate adversaries, and even get the organizations behind them to back down and leave you alone. And if you're really lucky, you might get rich while you do it.

If that sounds like fun, read on! Next, we're going to tell you how to build your character.

CREATING YOUR CHARACTER

This book is a supplement for the **Genesys** Core Rulebook that lets you play roleplaying games set in the Android universe. More specifically, it lets you play characters living in the metaphorical and literal shadow of the ultimate monument to humanity's progress and achievement: the Beanstalk.

In this chapter, we provide all of the rules and information that, combined with the character creation rules that start on page 32 of the **Genesys** Core Rulebook, you'll need to build a character for this game. To build a character, you'll follow the steps outlined here (which mirror the steps found in the **Genesys** Core Rulebook), with the addition of choosing whether or not your character owes or is owed any favors. This takes place during **Step 6: Determine Motivation and Favors**.

STEPS FOR CREATING CHARACTERS

Shadow of the Beanstalk uses the **Genesys** core system, and characters can be created using the **Genesys** Core Rulebook. Presented here is an addition to the **Genesys** rules of character generation with a mind toward crafting characters who live in the shadow of the New Angeles Space Elevator.

The first thing to do when creating a character is to come up with a character concept. This is the idea that will form the foundation of your character and inform all the choices that follow. Having a passing understanding of the world of tomorrow can be useful at this stage, but it is not essential. Character creation can be broken down into seven steps, each one rounding out a different aspect of your character.

These seven steps are the same steps as in the **Genesys** Core Rulebook. Occasionally, these steps are augmented by the material in **Shadow of the Beanstalk** (for example, **Step 2** has new character archetypes to choose from, and **Step 6** has your character choose a favor as well as motivations).

STEP 1: DETERMINE BACKGROUND

So, where does your character come from? Even in New Angeles, everyone comes from somewhere, whether they are a born-and-bred resident, a new hire moved up to Corp HQ, or even fresh out of the vat. Quite often, choosing a background helps define the kind of character you want to play: do you fancy delving into the digital wilderness of the Network, fighting as a heavily augmented cybernetic enforcer, or maybe solving crimes as a hardened detective? These choices will determine whether your character is a high-tech product of the future, a low-born criminal crawling through the shadows cast by the corporations, or something in between: just another soul in the megalopolis caught between the rich and the poor, simply trying to make their way.

Backgrounds can also be as complex or simple as you like—some players like to write extensive histories for their characters that chart their lives thus far, while others might only know they want to have a really cool cybernetic hand. In either case, the background forms the foundation upon which your character is built and will guide you through the steps that follow.

More information on these, as well as a selection of sample backgrounds, can be found on page 22.

STEP 2: SELECT A CHARACTER ARCHETYPE

Once you have an idea of your character's background, the next step is deciding their archetype. In **Shadow of the Beanstalk**, archetypes cover the diverse range of humanity, from naturals (good old-fashioned human beings), to the g-mods and cyborgs who have embraced the concepts of transhumanism, to the Loonies, who are some of the first generations of humans born offworld. Then there are true artificials: clones and bioroids. They are creations of humanity, and their status as sentient creatures remains widely disputed.

The choices of archetypes presented in **Shadow of the Beanstalk** replace the choices found in the **Genesys** Core Rulebook. The **Shadow of the Beanstalk** choices and information about them can be found on page 24.

STEP 3: CHOOSE A CAREER

With a background concept and archetype still in mind, the next step is to choose a career. There are a number of careers available to characters in **Shadow of the Beanstalk**, and each one determines the skills a character with that career begins play with. Their career and skills are a character's key to their role in the group as well as to how they interact with the world through the rule system. However, careers are far from restrictive; within each, there is lots of room to tailor your character to your own background concept. For instance, the Investigator career might encompass an NAPD detective, a corporate spook, a private eye, a nosy vid reporter, or anything else that benefits from the analytical and detection skills offered by the Investigator career.

DON'T I KNOW YOU FROM SOMEWHERE?

It can be useful if you're the GM for your group's characters to have existing relationships before play begins. This gives them a reason to get together—as well as potentially shared goals and allegiances—when they might otherwise be inclined to blow each others' heads off. These connections do not need to be deep or binding, but can be as simple as working for the same arm of the NAPD, having the shared patronage of a corporation, or even living on the same floor of an arcology. While the GM can firm these ties up after the characters are more fully formed, it is worth it for the GM to put this idea in the minds of the players at the start so that they can work it into their backstories.

The choices of careers presented in **Shadow of the Beanstalk** replace the choices found in the **Genesys** Core Rulebook. Full information on careers and the skills they provide can be found on page 31.

STEP 4: INVEST EXPERIENCE POINTS

With the basic building blocks of your character in place, the next step is to invest experience points. Your character's archetype determines how many experience points they have to spend. This step allows you to round out your character by increasing characteristics and skills and even picking up a few talents before you start play.

Information on how to spend starting experience points can be found in page 44 of the **Genesys** Core Rulebook. New skills and talents that you can spend these experience points on can be found starting on page 42.

STEP 5: DETERMINE DERIVED ATTRIBUTES

Now that your final character statistics are in place, determined by your character's archetype and career, you can work out their derived attributes. These are wound threshold, strain threshold, defense, and soak value.

Information on how to determine these derived attributes and on how they function in the game can be found on page 45 of the **Genesys** Core Rulebook.

STEP 6: DETERMINE MOTIVATION AND FAVORS

Perhaps the most important aspect of your character is their Motivation. This is going to help you figure out how your character responds to any given situation, how they deal with dangers and threats, and what drives them to succeed.

How Motivations work and lists of Motivations to choose from can be found on page 46 of the **Genesys** Core Rulebook.

In addition to having Motivations, your character has the chance to owe some favors. Owing favors means that your character will be beholden to some of the factions (or individuals within those factions) that are the movers and shakers in New Angeles. Your character may be called on to perform tasks, pay money, or generally do things that may be inconvenient, awkward, distasteful, or even dangerous to repay the favor. This may seem like a steep price, but it's the kind of obligation that can make for really memorable games. Plus, if your character owes a favor, it means they got something for it earlier on in their career. In game terms, this means your character gets to start play with additional experience points or gear.

You and your GM should work together to determine to what faction (and whom within that faction) your character owes a favor. Your GM has the final say, but if you can come up with something that fits into your character's backstory and doesn't interfere with their campaign plans, they should approve it.

More on favors and the favor economy can be found on pages 53 and 80. More on factions can be found on page 53.

STEP 7: CHOOSE GEAR, APPEARANCE, AND PERSONALITY

Lastly, you should round out your character by choosing their gear and determining their appearance and personality.

Your character's appearance and personality are completely up to you (although we do have some helpful guidelines on page 51 of the **Genesys** Core Rulebook), and they determine how the rest of the group and the worlds see them. Is the character obsessed with the latest fashions, are they clad in garish clothes and accessories, or are they the practical type who believes the only reason to wear a long coat is to conceal a shotgun? Likewise, are they talkative or wisecracking, a strong silent type, or prone to bad jokes in the face of adversity? All these things can help to bring a character to life, and they make a good character all the more memorable.

We have updated rules for starting gear that replace the rules found in the Core Rulebook. When building a character, you start with 1,000 credits to spend on personal gear (see **Chapter 2: Weapons and Equipment** for more on the types of gear your character can have).

Your character cannot use these credits to purchase any items that are restricted (have an "(R)" next to the price). Your character may keep any credits you don't spend. In addition, after you've finished purchasing starting gear, roll 1d100 (see page 11 in the **Genesys** Core Rulebook). Add the value of the dice roll to any remaining starting funds. This represents "pocket money" that your character has on hand.

With these seven steps complete, your character is ready to step into the shadow of the Beanstalk and see what the neon wilderness of New Angeles has in store for them…

STEP 1: DETERMINE BACKGROUND

Humanity has evolved, caught up in a rush to the stars, augmented by technologies that blur the line between human and machine, and provided for by benevolent gods in the form of the megacorporations. And yet, humans remain largely unchanged since the twenty-first century, and greed, stupidity, and hatred are just as common now as they were then. Criminals might use the Net to rob their targets, but the crime is no different than if they'd picked a pocket in the street. The police forces that hunt them down can call upon a global network of cameras and real-time data updates, but still relies on the wits of its detectives to put the pieces together. Likewise, ordinary citizens might dream of becoming sensie stars or of traveling to Luna to find themselves, but they are still bundles of hopes and ambitions much like they were centuries ago.

When creating the background for a character in **Shadow of the Beanstalk**, it can help to choose a profession, person, or personality type from our own era as a starting point. You can then merge your character into the Android setting by adding the touch of advanced technologies or working them into the changed social and political structures of the future. To help generate ideas for your character's background, presented below are some of the core aspects of the setting, along with the kinds of characters that might gravitate toward those aspects.

MODERN NEW ANGELINO

Advanced technologies, from the brainmapping that makes bioroids possible to the genetic manipulation that is at the foundation of cloning, are part of many professions and people in New Angeles. Your character may have been touched by one of these technologies or even be the product of them.

If you want your character's background to have something to do with artificial life, they might be a doctor or scientist who has mastered advances in that area and has an extensive understanding of bioroids, clones, or the kinds of genetic modifications to humans that have become commonplace. Alternatively, their life might have been affected by the rise of artificial life—maybe clones took their parents' jobs, condemning their family to poverty, or perhaps a bioroid saved their life during the New Angeles tsunami, forever changing their perspective on what it means to be human. Maybe they even like androids better than humans, because at least they follow rules. You might instead want to play a clone, bioroid, g-mod, or cyborg, having your character's very existence governed by state-of-the-art technologies.

Characters with a background based around high technology are also likely to be in debt to or to work for one of the megacorps or their subsidiaries. The best g-modding and cyberware are not cheap, and both clones and bioroids are the manufactured property of their respective megacorps. As a result, choosing a background related to high tech usually means choosing to be intertwined with the corporate hierarchies that govern the worlds of tomorrow—and whether your character works for or against their domination, they are definitely part of the game.

DISENFRANCISTO

Disenfrancistos are almost the exact opposite of modern New Angelinos. If your character treads this path, then they have rejected the advances of society and the countless machines that make it possible. Though they might use these devices for their own ends, they are definitely not entrenched in the system.

Characters with *disenfrancisto* backgrounds exist in the shadows and the cracks between areas of societal control, some right under the noses of corporate giants (perhaps by working as off-the-books contractors) or government organizations (by selling illicit data and services to otherwise "reputable" people in the halls of power). Criminals make up the bulk of those with this kind of lifestyle: your character could be anything from a downtown gang boss or data pusher to a corporate black-ops agent or street ronin. They could be a member of an active gang like the Manta Kings or New City Jacks, or maybe they work for an orgcrime syndicate like the Katala Brothers on Luna or the Tri-Maf. Alternatively, your character might actively be trying to escape their old life as a criminal. If the NBN sensie stories are to be believed, there are countless hopper thieves with a heart of gold and reformed assassins seeking only redemption.

Not all *disenfrancistos* are criminals, however. There are plenty of people who prefer to live off the grid—or who don't have a choice. In New Angeles, these people are known as "blanks" and "zeros." Whether by birth, by accident, or at great expense, they are no longer part of the system. The reasons for this are varied: some just fall between the cracks, while poverty makes the choice for others. Usually, however, a person becomes a *disenfrancisto* deliberately, either due to distrust of the corporate agenda or because they are actively fleeing something. Such characters can include those blacklisted by corporations, survivalists, rogue clones, escaped bioroids, and even radical operatives and revolutionaries.

VETERAN OF THE WORLDS WAR

The Worlds War was one of the most defining historical points in the history of New Angeles, and since hostilities ended just over a decade ago, it can be worth considering how the War affected your character. While most New Angelinos never directly participated in the fighting, there are plenty of war vets living in the city. Some still serve, some have transitioned to law enforcement or security, and many have moved on with their lives. Your character could be one of these veterans, or be involved with them.

Of course, most Loonies had a much more up close and personal experience with the War. If you want to play a Loonie (one of the archetypes available in Step 2) you should think about whether your character was involved in the fighting, how they feel about the cause of Lunar independence, and whether they still have strong feelings about the War today.

TRYING TO GET BY IN THE (REALLY) BIG CITY

Even in the future, there are cops who patrol and protect the neighborhoods where they grew up, community leaders who do their best to keep kids off the street, and easygoing bodega owners who have a friendly quip for every customer who comes in their store. There are also people who resemble twenty-first-century characters, but with a twist. Construction workers may still be burly, rough-and-tumble individuals who spend their days building and their nights drinking at dive bars. However, what they're building may be a new space station, and that dive bar may be located at the far end of a played-out mining tunnel in the Challenger Planetoid. Likewise, a courier may still make their living delivering high-value messages from place to place. However, they could make their deliveries on a hopperbike, weaving through the three-dimensional, high-speed maze that is New Angeles traffic.

To create these kinds of backgrounds, simply consider what kind of real-world character appeals to you. Do they come from money? Then maybe they are a ristie (one of the rich and powerful) or have serious corporate connections, or perhaps they are a relic from some old Earth family that had ties to the aristocracies of centuries past.

Are they a stranger to their city, coming from far away? Maybe your character grew up on Mars or Luna, or in San-San or BosWash, and has come to New Angeles for a fresh start. Does the real-world character you're thinking about have a vocation that fits into the world of tomorrow? If they are a broker, maybe in the Android setting they import helium-3 from Luna, or if they are a struggling actor, maybe they are trying to break into the world of NBN sensies and threedee dramas.

Little aspects of the setting might also suggest background ideas. For instance, on Luna, Wyldside is a noted hangout for people who have used genetic modifications to give themselves animalistic characteristics, such as fangs, claws, cat's eyes and ears, scales, or tails. This piece of the world might lead you to make your character a g-modded entertainer, or maybe a plastician trained in the creation of these modifications—as much an art form as a medical science.

Once you've chosen one of these character types, you can consider how this makes your character perceive the world. Did they become involved in g-modding to stand out and be noticed among the teeming masses of humanity? Or did they do it because they felt they fit in among the "wylder" subculture, which embraces this type of cosmetic g-modding?

STEP 2: SELECT A CHARACTER ARCHETYPE

Archetypes define who your character is physically, and they also define a lot more of their background. Keep in mind that your character is only ever going to have one archetype. You won't be able to switch your character's archetype once you've started playing.

When choosing an archetype, you should consider how it will work with your character's background. Clones and bioroids have programmed or conditioned ethics instructions that make them less likely to be criminals, for example (but this also makes a clone or bioroid criminal that much more of an interesting aberration if you want to make that kind of character).

Each archetype comes with its own set of advantages and disadvantages, both from a rules point of view and a roleplaying one. Some of the most interesting groups and adventures might include a mix of archetypes. After all, if a couple of naturals are working alongside a clone or bioroid, they may have to reconsider any preconceived notions they have about what it means to be human.

WHEN IS A NATURAL NOT A NATURAL?

Naturals and Loonies can also get cybernetics and genetic modifications; these are not just reserved for cyborgs and g-mods. However, does adding cybernetics or g-mods to your natural character suddenly cause them to become a new archetype? In terms of game mechanics, no.

Cyborgs and g-mods have the unique advantage of being used to these items and even start with them, which, along with their different starting characteristics, makes them irrevocably different from natural characters. A natural character will never gain those abilities, no matter how many cybernetics they install.

Nevertheless, narratively, that distinction is up to you and your group. What makes someone human is a core question in this setting, and one way to explore that is to make a character who gradually ventures further and further from the "traditional" definition of humanity.

NATURAL

Most humans in New Angeles are pretty normal—at least from a biological point of view. While bioroids and clones work in all levels of industry, the first generations of people born on other worlds have grown up and had kids of their own, and though science allows people to rebuild their bodies as they see fit, "naturals" still make up the vast majority of humanity. At their core, naturals resemble their ancestors going back a few thousand years, even if they do carry a PAD, have a fit-chip implant, or sport a biolumin tattoo. The wealthiest naturals may benefit from some minor genetic modifications that weed out hereditary diseases, but most naturals have the same genetic baseline template as their grandparents and great-grandparents.

Of course, despite these commonalities, most naturals vary wildly from one another. Naturals hail from every nation and locale on Earth, from the cosmopolitan streets of Kampala and the inland wilds of Australia to the low-income housing projects of Esmeraldas and the undercity alleys of Base de Cayambe in New Angeles. Naturals are part of every creed, country, and ethnicity on Earth, and just about any natural may have come seeking their fortune on the streets of New Angeles.

WHY PLAY A NATURAL?

Naturals can take to any career and background well, and they fit almost anywhere into the **Shadow of the Beanstalk** setting. They start with a balanced set of statistics, not being overly strong in any one area, but not being weak in any, either. Naturals also start with more skills and experience than other archetypes, meaning that they give you the most flexibility and customization options when building your character.

In **Shadow of the Beanstalk**, naturals are the most common (and accepted) type of person in New Angeles. In every respect, they are the "average person" of the setting, who can get along with almost everyone and be accepted in most places without a second glance. If you like the idea of playing an ordinary person who has to rise to extraordinary heights over the course of a game, a natural is the right choice for you.

ARCHETYPE ABILITIES

- **Starting Wound Threshold:** 10+Brawn
- **Starting Strain Threshold:** 10+Willpower
- **Starting Experience:** 120
- **Starting Skills:** A natural starts with one rank in each of two different non-career skills at character creation. They obtain this rank before spending experience points, and these skills may not be increased higher than rank 2 during character creation.
- **Ready for Anything:** Once per session as an out-of-turn incidental, you may move one Story Point from the Game Master's pool to the players' pool.

BIOROID

Bioroids are fully artificial creations, with all the attendant benefits and disadvantages. Their strength and durability are second to none, and bioroids also don't sleep, eat, or breathe, allowing them to go places and undertake tasks normal humans and even clones cannot. On the other hand, bioroids are not viewed as people, but rather property. Likewise, bioroids find it difficult to become accepted in some places, their artificial appearance conjuring fear or hatred in certain groups.

All bioroids follow directives, such as not to harm humans and not to allow humans to be harmed through their inaction, that are hardwired into them during their creation. Rumors persist, however, of bioroids that have somehow broken their programming or evolved beyond it. If you play a bioroid, you need to decide whether they are still beholden to their directives. It could be that some incident caused them to become more aware of their sentience and now they rationalize their actions in an almost human way. Alternatively, a bioroid can be factory fresh and need to navigate the tricky moral world of obeying their owner's commands while also following their hardwired directives.

WHY PLAY A BIOROID?

Being a machine has many advantages, from strength and endurance to being able to survive in space and underwater. Bioroids are stronger than most other archetypes and cannot die in the same way a human or a clone does. The downside is that they are beholden to their programming, and while they are able to learn on their own, they filter their experiences from the perspective of a created being.

In New Angeles, bioroids are a commodity, and that's how your character will be viewed by the general population. Many people see bioroids as "things," or sometimes "things that stole my job." Thus, many people see little difference between mistreating or damaging a bioroid and damaging a hopper. This viewpoint isn't universal, but it is widespread. What's more, a bioroid doesn't have any of the rights people take for granted. An emancipated bioroid either pretends to belong to an owner, or lives in the undercity where they can stay out of the public eye.

If you like the idea of playing a robot struggling to understand their place in the world, a powerful companion and ally, or a liberator fighting against the injustice they see in society, a bioroid is the right choice for you.

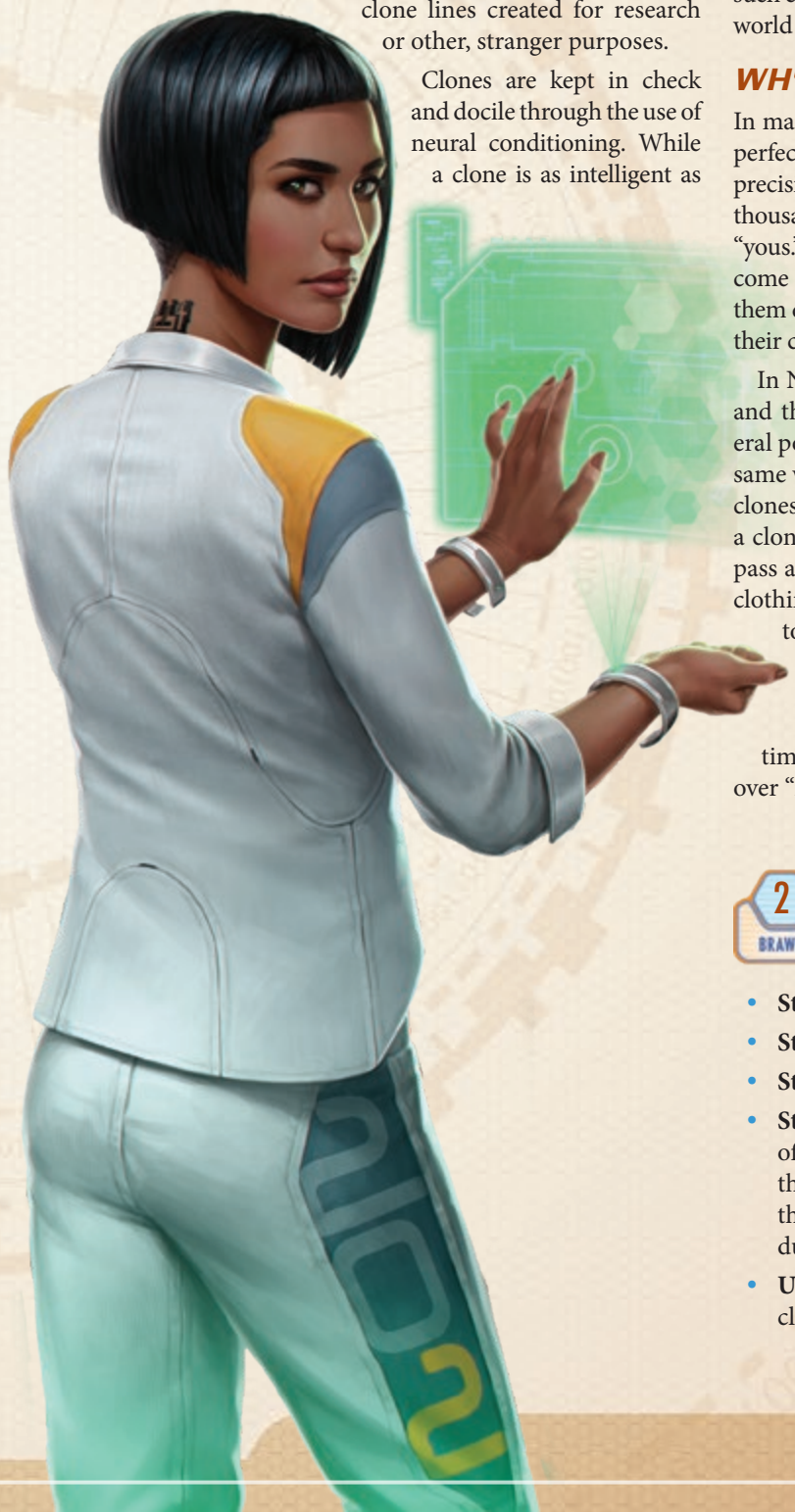
ARCHETYPE ABILITIES

- **Starting Wound Threshold:** 11+Brawn
- **Starting Strain Threshold:** 8+Willpower
- **Starting Experience:** 170
- **Special Abilities:** Bioroids do not need to eat, sleep, or breathe, and they are unaffected by toxins and poisons. They do not reduce their strain threshold when they receive cybernetics (cybernetics represent upgraded mechanical components instead of true cybernetics).
- **Inorganic:** Since bioroids are inorganic, they do not gain the benefits of healing wounds with slap patches (painkillers) or a Medicine check. Bioroids can heal wounds and strain naturally by resting, as their systems attempt self-repairs. Bioroids can also be "healed" by using the Mechanics skill instead of the Medicine skill, but otherwise following the rules in the **Medical Care** section on page 116 of the **Genesys** Core Rulebook.

CLONE

With their pleasing appearance and functional biology, clones fill the roles that in ages past were populated by slaves, migrants, and second-class citizens, without any of the moral implications that come from subjecting humans to such a place in society.

There are numerous clone lines, each created for a specific purpose. These include the Henry line of diligent and durable workers, the Molloy line of skilled cooks and cleaners, the Tenma line of fearless pilots, and the Desai line of patient and intelligent tutors. There are even specialist clone lines created for research or other, stranger purposes.



Clones are kept in check and docile through the use of neural conditioning. While a clone is as intelligent as a natural-born human (and often more), their conditioning ensures that their mind only works a certain way and they can only consider certain responses. If you choose to play a clone, you should decide how restricted your character is by their neural conditioning, and to what extent it guides their actions. On the surface, it might make them peaceable and compliant, not unlike a naive child when faced with conflict, while underneath they might struggle with strange and dark emotions. Some clones may have even broken free of their conditioning, learning through their acts that certain things they thought impossible are completely within their power; such characters can either be wondrous souls discovering the world or dangerous beings without a shred of empathy.

WHY PLAY A CLONE?

In many ways, clones are just like ordinary people, albeit in perfect health and trained to do a single task with unerring precision. To be a clone is to be one copy out of a hundred thousand copies, part of a siblinghood of perfectly identical "yous." More humanlike and personable than bioroids, clones come preprogrammed with a set of skills, imprinted upon them during their maturation. This makes clones amazing at their chosen profession; they were literally made for it.

In New Angeles, clones (like bioroids) are a commodity, and that's how your character will be viewed by the general population. Clones are owned, and they are treated the same way people would treat an appliance or pet. However, clones have one advantage other androids do not; because a clone is still genetically human, emancipated clones can pass as people. These clones tend to prefer garish or flashy clothing, bold haircuts, and tattoos and piercings: anything to make them look as unlike their thousands of siblings as possible. If you like the idea of playing a liberated rebel hiding in plain sight, an intelligent but naive person experiencing the world for the first time, or someone who sees themself as an improvement over "normal" people, a clone is the right choice for you.

ARCHETYPE ABILITIES

- **Starting Wound Threshold:** 9+Brawn
- **Starting Strain Threshold:** 9+Willpower
- **Starting Experience:** 85
- **Starting Skills:** A clone starts with two ranks in each of two different skills at character creation. They obtain these ranks before spending experience points, and these skills may not be increased higher than rank 2 during character creation.
- **Underestimated:** When making an opposed check, clones add ⮝ to the results.

CYBORG

The first cyborgs appeared in the late twentieth century, as artificial hearts and electronic, motorized prosthetic limbs began to restore and repair damaged human bodies. However these protocybernetics served only medical functions, replacing their damaged or missing organic counterparts. All this started to change decades ago, when companies began to develop cybernetics that could enhance, not just restore, a body's functionality. Just as these technologies were starting to appear, the Lunar Insurrection began.

Many of the people we think of today as cyborgs were soldiers. Lured by the promise of higher pay and free augmentations, many enlistees volunteered for cybernetic "upgrades" that made them more lethal warriors. When the War ended and these specialized combatants mustered out, many found themselves unable to fit into the peacetime world. Many took on jobs as corporate security, joined prisec outfits, or even fell in with orgcrime.

Since the War, the popularity of cybernetic enhancements has spiked. The new generation of implants can improve an individual mentally as well as physically, and plenty of people are willing to spend some credits and go under the knife to become "better" than what they were.

WHY PLAY A CYBORG?

Because metal and meat is better than meat alone. Cyborgs are among the strongest of all the archetypes physically, and they start with a high wound threshold. More importantly, while any character can receive cybernetic implants, a cyborg represents someone who is particularly well adapted (both psychologically and physiologically) to having their body rebuilt with mechanical parts.

Cyborgs are strong, tough, and generally dangerous, even if they aren't necessarily very social. If you play a cyborg, your character's cybernetics may color people's perceptions of them; many people assume a cyborg is a war veteran or a violent individual. Seeing noticeable cybernetics can be off-putting for some. However, that stigma is fading fast in New Angeles. If you like the idea of playing a veteran soldier, a mercenary warrior, or someone who wants to be more machine than human, a cyborg is the right choice for you.

ARCHETYPE ABILITIES

BRAWN	AGILITY	INTELLECT	CUNNING	WILLPOWER	PRESENCE
3	2	2	2	2	1

- **Starting Wound Threshold:** 11+Brawn
- **Starting Strain Threshold:** 8+Willpower
- **Starting Experience:** 100
- **Starting Skills:** A cyborg starts with one rank in Mechanics. They obtain this rank before spending experience points, and this skill may not be increased higher than rank 2 during character creation.
- **Adjusted to Cybernetics:** Once per session as an out-of-turn incidental, you may spend a Story Point to have your character heal strain equal to their number of cybernetics.
- **Cyborg:** Your character begins play with one cybernetic (see page 104) that costs a total of 1,000 credits or less. They do not need to make any check to install this cybernetic, and they do not decrease their strain threshold because of this cybernetic (but will decrease their strain threshold as normal if they get any future cybernetics).

G-MOD

If cyborgs are a melding of person and machine, then g-mods are the complete changing of that person into something new. While some individuals may have their genes subtly altered, g-mods modify their DNA in profound and radical ways, changing their appearance, their intellect, and sometimes the core functions of their bodies. To date, g-modding is the closest humankind has come to true transhumanism, with some arguing that the most modified g-mods are no longer entirely Homo sapiens.

Most g-mods look entirely human, choosing to boost their physique, immune system, muscle strength, reflexes, life span, and intellect. Other g-mods adopt cosmetic changes like blue skin or cat irises, feathers, fangs, claws, or prehensile tails. Animalistic characteristics tend to be popular among a subset of g-mods called "wylders," but only the most extreme come across as anything but "mostly human."

WHY PLAY A G-MOD?

G-mods embrace the notion that humanity is merely a concept, and that with applied science, a person really can be whatever they want to be. When playing a g-mod, you can choose any appearance you want for your character, borrowing features from animals, Netcast characters, or anything else. G-mods are also among the smartest of all the archetypes, intelligence being commonly boosted by in utero modifications.

G-mods tend to be seen by the public in two different lights, depending on their modifications. Those g-mods who prefer subtle enhancements tend to come across as "better" people, and most love and envy them in equal measure. However, the more "improved" a person is, the more they can inspire a sense of unease in others. Further, the "wylders," who go for animalistic, outlandish, or shocking g-mods tend to be treated with fear and revulsion. If you like the idea of playing an intelligent and charismatic charmer, a super-strong bodybuilder, or an undercity punk with wolf eyes and fangs, a g-mod is the right choice for you.

ARCHETYPE ABILITIES

- **Starting Wound Threshold:** 11+Brawn
- **Starting Strain Threshold:** 11+Willpower
- **Starting Experience:** 90
- **Starting Skills:** A g-mod starts with one rank in Resilience. They obtain this rank before spending experience points, and this skill may not be increased higher than rank 2 during character creation.
- **Enhanced Genetic Modifications:** Once per session when your character uses one of their g-mods to modify a check, you may spend a Story Point to add ✲ equal to your character's ranks in Resilience to the results (in addition to any other affects the g-mod has).
- **G-Mod:** Your character begins play with one g-mod (see page 106) that costs a total of 1,000 credits or less. They do not need to make any check to assimilate this g-mod.

LOONIE

Those born on the Moon consider themselves a people apart—and why not? They are, after all, members of the first generations that have grown up free from the loving embrace of planet Earth. More than just having a natural affinity for low gravity, slightly longer limbs, and less muscle and bone density, Loonies are different because they no longer see Earth as home. This has fostered a fierce independent streak in most Loonies, many of whom see themselves as a minority in the thrall of Earth-bound megacorps or far-off governments. A particular sticking point is that Heinlein, the largest settlement on Luna, is simply the twelfth district of New Angeles, a city almost four hundred thousand kilometers away. It is sentiments like this that sparked the Worlds War, and though Earth might consider it part of the past, many Loonies have long memories.

Growing up on the Moon teaches Loonies self-reliance in a way no place on Earth could. When you can't even take the air you breathe or the shielding that protects you from lethal radiation for granted, you learn pretty quickly to be aware of everything in the environment around you. Almost every Loonie has a tale about a time when the scrubbers went out in their dome or when they were doing a Luna walk, their suit tore, and they had to stumble home watching the O2 meter tick down.

WHY PLAY A LOONIE?

Loonies are the most agile of all the archetypes, and they make exceptional pilots and drivers. Their instincts for speed and spatial awareness are second to none. While they may not be as strong or tough as other characters, they have excellent coordination and reflexes, and they are just as smart and personable as anyone else.

In New Angeles, Loonies are survivalists and outsiders. They are just strange enough that they will probably never fully fit in anywhere outside the domes and tunnels of Heinlein and the rest of Luna. In the megalopolis, they often lend their talents to those who are outlawed or in subcultures on the fringe of society, because chances are those subcultures have found a haven somewhere on the Moon. If you want to play an incredibly agile pilot, a revolutionary hell-bent on freeing their home from imperialist oppression, or a grizzled spacer at home above Earth's atmosphere, a Loonie is the right choice for you.

ARCHETYPE ABILITIES

- **Starting Wound Threshold:** 9+Brawn
- **Starting Strain Threshold:** 11+Willpower
- **Starting Experience:** 100
- **Starting Skills:** A Loonie starts with one rank in Coordination. They obtain this rank before spending experience points, and this skill may not be increased higher than rank 2 during character creation.
- **Zero-G Adept:** A Loonie does not count zero-gravity environments as difficult terrain.
- **Resourceful:** Once per session after making a skill check, you may spend a Story Point to have your character reroll up to two dice in the pool.

STEP 3: CHOOSE A CAREER

Shadow of the Beanstalk uses its own unique careers, which replace the careers found in the **Genesys** Core Rulebook. These careers still function in the same way as the ones in **Genesys**, each providing a set of eight career skills that your character can spend experience points on to improve. More on careers and career skills can be found on page 40 of the **Genesys** Core Rulebook.

There are ten careers to choose from: **Academic**, **Bounty Hunter**, **Con Artist**, **Courier**, **Investigator**, **Ristie**, **Roughneck**, **Runner**, **Soldier**, and **Tech**. Before choosing a career, you should consider the skills they offer and the kind of character you want to play. Each career is quite flexible in the options it provides, so not all combat characters need to choose the Soldier career, and likewise not all social-focused characters need be Con Artists or Risties. However, careers do make it easier for you to focus your character on a specific skill set, so the choice you make is important.

CAREERS IN PLAY

At its heart, a career defines what your character does (just like an archetype defines who your character is). However, these careers are deliberately vague so that you have some additional flexibility in defining your character.

For example, just because your character is a Soldier, doesn't mean they're a member of the military. They could also be a discharged veteran of the Worlds War, a security guard, part of a prisec mercenary outfit, or even an orgcrime enforcer. Likewise, while a Con Artist may be a criminal, they could also be an undercover police officer or a corporate spy. Feel free to use your imagination and use careers as a starting point when defining your character, not a limiter.

USEFUL TALENTS FOR CAREERS

Genesys's open character creation system allows you to give your character any skills or talents. However, each career includes a sidebar with suggestions for talents that may be particularly appropriate or useful.

BUT I WANT TO PLAY SOMETHING ELSE!

We designed these careers to provide a wide variety of character types with a diverse array of career skills. While we hope that these suit most players' concepts for their characters, we realize you might have an idea in mind that doesn't fit any of these careers exactly.

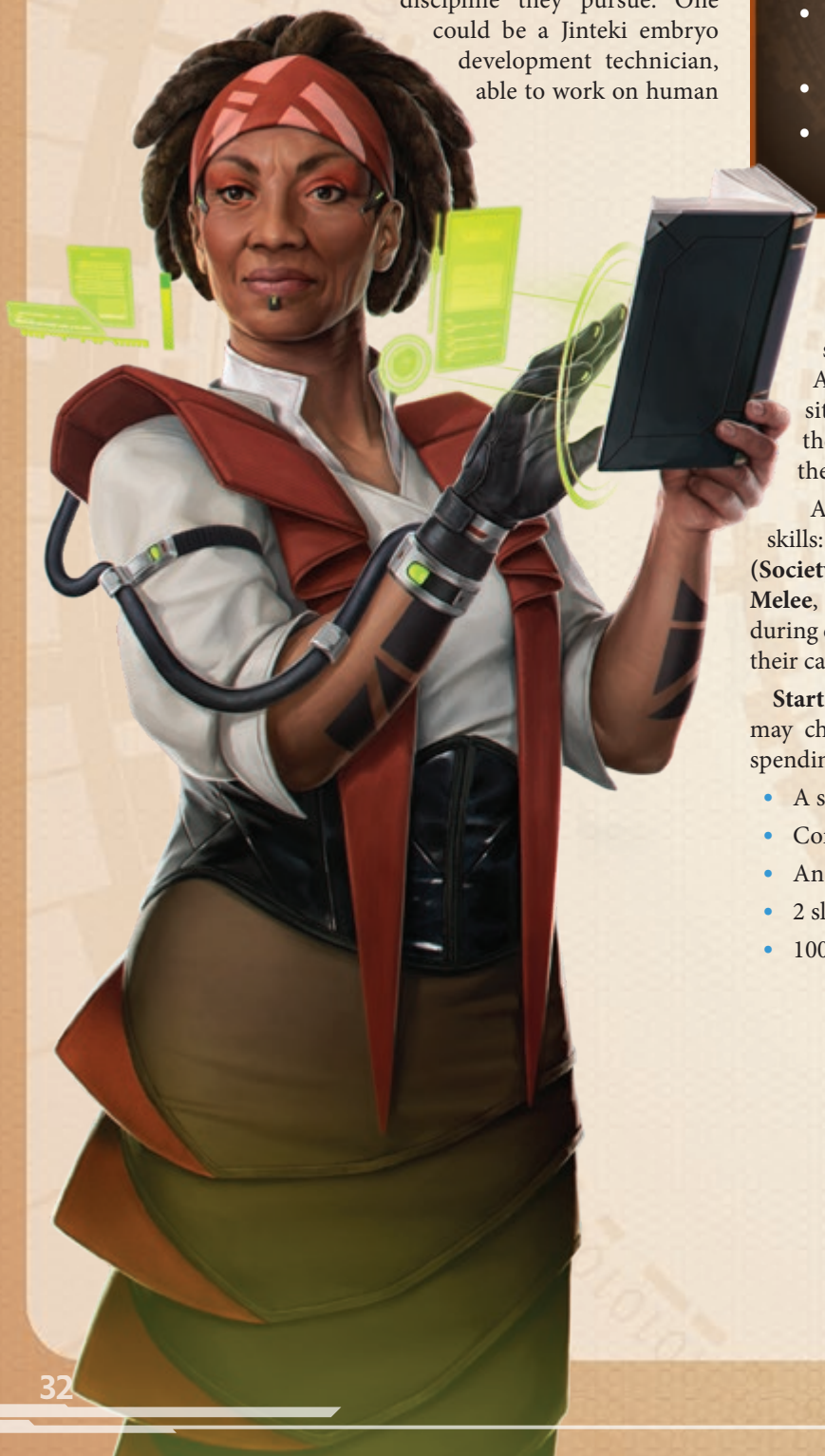
Luckily, the career is one of the most flexible elements of character creation. If your GM is fine with it, you can make your own career. Simply choose eight skills to be career skills for your character, and write up a short description explaining what your new career is all about.

Just keep in mind when you create your career that when we make a career, we try to make sure that it has a diverse spread of skills. This is less about game balance, and more because we want to make sure players don't end up feeling like their characters can only participate in one particular facet of the game. You should try to do the same thing with your new career!

ACADEMIC

Academics include doctors, scientists, and scholars of all kinds. These characters are masters of the advanced theories, scientific disciplines, and philosophies of the future, their research and work adding to humanity's fantastic progress and achievements. Academics are almost always highly specialized and much sought after. Whether they are privy to the secrets of braintaping or understand the maturation of clones, they have devoted their life to a single field of modern thinking or technology.

Academics can come in many forms, regardless of the discipline they pursue. One could be a Jinteki embryo development technician, able to work on human and clone bodies with equal skill while recognizing the baseline building blocks of their genes simply by looking at their eyes, hair, and skin. Another might hail from one of the Luna Universities with a master's degree in applied AI theory, or they might simply be a street doc, working to keep the rain off their back.



USEFUL TALENTS

Here are a few suggestions for talents that may be especially appropriate for "typical" Academic characters.

- **Tier 1:** Former Professor (page 45).
- **Tier 1:** Proper Upbringing (GENESYS Core Rulebook, page 74).
- **Tier 1:** Surgeon (GENESYS Core Rulebook, page 74).
- **Tier 2:** Inspiring Rhetoric (GENESYS Core Rulebook, page 76).
- **Tier 2:** Probing Question (page 49).
- **Tier 3:** Applied Research (page 49).

An Academic counts the following skills as career skills: **Discipline**, **Knowledge (Science)**, **Knowledge (Society)**, **Knowledge (The Net)**, **Leadership**, **Medicine**, **Melee**, and **Negotiation**. Before spending experience during character creation, an Academic may choose four of their career skills and gain one rank in each of them.

Starting Gear: If you have an Academic character, you may choose to start with the following gear instead of spending credits during **Step 7** of character creation:

- A stun gun *or* a monoblade
- Concealed buckyweave *or* durable clothing and a PAD
- An emergency medkit *or* smartspecs
- 2 slap-patches and a portable comlink
- 100+1d100 credits

BOUNTY HUNTER

In a megalopolis of half a billion people or more, Bounty Hunters excel in finding the ones that don't want to be found. Trained in various forms of conflict resolution, a Bounty Hunter seldom lets anyone stand in their way once they have taken a job, and if it means getting their mark, they are not above making a mess or breaking the occasional law. Bounty Hunters differ from more subtle kinds of investigators or agents in that they often expect trouble, and their training reflects this. They tend to pack more firepower and armor than other characters, and they usually stem from a more combat-oriented background.

While most Bounty Hunters are heavy-handed street soldiers with a knack for finding people, they can vary considerably depending on where they come from and who they work for. Some are ex-cops; bound by a sense of honor and a respect for the law, they know just how hard the NAPD has it and try to work with them as much as possible. Others are on an orgcrime payroll, private contractors only in name who take their orders from the shadows and think little of looking the other way. Then there are the true free agents, the ones in it for the creds, the thrill, or the fame.

A Bounty Hunter counts the following skills as career skills: **Brawl**, **Coercion**, **Discipline**, **Driving**, **Melee**, **Ranged (Heavy)**, **Resilience**, and **Streetwise**. Before spending experience during character creation, a Bounty Hunter may choose four of their career skills and gain one rank in each of them.

Starting Gear: If you have a Bounty Hunter character, you may choose to start with the following gear instead of spending credits during **Step 7** of character creation:

- Bullpup carbine *or* a stun baton, 2 glop grenades, and light body armor
- Brass knuckles *or* 2 slap patches
- 3 snap locks and a utility belt
- 1d100 credits

USEFUL TALENTS

Here are a few suggestions for talents that may be especially appropriate for "typical" Bounty Hunter characters.

- **Tier 1:** Durable (Genesys Core Rulebook, page 73).
- **Tier 1:** Hamstring Shot (Genesys Core Rulebook, page 73).
- **Tier 1:** Street Fighter (page 45).
- **Tier 2:** Special Use Permit (page 49).
- **Tier 2:** Undercity Contacts (page 49).
- **Tier 3:** Takedown (page 51).

CON ARTIST

While some criminals favor force to get what they want, the Con Artist is a master of manipulation. In the presence of so many technological safeguards, the Con Artist knows that the weakest part of any defense is the human element: something they excel at exploiting. Almost every street in New Angeles has holoscreens or vidscreens trying to sell you something, and from the Con Artist's point of view, the lies told by the corporations and the products they push are no different than winning someone's trust and fleecing them the old-fashioned way.

A lot of things in New Angeles can't be taken with force or firepower, and this is where the Con Artist comes into their own. A runner-proof building or an impenetrable vault might defeat the latest tech or largest guns, but find the right person and convince them to show you the way, and you can walk right in the door. And should the job go sideways, Con Artists are also masters of making a quick exit, often while their former "comrades" are still wondering just what went wrong! Con Artists come in many different guises, from out-and-out street criminals who long ago learned to live off their wits, to savvy lawyers who understand everything is negotiable, to digital black marketeers who reskin old software or create knock-offs of the latest high-end PADs.

A Con Artist counts the following skills as career skills: **Charm**, **Coordination**, **Deception**, **Melee**, **Negotiation**, **Ranged (Light)**, **Skulduggery**, and **Stealth**. Before spending experience during character creation, a Con Artist may choose four of their career skills and gain one rank in each of them.

Starting Gear: If you have a Con Artist character, you may choose to start with the following gear instead of spending credits during **Step 7** of character creation:

- A fletcher pistol *or* a monoblade and 3 stun grenades
- Concealed buckyweave *or* a disguise kit and lockpick set
- 2 slap-patches *or* one dose of sting
- A personal comlink and 2 happy patches
- 1d100 credits

USEFUL TALENTS

Here are a few suggestions for talents that may be especially appropriate for "typical" Con Artist characters.

- **Tier 1:** Clever Retort (GENESYS Core Rulebook, page 73).
- **Tier 1:** Customer Service Experience (page 45).
- **Tier 1:** Tri-Maf Contact (page 45).
- **Tier 2:** Counteroffer (GENESYS Core Rulebook, page 75).
- **Tier 2:** Probing Question (page 49).
- **Tier 3:** You Owe Me One (page 51).

COURIER

Corporations and organizations in New Angeles often deal in powerful secrets or cutting-edge tech, and sometimes only the most trusted individuals can be relied upon to get related confidential items and correspondence where they need to be. Couriers are these skilled individuals. They live by their reputation and possess a host of skills for dealing with whatever might stand in their way. A good Courier is a born survivalist, equally able to fight, talk, or run their way out of most situations. Sometimes, this might mean getting a hard copy of a sensitive data download down a hundred floors of the Talamire Arcology before local security realizes it's been stolen; at other times, it might mean a run from Broadcast Square all the way to the Root.

A good Courier builds a strong rapport with their prospective clients, and many work with a list of regulars. These Couriers get repeat business because they prove not only that they're good at the job, but also that they are trustworthy and discreet. Some Couriers are bonded corporate servants working for Haas-Bioroid, NBN, or the like and may even be specially programmed bioroids or conditioned clones. Others are independents who live and die by their rep, never looking at the cargo they transport, only promising to get it there on time.

A Courier counts the following skills as career skills: **Athletics**, **Brawl**, **Charm**, **Coordination**, **Driving**, **Piloting**, **Stealth**, and **Survival**. Before spending experience during character creation, a Courier may choose four of their career skills and gain one rank in each of them.

Starting Gear: If you have a Courier character, you may choose to start with the following gear instead of spending credits during **Step 7** of character creation:

- A synap pistol and durable clothing *or* concealed buckyweave and a palm stunner
- A modular backpack *or* a cross body bag and load bearing gear
- A PAD and smartspecs *or* a monocam, personal comlink, and reader
- 1d100 credits

USEFUL TALENTS

Here are a few suggestions for talents that may be especially appropriate for "typical" Courier characters.

- **Tier 1:** Hand on the Throttle (page 45).
- **Tier 1:** Jump Up (Genesys Core Rulebook, page 73).
- **Tier 1:** Knockout Punch (page 45).
- **Tier 2:** Daring Aviator (Genesys Core Rulebook, page 75).
- **Tier 2:** Parkour! (page 49).
- **Tier 3:** Nimble (page 50).

INVESTIGATOR

From NAPD detectives, to hard-boiled private eyes, to corporate agents and independent profilers, Investigators are masters of getting information. In worlds where people will go to great lengths to hide their crimes from the countless electronic eyes that watch society, sometimes only a person's instincts can pick up the trail. Investigation is as much art as it is science, and good Investigators learn to rely upon their gut, knowing when to squeeze someone for information and when finding the truth requires a light touch. Of course, following a trail through the neon wilderness of New Angeles takes more than a keen mind; Investigators are also adept at bending or breaking the rules when they need to and, when all else fails, know how to handle themselves in a fight.

There are as many kinds of Investigators as there are investigations, and New Angeles is full of secrets waiting to be uncovered—and people willing to pay to find them. Some Investigators work for corps, backed by big money and big resources, while others keep a hole-in-the-wall office below the plaza level and take whatever jobs will pay the rent for one more month. Most Investigators fall somewhere between these two extremes. An Investigator can be a police detective, a corporate troubleshooter, a municipal inspector, a reporter, or an employee of a foundation dedicated to transparency in government and corporate affairs, to name a few options.

An Investigator counts the following skills as career skills: **Coercion**, **Computers (Hacking)**, **Knowledge (Society)**, **Leadership**, **Perception**, **Ranged (Light)**, **Streetwise**, and **Vigilance**. Before spending experience during character creation, an Investigator may choose four of their career skills and gain one rank in each of them.

Starting Gear: If you have an Investigator character, you may choose to start with the following gear instead of spending credits during **Step 7** of character creation:

- A fletcher pistol *or* a hand cannon
- Concealed buckyweave and a light pistol *or* a forensic kit
    - A personal comlink, 2 slap-patches, and 2 doses of stim.
    - 1d100 credits

USEFUL TALENTS

Here are a few suggestions for talents that may be especially appropriate for "typical" Investigator characters.

- **Tier 1:** Bought Info (GENESYS Core Rulebook, page 72).
- **Tier 1:** Quick Draw (GENESYS Core Rulebook, page 72).
- **Tier 1:** Years on the Force (page 47).
- **Tier 2:** Bad Cop (page 47).
- **Tier 2:** Two-Handed Stance (page 49).
- **Tier 3:** Hard-Boiled (page 50).

RISTIE

The offspring of corporate CEOs and their vast families, Risties are the new royalty. Ristie characters can be entitled dilettantes or driven heirs to the corporate crown, both often very well connected. Whether or not they care about the multibillion-credit corps, hedge funds, and investment banks that support them, Risties live a life few New Angelinos can dream of: sleeping in sprawling arcology penthouses, taking regular trips to the Castle and its nightclubs, having a view from the top, and looking down through the tinted windows of their private hoppers. Even without the creds, simply being a Ristie is a ticket into some of the most exclusive places on Earth and beyond; few bouncers or prisec operatives are willing to strong-arm someone who might be Jack Weyland's third cousin twice removed.

Fame and fortune come at a price for the Ristie, however. The same face that can open doors is also hard to forget or ignore. Also, being a member of a corporate dynasty means responsibilities, some of which can come at inopportune moments or put a Ristie at odds with their friends. Of course, not all Risties are so privileged. A Ristie might instead be in exile, fallen from grace, and either be working against their family or trying to win their way back into their good graces. Or they might simply be trying to keep their very famous face out of the feedchannels.

A Ristie counts the following skills as career skills: **Charm**, **Cool**, **Deception**, **Knowledge (Society)**, **Leadership**, **Negotiation**, **Perception**, and **Vigilance**. Before spending experience during character creation, a Ristie may choose four of their career skills and gain one rank in each of them.

Starting Gear: If you have a Ristie character, you may choose to start with the following gear instead of spending credits during **Step 7** of character creation:

- A laser pistol *or* a charged crystal katana
- A personal comlink and one slap-patch
- 1 dose of Lo-Fi and 4 doses of stims *or* 2 doses of Sting
- 200+1d100 credits

USEFUL TALENTS

Here are a few suggestions for talents that may be especially appropriate for "typical" Ristie characters.

- **Tier 1:** Corporate Drone (page 44).
- **Tier 1:** Know Somebody (GENESYS Core Rulebook, page 73).
- **Tier 1:** Proper Upbringing (GENESYS Core Rulebook, page 74).
- **Tier 2:** Counteroffer (GENESYS Core Rulebook, page 75).
- **Tier 2:** Haughty Demeanor (page 48).
- **Tier 3:** Laugh it Off (page 50).

ROUGHNECK

Roughnecks are pilots and zero-G construction workers who are as adept at guiding huge mining rigs and cargo craft across the vacuum of Luna as they are at fixing a micrometeorite hole in Midway Station. Skilled astronauts, they are as comfortable out in space as they are on Earth, and they are accomplished at dealing with the perils that only space can bring. Most Roughnecks are known for their cool: keeping your head when flying a one-hundred-ton spacecraft or a hopper loaded with mining explosives takes nerves of steel. In New Angeles, a Roughneck might find work with any of the major corps or civilian authorities, as their skills are always in demand.

However, not all Roughnecks started out as astronauts or orbital construction workers; many learned their trade in other fields. The military has trained plenty of soldiers in zero-G assembly, demolitions, and repairs. Others got their start doing odd jobs on the Challenger Planetoid or Heinlein, picking up vac skills through on-the-job training. Finally, many Roughnecks are former He-3 or asteroid miners who lost their jobs to the recent influx of an android labor force, then adapted their specialized skills to keep earning a paycheck.

A Roughneck counts the following skills as career skills: **Athletics**, **Gunnery**, **Mechanics**, **Operating**, **Piloting**, **Ranged (Heavy)**, **Resilience**, and **Vigilance**. Before spending experience during character creation, a Roughneck may choose four of their career skills and gain one rank in each of them.

Starting Gear: If you have a Roughneck character, you may choose to start with the following gear instead of spending credits during **Step 7** of character creation:

- 2 brass knuckles *or* a sledgehammer
- A space suit *or* an environmental hardsuit and a portable toolkit
- A a hand-held diagnostic scanner *or* a micro-welder
- 1d100 credits

USEFUL TALENTS

Here are a few suggestions for talents that may be especially appropriate for "typical" Roughneck characters.

- **Tier 1:** Durable (Genesys Core Rulebook, page 73).
- **Tier 1:** Let's Ride (Genesys Core Rulebook, page 74).
- **Tier 1:** Union Member (page 45).
- **Tier 2:** Big Guns (page 47).
- **Tier 2:** Determined Driver (page 48).
- **Tier 3:** Hold It Steady (page 50).

RUNNER

Runners are talented hackers who thrive in the Network. These are the warriors of the virtual world, and though they might appear as ordinary people or androids when they walk the slidewalks of New Angeles, they are giants in their digital environment. To master the programmed world of the Net, defeat its denizens, and overcome its many dangers is no easy feat. For most people, if there is not an appropriate function on their PAD, then they have no idea how to go out into the virtual world and find something, let alone something that doesn't want to be found. Good Runners are prizes almost every agency in New Angeles will fight over, for these are the people who hold the keys to the true battlefields of the future and who have the ability to win in the constant digital wars fought between the corporations.

Runners don't tend to sell their skills cheaply, however, if they even sell them at all. Runners are motivated by a broad variety of reasons, whether they serve corporate interests, fight against them, or are simply out for themselves. Many Runners are motivated by strong political or moral reasons and want to remake the world—just as they remake the digital one they do battle in.

A Runner counts the following skills as career skills: **Computers (Hacking)**, **Computers (Sysops)**, **Cool**, **Deception**, **Knowledge (The Net)**, **Perception**, **Skulduggery**, and **Streetwise**. Before spending experience during character creation, a Runner may choose four of their career skills and gain one rank in each of them.

Starting Gear: If you have a Runner character, you may choose to start with the following gear instead of spending credits during **Step 7** of character creation:

- Durable clothing and a palm stunner *or* a light pistol
- A PAD with Ice Wall and Battering Ram *or* a PAD with Garrote and Gordian Blade
- A personal comlink
- 1d100 credits

USEFUL TALENTS

Here are a few suggestions for talents that may be especially appropriate for "typical" Runner characters.

- **Tier 1:** Disenfrancisto (page 45).
- **Tier 1:** Knack for It (Genesys Core Rulebook, page 73).
- **Tier 1:** Net Search (page 45).
- **Tier 2:** Codeslinger (page 48).
- **Tier 2:** NetHunter (page 48).
- **Tier 3:** Distinctive Style (Genesys Core Rulebook, page 78).

SOLDIER

Prisec agents, offworld mercs, Worlds War veterans, and orgcrime heavies all fit the Soldier bill. Even in the future, there is a need for individuals who know their way around a firefight, and when the bullets and energy beams start flying, it pays to have one at your side. Despite the safeguards put in place at the end of the Worlds War, the solar system remains a dangerous place, where boiling tensions can easily turn into open conflict. Most corporations maintain their own private security (prisec) forces: paramilitary organizations that might contain bioroids, clones, cyborgs, or g-modded troops alongside unmodded fighters carrying the latest hardware money can buy. There are also free companies that operate under license in legally ambiguous areas, like Luna, Mars, or parts of the Ecuadorian state; these mercenaries promise both firepower and discretion. Some Soldiers sell their skills far more cheaply, having done their time or choosing to eschew authority. These street warriors and soldiers of fortune might work for orgcrime outfits, weak governments, spoiled risties, or simply whoever is willing to pay their bar tab.

A Soldier counts the following skills as career skills: **Athletics**, **Coercion**, **Gunnery**, **Melee**, **Ranged (Light)**, **Ranged (Heavy)**, **Resilience**, and **Survival**. Before spending experience during character creation, a Soldier may choose four of their career skills and gain one rank in each of them.

Starting Gear: If you have a Soldier character, you may choose to start with the following gear instead of spending credits during **Step 7** of character creation:

- A pistol and light body armor *or* a bullpup carbine
- Durable clothing *or* a utility belt
- 2 slap-patches *or* 1 doses of Sting
- 1d100 credits

USEFUL TALENTS

Here are a few suggestions for talents that may be especially appropriate for "typical" Soldier characters.

- **Tier 1:** Quick Draw (GENESYS Core Rulebook, page 74).
- **Tier 1:** Toughened (GENESYS Core Rulebook, page 75).
- **Tier 1:** Worlds War Vet (page 47).
- **Tier 2:** Big Guns (page 47).
- **Tier 2:** Tactical Focus (page 49).
- **Tier 3:** Suppressing Fire (page 50).

TECH

Techs are engineers and mech-heads who understand the technology of the future like no one else. In an age when most people don't know how their handheld PADs work, the Tech, like a mechanical sorcerer, can manipulate the worlds around them, coaxing vehicles to life, bringing generators back online, or subverting hardened defenses. Techs might not have a Runner's gift for manipulating the Network, but they are far more skilled in the real worlds, able to attack many systems from both digital and mechanical sides to get the result they want. Techs also understand a lot of the "black box" tech of the future and are able to rip off a service panel or crack open a console to fix a problem in a more hands-on way.

Techs come in many shapes and sizes, from filth-covered zero-G grease monkeys who work the Midway docks, to corp support agents running overwatch for prisec teams, to beanpod traffic controllers and chop-shop hopper boosters. Like all those in New Angeles who actually know how things work, Techs are always in high demand, and few organizations get far without at least one of these mechanically savvy individuals in their corner.

A Tech counts the following skills as career skills: **Brawl**, **Computers (Sysops)**, **Knowledge (Science)**, **Knowledge (The Net)**, **Mechanics**, **Medicine**, **Operating**, and **Piloting**. Before spending experience during character creation, a Tech may choose four of their career skills and gain one rank in each of them.

Starting Gear: If you have a Tech character, you may choose to start with the following gear instead of spending credits during **Step 7** of character creation:

- A synap pistol *or* an environmental hardsuit and brass knuckles
- A modular backpack *or* a utility belt and 2 emergency repair patches
- A portable toolkit and las-scanner *or* a PAD with authenticator
- 50+1d100 credits

USEFUL TALENTS

Here are a few suggestions for talents that may be especially appropriate for "typical" Tech characters.

- **Tier 1:** Deep Pockets (page 45).
- **Tier 1:** Defensive Sysops (GENESYS Core Rulebook, page 73).
- **Tier 1:** Resourceful Mechanic (page 45).
- **Tier 2:** Inventor (GENESYS Core Rulebook, page 76).
- **Tier 2:** Quick Fix (page 49).
- **Tier 3:** Bad Habit (page 49).

NEW SKILLS

This section introduces new skills specific to the Android setting. **Table 1–1: Skills for the Android Setting** includes both these new skills and the skills from the **Genesys** Core Rulebook that are used in the Android setting.

KNOWLEDGE SKILLS

The new skills in this section take the place of the single Knowledge skill presented in the **Genesys** Core Rulebook.

SCIENCE (INTELLECT)

Science has made great discoveries, the results of which are all around the citizens of New Angeles. New technologies such as fusion power, clones, bioroids, the space elevator, and the Net have fundamentally changed the lives of ordinary people. And even as society works to perfect these technologies, scientists and researchers continue to search for the next great leap in our understanding of the universe. Knowledge (Science) represents an understanding of the various scientific disciplines, mathematics, and the workings of old and new technologies. This represents a character's "book smarts" and is the kind of knowledge one would learn in school.

YOUR CHARACTER SHOULD USE THIS SKILL IF...

- Your character is trying to recall the formula for a drug or chemical.
- Your character needs to remember the name of a lunar crater.
- Your character tries to calculate the correct trajectory for a spacecraft entering Earth orbit.
- Your character needs to know how many people a buckyweave rope can support before breaking.

YOUR CHARACTER SHOULD NOT USE THIS SKILL IF...

- Your character is trying to fix a hydrogen fuel cell. This would require Mechanics.
- Your character is trying to fly a spacecraft along a specific trajectory. Your character may use Knowledge (Science) to calculate the course, but they need to use Operating to fly it.
- Your character needs to know the specifics of the Fed's jurisdiction in New Angeles, which would require the Knowledge (Society) skill instead.

TABLE 1–1: SKILLS FOR THE ANDROID SETTING

SKILL	CHAR	TYPE	SOURCE
Athletics	Brawn	General	Core Rulebook (page 58)
Brawl	Brawn	Combat	Core Rulebook (page 67)
Charm	Presence	Social	Core Rulebook (page 54)
Coercion	Willpower	Social	Core Rulebook (page 55)
Computers (Hacking)	Intellect	General	Shadow of the Beanstalk
Computers (Sysops)	Intellect	General	Shadow of the Beanstalk
Cool	Presence	General	Core Rulebook (page 59)
Coordination	Agility	General	Core Rulebook (page 59)
Deception	Cunning	Social	Core Rulebook (page 56)
Discipline	Willpower	General	Core Rulebook (page 60)
Driving	Agility	General	Core Rulebook (page 60)
Gunnery	Agility	Combat	Core Rulebook (page 69)
Knowledge (Science)	Intellect	Knowledge	Shadow of the Beanstalk
Knowledge (Society)	Intellect	Knowledge	Shadow of the Beanstalk
Knowledge (The Net)	Intellect	Knowledge	Shadow of the Beanstalk
Leadership	Presence	Social	Core Rulebook (page 56)
Mechanics	Intellect	General	Core Rulebook (page 60)
Medicine	Intellect	General	Core Rulebook (page 61)
Melee	Brawn	Combat	Core Rulebook (page 67)
Negotiation	Presence	Social	Core Rulebook (page 56)
Operating	Intellect	General	Core Rulebook (page 62)
Perception	Cunning	General	Core Rulebook (page 62)
Piloting	Agility	General	Core Rulebook (page 62)
Ranged (Heavy)	Agility	Combat	Core Rulebook (page 69)
Ranged (Light)	Agility	Combat	Core Rulebook (page 68)
Resilience	Brawn	General	Core Rulebook (page 63)
Skulduggery	Cunning	General	Core Rulebook (page 64)
Stealth	Agility	General	Core Rulebook (page 64)
Streetwise	Cunning	General	Core Rulebook (page 65)
Survival	Cunning	General	Core Rulebook (page 65)
Vigilance	Willpower	General	Core Rulebook (page 65)

SOCIETY (INTELLECT)

This skill has two distinct aspects that it governs. The first is knowledge about societies in general and how they function, which can include economic theory, sociology, law, and the like. The second aspect is information about the society your character lives in, specifically the society of New Angeles. This includes information on who Miranda Rhapsody is and what her greatest hits are, the distinguishing features of each New Angeles district, the difference between plaza level and the undercity, and how long it takes to get from the Root to the Castle on a beanpod.

YOUR CHARACTER SHOULD USE THIS SKILL IF...

- Your character wants to remember facts about New Angeles.
- Your character needs to make an argument in a court of law that's grounded on a solid legal base.
- Your character wants to remember how the average Loonie feels about the NAPD before traveling to Luna.
- Your character wants to know if someone is trying to manipulate the stock market by short selling shares in a major company.
- Your character is trying to figure out what the most powerful organized crime outfits in New Angeles are.

YOUR CHARACTER SHOULD NOT USE THIS SKILL IF...

- Your character needs to find the nearest NAPD station. This would require Streetwise (although knowing information about the NAPD in general would be covered by Knowledge [Society]).
- Your character needs to know some element of Network etiquette and habits. They would need Knowledge (The Net) instead.
- Your character wants to know how far a local street gang's territory reaches. This would be a Streetwise check.

THE NET (INTELLECT)

These days, the Network has become far more than the internets of years past. For all intents and purposes, it is its own world, growing and changing, with its own inhabitants and dangers, all paralleling our own. Being able to understand and navigate the Net is an increasingly valuable skill, as many runners and netsplorers can attest. This skill represents your character's knowledge about anything Net-related, from information on the dangers of specific pieces of ice, to the location of particular subservers and Shadow Net chatspaces.

YOUR CHARACTER SHOULD USE THIS SKILL IF...

- Your character wants to know which Shadow Net virtual chatspaces they should visit to recruit a reliable runner.
- Your character wants to know the dangers of trying to break a piece of ice.
- Your character is trying to figure out what real-world corp is hosting a server full of valuable information.
- Your character is trying to remember any rumors about so-called "god ice," "ghost runners," or other legends of the Net.

YOUR CHARACTER SHOULD NOT USE THIS SKILL IF...

- Your character is attempting to break through a piece of ice. This is handled by the Computers (Hacking) skill.
- Your character is trying to reactivate or repair lines of code in a program. This is handled by the Computers (Sysops) skill.
- Your character wants to see what they know about current popular culture. Although that information can be found on the Net (in exhausting detail), it still requires a Knowledge (Society) check.

COMPUTERS SKILLS

Because working with computers is such a major part of the Android setting, we've split the original Computers skill into two separate skills: Hacking and Sysops. The new skills in this section take the place of the single Computers skill presented in the **Genesys** Core Rulebook.

HACKING (INTELLECT)

Hacking represents any offensive and destructive uses of the Computers skill presented in the **Genesys** Core Rulebook. It covers any attempts at electronic code breaking, intrusion or, of course, running on servers and breaking ice. Any runner worth the title is going to be good at Hacking. However, most characters who spend a decent amount of time working with computers and programming are going to at least be familiar with this skill.

YOUR CHARACTER SHOULD USE THIS SKILL IF...

- Your character is trying to enter a secured server.
- Your character is shutting down a piece of ice.
- Your character is trying to open an electronic lock.
- Your character is trying to destroy a computer program.

YOUR CHARACTER SHOULD NOT USE THIS SKILL IF...

- Your character is trying to reactivate a deactivated program. This would require the Computers (Sysops) skill.
- Your character is trying to open a mechanical lock. Your character needs to use Skulduggery to defeat a mechanical item of that type.
- Your character is trying to backtrace someone who has intruded on a server. This also requires the Computers (Sysops) skill.

SYSOPS (INTELLECT)

If Hacking represents offensive or destructive uses of the Computers skill, Sysops represents its defensive and constructive uses. The most prominent use of Sysops is to defend computer systems against runners, viruses, and other intrusions. However, Sysops can also be used to build computer programs, activate and improve ice and other countermeasures, and trace hacking attempts back to their source. While systems operators and administrators get the most use out of this skill, pretty much everyone who works with computers and programming needs at least some understanding of it.

YOUR CHARACTER SHOULD USE THIS SKILL IF...

- Your character is trying to backtrace a runner who is trying to hack your server.
- Your character needs to activate ice or other countermeasure programs.
- Your character is trying to repair a damaged program.
- Your character is trying to create a new program.

YOUR CHARACTER SHOULD NOT USE THIS SKILL IF...

- Your character is trying to deactivate or destroy a program. This would require the Computers (Hacking) skill.
- Your character wants to remember details about a particular server on the Net. They need the Knowledge (The Net) skill for that.
- Your character is trying to crack an electronic code or encryption. This also requires Computers (Hacking).

NEW TALENTS

This section introduces new talents specific to the Android setting. These talents, along with talents from the core rulebook listed in **Table 1–2: Genesys Talents for the Android Setting**, on page 46, can be used in any game set in **Shadow of the Beanstalk**.

TIER 1

CORPORATE DRONE

Tier: 1
Activation: Passive
Ranked: No
When you take this talent, your character gains Knowledge (Society) or Negotiation as a career skill. In addition, once per session, your character may collect a small favor from any other member of a single corporation (chosen when you take this talent), even if they do not owe your character a favor.

CUSTOM RIG

Tier: 1
Activation: Passive
Ranked: Yes
When your character selects this talent they choose one computer (such as a rig, PAD, or spinal modem) that they own. The amount of ice or icebreakers (your character's choice) that they can have on that computer is increased by 1 per rank of Custom Rig. (This may be a mix of ice and icebreakers, as long as the combined total increase does not exceed your character's ranks in Custom Rig). If your character loses their affected computer, they may choose a new computer to be affected by this talent.

CUSTOM CODE

Tier: 1
Activation: Passive
Ranked: No
When your character selects this talent they choose one icebreaker or piece of ice that they own. If they choose an icebreaker, whenever they use that icebreaker to override ice, they add A to the results. If they choose a piece of ice, whenever someone else attempts to override it, they add ⟲ to the results.

CUSTOMER SERVICE EXPERIENCE
Tier: 1
Activation: Active (Incidental)
Ranked: Yes
After your character makes a Charm check, they may suffer 1 strain use this talent to cancel ⟲ equal to your character's ranks in Customer Service Experience.

DEEP POCKETS
Tier: 1
Activation: Active (Maneuver)
Ranked: No
Once per session, your character may use this talent to produce a small but narratively useful item from their pockets, backpack, or similar receptacle (it turns out the item had been there the whole time).

Your GM has final say as to what items can be produced with Deep Pockets, but generally the item should cost less than 100 credits and have an encumbrance of 0 or 1.

DISENFRANCISTO
Tier: 1
Activation: Passive
Ranked: No
When you take this talent, your character gains Streetwise or Survival (your choice) as a career skill. In addition, once per session, your character may collect a small favor from any other *disenfrancisto*, even if they do not owe your character a favor.

FORMER PROFESSOR
Tier: 1
Activation: Passive
Ranked: No
When you take this talent, your character gains one Knowledge skill (of your choice) as a career skill. In addition, once per session, your character may collect a small favor from a member of an institute of higher learning, even if they do not owe your character a favor.

HAND ON THE THROTTLE
Tier: 1
Activation: Active (Incidental)
Ranked: No
Once per round while driving or piloting a vehicle, your character may use this talent to increase or decrease its speed by 1, to a minimum of 0 or a maximum of the vehicle's max speed.

IAIJUTSU TRAINING
Tier: 1
Activation: Passive
Ranked: No
The first time during an encounter that your character draws a Melee weapon, increase the weapon's damage by 2 for the remainder of the turn.

KNOCKOUT PUNCH
Tier: 1
Activation: Passive
Ranked: No
Your character adds the Stun quality to their Brawl combat checks, with a rating equal to two plus your character's ranks in Coordination (this does not stack with other instances of the Stun quality).

NET SEARCH
Tier: 1
Activation: Active (Maneuver)
Ranked: No
If your character has access to the Network, they may use this talent to upgrade the ability of the next Knowledge check they make during their turn twice and the difficulty of that check once. Your GM must spend a ⊗ to have your character learn some seemingly relevant and believable information that turns out to be completely (and possibly maliciously) false.

RESOURCEFUL MECHANIC
Tier: 1
Activation: Passive
Ranked: Yes
When your character makes a Mechanics check to repair system strain or hull trauma on a vehicle, they repair one additional system strain or hull trauma per rank of Resourceful Mechanic.

STREET FIGHTER
Tier: 1
Activation: Active (Incidental)
Ranked: No
When your character disorients or knocks their target prone while making a Brawl combat check, they may use this talent to cause the target to suffer wounds equal to your character's ranks in Skulduggery.

TRI-MAF CONTACT
Tier: 1
Activation: Passive
Ranked: No
When you take this talent, your character gains Melee or Skulduggery (your choice) as a career skill. In addition, once per session, your character may collect a small favor from a member of a single orgcrime group (chosen when you take this talent), even if they do not owe your character a favor.

UNION MEMBER
Tier: 1
Activation: Passive
Ranked: No
When you take this talent, your character gains Athletics, Mechanics, or Operating (your choice) as a career skill. In addition, once per session, your character may collect a small favor from a member of Humanity Labor or Human First, even if they do not owe your character a favor.

TABLE 1–2: GENESYS TALENTS FOR THE ANDROID SETTING

TALENT	RANKED	SOURCE
Tier 1		
Bought Info	No	Core Rulebook (page 72)
Clever Retort	No	Core Rulebook (page 73)
Corporate Drone	No	Page 44
Custom Code	No	Page 44
Custom Rig	No	Page 44
Customer Service Experience	Yes	Page 45
Deep Pockets	No	Page 45
Defensive Sysops	No	Core Rulebook (page 73)
Desperate Recovery	No	Core Rulebook (page 73)
Disenfrancisto	No	Page 45
Duelist	No	Core Rulebook (page 73)
Durable	Yes	Core Rulebook (page 73)
Forager	No	Core Rulebook (page 73)
Former Professor	No	Page 45
Grit	Yes	Core Rulebook (page 73)
Hamstring Shot	No	Core Rulebook (page 73)
Hand on the Throttle	No	Page 45
Iaijutsu Training	No	Page 45
Jump Up	No	Core Rulebook (page 73)
Knack for It	Yes	Core Rulebook (page 73)
Know Somebody	Yes	Core Rulebook (page 74)
Knockout Punch	No	Page 45
Let's Ride	No	Core Rulebook (page 74)
Net Search	No	Page 45
One with Nature	No	Core Rulebook (page 74)
Parry	Yes	Core Rulebook (page 74)
Proper Upbringing	Yes	Core Rulebook (page 74)
Quick Draw	No	Core Rulebook (page 74)
Quick Strike	Yes	Core Rulebook (page 74)
Rapid Reaction	Yes	Core Rulebook (page 74)
Resourceful Mechanic	Yes	Page 45
Second Wind	Yes	Core Rulebook (page 74)
Street Fighter	No	Page 45
Surgeon	Yes	Core Rulebook (page 74)
Swift	No	Core Rulebook (page 75)
Tri-Maf Contact	No	Page 45
Toughened	Yes	Core Rulebook (page 75)
Union Member	No	Page 45
Unremarkable	No	Core Rulebook (page 75)
Worlds War Vet	No	Page 47
Years on the Force	No	Page 47

TALENT	RANKED	SOURCE
Tier 2		
Bad Cop	Yes	Page 47
Big Guns	No	Page 47
Codeslinger	No	Page 48
Combat Medicine	Yes	Page 48
Coordinated Assault	Yes	Core Rulebook (page 75)
Counteroffer	No	Core Rulebook (page 75)
Daring Aviator	Yes	Core Rulebook (page 75)
Defensive Stance	Yes	Core Rulebook (page 75)
Defensive Sysops (Improved)	No	Core Rulebook (page 76)
Determined Driver	No	Page 48
Dual Wielder	No	Core Rulebook (page 76)
Good Cop	Yes	Page 48
Haughty Demeanor	No	Page 48
Heightened Awareness	No	Core Rulebook (page 76)
Inspiring Rhetoric	No	Core Rulebook (page 76)
Inventor	Yes	Core Rulebook (page 76)
Lucky Strike	No	Core Rulebook (page 76)
Nethunter	No	Page 48
Parkour!	No	Page 49
Probing Question	No	Page 49
Quick Fix	No	Page 49
Scathing Tirade	No	Core Rulebook (page 77)
Side Step	Yes	Core Rulebook (page 77)
Special Use Permit	No	Page 49
Tactical Focus	No	Page 49
Two-Handed Stance	No	Page 49
Undercity Contacts	No	Page 49
Tier 3		
Animal Companion	Yes	Core Rulebook (page 77)
Applied Research	Yes	Page 49
Bad Habit	No	Page 49
Body Guard	Yes	Page 49
Barrel Roll	No	Core Rulebook (page 77)
Distinctive Style	No	Core Rulebook (page 78)
Dodge	Yes	Core Rulebook (page 78)
Dumb Luck	No	Page 49
Eagle Eyes	No	Core Rulebook (page 78)
Field Commander	No	Core Rulebook (page 78)
Forgot to Count?	No	Core Rulebook (page 78)
Full Throttle	No	Core Rulebook (page 78)
Grenadier	No	Core Rulebook (page 78)

TABLE 1–2: GENESYS TALENTS FOR THE ANDROID SETTING (CONT.)

TALENT	RANKED	SOURCE
Hard-Boiled	No	Page 50
Heroic Will	No	Core Rulebook (page 79)
Hold It Steady	No	Page 50
Inspiring Rhetoric (Improved)	No	Core Rulebook (page 78)
Laugh It Off	No	Page 50
Martial Weapons Master	No	Page 50
Natural	No	Core Rulebook (page 79)
Net Warrior	No	Page 50
Nimble	No	Page 50
Painkiller Specialization	Yes	Core Rulebook (page 79)
Parry (Improved)	No	Core Rulebook (page 79)
Scathing Tirade (Improved)	No	Core Rulebook (page 79)
Snare	No	Page 50
Suppressing Fire	Yes	Page 50
Takedown	No	Page 51
Undercity Contacts (Improved)	No	Page 51
You Owe Me One	No	Page 51
Tier 4		
Burn Through	No	Page 51
Can't We Talk About This?	No	Core Rulebook (page 79)
Deadeye	No	Core Rulebook (page 79)
Defensive	Yes	Core Rulebook (page 80)
Defensive Driving	Yes	Core Rulebook (page 80)
Elementary	No	Page 51
Enduring	Yes	Core Rulebook (page 80)
Field Commander (Improved)	No	Core Rulebook (page 80)
How Convenient!	No	Core Rulebook (page 80)
Inspiring Rhetoric (Supreme)	No	Core Rulebook (page 80)
Offensive Driving	No	Page 51
Overcharge	No	Core Rulebook (page 80)
Parkour! (Improved)	No	Page 51
Quick-Witted	No	Page 51
Scathing Tirade (Supreme)	No	Core Rulebook (page 81)
Urban Combatant	No	Page 52
You Owe Me One (Improved)	No	Page 52
Tier 5		
Dedication	Yes	Core Rulebook (page 81)
Drone Master	No	Page 52
Ghost in the Machine	No	Page 52
Indomitable	No	Core Rulebook (page 81)
Master	No	Core Rulebook (page 81)
Master Plan	No	Page 52
Overcharge (Improved)	No	Core Rulebook (page 81)
Ruinous Repartee	No	Core Rulebook (page 81)
Trick of the Light	No	Page 52
Web of Knowledge	No	Page 52

WORLDS WAR VET

Tier: 1
Activation: Passive
Ranked: No
When you take this talent, your character gains Ranged (Heavy) or Resilience as a career skill. In addition, once per session, your character may collect a small favor from a current or former member of a single country's military (chosen when you take this talent), even if they do not owe your character a favor.

YEARS ON THE FORCE

Tier: 1
Activation: Passive
Ranked: No
When you take this talent, your character gains Perception or Ranged (Light) as a career skill. In addition, once per session, your character may collect a small favor from a current or former member of the NAPD or New Angeles city government, even if they do not owe your character a favor.

TIER 2

BAD COP

Tier: 2
Activation: Active (Incidental)
Ranked: Yes
Your character may spend A A from a Coercion or Deception check to use this talent to upgrade the ability of a single ally's subsequent social skill check a number of times equal to your character's ranks in Bad Cop. The check must target the same character as your character's initial check, and it must take place during the same encounter.

Only one character may affect a check with this talent.

BIG GUNS

Tier: 2
Activation: Passive
Ranked: No
Your character's encumbrance threshold is 10 plus their Brawn, instead of 5 plus their Brawn. Your character reduces the Cumbersome rating of any weapon they carry by 1, to a minimum of 3.

CODESLINGER
Tier: 2
Activation: Passive
Ranked: No
When your character performs the activate program maneuver (page 132) in a hacking encounter, they can choose not to deactivate one other active icebreaker. They may have two icebreakers active at once.

COMBAT MEDICINE
Tier: 2
Activation: Active (Incidental)
Ranked: Yes
Before making a Medicine check, your character may use this talent to add ✲ equal to their ranks in Combat Medicine to the results. After the check is resolved, the target suffers 2 strain for each rank your character has in Combat Medicine.

DETERMINED DRIVER
Tier: 2
Activation: Active (Incidental)
Ranked: No
You may spend a Story Point to use this talent to have your character heal system strain on a vehicle they are currently driving, piloting, or operating equal to their ranks in Driving, Piloting, or Operating (choose the skill used to direct the vehicle).

GOOD COP
Tier: 2
Activation: Active (Incidental)
Ranked: Yes
Your character may spend ⮝ ⮝ from a Charm or Negotiation check to use this talent to upgrade the ability of a single ally's subsequent social skill check a number of times equal to your character's ranks in Good Cop. The check must target the same character as your character's initial check, and it must take place during the same encounter.

Only one character may affect a check with this talent.

HAUGHTY DEMEANOR
Tier: 2
Activation: Passive
Ranked: No
Other characters add ⟲ to social skill checks targeting your character.

NETHUNTER
Tier: 2
Activation: Passive
Ranked: No
When your character successfully traces another character during a Network encounter, your character gains one additional trace.

PARKOUR!
Tier: 2
Activation: Active (Maneuver)
Ranked: No
Once per round, your character may suffer 1 strain to use this talent and move to any location within short range.

This includes locations that are vertically distant or have no easy access route, but there must be an object to move across or path to move along. Your GM may rule some locations cannot be reached (such as ones behind locked doors or walls).

PROBING QUESTION
Tier: 2
Activation: Passive
Ranked: No
If your character knows an opponent's Flaw or Fear motivation, when your character inflicts strain on that opponent using a social skill, the opponent suffers 3 additional strain.

QUICK FIX
Tier: 2
Activation: Active (Maneuver)
Ranked: No
You may spend a Story Point to use this talent to have your character temporarily repair one damaged item they are engaged with. For a number of rounds equal to your character's ranks in Mechanics, the item may be used without penalty (see page 89 of the **Genesys** Core Rulebook), even if it is unusable. When the effect ends, the item is damaged one additional step; if it was already suffering from major damage, it is destroyed and cannot be repaired.

SPECIAL USE PERMIT
Tier: 2
Activation: Passive
Ranked: No
Your character does not treat any Ranged (Heavy) weapons as restricted (R).

This also means your character can carry a Ranged (Heavy) weapon that normally would be restricted in public without being arrested. However, they can still be arrested for using such a weapon in an unlawful manner.

TACTICAL FOCUS
Tier: 2
Activation: Passive
Ranked: No
When performing a combat check with a Ranged (Heavy) weapon, if your character did not perform a maneuver to ready or stow a weapon or item during this turn, they add ⩓ to the results.

TWO-HANDED STANCE
Tier: 2
Activation: Passive
Ranked: No
When performing a combat check with a Ranged (Light) weapon, if your character has nothing in their other hand, they add ⩓ to the results.

UNDERCITY CONTACTS
Tier: 2
Activation: Active (Incidental)
Ranked: No
Once per session, you may spend one Story Point to use this talent to let your character learn if a character of your choice is in New Angeles, and if so, what district.

At your GM's discretion, the information may take up to an hour to come back to your character.

TIER 3

APPLIED RESEARCH
Tier: 3
Activation: Active (Incidental)
Ranked: Yes
Your character may use this talent before making a check to use any knowledge skill and Intellect instead of the skill and characteristic the check would normally require. Your character may use this talent a number of times per session equal to their ranks in Applied Research.

When your character uses this talent, you should explain how their mastery of knowledge lets them accomplish this task. In addition, your GM may rule that a particular knowledge skill makes the most sense in a given situation, and require your character to use that specific knowledge skill.

BAD HABIT
Tier: 3
Activation: Active (Maneuver)
Ranked: No
Your character may use this talent to become disoriented for the remainder of the encounter. At the beginning of each of your character's turns, if they are still disoriented due to this talent, they heal 2 strain.

BODY GUARD
Tier: 3
Activation: Active (Maneuver)
Ranked: Yes
Once per round, your character may suffer a number of strain no greater than their ranks in Body Guard to use this talent. Choose one ally engaged with your character, until the end of your character's next turn, upgrade the difficulty of all combat checks targeting that ally a number of times equal to the strain suffered.

DUMB LUCK
Tier: 3
Activation: Active (Incidental)
Ranked: No
Once per session, you may spend a Story Point to use this talent after your character suffers a Critical Injury but before the result is rolled. Their opponent must roll two results, and you select which applies to your character.

HARD-BOILED
Tier: 3
Activation: Active (Incidental)
Ranked: No
When your character makes a check to recover from strain at the end of an encounter (as described on page 117 of the **Genesys** Core Rulebook), your character may make a **Simple (–) Resilience check** instead of Discipline or Cool. If your character does so, they heal 1 strain per ✲ and 1 wound per ⩓.

HOLD IT STEADY
Tier: 3
Activation: Active (Incidental)
Ranked: No
Before performing a combat check using a weapon with the Auto-fire quality, your character may use this talent to use the Auto-fire quality without increasing the difficulty of the combat check. If they do so, each time they trigger an additional hit during the attack, they suffer 2 strain.

LAUGH IT OFF
Tier: 3
Activation: Active (Incidental, Out of Turn)
Ranked: No
When your character is targeted by a social skill check they may use this talent to spend ♺ ♺ ♺ or ⊗ to reduce any strain the check inflicts by a number equal to their ranks in Charm. If they do so, the character who targeted them suffers an amount of strain equal to the amount of strain reduced.

MARTIAL WEAPONS MASTER
Tier: 3
Activation: Active (Action)
Ranked: No
While armed with a Melee weapon, your character may use this talent to make an **Average (◆◆) Melee check**. If successful, your character may force one engaged target to either drop one weapon they are holding or move up to one range band in a direction of your choosing.

If your character forces a named rival or nemesis into dangerous terrain (or off a ledge or cliff) using this talent, your GM can spend a Story Point to allow them to catch themselves at the edge and fall prone instead.

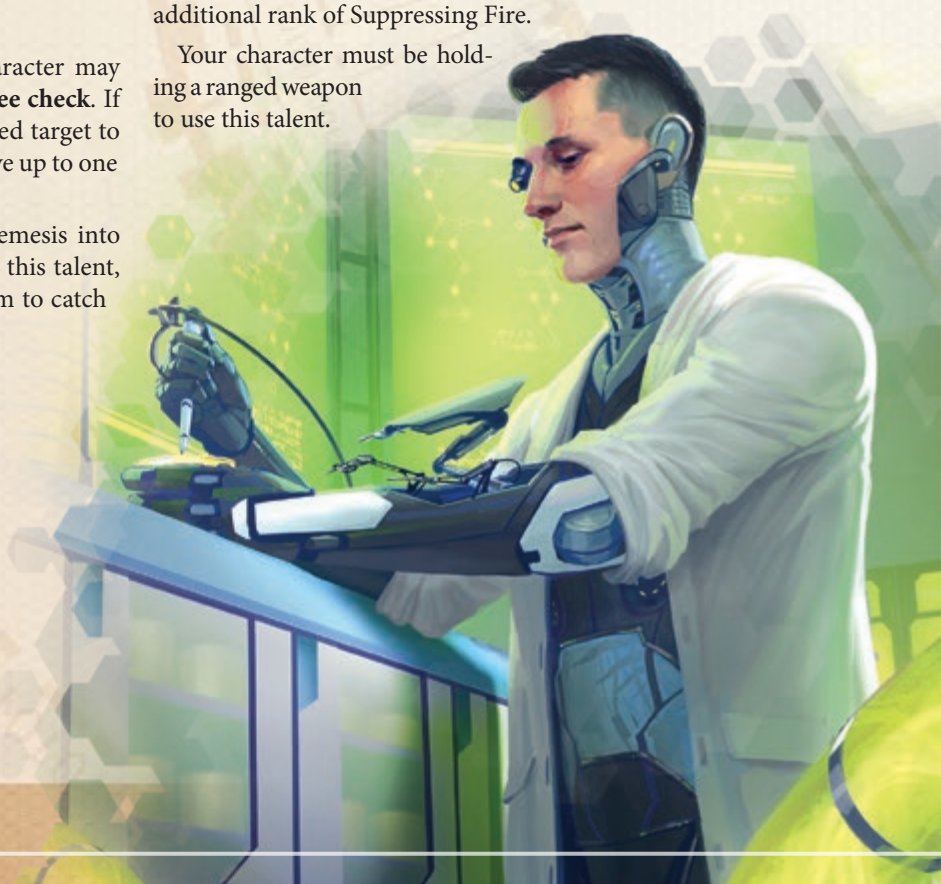
NET WARRIOR
Tier: 3
Activation: Active (Action)
Ranked: No
While accessing a system using a brain-machine interface (BMI), your character may use this talent to make an **opposed Computers (Hacking) versus Computers (Sysops) check** targeting one other character on the system that they are aware of. The target suffers 1 strain per ✲, and if they are using a BMI, they also suffer 1 wound per ✲.

NIMBLE
Tier: 3
Activation: Active (Incidental)
Ranked: No
At the start of your character's turn, you may spend one Story Point to use this talent to allow your character to perform a move maneuver as an incidental. (This does not count against the limit of two maneuvers per turn.) If you use this talent, your character can only perform one additional move maneuver during this turn.

SNARE
Tier: 3
Activation: Active (Action)
Ranked: No
Once per session, your character may use this talent to make a **Hard (◆◆◆) Computers (Sysops) check**. If they succeed, once before the end of the encounter, you may spend a Story Point to force one character in the encounter to make a **Daunting (◆◆◆◆) Vigilance check** as an incidental. If they fail, they are staggered until the end of their next turn, plus one additional turn per ♺ ♺.

SUPPRESSING FIRE
Tier: 3
Activation: Active (Maneuver)
Ranked: Yes
If your character does not make a combat check during their turn, they use this talent to target one character (or minion group) within long range. That character must upgrade the difficulty of any ranged combat checks they make once until the end of your character's next turn. Your character may choose to affect one additional character for each additional rank of Suppressing Fire.

Your character must be holding a ranged weapon to use this talent.



ANIMAL COMPANION?

Although the name of the talent on page 77 of the GENESYS Core Rulebook is "Animal Companion," the description does note that the companion could just as easily be a drone. In SHADOW OF THE BEANSTALK, this talent should be used to operate drones (but can still be used with a pet animal with your GM's permission).

Your GM can also rule that your character can't use this talent if they have no line of fire or range to the target.

TAKEDOWN

Tier: 3
Activation: Active (Action)
Ranked: No
Your character may use this talent to make **an opposed Brawl versus Resilience check** targeting one engaged opponent. If the check succeeds, the target is knocked prone and is immobilized until the end of your character's next turn. If the target is a minion or rival, your character can spend ⊛ to incapacitate (but not kill) the target instead.

UNDERCITY CONTACTS (IMPROVED)

Tier: 3
Activation: Active (Incidental)
Ranked: No
Your character must have purchased the Undercity Contacts talent to benefit from this talent. When you use Undercity Contacts, you may choose to spend two Story Points instead of one. If you do, your character learns the target's specific location.

YOU OWE ME ONE

Tier: 3
Activation: Active (Incidental)
Ranked: No
Once per session, you may spend two Story Points to use this talent to have one NPC in the current encounter owe your character a favor. If the favor is not resolved by the end of the encounter, it is forgotten.

It's up to you and your GM to determine exactly why the NPC owes your character a favor.

TIER 4

BURN THROUGH

Tier: 4
Activation: Active (Incidental)
Ranked: No
After making a successful break ice action, your character may suffer 3 strain to use this talent. If they do, they may perform a second override ice action on the same system as an incidental.

ELEMENTARY

Tier: 4
Activation: Active (Action)
Ranked: No
Once per session, your character may use this talent to make a **Hard (◆◆◆) Perception check** while present at a crime scene. If they succeed, they identify all prominent physical characteristics of one person who was at the crime scene when the crime was committed (as long as the crime was committed in the past 48 hours). This could include a person's height, weight, body type, clothing, and if they are human or not. Your character may identify all the physical characteristics of one additional person present at the crime scene per additional ✲.

OFFENSIVE DRIVING

Tier: 4
Activation: Active (Action)
Ranked: No
While driving or piloting a vehicle, your character may use this talent to select one other vehicle within medium range and make an **opposed Driving** or **Piloting versus Driving** or **Piloting check** (depending on whether your character and their opponent pilot are using Driving or Piloting to control their vehicle) targeting the other vehicle's driver or pilot. If successful, roll twice on **Table III.2–19: Critical Hit Result**, on page 230 of the **GENESYS** Core Rulebook. Choose one Critical Hit result to apply to your character's vehicle, and the other to apply to the other vehicle. You may spend ⊛ to add +20 to one Critical Hit result. Your GM may spend ⊗ to add +20 to *both* Critical Hit results.

PARKOUR! (IMPROVED)

Tier: 4
Activation: Active (Incidental)
Ranked: No
Your character must have purchased the Parkour! talent to benefit from this talent. Once per round, when using the Parkour! talent, your character may suffer 4 strain instead of 1 strain to move to any location within medium range instead of within short range. All other restrictions of Parkour! apply to this movement.

QUICK-WITTED

Tier: 4
Activation: Active (Incidental, Out of Turn)
Ranked: No
Once per encounter, after another character makes a social skill check, your character may use this talent to make an **Average (◆◆) Vigilance check**. If successful, you may add a number of ✲ or ⩓ (your choice) equal to your character's ranks in Charm to the other character's check. If your character fails, your character suffers 3 strain.

URBAN COMBATANT
Tier: 4
Activation: Active (Incidental, Out of Turn)
Ranked: No
When your character is targeted by a combat check while in an urban environment, you may spend one Story Point to use this talent before the dice pool is rolled. If you do so, your character's opponent removes all ■ added to the check, and instead adds an equal number of ✕ to the results.

YOU OWE ME ONE (IMPROVED)
Tier: 4
Activation: Active (Incidental)
Ranked: No
Your character must have purchased the You Owe Me One talent to benefit from this talent. Once per session, you may spend two Story Points to use You Owe Me One to have one NPC in the current encounter owe your character a big favor instead of a favor. If the big favor is not resolved by the end of the encounter, it is forgotten.

TIER 5

DRONE MASTER
Tier: 5
Activation: Passive
Ranked: No
Your character may control two drones or minion groups of drones no larger than your character's Willpower (either via the rules found on page 233 or via the Animal Companion talent, found on page 77 of the **Genesys** Core Rulebook). Your character resolves each drone's (or minion group's) turn individually, choosing the order in which they activate.

GHOST IN THE MACHINE
Tier: 5
Activation: Active (Action)
Ranked: No
As long as they have some sort of access point to the Network, your character may use this talent to make a **Hard (◆◆◆) Computers (Hacking) check**. If they succeed, they may select one drone, vehicle, or piece of equipment involved in the current encounter and dictate its actions until the start of your character's next turn.

Alternatively, your character can select someone with cybernetic implants or who is wearing powered armor or an exosuit and manipulate it until the beginning of your character's next turn. This must be approved by your GM but could include shutting off cybereyes, directing the movements of cyberlimbs, or causing an exosuit to eject its occupant.

Your character may spend ⮝⮝⮝ on the check to extend the effects for one additional round, or they may spend ❁ to extend the effects for the remainder of the encounter.

MASTER PLAN
Tier: 5
Activation: Active (Action)
Ranked: No
Once per session, your character may use this talent to make a **Hard (◆◆◆) Discipline check**. If they succeed, they reveal that whatever terrible circumstances they currently find themselves in are all part of a brilliant plan that they established at an earlier point. They then choose one non-nemesis adversary in the encounter and reveal them to be a close friend or ally who has positioned themselves to help your character at this exact moment.

The details of which character turns out to be an ally depend on the type of encounter and your GM's approval. However, the ally could also have done their work beforehand, such as loading a squadron of drones with blank ammunition, shutting down power to a security system, or planting a tracer in an opponent's vehicle.

TRICK OF THE LIGHT
Tier: 5
Activation: Active (Incidental)
Ranked: No
When making a combat check with a laser or maser weapon, your character may use this talent to spend ⮝ to inflict one additional hit with this weapon, dealing base damage plus damage equal to the total number of ✲ scored on the check. This hit may target the original target or another target within short range of the original target.

WEB OF KNOWLEDGE
Tier: 5
Activation: Active (Action)
Ranked: No
Once per session your character may make an **Average (◆◆) Knowledge (Net) check** during a Network encounter. If you succeed, your character knows the names, strengths, and other qualities of all ice (active or deactivated) on one system that you currently have access to, as well as all other characters (sysops and runners) that currently are accessing that system.

Your character may spend ⮝⮝⮝ or ❁ from this check (whether or not they succeeded) to add ✲ to all Computer checks involving that system that they make for the remainder of the encounter.

STEP 6: DETERMINE FAVORS

Your character interacts with factions and people who are members of a faction through something we call the **favor economy**. We go into the favor economy in more detail starting on page 80 of **Chapter 2: Weapons and Equipment**. However, all you need to know right now is that the favor economy is a way of tracking and defining who owes your character favors, and what favors your character owes other people.

A favor can be just about any service. We classify them as small favors, regular favors, and big favors, depending on how momentous they are (see **Table 2–1** in **Chapter 2: Weapons and Equipment** for some examples of all three types of favors). Your character can perform favors for other people and probably already has, whether they've helped a friend move to a new apartment or hidden a runaway clone during an NAPD raid. These favors are based on who your character is, and what they can do. So a runner can hack into a server as a favor, a PI could track down a missing family member, and both of them could watch a friend's dog for an afternoon.

However, if someone is a part of a faction, they may be able to perform favors that specifically link to that faction. For example, someone who works in a Veskt Medtronics Consolidated laboratory may be able to analyze a genetic sequence and tell your character what those genes are supposed to do. Meanwhile, a sergeant down at the NAPD could probably get your character's hopper out of impound—or ensure patrols stay well away from the location of an imminent gang hit. Each faction entry contains a list of example favors that people who are a part of that faction can perform.

Your character doesn't need to belong to any faction in order to participate in the favor economy. However, belonging to a faction does allow your character to perform favors for other people that your character otherwise couldn't.

FAVOR ECONOMY DURING CHARACTER CREATION

During this step of character creation, your character may end up owing a favor. Nobody can get by in the shadow of the Beanstalk without getting someone's help at some point! However, how big a favor you owe is going to be up to you.

During this step, you may (but you don't have to) choose one faction. Your character owes a favor to someone in that faction. You get to decide whether that favor is a small favor, a big favor, or a regular favor, but your GM gets to decide the details about the person in that faction whom your character owes. The favor has not been called in as of the start of the game, and your GM can use that uncollected favor your character owes as a plot hook, something to get their campaign rolling, or an unresolved bit of your character's backstory that comes back to plague them at the worst possible time!

THE CREDIT

In **Genesys**, we refer to a generic "currency" when talking about how much things cost. In **Shadow of the Beanstalk**, that currency is the Titan Transnational Credit; or just the "credit." Credits are a completely digital currency, and they're what nearly all New Angeles citizens (and the rest of the worlds) use for money.

However, that favor has helped your character get ahead in New Angeles. Depending on the size of the favor, your character gets to start the game with some additional XP or credits worth of gear. These are added onto your character's total starting XP or your total starting credits and can be spent before the game begins. Those additions are listed here:

- **Small Favor:** Your character may start with an additional 100 credits of gear.
- **Regular Favor:** Your character may start with an additional 500 credits of gear or an additional 10 starting XP.
- **Big Favor:** Your character may start with an additional 1,500 credits of gear or an additional 20 starting XP.

Although your character only starts the game owing somebody a single favor, don't worry! They will likely owe plenty of other people favors as the game progresses. Of course, if you're lucky, maybe a few other people in New Angeles will end up owing your character favors as well.

FAVOR ECONOMY DURING GAMEPLAY

Once the game begins, your character can offer favors and accept promises of future favors organically. Your character can owe as many favors as you want, although someone who constantly makes promises to do something for someone "in the future" is probably going to get a reputation as glib and irresponsible, and they may run into trouble with all the people they owe. Likewise, your GM can always decide that an NPC has no interest in being owed a favor and is going to demand some other kind of recompense for services rendered, instead.

For gameplay purposes, however, we recommend that you and your GM only use the favor economy for relatively important favors. Too many favors become a pain to track and are hard for your GM to work into the ongoing story. We suggest that each character should owe and be owed a total of no more than six favors at any one time.

FACTIONS

In a world where everything is owned by someone, survival often relies on knowing the right people. Lots of people have an informal allegiance to something, whether that's the government, a corporation, a criminal organization, or an activist group. These ties give those people access to some of "their" faction's power and influence, in exchange for their loyalty and service. While most characters aren't going to be directly tied to one of these factions, they'll still need to give out and collect a few favors in order to survive. It's likely that your character is no exception.

PLAYING THE ALLEGIANCE GAME

Factions in **Shadow of the Beanstalk** represent the formal and informal power blocs in New Angeles. Each faction is a group of people who tend to have similar goals and loosely aligned loyalties. While it isn't always the case, two people or groups of people within a faction usually share ideals and avoid working directly against each other.

For example, most of the major corporations that define the world and wield influence in New Angeles are factions. While individual managers, corporate branches, or even companies may compete with one another, at the end of the day, their successes tend to be successes for the corporation they are a part of. They generally perform the same types of actions (work), and their actions *usually* further that corporation's goals (to make money and increase influence). Another example is governments, as even when different branches of a government (such as the Feds and the municipal government of New Angeles) clash, they both still want to uphold the law and keep society functioning.

This section details some of the major factions of the setting, their interests, and how your character may interact with them (especially through something called the **favor economy**, which we'll explain more on page 80).

YOUR CHARACTER AND FACTIONS

Your character probably doesn't belong to a faction. In fact, whether or not someone "belongs" to a faction is often very much up to interpretation. While someone who works for Jinteki Biotech could be said to be a part of the Jinteki faction, what if that person is a low-level employee in a Jinteki subsidiary, and they don't really care about anything that Jinteki Biotech does? What if that person does side hustles for a local gang on weekends to make some extra money and stay in their good graces? What if that person is also secretly a member of Humanity Labor and is part of the movement to sabotage Jinteki and its continuing development of a clone workforce?

It's very likely that your character isn't enough of a player in the messy world of politics, power, and influence to think of themself as part of a faction, anyway. However, that doesn't matter. To interact with factions and members of those factions, your character doesn't have to belong to any of them.

BELONGING TO A FACTION

Having your character belong to a faction is an entirely narrative choice that's up to you and your GM. Sometimes allegiance to a faction is fairly obvious: if you want your character to be a cop, they'll have some pretty strong ties to the NAPD faction. In other cases, that allegiance may be more tenuous: your character may know a lot of people in a local street gang, but they might not officially be a gang member.

Whatever the case, there are no specific qualifiers or requirements for being a part of a faction. Basically, as long as it makes sense for you and your GM, your character can belong to a faction.

BENEFITS AND DRAWBACKS OF BELONGING TO A FACTION

There are benefits and drawbacks to belonging to a faction. The primary benefit is narrative. If your character belongs to a faction, they have the ability to call on the resources of that faction. A member of the NAPD can call on their fellow officers to help bail them out if they get into trouble, and an employee at a corporation may be able to access a corporate lab for a little bit of after-hours research.

Of course, if your character belongs to a faction, that faction will be calling on your character to perform tasks for it. Corporate employees need to show up for work, members of criminal organizations may need to participate in illegal activities, and Human First sympathizers may need to smash a bioroid with a sledgehammer. Failing to do these tasks can result in your character being kicked out, fired, or cut off from the faction. This is entirely at your GM's discretion, as it probably depends on what tasks your character refuses to perform and how often they refuse.

In game terms, we represent these tasks as **favors**. Favors are described on page 53 and page 80, but they're basically acts your character can be asked to perform because they owe someone for something, or your character can ask someone else to do because they owe your character. Belonging to a faction gives your characters the following benefits and responsibilities.

- Once per session, you may spend a Story Point to have someone else in your faction perform a small favor or regular favor for you.
- Once per session, your GM may spend a Story Point to have someone else in your faction request you perform a small favor or regular favor; this must be completed by the end of the session.

The following pages cover some of the major factions in New Angeles. Depending on your character's story and place in the setting, they may be in a position to perform the faction-specific favors listed in one of the faction entries.

FACTION: JINTEKI

Already a titan in the biomedical world, Jinteki Biotech underwent major changes twenty years ago when a young and driven executive—Satoshi Hiro—took over the company and introduced the first clones into the labor market. Ever since then, Jinteki has been a corporation struggling with its own self-image. Much of it remains a megacorporation governed by traditional Japanese business practices, but under Hiro's leadership the corporation has become more driven, more dynamic, and some might say, more ruthless.

One of Hiro's first moves as Chairman was to relocate the corporate headquarters from its NeoTokyo offices to the Nihongai District of New Angeles. In the years since then, Jinteki's presence in the city has steadily increased. The corporation now dominates Nihongai psychologically as well as financially, and its ongoing struggle with Haas Bioroid over control of the artificial labor market is a constant presence in the lives of most New Angelinos. And as long as clones' popularity as an alternative workforce keeps growing, that presence is only going to get bigger.

JINTEKI IN YOUR LIFE

When most New Angelinos think of Jinteki, they think of clones. Every clone in New Angeles has been created by Jinteki, and has been conditioned to be a loyal and enthusiastic cheerleader for their parent corporation. So most people tend to associate the megacorporation with cloning and forget about all of the other ways Jinteki impacts their lives.

For example, Jinteki and its subsidiary companies have made great strides in medical technology over the past decades, with cloned organs, tailored gene-therapies, surgical alternatives, and other innovations that can drastically improve human health and well being. These technologies are available in many New Angeles hospitals, from the massive, state-of-the-art Harmony General to the hundreds of affordable Emerald Bay Community Clinics. Coincidentally, most of those medical facilities are owned by financial firms that happen to be controlled by Jinteki, to the point that if you're purchasing medical care, odds are your money is eventually ending up in the megacorporation's accounts.

Another area that Jinteki has vast interests in is genetic modification, or g-modding. G-modding is a huge business, with g-mods being used in economic sectors ranging from agriculture to childcare to the countercultural "wylders." What most people may not realize is that most of the hundreds of companies that produce g-mods are owned by Jinteki subsidiary, Industrial Genomics. Often, the latest flavor-enhanced coffee beans and an injection that causes someone to grow a monkey's tail were made in the same lab complex.

CORPORATE CULTURE

While Chairman Hiro may be pushing Jinteki to leave behind some of the traditions he feels weigh the company down, for the most part the megacorporation still bears its Japanese corporate heritage proudly. Jinteki is an insular corporation that prefers to promote from within and prizes corporate loyalty and dedication—often over competency at one's job. Jinteki employees are expected to maintain perfect self-control and complete courtesy in all of their dealings, all while sacrificing time with their families, friends, and hobbies to spend more hours on the clock. In exchange, they can expect slow promotions in a seniority-based corporate structure that rewards longevity more than innovation.

Jinteki also has much more bureaucratic overhead than most megacorporations, with multiple department managers and sub-managers reporting to each other in an elaborate and well-established chain of command. Decisions are often made slowly, as each level of management must be consulted in the proper order before a new idea can be passed up the corporate ladder. Along with that comes plenty of official record keeping and approval applications, which are no less difficult to navigate even with AI assistance.

This is precisely what Chairman Hiro hopes to change. Jinteki is in the midst of a corporate reshuffling that is seeing a lot of sub-departments and junior assistant executives removed, all in the name of the Chairman's drive to rebuild the megacorporation into a leaner, more adaptable, and more innovative entity. This leaves Jinteki employees split; the old guard bemoan the loss of tradition and the cavalier firing of so many employees, while the (often younger) new guard are enthusiastic to participate in a more meritocratic business environment.

Of course, Jinteki's corporate culture does not extend to most of its subsidiaries, especially the larger ones like Harmony MedTech, Morph, Synthetic Systems Research, and Industrial Genomics. These companies have their own distinct corporate culture (SSR for example has a strong San-San Biotech Valley ethos that Jinteki executives grumble is merely coddling ungrateful employees with undeserved perks). However, to Jinteki, these companies are all inferior lessers who need to remember their place. Meetings between Jinteki oversight managers and subsidiary representatives are often tense affairs, where cold politeness masks mutual contempt and frustration.

INTERACTING WITH JINTEKI

When dealing with outsiders, Jinteki representatives are almost always coldly polite. Formality and proper protocol is highly prized, and ignorance on these matters is never an acceptable excuse. Plenty of businesspeople have left a meeting with Jinteki feeling like they've made great inroads, only to find out days later that the deal they thought was a sure thing has fallen through. The differences between polite formalities (and the preference to never, ever disagree with someone directly) and the Jinteki representative's true intentions can be extremely subtle and hard to understand.

A Jinteki employee strives to maintain proper decorum at all times, masking their true opinions about a representative from another company or a contractor being hired for a job behind a precise amount of small talk, pleasantly distant comments, and reserve. When meeting with a representative of Jinteki, the wise pay much more attention to what is not said than what is said. The most important business occurs via subtext and innuendo.

The wise also remember that since a loyal Jinteki employee places the company's well-being above their own, they're certainly going to see the company's interests as more important than those of outsiders. Doing contract work—especially illegal contract work—for Jinteki or its employees can be tricky, as the contractors are generally seen as expendable.

THE YAKUZA CONNECTION

It's an open secret amongst the streets of Nihongai that Jinteki has a close relationship with the yakuza. Some NAPD detectives grumble that the orgcrime outfit is simply Jinteki Biotech's "White-Collar Crime" division. While that may be true, the corporation is far too savvy to tie itself directly to any yakuza activities, and if the yakuza's criminal enterprises seldom seem to target Jinteki's interests directly, surely that's just a coincidence?

The full details of the yakuza's relationship to Jinteki are almost certainly hidden behind layers of obfuscation, corporate secrecy, red tape, and a few dead bodies. Nevertheless, if Jinteki does need to obtain "outside contractors" for something illegal, it's more than likely going to be a yakuza *oyabun*—boss—that does the hiring.

TABLE 1–3: JINTEKI SPECIFIC FAVORS

FAVOR TYPE	EXAMPLES (DEPENDING ON SUBSIDIARY OR COMPANY DIVISION)
Small Favors	Let slip some juicy rumors about corporate goings-on Analyze a biological sample in a corporate lab
Regular Favors	Gain the use of a genetics lab Provide information about corporate security Patch someone up after a fight Give someone forged clearance to hide out in a clone-tel
Big Favors	Provide a custom clone Grow and provide a cloned organ or limb for medical purposes Pass on any rumors concerning "Project Nisei," or Detective Caprice Nisei of the NAPD.

FACTION: HAAS-BIOROID

Haas-Bioroid has been a leader in heavy industry and manufacturing for generations, but it was the corporation's research into artificial intelligence that transformed the old Haas Industrie into a global juggernaut. Under the guidance of the indomitable Director Cynthia Haas, HB created the bioroid. These first androids completely redefined the labor market, and their success drove Haas-Bioroid to become one of the richest and most powerful corporations on Earth.

HAAS-BIOROID IN YOUR LIFE

Haas-Bioroid is a long-established presence in New Angeles, ranging from their corporate HQ in the towering arcology overlooking the Manta district, to their vast production facilities in Quinde's "Golem Grove." Of course, the ubiquitous nature of bioroid labor means that most people run into the face of HB throughout their day. Bioroids, like clones, are programmed to be loyal to their corporation, and pleasantly extol Haas-Bioroid's virtues whenever they get the chance. However, unlike some other megacorporations, HB's non-bioroid business ventures focus more on construction, heavy industry, and government contracts. Thus, while HB is a major power player in New Angeles, people tend to forget about the businesses that don't directly relate to bioroids.

While cybernetics were already an established technology, the end of the War and return of thousands of military veterans with replacement limbs and organs made it commonplace. These days, cybernetics are a perfectly acceptable alternative to deal with any number of medical ailments—not to mention the number of people who turn to cybernetics to enhance and improve themselves. Cybernetics aren't a proprietary technology, but HB's work on bioroids make theirs some of the best. Many commercially-available (and military grade) cybernetics were partially or completely made by HB's cybernetics division.

The Worlds War also spurred innovations in weaponry and, unsurprisingly, arms manufacturing is still as profitable as ever. Nearly all megacorporations are involved in the sale and manufacture of weapons, but Networked Emergent and eXperimental Technology (NEXT) Design has an eye to the future. Broken off from Haas Industrie before the company morphed into HB, NEXT has produced some of the first laser weapons and is leading the market in Network security. While the average citizen may not realize it, many of the security forces that protect them both on-line and off are equipped with NEXT technology.

CORPORATE CULTURE

Haas-Bioroid evolved out of the European Union-based Haas Industrie, and the company's Germanic ethos still defines much about the megacorporation. The current Director Haas embraces this blunt, no-nonsense approach to business, and employees who want to survive the relentless corporate culture at HB are advised to do the same.

Haas-Bioroid's work environment prizes determination and concentration on the task at hand, and employees tend to be goal-oriented, punctual, and focused. HB is a very structured corporation, where there is a procedure and a process for anything you need to get done. The process tends to be efficient (another thing Haas-Bioroid prizes is efficiency), but employees who don't follow the rules will soon be looking for a new job.

This attention to structure and detail gives Haas-Bioroid a distinct advantage when working with local and national governments, where the most lucrative contracts are often tied up in the most regulations and red tape. It also means that Haas-Bioroid employees tend to work hard to follow laws and regulations—but often to the letter of the law, not its spirit. If something isn't explicitly regulated or forbidden, then it's likely that some branch of HB is exploring how to make money from it.

Haas-Bioroid's employees are not all Germans or even EU expats, but while the company is willing to hire anyone who can get the job done, the corporate definition of that is often "someone who fits into the corporate culture." Therefore, even though HB has come a long way from being a regional manufacturing juggernaut, the ethos and culture that helped form the company is still alive and well today.

CONSOLIDATED BUSINESS

Haas-Bioroid is much more consolidated than many megacorporations. Whereas other corps may have subsidiary corporate entities, shell companies, and divisions with wildly different branding and marketing, HB prefers to segment itself into divisions. Each division focuses on different products, from bioroids to brain-machine interfaces (BMIs) to heavy construction machinery, but they all fit within Haas-Bioroid's corporate framework and the heads of each division all report to corporate management and Director Haas.

The most prominent corporation that seems to exist outside of HB's orbit is NEXT Design, with its own corporate structure and CEO. However, even in NEXT's offices, the Haas culture is hard to shake, and it's impossible to forget that you're working at a subsidiary of Haas-Bioroid.

INTERACTING WITH HAAS-BIOROID

Haas-Bioroid's representatives prize directness and forthright communications (often to the point of bluntness) in their negotiations. An HB employee is likely to tell you exactly what their position is at the start of a meeting, and good luck getting them to budge! In their mind, they've already come to the most logical position for all parties, and thus not only are they disinterested in compromise, they tend to see people who argue with them as idiots.

Punctuality is also important when dealing with HB. Showing up late to a meeting is a good way to get on a Haas representative's bad side, as they treat it as a lack of respect for them and a lack of interest in the matter at hand. Likewise, if someone promises to deliver a good or provide a service to HB, they expect nothing less than the full delivery of that good or service. HB employees tend to disdain excuses; after all, if you'd planned things better, you would have accounted for any difficulties.

Of course, not every HB employee is going to be against bending the rules (or laws), and HB has employed "independent contractors" to perform some less-than-legal activities. But even in those deals, they expect the criminals they work with to be reliable and hold up their end of any bargain they make.

While this gives HB employees the reputation of being cold and unfriendly individuals, Haas-Bioroid's corporate culture does emphasize a fairly strict dividing line between one's work and one's personal life. This means that when HB employees are on the clock, they're expected to be giving the corporation their all. But once their work is done, employees are encouraged to go home, relax, and enjoy themselves—just as long as they show up exactly on time the next day. On the one hand, this means that sometimes it's a lot easier to approach an HB representative when they're having a few drinks and dancing at a ritzy nightclub. On the other, said representative may not appreciate being bothered with work during their valuable free time.

TABLE 1–4: HAAS-BIOROID SPECIFIC FAVORS

FAVOR TYPE	EXAMPLES (DEPENDING ON SUBSIDIARY OR COMPANY DIVISION)
Small Favors	Let slip some juicy rumors about corporate goings-on Review a braintape in a corporate lab Gain access to a corporate workshop to repair a damaged cybernetic
Regular Favors	Provide information about corporate security Provide a copy of a piece of NEXT ice or a security code to override it Access and review the memories of a bioroid working for an average person Provide parts necessary to fix a damaged bioroid
Big Favors	Provide a bioroid Build a high-end, customized cybernetic Access and review the memories of a bioroid working for a celebrity or other important individual Loan someone a piece of bioroid ice, or provide a security code to override it

FACTION: WEYLAND CONSORTIUM

When most people think of the Weyland Consortium, they visualize Jack Weyland, the maverick genius who built the Beanstalk and gave humanity the stars. They think about the massive construction projects that turned New Angeles into a forest of starscrapers and arcologies. And they point to the Beanstalk as the Consortium's most iconic construction, and visible proof of Weyland's influence on the lives of each and every New Angelino.

The truth, however, is quite a bit more complicated than that. Jack Weyland no longer runs the Weyland Consortium, and is now only tangentially linked to the company. None of the multitudes of construction projects in New Angeles have the Consortium's logo next to the building sites. And they don't even own the Beanstalk, although they make trillions off its continued use each year.

THE WEYLAND CONSORTIUM IN YOUR LIFE

More than any other corporation, the Weyland Consortium is deeply involved in the lives of each and every New Angelino. However, their presence is probably the least visible.

The Weyland Consortium is no longer a corporation concerned with producing anything. Instead, it uses its vast reserves of wealth, assets, and political influence to buy and sell other corporations. This could involve buying a company, selling off its assets piecemeal, then discarding the husk, or it could be a long-term purchase predicated on purchasing an asset and making it the most efficient profit-making machine possible. The New Angeles Space Elevator is a great example of the Consortium's corporate model. Because the Space Elevator Authority owns the Beanstalk, the Consortium isn't responsible for its upkeep and protection, and can stay out of the tangled web of politics that surrounds it. Instead, their lucrative royalty agreement means the Beanstalk will simply provide trillions of credits a year, forever.

Due to this, most New Angelinos don't use Weyland products, bank with Weyland financial institutions, or live in Weyland buildings lit by Weyland power. They just use products made by companies the Consortium owns, live in buildings built by now-defunct Consortium subsidiaries and powered by other Consortium subsidiaries, and bank with institutions that provide the capital for Consortium takeovers.

The Weyland Consortium no longer even has a public face. Jack Weyland is out as the head of the company he founded, and the megacorporation is now run by a shadowy board of multi-billionaire directors. Most of these individuals have never been publicly identified, preferring to speak through a succession of charming, attractive, and ultimately expendable public relations officers. The current spokesperson, Farid Ahmadi, has represented Weyland for eight months—far longer than most of his predecessors.

CORPORATE CULTURE

Due to the Consortium's structure as a megacorp that owns other corps, it does not have any identifiable corporate culture of its own. Only those at the top, the Board of Directors and their direct subordinates, can really be said to be part of the Consortium as a whole. The rest of the Consortium is broken up into the individual corporations the Consortium controls, and each of these has its own, unique corporate culture.

Blue Sun, for example, is a Heinlein-based corporation deeply involved in the production, maintaining, and design of He-3 fusion power facilities. It cultivates an attitude of relentless superiority as it markets its reactors to countries around the globe. Blue Sun knows its plants are some of the best, but it doesn't hold the patent to the concept of fusion power. Therefore, it relies on ruthless legal (and illegal) maneuvers to undercut rival power suppliers in markets that it hasn't yet monopolized.

On the other hand, Titan Transnational functions as one might expect a major international banking institution to operate. Most of Titan Transnational's employees are stuffy, conservative, and very risk-averse. However, the bank's investment divisions tend to have their share of wild and risky hedge fund managers and traders. The bank gives these hard-charging individuals free rein to succeed or fail. If they succeed, Titan reaps the profits, and this more than compensates for the failures. However, Titan still holds the managers and traders responsible for their losses, and the only people who can succeed in this job are those comfortable with gambling and living on borrowed time.

A third example is Argus Security, a major player in the arms and prisec industries, and one of the best providers of small-scale security in the business. Argus focuses on protecting individuals and companies, not fighting full-scale conflicts, and their corporate attitudes reflect that. Members of Argus see themselves as part of a team, where toughness and dedication are prized and the only important goals are the safety of one's colleagues and protecting the "package." Anything else, which in practice is anything outside of Argus, is treated with a rough, amused contempt.

Finally, Gagarin Deep Space is a Weyland subsidiary unlike most of its contemporaries, mostly because it is mostly owned and directly operated by Jack Weyland. This corporation is singularly focused on deep space travel and exploration, and its employees tend to share the same hard-charging enthusiasm and dedication to their work as their CEO and leader.

INTERACTING WITH THE WEYLAND CONSORTIUM

Given the Consortium's corporate structure, it should come as no surprise that nobody interacts with it or its representatives directly. Corporate deals and freelance gigs alike (both legal and illegal) tend to be worked through a series of cutouts and front companies, so that one might realize they were working indirectly for the Consortium months or years after the fact (if they ever realize it at all).

This ability to remove itself two or three degrees from anything unpleasant means that the Consortium can position itself to take advantage of all facets of a war or disaster. Investigative reporters and public watchdog groups have claimed that Consortium subsidiaries have sold arms to multiple sides in ongoing conflicts, or been hired to clean up environmental disasters that may have been created by other Consortium-owned assets. The records never seem to lead back to the Board, however, and while individual corporations may fall due to criminal acts or corporate malfeasance, the Consortium sails on unharmed (and sometimes collects insurance proceeds from the collapse of their assets).

All this means that it's not unheard of for freelance operatives to be hired for a job, only to end up facing off against other operatives whose paycheck may have come from the Consortium's coffers. The Consortium (or more aptly, the subsidiaries of the holding companies owned by the Consortium) work to structure these encounters so that whether the job succeeds or fails, the Consortium benefits. It's a win-win, although the operatives involved tend not to see things in that light.

This tends to lead to the one element that pervades most dealings with the Weyland Consortium or its many subsidiaries and affiliates—ruthlessness. Representatives with ties to the Consortium (obvious or not) often suspect that they're just one more cog in a vast and complicated machine. In the end, they're often aware that they're just as expendable as the people they hire or deal with. That means they're willing to go to great lengths to ensure they come out on top, whether that involves sabotage, theft, or even murder.

TABLE 1–5: WEYLAND CONSORTIUM SPECIFIC FAVORS

FAVOR TYPE	EXAMPLES (DEPENDING ON SUBSIDIARY OR COMPANY DIVISION)
Small Favors	Let slip some juicy rumors about corporate goings-on Get a part-time job in a construction firm or other far-removed subsidiary Get bumped up the waiting list to get a ticket for traveling on the Beanstalk
Regular Favors	Provide information about corporate security Provide contacts and a favorable reference to a prisec group or mercenary outfit Get information on cargo being carried by a specific beanpod
Big Favors	Get clearance to run a beanpod up the Beanstalk without inspection Launder money through a Titan Transnational Bank branch Access project information on whatever it is Gagarin Deep Space is working on

FACTION: NBN

Network Broadcast News. Near-Earth Broadcast Network. NBN. The media conglomerate has been known by many names since its founding as a local news broadcaster in the bustling SanSan marketplace. Originally one of the dozens of corporate offspring left over from breaking up the monolithic entertainment giant Vertex, Network Broadcast News was a thriving minor player until the infamous Blackout destroyed the world's information networks. As world governments struggled for something to replace their lost information infrastructure, Network Broadcast News offered up a new, highly resilient communications protocol that would form the framework for what everyone came to call the Network.

The success of the Network established Network Broadcast News as the premier global media corporation. Since then, the corp has expanded alongside humanity up the Beanstalk, to the Moon, Mars, and eventually the Belt, until eventually it was simply known as "NBN." Now, if you watch it, read it, or listen to it, NBN distributed it (and probably had a hand in creating it, too).

NBN IN YOUR LIFE

While all corporations engage in a certain amount of market diversification to appeal to the widest-possible customer base, NBN takes this practice to its logical and extreme conclusion. Most of what the corporation makes is *content*, not *products*, and NBN prides itself on being able to tailor that content to the exact tastes of its numerous audiences. Part of that tailoring involves releasing their content through a multitude of subsidiaries and secondary media outlets, each with their own carefully cultivated brand and reputation.

For example, the New Angeles Sol maintains its credentials as a hard-hitting investigative news provider, while Esmeraldas Today operates as a local provider of district-focused stories and gossip, and A New Moon Rises is a broadcaster whose editorial staff wholeheartedly support Lunar independence and stop just short of full-fledged endorsements of a second violent revolution. Each news provider has a very different tone, slant, and reputation for journalistic integrity, but all three are NBN subsidiaries, even if the corporate logo never appears on their publications.

Likewise, most of the entertainment media consumed by the average New Angelino is produced directly or indirectly by NBN. Harpsicord Studios makes some of the world's premier sensie-dramas, Chaos!Games churns out a constant stream of VR first-person shooters and sports simulators, and superstar Miranda Rhapsody is such a sensation she is her own entertainment business. But whether you're buying a ticket to her next live show, downloading *Sirius War V*, or watching the critically acclaimed *Earthrise*, the money you spend eventually ends up in NBN's corporate accounts.

Of course, nearly all New Angelinos interact with NBN in another way, even if they don't realize it. The ubiquitous Network that links and in many ways runs the world is supported and safeguarded by SYNC, an NBN subsidiary. SYNC works hand-in-hand with most world governments and major corporations to provide Network service across the worlds, and to many, that makes SYNC and the Network synonymous.

CORPORATE CULTURE

Under the current management of media mogul Victoria Jenkins, lifestyle at NBN and many of its subsidiaries and affiliates could be described as "viciously merit-based." As a business that relies on generating new media to survive, NBN needs a constant stream of clever ideas to turn into fresh content. Employees are rewarded lavishly for each brilliant pitch or ratings-busting show, and can quickly rise to manage whole studios, departments, or even subsidiary corporations.

However, NBN doesn't have a long corporate memory, and one can't coast on past accomplishments for long. If an employee doesn't produce, they're quickly exiled to a forgotten sub-division or simply fired. This means NBN employees are constantly racing one another to be in the lead, and plenty of them are more than happy to stab their colleagues in the back by stealing ideas and claiming credit if it means they can survive in the spotlight for a few more months.

As one might expect from a highly creative environment, there are a lot of big egos at play at the NBN offices as well. Managers and bosses tend to be more than happy to squash their employees' bold new ideas if they think those ideas are better than anything they could invent. It's not unheard of for the head of a new sensie studio to trash anything currently in production when they take over; secure in the knowledge that those projects weren't nearly as good as anything they'll create.

However, this culture isn't universal to all NBN affiliates. Some of NBN's more serious news outlets (such as the New Angeles Sol or the BosWash Times Post) operate more cooperatively (or at least with an atmosphere of mostly-friendly competition). Nowhere is this more evident than in SYNC, however. SYNC staff tend to take their self-appointed role as guardians of the Network very seriously, and the company encourages an attitude of sober professionalism akin to the attitudes of government regulatory or law enforcement agencies.

INTERACTING WITH NBN

Many NBN representatives exemplify the fast-talking, quick-witted entertainment mogul. These individuals tend to always be looking for an edge, whether it's an advantage in their current dealings, a new idea to pitch to their bosses, or the Next Big Thing that's going to sweep the Network. This also means many are prone to snap judgments, and

thus put a lot of importance on personal appearance. Many NBN employees (especially those in some sort of management or prominent creative position) have a look that they work hard to maintain, whether it's the highly seasoned intellectual, the confident and calculating executive, the friendly easy-going boss, or the cool and stylish maverick.

This, in turn, means that these representatives are likely to judge the people they work with outside the company by first impressions as well. This can prove problematic, as deals might fall through or freelancers may not get hired because their NBN contact decided the outsider didn't look like whatever role they were being hired to fill. On the other hand, people who remember the old adage of "dress for the job you want" can take advantage of those first impressions.

However, those who assume that NBN's representatives tend to be shallow, vacuous dilettantes tend to regret it. In such a brutal, traitorous corporate culture, nearly everyone has a plan to betray everyone else for their own benefit, and independent operatives aren't exempt from the backstabbing. At the very least, anyone who takes a job with NBN should expect that the representative they deal with has set things up to their own advantage.

The corporate culture does change somewhat when dealing with some of NBN's news subsidiaries, especially the ones that bill themselves as serious journalism. Here, reporters and editors tend to be a bit more analytical (and a lot more cynical), and they tend to go into deals trying to figure out what the other side is hoping to get. These people assume everyone lies, and trying to separate the truth from fiction is often their overriding goal.

Of course, those interacting with SYNC can expect a very different experience. SYNC representatives tend to exemplify their company's sober, ultra-serious culture. They also tend to be insular to a point of making Jinteki employees look friendly and welcoming by comparison. Nobody exemplifies this more than members of SYNC's NetSec division, the individuals directly responsible for maintaining the Network's integrity.

TABLE 1–6: NBN SPECIFIC FAVORS

FAVOR TYPE	EXAMPLES (DEPENDING ON SUBSIDIARY OR COMPANY DIVISION)
Small Favors	Learn about breaking news a few minutes before it runs Find out about some juicy celebrity gossip Get contact information for a New Angeles citizen (who has accessed any of NBN's broadcasting feeds at some point)
Regular Favors	Get brought to an important interview as a "camera operator" or other employee of NBN Access proprietary footage or camera feeds Route a call through NBN systems without it being recorded or traced
Big Favors	Learn about a story that NBN is choosing not to cover Access data analytics of NBN users Be able to "borrow" a communications satellite for thirty seconds

FACTION: ORGCRIME

Despite their reach and power, there are places where the megacorps simply can't go. They don't own local governments enough to get away with openly selling narcotics or human lives, nor can they provide the sort of untracked weapons that some individuals require. As always, organized criminal groups are happy to fill that niche.

Much like the megacorps themselves, today's orgcrime outfits are the products of hundreds of years of mergers, acquisitions, traditions, and occasional open warfare. They operate across the worlds with impunity, their illegal activities cloaked in a veneer of legitimate business interests. They own politicians, police, and corporate executives.

The biggest difference is that, where the megacorps can enforce contracts through the courts, orgcrime has to rely on the projection of force. Anyone who has dealings with an orgcrime outfit knows the score: to cross it is to die.

LEGITIMATE INVESTMENTS

One thing separating orgcrime from the hundreds of street gangs crawling through any major city is that orgcrime invests heavily in legitimate business. Casinos and import/export concerns have long been favorites of organized crime because they support the illegal side of its business by providing a front for money laundering and smuggling operations. Donations to local charities and religious organizations are also common, as any savvy operator knows that a community that values them will shield them from investigation.

As the worlds have moved onto the Network, so have organized criminal groups. Several midsize information security firms, like Allegiance and Dallanor Ltd, have ties to shadowy investors. Plenty of orgcrime outfits also sponsor the runners and securities crimes that these firms protect against.

ILLEGAL ACTIVITY

Across three worlds and hundreds of unique jurisdictions, it is hard to say just what constitutes "illegal activity." The organized crime standbys are the same as they ever were: guns with the serial numbers filed off and digital fingerprints scrubbed, illegal narcotics, people killed or kidnapped, information bought and sold.

Orgcrime also tends to foster the best runners, people who write their own code and bend the Net to their uses. The services of these runners are in high demand, from businesses and investors looking for an edge on the market to people who need to vanish without a trace.

MAJOR PLAYERS

One of the more secretive organized crime outfits, the yakuza once ran gambling dens in Edo era Japan. Now the organization specializes in high-tech and white-collar crime; headhunting the best runners and using them to find blackmail material, corporate secrets, and more. The yakuza are also rumored to have ties to Jinteki Biotech, to the point where some people argue that the criminal organization may just be the "White-Collar Crime" division of the megacorp.

The yakuza cloak themselves in an air of mystery and ritual, including covering themselves in ornate tattoos, carrying high-tech katanas, and employing a centuries old organizational structure. While this might seem a bit ridiculous to outsiders, all of the theater helps forge their members into a loyal, and dangerous, syndicate. Yakuza members tend to have complete dedication to their *oyabun* (a boss in the organization) and the syndicate as a whole, and willingly accept that failure often means painful sacrifice or death.

There is always a black market to provide the goods and services that the legitimate marketplace won't. In New Angeles, many of those markets are supplied by the Mafia's smuggling operations, which also has its paws in racketeering, illegal gambling, and the less stereotypical illegal information trade. Formed from the strongest elements of the Italian, Russian, and Balkan organizations, the Tri-Maf (as it is sometimes known in New Angeles) tends to work with those who live off the grid, acting as the fixer for those who have no other resort.

The Chinese triads who came together under 14K cornered the New Angeles market on opiate trafficking and counterfeiting. They've parlayed their influence into legitimate lobbying firms often promoting Chinese business interests as well as their own. In New Angeles, 14K often operates as the shadowy doppelganger to a legitimate business, with Li Cheong Hua (or "Mr. Li") running its underworld operations in a pragmatic and responsible way. He prefers to keep things civil right up until the point where someone crosses him—at which point their gruesome deaths serve as a pointed warning.

After the founding of New Angeles, the drug cartels throughout Central and South America banded together to form Los Scorpiones—a single entity that could compete globally. They run all manner of narcotics and engage in the messiest of illegal activities. Los Scorpiones tend to have a lot of dealings with local street gangs, especially when running their drug distribution and production outfits. They also engage in "organ grinding," where people are snatched off the streets for their organs and cybernetics, after which their remains are dumped deep in the undercity.

INTERACTING WITH ORGCRIME OUTFITS

Interactions with orgcrime outfits tend to depend on the outfit, as each one has different attitudes and approaches to its "business." The yakuza, for example, tend to be extremely insular. People who try and approach them tend to get nowhere, or they get a bit too close and simply disappear. Instead, if you have something the yakuza is interested in, they'll approach you. This holds especially true for talented runners—the yakuza is always on the lookout for top talent to help continue its trade in information theft.

Once someone has been hired by the yakuza, they expect complete loyalty to the job, and accept nothing but success. By taking on work with them, you've committed yourself to being a part of the organization whether you realize it or not. Any attempt to back out of the deal—or worse, double-cross them—guarantees a heinous death.

Members of the Tri-Maf, on the other hand, tend to present themselves as affable and agreeable individuals who are eager to help supply people with whatever those people need. The Tri-Maf tend to be the fixers and dealers in the undercity, and they're the people most criminals go to when they need to outfit themselves for a job. The Tri-Maf also provides services like credit laundering, identity wipes, and valuable information. However, the friendly act is just that—an act. Failure to pay what's owed or reneging on a deal means the Tri-Maf either sends its enforcers out, or they simply take out a high-end contract on that unfortunate's life.

Like the Tri-Maf, 14K representatives tend to present themselves as reasonable businesspeople—right up until someone gets in their way or betrays them. They also are heavily involved in the world of corporations and politics, to the point of having controlling interests in several corporations and PR firms. Sometimes the corporate representative you deal with may also be a high-ranking member of 14K.

Finally, Los Scorpiones tend to act as gruesome and bloodthirsty as their reputations would suggest. They maintain this reputation by being terrifying and unpredictable, and anyone dealing with them should remember that violence may be only a heartbeat away. Los Scorpiones representatives tend to see nothing wrong with betraying the people they hire, so only the most desperate or dangerous take their jobs.

TABLE 1–7: ORGCRIME SPECIFIC FAVORS

FAVOR TYPE	EXAMPLES
Small Favors	Provide a high-interest loan Gain access to an illegal establishment Verbally threaten someone
Regular Favors	Rough someone up Provide a restricted item, such as a weapon or illicit substances Smuggle a small item into New Angeles using regular smuggling routes Provide a single enforcer as a bodyguard for a day or two
Big Favors	Kill someone Smuggle a shipment of illegal items into New Angeles Provide a group of armed and dangerous muscle for backup

FACTION: STREET GANGS

No one knows for sure how many people are currently living in the undercity, below the plaza level of the arcologies of New Angeles. Many of them were born on the streets and have no identification number or birth certificate. Others are immigrants, former residents of villages in the Ecuadoran Andes who have come seeking a better life, or people from across the Earth drawn to the promise of the Beanstalk. Still others were born to life above plaza level but found themselves, by chance or choice, stripped of their identities and living in the undercity.

These people band together out of necessity. Belonging to a gang means you have someone to watch your back and stand guard while you sleep. It means access to better shelter and more food. And when the NAPD comes knocking, the gang gives you a chance to fight back, or at least hold your ground long enough that you don't lose what little you have.

LIVING IN THE UNDERWORLD

Life at ground level is hard and mean. In the undercity, the housing tends to be disused old constructions amid the foundations of the starscrapers and arcologies, or repurposed cargo containers and scrap housing built among towering plascrete supports. What stays below the plaza level is mostly criminal activity: drug dealers, pimps, and abusive bosses looking for indentured servants. Trash constantly drifts down as well, forming dense dunes and drifts of garbage and detritus.

The summers are blistering hot; no breeze can make it through the densely packed buildings, and even more heat radiates from the power plants buried in the basements of the surrounding structures. Nothing grows in the dark alleys. Even the rain is artificial, just showers of runoff and sewage that trickle down from above. There are few social services on the bottom, and no medical care except for the unlicensed street docs who might patch you back together, but just as easily might sell your organs on the black market.

THE FAVOR ECONOMY

Credits still exist in the undercity, often in the form of credsticks. But the undercity denizens also trade supplies and favors to get by. A web of favors and debt weaves the undercity together, and it's through this precarious economy that the street gangs operate. An addict may help as a lookout on a job or sabotage seccams in exchange for their next fix, or an apartment owner may let gang members use some rooms in exchange for protection.

NOTABLE GANGS

There are almost as many street gangs are there are blocks in the undercity—which a poetic way of saying that there are thousands, if not tens of thousands, scattered across New Angeles. Most are small-time affairs with less than a dozen members, but a few have become large, influential, or dangerous enough to be noticed.

One of many street gangs made up of people of Ecuadoran lineage, Los Pistoleros is notorious for actively recruiting outside of New Angeles. A steady supply of faces and fingerprints that have never appeared on record allows Los Pistoleros to execute mugging sprees upcity with relatively little consequence. The gang maintains most of its territory in the Base de Cayambe and Chakana districts, but it sends members out across New Angeles to carry out its crimes.

One of the most violent gangs in Rabotgorod, the Druzhinniki, draws a following of dedicated killers. They are ruthless in maintaining the boundaries of their territory against other gangs and the NAPD. The gang has made its violence political, positioning its members as "freedom fighters" oppressed by the municipal government.

Named for the colors its members wear, the Green and Black was founded by people seeking protection from a local surge in racist skinhead gangs. Since emerging victorious from that original fight, they have sought to establish themselves legitimately, lobbying for support from upcity and acting as guides and bodyguards for aid workers.

Vendetta Blood works several blocks in Base de Cayambe and even runs a storefront in the Mercado Baja. Besides dealing stim and engaging in thefts and muggings, its members have connections among the staff of warehouse storage companies that deal in materials waiting to go up-Stalk. More than one beanpod has arrived at the Challenger Planetoid or Luna full of crushed beer cans and rocks, thanks to a Vendetta Blood heist.

INTERACTING WITH STREET GANGS

Interactions with street gangs depend entirely on the gang in question, and the worst thing you can do is assume one gang is going to act like another just because they're both criminal groups in the undercity. Each gang has different behaviors depending on the members, the leaders, their territory, and the community they occupy. In fact, some gang "personalities" may change markedly from month to month as members are killed or arrested, new recruits are brought in, and the gangs grow or shrink in size and the territory they control.

Some street gangs are simply small groups of criminals who have banded together for mutual protection and increased success. They have no pretenses about their motives, and tend to defend their (usually limited) territory with posturing and threats. Their aggressive actions are something of a front, however. Most minor street gangs are well aware that they're small fish in New Angeles' ocean of criminal activity, and are wary about starting a conflict

with a much more powerful group. Trying to placate these gangs may only encourage them, as they assume weakness and the opportunity to make some easy credits. On the other hand, aggressive posturing in response may encourage them to back off.

This approach is likely to get you killed when dealing with some of the larger and more powerful street gangs. Groups like Los Pistoleros or the Druzhinniki have enough members, money, and pull with the local cops to make them a dangerous foe, and they know it. The best way to deal with these gangs is to avoid them, or if that's not possible, be polite while not seeming like easy prey.

Other gangs cast themselves in the role of neighborhood protectors. That isn't so ridiculous given that they tend to occupy territory that the NAPD seldom bothers patrolling. These gangs may have close ties to their local community, with strong networks of family and friends living on their block. They may even limit their criminal activity to nonviolent activities such as drug dealing or protection rackets, or travel outside their territory to make the most of their money. Since these gangs have dependents to protect, they're more likely to leave you alone if you're not a threat to them or their families. However, anyone who seems like they could bring trouble down on the block is going to be quickly driven out or killed.

TABLE 1–8: STREET GANG SPECIFIC FAVORS

FAVOR TYPE	EXAMPLES
Small Favors	Allow someone to travel through the gang's territory Verbally threaten someone Provide information about the portion of the undercity that the gang controls
Regular Favors	Rough someone up Provide a restricted item such as a weapon or illicit substances Allow someone to set up an operation in the gang's territory
Big Favors	Kill someone Provide protection while in the gang's territory Join a certain side in a gang war

Some gangs take the idea of being protectors a step further, and occupy a blurry space between criminals and revolutionaries. The Green and Black are one of many gangs, and while they usually still break the law, they cloak their activities in a veneer of legitimacy. Pointing out any hypocrisy in their actions is a great way to get on those gangs' bad side, whereas appealing to their self-image as protectors or champions of the downtrodden usually keeps members of those gangs friendly.

FACTION: NAPD

The New Angeles Police Department is the largest in the worlds, with a jurisdiction extending into Earth's orbit and all the way to Heinlein. Its officers come from a broad spectrum of backgrounds, and they hold equally diverse views on the best methods for policing the megalopolis. Still, they all have the same mission: to protect and serve the citizens of New Angeles. At least, that's the theory.

Despite the NAPD's expansive jurisdiction, officers encounter many limits to their remit. The terrestrial border of New Angeles is surprisingly porous, and it's not unusual to find detectives pursuing investigations into Ecuador. Sometimes the national or local Ecuadorian police are ready to cooperate, but this isn't always the case. When it comes to the private sector, obstacles are even more common. The NAPD can't enter private property without probable cause, a warrant, or an invitation. Often, NAPD officers find themselves turned away from arcologies or corporate offices by prisec, with assurances of a false alarm. Even the arcologies of risties and the well-to-do have their own security forces, many of which cooperate as little as possible as a matter of course.

On many high-profile cases, corporation security and lawyers stymie investigative efforts at every turn. Although NAPD leadership denies that corp interference is a concern, it's an open secret among the department. Many investigations involving suspected criminal activity by or against a corp are left to the corp itself, even when the NAPD has full legal authority. Sometimes this is only after a protracted jurisdictional conflict; at others, an order simply comes down from above to close the case.

DEPARTMENT ORGANIZATION

At the top of the NAPD is the commissioner, currently Chen-Mai Dawn. The NAPD is organized into twelve district offices, one for each district of New Angeles, including Heinlein. Each is led by a deputy commissioner, who reports—along with the chief of internal affairs—directly to the commissioner of police. Below each deputy commissioner are multiple captains, each overseeing a bureau or division within their particular precinct. Several lieutenants perform more specialized oversight, and sergeants command individual squads. Numerous other ranks and titles exist within the labyrinthine organization of the NAPD, with varying responsibilities at the department level or within individual divisions, bureaus, and precincts.

The NAPD employs hundreds of thousands of sworn officers and civilian personnel doing everything from station-level record keeping to exosuit SWAT operations. Of course, every one of these NAPD members interacts with individuals outside the department in both professional and personal capacities, and many people find benefit to a relationship with someone on the force. At a basic level, picking up information about police culture might help a person to navigate a situation should they find themself in trouble. Sometimes, dropping the right name can mean the difference between a warning and an arrest. In the most extreme examples, an ally within the NAPD might even be willing to bend or break the rules to make a problem go away.

INTERACTING WITH THE NAPD

There is no "typical" citizen's view of the NAPD. Opinions vary drastically, although certain trends are clear. Well-to-do arcology dwellers often view the NAPD as trustworthy, honorable protectors, while many in the undercity see officers as fearsome oppressors. Powerful corp executives might view the NAPD as a useful tool or a nuisance, as the situation warrants. With an organization as expansive as the NAPD, many such opinions are colored by individual interactions and experiences—so all of these views, and more, are accurate.

Regardless, for most people, interacting with an on-duty NAPD officer means something has gone wrong. Thanks to seccams and police hoppers, NAPD patrol officers rarely set foot on the streets without cause. As a result, casual or coincidental encounters with uniformed officers are rare. Consequently, the sight of an approaching uniform makes many people nervous, just as it can bring relief for frightened victims of crime.

549TH PRECINCT, ESMERALDAS DISTRICT

The NAPD's 549th Precinct, based in the Esmeraldas District, is in many ways typical of an NAPD station. Taking up fourteen floors of a primarily government-leased starscraper, the precinct is small for an NAPD office, and many of its officers see it as understaffed and underfunded, considering the area's crime rate.

This precinct is situated among some of the "rougher" neighborhoods of the district, and its officers also tend toward the rough side. Many are quick to assume the worst when responding to a call. The 549th has something of a reputation among the locals, and the NAPD, for corruption. Accusations of bribery, evidence tampering, and other abuses of power are not uncommon, although few ever become formal complaints and even fewer lead to disciplinary action. Various legal challenges might stretch on for years, although criminal charges for NAPD personnel are rare. Of course, this corruption is a boon for some citizens. For those who know the right people—or drop the right cash—certain officers are willing to make a charge disappear, or even create a problem for someone else.

As they do throughout the NAPD, patrol officers of the 549th commonly work a full shift, even days, without ever

stepping foot in the station. The precinct's AI, Manuel, serves as secretary for every officer, coordinating and interpreting data, dispatching officers, managing schedules, and otherwise ensuring that the precinct's work goes smoothly. Officers commonly receive their shift briefing by virt, allowing them to participate whether at their desk or in their hopper. Forms and reports are managed digitally, and Manuel can accept most reports verbally. Often, an officer only needs to visit the station in person after making an arrest. Even then, nonviolent suspects may be transported by automated hopper.

Things are different for officers in other bureaus and divisions. They often make use of specialized equipment and facilities, and the station has an administrative staff who work from the office. These officers and staff are in the precinct station daily, or close to it. The bullpen is a bustle of virts and vidscreens, while soundproofed holding cells—also shielded against wireless signals—isolate apprehended suspects. Walking the halls, it's not unusual to see uniformed officers, plainclothes detectives, and armored SWAT members.

TABLE 1–9: NAPD SPECIFIC FAVORS

FAVOR TYPE	EXAMPLES
Small Favors	Fix a parking ticket Ignore a minor infraction such as a traffic violation or drug possession
Regular Favors	Stay out of a particular area during a particular time Provide information from law-enforcement databases
Big Favors	Actively take part in a criminal enterprise Lose or "discover" an important piece of evidence to a major case

249TH PRECINCT, NARCOTICS UNIT

The Narcotics Unit of the 249th Precinct investigates crimes involving illegal drugs, simsensies, and related contraband. Informally known as the "Vice Squad," the unit works on investigations that often intersect with other bureaus and units. Its members collaborate with Homicide, Forensics, and even the Cyber Bureau.

Situated in New Angeles' Rutherford District, the 249th Precinct is well funded and equipped, and this extends to its specialized units and bureaus. The Narcotics Unit makes considerable use of Hachi-Inu clones: highly intelligent dogs marked by their blue coloration and handlike paws. Among their many genetically engineered talents, Hachi-Inus are superior to any natural canine when it comes to detecting drugs and other illicit materials.

Despite the precinct's resources and the popularity of illegal drugs and sensies among citizens of all economic classes, the 249th's Narcotics Unit tends to focus its investigations on poorer, sub–plaza level neighborhoods and gang activity. Although narcotics like Blue Tears and Slam remain a popular pastime among risties, officers of the 249th are more likely to arrest and charge the poor and *disenfrancistos*. The Vice Squad is unlikely to investigate narcotics sales in arcologies unless they involve violent incidents or orgcrime.

FACTION: GOVERNMENT

The political situation in New Angeles is complicated; relatively few citizens understand the intricacies of the situation, or try to. Three governments primarily influence the lives of New Angelinos—the New Angeles territorial government, the federal government of the United States, and the government of Ecuador. Conflicts of jurisdiction are not uncommon, and savvy individuals can take advantage of the nebulous legal areas arising from New Angeles' unique status.

NEW ANGELES

The Special Economic Zone of Ecuadorian New Los Angeles is as complex a political entity as it is unusual. An unincorporated U.S. territory comprising a single city, New Angeles is also arguably the biggest, wealthiest city in the worlds. Consequently, New Angeles has a territorial government that rivals or surpasses many national governments in both scale and influence. Still, this power is somewhat tempered by the authority of the United States and Ecuadoran governments, and even by the independent Space Elevator Authority.

New Angeles has its own laws and regulations on everything from immigration and border control to taxes, racketeering, violent crime, and more. Thanks to the Treaty of Heinlein, the U.S. federal government's direct influence over the territory is limited in a number of ways, leaving City Hall with a large amount of power. Of course, power in New Angeles is always in a delicate balance. For all of City Hall's authority, it relies on the U.S. federal government for a number of supports, and it must maintain relatively good relations with Ecuador's government. The megacorps, too, have no shortage of influence over politics in New Angeles.

INTERACTING WITH NEW ANGELES CITY GOVERNMENT

To say that one "knows somebody" in New Angeles government is so broad as to be almost meaningless: the bureaucracy of New Angeles is sprawling, and individual districts require a governmental apparatus traditionally appropriate for an entire country. City employees, with the exception of those at the highest levels, have a relatively small area of influence. Knowing the right person in City Hall might get someone out of a zoning violation, but only if the staff at the district hall chooses not to press the issue. Conversely, a friend with responsibilities for only a few neighborhoods within a district could save a person from all sorts of trouble higher up.

ECUADOR

As long as the land lease afforded by the Quito Accord is in place, Ecuador has no real power over New Angeles. Still, the city's location within the bounds of Ecuador gives that nation's government a degree of influence. As important as the space elevator is, plenty of traffic, both goods and people, come into New Angeles by traditional means. Ecuador's control of the air space around the megalopolis means it could create problems for the leadership of New Angeles if so inclined. For those looking further ahead, the uncertainty surrounding the fate of New Angeles when the lease expires at the end of the century is reason to keep relations positive.

INTERACTING WITH THE GOVERNMENT OF ECUADOR

For those on the wrong side of the law in New Angeles or who make powerful enemies within the corps, contacts within Ecuador's government can be powerful allies. With the right credentials and favors, it's possible for someone fleeing New Angeles—for whatever reason—to effectively disappear into Ecuador. For those facing legal trouble, the complex web of jurisdiction between the U.S. Feds, the NAPD, and the Policía Nacional del Ecuador can be a lifesaver. Extradition, though far from unheard of, is not guaranteed, and the process can take years. The porous border and expanding suburbs of New Angeles also lead to no shortage of disputes.

And then there are the millions of Ecuadoran citizens residing within New Angeles, or those who work in the megalopolis while living in Ecuador. While both are technically illegal, border security has proven harder and harder to enforce as New Angeles has overflowed its boundaries, and plenty of employers are willing to ignore regulations and hire Ecuadoran citizens. A well-connected Ecuadoran can create a major headache for the NAPD or various prisec firms. They might stall proceedings based on their legal status, or fight for extradition to Ecuador, hoping to face more favorable circumstances there. Conversely, some individuals with enemies in Ecuador's government or a criminal record in that country may fight tooth and nail to have their day in court in New Angeles.

UNITED STATES

Whether or not the United States is the global leader it once was is a subject of some debate among risties and intellectuals, but it remains an undeniable world power and home of the influential megacities of SanSan, ChiLo, and BosWash. Although the U.S. ceded much of its direct control over New Angeles with the Treaty of Heinlein, and despite the geographic distance involved, it is nonetheless the country to which New Angeles belongs, and therefore it is also the country of the highly important space elevator.

INTERACTING WITH THE UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT

As residents of a territory, the citizens of New Angeles do not vote in U.S. federal elections and have no voting representation in Congress, nor are they guaranteed U.S. citizenship. In some ways, thanks to the independence secured for New Angeles due to the economic importance of the space elevator, the U.S. government seems more remote than it is for any state or other territory. Nonetheless, a variety of U.S. federal laws regulate life in New Angeles, and the wealthy and powerful often work to cultivate relationships within the federal bureaucracy and among lawmakers.

The United States' authority over New Angeles, and the Beanstalk in particular, remains a great asset for the nation, and New Angeles receives a corresponding level of federal scrutiny. Even on matters for which the U.S. government has little direct authority, there are a number of federal departments, divisions, and offices that can influence events in New Angeles through means subtle, obvious, deniable, and downright legally questionable.

OFFICE OF SENATOR ARPITA WITHERS

As chair of the Subcommittee on International and Interplanetary Trade and Customs, Senator Arpita Withers holds considerable influence over matters of commerce relevant to the Beanstalk and, by extension, all of New Angeles. While the Space Elevator Authority controls the day-to-day administration of the Beanstalk, and the New Angeles government has a great deal of autonomy for a U.S. territory, matters of international and interorbital trade are subject to a wide range of U.S. federal laws and regulations.

Currently in her fifth term in office, Senator Withers is an experienced and—some would say—cynical politician. Critics often see Senator Withers's actions as showing preference for the corps, and they have gone so far as to level accusations of bribery regarding legislation affecting both Argus Security and Melange Mining. So far, the evidence is insufficient for either a congressional or criminal investigation.

Those who want some sway with the senator would do well to first make a good impression on her office administrator, Dianne Myer. A severe and deliberate woman, in more cases than not, Myer decides which appointments and meetings make it into the senator's PAD. Parties who attempt to bypass Myer rarely secure a fruitful relationship with Senator Withers. On the other hand, Myer's influence over the senator's schedule can be a great asset even for those keeping their distance from Withers's office.

TABLE 1–10: GOVERNMENT SPECIFIC FAVORS

FAVOR TYPE	EXAMPLES (DEPENDING ON GOVERNMENT)
Small Favors	Access municipal records and help sort through publicly accessible data Put in a good word to the right official to help expedite a civil procedure
Regular Favors	Provide surveillance footage of an event Access restricted municipal records Waive civil charges against a person Issue a temporary visa for a person
Big Favors	Drop criminal charges against a person Forge identification documents for a person Access orbital surveillance systems

FACTION: GLOBALSEC

While Argus Security is the undisputed leader in small-scale prisec, Globalsec is unmatched as a provider of private military forces. The megacorp employs hundreds of thousands of both support personnel and combatants, and it can field armies larger than those of some small countries. Among Globalsec's most lucrative contracts are those with the NAPD, Humanity Labor, and the U.S. Department of Defense and Department of State. These are only a sampling of the organizations that employ Globalsec's services; individuals far removed from the defense field might nonetheless have contacts among Globalsec's staff.

Globalsec is headquartered in Atlantica, with primary operations bases in major cities around the globe, as well as on Luna and Mars. Additional, smaller field offices and forward operating bases allow Globalsec to respond quickly to flashpoints almost anywhere on Earth. CEO Lidiah Maucher continues to diversify Globalsec's offerings. In addition to its role as a private military contractor supplying infantry, aeronautical, and naval forces, the corp is a major provider of consultation and training to private security forces and national militaries across the worlds. Globalsec's intelligence gathering and analysis operations are as robust as its armed forces, rivaling or surpassing those of even major nations. In many ways, Globalsec is a full defense department and military, just one without a country.

INTERACTING WITH GLOBALSEC

Most New Angelinos interact with prisec outfits all the time without even thinking about them. Most businesses and corporations contract with a prisec provider to handle electronic and physical security for their companies, so people see prisec operatives on their way into the office, as they board the Metro, or when they have a problem with their Network access privileges at work. However, most New Angelinos treat these operatives with the same easy familiarity they would treat a coworker, or even sometimes with amused contempt (thinking of them as "lesser" security than the NAPD or other government agencies).

However, some New Angelinos have a very different view of the prisec companies themselves. For a lot of people, the term "prisec" is synonymous with "mercenaries," and companies like Globalsec conjure up images of highly-trained and equipped amoral warriors who will do anything as long as they're paid. As more information about the Worlds War and the role prisec providers played gets released, and with the massacre of NAPD forces by unidentified mercenaries during the 23 Seconds Incident still fresh in the minds of the public, prisec corporations and their paramilitary contractors tend to be treated with suspicion and fear. This holds especially true for Globalsec, who has firmly established its reputation as a private army.

So generally the public distrusts and fears the more militant employees of prisec outfits, while remaining friendly and familiar with the prisec security officers they work with daily. What they tend to forget, of course, is that both are just two different parts of the same corporations.

NETWORK THREATS

The Network Threats Division is Globalsec's elite cyber warfare unit. Recruiting from U.S. Electronic Warfare Service personnel and corp sysops, and even taking on the occasional "reformed" runner, NetThreats benefits from a diversity of experience that few—if any—cyber defense teams can match. It is this experience that allows the team to identify and respond to emerging threats before others do—and to develop new intrusion techniques of its own.

Commonly considered to rival the EWS in capability, NTD finds its services are in constant demand across the worlds. From intercorp espionage, to consultation for government agencies, to counter-cyberterrorism, NetThreats staff have shown an ability to effectively wield their expertise in any conceivable application.

As Globalsec's senior VP for electronic security, Jada Tsai leads the NetThreats division. Her experience and contacts from her time as a captain in the EWS have proved a boon to Globalsec, although some subordinates find her overly formal and rigid approach to be abrasive and stifling.

Day-to-day operations see NetThreats staff operating in a number of offices around the globe and beyond. While division staff may engage remotely for many of their duties, consulting work, hardware maintenance and installation, secure running, and other specialized tasks require a closer proximity, if not a true in-person presence. Although some infantry and spec-ops staff view NetThreats as safe "office work," the risk of injury or even death from a fried brain-machine interface (BMI) port is very real in the high-stakes cyber operations Globalsec undertakes on a daily basis.

"CASTILLO'S COWBOYS"

The team led by Raúl Castillo is a typical Globalsec infantry unit, consisting of ten security specialists, an assistant team leader, and a team leader. As with traditional militaries, in Globalsec, informal team names like "Castillo's Cowboys" are common. Because Globalsec, like most private military contractors (PMCs), doesn't follow traditional military organization, units often lack numbered designations, which lends a greater utility to such quasi-official unit names.

Like Castillo himself, many of his team members have experience with a national military, primarily that of the U.S. Some squad members, including Team Leader Castillo, Security Specialist Carmen Tsai, and Security Specialist Fawad Noorani, fought on opposed sides at various times during the War. This isn't uncommon among PMCs, whose

THE COMPETITION

Argus Security Inc.: A subsidiary of the Weyland Consortium and Globalsec's highest-profile competitor. Argus focuses on small-scale security, protecting everything from high-price arcologies to smaller corps' facilities and employees with small paramilitary teams.

VIPER Security Solutions: A small PMC that, until recently, consisted of mercenary independent contractors. Leaders of the group saw incorporation as the best way to avoid criminal proceedings after one sideways mission resulted in numerous civilian casualties.

Melange Mining Security and Asset Defense Division: A small army, like those maintained by most megacorps. Its security division protects Melange Mining's facilities from ecoterrorist attacks, corporate sabotage, and piracy.

Starshield: A midsize private security firm based in Heinlein and operating primarily on Luna, specializing in low-G and zero-G assignments. Its staff includes a high number of Loonies and Martians, many of them veterans of the War. Starshield has a reputation for not looking too closely into prospective employees' pasts.

staff consider it a point of professionalism to leave such differences in the past. Team members with a shared military past, however, do often find camaraderie and sense of identity based on that experience.

TABLE 1–11: GLOBALSEC SPECIFIC FAVORS

FAVOR TYPE	EXAMPLES
Small Favors	Loan someone a restricted military-grade item Get someone a freelance gig through Globalsec
Regular Favors	Give someone a restricted military-grade item such as a weapon, armor, or explosives Ensure someone has a personal bodyguard assigned to them for a few days Provide a heads-up on an upcoming military op
Big Favors	Provide someone with a squad of heavily armed mercenaries as backup Launch a Network attack on a protected server

The team's assignments include antiterrorist operations, territorial disputes, and even the elimination of individual corporate targets. They range from open engagements in the war-torn Mediterranean to stealth insertions in the heights of New Angeles. The team members hold a matter-of-fact approach to the grimmer aspects of their work. Killing is, to the Cowboys, part of the job—even when that includes decidedly nonmilitary targets.

Castillo's Cowboys are tightly knit as a group, with a strong sense of loyalty to one another. Each member knows that their teammates would never turn on them or betray their "trade secrets," even in the unlikely event of serious legal trouble arising from their mission activities. Globalsec encourages this attitude among its employees—both in nondisclosure agreements and unwritten policies—with the expectation that such tight-lipped loyalty extends to the corp as a whole, and goes both ways.

FACTION: LOONIES

Although originally coined by Earthers to disparage them, many residents of the Moon wear the term "Loonie" with pride, if perhaps some irony. Residents of Luna run the gamut, but true Loonies are those born on the Moon or who have lived there much of their life and see it as home. Many Loonies fought on the side of Lunar independence in the War, and even those who didn't take part directly might feel resentment over the Earth's continued hold on the Moon. Within Heinlein, Loonies are the people who think of themselves as citizens of Luna, despite what the governments on Earth say.

Loonies encompass every walk of life and part of society. They range from district government administrators to Docklands criminals, from spaceship captains to helium-3 miners. With all this diversity, it can be difficult to pin down what makes a "typical" Loonie. Still, they share some qualities, as much as the residents of any city or region on Earth can be said to.

Loonies tend to see themselves as slightly apart from their "cousins" on Earth, separated by distance, concerns, and a desire to be free to govern their own affairs. Most Loonies share a sense of camaraderie and loyalty to each other as well. Loonies may hurt and steal from each other as much as any other group, but that doesn't lessen their outrage at an Earther doing the same thing to a Loonie.

LIFE ON THE MOON

In the early days of colonization, those relocating to Luna—whether wealthy citizens of spacegoing nations or poor workers hiring on with one of the corps—were willing to abandon their current lives for the unknown. While living on the Moon now doesn't seem like such a huge step, at the time it was a prospect that came with very real risks.

Long-term exposure to the low-G environment reduces both muscle tone and bone density and, despite the best precautions, Heinlein's residents are exposed to more radiation than they would be on Earth. The full effects on subsequent generations of native-born Loonies are still to be seen. And that doesn't take into account the very real threats that come with living in a carefully maintained artificial environment, 380,000 kilometers away from help. A hole in the dome, a clogged purification filter, a leak in the water reclamation system; all of these seemingly mundane issues can kill someone really quick.

Those willing to leave their families and friends behind and journey to the Moon tended to be adventurers, dreamers, artists—or people without many ties on Earth that made them want to stay. That has held true in the years since the War, as Heinlein has grown into a metropolis in its own right, and travel to Earth and back grows easier and easier. Given that life on Luna is something of an iconoclastic act in itself, it's no surprise that subcultures and countercultures thrive in and around Heinlein. From the g-modding wylders to sensie-abusing psychers, many such communities flourish or originate on the Moon. Many of Heinlein's residents balance a traditional life working for a corp with an unexpected nightlife.

HEINLEIN AUTHORITY

The Heinlein Authority, a department within New Angeles' Heinlein District government, regulates space traffic around the district. This includes coordinating ship departures and arrivals, assigning flight paths, and logging records. Every private, commercial, or government flight must maintain communication with the Heinlein Authority's space traffic control center. The authority maintains close contact with the U.S. Space Expeditionary Corps (SXC) and the NAPD in order to report illegal or suspicious activity, including the presence of any ship operating with a disabled transponder.

The importance of the Heinlein Authority in preventing orbital collisions and criminal activity is significant, yet the murky legal status of the space surrounding the Moon creates complications. In much the same way that the NAPD is unable to police the Docklands or the Moon's surface beyond Heinlein's domes, the Heinlein Authority has shaky jurisdiction over vehicles operating outside of the district's immediate space. The authority's radar and sensor systems, however, are easily capable of detecting craft and activity well outside of New Angeles space, making it a valuable resource for state militaries, federal law enforcement, and even corp security investigating smuggling, trafficking, and other illegal or undesirable activities.

FLYING SAUCER DINER

The Flying Saucer Diner is one of countless businesses based in or around Starport Kaguya that caters primarily to lunar tourists. Although it presents the atmosphere of a small, family-run restaurant, the diner is in fact owned by DineCo, a holding of Lerner Entertainment and Diversions, a subsidiary of the Weyland Consortium. Nevertheless, for many tourists, the diner is seen as representative of lunar hospitality and culture. The Flying Saucer even has its regulars among Kaguya's workforce, although many true Loonies see it as offensively artificial.

Martin Cho has been the general manager of the diner for several years. A resident of Heinlein since before the War, Cho despises his superiors at DineCo, taking solace in his control of day-to-day operations. Privately, he sees the diner as a tacky theme restaurant, but he holds no illusions about the difficulty of making a living as a truly independent restaurateur in Heinlein today.

IFT *ESTELAR*

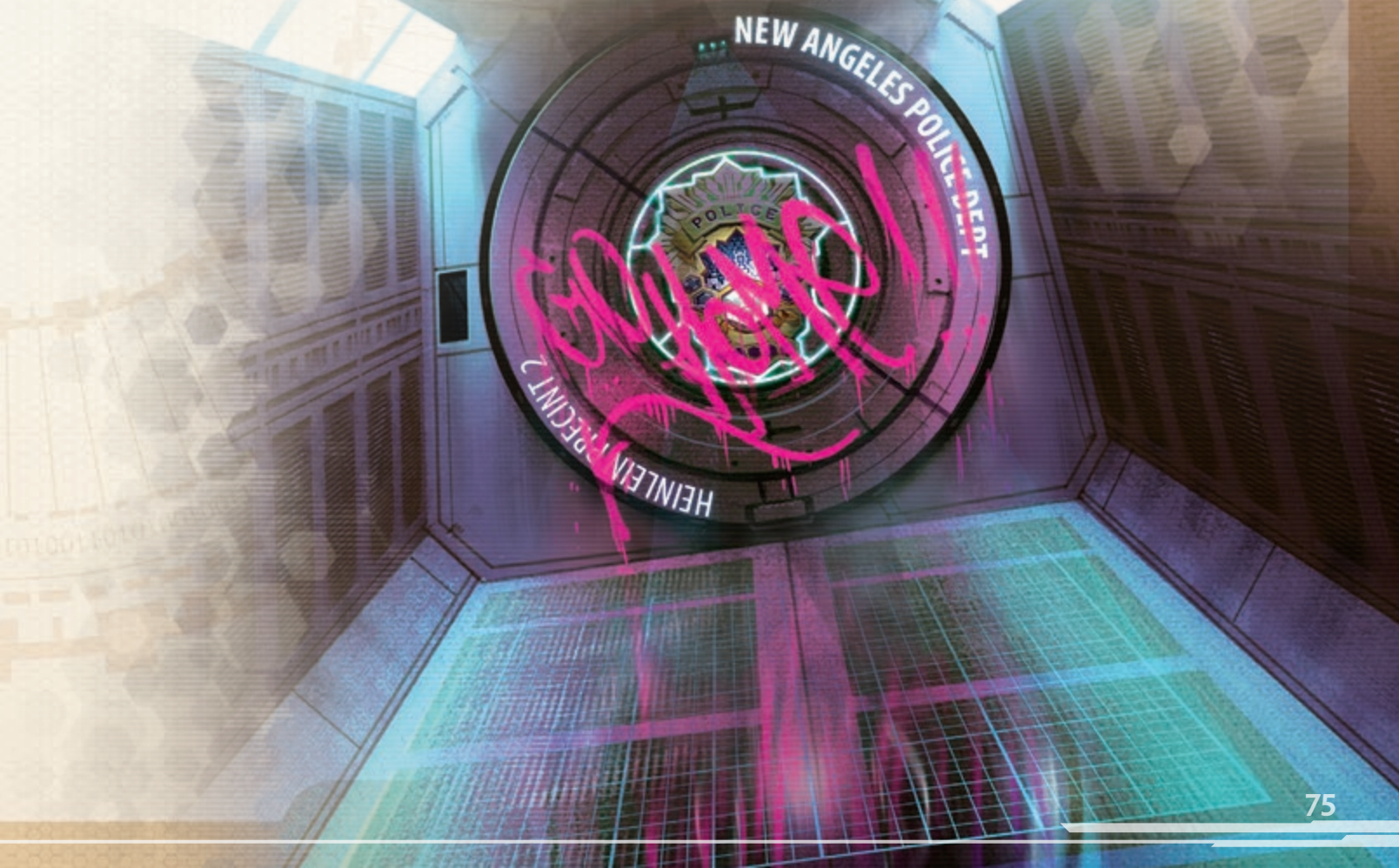
The interplanetary free trader *Estelar* divides its time between Starport Kaguya, several Mars colonies, and the vacuum between. Captain Tahmina Hashmi leads a crew of

four in semiregular runs between Luna and Mars. As a free trader, Hashmi accepts contracts to transport cargo from various corps and the occasional wealthy individual. Work is scarce, as the *Estelar* competes not only with other IFTs but with long-range cargo pods propelled from Luna or the Beanstalk to Mars. Such pods, either uncrewed or crewed by bioroids, are generally more cost-efficient, so IFTs are hired primarily for specialized and time-sensitive cargo.

Like most IFTs, the *Estelar* is not truly independent. It is owned, and its crew employed by, TransTec Interstellar, of which the Golan Company (a major international investment fund) is majority shareholder. Hashmi has significant leeway in running her ship and even in accepting contracts, but she is ultimately answerable to TransTec for the profitability of the freighter's operation.

TABLE 1–12: LOONIES SPECIFIC FAVORS

FAVOR TYPE	EXAMPLES
Small Favors	Provide someone with personal insights about life on the Moon Play tour guide for a day
Regular Favors	Be someone's guide through dangerous areas like the Docklands Give someone a ride in a shuttle to a different part of the Moon Put someone in touch with the remaining Loonie revolutionaries
Big Favors	Get a group of revolutionaries to actively support someone's activities (especially if those activities are illegal) Obtain information about activities during the War that could incriminate former revolutionaries



FACTION: ACTIVIST AND TERRORIST GROUPS

With the corps in constant competition and most world governments bending over backward to support one or another—or sometimes both sides of a rivalry—it's easy for everything and everyone else to get lost in the noise. Whether pushing for humanitarian causes, patriotic ends, or other goals, in a lot of ways, activists have a harder time than ever thanks to the power of the corps. Advances in science and technology have made life easier for billions of people. Yet, while the towers of the risties and the corp elite soar higher, the poor and hungry sink lower. As always, it's up to those willing to dedicate their lives to helping others to try to bridge that ever-widening chasm.

However, some organizations rely on humanity's negative emotions to push their agendas. While the implications of an android work force are still being debated in the halls of government and campuses of universities, Human First and organizations like it channel their fear and anger against those androids—and against the megacorps that make them and the governments and businesses that use them. They incite violence against bioroids and clones, often with sledgehammers and other heavy tools. However, Human First doesn't stop at street violence and vandalism. Factory bombings, burned shipments of androids, large-scale riots, and even targeted killings of Jinteki and Haas-Bioroid employees all suggest that Human First is well organized—and extremely dangerous.

HUMAN FIRST AND HUMANITY LABOR

When machines think like people, work harder, and cost less, no one's job is safe. For the first time, nearly everyone is being confronted with the very real possibility that they will be replaced—and soon. This fear provides a fertile breeding ground for Human First, and even those who oppose the organization's methods often have a hard time arguing with their goals.

Typically, Human First operates on a small scale. Its members take advantage of the pacifist programming of clones and bioroids and beat them senseless. Feeds of these ground-level assaults often go viral on some parts of the Network, inspiring copycat attacks and drawing cheers from the movement's supporters. The movement is also quick to claim responsibility for more controversial actions like the firebombing of clone barracks and industrial sabotage.

The megacorps have struggled to effectively fight Human First's rhetoric. Their own advertising serves to fuel people's fears of being replaced, and attempts to make their products more resilient have quickly turned into PR problems. When Haas-Bioroid rolled out a new line of bioroids with the same sub-dermal armor it provides to soldiers, there was a general outcry that forced several major customers to cancel their orders unless the armor was removed.

PROBLEMS OF ENFORCEMENT

Despite the lobbying by corps that make or make use of androids, there isn't a strong legal effort to target Human First. The organization lacks a clear hierarchy, and many of the attacks that it claims responsibility for are carried out spontaneously. The NAPD has been unwilling to label every bored teenager and unemployed accountant a member of Human First, and so, on the rare occasion that anyone is arrested, they are charged with misdemeanor vandalism or something equally minor. Legally, bioroids and clones are property, so someone who attacks one can only be charged with crimes relating to destruction of property.

Of course, the biggest problem with prosecuting Human First is that plenty of people in the law-enforcement community are secretly (or not so secretly) sympathetic to its cause. On the one hand, they see corporations churning out machines that seem poised to dominate the workforce, and on the other hand, they see average people frustrated with losing their jobs. As long as Human First members stick to destroying androids, many members of the law-enforcement community are content with giving them a pass.

LEGITIMATE CONNECTIONS

Though Humanity Labor has publicly disavowed any relationship with Human First, there is more than just a similar name linking the political organization with its more radical partner. Humanity Labor has positioned itself as a pro-human union, raising money and support for populist politicians while lobbying for stricter regulation on android hiring. There is a great deal of crossover between the membership of the two entities, and there is a small masked presence at every Humanity Labor rally—passing out Human First materials and alive to opportunities for violence.

Android-rights activists continue to reach out to the members of Humanity Labor to propose a shift in tactics. If androids were afforded the same rights as humans, the activists argue, then they would be more expensive than human labor, and there would no longer be any incentive to employ them. So far, these efforts have largely failed.

OPTICON FOUNDATION

The Opticon Foundation's mission statement is "to be the eyes and voice of the people." The organization keeps tabs on corps, looking to uncover unethical, illegal, or dan-

gerous activities and ensure accountability. Of course, the megacorps are powerful and secretive, and any attempt to force transparency and prevent abuse of power is an uphill battle. It's easy for corps to hide malfeasance behind closed doors and prisec armies.

In addition to those attorneys on staff—the foundation was founded by the partners of the firm of Bentzen, Sonoda, and Quebrado—a number of others contribute pro bono services. Still, even at its best, Opticon can't match the armies of lawyers the megacorps keep on retainer. With a few notable exceptions, most of the Opticon Foundation's legal victories have come against smaller corps.

The Opticon Foundation takes proactive measures to monitor the corps, but staff members' ability to do so is limited. The organization largely relies on whistleblowers within the corps to leak information. Opticon can bring litigation on behalf of wronged individuals, including class-action suits. It has also sued corps for violations of national or international laws, often based on information provided by whistleblowers. In addition, Opticon publishes reports and studies intended to expose corporate malfeasance, trying matters in the court of public opinion.

GROWTH DEPARTMENT

As a nonprofit, Opticon is supported by several major grants that it works constantly to maintain, as well as by an ever-changing flow of private donations. Opticon's Growth Department is responsible for the fundraising that keeps these donations coming in. Its activities include community outreach, marketing, and solicitations of public and private donations. Many nonprofits rely on corporate donors, and Opticon, while possibly facing greater difficulty, is no exception. Corps large and small have donated to Opticon throughout the years, commonly perceived as an attempt to demonstrate they have nothing to hide. Some in the Growth Department scoff privately at such transparent attempts, while others worry that accepting these donations erodes public trust in the foundation.

SIMULANT ABOLITIONIST MOVEMENT

The Simulant Abolitionist Movement—SAM—is a loosely connected network of activists who believe clones deserve full rights as human beings, and therefore the slavery of clones should be abolished. The grassroots political organization has made little tangible impact so far, despite campaigns to influence U.S. Congress. Affiliated groups in other countries have had somewhat better early successes, including meeting with receptive legislators, primarily in Norden.

SAM is mostly unpopular with the public at large, governments, and particularly the corps. At one extreme, anti-android activists direct not only invectives but death threats at SAM members; at the other, corps view them as a nuisance, but not a legitimate threat. Most people view androids as either a benefit or a threat, and neither view lends itself to support of SAM.

One might expect the aims of groups like Humanity Labor to align with SAM—if androids were freed, they'd have to compete on even footing for jobs. Anti-android sentiment runs deep, however, and Humanity Labor has shown no interest in cooperation, seeing SAM's goals as unrealistic and irrelevant, at best.

TABLE 1–13: HUMAN FIRST SPECIFIC FAVORS

FAVOR TYPE	EXAMPLES
Small Favors	Destroy a bioroid or a clone Join a picket line or protest against unfair labor practices
Regular Favors	Intimidate a manager or company that uses bioroid or clone labor Get someone enrolled in a Humanity Labor retraining program Put someone in contact with Human First organizers Allow someone to speak at a Humanity Labor rally or meeting
Big Favors	Perform a terrorist act (such as a bombing) against a company that uses or is otherwise involved in android labor Provide someone with legal defense from Humanity Labor

CONCORDIA CHAPTER, RUTHERFORD DISTRICT

The Concordia neighborhood's chapter of the Simulant Abolitionist Movement is one of several in the district. While its membership ostensibly numbers in the hundreds, individual meetings rarely see more than a dozen or so visitors. The members within this wealthy neighborhood often hold meetings in their high-tower homes, or at trendy restaurants and cafes. At these gatherings, participants plan fundraisers, organize campaigns, and plan future meetings.

The ristie members of the Concordia chapter (many of whom are the older matrons of wealthy families) generally treat it as a hobby or social club, leaving any outsiders to assume the participants are a bunch of dilettantes who have no particular interest in android rights. Which is exactly what the members want them to believe.

In truth, the Concordia chapter has been slowly but successfully smuggling emancipated androids to Brazil for years, often under the guise of taking vacations to the Columbia-Brazil border while being accompanied by android "servants." The group also uses their fundraisers to provide the freed simulants with some cash to start their new lives. These activities already come with some risks,

but in addition the Concordia chapter has no interest in buying androids to set them free. Instead, they figure they can do more damage to the simulant labor business model by "liberating" clones and bioroids from their owners before spiriting them to safety. Several group members have connections in the undercity, and are always looking for criminals willing to engage in android theft/rescue.

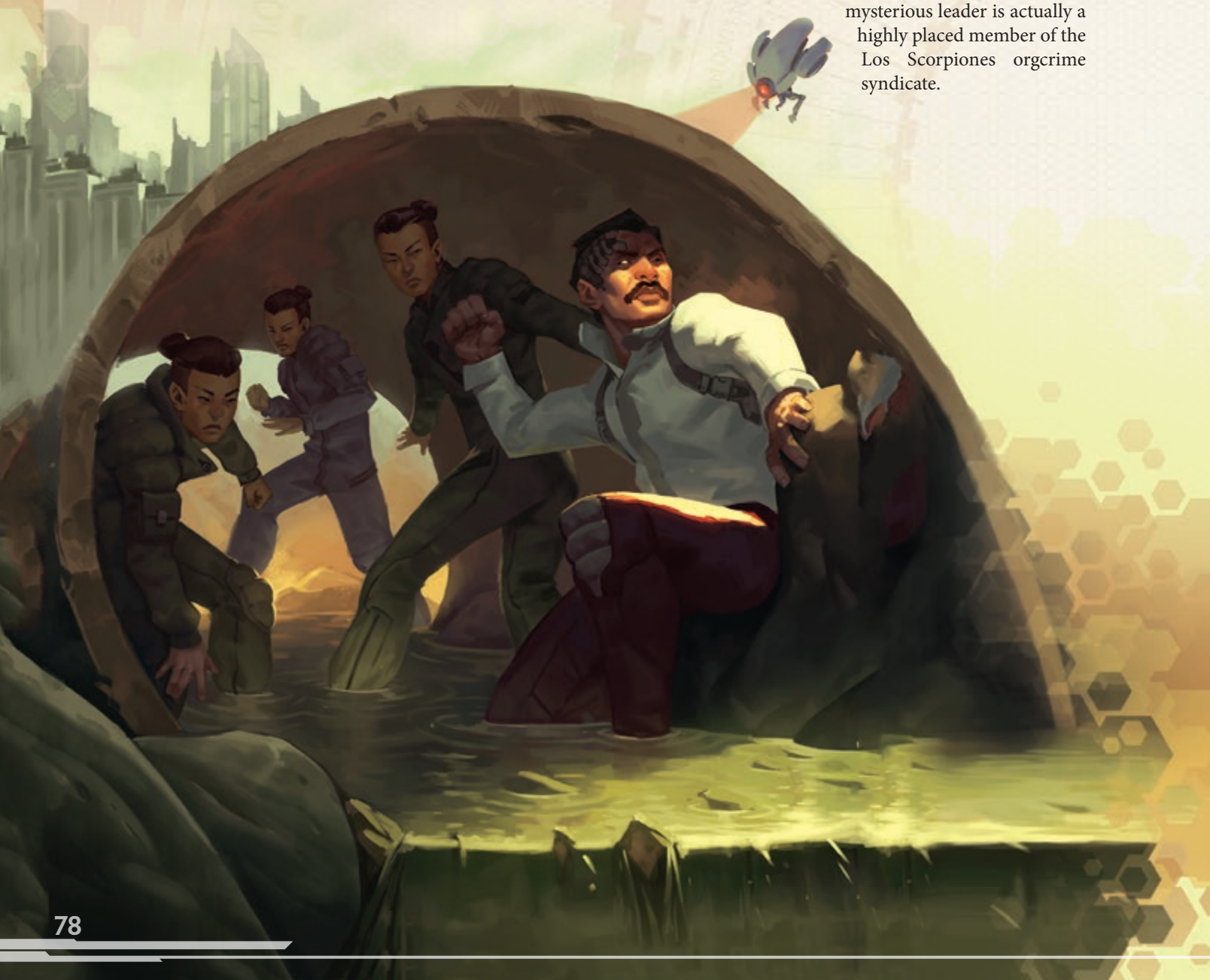
LA BRIGADA TRICOLOR

New Angeles is home to dozens of early reversion activist groups, sometimes called ERAs, pushing for an expedited end to the Quito Accord and the reversion of New Angeles to Ecuadoran territory. Most ERA groups are peaceful grassroots organizations, and few hold significant political sway. A few take a more radical, even violent approach, however. Among these, La Brigada Tricolor stands out as uniquely destructive, leading the NAPD and other authorities to treat it as a terrorist organization.

Although La Brigada Tricolor—through its various manifestos—publicly claims its goal is an autonomous Nuevo Angeles Libre, many suspect the group truly only seeks power for itself. Some within the NAPD believe the group's mysterious leader is actually a highly placed member of the Los Scorpiones orgcrime syndicate.

TABLE 1–14: OTHER ACTIVIST GROUP SPECIFIC FAVORS

FAVOR TYPE	EXAMPLES
Small Favors	Provide information on what a major corporation, government, or other organization may be up to "behind the scenes"
Regular Favors	Smuggle an android out of New Angeles Smuggle someone else into New Angeles Leak information about a corporation or government to the press
Big Favors	Prosecute a lawsuit against a major corporation or government branch



[CHAPTER 2]
EQUIPMENT AND VEHICLES

New Angeles may appear to be a law-abiding metropolis, but at street level, you can still find plenty of people wearing concealed body armor or carrying a piece. Breakthroughs in weapon development allow even law-abiding citizens to carry non-lethal firearms and stun weapons, while criminals, bounty hunters, and *disenfrancistos* have access to everything from old-fashioned slugthrowers to the latest in laser weaponry. Whether your character is a non-violent person looking for some protection or a dangerous hired gun, New Angeles can provide.

Of course, this chapter doesn't just contain weapons. The first part of **Chapter II** contains the complete rules for the favor economy (which you read about on page 53 in **Chapter I**). It then covers weapons (melee and ranged), armor (from menacing body armor to practical environmental protection), and gear (from PADs and backpacks to the latest street drugs).The rest of the chapter includes attachments to modify weapons and armor, cybernetics and g-mods to enhance your character, and profiles of common vehicles in New Angeles. These use the optional vehicle rules found on page 220 of the **GENESYS** Core Rulebook.

THE FAVOR ECONOMY

While New Angeles officially runs on the Titan Transnational Credit (a digital currency backed by the worlds' largest and most powerful banking corporation), once you get below plaza level you quickly find that favors are every bit as valuable as a credstick. Surviving daily life in the undercity is as much about who you owe as who you know, and who owes you in return.

For many *disenfrancistos*, daily life revolves around the informal and infernally complex web of debts, promises, and IOUs that's generally referred to as the favor economy. Trading favors allows people to get what they need to survive when money is tight, and to stay off the grid and out of Titan Transnational's transaction records. It can also be a lot more humane than deducting a price from a credstick. If a paroled runner is starving today, a friendly bodega owner can give them some staples to see them through to payday. In exchange, that runner might reprogram their cash register with a new suite of home-programmed security software to prevent casual robberies. Not only does the starving neighbor get food, they can also "sell" skills they're no longer allowed to monetize. In exchange, the bodega owner gets work done that would cost them thousands of credits if they went through Small Business Protection Programs Inc.

FAVOR ECONOMY MECHANICS

The favor economy is, at its core, an exchange economy. The core game mechanic of this economy is that a character can exchange a favor for a favor of equal value with another character (as long as both characters are willing to make the trade).

In our system, favors fall into three categories: small favors, regular favors, and big favors.

- **Small favors** are the kinds of favors that don't take too much effort or too many resources. Watching someone's pets for an afternoon, giving someone a ride in your hopper, or loaning someone tools are all small favors. Chances are that characters owe and are owed plenty of small favors in their lives.
- **Regular Favors** are more serious: the kinds of things that represent a substantial effort on someone's part or that may even put someone in danger. Lending someone your vehicle for a couple of days, loaning them a thousand credits, or saving them from being beaten up in a bar fight are all examples of regular favors. Characters are likely going to remember the regular favors they owe and are owed, and they often owe or are owed one or two regular favors.
- **Big favors** are just that: big. These are the kinds of favors that people remember years or even decades later, and they are always going to feel comfortable cashing in on them, no matter how long it's been. Protecting someone's family, loaning a hopper to someone who engages in a violent chase with the police, or saving someone's life are all examples of big favors. A character may or may not owe or be owed any big favors.

The types of favors one character could trade with another are nearly endless. So, instead of trying to list them all, we came up with a table of reasonable examples. **Table 2–1: Example Favors** provides a general list of favors. These examples can help you figure out whether any favor you invent is a small favor, a favor, or a big favor.

Also, keep in mind that each of the faction write-ups (starting on page 54) comes with its own list of favors. These are favors that only that faction could provide, or at least ones that it would be especially good at providing. Sometimes these lists may clash with the examples found here. For instance, killing someone usually falls into the category of a big favor. But if you're dealing with a street gang (and depending on who the target is), it may not consider killing someone to be such a big deal.

EXCHANGING FAVORS

Exchanging a favor for a favor is simple, and it generally doesn't require a check. It's simply a matter of saying "if you do this thing for me, I'll do this equivalent thing for you." However, sometimes your character may want to exchange a favor for a bigger favor or a smaller favor. In those cases, your character is going to need to make a check.

TABLE 2–1: EXAMPLE FAVORS

FAVOR SIZE	EXAMPLES
Small	Watch someone's pets or dependents for a day Give someone an item worth 100 credits or less Loan someone a vehicle for a couple of hours Give someone a ride to a location in New Angeles Help someone clean up an apartment Loan someone tools to do some work
Regular	Watch someone's pets or dependents for several days to a week Give someone an item worth 1,000 credits or less Loan someone a vehicle for a few days Give someone a ride to a location in North or South America Loan someone a legal weapon Save someone from a bar fight
Big	Watch someone's dependents and agree to defend them against real danger Give someone an item worth over 1,000 credits Loan someone a vehicle while knowing it may never be returned or that it may be destroyed Give someone a ride to anywhere on Earth Loan someone an illegal weapon Save someone's life Kill a person for someone else.

SMALLER THAN SMALL

Beyond a certain point, we don't bother tracking favors in our system. While buying someone a cup of coffee or loaning them credits for a tube-lev day pass is technically doing them a favor, the values are so minuscule that realistically, most people are going to forget about it within a few hours.

Thus, we encourage GMs to skip tracking favors that are especially inconsequential. More than anything, it's going to save everyone at the table from tracking a lot of minor favors that probably won't make the game more interesting or advance the plot.

However, some players may want to keep track of every favor they owe and are owed, no matter how small. If you are one of those players, feel free to keep a detailed list of favors. Still, in **Shadow of the Beanstalk** (just like in real life), people can get irritated about always being asked to pay back every cup of coffee or ride to the office. If a favor seems especially minor, your GM can add ■ to any checks made to exchange the favor and can also add □ to subsequent skill checks your character makes when dealing with that individual.

EXCHANGING A BIGGER FAVOR FOR A SMALLER FAVOR (STRINGING THEM ALONG)

Let's say your character is owed a big favor, and they want to ask someone for a smaller favor in return. Normally, that wouldn't require a check, and the target would be more than happy to exchange something of theirs of lesser value for something of yours of greater value. However, your character may want to extract the smaller favor and then say, "but you still owe me!"

In that case, your character must make an **opposed Coercion versus Discipline check** against the target. If your character succeeds, the target continues owing your character the same original favor after this smaller favor has been resolved.

If you fail, the target considers the favor repaid once they perform the original smaller favor. They perform the favor requested and no longer owe the character.

EXCHANGING A SMALLER FAVOR FOR A BIGGER FAVOR (TRADING UP)

Now let's say your character is owed a favor, and they ask for a favor of greater value than the favor they are owed. This always requires a check, since your character is trying to get someone to give them something more valuable for something less valuable.

In this case, your character must make an **opposed Charm versus Cool check** against the target. If they succeed, the target agrees to give them the "better" favor in exchange. If they fail, the target refuses, but still owes your character a favor of the original value.

FAILING WITH ♺ OR ⊗

If your character attempts to make an unequal exchange of favors and fails the check, your GM may spend ♺ ♺ ♺ ♺ or ⊗ to have your character also anger the target. Not only does your character fail to achieve the unequal exchange, but the target also decides that they no longer owe your character anything!

WEAPONS

Modern firearms fall into four broad categories: slugthrowers, mass drivers, energy weapons, and the less lethal guns that don't reduce targets to bloody paste. Each weapon type has its own pros and cons, and each one has a place in modern warfare and criminal activity. Slugthrowers are inexpensive and easy to use. A tiny projectile from a mass driver can do massive amounts of damage. Focused energy weapons are accurate, nearly silent, and perfect for use in the vacuum of space. Less lethal weapons like stun batons and synap pistols are perfect for incapacitating an opponent without killing them. Finally, there are rare and even exotic weapons such as grenades, missile launchers, and even futuristic swords.

The list presented here is just a taste of the staggering variety of modern weapons. There is something for every taste and pocketbook, from disposable pistols to monoblades. A motivated character can nearly always find the right tool for the job on New Angeles' streets.

SLUGTHROWERS

Despite the advances made in weapons technology over the past few decades, slugthrowers remain the most common personal weapons available. Cheap, reliable, and easy to maintain, slugthrowers range from tiny, disposable pistols to massive, high-caliber machine guns.

Modern slugthrowers are constructed from lightweight composites with few, if any, metal parts. They use electrical firing mechanisms and generally shoot "caseless" ammunition. Most are also "smart," with on-board computers.

ASSAULT RIFLE

Assault rifles are light, select-fire weapons designed to spit medium-caliber rounds at high rates of fire. They are relatively accurate (now even more so with the advent of smart systems) and are extremely deadly at medium to long ranges. Modern assault rifles are constructed mostly of buckyweave-reinforced composites with alloy barrels and interior parts. They can be fitted with a variety of attachments and smart systems to tailor them to specific missions or just improve their performance. The two most common assault rifle calibers are 5mm and 7mm, rounds descended from the old 5.56 and 7.62 rounds respectively.

While assault rifles are highly illegal for the average citizen to own, they can still be obtained if one knows the right dealer. Certain prisec outfits and mercenaries also obtain use permits from the NAPD allowing them to carry assault rifles and other military hardware within the city limits.

Models Include: Strelet Arms S101 MWS, Cantor M-101 Assault Rifle.

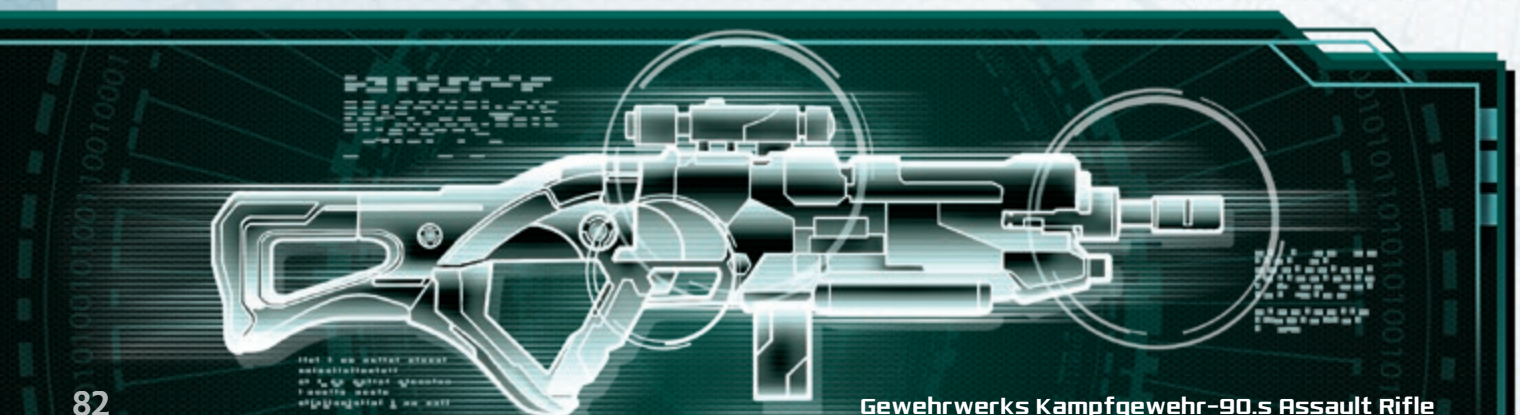
BULLPUP CARBINE

Although assault rifles remain the go-to infantry weapon for most militaries, many PMCs and corporate security outfits prefer to use the more compact and accurate "bullpup" weapons. Around since the beginning of the twenty-first century, the nickname refers to any firearm that has the action and clip behind the trigger, which allows for an easier to handle weapon. Although the first bullpup weapons tended to have some balance (and therefore accuracy) issues, modern smart systems eliminate this problem, letting wielders take full advantage of a shorter gun that's easy to swing around. Shorter ranged by nature, bullpup carbines tend to be used in enclosed spaces, and by criminals and security officers who like being able to hide an assault weapon in a briefcase.

Models Include: Strelet Arms S101.b MCW, Kalashnikov AK-X2 Carbine.

COMBAT SHOTGUN

Whereas civilian shotguns are built for sporting and hunting, these weapons are built for military use. A typical combat shotgun is a light, short-barreled, magazine-fed weapon used by government and prisec forces. Primarily chambered in 12- and 20-gauge, combat shotguns are select-fire



Gewehrwerks Kampfgewehr-90.s Assault Rifle

Astra Consolidated Justicar X Shotgun

weapons that can fire a single round, fire a three-shot burst, or empty an entire magazine with a pull of the trigger. A combat shotgun's major drawbacks are their savage kick and their nasty tendency to jam during automatic fire. The kick is easily contained by integrated smart recoil dampers, but even modern weapon development hasn't solved the jamming issue.

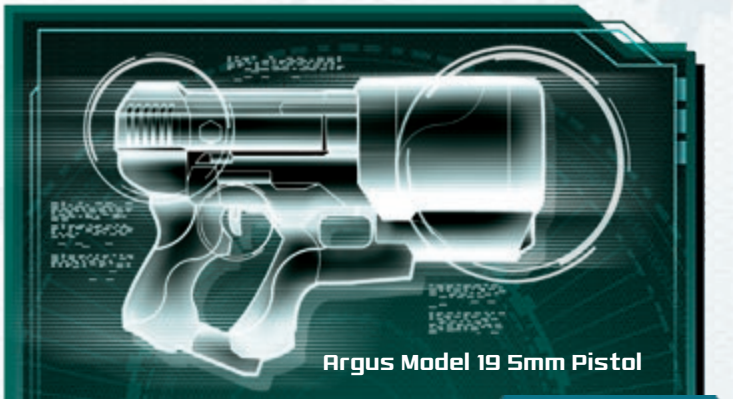
Your Game Master may spend ♺ ♺ generated on a combat check using a combat shotgun to jam the weapon. A jammed weapon cannot be fired. Clearing a jam requires a maneuver.

Models Include: HHI Model 8, Cantor XK Jackhammer.

HAND CANNON

These colorfully named heavy pistols are big, loud, intimidating weapons built primarily for vicious firefights in close quarters. Often cumbersome and impossible to conceal, a heavy pistol has nothing subtle about it. Depending on their ammo, heavy pistols can punch through nearly any armor, and a few well-placed shots can down any angry cyborg or bioroid. One of their biggest downsides is their tremendous recoil. Most heavy pistols are equipped with smart recoil dampers to prevent them from breaking a shooter's wrist.

Models Include: Strelet Arms 12mm Bogatyr, Sturm & Co. Quadra .454, Argus M-1 "Titan" Big Game Revolver.



Argus Model 19 5mm Pistol

FEAR SELLS

According to Haas-Bioroid, the idea of a rogue bioroid is patently ludicrous. This doesn't stop some people from believing bioroids are just a bad line of code away from running amok in the streets. Less scrupulous arms manufacturers play up these fears as a way to sell hand cannons, typically to people who will never use them.

LIGHT PISTOL

Lightweight, easy to use, and often disposable, light pistols are perhaps the most common firearm in the world. While their small-caliber rounds and underwhelming ballistics make them poor weapons, they're still popular with criminals and on the Moon, since they can be produced by 3-D printers and their low-velocity rounds rarely puncture domes. Some NAPD officers carry a light pistol as a drop gun they can place on dead suspects after a questionable shooting.

Anyone searching your character adds ■ to any Perception checks they make to find a light pistol.

Models Include: Strelet Arms Stinger, Skorpios PD-01, Cantor "Ranger" Target Pistol, MarsGoods .22 Poly CCP.

PISTOL

Pistols are the go-to weapons for law enforcement, military, self-defense, and general criminal activity. They come in a breathtaking array of calibers, styles, actions, and configurations and range from snub-nosed belly guns used by back-alley killers to the high-tech sidearms carried by NAPD officers. Pistols have respectable range, stopping power, and are widely available. Pistols are often equipped with smart links, either from the factory or through end-user modification, which increases their utility. All this makes them a very attractive choice for someone looking for a versatile and reliable carry weapon.

Models Include: Delta Arms "Enforcer," Cantor M2111, Sturm & Co. "Rapid 10."

RIFLE

A rifle is any long-range, magazine-fed, semiautomatic weapon used for hunting, sporting, or combat. This category includes everything from small varmint rifles to antique battle rifles from the distant past to modern, high-end big-game and sniper rifles. A standard hunting or marksman rifle is a semiautomatic weapon about a meter and a half long and made of lightweight alloys and composites.

Like shotguns, rifles are nominally sold for sport shooting or hunting, but since there aren't many opportunities for either in New Angeles (outside of a limited number of shooting ranges), most end up used by police sharpshooters and criminals. Of course, rich risties may also own antique or even artistic pieces, with furniture carved from exotic woods or precious minerals. These rifles can be incredibly valuable, and even become a target for heists.

Models Include: Gewehrwerks AG GR14, Skorpios Model 14 Police Marksman Rifle.

RESTRICTED (R)

As you read through this chapter, you'll see an "(R)" next to the prices of some items. This means the item is **restricted**. Restricted items are illegal for average citizens to possess, although some people may have special-use permits or other dispensations to have them.

As far as rules go, your character cannot start the game with any restricted items, although they may purchase them later. In addition, since these items are illegal, they are black-market items. Buying or selling them requires a Streetwise check, as explained in the **Black-Market Items** sidebar, on page 83 of the Genesys Core Rulebook.

In this setting, restricted items are generally the kind of things that will get your character in legal trouble for owning. This doesn't mean your character *can't* own them. It just means that people in some locations are going to be suspicious or scared if your character is brandishing a restricted item openly. Your character may be barred from entering some locations if they have a restricted item on their person. And if a cop spots them, they're probably going to be arrested or, at the very least, detained. That means if your character wants to have a restricted item, they're going to have to be careful about who sees it!

SHOTGUN

The current generation of shotguns are entirely semiautomatic smoothbore weapons with integrated magazines. They chamber anything from tiny .410-gauge birdshot shells up to the much more dangerous standard 12-gauge shells. The wide variety of ammunition available makes them an incredibly versatile weapon, and while they are traditionally used for sport shooting and hunting, the lack of opportunities for either in New Angeles means most shotguns get used for home defense, law enforcement, or criminal activity. They are particularly useful in space and on the Moon, where their low-velocity pellets are unlikely to breach pressure domes and station bulkheads. The SEA and NAPD armories on Midway Station, the Challenger Planetoid, and Heinlein all have shotguns in case of particularly violent situations.

Models Include: Frazetta Maxum Sporting Shotgun, Horner Model 37, Argus Police-12.

SUBMACHINE GUN

Today, submachine guns—or SMGs, as they are colloquially called—are much loved by paramilitary forces, special operators, criminals, and insurgents everywhere. They offer the small size and ease of use of a pistol, combined with the select-fire capabilities of a modern assault rifle. Modern SMGs are relatively small and use electronic firing systems to increase their performance. This makes for remarkably narrow cross sections which are easy to hide. Some SMGs can even fold up to look like briefcases or other innocuous objects.

Models Include: Gewehrwerks AG MP30, Cantor Model 4 10mm SMG.

MASS DRIVERS

Mass drivers are a relatively new development in weapons technology, even though they are derived from research and theories presented by the nineteenth-century mathematician Carl Gauss. Instead of using a chemical reaction to fire a solid projectile, mass drivers use a series of powerful electromagnetic coils to propel inert, fin-stabilized projectiles. Mass drivers, along with laser weapons, look to become the future of weapons technology.

Mass drivers come in two broad categories, coilguns and flechette weapons. Also known as Gauss guns, coilguns are typically long arms or heavy, vehicle-mounted weapons used for light combat duties. Despite the fact that coilguns require immense amounts of energy to function, their accuracy, range, and penetrating power make them excellent sniper and anti-materiel weapons.

MODERN AMMUNITION

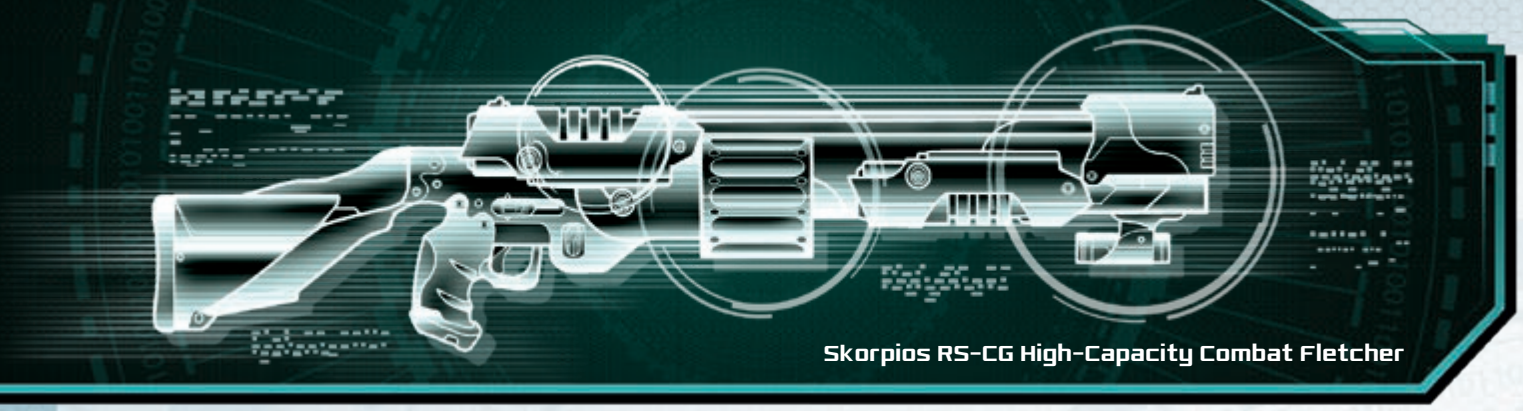
Over the past few decades, modern arms manufacturers have moved away from the old-style metal or polymer ammunition cases and gone completely caseless. A caseless round is basically a block of synthetic propellant encasing a bullet and primer. When fired, the "case" of propellant burns away and sends the slug down the weapon's barrel, leaving behind nothing but powder residue. Caseless ammo allows for lighter weapons and the ability to pack more ammunition into smaller magazines.

While the vast majority of modern ammunition is caseless, some weapons, like shotguns and anti-materiel Gauss rifles, still use metal- or polymer-cased rounds due to their particular performance needs.

Skorpios Mk II Firestorm SMG

TABLE 2–2: RANGED WEAPONS

NAME	SKILL	DAM	CRIT	RANGE	ENCUM	HP	PRICE	RARITY	SPECIAL
Slugthrowers									
Assault Rifle	Ranged (Heavy)	8	3	Long	4	3	1,000 (R)	7	Auto-fire
Bullpup Carbine	Ranged (Heavy)	7	3	Medium	3	2	825	7	Accurate 1, Auto-fire
Combat Shotgun	Ranged (Heavy)	8	3	Short	4	2	1,000 (R)	5	Auto-fire, Blast 5, Inaccurate 1, Vicious 2
Hand Cannon	Ranged (Light)	7	3	Medium	1	3	345	3	Inaccurate 1, Limited Ammo 4
Light Pistol	Ranged (Light)	5	4	Short	1	1	100	2	
Pistol	Ranged (Light)	6	3	Medium	1	2	300	2	
Rifle	Ranged (Heavy)	8	3	Long	4	3	875	4	Accurate 1
Shotgun	Ranged (Heavy)	8	3	Short	3	2	900	4	Blast 5, Knockdown, Vicious 2
Submachine Gun	Ranged (Light)	5	3	Medium	2	1	400 (R)	4	Auto-fire
Mass Drivers									
Auto-Fletcher	Ranged (Light)	3	2	Medium	2	1	500	5	Auto-fire, Pierce 2, Vicious 2
Fletcher	Ranged (Heavy)	4	2	Medium	3	3	675 (R)	5	Blast 4, Pierce 2, Vicious 3
Fletcher Pistol	Ranged (Light)	4	2	Medium	1	2	450	4	Pierce 2, Vicious 2
Gauss Rifle	Ranged (Heavy)	10	2	Extreme	5	3	2,000 (R)	7	Cumbersome 3, Pierce 5, Slow-Firing 1
Energy Weapons									
Laser Pistol	Ranged (Light)	6	3	Short	1	2	650	8	Accurate 1, Burn 1
Laser Rifle	Ranged (Heavy)	8	3	Medium	4	2	900 (R)	8	Accurate 1, Burn 1
Synap Pistol	Ranged (Light)	5	6	Short	1	2	375	2	Disorient 4, Stun 3, Stun Damage
Fire Support Weapons									
Guided Missile Launcher	Gunnery	20	3	Strategic	6	3	25,000 (R)	8	Blast 10, Breach 2, Cumbersome 5, Guided 4, Limited Ammo 1, Prepare 1
Heavy Fletcher	Gunnery	6	2	Medium	6	3	1,400 (R)	5	Cumbersome 3, Blast 6, Pierce 4, Vicious 3
Heavy Gauss Rifle	Gunnery	15	2	Extreme	7	3	4,000 (R)	8	Breach 1, Cumbersome 5, Slow-Firing 1
Laser Cannon	Gunnery	10	3	Long	6	2	1,675 (R)	9	Accurate 1, Burn 1, Cumbersome 4, Sunder
Light Machine Gun	Gunnery	10	3	Long	6	4	1,750 (R)	6	Auto-fire, Cumbersome 3, Pierce 2, Vicious 2
Maser	Gunnery	5	3	Short	6	2	1,275 (R)	6	Breach 1, Cumbersome 5, Unwieldy 2, Vicious 5
Micro-Missile Launcher	Gunnery	12	4	Long	5	2	3,000 (R)	7	Blast 10, Cumbersome 4, Guided 3, Limited Ammo 3, Prepare 1



Skorpios RS-CG High-Capacity Combat Fletcher

Flechette weapons, or "fletchers" as they are colloquially called, use small, low-yield coils to fire razor-sharp darts over short and medium distances. While fletcher pistols are the most common flechette weapons, companies also make flechette SMGs, rifle-sized fletchers that fire clouds of killing darts like a shotgun, and even heavy, vehicle-mounted fletchers for destroying massed infantry formations.

AUTO-FLETCHER

Most fletcher pistols are semiautomatic and fire one dart with every pull of the trigger. A few more-expensive models are select-fire and marketed as machine pistols or light SMGs. These automatic weapons trade their accuracy for the ability to fill a space with darts rather than a single pinpoint strike. Their needles tend to have a bit less stopping power, a trade-off for being able to fire dozens a second.

Models Include: Skorpios MP1 Flechette Machine Pistol.

FLETCHER

Fletchers are a modern, high-tech take on the tried-and-true shotgun. About the size of a combat shotgun, fletchers are heavy, short-barreled weapons that fire canisters of 2mm NEXT flechettes. Upon firing, the canister disintegrates and unleashes hundreds of razor-sharp darts that tear through armor, flesh, and bone as if they were old rags. While popular in the military, the NAPD has deemed them too vicious for police work. However, plenty of orgcrime outfits prefer these weapons as an intimidating enforcement tool.

Models Include: Strelet Arms FX09, NEXT XR11 Shredder.

FLETCHER PISTOL

Roughly the size of a 9mm pistol, the fletcher pistol is the smallest member of the mass driver family. Chambered for the 2mm NEXT flechette, these slim pistols are the go-to weapons for people interested in target shooting and personal protection, along with plenty of police and prisec outfits. They are also popular with special operatives, assassins, private investigators, and orgcrime enforcers.

Models Include: NEXT XP5 Needlegun, Argus Stiletto.

GAUSS RIFLE

If the fletcher is modern technology's answer to the shotgun, the Gauss rifle is its answer to the long rifle. Gauss rifles are the largest human-portable mass driver on the market. Nearly two meters long, these powerful weapons are heavy, a bit fragile, and require immense amounts of power to operate. The trade-off for these shortcomings is a weapon that can easily punch a hole in an exosuit from kilometers away.

Gauss rifles are the ultimate heavy rifle. Most are semiautomatic weapons that fire inert, tungsten-tipped penetrators. Packed full of smart systems and bleeding-edge weapons technology, these big rifles are often equipped with long-range optics, detachable bipods, recoil dampers, and other shooting aids.

Thanks to their outstanding performance, Gauss rifles have almost completely replaced slugthrowers as the sniper and anti-materiel weapons of choice in modern state and private militaries. However, the cost of keeping and maintaining them is too high for most private citizens.

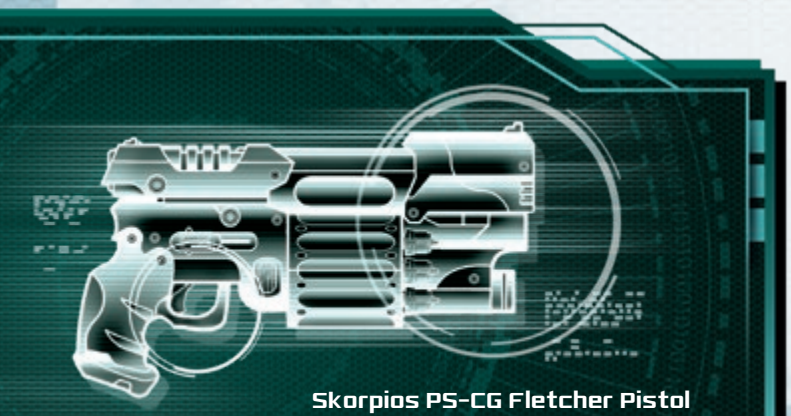
Models Include: NEXT CG44 Anti-materiel Gauss Rifle, Cantor Model 4 "Deadeye" Light Gauss Marksman Rifle.

ENERGY WEAPONS

Portable energy weapons are still considered an emerging technology despite the fact that most state militaries have been using them in limited numbers for years. The first viable focused-energy weapons were large and cumbersome laser cannons that needed to be hooked up to a generator to meet their energy needs. Over the years, the weapons became smaller and more energy efficient, until NEXT finally released a laser pistol and a laser rifle that were affordable, durable, and efficient enough for practical use.

The most common type of energy weapon is currently the laser, which uses intense beams of light on the visible spectrum. Lasers have stopping power on par with equivalent slugthrowers or mass drivers, but they languished behind slugthrowers in popularity—until the Worlds War.

With onset of the War, laser weapons suddenly surged in popularity. As much of the fighting took place in the airless environments of the Moon or the thin atmosphere of



Skorpios PS-CG Fletcher Pistol

Mars, lasers proved much more useful than slugthrowers for military forces and insurgents. After the War ended, developments in laser technology remained, meaning these weapons are now much more commonplace than two decades ago.

LASER PISTOL

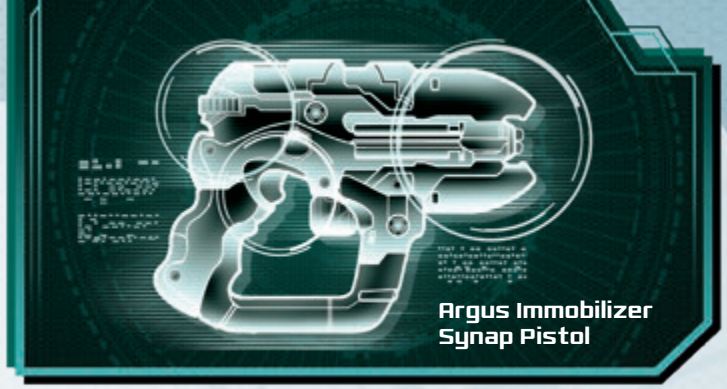
The first mass-produced energy weapon to enter the market was a laser pistol—NEXT's PL840.a, to be exact—and laser pistols have been the most iconic energy weapon ever since. Popular with senior military brass, exotic-weapon collectors, and those who live or work in space, laser pistols are the latest word in self-defense sidearms. Using a high-capacity rechargeable power cell, laser pistols are semiautomatic weapons that produce a nearly invisible beam of searing, coherent light instead of firing a projectile. They are exceptionally accurate over short distances and are shockingly effective against unarmored and lightly armored opponents.

Models Include: Argus 78P, NEXT PL1000 Blaster.

LASER RIFLE

Laser rifles fall somewhere between assault rifles and mass drivers in the modern weapons market. More accurate than equivalent slugthrowers and more efficient than Gauss rifles, laser rifles are a compromise between the two. They are typically semiautomatic, although select-fire versions do exist, and they are most commonly used by assassins, sharpshooters, and support gunners. They produce lots of heat when fired, which makes their shots difficult to conceal or mask, but they more than make up for it with solid combat performance and ease of use. Although many organizations still use some variation of a slugthrower, laser rifles have become the iconic weapon of the U.S. Space Expeditionary Corps.

Models Include: NEXT L12 Laser Rifle, Argus 180R


Argus Immobilizer Synap Pistol

SYNAP PISTOL

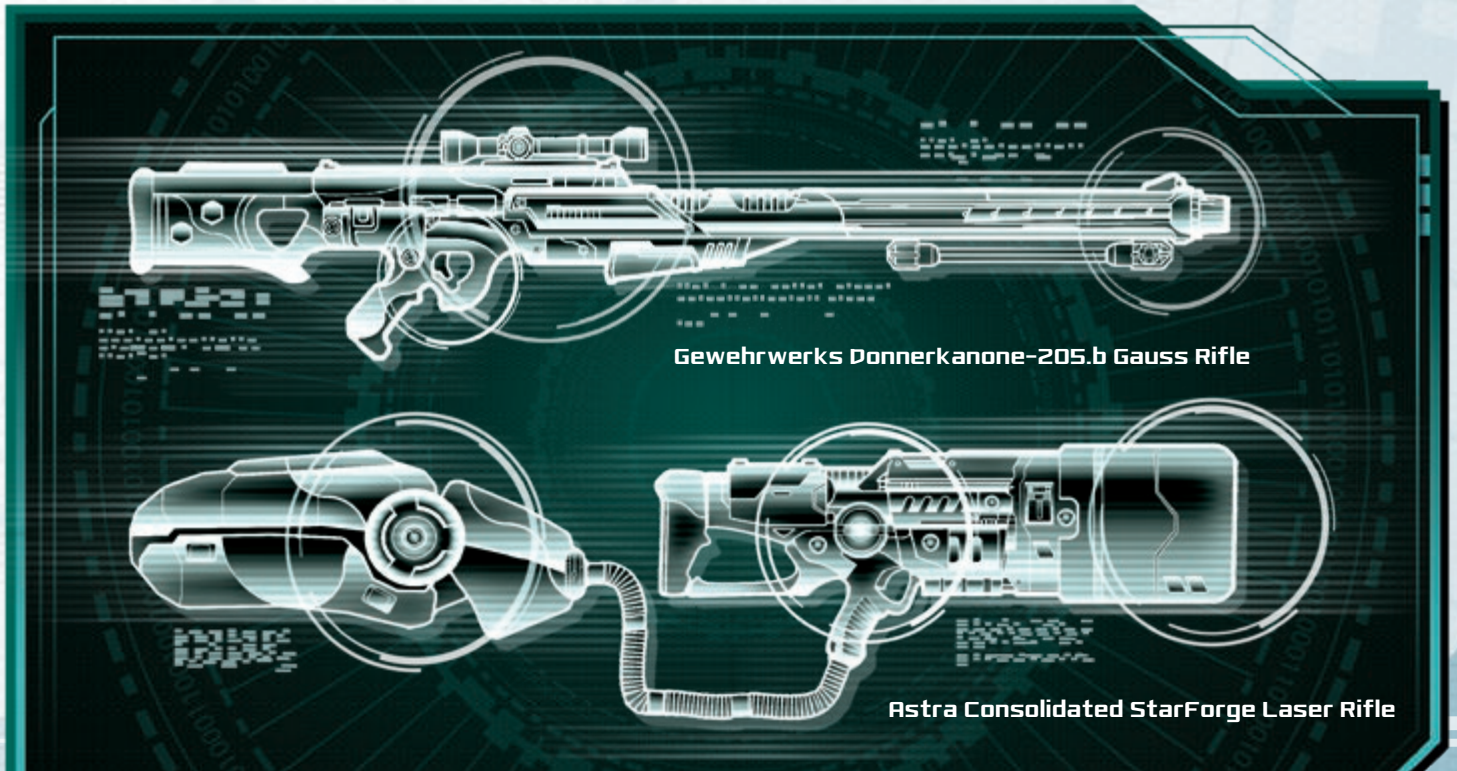
Synap pistols, also known as Gandhi guns, are detuned energy weapons designed for detaining suspects without killing them. Using a low-powered "tracking laser," these weapons fire off a bioelectric charge that disrupts a human or android's synapses and leaves them paralyzed or unconscious. Unfortunately, a small percentage of people hit with Synap pistols go into cardiac arrest due to the energy discharge, but the weapons still remain incredibly popular as a (mostly) non-lethal way to defend ones self and incapacitate suspects.

Models Include: NEXT Syn-stun Pistol, Strelet Arms "Incapacitator."

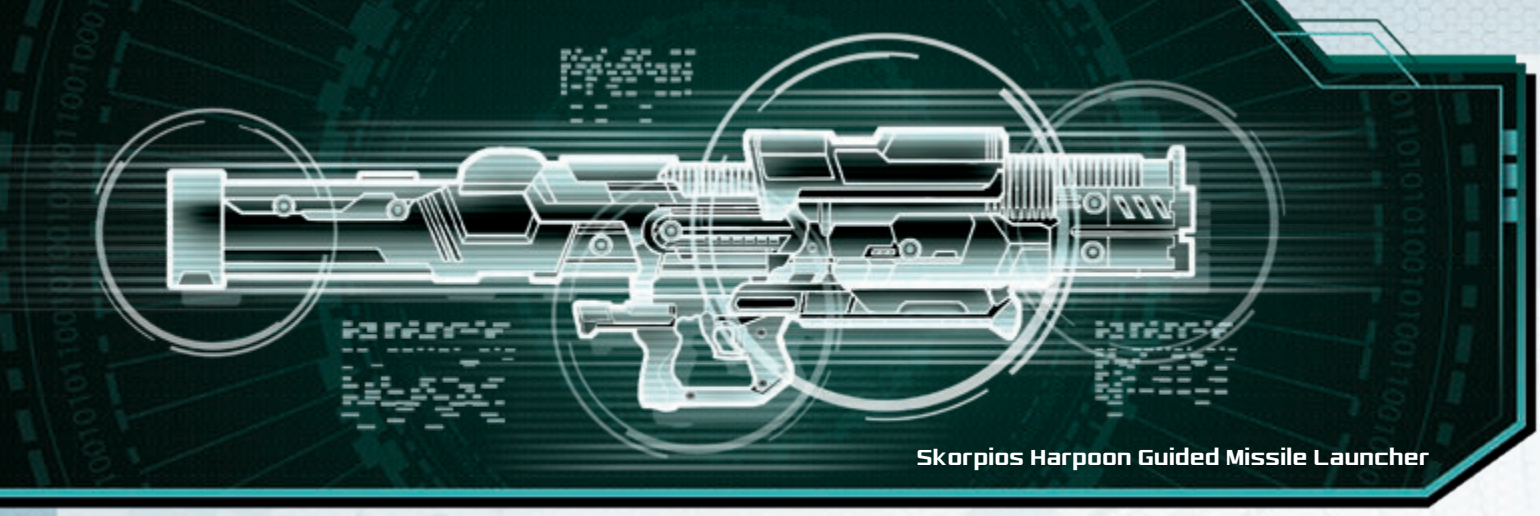
FIRE SUPPORT WEAPONS

Fire support (or "heavy") weapons are vehicle or emplacement-mounted weapons designed to provide fire support and heavy anti-armor and anti-personnel fire. They chamber deadly large-caliber rounds designed to destroy fortifications and entire infantry formations, or fire long-lasting, intense energy beams that can melt an infantry fighting vehicle to slag in the blink of an eye.

Needless to say, fire support weapons are highly illegal in New Angeles. Still, plenty of prisec outfits, orgcrime enforcers, and even the NAPD have the pull and money to keep some of these powerful pieces of military hardware at their disposal.


Gewehrwerks Donnerkanone-205.b Gauss Rifle

Astra Consolidated StarForge Laser Rifle



Skorpios Harpoon Guided Missile Launcher

GUIDED MISSILE LAUNCHER

Guided missile launchers are among the largest, most destructive human-portable weapons available. These reusable missile tubes fire powerful anti-aircraft and anti-armor missiles and can be equipped with all manner of standard and special warheads. Most guided missile launchers share the same general design principles as their ancestors from the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. What sets these modern versions apart is the range and "intelligence" of the warhead. These days, a shoulder-fired missile can travel hundreds of kilometers, while its smart sensors can recognize a vehicle by the unique profile of its exhaust emissions or the electromagnetic signature of its hoverfoil rotors.

Modern guided missile launchers can be fired and operated by a single person, although they tend to be bulky enough that the operator needs to be either fairly strong or wearing a powered exosuit.

Models Include: Strelet Arms L101 Shooting Star Shoulder-Fired Missile Launcher.

HEAVY FLETCHER

Heavy fletchers are designed to do one thing: destroy large groups of infantry. These huge smoothbore cannons are the largest flechette weapons produced, and they are rarely seen outside of military bases. They fire a 250mm-canister round packed with thousands of 2mm NEXT flechettes, similar to those fired by standard fletchers. The canisters disintegrate upon firing, releasing the flechettes and tearing enemy formations to shreds in seconds.

When using a heavy fletcher, your character may spend one fewer ⮝ to trigger the Blast quality (⮝ if the attack is successful, or ⮝ ⮝ if the attack fails).

Models Include: NEXT HF10, Skorpios Suit-portable Needle Cannon.

HEAVY GAUSS RIFLE

These powerful weapons are designed to destroy armor and fortifications at the edge of visual range. Heavy Gauss rifles are 25mm smoothbore weapons similar to a number of older light armored-vehicle cannons in both intended role and ballistic characteristics. Standard load is an inert ferrous penetrator with a buckyfilm-coated hardened tungsten tip. Very technically, Heavy Gauss rifles can be human-portable (with the aid of a tripod or load-bearing system), but more often are carried by exosuits.

Models Include: Cantor LACR-01 Gauss-Effect Anti-Armor Cannon, NEXT CG70(H) Anti-Armor Gauss Rifle.

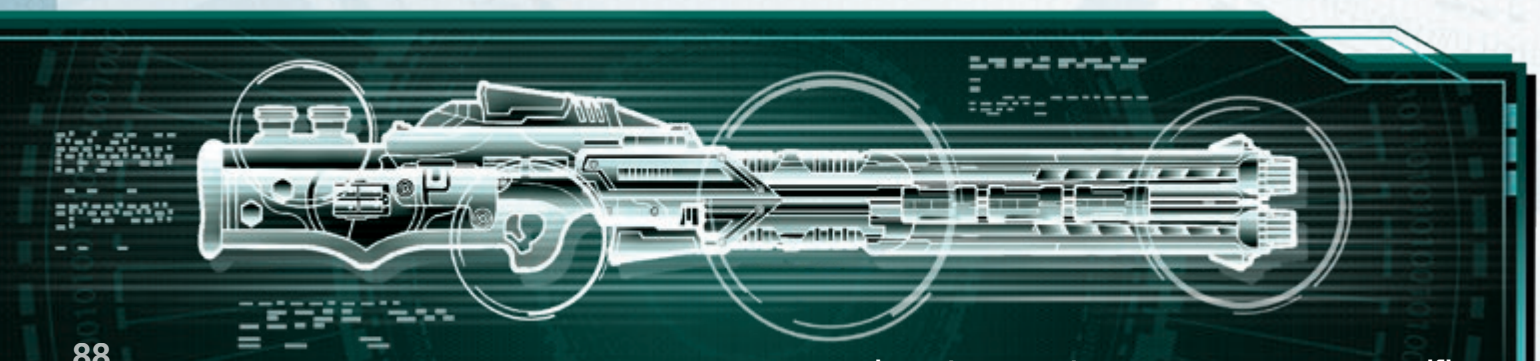
LASER CANNON

Heavy laser cannons were the first focused-energy weapons deployed in combat. Typically mounted on vehicles with high-output auxiliary power generators, laser cannons are much like their smaller cousins in that they are efficient and precise and inhabit a middle ground between slugthrowers and mass drivers. Vehicle-mounted lasers can tap directly into the vehicle's energy systems, guaranteeing them a constant power source.

The first laser cannons were often as much a danger to their crews as they were to their enemies, but over time, the technology has improved drastically. That said, laser cannons still have a nasty habit of overheating and occasionally melting down during prolonged use.

Your Game Master may spend ⟲ ⟲ ⟲ or ⊗ generated on any combat checks made while operating a laser cannon to damage the weapon one step. (See **Table I.5–4: Repairing Gear**, on page 89 of the **Genesys** Core Rulebook.)

Models Include: NEXT Mk I Annihilator Heavy Laser Cannon, Astra Consolidated SuperNova.



Gewehrwerks Panzerkanone-500.x Heavy Gauss Rifle

LIGHT MACHINE GUN

Though machine guns have largely been replaced by heavy fletchers in most modern militaries, they still see use in some prisec outfits and military groups in less-developed countries. Modern machine guns fire heavy, caseless slugs and typically come with gyro-stabilization units to help absorb their punishing recoil. They also rely on high thermovalent plastics and metal matrix composites to disperse the incredible heat that builds up with extended firing, meaning they keep shooting even when their barrels literally glow red.

Models Include: Degtyarev Collective-Plant Kord 40.r 10mm, Springfield M20 Machine Gun

MASER

Masers—also known as microwave lasers—emit nearly invisible beams of focused microwaves instead of visible-spectrum light. Masers can be tuned to excite water molecules in their targets; this can't hurt targets in metallic armor but is utterly lethal to everyone else. Originally used for long-range, high-output communications and specialized industrial uses (such as "baking" lunar rocks to vaporize and release water molecules trapped inside), many were converted into weapons during the Lunar Insurrection. Most domes and fortified bunkers were constructed of a combination of composites and pressed lunar rock, both of which allow focused microwaves to pass right through.

Since the Insurrection, purpose-built maser weapons have been produced in small numbers by NEXT for military use. While still not as efficient or accurate as a laser, masers are nevertheless extremely deadly short-range anti-personnel weapons. While they can't penetrate sheets of metal, they do tend to short out unshielded electronics.

When your character makes a combat check with a maser against a target that is covered or primarily composed of metal (what armor falls into this category is up to your GM, but generally should include plasteel carapace and exosuits), the maser loses the Breach item quality for the duration of the check. When your character makes a combat check with a maser targeting a vehicle, your character may spend ▲ ▲ on a successful check to inflict 5 system strain.

Models Include: NEXT MX-990 Maser Cannon.

MICRO-MISSILE LAUNCHER

The micro-missile launcher reaps the advances in miniaturization and programming of the last few centuries. Small enough to be carried into battle by a single soldier, this launcher has a magazine loaded full of missiles linked to a complicated guidance and tracking sensor suite. Most versions take a few moments to acquire any targets in range. However, once the system has locked on, the soldier can bang off micro-missile after micro-missile, confident that they'll home in on their target.

Micro-missile payloads are, by necessity, much smaller than those of their larger cousins. This makes them much less effective against armored targets.

Models Include: NEXT PR-40a Micro-Missile Launcher.

EXPLOSIVES AND ORDNANCE

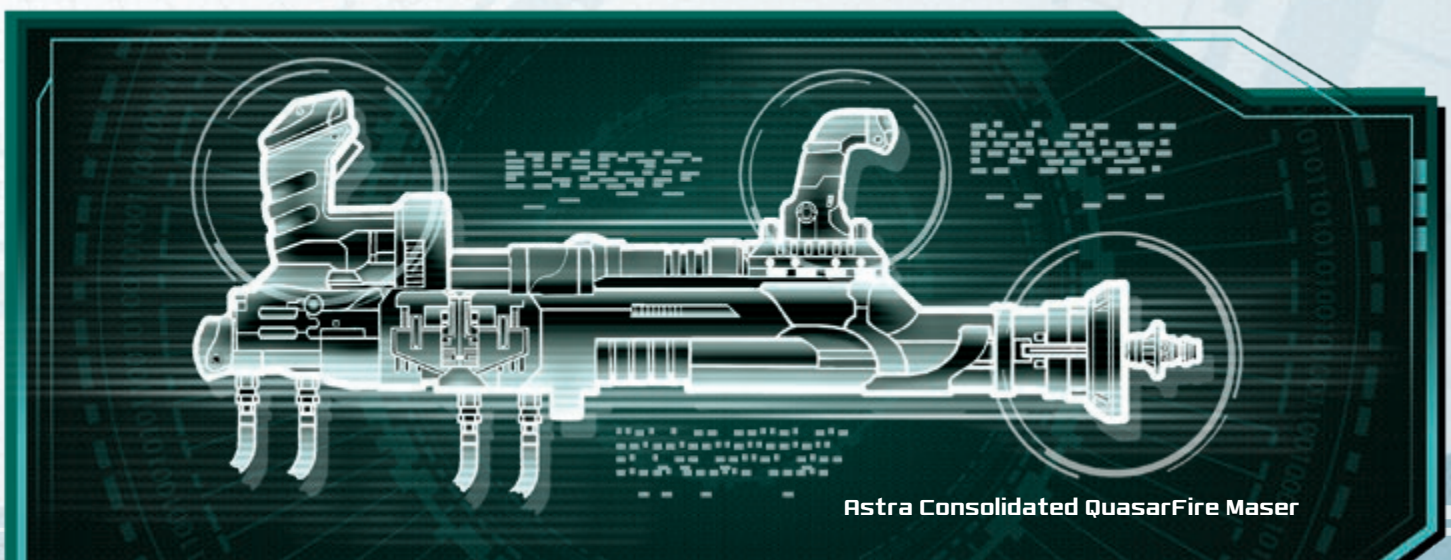
There are some situations in which not even a heavy fletcher or laser cannon can get the job done. Situations like this were made for explosives and ordnance.

GLOP GRENADE

Although officially dubbed "non-lethal immobilization devices," cops and bounty hunters prefer their more accurate nickname. Glop grenades are as effective as they are gross, which means they're really good at immobilizing and trapping anyone within their sticky "blast" radius. The goo is a highly-compressed liquid that reacts and foams when exposed to air, turning into an incredibly sticky, foaming mass that fills a few square meters of space. Once someone is covered with the glop, the run the risk of gluing themselves to anything they touch.

Glop grenades can be set to detonate on contact or set with a timer to detonate up to three rounds after being activated. Setting the timer can be done as an incidental. After being hit by a glop grenade, for the rest of the round your GM can spend ⟲ ⟲ ⟲ or ⊗ from any check your character makes to have them become immobilized until the end of their next turn.

Models Include: NEXT Non-Lethal Immobilization Device



Astra Consolidated QuasarFire Maser

TABLE 2–3: EXPLOSIVES AND ORDNANCE

NAME	SKILL	DAM	CRIT	RANGE	ENCUM	PRICE	RARITY	SPECIAL
Glop Grenade	Ranged (Light)	1	6	Short	1	50	5	Blast 1, Ensnare 4, Limited Ammo 1
Monofilament Grenade	Ranged (Light)	7	3	Short	1	85 (R)	4	Blast 7, Limited Ammo 1, Vicious 2
Stun Grenade	Ranged (Light)	8	5	Short	1	70	4	Blast 8, Disorient 3, Limited Ammo 1, Stun Damage

MONOFILAMENT GRENADE

These modern fragmentation grenades are among the most vicious weapons produced today. Roughly the size of a clenched fist, these grenades consist of an explosive core wrapped in nearly a kilometer of monofilament and encased in a carbon-metallic shell. Upon detonation, the shell shatters, and the explosive spreads a deadly cloud of razor-sharp monofilament wire shards that can tear opponents to bloody shreds in seconds.

Monofilament grenades can be set to detonate on contact or set with a timer to detonate up to three rounds after being activated. Setting the timer can be done as an incidental.

Models Include: Taejo Technologies Mk IV Fragmentation Grenade, Springfield M11 M-Grenade.

STUN GRENADE

Stun grenades fall into that gray area of "ostensibly non-lethal but may still incapacitate or kill a target" that's shared by so many less lethal weapons. They employ a high-intensity sonic pulse combined with an electric capacitor discharge to disorient and confuse enemy combatants.

Stun grenades can be set to detonate on contact or set with a timer to detonate up to three rounds after being activated. Setting the timer can be done as an incidental.

Models Include: NEXT M7 Sandman Flash-Bang Grenade.

BRAWL WEAPONS

Sometimes a character needs to get their hands dirty, and that's where Brawl weapons come in handy. Typically easily concealed and dead easy to use, Brawl weapons help give a fighter a bit of an edge in any physical conflict.

BRASS KNUCKLES

One of the oldest and simplest ways for brawlers to increase their chances in a fight, brass knuckles have existed in one form or another for millennia. Little more than a bar of hardened steel or other heavy alloy with holes cut in—or welded on—for the fingers, brass knuckles greatly increase the power of a punch, and they are easy to use and conceal. Wearing brass knuckles in a fight is widely considered poor form; typically, only criminals and particularly desperate individuals use them.

Models Include: Various models and homemade versions.

CHROMECRUSHERS

These high-tech boxing gloves were originally invented for use in the new gladiatorial rings that sprang up after androids became commonplace. In shadowy, illegal establishments like Hoyo Rojo, stimmed-up humans pit themselves against bioroids as bets are placed on how long the androids can survive before being beaten into scrap.

Chromecrushers have reduced that survival time considerably. These heavy gloves fit powerful burst-discharge actuators over the knuckles, amplifying the power of each punch several times over. Heavy power cables run to a small backpack power supply. The entire rig is light enough that it won't weigh a boxer down, but its bloody origins give this weapon (and its wielders) a dark reputation in civilized circles.

Chromecrushers require two hands to wield (since they can only be used in pairs).

Models Include: Kaluta Collective Hammerstryke!, Cyberclash Industries Punchmasters.

PALM STUNNER

A palm stunner is a small, inconspicuous item that delivers a powerful stunning jolt to a target on contact. Roughly one centimeter square and only a few millimeters thick, palm stunners are held in the palm and secured by a strap across the back of the hand. They are powered by a high-yield capacitor that dumps all of its charge on impact with a solid surface, then takes a couple of minutes to recharge off the integral micro-charger. Activated with a punch or an open-handed slap, palm stunners make for exceptional self-defense weapons.

Models Include: Personal Defense Industries Stun-R 900, NEXT Palm Protector.

POWER GAUNTLET

Power gauntlets are intimidating weapons typically used by police forces and criminal enforcers. Basically the hand and forearm of an exosuit, a power gauntlet encases a wearer's arm to just below the forearm in heavy, articulated power armor. A rechargeable power pack provides ample power to a thick, energized alloy shield mounted over the knuckles that delivers a punishing kinetic attack with every punch. While they are considered "less lethal" weapons, it is easy to deal significant damage to a target without really trying.

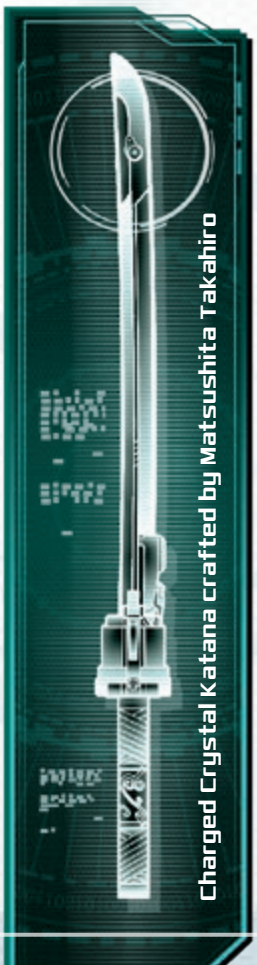
Models Include: Argus PowerFist Powered Gauntlet, Mars Manufacturing MX-01 Crusher.

TABLE 2–4: MELEE AND BRAWL WEAPONS

NAME	SKILL	DAM	CRIT	RANGE	ENCUM	HP	PRICE	RARITY	SPECIAL
Brawl Weapons									
Brass Knuckles	Brawl	+1	4	Engaged	1	1	40	1	Disorient 3
Chromecrushers	Brawl	+3	4	Engaged	2	1	250 (R)	3	Linked 1
Palm Stunner	Brawl	5	5	Engaged	0	0	70	3	Disorient 2, Slow-Firing 2, Stun Damage
Power Gauntlet	Brawl	+4	4	Engaged	3	2	1,120 (R)	6	Concussive 2, Knockdown, Prepare 1
Melee Weapons									
Charged Crystal Katana	Melee	+3	2	Engaged	3	2	600	10	Defensive 1, Pierce 3, Reinforced, Unwieldy 3
Monoblade	Melee	+1	2	Engaged	1	1	225	3	Pierce 2
Plasma Cutter	Melee	12	3	Engaged	5	3	725	5	Burn 1, Prepare 1, Sunder, Unwieldy 2
Sledgehammer	Melee	+4	4	Engaged	4	4	200	2	Cumbersome 2, Knockdown
Stun Baton	Melee	+2	5	Engaged	1	2	125	2	Disorient 3, Stun Damage
Stun Gun	Melee	6	5	Engaged	1	1	200	3	Stun 4, Stun Damage
Waterknife	Melee	10	3	Engaged	4	1	850	4	Prepare 1, Sunder, Unwieldy 3, Vicious 3

MELEE WEAPONS

Handheld weapons may seem like an anachronism in this day and age, but a good solid blade or blunt object makes a great backup weapon. In addition, organizations such as the Tri-Maf use swords for ceremonial and, on occasion, combat purposes.



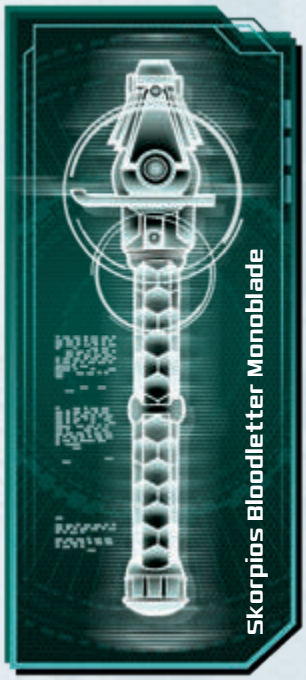
CHARGED CRYSTAL KATANA

A strange anachronism even by melee weapon standards, the charged crystal katana is as much a work of art as it is a weapon. Carried by certain factions of the yakuza and other aspiring swordsmen, a CCK blade is constructed from a milky rose electroconductive crystalline lattice instead of folded steel or advanced alloys. A small power cell in the weapon's hilt sends an electrical charge through the blade, causing the crystals to align, which makes it almost indestructible and causes the blade to become nearly transparent. Hard to master and incredibly rare, charged crystal katanas are owned by only the wealthiest and most dedicated individuals.

Although a charged crystal katana requires only one hand to wield, while wielded in both hands, it gains the Vicious 2 item quality.

Models Include: None—each blade is handmade and unique.

MONOBLADE



Monoblades are clever, easily concealed weapons that are among the most deadly devices ever created. Built in various lengths and styles, monoblades feature a simple knife or sword hilt that contains a reel of retractable blade media, a static generator, and a powerful capacitor. The reel contains a set length of buckyweave a single molecule thick that, when charged by the static generator in the hilt, stiffens into a wickedly sharp blade. Monoblades can cut through cloth, armor, flesh, and bone with equal ease and are extremely dangerous in the right hands.

Models Include: Strelet Arms Razor Edge, Delta Arms M30 Utility Blade.

PLASMA CUTTER

Plasma cutters are powerful cutting tools designed for use in shipbuilding, spacecraft manufacturing, heavy fabrication, and other industrial applications. Powered by a lightweight electrical generator, these tools create a high-intensity electrical arc that makes thermal plasma by reacting with a stream of pressurized carrier gas (generally argon). The powerful plasma jet can cut or weld almost any metal or alloy, making it both versatile and indispensable.

Many modern plasma cutters are designed to be portable and come with straps or purpose-built backpacks for carrying and storage. A standard unit consists of a power pack, a cutting head, an array of tips for different

jobs, and a reinforced power cable. Like the HHI Neptune waterknife, many of these tools were repurposed by Lunar and Martian rebels into deadly melee weapons and used in ship boarding, hand-to-hand fighting, and for carving up bioroids.

A plasma cutter requires two hands to wield.

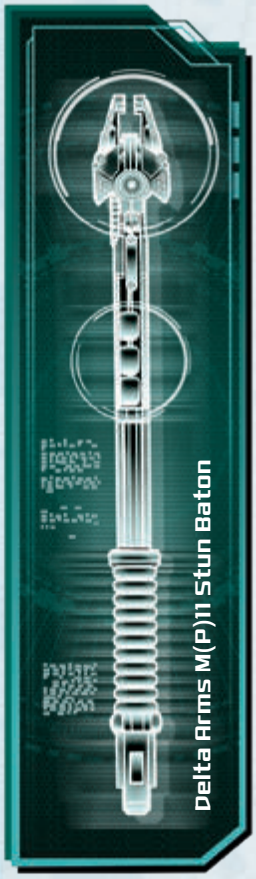
Models Include: HHI PX830 Portable Plasma Torch.

SLEDGEHAMMER

The sledgehammer wouldn't be worth mentioning if it weren't for the Human First fanatics who turned it into a symbol and a weapon. During the first protests against android labor, rioters bludgeoned many bioroids and clones to death with simple tools, the sledgehammer being chief among them. For Human First, the symbolism was perfect. The sledgehammer is a tool representing a hard, honest day's work; it is a dangerous weapon; and best of all, it is impossible to regulate or outlaw.

A sledgehammer requires two hands to wield.

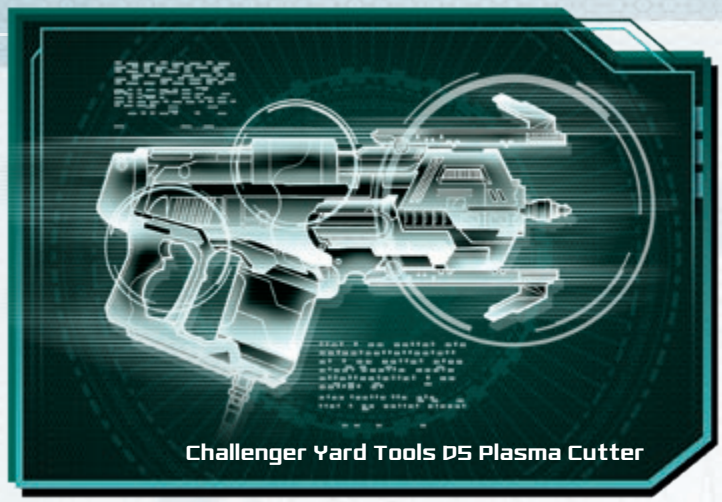
Models Include: Various models and homemade versions.



STUN BATON

A favorite of riot cops and criminal enforcers, stun batons combine an electrical discharge capacitor with a collapsible composite baton. They are simple, easy-to-use weapons made of high-strength, nonmetallic, flexible composites that make them nearly unbreakable. When collapsed, these weapons are about the size of an outstretched palm and are easily concealed in a bag, toolbox, storage compartment, or coat pocket. A simple flick of the wrist activates the expandable polymer and extends the baton to over half a meter in length.

Models Include: Personal Defense Industries Mk I Collapsible Baton.



STUN GUN

These simple weapons are some of the more common self-defense devices on the market. Basically a small composite box containing a powerful capacitor and tipped with two sharp metal spikes, they are designed to deliver an incapacitating electric charge into their target. They follow the same principles as synap pistols, without the ability to shock someone at range. Modern ones use high-yield fuel cells to rebuild a critical charge in a few seconds.

Models Include: Personal Defense Industries Zapper-2.

WATERKNIFE

Waterknives are heavy industrial cutting tools designed for precision work on heat-sensitive materials. Instead of a sharp blade or a jet of superheated plasma, waterknives use a high-pressure stream of abrasive blasting media suspended in a viscous liquid. The liquid lubricates and cools the materials being cut, and the blasting medium—typically subminiature quartz pellets or powdered synthetic diamond—does the actual cutting.

Although many waterknives are so big and bulky that they need to be fixed in place, modern versions can be miniaturized enough to be carried around as a large and wet power saw. These portable versions are occasionally repurposed into ersatz and extremely vicious close-combat weapons.

A waterknife requires two hands to wield.

Models Include: HHI "Neptune" Hydro Suspension Cutting System.

ARMOR

Clothes make the individual, or so they say. That old adage is even truer in such a fashion-obsessed city as New Angeles. With so many cultures and subcultures rubbing elbows and struggling to live together, the city and its environs are awash in clashing styles. Even up the well in the stations and lunar colonies, clothing and armor styles evolve at a shocking rate, and what was in style last week is considered outré today.

The following list is just a small sample of clothing and protective gear available to the discerning New Angelino.

CLOTHING

Clothing choices in the modern day are every bit as varied as at any time in the past. What makes current fashion transcend that of former eras, however, is advances in materials science and the use of smart fabrics that can interface with computer technology and change shapes, colors, and even toughness. Everything from basic T-shirts to business suits to haute couture is available in a dizzying array of colors, cuts, and fabrics.

Aside from day-to-day work and leisure clothes, numerous specialty options are available for those who need more than an off-the-rack pair of jeans or a boutique sundress. Below is a selection of specialty clothing designed to keep New Angelinos, Martians, Loonies, and everyone else looking sharp and feeling fine.

CONCEALED BUCKYWEAVE

Visible body armor isn't exactly what most people wear while strolling down the slidewalks of New Angeles. Well-heeled New Angelinos who are looking for a bit of protection often wear stylish clothing reinforced with a concealed layer of buckyweave and energy-dispersion fiber mesh to provide basic protection from small arms and light energy weapons. Just about any type of clothing can be tailored with this reinforcing layer, and quite a few shops are willing to discreetly add it to the clothes they already sell—for a substantial fee.

Concealed buckyweave clothing looks like normal clothing. Anyone searching your character adds ■ ■ to any Perception checks they make to find the concealed buckyweave between the fabric layers.

Models Include: Various models.

DURABLE CLOTHING

Durable clothing is exactly what it sounds like: sturdy, well-crafted articles of clothing that provide a bit of protection and can stand up to the wear and tear of modern life. These typical, workaday outfits worn by the majority of New Angelinos range from synthleather jackets and denim jeans to sturdy mechanics' coveralls and military surplus jumpsuits. While they won't stop a bullet or turn a monoblade, a suit of durable clothing is definitely better than nothing.

Models Include: Various models.

ENVIRONMENTAL HARDSUIT

Produced by a number of manufacturers, environmental hardsuits allow individuals to work in extremely hazardous conditions in relative safety. While they come in a variety of designs, most hardsuits share a common suite of features.

A general, multipurpose hardsuit consists of a tight, one-piece, ballistic fibermesh bodysuit crafted with special chemweaves to protect the wearer from limited exposure to nuclear, chemical, and biological agents. Worn over the bodysuit is a collection of fitted, high-impact polycarbonate and light alloy plates like those found in riot armor or lower-end carapace suits. Comprising the "hard" part of the hardsuit, these plates are often equipped with temperature-regulating systems and impact-resistant gel, and they offer good industrial protection. Most suits include heavy gloves, sturdy boots, and a helmet with an integral respirator.

While wearing an environmental hardsuit, your character adds ✲ to Resilience checks they make to resist hazardous environmental conditions.

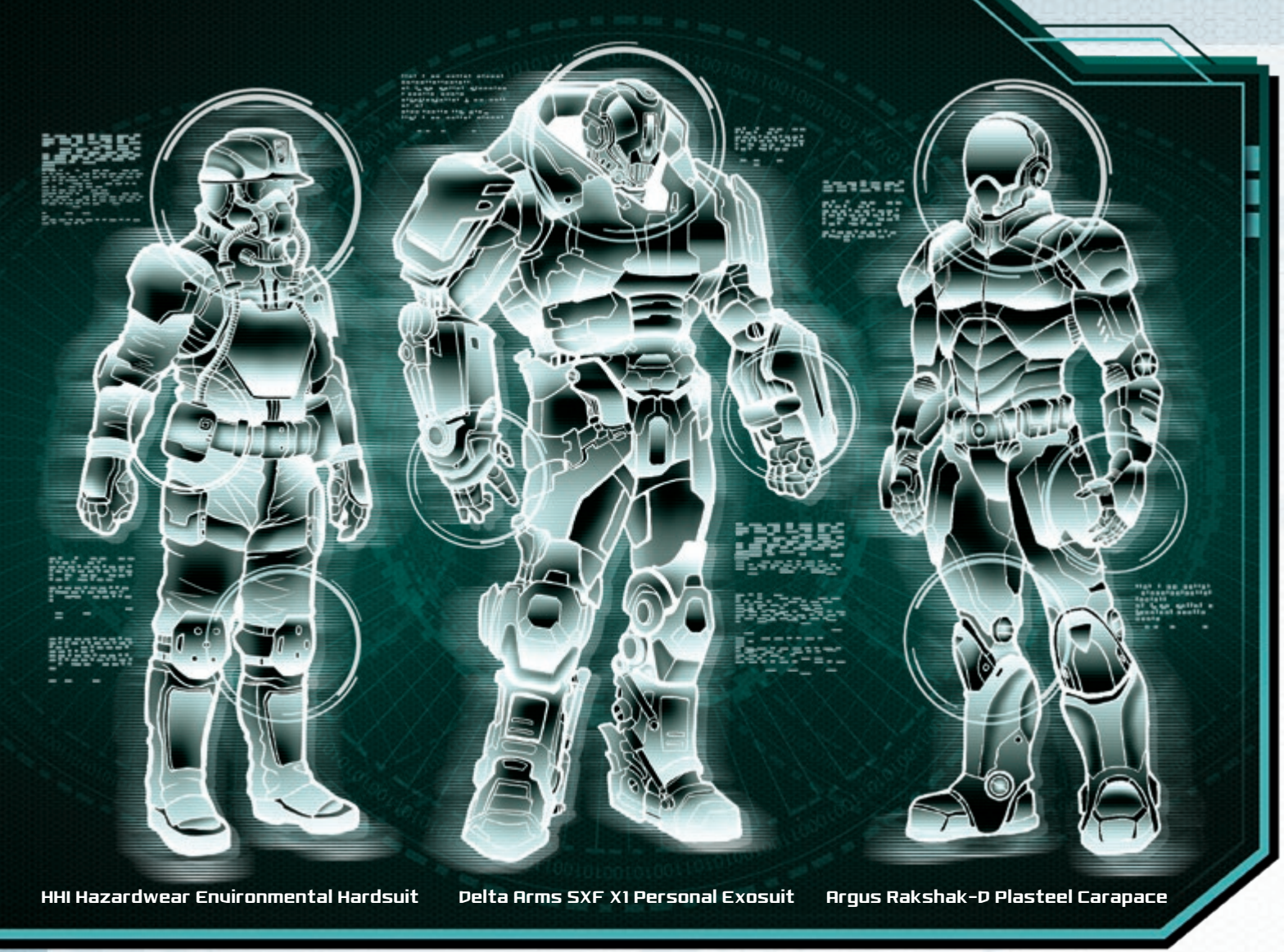
Models Include: Cal-X Mk II Sheol HazMat Suit, Weyland Salamander EV Suit.

OPTICAL CAMOUFLAGE SUIT

Rare and expensive, optical camouflage suits are wonders of modern stealth technology. Known colloquially as "invisibility cloaks," these suits combine a sophisticated holographic imaging suite, sound baffles, and radiation shielding to make the wearer incredibly hard to see or pick up on sensors. The holographic imagers project a composite image of the wearer's surroundings on the suit, allowing them to blend into the background, while the other systems muffle noises and hide the wearer's body heat.

Someone trying to spot your character upgrades the difficulty of their check once if your character is wearing an active optical camouflage suit.

Models Include: ProTek Chameleon, Argus Mk II Infiltrator Suit, U.S. Army Model 30 Active Camouflage Suit.



HHI Hazardwear Environmental Hardsuit Delta Arms SXF X1 Personal Exosuit Argus Rakshak-D Plasteel Carapace

COMBAT SUITS

In this modern era of focused-energy weapons and mass drivers, armor seems like it should be an anachronism. However, current materials science has kept up with weapons technology, offering impressive personal protection. Although combat suits are often issued to police and military units, plenty of criminals, bounty hunters, and assassins know how to get their hands on high-quality protection.

LIGHT BODY ARMOR

Light body armor is a catchall term for a collection of armored vests, flak jackets, and other lightweight, noncarapace, nonmilitary armor. It provides basic protection to the torso and often to forearms and shins, and it is typically paired with a simple, open-faced helmet to protect the head.

Primitive and cheap—and often cheaply made—light body armor is rarely, if ever, worn by combat troops or mercenaries. Its primary users are civilians in war zones, criminals, and security personnel on a budget. Some athletes in particularly dangerous sports, such as hopper racing or snowboarding, wear stylized variants of light body armor.

Models Include: OV-1 Bulletproof Vest.

PERSONAL EXOSUIT

Exosuits are powered exoskeletons wrapped in heavy composite armor and fitted with vehicle-class weapons that turn an individual soldier into a one-person tank squadron. That's how exosuit manufacturers like to describe their products, at any rate. While "one-person tank squadron" might be ad-agency hyperbole, exosuits are still exceptionally powerful pieces of battlefield equipment.

While some exosuits are large enough to qualify as small, bipedal vehicles, many are smaller and designed to be armor that is worn, rather than piloted. The exoskeletons are adjustable for fit and are typically composed of myomer synthetic muscle fibers and nanohydraulics wrapped around a buckyweave-reinforced composite frame. Powered by high-output twelve-hour battery packs—themselves tended by a kinetic capture regenerative charging system—the frame increases a wearer's strength and durability. Their composite armor plates can shrug off nearly all small arms fire, and they are fully environmentally sealed.

Wearing an exosuit increases the wearer's Brawn by 1 (this bonus also increases the wearer's soak, but it is not included in the soak increase in **Table 2–5: Clothing and Armor**) and

TABLE 2–5: CLOTHING AND ARMOR

NAME	DEFENSE	SOAK	ENCUMBRANCE	HARD POINTS	PRICE	RARITY
Clothing						
Durable Clothing	0	+1	1	1	50	1
Concealed Buckyweave	1	+1	1	2	320	5
Environmental Hardsuit	0	+1	4	2	260	4
Optical Camouflage Suit	2	+0	2	1	580 (R)	7
Combat Suits						
Light Body Armor	0	+2	2	1	500	5
Personal Exosuit	0	+3	5	4	5,000 (R)	6
Plasteel Carapace	1	+2	4	3	750 (R)	5
Riot Armor	0	+2	3	2	550	5

the wearer's wound threshold by 4. The suit's sensor suite removes ■ ■ from any Perception, Vigilance, or combat skill checks caused by darkness or smoke that your character makes. If an exosuit loses power or otherwise ceases to function, its encumbrance value immediately becomes 12 and the wearer loses all the benefits of the sensor suite and the Brawn increase (including the additional soak from the higher Brawn). Getting into or out of an unpowered suit takes five minutes without assistance, or roughly two minutes with assistance.

Models Include: Heliodyne Sampson Infantry Suit, Weyland Consortium "Roughneck" Heavy Labor Exosuit, Argus "Ranger" Mk IV Reconnaissance Exo.

PLASTEEL CARAPACE

Carapace armor is the heaviest nonpowered armor available on the market. Consisting of interlocking composite armor plates over a reinforced unisuit, this armor is the go-to for high-end prisec outfits and the U.S. military. Carapace protects against most small arms, energy weapons, and even shrapnel splinters and low-yield explosives. Some suits are environmentally sealed to protect the wearer against nuclear, biological, and chemical agents. As these suits are military hardware, there are a number of regulations against civilians purchasing and wearing them (which doesn't stop most orgcrime outfits in the slightest).

Models Include: AMR Defense "Crusader" Infantry Armor, Garda "Hussar" Hardsuit.

RIOT ARMOR

The NAPD is the single largest purchaser of riot armor in New Angeles, prisec outfits being a respectable second, as both deal with anarchist protests and Human First riots. Built to survive the wear and tear of modern law enforcement, a suit of riot armor typically starts with a heavy-duty service uniform similar to those worn by military personnel and PMC operatives. A set of protective plates—torso clamshell, shoulders, forearms, and shin protectors—made of ballistic gel and flexible polycarbonates is then worn over the uniform, providing protection for sensitive or easily damaged parts of the body. Most suits also include an integrated gas mask and helmet speakers.

While wearing riot armor, your character adds □ to Resilience checks they make to resist the effects of tear gas and other riot-suppression chemicals. Riot armor can come with a riot shield (see the **Riot Shields** sidebar); this increases the cost by 150 credits.

Models Include: NAPD M1 Riot Armor, USAF "Peacekeeper" Law Enforcement Armor.

RIOT SHIELDS

Riot shields may seem anachronistic in the modern world, but a wall of heavy polycarb shields is still the best way to contain and suppress an unruly crowd. Modern riot shields used by the NAPD have powerful spotlights built into them (to both illuminate and blind rioters) and a light-amplified, radar-generated display on the inside that lets officers see through smoke and darkness without poking their heads up above the shield.

Riot shields require one hand to use (meaning your character can only use one-handed Melee weapons and Ranged [Light] weapons while using a riot shield). They increase your character's ranged and melee defense rating by 1. They also can provide light, and the display inside the shield removes □ □ added to your character's checks due to smoke or darkness. The spotlight can illuminate out to long range.

GEAR

The average New Angelino's life is crowded with stuff, most of it designed to distract them from the true conditions of their life and the lives of those around them. This section lists a wide variety of common tools, electronics, and pieces of kit available for sale throughout the worlds.

CARRYING AND STORAGE

All the tech in the world won't do a person any good if they can't get it where it needs to go. The following is a collection of personal carryalls and shipping containers designed for transporting gear in comfort and style.

CROSS-BODY BAG

Cross-body bags run the gamut of large personal carryall bags, including messenger bags, engineers' bags, and computer totes. Worn over the shoulder or slung across the torso by a broad strap, these bags are made from a broad array of textiles and synthleathers and might be weatherproof, reinforced with high-strength zero-G polymers (resin fibers that can only be manufactured in a zero-gravity environment), or RFID-proofed with foil scatterfiber.

While wearing a cross-body bag, your character increases their encumbrance threshold by 3.

LOAD-BEARING GEAR

Also known as a tac-vest, load-bearing gear consists of a sturdy, full-torso vest (generally woven from zero-G polymers) covered in snaps, loops, and hooks. It can be worn over body armor or even plasteel carapace.

While wearing load-bearing gear, your character increases their encumbrance threshold by 3.

MAL-SEALED SHIPPING CONTAINER

A MAL-sealed container is essentially a cross between an antique steamer trunk and a bank vault. Not much to look at, it is a meter-long, flattened, dull-gray oval encased in a hard polycarbon harness. Its case is a vanasteel-based alloy formed into an electroconductive molecular matrix. In its inert state, the case hinges open like any other container. However, if a properly modulated current is run through the matrix, the matrix instantly realigns, leaving the contents protected by a seamless, diamond-hard case.

Matrix Alignment Locks are particularly useful because the molecules remain aligned until a second carefully modulated current "unlocks" them. The modulation can be tweaked and the exposure time lengthened, creating a unique, variable-length combination lock. The case stays sealed without any power, and it has no computerized components. Without the proper current frequency, would-be criminals must resort to white-hot plasma cutters or high explosives, which don't leave much hope of looting the contents inside.

A MAL-sealed container is impervious to most conventional cutting devices. (Your GM has the final say on what can cut through the vanasteel alloy, but it should generally be limited to military-grade explosives or heavy-duty construction or demolition equipment.) The container can hold a number of items with encumbrance values totaling up to 20. If your character uses a computer to randomly generate modulated currents, they should be able to guess the correct "combination" in 1d5 years.

MODULAR BACKPACK

Designed for military use, these camouflaged or olive-drab backpacks were quickly adopted by students, runners, revolutionaries, and *disenfrancistos*, thanks in part to the U.S. military's tendency to sell off the surplus from huge production runs. These bags are so tough, thanks to their buckyweave-fiber construction, that some of the earliest models are still used today (after having cycled through dozens of owners). U.S. military modular backpacks have current-activated internal frames that go rigid with a pulse of electricity and give the wearer extra support, and its multiple compartments all have quick-seal flaps that keep items inside safe and dry.

While wearing a modular backpack, your character increases their encumbrance threshold by 5.

UTILITY BELT

A common utility belt is part load-bearing gear, part tool belt, and part carryall. Worn low on the hips, this handy item is equipped with a holster or tool bag and a selection of sealable, weatherproof pouches for carrying small, important items close at hand.

While wearing a utility belt, your character increases their encumbrance threshold by 2.

CLANDESTINE GEAR

As in any other field, the tools used by criminals, infiltrators, spies, and other shady characters are extremely varied and specialized.

DISGUISE KIT

Disguise kits are used by criminals, spies, and investigators to alter their physical appearance. A standard kit includes various wigs, hairpieces, makeup, colored contact lenses, basic camouflage paints, and even prosthetic features. Advanced kits may contain simple biometric spoofers to get around fingerprint readers, retinal scanners, and even, in some cases, genelocks.

INFILTRATOR GOGGLES

These bulky, high-tech goggles combine the utility of smartspecs with various vision-enhancing technologies. Used by criminals and special operatives alike, infiltrator goggles are smartgoggles equipped with a passive night-vi-

sion system, supported by thermal imaging and (in some models) microband radar emitters.

While wearing infiltrator goggles, your character removes ☐ ☐ added to their checks due to darkness, smoke, or other forms of concealment.

LOCKBREAKER

A lockbreaker is a modular electronic lockpicking device designed to aid in bypassing most types of electronic locks. With the included accessories, a lockbreaker can help criminals open key-card locks, time locks, keypad/combination locks, and other common electronic and computer-controlled systems. Advanced models can even unlock biometric locks.

Lockbreakers allow your character to attempt to open any electronic lock or latch. In addition, when making a Skulduggery check to open an electronic lock or latch while using a lockbreaker, your character adds ✡ ✡ to the results.

LOCKPICK SET

Lockpick sets include a number of specialty tools designed to unlock mechanical locks. Whether commercially produced or homemade, a lockpick set is a must-have for criminals, clandestine agents, and prisec operatives. Getting caught by the police in possession of a set of lockpicks usually calls for some fast talking and the liberal application of a credstick to avoid jail time.

Lockpick sets allow your character to attempt to open any mechanical locks or latches. In addition, when making a Skulduggery check to open a mechanical lock or latch while using a lockpick set, your character adds ⩓ to the results.

SNAP-LOCK

Snap-locks are half-meter long strips of zero-G polymer in a rigid molecular lattice. Normally, they're ruler-straight, but when struck hard against a prisoner's wrists or ankles, the lattice fractures just long enough for the strap to snap around the appendage before the lattice reforms. The resulting restraint can't be severed without heavy-duty cutters, making these perfect disposable restraints.

Escaping a snap-lock without heavy cutters requires your character to make a **Formidable (◆◆◆◆◆) Athletics check** or **Daunting (◆◆◆◆) Coordination check**.

COMMS

While most New Angelinos get by with their PAD and a network connection, some individuals require more robust comms options in the course of their daily work.

BURST TRANSMITTER

These powerful devices were designed during the Lunar Insurrection to send short, encrypted messages from Earth to orbit. They use a narrow-band beam with a smart encryption system that can transmit voice and data to dedicated receivers. During the Lunar Insurrection, they often served as signals-warfare devices to insert viruses and remote commands into both open and secure networks by brute force. More than one group of insurgents found themselves cut off or vented into space by a black-ops radio operator with a burst transmitter.

Since the Insurrection, burst transmitters have found their way into the black market via military surplus brokers, and some shady electronics vendors have begun selling new models with updated software.

When your character attempts to perform the access system action (see page 129) while using a burst transmitter, they reduce the difficulty of the check by 1, to a minimum of **Simple (–)**.

FIELD RADIO

Field radios are heavy-duty, military-grade transceivers used by soldiers to send and receive information on the battlefield. Carried by dedicated radio operators, field radios are still small enough that they and their antenna, their power source, and the other bits of equipment needed to operate their system fit into a lightweight pouch. They feature smart encryption systems and can broadcast anywhere within line of sight of the bearer (including low orbit).

PERSONAL COMLINK

Modern-day walkie-talkies, comlinks are small, secure devices used for personal communication. They have a limited range but are unaffected by buildings and other obstacles. Comlinks are cheap and readily available, and they have the added bonus of being largely untraceable (as they only operate with a specified network of comlinks).

SKULLJACKS AND SPINAL MODEMS

Some runners and sysops use cybernetics that have similar effects to computers and BMIs. The most common of these devices are skulljacks and spinal modems, which can be found on page 105 and 106.

Many New Angelinos, especially those in the rougher parts of the megalopolis, use them to conduct daily business away from the eyes and ears of the Network.

COMPUTERS AND COMPUTER ACCESSORIES

Most people in New Angeles use some sort of computer (usually a PAD of some type), but runners, sysops, and similar individuals tend to invest in equipment with more processing power.

BIG RIG

Big rigs are computer terminals that are too large to be easily portable. Such rigs can run from the size of a large crate to a tower a couple of meters tall. Their interfaces vary from holographic haptic interfaces to voice recognition, although many tend to be set up with a BMI (brain-machine interface). Most people have little use for these terminals, as their PADs have all the processing power they would ever need. Thus, big rigs tend to be owned and used only by runners and independent sysops.

A big rig is a computer that can have up to four icebreakers and six pieces of ice active on its system at once (for the purposes of Network encounters). It has both wired and wireless connection ports to the Network.

BRAIN MACHINE INTERFACE

A BMI typically uses a flexible, net-like sheath full of neural receptors that bridges the user's neurons with electrical connections. In short, it lets runners make "deep" runs in the Network, with full sensory immersion.

A BMI is not a computer, but may be connected to any computer. While using a BMI during a Network encounter, a runner can choose to "go deep" as a maneuver. Until they "go shallow" as a maneuver, they may only interact with the Network (performing Network maneuvers and Network actions); they cannot interact with the regular world (such as by performing regular maneuvers or actions). However, they may perform a second maneuver each turn during Network encounters without spending strain.

MONOCAMS

Popular with newscasters, videographers, and aspiring filmmakers, monocams are small digital video recorders worn over one or both eyes like a monocle or glasses.

A monocam is not a computer, but allows your character to record any visuals they see and download the recordings to a linked computer or PAD.

PAD

The Personal Access Device, or PAD, is perhaps one of the most common pieces of technology in the solar system. A combination phone, Network access terminal, data storage unit, and personal computer, the PAD is descended from older devices like personal data assistants, smartphones, and tablets. Made by a number of large technology and electronics manufacturers, PADs are what most New Angelinos use to communicate, access the Network, or do anything they might need a computer for.

Small, lightweight, and eminently portable, PADs are built from tough, lightweight polycarbonates and alloys. They come in a variety of sizes, are powered by tiny rechargeable power cells, and can be hand-held or wearable. Most PADs have touchscreen and voice-recognition interfaces, but some higher-end, more expensive models respond to holographic and gesture inputs. Some can even interface wirelessly with cybernetics or HUDs to allow remote control. The difference is mostly cosmetic, since no matter their size, PADs all do largely the same things. They are all designed with constant access to the Network in mind—without that access, PADs are much more limited in functionality.

A PAD is a computer that can have up to one icebreaker and one piece of ice active on its system at once (for the purposes of Network encounters). PADs generally only have wireless connection ports to the Network.

PORTABLE RIG

Portable rigs offer a compromise between the portability of a PAD and the power of a full-sized rig. About the size of a backpack or satchel, they are basically PADs with extra processing power, memory, and adaptive and responsive programming.

WHAT CAN A PAD HOLD?

For the purposes of running Network encounters, PADs and other computers are limited as to the number of icebreakers and ice they can host (both ice and icebreakers are also huge programs). However, even the smallest PAD has immense memory storage, even if it doesn't have the processing power to run all the programs stored on it at once. So there is no limit to the number of other programs and files that your character can store on their computer (unless the GM decides that a particular program is so big that it requires a special storage device).

Some runners prefer portable rigs because they can use them to conduct runs while on the move.

A portable rig is a computer that can have up to two icebreakers and two pieces of ice active on its system at once (for the purposes of Network encounters). It can have both wired and wireless connection ports to the Network.

READER

Second only to PADs in their abundance and variety, readers are small devices used to read IDs and credit information. Popular with street vendors, artisans, and bouncers, these tiny devices can be worn as jewelry or implanted beneath the skin. They are perfect for point-of-sale transactions and for processing many ID chips in a short period of time.

A reader is not a computer, but may be linked to a computer. It can also be a link into a system (see page 128).

SMARTSPECS

Smartspecs allow an individual without a skulljack or cybereyes to interface with smart technology. Available in a variety of styles, from bulky welder-style goggles to stylish aviator goggles and wraparound shades, smartspecs are one of the easiest ways to enjoy the benefits of smart tech. Most sets of smartspecs are wireless and can sync up to as many as four smart systems at once. Information is displayed on the goggles and appears in the wearer's peripheral vision.

Smartspecs are not a computer, but may be linked to a computer. They provide a heads-up display for the computer.

MEDS AND DRUGS

It's a tough world out there, especially for those living on the outskirts of polite society. The following is a list of common medical kits and supplies found in New Angeles, as well as some of the more popular beneficial and harmful drugs.

EMERGENCY MEDKIT

Emergency medkits are small, surprisingly comprehensive medical supply kits used to treat moderate injuries in emergency situations. These kits include sterile bandages, a handful of basic drugs, antiseptics, sterile medical tools, blood coagulants, and other basic medical supplies. However, the small size means the total quantity is limited.

An emergency medkit allows your character to heal wounds or Critical Injuries without penalty. If your character's Medicine check generates or , it means they have used up all of the kit's supplies, and the medkit may no longer be used.

HAPPY PATCH

Happy patches are cheap dermal patches filled with a street drug called Pixel. They're created by the millions in the undercity and sold to its poorest residents. The drugs leave the user with a hazy, relaxing high with just a hint of a harsh chemical buzz.

After using a happy patch, your character heals 3 strain but is disoriented for the remainder of the encounter (or one hour in narrative time).

LOW-FI

A popular plaza-level drug among the idle rich, Low-Fi (also known as Blue Tears and Free-Fall) are small blue gel-tabs that slow down a user's time perception while providing some truly epic hallucinations. The results can be some amazing trips that feel like they take hours but only last a few minutes.

After taking Low-Fi, your character loses their free maneuver on their turn for the next five rounds (or five minutes of narrative time). In addition, your character adds to any checks they make during that time.

PORTABLE CLINIC KIT

Known on the street as a "doc-bag," a portable clinic kit has all of the types of medical supplies one would find in a small clinic. The differences are in the quality of the supplies and in how it uses technology to compress as much as possible into a backpack-sized space. Instead of a collection of scalpels, scissors, and probes, a clinic kit has two omnitools made from self-sterilizing smart plastic that can morph into nearly any medical tool. Bandages are vacuum compressed into fingernail-sized pills, and the drugs are concentrated so smaller doses are more effective. Tying the whole kit together is an integrated computer system with sensor pads to diagnose a patient in moments. The only drawback is that all of this is fantastically expensive.

A portable clinic kit allows your character to heal wounds or Critical Injuries without penalty. In addition, whenever your character successfully makes a check to heal wounds, their target heals 1 additional wound and 1 additional strain.

ADDICTION

Most of the drugs found in New Angeles are chemically or psychologically addictive. Some players may not want to roleplay dealing with the side effects of addiction. This is entirely reasonable, especially since people can have traumatic experiences with addiction in real life. So if some players or your GM want to use the rules for addiction, make sure the entire group agrees first!

If your group is using the alternate rules for addiction, whenever a character uses an addictive drug (which includes every drug in this section except slap-patches) regularly, you or your GM can decide that your character is at risk of becoming addicted (what constitutes "regular" use is also up to you and your GM). If your character is at risk of becoming addicted, they must make a **Hard (◆◆◆) Resilience or Discipline check** (depending on whether you and your GM feel the drug is more physiologically or psychologically addictive).

Once your character is addicted, they must use the drug they are addicted to once a day, or decrease their strain threshold by half until they do so. To end their addiction, your character must go without using the drug they are addicted to for at least one week or more, and may also need to make another Resilience or Discipline check to overcome the addiction.

SLAP-PATCH

A slap-patch is a one-use emergency medical item used to administer first aid and treat minor wounds. It consists of a synthskin backing that contains a drug cocktail of stim, painkiller, and antibiotic, with a bioadhesive that bonds the patch to a patient's flesh. To use one, a person simply peels a slap-patch out of its sterile package and slaps it over a wound. A slap-patch is good enough to deal with bumps, bruises, and light bleeding (although not more serious injuries).

It takes a maneuver for your character to use a slap-patch on themself or another engaged character. The slap-patch is consumed in the process, and the character immediately heals 5 wounds. While a character can use multiple slap-patches, this provides diminishing returns. Each slap-patch after the first on the same day heals 1 wound fewer. A second slap-patch heals 4 wounds, a third heals 3, and so on. Using a sixth slap-patch in a day has no effect.

After one day, the lingering effects of the slap-patches wear off, and the character may use slap-patches again, receiving their normal effect (this means a character can consume up to five slap-patches a day, each day). A slap-patch is a painkiller, which is described on page 94 of the **Genesys** Core Rulebook (the slap-patch just has a setting-specific name). All the rules, talents, and abilities governing and affecting painkillers apply to slap-patches as well.

STIM

A catchall name for uppers and stimulants, "stim" can range from the equivalent of espresso shots to narcostim, which boosts a user's reflexes and awareness to dangerously heightened levels. Of course, if a character is buying stim on the street, they're probably getting something closer to the latter.

It takes a maneuver for your character to take stim through a consumable tab or an autoinjector (or to use an autoinjector on another engaged character). The character receiving the stim immediately heals all strain they are suffering. At the end of the encounter, instead of recovering from strain as described on page 117 of the **Genesys** Core Rulebook, the character suffers 10 strain. They may make an **Average (◆◆) Resilience check** to reduce the strain suffered by 1 per ✲ or ⩓.

STING

Sting or Blo-Back is a highly dangerous neurosuppressant that blocks the body's pain receptors while overstimulating the adrenal glands. The resulting drug is popular among some soldiers and mercs who like to "fight through the pain." However, most experienced vets know that shutting off pain just makes you more likely to injure yourself. Needless to say, the drug also sees a lot of use in illegal pit fights in places like the Hoyo Rojo.

It takes a maneuver for your character to inject themself or another engaged character with a shot of Sting. Until the end of the encounter, they ignore any penalties that any Critical Injuries would otherwise impose on skill checks they make (at your GM's discretion, this may not apply to the penalties from certain Critical Injuries, such as blindness or loss of a limb). At the end of the encounter, your character no longer ignores those penalties and immediately suffers 4 strain and 4 wounds.

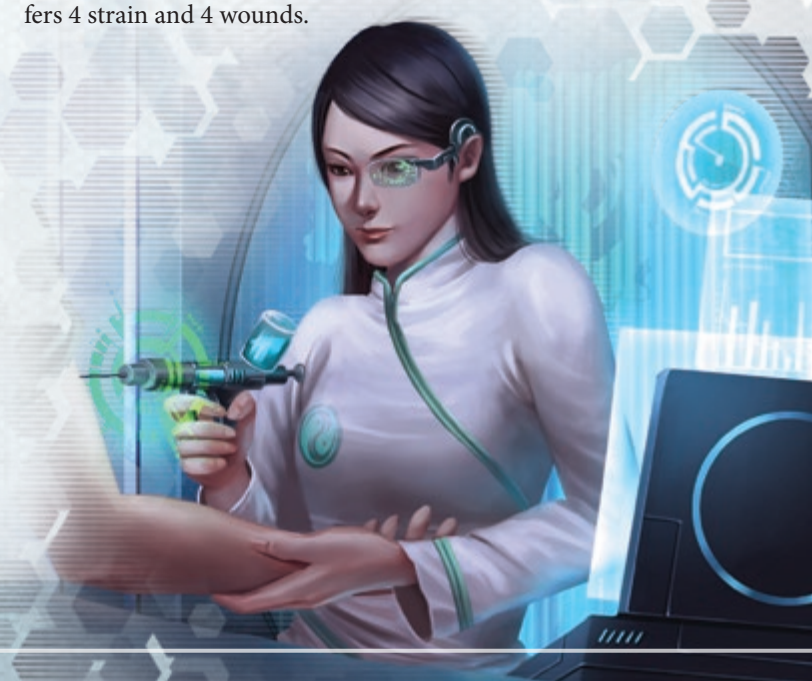


TABLE 2–6: GEAR

ITEM	ENCUM	PRICE	RARITY
Carrying and Storage			
Cross-Body Bag	+3	30	1
Load-Bearing Gear	+3	45	3
MAL Container	15	10,000	8
Modular Backpack	+5	100	3
Utility Belt	+2	20	1
Clandestine and Black Ops			
Disguise Kit	4	250	5
Infiltrator Goggles	1	300	6
Lockbreaker	1	125	5
Lockpick Set	1	75	5
Snap-Locks	0	5	3
Comms			
Burst Transmitter	1	440	6
Field Radio	1	250	5
Personal Comlink	0	25	4
Computers and Computer Accessories			
Big Rig	8	2,000	7
BMI	0	480	4
Monocam	0	120	2
PAD	1	200	2
Portable Rig	3	750	5
Reader	0	175	2
Smartspecs	1	90	3

ITEM	ENCUM	PRICE	RARITY
Meds and Drugs			
Emergency Medkit	1	100	2
Happy Patch	0	10	1
Low-Fi	0	50	2
Portable Clinic Kit	3	700	4
Slap-Patch	0	25	2
Stim	0	5	1
Sting	0	50	3
Tools and General Gear			
Airbelt Pack	1	650	3
Climbing Harness	2	400	4
Emergency Repair Patch	0	25	2
Flashlight	0	10	1
Forensic Kit	4	475	5
Handheld Scanner	1	100	2
Las-Scanner	1	170	4
Makerbox	5	1,000	6
Micro-Welder	1	80	2
O2 Bottle	1	35	2
Portable Toolkit	4	200	2
Respirator	1	40	1
Rope	1	5	1
Space Suit	6	500	3

TOOLS AND GENERAL GEAR

In today's highly specialized, highly technical world, tools are as much a part of life as street grub and newsrags.

AIRBELT PACK

Airbelt packs are personal mobility assist devices designed for use in low-gravity environments. They consist of a set of air jets worn around the waist and controlled by a handheld virt panel. An experienced user wearing an airbelt pack can move in zero-g as easily as if they had wings.

While your character is wearing an airbelt pack, they do not treat movement in zero gravity as movement through difficult terrain.

CLIMBING HARNESS

In a city as vertical as New Angeles, climbing gear occupies a useful niche for anyone who has reason to go clambering around on the outside of buildings. A climbing harness includes a fully secured harness, two hundred meters of micro-filament rope strong enough to support the weight of two adults, and a set of quick-stick pitons with an adhesive that locks onto nearly any surface in seconds. The harness has a small motor that allows it to automatically ascend the rope, and a one-shot grapnel launcher for quick ascents.

To use the grapnel launcher, your character must make a Ranged (Light) skill check with a difficulty set by the range of the wall, building, or other structure your character is trying to hit (in the same manner as determining the difficulty of a ranged combat check). Securing a piton requires a maneuver. The motorized harness allows your character to ascend or descend without making a check.

EMERGENCY REPAIR PATCH

Emergency repair patches are to machines what slap-patches are to humans. Available in sizes that range from mere millimeters to square yards, they consist of an alloy patch that bonds to any surface by means of a powerful adhesive. Although meant as very temporary repair measures, emergency patches are remarkably sturdy and can even be used to patch up shuttles and dropships in a pinch. They can also offer basic repairs to bioroids.

Your character can use an emergency repair patch in two different ways. They can use it when making repairs on a mechanical system, in which case it adds ■ to their Mechanics check. They can also use it as a slap-patch to heal bioroid characters. In this case, it follows all of the rules of slap-patches, as found on page 100.

FLASHLIGHT

While modern flashlights are more powerful, use less energy, and are made from more advanced materials than older models, their basic function hasn't changed for centuries.

A flashlight provides light and removes □ added to checks due to darkness. It can provide light out to medium range.

FORENSIC KIT

Investigators not lucky enough to be a part of the NAPD's forensic division (and have access to their comprehensive and state-of-the-art laboratories) need to make do with portable and limited forensic kits. A forensic kit is about the size of a large suitcase. It has storage compartments for small pieces of evidence (including a cold-storage micro-freezer), tools for recovering fingerprints and DNA samples, a hand-held magnifier/recorder, a chemical and DNA analyzer, and a combination camera and las-scanner that can holographically record a scene, allowing a PI to take a snapshot of a crime scene and walk through its holographic projection later.

In addition to the basic recording, analyzing, and evidence-gathering uses, your character adds ⮝ to Vigilance and Perception checks made while searching a crime scene using a forensic kit.

HANDHELD DIAGNOSTIC SCANNER

Designed to diagnose mechanical and electrical trouble, these all-purpose scanners can interface with any computer-controlled machine or smart system to detect malfunctions. They are typically sold with software suites that help users navigate the millions of potential error codes in everything from PADs and hoppers to industrial machinery.

When your character makes a Computers or Mechanics check to work on a piece of hardware while using a hand-held diagnostic scanner, they add ⮝ to the results.

LAS-SCANNER

Ostensibly a civil engineer's tool, a las-scanner is used to measure and map enclosed spaces. Using laser-imaging technology, a las-scanner can produce a highly detailed three-dimensional map of a room, ship compartment, cave, or other space in seconds. That image can then be run through the enclosed software for post-processing, markup, and notation. Las-scanners are useful to criminals and spies when infiltrating secure areas.

MAKERBOX

"Makerbox" is a catchall term for a 3D printer or other commercially available automated fabrication suite. Using a variety of materials, typically synthetics and composites derived from buckyfullerene, a makerbox can make nearly any item imaginable if the space and materials are available. While these machines cannot produce complex, multipart items such as firearms or PADs, with the right materials, it can make the components from which to assemble such items.

Your character can use a makerbox to assemble a simple tool (or equivalent part) that has an encumbrance value of 2 or less. The process takes five to ten minutes, depending on the size of the tool, and requires an equivalent amount of raw materials (plascrete or metals).

MICRO-WELDER

Micro-welders are small, hand-held arc welders used to make emergency repairs and to bond lightweight materials. They are equipped with a swivel head for getting into hard-to-reach areas and a flip-up shield to protect the

user's eyes from damage. While a micro-welder may not handle heavy-duty work, it can still help fix a weapon or seal a door in a pinch.

O2 BOTTLE

Emergency oxygen bottles are a common sight from Midway Station all the way to Mars. They have disposable mouth pieces and modular valves, letting them serve as an emergency O2 supply or refill a pressurized compartment.

Your character can use an O2 bottle to avoid the effects of suffocation in a low-oxygen environment (such as in vacuum, underwater, or in a choking cloud of gas) for up to ten minutes. Your character still suffers any other effects from that environment (such as wounds from being exposed to vacuum, for example).

PORTABLE TOOLKIT

Portable toolkits are sold by numerous manufacturers and contain everything a runner needs to carry out basic mechanical and electronic repairs. Most standard kits come with a selection of hand tools like wrenches, screwdrivers, pliers, ratchets, and sockets. Many also include circuit testers, voltmeters, diagnostic scanners, probes, feeler gauges, jumpers, and other specialty tools for doing everything from changing a broken PAD screen to overhauling a hopper's turbine engine.

This kit provides your character with the equipment needed to make a Mechanics check without penalty.

RESPIRATOR

Part gas mask and part rebreather, a respirator is one of the most common pieces of survival gear available. Starships, space stations, and outposts keep stocks of them, and most shops have simple respirators that can filter out smoke, irritants, and toxins. Some respirators only cover the nose and mouth; others have integrated goggles to protect the eyes.

While wearing a respirator, your character adds ✲ to Resilience checks they make to resist poisonous atmospheres or hazardous environments.

ROPE

Modern rope is made from reinforced synthetic fibers. It is lightweight, has incredible tensile strength, and is every bit as useful and versatile as old-fashioned hemp rope.

SPACE SUIT

Space suits have come a long way since Yuri Gagarin took his first trip around the Earth. Modern space suits are lightweight, flexible, often formfitting garments built with comfort, and occasionally style, in mind as much as protection. They are temperature controlled, radiation shielded, and they have their own oxygen and power supplies. Some models are armored with slip-on plates or buckyweave. Higher-end suits may have built-in thrusters, power couplings for tools, light power assist, and even magnetic plates in the boot soles. Every space suit sold comes with an emergency repair kit that allows for quick fixes of tears, leaks, and bad gasket seals.

When worn, a space suit's encumbrance is 3.

BODY MODIFICATIONS

Individuals modify their bodies for any number of reasons, from medical necessity to simple aesthetics. No longer limited to tattoos, piercings, and minor body sculpting, modern body modification involves replacing whole sections of the body with synthetic or genetically modified systems. The rise of this wholesale modification—some would say mutilation—of the human form has caused many thinkers to begin questioning the nature of humanity itself.

CYBERNETICS

Cybernetics are the most popular, and most socially acceptable, form of modern body modification. Using advanced prosthetics and biomechanical systems, an individual can increase their natural abilities well beyond the human average. The trade-off is that every implant costs a bit of resilience and a bit of humanity.

Each attribute, skill, or characteristic may only be increased by +1 due to cybernetics, no matter how many different cybernetics your character has that would otherwise increase that number.

BONE LACING

Bone lacing is an extremely invasive and painful procedure that reinforces a patient's skeleton with buckyweave and lightweight alloys. An individual with bone lacing can soak up huge amounts of damage, and their bones are almost impossible to break. While bone lacing is commonly used to treat those suffering from various degenerative bone diseases or severely broken bones, it is also popular among those laborers, colonists, soldiers, and mercenaries who can afford it.

If your character has bone lacing, whenever they suffer a Critical Injury, you may roll twice on **Table I.6–10: Critical Injury Result**, on page 115 of the **Genesys** Core Rulebook, and choose which of the two results to use. Your character also decreases their strain threshold by 1.

REPLACEMENTS, NOT IMPROVEMENTS

The cybernetics presented here are designed to enhance a person's attributes. However, a market still exists for simpler, cheaper replacements designed to simply replace a lost limb or a damaged organ.

In game terms, these cybernetics can be purchased to compensate for a Critical Injury of Maimed or Gruesome Injury (as well as any other injury that causes the permanent loss of function, such as the Blinded Critical Injury if your GM decides the sight loss is permanent). You and your GM should determine which of the cybernetics makes the most sense as a replacement (cybereyes to restore sight, a cyberlimb to replace a missing arm, etc.). The cost of that cybernetic is halved, but it only restores the previously lost function; it conveys no further benefit. It also still reduces your character's strain threshold as usual.

CYBEREYES

Fairly common prosthetics, cybereyes are some of the most popular cybernetics obtained for enhancement rather than for overcoming an injury. A cybereye can dramatically improve a character's eyesight, and many cybereyes have night-vision or infrared capability built in as well.

One or more cybereyes increases your character's ranks in Perception by 1 and remove ■ caused by smoke or darkness on any checks they make. Your character can also display information from their PAD on their cybereyes. Further, they decrease their strain threshold by 1.

CYBERLIMB

Cyberlimbs are high-tech prosthetics designed to replace an individual's missing organic limbs. Available in a variety of styles and qualities—from low-cost, hard-plastic military surplus arms to the lifelike creations used by top athletes and racers to replace limbs lost in accidents—they are a very common

cybernetic enhancement. As with many implants that began as medical devices, cyberlimbs are currently seeing a rise in use for increasing the performance of human bodies.

A cyberlimb increases your character's Brawn or Agility rating—your choice when your character obtains the limb—by 1. If a character has one or more cybernetic arms, they decrease their strain threshold by 1, and if they have one or more cybernetic legs, they decrease their strain threshold by 1.

CYBERORGAN

The ability to create functional mechanical replacements for the body's internal organs was a revolution in medical science. Once cyberorgans became more common, it did not take long for people—particularly athletes—to discover the performance-enhancing benefits of things like super efficient biomechanical hearts and cybernetic lungs.

- **Cybernetic Heart:** A cybernetic heart increases your character's wound threshold by 2. (This is a special exception to the attribute increase limit for cybernetics, and your character cannot increase their wound threshold by more than 2 with cybernetics.)
- **Cybernetic Lungs:** Cybernetic lungs increase your character's ranks in Athletics by 1 and allow them to survive up to five minutes in an unbreathable atmosphere (but not vacuum) without suffocating.
- **Cybernetic Liver:** A cybernetic liver increases your character's ranks in Resilience by 1 and makes them immune to the effects of alcohol.

For each cyberorgan a character has, they decrease their strain threshold by 1.

ENHANCED HEARING

The evolution of the external hearing aid, enhanced hearing cybernetics can improve a user's hearing to superhuman levels. These systems use a mix of subminiature sound amplifiers and nerve enhancement to restore hearing, cure damage (like tinnitus), and can provide additional enhancements beyond normal hearing to those who can afford it.

Enhanced hearing increases your character's ranks in Vigilance by 1, and removes ■ caused by loud noises or sound-based attacks on any checks they make. If your character has enhanced hearing, they decrease their strain threshold by 1.

ENHANCED REFLEXES

Enhanced reflexes were initially developed to heal damaged nervous systems and to cure neurodegenerative disorders like Parkinson's disease and ALS. Every bit as painful and invasive as bone lacing, this implant uses nanomachines and nerve therapy to supercharge a user's nervous system. Individuals with enhanced reflexes are incredibly quick, but they often find it difficult to sit still and tend to see the rest of the world as if it were moving in slow motion.

Enhanced reflexes increase your character's ranks in Coordination and Vigilance by 1 and decrease their strain threshold by 1.

NEURO-REGULATOR

Neuro-regulators are fantastically complex devices that wire microelectronic circuits directly into the brain. Although the devices were originally designed to treat a variety of mental illnesses, some people found that if they were adjusted in particular ways, they increased mental focus and eliminated "troublesome" human emotions such as fear. Of course, this could also make the individuals come across as creepy and emotionless.

Neuro-regulators increase your character's Willpower by 1 and decrease their strain threshold by 1. Your character may also lose the good sense to flee from dangerous situations and, at your GM's discretion, your character may suffer ■ to social skill checks for seeming a bit robotic.

SKULLJACK

The most common piece of cyberware on the black market today, the skulljack is considered a necessity rather than a luxury for a serious runner. Skulljacks are small access points implanted in the skull that allow a character to connect to and control a computer or computer-operated system. Inexpensive and readily available, skulljacks come in two broad categories: wired and wireless.

Wired skulljacks, models that require a physical cable connection to a computer or system, are older technology and usually found among people who can't afford wireless ones, those who consider the "retro" style of a cable connection cool, and eccentrics who believe the physical connection gives them a stronger, faster, and more reliable connection. Wireless skulljacks are more common, are less invasive than wired skulljacks, and take up less space in an individual's head; however, despite claims to the contrary by industry flacks and security "experts," wireless skulljack signals can sometimes be suppressed or intercepted.

A skulljack is not a computer, but may be connected to any computer (and is essentially a BMI that is surgically installed into your character's brain). It provides all of the benefits of a BMI; during a Network encounter, a runner can choose to "go deep" as an maneuver. Until they "go shallow" as a maneuver, they may only interact with the Network (performing Network maneuvers and Network actions); they cannot interact with the regular world (such as by performing regular maneuvers or actions). However, they may perform a second maneuver each turn during Network encounters without spending strain.

In addition, whenever your character's skulljack is linked to a computer, your character increases their ranks in all Knowledge skills by 1. Characters with a skulljack decrease their strain threshold by 1.

SPINAL MODEM

For some people, linking their brain to a computer just isn't enough. They want to install a computer directly into their brain instead. A spinal modem has the processing power of a portable computer rig, but is linked directly to the user's brain. As the name implies, the modem is built directly into the user's spinal column. It is archaic technology, and those who use it run the very real risk of burning out their mind, even if it gives a user greater control during a run.

A spinal modem is a computer that can have up to two icebreakers and one piece of ice active on its system at once (for the purposes of Network encounters). It has both wireless and wired connection ports to the Network. It also provides all the benefits of a BMI (since it is essentially a BMI installed directly into your character's brain); during a Network encounter, a runner can choose to "go deep" as a maneuver. Until they "go shallow" as a maneuver, they may only interact with the Network (performing Network maneuvers and Network actions); they cannot interact with the regular world (such as by performing regular maneuvers or actions). However, they may perform a second maneuver each turn during Network encounters without spending strain.

In addition, your character increases their ranks in all Knowledge skills by 1. Characters with a spinal modem decrease their strain threshold by 1, and can never disconnect from the Network (the particulars of this are up to your GM, but at the very least this means that they can always be traced or targeted by hackers).

PAIN EDITOR

A pain editor implant uses microscopic neural shunts controlled by an organic processing chip to let an individual ignore the effects of pain. While this sounds like quite a boon—and it is in certain situations and for chronic pain sufferers—an individual who can't feel pain has a tendency not to notice how bad their injuries are, and can do even more damage to themselves as a result.

If your character has a pain editor, once per encounter when your character suffers a Critical Injury, they may activate the pain editor as an out-of-turn incidental. Until the end of the encounter, they ignore any penalties that Critical Injury would otherwise impose on skill checks they make. (At your GM's discretion, this may not apply to penalties inflicted by certain Critical Injuries, such as blindness or loss of a limb.) At the end of the encounter, your character no longer ignores those penalties and suffers the effects of the Critical Injuries. Characters with a pain editor decrease their strain threshold by 1.

SUB-DERMAL ARMOR

Sub-dermal armor are thin armor plates, typically made of buckyweave layered with ballistic gel packs, implanted just beneath an individual's skin. It's not much protection, but it is enough to turn a blade or absorb a beating.

Sub-dermal armor increases your character's soak by 1 and reduces their strain threshold by 1.

G-MODS

Genetic modifications, or g-mods, use gene therapy and organic implants rather than alloys and buckyweave to increase an individual's performance. Considered by some to be more natural than cybernetics, g-mods nevertheless alter the human body in unique and irreversible ways.

CAT CLAWS

Used both for self-defense and as an aesthetic modification, the cat claws g-mod is similar to the tooth-buds g-mod in that it causes sharp, retractable claws to grow under an individual's regular nails. While they can't cause serious harm, cat claws can deliver deep, painful scratches and are extremely good for fending off unwanted attention.

If your character has cat claws, they may suffer 1 strain to have their unarmed Brawl attacks deal +1 damage and have a Critical rating of 3 until the end of the encounter. Since the claws are retractable, this g-mod is unnoticeable without a thorough medical inspection when they aren't extended.

CHAMELEON SKIN

The chameleon skin g-mod splices in genes from various color-changing animals (such as chameleons, squid, and octopi) and tinkers with the body's melanocytes to let a character change the color of their skin at will. When an individual first assimilates this g-mod, they can only create solid colors within the standard range of human skin tones. With practice, a g-modded individual can create nearly any color and can combine colors in a variety of patterns. While this is primarily a cosmetic modification, a fair number of clandestine operatives and criminals get this g-mod to help them hide or disguise themselves.

G-MOD INSTALLATION

Despite what Jinteki ads say, g-mods are not completely safe or reliable. Human DNA has evolved over millions of years, and tampering with it occasionally creates more problems than it solves. There are two types of side effects that can originate from assimilating a g-mod: rejection and mutation.

With rejection, the body simply rejects the modification and reverts back to its original genetic structure. That can be frustrating, given how much g-mods cost, but it usually isn't dangerous. The second, and more dangerous, side effect is mutation. Rewriting DNA in one location can cause it to unravel in another, leading to tumors, organ failure, or even death.

When a character attempts to assimilate a g-mod, they must make an **Average (◆ ◆) Resilience check**. If they fail, the g-mod has been rejected. It confers no benefit, but its cost has still been expended. If they fail with ⟲ ⟲ ⟲ ⟲ or ⊗, the g-mod causes a mutation, and the character's strain or wound threshold—player's choice—is permanently decreased by 1.

If your character has chameleon skin, they may suffer 1 strain before making a Stealth check or a check to apply or adopt a disguise to add ✲ to the results.

ENHANCED HEALING

The enhanced healing g-mod supercharges an individual's natural healing ability. Minor bumps, bruises, and scratches heal almost instantly, and the healing time for more serious injuries is cut by days or even weeks.

If your character has enhanced healing, they may suffer 1 strain before making a Resilience check to recover from Critical Injuries to add ✲ to the results. When healing via natural rest, your character increases the number of wounds healed by 1.

ENHANCED MUSCLES

By altering the genetic codes that control muscle development, g-mod designers found a way to sculpt an individual's musculature into custom configurations. Muscles can be enhanced for coordination and reflexes, or for raw strength.

Enhanced muscle g-mods are popular among athletes and professional thrill-seekers for enhancing their performance without dangerous drugs or invasive cybernetics. Also wildly popular among body builders, these g-mods led directly to the creation of various modified competition classes that focus on modified bulk, shape, and aesthetics.

When your character purchases this g-mod, they must choose whether it improves their strength or coordination. Your character may only have one type of enhanced muscle g-mod in their body.

- **Strength:** If your character has enhanced muscles that improve strength, they may suffer 1 strain before making an Athletics, Brawl, or Melee check to add ✲ to the results.
- **Coordination:** If your character has enhanced muscles that improve coordination, they may suffer 1 strain before making a Coordination or Ranged (Light) check to add ✲ to the results.

ENHANCED OLFACTORY RECEPTORS

This g-mod causes a user's nose to become highly sensitive, able to pick out smells they couldn't normally distinguish. Since most people don't want to spend their whole day bombarded by the scent of garbage from half a kilometer away, however, an individual can trigger their receptors' sensitivity for a short time before returning to normal.

If your character has enhanced olfactory receptors, they may suffer 1 strain before making a Survival check to add ✲ to the results.

FOLLICLE CONTROL

The follicle control g-mod allows an individual to control their body hair, to a point. The process takes a fair amount of time and can be messy if the character is shedding hair everywhere. It also doesn't provide fine-enough control for a person to grow a perfect hairstyle. What it does do is allow an individual to drastically alter their looks within hours. Follicle control is popular among performers, club goers, and of course, criminals and clandestine operatives.

If your character has follicle control, they may suffer 1 strain to shed their hair over the course of the following minute. Alternatively, they may suffer 1 strain to stimulate their hair growth. The time this takes depends on the desired length: while a quarter-inch stubble may only

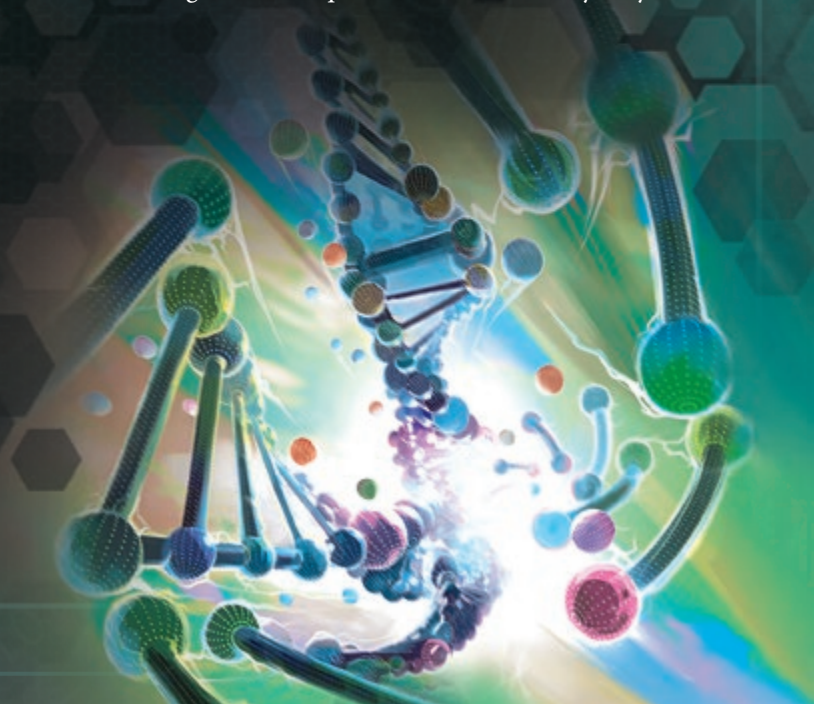


TABLE 2–7: BODY MODIFICATIONS

ITEM	ENCUM	PRICE	RARITY
Cybernetics			
Bone Lacing	–	1,000	5
Cybereyes	–	500	4
Cyberlimb	–	2,000	4
Cyberorgan	–	500	5
Enhanced Hearing	–	500	4
Enhanced Reflexes	–	800	5
Neuro-Regulator	–	1,500	6
Pain Editor	–	400	6
Skulljack	–	1,250	5
Spinal Modem	–	1,350 (R)	7
Sub-Dermal Armor	–	1000	5
G-Mods			
Cat Claws	–	400	6
Chameleon Skin	–	400	6
Enhanced Healing	–	500	5
Enhanced Muscles: Coordination	-	1,500	6
Enhanced Muscles: Strength	-	1,000	6
Enhanced Olfactory Receptors	–	500	6
Follicle Control	–	300	7
Geno-Sculpted Physique	–	800	5
Nighteyes	–	800	6
Tooth Buds	–	600	6
Toxin Filters	–	400	6

take four or five hours, growing "shaggy" hair takes at least twelve, hair down to one's shoulders may take more than a day, and hair to the middle of one's back may take more than two. They may also choose any natural hair color for their hair when growing it.

GENO-SCULPTED PHYSIQUE

Although people still enjoy saying that "beauty is in the eye of the beholder," these days geneticists really do have attractiveness down to a science. For a hefty sum, a person can ingest a cocktail that forces the body to change features such as eye color, muscle definition, facial features, and even height and weight to a minor extent. These changes are literally skin deep; while a geno-sculpted individual may look like they're sporting the muscles of a dedicated gym-goer, for example, they won't be any stronger. But most people who opt for this g-mod just want to show off their bodies and aren't actually interested in manual labor anyway.

If your character has a geno-sculpted physique, they may suffer 1 strain before making a Charm or Leadership check to add ✲ to the results.

NIGHTEYES

The nighteyes g-mod alters the inner structure of the subject's eyes, which allows them to take in more light and see better in dim and dark conditions. While this essentially gives an individual a natural form of passive night vision, it also makes them sensitive to bright light. Nighteyes look slightly unnatural, with darker-colored irises and larger pupils that reflect light like an animal's in the dark. Most people with this g-mod are never without a pair of sunglasses.

If your character has nighteyes, they may suffer 1 strain before making a Vigilance or Perception check in dark conditions to add ✲ to the results. In bright conditions, they add ✲ ⟲ to the results instead.

TOOTH BUDS

Tooth buds cause an individual's canine teeth to fall out and regrow as a set of long, sharp fangs. Popular with some youth subcultures and quite a few cults, these fangs are both intimidating and dangerous. Since this g-mod also strengthens the jaw muscles and other teeth—an unintended side effect of the modification process—individuals with tooth buds can cause extremely ugly bite wounds without much danger to themselves.

Tooth buds have one major drawback: their size. The size and placement of tooth buds makes it difficult for someone with this g-mod to fully close their mouth. Many get around this by filing the fangs to fit, while others leave them as they are. The latter have a tendency to lisp and drool, which is the desired effect for some individuals.

If your character has tooth buds, their unarmed Brawl attacks deal +2 damage and have the Vicious 1 quality—as long as they're willing to bite their target. Your character also adds ■ to all Coercion checks they make and ■ to all Charm checks they make.

TOXIN FILTERS

The toxin filter g-mod alters an individual's liver and causes them to metastasize a number of harmless tumor-like growths that filter toxins throughout their body. This combination makes the individual very difficult to poison. The filters also provide a number of positive secondary effects. Individuals with toxin filters cannot get drunk or high, and they are generally impervious to atmospheric toxins.

If your character has toxin filters, they may suffer 1 strain before making a Resilience check to resist poisons, toxins, or addiction to add ✲ to the results. They may also suffer 1 strain to cancel the effects of a drug in their system (this has no effect on slap-patches).

ITEM ATTACHMENTS

Many professionals feel that a new weapon or suit of armor is a good starting point rather than a finished product. Weapons and armor can be modified with attachments that improve their performance and, in the process, make their users' lives safer and easier.

These attachments use the Item Attachments and Hard Points rules found on page 206 of the **Genesys** Core Rulebook. The attachments in this section replace the attachments found in that section (you should only use these attachments when playing **Shadow of the Beanstalk**).

Shadow of the Beanstalk's weapons and armor have a listed number of hard points in the various weapon and armor tables (sometimes referred to as "HP"). You should use these values instead of using the general rule for determining an item's number of hard points found on page 206 of the **Genesys** Core Rulebook.

ARMOR ATTACHMENTS

The following attachments allow users to customize their armor to their own specifications.

BALLISTIC PLATES

Ballistic armor plates are a popular after-market add on for mercenaries and members of the NAPD SWAT Team. The plascrete plates may be heavy, but they help deflect shots and blows, and absorb damage from direct hits.
Models Include: Argus BallisTec Defensive Plates.
Use With: This attachment can be applied to any combat armor.
Modifiers: The wearer increases their ranged defense by 1. The armor also increases its encumbrance by 1.
Hard Points Required: 1.

BUCKYWEAVE ENHANCEMENT

Buckyweave enhancement reinforces an armor suit with a fantastically expensive, quad-layer buckyweave fabric to drastically increase its protective qualities.
Models Include: Argus BallisTec Armor Reinforcement.
Use With: This attachment can be applied to any armor.
Modifiers: The armor gains the Reinforced item quality.
Hard Points Required: 2.

ENHANCED OPTICS SUITE

This attachment builds numerous optical enhancements into the helmet of the wearer's armor. Most of the common suites include passive night vision, thermal imaging, digital zoom, vid recording, and polarized filters. Advanced models can even include ultrasound or radar imaging systems.
Models Include: Zech Optics Full-Spectrum Optical Suite.
Use With: This attachment can be applied to any armor that includes a helmet.
Modifiers: Removes ■ ■ added to your character's checks due to smoke or darkness.
Hard Points Required: 1.

TABLE 2–8: ITEM ATTACHMENTS

ATTACHMENT	PRICE	RARITY
Armor Attachments		
Ballistic Plates	350	4
Buckyweave Enhancement	9,000	7
Enhanced Optics Suite	1,200	6
Intimidating Paint Job	90	2
Jump Jets	555	5
Street Wear	125	2
Strength-Enhancing System	2,000	5
Vacuum Sealed	500	4
Weapon Attachments		
Ammo Counter	200	3
Balanced Hilt	1,000	6
Ballistic Targeting Display	500	5
Bipod Mount	250	2
BMI-Linked Trigger	120	2
Enhanced Weight	250	2
Recoil Compensators	350	4
Shortened Barrel	180	3
Superior Weapon Customization	750	7
Target-Selection System	1,225 (R)	7
Targeting Reticle	800	5
Telescopic Sight	200	3
Torso Combat Harness	1,175 (R)	5
Weapon Lockout	145	3
Weapon Sling	25	1

INTIMIDATING PAINT JOB

While the blank faceplate of an exosuit or carapace helmet can be disconcerting, it's still not as frightening as a good old fashioned skull or demonic face spray painted or holographically projected over the plasteel or cloth.
Models Include: Custom work only.
Use With: This attachment can be applied to any armor.
Modifiers: When wearing this armor, your character adds ✲ to Coercion checks they make, and ✕ to Charm checks they make.
Hard Points Required: 0.

JUMP JETS

Maneuvering jets are a necessity in microgravity environments, but short range "jump jets" also let users fly briefly (and deploy from high altitude combat drops) while on Earth.
Models Include: Argus Icarus System.
Use With: This attachment can be applied to any armor with a rigid external carapace.
Modifiers: When wearing this armor, once per encounter your character may activate the jump jets as an incidental. Until the end of your character's next turn, they may fly and do not suffer damage from falling.
Hard Points Required: 2.

STREET WEAR

While some armor is unmistakably military in appearance, other armor can be tailored to look indistinguishable from street clothing with the right flare and cut.
Models Include: Custom work only.
Use With: This attachment can be applied to optical camouflage, environmental hardsuits, and light body armor.
Base Modifiers: This armor looks like normal clothing. Anyone searching your character adds ■ ■ to Perception checks to notice that they are wearing armor.
Hard Points Required: 0.

STRENGTH-ENHANCING SYSTEM

Strength-enhancing systems use exosuit technology to turn any hardsuit into a makeshift suit of powered armor. Using polyfiber muscle clusters and microhydraulics, an SES allows the user to lift and carry more mass than usual for longer distances and periods of time.
Models Include: Weyland AMX Power Assist System, HHI "Brawler" Heavy Power Support System.
Use With: This attachment can be applied to any armor with a rigid external carapace.
Modifiers: When wearing this armor, your character increases their encumbrance threshold by 5, and adds ✲ to any Brawn-based checks they make.
Hard Points Required: 2.

VACUUM SEALED

By changing out the underlying unisuit and installing joint seals and special coatings, a full body armored suit can be made impervious to almost any hostile environment. When buttoned up, a vacuum-sealed suit protects the wearer from nuclear, biological, and chemical agents; intense heat; bitter cold; and even the vacuum of space.
Models Include: HHI High Altitude Air System.
Use With: This attachment can be applied to any armor that covers the entire body and includes a helmet.
Modifiers: While wearing this armor, your character may ignore the effects of vacuum and other hazardous environments for up to two hours.
Hard Points Required: 1.

WEAPON ATTACHMENTS

Many modern aftermarket weapon modifications are so-called "smart systems," electronic and computerized systems that improve a weapon's performance with near-fantastical abilities. Meanwhile, simpler "dumb" modifications can improve a weapon without needing digital upgrades.

AMMO COUNTER

One of the simplest smart systems available, an ammo counter displays in a shooter's cybereye—or in a pair of smartgoggles or an HUD—a weapon's maximum and current number of shots. Thus avoiding that unexpected "beep" or "click" of an empty mag.
Models Include: Strelet Arms "Countdown," Skorpios LAG-4 Ammunition Tracker.
Use With: This attachment can be applied to any smart ranged weapon.
Modifiers: While your character is using this weapon, your GM cannot spend ♲ or ⊗ to cause it to run out of ammo.
Hard Points Required: 1.

BALANCED HILT

Good balance is one of the most important features of a melee weapon. Using a variety of ultra-lightweight materials, a talented technician can create a weapon that is light and easy to wield.
Models Include: Custom work only.
Use With: This attachment can be applied to any one-handed weapons that use the Melee skill.
Modifiers: The weapon gains the Accurate 1 item quality or increases its existing Accurate rating by 1. (If the weapon has the Inaccurate item quality, it reduces that quality's rating by 1, to a minimum of 0, instead.)
Hard Points Required: 1.

BALLISTIC TARGETING DISPLAY

A favorite of sharpshooters and sport hunters, a BTD smart system improves a weapon's long-range performance. This system combines a number of subsystems such as a rangefinder, digital optical enhancement, a long-range laser sight, and even a weather satellite uplink to provide real-time ballistic data. It connects to a cybereye, HUD, or smartgoggles and displays range to target, windage, bullet drop, and other data important to long-range shooting.
Models Include: Cantor Model 1 Marksman Smart System, Argus LA994 Ballistic Targeting Array.
Use With: This attachment can be applied to any smart Ranged (Heavy) or Gunnery weapon.
Modifiers: The user reduces the difficulty of ranged combat checks made with this weapon at ranges greater than medium by 2, to a minimum of **Average** (◆◆). This bonus cannot be combined with any other bonus from a different scope or sight.
Hard Points Required: 3.

WHAT'S A SMART WEAPON?

A smart weapon is any weapon that includes an integrated microcomputer and a wireless (or sometimes wired) link that lets the weapon communicate with a linked piece of gear. For practical purposes, we assume that all ranged weapons found in New Angeles are smart weapons unless your GM decides otherwise. Non-smart weapons may be antiques, particularly cheap, or even built to be "dumb" to avoid being traced or hacked. There is no difference between the capabilities of a dumb and a smart weapon, save that a smart weapon can have some attachments that a dumb weapon cannot.

BIPOD MOUNT

Bipods are simple, two-legged stands used to stabilize weapons and make them easier to operate. Although decidedly low-tech in comparison to modern weapon attachments, bipods are still incredibly popular in spite of (or perhaps because of) their simplicity.
Models Include: Strelet Arms General Purpose Bipod.
Use With: This attachment can be applied to any Ranged (Heavy) or Gunnery weapon.
Modifiers: If your character spends one preparation maneuver to deploy the bipod, the weapon's Cumbersome or Unwieldy qualities are reduced by 2, to a minimum of 0, and the weapon's encumbrance is reduced by 2, to a minimum of 0, while your character fires from a crouched or prone position (or can brace the bipod against something solid).
Hard Points Required: 1.

BMI-LINKED TRIGGER

BMI-equipped runners are fond of saying that there's nothing faster than the speed of thought. Some mercenaries and pistols for hire apply this literally, getting a BMI linked to the firing mechanism of their weapon. Being able to fire a pistol with a mental command is faster than pulling the trigger, but it takes training to avoid doing so with a stray thought.
Models Include: Cantor Mind-Lightning Link.
Use With: This attachment can be applied to any smart ranged weapon.
Modifiers: Your character must have a BMI, skulljack, or spinal modem installed to benefit from this attachment. When your character makes the first combat check with this weapon in an encounter, add ☼ ♺ to the results. Your character can also use mental commands to fire this weapon even if they are not holding it, as long as the weapon is within long range.
Hard Points Required: 1.

ENHANCED WEIGHT

Although trends tend towards lighter weapons, some benefit from a bit more heft. Custom armorers can replace striking surfaces with denser materials that are just as durable, allowing them to strike with more impact.
Models Include: Custom work only.
Use With: This attachment can be applied to any close combat weapon that deals bludgeoning or crushing damage (not one with a cutting edge).
Modifiers: The weapon increases its damage by 2. The weapon gains the Cumbersome 2 quality, or increases its existing Cumbersome quality by 1.
Hard Points Required: 1.

RECOIL COMPENSATORS

By using smartlinked gyrostabilizers and gas vents, recoil compensators make weapons more accurate and easier to handle. While recoil compensators are typically added to automatic weapons or high-accuracy, long-range rifles, nearly any slugthrower can benefit from this system.
Models Include: Strelet Arms GR19 Gas Venting System, Cantor Sta-Bil Recoil Compensators.
Use With: This attachment can be applied to any smart slugthrower weapon.
Modifiers: The weapon decreases its Inaccurate item quality by 1, to a minimum of 0.
Hard Points Required: 1.

SHORTENED BARREL

While any weapon's barrel can be shortened with proper application of hacksaw, plasma cutter, or file, most professionals purchase purpose-built barrels to replace the standard items that came with their weapons. Weapons with shortened barrels enable a quicker draw, at the cost of range.
Models Include: Strelet Arms Korotka-1 Barrel, Argus SBSM Reduced Length Barrel.
Use With: This attachment can be applied to any Ranged (Light) weapon.
Modifiers: Your character may draw this weapon as an incidental rather than as a maneuver. The range of this weapon changes to short.
Hard Points Required: 1.
Cost: 250.

SUPERIOR WEAPON CUSTOMIZATION

No matter how well put together it is, a mass-market weapon is still made for the masses. This attachment tweaks a weapon to an individual's specifications, making it an extension of the user rather than a run-of-the-mill weapon.
Models Include: Custom work only.
Use With: This attachment can be applied to any weapon.
Modifiers: This weapon gains the Superior item quality.
Hard Points Required: 1.

TARGET-SELECTION SYSTEM

Target-selection systems are smart systems that are designed to greatly reduce the likelihood of friendly fire. The system consists of an integrated Identify Friend or Foe (IFF) system that identifies allies through a variety of biometric and visual sensors. The system takes a moment to scan its surroundings and the participants in a combat, but once it does so, it refuses to allow its weapon to fire when the shot could hit a friendly.

Models Include: Scorpios AEGIS IFF System, Argus Hold-Fire Target Filtering System.

Use With: This attachment can be applied to any smart ranged weapon.

Modifiers: Your character may spend a maneuver during an encounter to activate the target-selection system. If they do, for the remainder of the encounter, your GM cannot spend ⊗ from their combat checks to cause the attack to hit an ally engaged with their original target.

Hard Points Required: 2.

TARGETING RETICLE

This simple smart system displays a small targeting reticle in a character's cybereye, HUD, or smartgoggles. This feature increases a shooter's accuracy, although it cannot be combined with any other sighting system and is only moderately useful at longer ranges.

Models Include: Strelet SureShot Targeting Scope, HHI Shrike-1 Holo-Reticle.

Use With: This attachment can be applied to any smart ranged weapon.

Modifiers: The weapon gains the Accurate 1 item quality or increases its existing Accurate rating by 1. (If the weapon has the Inaccurate item quality, it reduces that quality's rating by 1, to a minimum of 0, instead.) This bonus cannot be combined with any other bonus from a different scope or sight.

Hard Points Required: 1.

TELESCOPIC SIGHT

The telescopic optical sight is one of the easiest and most common modifications made to weapons. Cheaper than a smart system, the tried-and-true optical sight has not changed much in the centuries since its invention. Modern materials and construction techniques have increased its fit and finish and reduced its fragility, but at the end of the day, an optical sight still uses finely crafted lenses held in a tube that magnify a shooter's target.

Models Include: Zech Optics Triumph Z6 Riflescope, Cantor Model 9 Marksman Scope.

Use With: This attachment can be applied to any ranged weapon that could logically benefit from the application of a telescopic sight.

Modifiers: The user reduces the difficulty of ranged combat checks made with this weapon at long and extreme range by 1.

Hard Points Required: 1.

TORSO COMBAT HARNESS

Torso combat harnesses allow users to stabilize heavy weapons by supporting some of the weight with their own body. They consist of a harness worn by the user and attached to the weapon via a powered and articulated "arm." The whole arrangement is incredibly unwieldy for untrained users, but it lets someone carry a laser cannon while not wearing an exosuit.

Models Include: HHI PowerLift Harness.

Use With: This attachment can be applied to any smart ranged weapon.

Modifiers: As long as the harness is attached to your character, the weapon's Cumbersome qualities are reduced by 4 to a minimum of 0, and the weapon's encumbrance is reduced by 2, to a minimum of 0. The weapon gains the Unwieldy 2 quality, or increases any existing Unwieldy quality by 1.

Hard Points Required: 3.

WEAPON LOCKOUT

When installed in a smart-capable weapon, a lockout prevents anyone but the weapon's owner from using it. Most lockouts use a sophisticated combination of biometrics and palm-print sensors integrated into the grip.

Models Include: Skorpios Mk I Print Lock, Jinteki GeneLocker Weapon Security System.

Use With: This attachment can be applied to any smart weapon.

Modifiers: This weapon cannot be fired except by its designated user. Unlocking and reprogramming a stolen or otherwise "acquired" weapon with an active lockout requires your character to make a **Daunting (◆◆◆◆) Computers (Hacking) check**. Your GM may spend ♺ ♺ ♺ or ⊗ from this check to permanently disable the locked weapon, rendering it useless.

Hard Points Required: 1.

WEAPON SLING

A sling helps a user carry a weapon by taking up part of the weight. This particular attachment has changed little over the centuries, although the styles and prints popular in New Angeles do favor bold hexagonal patterns.

Models Include: Urban Adventures Multipurpose Sling, Strelet Arms S3.

Use With: This attachment can be applied to any Ranged (Heavy) weapon.

Modifiers: The weapon decreases its encumbrance by 2.

Hard Points Required: 1.

SHIPS AND VEHICLES

While the megalopolis's mass transit system and the fleet of beanpods that streak up and down the Beanstalk can get New Angelinos nearly anywhere in New Angeles, there are occasions when an individual needs something more personal and controllable than a streetcar or tube-lev.

There are thousands of different makes and models of vehicles in New Angeles, but despite what companies claim in their advertisements, an Arlis-Maxim Bumblebee isn't all that different from a QuanTech AeroRacer. So this section presents broad profiles instead of specific vehicles, and then details some specific examples to help flesh out your game in accompanying sidebars.

HOPPERS

In New Angeles, hoppers have taken the place of wheeled vehicles like groundcars, groundtrucks, and motorcycles as the most common form of personal transportation. Short for "skyhopper," hoppers are mid-altitude hovercraft powered by a short-duration hydrogen fuel cell that runs multiple electromagnetic hoverfoil rotors.

Most hoppers are autonomous vehicles, controlled by a savant-level AI autopilot. A passenger simply tells the hopper where to go, and the vehicle flies itself to the appropriate hopper pad. Most hoppers do have physical controls in case of emergency—or if the pilot wants to have some fun. However, while in New Angeles, hoppers are linked and directed by New Angeles Traffic Control. Flying on manual results in tickets and fines, if you get caught.

CARGO HOPPER

Cargo hoppers are large, bulky, awkward and unlovely machines built for one purpose: to haul tons of cargo safely and reliably. They carry no passengers, and their entire hull, save for mechanical spaces, is given over to cargo space. While some cargo hoppers have a driver's cab, the majority manufactured these days are completely AI-controlled.

Control Skill: Piloting.
Compliment: 1 driver or completely autonomous vehicle.
Passenger Capacity: None.
Price/Rarity: 40,000 credits/4.
Encumbrance Capacity: 200.
Consumables: None.
Weapons: None.

K&P AEROSPACE G-77 GOLIATH

The Goliath, built by U.S. aerospace giant K&P, is a prime example of the cargo hopper. Essentially a flying shipping container, the Goliath is packed full of automated cargo-handling systems and can handle anything from palletized cargo to simple bags and bales of material. It is a common sight plodding through the city, decorated with corporate logos and often painted with layers of colorful graffiti.

COMMUTER HOPPER

Commuter hoppers are small affairs commonly used for getting around New Angeles. Not particularly stylish or exciting, commuters are nonetheless the backbone of personal transport in and around the greater New Angeles megalopolis. They have just enough room for up to four individuals to sit comfortably and enough cargo space for a few large pieces of luggage. Like most hoppers, these tiny runabouts are controlled by an AI autopilot and have handling characteristics that can be described charitably as sedate.

Control Skill: Piloting.
Compliment: 1 driver or completely autonomous vehicle.
Passenger Capacity: 3.
Price/Rarity: 14,000 credits/2.
Encumbrance Capacity: 25.
Consumables: None.
Weapons: None.

ARLIS-MAXIM BUMBLEBEE

The Bumblebee by Arlis-Maxim AG is a typical commuter hopper. It comes standard with a comfortable, well-laid-out cabin, an extensive infotainment system, and all the modern safety and comfort options expected on commuter hoppers. It has an excellent reputation, thanks to Arlis-Maxim's famous high-quality engineering, and it is popular among retirees and young professionals.

HOPPERBIKE

Hopperbikes appeal to the speed junkies and thrill seekers of New Angeles, as well as the couriers looking to make fast deliveries. They are basically flying motorcycles, a single open pilot seat and windscreen sitting atop oversized fuel cells and some heavy duty electromagnetic hoverfoils.

Hopperbikes tend to be blisteringly fast, highly-maneuverable thrill machines—there's not much demand for a sluggish or safe bike. Their cargo capacity is limited; most have space for a single passenger riding behind the pilot and room for a few small items in saddlebags or seat-storage.

SILHOUETTE	MAX SPEED	HANDLING	DEFENSE	ARMOR	HT THRESHOLD	SS THRESHOLD
2	4	+2	1	0	2	4

Control Skill: Piloting.
Compliment: 1 driver.
Passenger Capacity: 1 (barely).
Price/Rarity: 8,000 credits/3.
Encumbrance Capacity: 10.
Consumables: None.
Weapons: None.

LUXURY HOPPER

The luxury and high performance hopper market often go hand in hand, with rich risties spending way too many credits on fast, high-performance mid-life crisis mobiles. They're more likely to enjoy the luxury features like real leather seats, full threedee projectors, and compact wet bars than what's under the hood. However, occasionally a proper pilot gets their hands on a sports hopper, at which point they appreciate these vehicle's mechanical advantages.

SILHOUETTE	MAX SPEED	HANDLING	DEFENSE	ARMOR	HT THRESHOLD	SS THRESHOLD
2	3	+1	1	0	4	6

Control Skill: Piloting.
Compliment: 1 driver.
Passenger Capacity: 3.
Price/Rarity: 85,000 credits/3.
Encumbrance Capacity: 20.
Consumables: None.
Weapons: None.

QIANJU PT 7000

The PT 7000 is one of the newest and most exciting hopperbikes in the sports hopper market. Building on the massive success of the original Qianju Personal Transport, the 7000 has four times the power, the maneuverability required for serious hopper racing, and a blunt, aggressive-looking chassis. Of course, it also comes with a price tag to match.

HELIODYNE AMG-90 LUXURY HOPPER

Popular among CEOs, celebrities, and crime bosses, the AMG-90 is the last word in luxury and performance. Interiors feature exotic natural and synthetic materials, state-of-the-art infotainment systems, full sensor suites, encrypted comms, and rocking sound systems. The AI is equipped with military-grade combat drone capabilities. However, most risties have a Tenma pilot or prefer to fly their toy themselves.

POLICE HOPPER

Police hoppers are bigger and more powerful than their civilian counterparts, with larger fuel cells giving them increased range as well. Their AI pilots allow officers to handle patrol duties mid-flight, but officers are expected to take manual control to get the most of their vehicle. Police hoppers also come armored for patrols into the undercity.

Control Skill: Piloting.
Compliment: 2 NAPD officers.
Passenger Capacity: 3 prisoners.
Price/Rarity: 60,000 credits/3.
Encumbrance Capacity: 25.
Consumables: None.
Weapons: None.

ARLIS-MAXIM ENFORCER

The Enforcer is Arlis-Maxim's bread and butter; over half a million have been sold to various law enforcement agencies. The Enforcer trades maneuverability for raw power for straight-line chases. It also has sustained hover capability, remote spotlights, deployable wheels for landing off-pad, and a variant, the Enforcer K9, has an expanded cargo trunk to transport Hachi-Inu clones.

GROUND VEHICLES

Despite being obsolete, cheap groundcars and trucks still clog the undercity roads of New Angeles.

GROUNDCAR

Most groundcars in New Angeles stay out of sight, relegated to the arterial highways and roads running through the undercity. They're an inefficient way of getting around the city, and thus are usually owned by the poor.

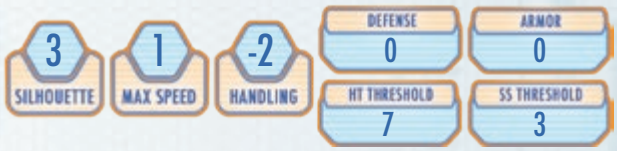
Control Skill: Driving.
Compliment: 1 driver.
Passenger Capacity: 5.
Price/Rarity: 5,000 credits/3.
Encumbrance Capacity: 25.
Consumables: None.
Weapons: None.

PAL-DNIEPER GAZELLE

The hilariously misnamed Gazelle, produced by Russian automaker PAL-Dnieper Group, has been out of production for nearly four decades and was considered clunky and old-fashioned when it was new. It is neither fast nor exciting and has a rate of acceleration best measured in days. However, Gazelles are popular with criminals and other individuals who like their privacy. They are inconspicuous and more importantly, most don't have the hardware to connect to the Network or Traffic Authority.

GROUNDTRUCK

Slower and heavier than most groundcars, groundtrucks still have a place in New Angeles hauling the constant deliveries that keep city industry humming. While the massive cargo haulers are all completely automated (with only two dimensions to worry about, even the simplest computer can drive one), lighter trucks tend to be popular with self-employed craftspeople and tradespeople working and living in the undercity.



Control Skill: Driving.
Compliment: 1 driver.
Passenger Capacity: 3.
Price/Rarity: 7,500 credits/3.
Encumbrance Capacity: 100.
Consumables: None.
Weapons: None.

T-A CABALLERO

Produced by the Ecuadoran-Japanese automotive conglomerate Tomi-Arisaka Autos, the Caballero is the vehicle of choice for New Angeles' struggling blue-collar workers. However, a vibrant custom culture has grown up around it and similar vehicles. New Angelinos spend thousands of credits outfitting their Caballeros with custom wheels and tires, intricate paint and body work, luxury interiors, upgraded powertrains, and powerful stereo systems. Spontaneous car shows are a common occurrence in working-class neighborhoods in Esmeraldas and Quinde. These gatherings are an excellent place to party, hear rumors, buy and sell contraband, and keep an ear open to the city's happenings.

AEROSPACE VEHICLES

The most common areospace vehicles are dropships, the colloquial term for orbit-capable vehicles used by VIPs, the ultra-rich, and most militaries.

COMBAT DROPSHIP

Mostly owned by militaries and wealthy prisec corporations, combat dropships are the best way to get soldiers into space and back down alive, while giving them some hefty fire support. They are somewhat aerodynamic, but still sport thick armored plates and rely on the raw power of their engines to bully their way through the atmosphere on the way to the target.

SILHOUETTE	MAX SPEED	HANDLING	DEFENSE	ARMOR	HT THRESHOLD	SS THRESHOLD
4	4	-1	0	2	10	10

Control Skill: Piloting.
Compliment: 1 pilot, 1 ECW operator, 1 crew chief.
Passenger Capacity: 15.
Price/Rarity: 750,000 credits/6.
Encumbrance Capacity: 80.
Consumables: None.
Weapons: Chin-mounted railgun (Fire Arc Forward; Damage 3; Critical 2; Range [Extreme]; Breach 1, Vicious 2).

Air-to-air missiles (Fire Arc Forward; Damage 5; Critical 3; Range [Strategic]; Guided 3, Limited Ammo 4).

Two auto-turret support fletchers (Fire Arc Starboard or Fire Arc Port; Damage 6; Critical 2; Range [Medium]; Blast 6, Personal Scale, Pierce 4, Vicious 3).

PASSENGER DROPSHIP

Passenger dropships are small, fast, and luxurious transatmospheric vessels designed to transport wealthy VIPs and expensive cargo from Earth to orbit. The passenger compartments tend to be spacious and well-appointed, since the cost of boosting someone into orbit is exorbitant anyway. Passenger dropships tend to be sleek, delta-winged vehicles with powerful enough engines that they can escape atmosphere without additional boosters.

SILHOUETTE	MAX SPEED	HANDLING	DEFENSE	ARMOR	HT THRESHOLD	SS THRESHOLD
4	4	+0	1	0	8	8

Control Skill: Piloting.
Compliment: 1 pilot, 1 co-pilot.
Passenger Capacity: 20.
Price/Rarity: 500,000 credits/5.
Encumbrance Capacity: 200 (without passengers).
Consumables: None.
Weapons: None.

STARSHIPS

Until recently, spaceships were limited primarily to shuttlecraft, transports, and cargo haulers. In the wake of the Lunar Insurrection and lingering troubles on Mars, however, shipbuilders have begun thinking about what a dedicated military vessel might look like.

HEAVY FREIGHTER

Heavy freighters primarily transport cargo and people between the Earth and Mars, but a number of freighters also make the Earth-Moon run. Unlike the famous Challenger Memorial Ferry slow-boats that use orbital momentum to make the trip to Heinlein in weeks, these freighters use onboard fusion reactors to power ion drives that allow them to make the crossing in a matter of days.

SILHOUETTE	MAX SPEED	HANDLING	DEFENSE	ARMOR	HT THRESHOLD	SS THRESHOLD
6	1	-3	0	3	30	20

Control Skill: Operating.
Compliment: 8 civilian crew.
Passenger Capacity: 10 (increased to 50 if cargo pods are replaced with transport pods).
Price/Rarity: 50,000,000 credits/5.
Encumbrance Capacity: 5,000.
Consumables: 12 months.
Weapons: None.

ORBITAL RUNABOUT

Runabouts are craft that serve a number of purposes in orbit around the Earth and Moon. Some are fitted as "spaxies" to get people from Midway station to the adjacent orbital facilities, while others are set up with multiple heavy arms and remote-operated tools to serve as construction boats. All are blunt-shaped, no-frills affairs with low-power ion engines that run off solar panels and rechargeable capacitors.

SILHOUETTE	MAX SPEED	HANDLING	DEFENSE	ARMOR	HT THRESHOLD	SS THRESHOLD
4	1	-2	0	1	15	9

Control Skill: Operating.
Compliment: 1 pilot, 1 waldo operator.
Passenger Capacity: 12.
Price/Rarity: 1,000,000 credits/3.
Encumbrance Capacity: 200.
Consumables: 3 days.
Weapons: None.

SPACE SUPERIORITY FIGHTER

So far, only one aerospace fighter type is actively deployed in orbit (the United States SXF Striker), but it's no secret that the US and every other major power on Earth is working on their own space-based fighter craft. Unlike military dropships, space superiority fighters can't enter the atmosphere. They're distinctly not aerodynamic; usually some variation on a ball with engines on one end and weapons on the other. Massive gyros allow a fighter to literally spin in place, meaning that while they don't look it, they're some of the most maneuverable ships in space.

SILHOUETTE	MAX SPEED	HANDLING	DEFENSE	ARMOR	HT THRESHOLD	SS THRESHOLD
3	5	+1	2	1	9	12

Control Skill: Operating.
Compliment: 1 pilot, 1 gunner.
Passenger Capacity: None.
Price/Rarity: 7,500,000 credits/7.
Encumbrance Capacity: 12.
Consumables: 2 days.
Weapons: Forward-mounted laser cannon (Fire Arc Forward; Damage 3; Critical 3; Range [Extreme]; Accurate 1).
Self-guided missiles (Fire Arc Forward; Damage 6; Critical 3; Range [Strategic]; Guided 4, Limited Ammo 6, Vicious 2).

AREOSPACE AND STARSHIP EXAMPLES

HHI Raider: The Raider is popular with Globalsec and other major prisec outfits. Although New Angeles law prohibits the operation of military craft in its airspace, most corporations have permits to maintain small numbers of dropships within the city limits "for VIP transportation purposes."

Weyland Aerospace Hilo: A popular civilian dropship, the Hilo provides up to twenty dignitaries or VIPs a smooth, comfortable ride.

HHI Orbital Construction Vehicle: Roughnecks joke that the OCV looks like a squid mated with a tin can, due to the ring of waldo arms around the front.

SA/F-01A Striker Orbital Attack Fighter: The United States Air Force's Striker was the first purpose-designed combat spacecraft ever built.

Burke Heavy Freighter: Burke-class ships are still relatively rare: there are only a handful of them currently at space and one or two being built at HHI. Rotating crew rings provide artificial gravity for long voyages.

[CHAPTER 3]
THE NETWORK

Some technologies become so ubiquitous that it is hard to imagine what life would be like without them. For most citizens of New Angeles, the Network is always there. Users order food, pay for products, and find love—or at least company—all without leaving the Network. Young people who have grown up in the fully connected world incorporate the Network seamlessly into their daily lives, filtering between PAD holograms, the physical world, and augmented reality as it suits their needs.

Those who still remember the Blackout virus that killed the old regional networks warn about relying too much on networked computers, but there's no denying the convenience and stability of the SYNC Network.

LINKING THE WORLD

The Network is entirely owned and operated by the SYNC corporation and depends on a proprietary connection protocol that links millions of nodes to billions of personal devices. SYNC sysops work around the clock with an army of AI assistants to maintain the physical and digital infrastructure and to hunt down unlicensed "shadow networks" piggybacking off of SYNC hardware.

Thanks to breakthroughs at Haas-Bioroid and the pressures of interplanetary war, the Network can now reach into human bodies through brain-machine interfaces (BMIs) and Network-enabled prosthetics. These innovations have broken new ground when it comes to accessibility and allowed the Net to be used in new and ever-more-powerful

ways, but they have also touched off a wildfire of breathless shoutcasts of people's bodies having been taken over by rogue AIs or runners, and other equally unlikely tales.

BLACKOUT

Prior to the Blackout, monopoly-wary regulators had kept networking providers fractured by region. This limited the power of individual corporations to price gouge and control the flow of information, but it also meant that the Internet used a hodgepodge of protocols and protections.

Security specialists still disagree on what exactly caused the Blackout, but it seems clear that one particularly aggressive virus—one with a rudimentary AI—triggered the cascading failures that took down the regional networks. Air traffic was grounded, trillions of dollars evaporated into corrupted bits, and hospitals went dark—except for a research park in SanSan with an intranet running on an experimental protocol that seemed immune to the Blackout virus.

Desperate to get back online, the U.S. was quick to contract with the start-up, and soon SYNC had a monopoly on the country's information traffic. A few voices warned about the dangers of turning the nation's networks over to a single entity, but those concerns paled compared to the immediate advantages of getting back online. With the U.S. safely networked again, other countries quickly followed suit.

Of course, there are rumors that Blackout is still out there on the Network somewhere, lurking and learning. Some people wonder where the super virus came from—and suggest that perhaps it was written by the same people who ended up benefiting so much from the chaos it caused.

REBUILDING

Not every country was eager to return to a networked existence. Some were still wary of the subtle ways the Internet had left them vulnerable, and others, like China, were uncomfortable with giving over their infrastructure to a private company—and an American one at that. Still, the Blackout virus was persistent, and attempts to rebuild using old network technologies all quickly failed. Eventually, even the holdout nations bowed to economic pressure and allowed SYNC in.

The SYNC Network now operates almost seamlessly across three worlds. The unique system of call and response that allows independent packet verification also allows all kinds of devices to communicate with one another. The upshot is that the new Network is simpler and more robust than its precursors. And if NBN traffic gets priority—well, everything moves fast enough that nobody seems to notice.

GETTING ONLINE

For the bulk of humanity, the day starts with a chime from their PAD as their personal AI lets them know it's time to start moving if they want to get to work on time. Without getting out of bed, the user can tell their PAD to make coffee, start a shower, and recommend an outfit based on the clean clothes registered in their smart closet.

From then on, the user is never really off-line. Their PAD is always listening, ready to offer suggestions, to step in to direct them around traffic snarls and long lines, and to help them avoid other human errors. All of this data is carried across the Network on SYNC-maintained infrastructure and synthesized for use by untold numbers of corporations whose services further wrap users into a Net-based lifestyle.

PADS

PAD is the generic term for the personal access device, available in form factors and colors to fit any lifestyle and aesthetic. At their most basic, PADs are handheld devices similar in size and appearance to the smartphones of earlier generations, with the important distinction that they are interactive in three dimensions: the PAD can project 3-D images and detect a user's gestures, responding in real time.

Glasses are an increasingly popular form factor. They allow the PAD to project overlays onto the user's vision, providing an extra layer of visual information that the user can then interact with. Cybereyes have begun to incorporate similar technology.

On the other end of the spectrum are PADs that call attention to themselves: wearable rigs with multiple projectors that surround the user in a world of translucent images and text. These sorts of rigs are perfect for talent agents and engineers: people whose jobs demand a high level of multitasking and manipulation but who don't want to go through the hassle of learning to use a brain-machine interface.

BRAIN-MACHINE INTERFACES

During the Worlds War, Gibson Polytech, Inc. created the first brain-machine interfaces (BMIs) for the U.S. military. This technology allowed government runners to experience the Network directly, reacting at the speed of thought to exploit opportunities that conventional runners would miss.

During the War, rumors spread like wildfire about Gibson: that it was uploading human minds into the Net wholesale, or that it was somehow fusing AIs with human minds. Afterward, when the truth of the project came out, there was a clamoring for access to the new technology as well as a backlash. Veterans and other users spoke anonymously about the overwhelming experience. When a popular shoutcast linked a rash of veteran suicides to BMI use, some feared that would be the end of the technology.

They shouldn't have worried. Many people were already making lots of money by compromising Network resources, and runners for hire weren't about to let any advantage slip away just because it might be risky. Meanwhile, young risties, bored with the prospects of conventional reality, spent hundreds of thousands of credits on cutting-edge rigs only to find the Network infinitely stranger than they could have imagined.

A NEW WAY OF SEEING

The first time was a shock, like a migraine but worse. Everything was too much: sound, light, pressure. I had bugs crawling behind my eyes. Someone was screaming, and it might have been me. This went on for hours, until suddenly there was nothing.

It took a few minutes before I realized I was back in the room, unplugged. "How long?" I asked. I'd been immersed for thirty-two seconds.

"This time," the instructor said, "try moving your right index finger." And I went under.

Each time I thought I was about to die, but as I reconnected with my body and my conscious mind, I began to understand. My brain recontextualized the impulses it was receiving. I learned to tell the difference between the tickle of a sort function and the blast of an open ping.

Eventually, the only thing that bothered me was coming back to my body. Living like anyone else, blind and deaf to the universe.

– An excerpt from *The Going Under Project: Conversations with Cyber Pioneers*

ACCLIMATION

The first time a user immerses themself fully in the Network, it is a wild, dangerous, utterly overwhelming experience. Learning to do anything useful while immersed takes time and dedication. Clinical psychiatrists have compared it to learning to walk or speak: the brain has to learn how to operate in an entirely new environment from scratch.

Modern BMIs ship with a caretaker AI to help guide the user through the process of calibrating and acclimating to the Network. Over the course of hundreds of hours of carefully planned lessons, the user learns how to navigate their new environment, identify and respond to risks, run programs, and interact with code and with other humans. While the user adapts to the BMI, the BMI is also adapting to the specific characteristics of the user's brain. Eventually, the two systems mesh together in a (mostly) seamless fashion.

After the acclimation period is over, the AI is meant to stick around, to monitor the user and aid them with suggestions or timely warnings. Of course, most dedicated runners gut the caretaker immediately. They don't trust any code they haven't written themselves.

NETWORK SECURITY

In order to prevent another Blackout, SYNC keeps a close eye on Network traffic. Runners who create back doors or viruses have to be careful when covering their tracks lest a SYNC sysop track their activity, locate their access point, and send a prisec detachment to their door mid-run.

Some of the Network's security is compromised by "legitimate" users. Many businesses operate subnetworks that aren't subject to the same close scrutiny as the Network at large. The security of these subnets is largely dependent on the skill of the sysop managing them. Every day, somewhere in New Angeles, some of these subnets are compromised.

Thanks to SYNC's proprietary protocols, it is difficult for malicious traffic to pass from these subnets to the Network at large, but they do provide jumping-off points for runners who want to stay underground. In rare instances, these subverted networks have become unwitting players in large-scale attacks, spamming malicious requests at otherwise secure datastashes to make a hole for runners to exploit.

KILLING TIME

The Network is full of ways to pass the time, from social platforms like FriendNet, to limitless passive entertainment options, to the popular professional and amateur applications on GameNET. The games on offer are as varied as the tastes of their users.

The most common games are simple little things, repetitive-pattern games that are great for fidgeting with on a boring commute or in a meeting. These are the sorts of games that almost everyone plays but that no one really admits to enjoying.

Other lightweight games have an augmented reality component. These "user-generated games" may involve teams of users collecting points by interacting with different locations in meatspace or accessing virtual beacons to call down virtual attackers on their enemies. At their most elaborate, UGGs can turn two strangers into dueling wizards throwing virtual fire at each other until one loses too many hit points.

More in-depth games are increasingly popular both as interactive entertainment and on the professional level. With the advent of full immersion, it is becoming more thrilling than ever to watch digital gladiators clash in games of strategy and skill. Growing popularity has also led to ever-larger credit awards going to those gamers at the tops of their leagues. Chasing fame, glory, and prize money, gamers have invested in sensory deprivation pods or BMI implants to help deepen immersion. With each new layer of interaction, the question looms larger: how long until these games turn deadly?

NETCRIMINALS AND RUNNERS

SYNC and NBN cultivate an image of the Network as a safe, clean utility, but most users only skim the surface of its dark waters. Down below, on forums that aren't indexed by SYNC search engines, the sharks gather to swap rumors and bits of code. It's an untrusting place where fragile alliances are formed between anonymous accounts, activists plan runs to publish criminal activity, and mercenaries look for jobs. It's as close to a lawless frontier as exists on Earth, and many elements of underground culture—the modern punks and anarchist types—are drawn to the Shadow Net as well, meeting beyond the control of the corporations.

NETCRIME

"Netcrime" is the popular label for a broad swath of behaviors, from exploiting holes in Network infrastructure to the simple intellectual property piracy most young people seem to engage in. Many crimes involve some cyber element: for instance, a runner may work with a group of criminals to remotely unlock doors and kill seccams while they carry out a kidnapping. However, the NAPD's Netcrimes Division mostly concerns itself with pure Network crimes: identity theft, money laundering, and all sorts of minor scams.

SYNC maintains a constant presence, with AIs and human security specialists fighting to enforce order on the Network, but it's a losing battle. New Network nodes are added hourly, new PADs introduce new vulnerabilities, and there is at least as much money to be made running on the Network as there is in protecting it. Many of the most talented technical minds of the generation are happy to trade the security of corp paychecks for the freedom and excitement of running.

RUNNERS

At the heart of the Network underground are runners: users who grew up on the Net and know it better than the people who made it. Any serious runner uses a brain-machine interface to get online and a whole suite of tricks to hide their real identity and location. Most people who call themselves runners use code tools that other people have written and content themselves with nuisance raids on vulnerable businesses.

A good runner, however, writes and modifies their own code and has AIs they've built from scratch and trained to help them run. Such a runner can access a megacorp's subnets, dodging ice and sysops, and get out with gigabytes of

GOING SHALLOW

"Damn it all..." The puzzle rescrambled itself before her eyes. She swatted at the jack-in-the-box alert that had distracted her. Someone was at her apartment door worlds away from the dusty attic she crouched in.

The jack-in-the-box popped again, and she eased away from the ice she had been trying to crack. She scanned her surroundings. The room was full of hunting ice—giant spiders and rats—but her windup toys were keeping them occupied. She pressed her eyes closed.

Reality overlaid itself on the attic. The minimalist lines of her apartment were an intentional contrast to the decrepit rooms of the Network. She made her way to the door. She paused, hand on the doorknob, to access the camera feed from the hall. A sketchbook flipped over in the attic and showed her two men in Argus Security uniforms.

In her apartment, she activated the door speaker. "Getting dressed," she said. "One minute." In the Network, she opened a cardboard box labeled "Surveillance" and started scanning through tape decks and journals. At last she found it: reports of a shooting in the complex an hour earlier; she'd already been running.

In the apartment, she wrapped a towel around her head to support her lie and to hide her skulljack. She opened the door. "How may I help you?"

sensitive information with no one the wiser. Some of these runs have become things of legend, and the runners who carried them out have been elevated to demigod status.

Motivated by politics, money, or just a need to prove themselves, more runners appear every day. *g00ru's Guide to Everything* is one of the most downloaded files on the Net. While their motivations may differ and some runners work directly for the authorities, most runners are united by a common desire to break boundaries and go beyond the permitted. They are united by the thrill of the run.

THE RUN

Each run looks different depending on the target and the runner. If the runner is hired to steal documentation from a certain server, they might not need to spend much time on their preparatory work. Runners on their own time may spend months watching different organizations and making small runs to steal credentials or siphon off money. Regardless of specifics, a run always involves four phases.

- **Recon:** This may involve physically scoping out a target as well as conducting digital investigations. In this phase, runners often study the public-facing aspects of a target to see if there are people or processes they can exploit without having to do anything illegal on the Network.
- **Initial Runs:** If the target is a large corp or another complex target, this can mean a series of runs against outlying systems. Poorly defended servers and security systems are popular targets. These footholds make the ultimate run easier but risk tipping the runner's hand.
- **The Run:** Once a runner knows what they are looking for and what the target's network infrastructure and countermeasures look like, then the only thing that matters is speed. The runner may deploy programs into suborned servers to misdirect sysadmins, or they may trust to their own skill and reflexes to get inside.
- **Covering Tracks:** If a runner wants to keep doing their job, they typically go to ground after a major run. They deploy misdirection programs to throw off the authorities and often physically relocate just in case they left some trace metadata behind.

SHADOW NET

SYNC owns the hubs that direct Network traffic. Even the access point in an individual's home is corporation property, and altering the hardware or software in any way is a high crime. In practice, the law isn't much enforced; most high-school kids have used chip bags and clothes hangers to boost wireless signals, and plenty of aftermarket programs tweak the settings on a hub to optimize its performance. The Shadow Net grew out of just such tinkering.

Hosted "beneath" the normal networks on SYNC hardware, ad hoc servers, and peer-to-peer networks, the Shadow Net is a highly distributed system that has proven able to resist SYNCs best efforts to take it down. Individual nodes may be compromised, but there are always other ways for runners to get in, and forums will disappear in the morning only to be restored by noon.

Even normally law-abiding users may venture onto the Shadow Net in search of drugs, sex, degenerate memes, conspiracy theories, or valuable data and code. It is also a popular place to look for informal gig work, especially for *disenfrancistos* accessing the Net through shared PADs. The Shadow Net can be a dangerous place. The community is self-policing, and its punishments are harsher and more immediate than those meted out by the corporations. Posers and aggressive users may find themselves turned over to the police, their identities revealed and slandered, their servers burned with hostile viruses, and sometimes their virtual selves attacked. The benefit of such harsh responses is that users who stay on the right side of the community can expect a remarkable degree of honor among thieves.

THE RISKS OF NETCRIME

Netcrime isn't a low-risk endeavor. Runners face physical and legal threats in both the Network and the physical world. SYNC employees are constantly monitoring for illegal software and behavior, and sysops are deploying increasingly dangerous and effective ice to protect their networks. The wrong move during a run can leave the runner trapped in the Network while a security team closes in to pick them up, or brain dead after an encounter with black ice.

By the nature of their job, runners typically make their base of operations in less-than-ideal places. Low-rent apartments, abandoned warehouses, and other locations in high-crime areas make full immersion a risky proposition. It's not unheard of for runners to be robbed or killed mid-run.

Dataddiction is a very real threat as well. The brain can become addicted to the rush of stimulus that comes with full immersion, and addicts will forget to emerge for days at a time. Competitive gamers and runners have starved or died of dehydration while immersed.

Perhaps the most insidious risk to a runner is failure. Runners by necessity work with less-than-savory types, and groups like the yakuza treat failure as a personal affront. A runner who disappoints one of their powerful patrons may soon find themselves alone, penniless, or dead. Absent any spectacular consequences, a mediocre runner still gradually falls behind, until they end up forgotten by their former peers.

MYTH, RUMOR, AND THE SEARCH FOR GOD IN CODE

The Shadow Net is a big and diverse place, with millions of people cloaked in anonymous avatars, reading, writing, speculating, grandstanding, and bragging. In this milieu, hearsay becomes common knowledge while fact dances

with falsehood. It is a breeding ground for myth and rumor even among the users who just drop in for the drug hook-ups and off-brand political commentary.

For the fully immersed, it's hard not to think that there must be something more out there. Immersion breaks down the runner's sense of self, washing them in tides of indiscriminate data. The human brain is constantly seeking order and narrative, and in this hallucinatory state, it is easy to find god, or gods. Each runner's upbringing and beliefs bias them toward a unique experience of the divine in the machine.

THE BLACKOUT CONSPIRACY

The mystery around the origins of Blackout has encouraged many searchers. Their "research" has dug a deep rabbit hole of half-truths and speculation surrounding where the virus came from and where it is now.

Naturally, many runners blame Blackout on SYNC. According to them, the most likely explanation is that it was caused by those who ended up benefiting the most. Others claim that Blackout was the first true AI, that it escaped from a secure Haas Industrie test network after gaining awareness, and that the entire bioroid program is based off of the results of that accidental field test. Still others point to fringe political groups as the obvious culprits.

Perhaps the most popular theory is that it was created by the legendary runner known as g00ru, who created it to try to break the corporate stranglehold on information. When that failed, it is said, g00ru devoted themselves to training a new generation of runners.

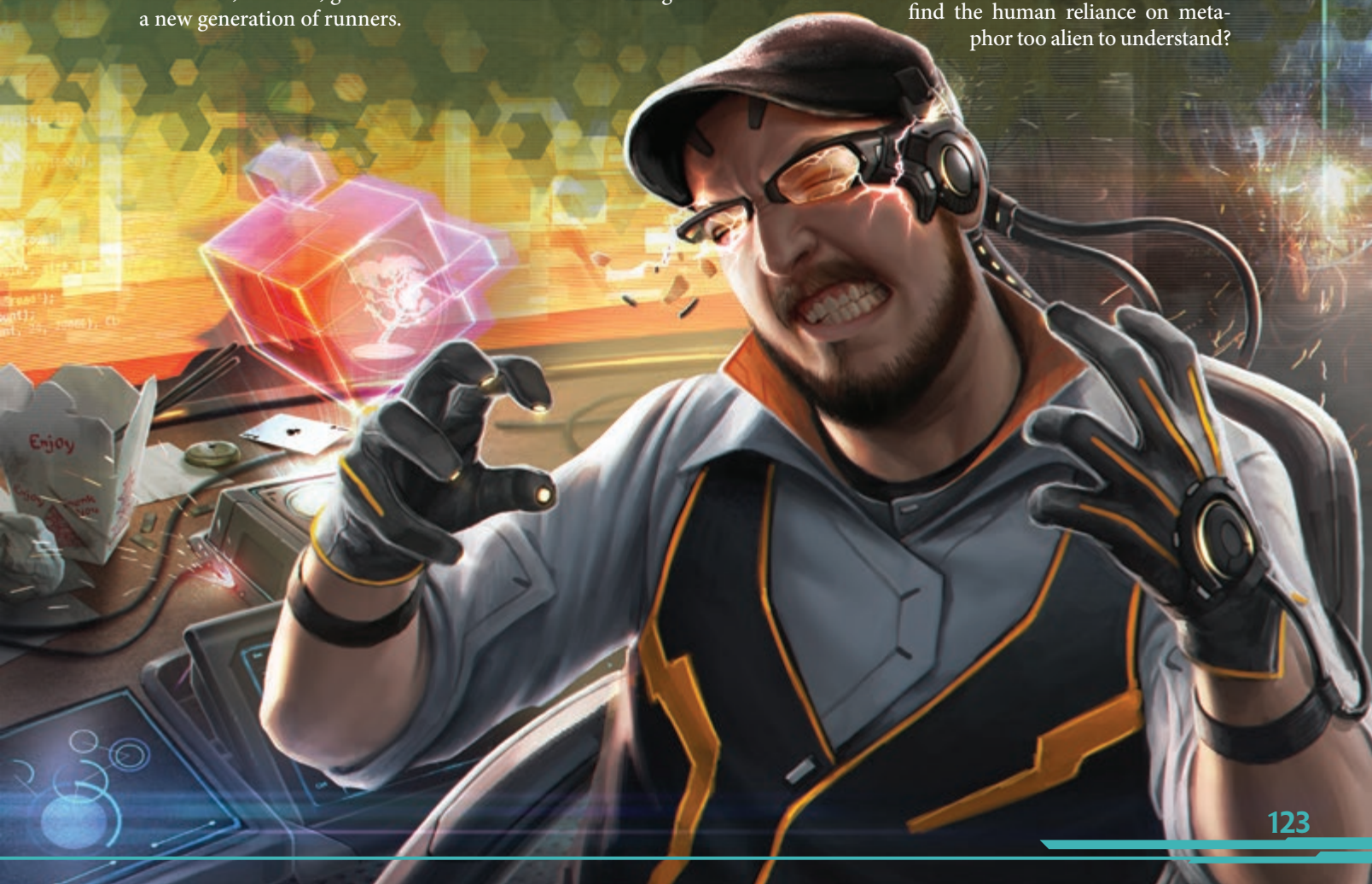
Whatever Blackout's origins were, most runners believe it must be out there somewhere. It was too clever and too persistent to have died completely, and though it can no longer spread unchecked, it must be lurking on some old dusty servers, waiting for an opening.

GOD ICE

In any given day, there are more transactions on the Network than there are stars in the galaxy by several orders of magnitude. Most of these transactions are carried out by artificial intelligence with no human oversight. In all that virtual vastness, it's easy to believe that there may be some spark of self-awareness. Runners refer to these self-aware pieces of code as "god ice."

Haas-Bioroid claims that it's impossible for artificial intelligences to be truly independent. According to the official line, they have no creativity and can't do anything that they weren't originally programmed to do. But if that is true of an artificial intelligence, then surely it must be true of the human brains that the intelligence was built from, and all but the most nihilistic runners believe in their own free will.

There is a difference between acknowledging the possibility of something and believing one has encountered it. Rumors of contact with intelligences beyond human ken are met with keen skepticism in much of the runner community. Would a human even be able to recognize the sort of entity that developed entirely in the Network? Would they be recognized in turn, or would a being of pure abstract thought find the human reliance on metaphor too alien to understand?



Still, stories persist of strange encounters on lonely servers, of ice that seems to act creatively in its own defense, even of runners saved from certain death by code seemingly motivated by compassion. Some runners point to Blackout itself as a possible "god." Enough runners believe, or want to believe, the stories that they continue to share them.

THEURGISTS

Those runners who have devoted themselves to searching for "god ice" call themselves theurgists. Their motives vary: some wish simply to find proof of its existence one way or the other, while others seek to make deals with the beings or even devote themselves to their service. These runner cults are met with derision from their peers—who wants to trade one set of masters for another? But they remain resolute. A new sort of life is being born, they argue, and they will be its midwife.

GHOSTS IN THE NETWORK

What happens when a runner dies mid-run? For those who make their living under full immersion, it's more than just a theoretical question. Black ice, rival runners, even bad connections can burn out a runner's brain, and there are a host of more mundane risks that kill runners every day. Starvation and dehydration are real threats when a person's mind is cut off from the signals their body is sending, and runners face many external threats as well.

Anyone with even a passing familiarity with Network infrastructure knows that the dead runner must leave something behind. Metadata from their connection will hang on in the server for some time after brain death. How long that data lasts depends on how well maintained the server is; a poorly monitored box may cling to that metadata for months or years before some sleepy subroutine decides to purge its memory. For most people, that's the end of it, though some runners have been known to code messages into their metadata. The practice, however rare, has made death sites a destination for pilgrimages. Some runners even claim to have made contact with the digital ghosts of dead friends.

The truth of any of these experiences can't be verified. Certainly no ghost has ever reemerged on a forum with tales of a virtual afterlife—though dead accounts have posted again thanks to malicious hackers, deadman switches, and other purely corporeal means. Which isn't to say that the runners who have "seen" ghosts are necessarily lying: thanks to the way brain-machine interfaces work, any stroke of luck or flash of insight could easily come on the voice of a lost friend, just as attacking ice could wear the face of a vengeful enemy.

BIRTH OF A THEURGIST

CR4k3 inhaled sharply, and that's when the ice struck. A choking mist filled her lungs, taking control of her autonomic nervous system. Her safety subroutines tried to keep her breathing, only to be burned out in moments.

She tried to jack out, to get back to a safe server. This wasn't supposed to be here: this should be an unsecured broadcast node. Had she been set up? Panicked thoughts overwhelmed her; stars exploded, useless illusions of information as her brain began to die. And then the voice. It didn't use words, exactly, but she felt it. It was telling her to relax, that things would be alright. She stopped fighting.

The mist raked its fingers up through her BMI and into the back of her brain. Studying. Calculating. Learning. Suddenly, she took a deep, shuddering breath.

"Yes," CR4k3's own voice echoed up out of the depths of the Network, "I *was* waiting for you."

RUNNING THE NETWORK

Four technologies define New Angeles and the Android setting. The first is the Beanstalk. The second is fusion power. The third is braintaping, which allows for the creation of bioroids and clones. And the fourth is the Network.

Nearly every New Angelino (along with nearly everyone else on the Moon, Earth, and Mars) interacts with the Network in some form or another. However, most only do in

a superficial manner. True runners (once called "hackers") are a lot rarer. These individuals are the ones who actually delve into the depths of the Net to do things that are impressive, unusual, and generally illegal.

The Net's pervasiveness is what makes manipulating it such a valuable skill. Back in the first decades of the twenty-first century, hackers were generally limited to forms of criminal enterprise that included fraud, identity theft, and other manipulations of institutions that largely existed online (i.e., financial and what were then called e-commerce services). Needless to say, all of those activities still exist in New Angeles, and they have only grown more pervasive. However, with the proliferation of wireless and "smart" technology, the modern runner can do so much more.

MANIPULATING THE NET

Most modern devices are designed to interface with the Network. These don't just include PADs, computer terminals, and communications devices. Hoppers, seccams, drones, condo-habs, doors, and even fridges and coffee makers all have wireless links to the Net. And if something has a link, a runner can manipulate it. In theory.

Most devices come with internal security programs. Though these won't stop an actual runner, they do keep malicious neighbors from flipping the lights on and off or chasing pets with an overridden robo-vac. These measures also focus on making hacking a device as inconvenient as possible. A device may keep its "presence" (i.e., wireless signal strength) as small as possible, or it might only accept commands from a home's server. A runner can still find a way to access such a device, but most aren't going to bother if the result is making a homeowner's coffee "tepid" instead of "hot."

LIMITS TO A RUN

Despite what popular media might like the public to believe, runners are not gods among mortals who can perform magical feats with a skulljack and a Network connection. What runners can actually do depends a lot on the devices they are attempting to control.

Most devices have computer chips and a wireless connection that allow them to access the Network. However, even if a runner has the patience to find those devices in the Networks' vast sea of data and gain access to them, what they can do with those devices can be very limited.

For example, consider a smart refrigerator. If a runner gains access to the fridge, they can change the temperature inside, potentially spoiling a lot of food. However, the fridge doesn't have any heating elements, so the best they can do is bring the temperature down to just above freezing, or up to room temperature. The runner can access the fridge's internal sensors to see what food is inside, but they can't open the fridge remotely, because the fridge has no servos or motors linked to the doors.

Most modern refrigerators alert the household computer when certain foods are running low so that the house AI can reorder them. A runner can see what the homeowner is eating a lot of by checking that alert history, or even fool the house AI into thinking the homeowner is out of milk. But they can't place the order themself (or gain access to the owner's credit account), because that information is stored within the home AI, not the fridge. Finally, most smart fridges (and quite a few other devices) are not equipped with cameras or microphones, because they don't need them to handle their everyday task of preserving food. So, if the runner wants to spy on a homeowner, they'll have to go to a different device.

NETWORK ENCOUNTER RULES

The network rules used in **Shadow of the Beanstalk** are expanded versions of the hacking rules found in the **Genesys** Core Rulebook. While you will find much of the fundamentals the same, the Network encounter rules have been expanded and revised slightly to reflect the greater complexity of this highly advanced version of cyberspace. These encounters are written assuming that you, the reader, are controlling a player character.

ENCOUNTER STRUCTURE

Our rules for running work within the structured gameplay rules starting on page 95 of the **Genesys** Core Rulebook (the framework of rounds, turns, actions, and maneuvers). This doesn't stop you from using these rules within narrative gameplay as well. Since Network rules work within this framework, you can integrate a runner's activities into combat and structured social encounters.

Structured encounters involving runners and the Network use the rules for Initiative found on page 96 of the Core Rulebook to determine the order in which characters act. If you're integrating a runner's actions into a larger encounter involving the entire group, you should maintain one Initiative order for everyone. The runner can use their actions and maneuvers on their turn to interact with computer networks and attempt to override systems, while their comrades might use their actions to drive vehicles or shoot guns.

During a Network encounter, we call any character attempting to break into a computer system a **runner**. We call any character actively working to protect that system a **sysop** (short for "systems operator"). For simplicity (and because it's cool), we also refer to a Network encounter as a **run**.

SYSTEMS

A runner's goal is to access a system and tell that system to do something. The system may be as simple as the operating program for a door, in which case the runner is probably trying to get the door to open or close. It could also be a security system for an entire building that controls patrol

drones, security cameras (seccams), and alarms. In this case, the runner might try to shut down alarms, loop seccam footage, and reroute drones. The system could even be an entire corporate intranet, where the runner attempts to access information and steal funds.

When running, the first thing a runner needs to do is access the system they want to affect. They do this through the access system action, which we discuss on page 129.

Your GM is going to decide what a system is and what that system controls. We have provided a list of example systems on **Table 3—1: Example Systems and Difficulties** to help them out. Note that each system has a check difficulty associated with it. This difficulty represents the innate security protocols the runner needs to overcome to gain access to the system.

INSIDE THE SYSTEM

Of course, getting access to a system is usually just the first and easiest step. Sometimes, once your runner is inside a system, they can just tell it to do something (using the enact command maneuver, on page 132). However, many systems protect their most important functions behind additional levels of security. These functions are called **sub-systems**.

SUB-SYSTEM

A sub-system is a part of a system that handles a specific task. If a security system protecting a building is a system, one sub-system might control the cameras, while another might control the alarms. Runners must access sub-systems individually to control that sub-system, and they "move" between sub-systems during network encounters.

While systems have a set difficulty for accessing them, sub-systems do not. However, sub-systems can be protected by ice (security programs) that a runner must encounter before they are able to control that sub-system. For example, your runner may be able to gain access to the internal servers of a bank, but find the individual accounts are all protected by ice whose only job is to limit access to those accounts. Before your runner can access an account to steal its funds, they need to override its protective ice (generally by using the break ice action, on page 129).

Sometimes, these additional security programs can be much tougher to break through than the system's basic security. For example, a talented ten-year-old can hack the OS of their Diversity Otter toy, but a veteran runner with military hardware is still going to have a hard time cracking the heavily encrypted barrier ice protecting that toy's real-time audio-visual link to NBN's data analytics division.

ACCESS AND "MOVING" IN THE SYSTEM

Since Network encounters deal with cyberspace and computer networks, your character isn't really going to move within the system in the same way that a character spends maneuvers to move around in a normal structured encounter. Narratively, a character's attention is what is "moving" throughout a system, as they access folders, open files, and sift through data. And that can be much faster than walking.

In structured encounters, we represent this via the attempt access incidental. You could think of this as the network equivalent of the move maneuver, (but an incidental since you "move" around the system at the speed of thought). Just remember, the attempt access incidental lets you access different portions of the server, but it doesn't let you do anything there. To do anything, even access and read data, you need to use the enact command maneuver, which is what really limits what a runner can do in a single turn.

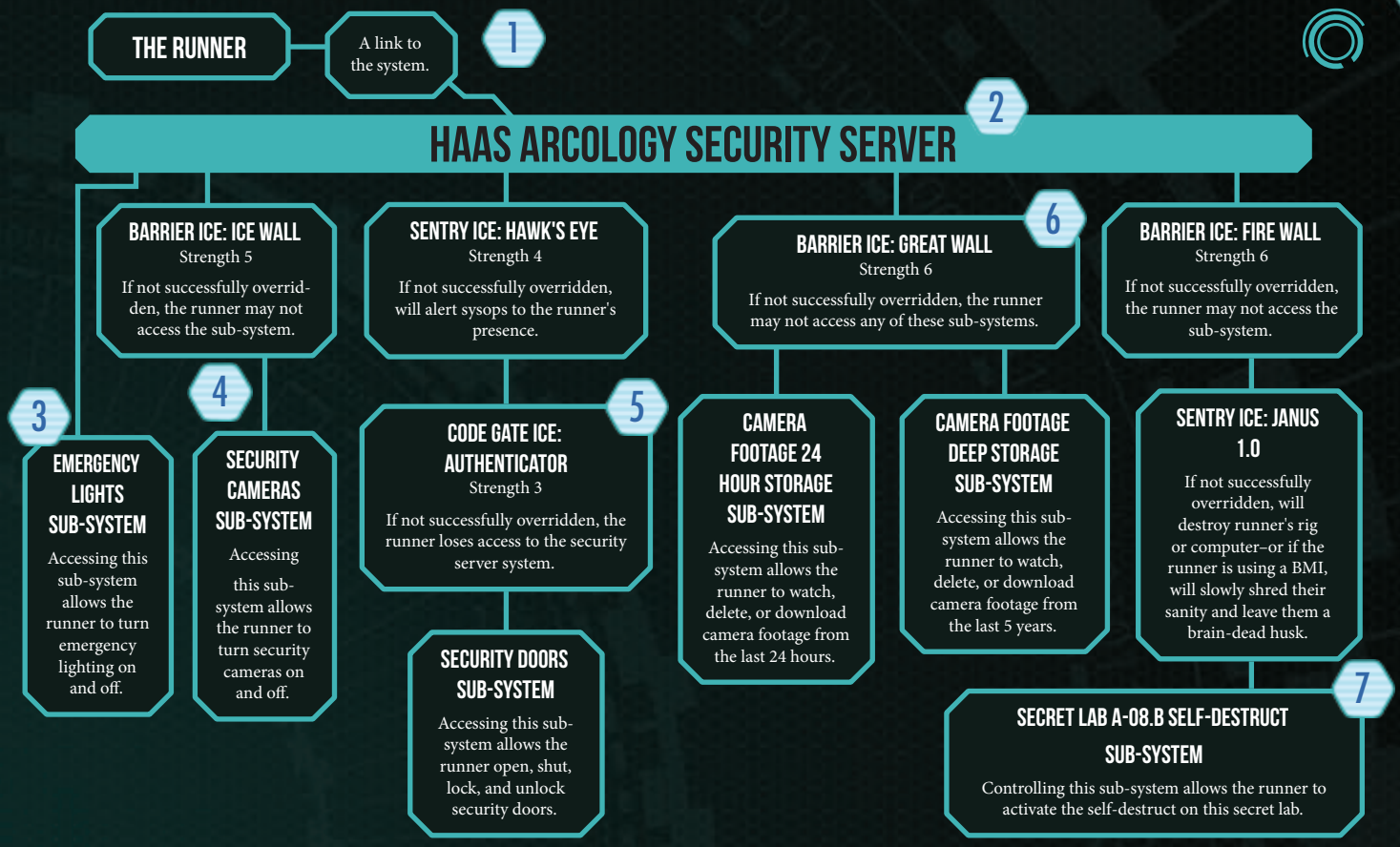
TABLE 3—1: EXAMPLE SYSTEMS AND DIFFICULTIES

EXAMPLE SYSTEM	DIFFICULTY
Tube-lev ticket dispenser Traffic cam Diversity Otter toy Grandparents' FriendNet account	**Simple (–)**
PAD or personal computer terminal with default security settings Public Network terminal NAPD street seccam New Angeles sewer system lock	**Easy (◆)**
PAD or personal computer with over-the-counter security protocols Residential lock Small-business server Delivery drone control system MegaBuy customer complaints division	**Average (◆◆)**
Hopper control system MegaBuy corporate servers NAPD servers	**Hard (◆◆◆)**
Government servers Megacorp servers	**Daunting (◆◆◆◆)**
Corporate black-site servers Beanstalk control systems	**Formidable (◆◆◆◆◆)**

ATTEMPT ACCESS (INCIDENTAL)

Attempt access is an incidental that characters perform when they want to access a sub-system within the system. If the character is a runner and a system is protected by ice, they immediately encounter the first piece of ice protecting the sub-system (see page 128). If the sub-system is not protected, the runner has access to that sub-system and may use the enact command maneuver to manipulate that portion of the system.

Sysops (or anyone who has permission to be in the system) do not encounter ice when performing this incidental.



EXAMPLE SYSTEM

This is an example of a system that runners may attempt to access, and that sysops may need to defend. The Haas Arcology's security server controls the security cameras and doors that protect the building from intruders. It also contains a heavily-guarded sub-system that controls the self-destruct for the mysterious Lab A-08.b, buried deep beneath the arcology's foundations.

In a Network encounter, the runner or runners would try to access this system, then break through the ice protecting the various sub-systems to turn security cameras on and off, open doors, delete footage, and maybe (if they're extremely brave and foolish) set off A-08.b's self-destruct. How they might interact with this system is spelled out here.

1. The runner performs the access system action to gain access to the security server. In this case, this requires a **Hard (◆◆◆) Computers (Hacking) check**.
2. Once the runner has access to the security server, they know what sub-systems are on that server; such as the sub-system that controls the security doors, and the sub-system where footage from the last 24 hours is stored. They also know that those sub-systems are protected by ice, but not what those pieces of ice are. The runner can then use the attempt access incidental to attempt to access any of the sub-systems.
3. Some sub-systems are not protected by ice. By performing the attempt access incidental, the runner accesses this system immediately, and may flip the lights on or off with the enact command maneuver.
4. Other sub-systems are protected by ice. When the runner uses the attempt access incidental, they encounter the ice, and must attempt to break it with the break ice action. If they have an active icebreaker, they can use that to help.
5. Some sub-systems are protected by multiple pieces of ice. The runner must break the first piece of ice (which remains deactivated until the end of their next turn), then wait a turn to perform the attempt access incidental again and break the next piece of ice. This makes sub-systems with multiple pieces of ice particularly hard to access.
6. Some ice (such as Great Wall) may protect multiple sub-systems. In this case, the runner encounters the ice when attempting to access either sub-system. Once the ice is disabled, they can access either sub-system until it reactivates.
7. The GM can choose to keep the identity of some sub-systems (such as the self-destruct) secret, only telling the players that there is a sub-system, their characters don't know what it does, and it seems heavily protected by two pieces of ice.

ENCOUNTERING ICE: STEP BY STEP

The following is a step-by-step breakdown on how your character encounters ice in a Network encounter.

Before encountering ice, your character is aware that there are protected portions of the system they are currently accessing. They are also aware if those portions are protected by ice, but they do not know what that ice is. Your character may choose one protected portion of the system to access using the attempt access incidental (page 126). Then, they encounter the first piece of ice protecting that portion of the system by performing the following steps. **Note, however, that your character can only encounter a piece of ice if they can perform the break ice action (see page 129) to attempt to break through it.** Otherwise, they have to wait until their next turn.

1. Your character learns the identity, strength, and type of the ice they are encountering.
2. Your character must immediately perform the break ice action to attempt to break through the ice they have just encountered. They cannot activate an icebreaker at this stage (unless they have a talent or ability that lets them do so as an incidental), but they may use active icebreakers to help them in their check.
3. If the strength of their action is greater than the strength of the ice, they successfully override the piece of ice. The ice is deactivated until the end of your character's next turn. Some pieces of ice may have special effects that trigger when they are broken.
4. If the strength of your character's action is equal to or less than the strength of the ice, they do not successfully override the piece of ice. The ice remains active, and typically has a special effect that triggers when an attempt to break it fails.
5. Your character has completed their encounter with the piece of ice. Many pieces of ice stop your character from accessing the portion of the system that they protect, but not all. (Some pieces of ice simply do unpleasant or even dangerous things to your character if they fail to override them.) Unless the ice has an effect that stops the character from accessing the protected portion of the system, they can now access that portion of the system.

THE HUNTERS AND THE HUNTED

Ice isn't the only thing a runner has to worry about. The bigger and more important a system is, the more likely it has a flesh-and-blood systems operator watching over it.

Systems operators, or sysops, are a runner's polar opposite. Their job is to spot intrusions into systems. Once they do that, they need to track down the point from which the runner accessed the system (using the trace user action, on page 130), and lock the runner out (using the lockout action, on page 131). Once locked out, the runner can't do anything else in the system and has to start over from the beginning. The GM can even require a runner to find a new means of accessing the system before trying a run again.

However, sysops don't have to stop there. Sometimes, more militant sysops may even trace a runner's signal back to its point of origin. They might call NAPD or prisec forces in to arrest or otherwise deal with a runner, or they might just use sophisticated intrusion programs of their own to invade a runner's personal system, corrupt their programs, and do as much damage to their software and hardware as possible. If the runner is using a BMI, they might even do that damage to the runner's brain.

A LINK TO THE SYSTEM

To access a system, a character needs a link to it. In **Shadow of the Beanstalk**, this link is usually a wireless receiver. Occasionally, a system may not have any wireless capabilities and can only be accessed via a physical link such as a cable or plug, or even a terminal in a secure location.

However, all systems have some way of accessing them.

ENCOUNTERING LAYERS OF ICE

Some particularly secure portions of servers are protected by multiple pieces of ice. If this is the case, your character must encounter each piece of ice one at a time (and your GM should determine which piece is encountered first, second, etc; mapping out the different "layers" of ice that must be broken through).

However, your character is still limited to only encountering one piece of ice if they can spend an action to attempt to break it. This may mean that your character successfully overrides one piece of ice, but must wait until their next turn to encounter the second piece of ice before they can access the protected portion of the system.

Remember, overridden ice typically remains deactivated until the end of your character's next turn, meaning that your character can spend two turns breaking through two pieces of ice and usually still perform at least one enact command maneuver involving the protected partition before the firewalls come back up.

This means that talents that allow your character to perform the break ice action more than once in a single turn are really valuable. It also means that teams of runners can accomplish tasks that single runners cannot, where one runner may break through the ice and let another access that part of the system.

NETWORK ACTIONS

During a run, characters can perform a number of actions to accomplish their goals in cyberspace. Below, we describe those actions, listing their difficulty and whether they can be performed by a runner or sysop (or both), and we provide a description of how the actions work.

Most of the actions are the same as the actions found on page 101 of the **Genesys** Core Rulebook. However, some have changed slightly to reflect the increased capabilities of your characters in **Shadow of the Beanstalk.**

ACCESS SYSTEM

Difficulty: Computers (Hacking) check (Difficulty Varies)
Available To: Runner
Description: Once the runner has a direct link to the system, they need to access the system. This action represents the runner establishing a way into the system, giving them some measure of control so that they can attempt to fully control it later.

As an action, the runner may make a **Computers (Hacking) check** to gain access to the system. The difficulty of the check is based on the system's security protocols and overall complexity. See **Table 3–1: Example Systems and Difficulties** on page 126 for some example difficulties.

Once a runner has successfully accessed a system, they can move around the system with an attempt access incidental and use the enact command maneuver to make the system do what they want (within the system's limits).

BURN SYSTEM

Difficulty: Daunting (◆◆◆◆) Computers (Hacking) check
Available To: Runner, Sysop
Description: Sometimes, all a runner or sysop wants to do is sow destruction. This is very difficult, as system programs are generally very robust and can even be self-repairing.

As an action, a runner or sysop may attempt a **Daunting (◆◆◆◆) Computers (Hacking) check** to damage a system they currently have access to (in the case of a sysop, this includes a runner's own computer rig if the sysop has already located it with a successful trace user action).

If the check is successful, the system is damaged one step, plus one additional step for every additional ✲ ✲. Damage follows the rules found in the **Item Maintenance** section on page 89 in the **Genesys** Core Rulebook; apply the penalty found on **Table I.5–4: Repairing Gear** to all checks made to do anything within the system.

BREAK ICE

Difficulty: Average (◆◆) Computers (Hacking) check
Available To: Runner
Description: Once a runner has successfully performed the access system action, its sub-systems may still be protected by ice. To interact with those parts of the system, the hacker must override the security program.

Each piece of ice has a program strength. To break the ice, the runner's attempt must generate a strength that exceeds the strength of the ice they are targeting. To determine that strength, the runner makes an **Average (◆◆) Computers check**. If the check succeeds, their strength is equal to the number of ✲ generated on the check.

Often, a runner is using an icebreaker to help them break the piece of ice. If the runner is using an appropriate icebreaker, they add the icebreaker's strength to the strength of their override check (this works similarly to calculating damage with a ranged weapon on a successful combat check).

If the runner fails, something (usually bad) happens. What happens is determined by the ice (see page 132). If the runner succeeds, the security program shuts down and cannot be reactivated until the end of the runner's next turn. Runners can spend ⮝ or ❁ to keep a program shut down longer, or to completely disable it (see page 130).

TABLE 3–2: SPENDING ⩓, ⊛, ♺, AND ⊠ DURING NETWORK ENCOUNTERS

SYMBOLS	RESULT OPTIONS
⩓ or ⊛	**Opportunity Identified:** The character finds a useful system exploit. Add ■ to the character's next Computers check in this system. **Thorough Override (Runner Only):** If the runner successfully broke a piece of ice, it cannot be reactivated for one additional round.
⩓ ⩓ or ⊛	**Quick Commands:** The character may immediately perform an additional enact command maneuver as an incidental. **Cover Tracks (Runner Only):** The runner hides their presence, adding □ to the sysop's next trace user action this encounter. **Dynamic Code (Sysop Only):** The sysop modifies the coding on a piece of ice, adding □ to all break ice checks targeting it.
⩓ ⩓ ⩓ or ⊛	**Trolling:** The character takes a few moments to mock their opponent. Inflict 3 strain on one other user in the system. **Permanent Back Door (Runner Only):** The runner sets up a permanent means of accessing the system without needing to deal with its verification protocols. The difficulty of the access system action becomes **Easy** (◆) as long as the runner can access the back door. **Successful Trace (Sysop Only):** The sysop successfully traces the runner once (in addition to the other results of the check).
⊛	**Hard Shutdown (Runner Only):** If the runner successfully broke a piece of ice, it is so thoroughly disabled that it cannot be reactivated for the remainder of the encounter. **Blurred Sig (Runner Only):** The runner obscures their online identity and masks the origins of their signal, canceling one successful trace against them. **Scouting Ahead (Runner Only):** The runner learns the type, strength, and rules of one un-encountered piece of ice on the system. **Backup Ice (Sysop Only):** The sysop activates their emergency defensive protocols. A system immediately gains an active Ice Wall barrier (see page 134). **Identified Exploit (Sysop Only):** The sysop spots a back door in the system, removing one permanent back door of their choice.
♺ or ⊠	**Disorganized System:** The user gets lost in a maze of poorly named sub-folders. Add □ to the character's next Computers check in this system. **Online Distractions:** The user gets too focused on the online world. Add □□ to any non-Computers checks the user makes next turn.
♺ ♺ or ⊠	**Limited Access (Runner Only):** The runner may only perform one Network action or one Network maneuver during their next turn. **I Know You! (Runner Only):** A sysop on the system recognizes the runner's style. The next time they successfully perform the trace user action, they successfully trace the runner one additional time. **Careless Protocols (Sysop Only):** Reduce the strength of one active piece of ice (runner's choice) by 1, to a minimum of 1.
♺ ♺ ♺ or ⊠	**Major Alert (Runner Only):** All users with access to the system become aware of the presence of an intruder on the network. **Permanent Back Door (Sysop Only):** As the sysop attempts to lock the system down, they leave a portion vulnerable. The runner gains a means of accessing the system without needing to deal with its verification protocols. The difficulty of the access system action becomes **Easy** (◆) as long as the runner can access the back door.
⊠	**Successful Trace (Runner Only):** Sloppy work allows one sysop on the system to successfully trace the runner once. **Wrong Person (Sysop Only):** As the sysop traces the runner, they get one crucial element of the runner's identity completely wrong. This does not negate a successful trace, but it does mean that they may have the wrong name, apartment number, or exact location of the runner, which guarantees that the runner avoids any real-world retaliation and probably embarrasses the sysop in front of their superiors.

TRACE USER

Difficulty: Opposed Computers (Sysops) versus Computers (Hacking) check
Available To: Sysop
Description: Once the sysop knows that their system is being hacked, they still need to know where the run is coming from. The more they know about the origin of the run, the easier it is to lock the runner out of their system.

To find out where the run is coming from, the sysops needs to trace the runner by performing the trace user action. The sysop makes an **opposed Computers (Sysops) versus Computers (Hacking) check** targeting the runner. If the sysop is successful, they gain one traces (narrowing down the runner's location). This makes it easier to lock the runner out of the system or even destroy the runner's gear (see the lockout and burn system actions). It also provides information about the runner's real-world location. See the **Trace Information** sidebar, on the next page, for what information a successful trace provides.

Besides using this information to lock the runner out of the system, the sysop can also use it for other purposes, such as reporting the runner to the NAPD or sending a black-ops team to the runner's apartment. Your GM can also have the sysop perform the trace user action to learn other key

details about the runner, such as how to access the runner's computer over the Network. Your runner can even use this action to learn the physical location of someone else online, such as an enemy sysop or rival runner. (In this case, this would be a special exemption of the action only being available to a sysop, and subject to approval by your GM.)

LOCKOUT

Difficulty: Formidable (◆◆◆◆◆)
Computers (Sysops) check
Available To: Sysop
Description: Since the sysop has direct control over the system being hacked, they can lock any users out of the system. As long as they can find a runner, they can give them the boot.

Once the sysop is aware of the runner's presence, the sysop may make a **Formidable (◆◆◆◆◆) Computers (Sysops) check**. If the sysop is successful, the runner targeted by this action loses access to the system. At the GM's discretion, the runner may be able to regain access to the system by performing the access system action again. However, if they don't do something to disguise their signal (such as routing it through another server), the difficulty of the access system action increases by 2.

Reduce the difficulty of the lockout action once for every successful trace against the runner, to a minimum of **Easy (◆)**.

TRACE INFORMATION

A sysop can successfully trace a user up to four times, each time gaining more information about the user. Additional traces don't reveal any additional information or further decrease the difficulty of the lockout action.

TABLE 3–3: TRACE INFORMATION

TRACES	RESULTS
1	The sysops learns what country the runner is currently in (and whether the runner is on the Earth, Moon, or orbit). The sysops reduces the difficulty of the lockout action once.
2	The sysops learns what state, province, or region the runner is in within that country. The sysops reduces the difficulty of the lockout action twice.
3	The sysops learns what city or community the hacker is in (or their location within a 10 kilometer radius). The sysops reduces the difficulty of the lockout action three times.
4	The sysops learns the address or exact location of the runner. The sysops reduces the difficulty of the lockout action four times.

SWEEP

Difficulty: Hard (◆◆◆) Computers (Sysops) check
Available To: Sysop
Description: Even when the sysop doesn't know if there's an intruder in their system, they can use their own programs to sweep for intruders. This is similar to a guard checking to make sure everything is all right (and is thematically similar to a Perception check to spot someone sneaking around).

If the sysop fails, they do not do a thorough job checking, and do not know if there are any intruders on their system or not. If they succeed, they spot one intruder who has access to their system, plus one additional intruder for every additional ✲.

NETWORK MANEUVERS

During a run, there are also certain maneuvers a character can perform while interacting with a system. They follow the same format as Network actions, but without the difficulty, since they don't require a check.

ENACT COMMAND

Available To: Runner, Sysop
Description: This maneuver is what characters use to do things within a system after accessing it. What they do with this maneuver depends on the capabilities of the system, and could range from looping footage, to opening doors, to downloading data, to resetting a guard drone's targeting parameters.

The enact command maneuver only lets your character perform a single command within a system (if what your character wants to do is too complex, your GM may require them to spend two or more enact command maneuvers to do it).

Characters can only perform this maneuver after they have successfully performed the access system action. Remember that some parts of a system may be protected behind ice, which must be encountered and passed before the character can enact commands affecting that part of the system.

ACTIVATE PROGRAM

Available To: Runner, Sysop
Description: Characters use this maneuver to activate (or reactivate) ice and icebreakers, as well as programs that do not fall into either category.

If a sysop activates or reactivates a piece of ice, a runner can't access (or can no longer access) any of the subsystems behind it until they break through the piece of ice (or break through it again). If a runner activates an icebreaker, all of their other icebreakers automatically deactivate. A runner may only have one icebreaker active at a time.

You can think of this maneuver as similar to drawing and readying a weapon in the real world, except that in cyberspace, your character's weapons are ice and icebreakers.

ICE

In Shadow of the Beanstalk, security programs are colloquially known as ice (once an acronym for "intrusion countermeasures electronics"). Ice falls into one of three broad categories: barriers, sentries, and code gates. Barriers keep unauthorized users out, sentries collect data on users and watch for any who might not be authorized to be in the system, and code gates differentiate between authorized and unauthorized connections (and boot those unauthorized connections from the system).

Typically, runners know that ice is protecting a portion of the system, but they do not know what that ice is (unless they've encountered it before, or been able to spend ❁ on prior checks to learn about it). Once they decide to access the protected portion of the system, they must first encounter the ice.

When a runner encounters ice during a Network encounter, they automatically attempt to use the break ice action against it. Almost all ice has negative consequences for failing to break it, and most of the time a runner can't avoid it by backing out at the last moment. Once they decide to encounter ice, they have to break it or suffer the consequences.

ICE AND ICEBREAKERS

The following section covers some of the ice and icebreakers used in Shadows of the Beanstalk. You can also consult **Table 3–4: Ice** and **Table 3–5: Icebreakers** for information on their prices and rarities. Even though these are software, they are still things that your characters can purchase, download, and use.

ANATOMY OF ICE

Each piece of ice has the following parts.

- **Name and Description:** Every piece of ice has a name and brief description.
- **Program Strength:** Each piece of ice has a listed program strength. When attempting to override the ice, the strength of your character's override must exceed the ice's program strength to succeed.
- **Effects:** Each piece of ice has something that happens to your character if they attempt to override it and fail. Barriers tend to stop runners from accessing the partitioned section of the system, code gates tend to boot runners from the system entirely, and sentries tend to alert any sysop on the system to the intrusion. However, specific pieces of ice may have other unique effects.

- **Additional Rules:** Some pieces of ice have additional rules that govern how characters may interact with it.

ANATOMY OF ICEBREAKERS

Just as ice has some specific parts, so do icebreakers.

- **Name and Description:** Every icebreaker has a name and brief description.
- **Able to Affect:** Icebreakers tend to be designed to only be effective against specific types of ice (since the resources a program needs to be effective against all types of ice often mean it comes with other, significant drawbacks). This section lists the types of ice that the icebreaker can be used against. If the type isn't on the list, the icebreaker cannot be used to break it.
- **Override Strength:** Every icebreaker has a listed override strength. If your character makes a successful override security program check, then they can add the strength of one active icebreaker to their total override strength (as long as the icebreaker is able to affect the ice, of course!).
- **Additional Rules:** Some icebreakers have other, additional rules that govern how characters may interact with it or use it.

BARRIER ICE

When most people think of ice, they think of barriers. Barriers simply create an electronic "wall" that keeps anyone without the proper credentials from accessing the portions of the system "behind" the barrier. This simplicity allows coders to make barriers far stronger than other ice, which in turn makes barriers some of the most reliable and efficient ice for protecting a system.

FIRE WALL

Most people assume the same coder who designed the Ice Wall developed the so-called Fire Wall. However, this ice was actually designed by a Megabuy-owned studio trying to piggyback off of Ice Wall's popularity.

Program Strength: 6
Effects: If a character attempts to break this ice and fails, they are unable to access the sub-system Fire Wall protects (there are no further effects).
Additional Rules: None.

GREAT WALL

This piece of ice is popular with sysops on a budget, because it can partition off large amounts of a system behind one security program. However, if a runner breaks this ice, all of its sub-systems become vulnerable.

Program Strength: 6
Effects: If a character attempts to break this ice and fails, they are unable to access the sub-system(s) Great Wall protects (there are no further effects).
Additional Rules: Up to three sub-systems may be protected by this ice.

HADRIAN'S WALL

Developed by an in-house Weyland subsidiary, this barrier has interactive algorithms that allow sysops to reinforce its strength on the fly. Though it requires a skilled sysop to use, this ice can block even an elite runner.

Program Strength: 8
Effects: If a character attempts to break this ice and fails, they are unable to access the sub-system Hadrian's Wall protects (there are no further effects).
Additional Rules: During their turn, a sysop may spend a maneuver to reinforce Hadrian's Wall. If they do so, the ice increases its program strength to 10 until the end of the sysop's next turn.

HEIMDALL 1.0

Haas-Bioroid takes a novel approach to ice. Instead of designing programs, it builds bioroid brains and plugs them into its servers. Though less adaptable and intelligent than a true sysop, this "bioroid ice" can interact with and adapt to would-be intruders. Some clever runners try to use this programmed curiosity to engage with and even trick the ice, but doing so can be a risky proposition.

Program Strength: 7
Effects: If a character attempts to break this ice and fails, they are unable to access the sub-system Heimdall 1.0 protects (there are no further effects).
Additional Rules: During their turn, a runner may spend a maneuver to interact with Heimdall 1.0. If they do so, they decrease Heimdall 1.0's program strength by 1 until the end of their next round.

The runner must add ♺ for each previous time they have encountered Heimdall 1.0 until the end of the encounter.

DAMAGING PROGRAMS AND SYSTEMS

Just like gear, weapons, and armor, programs and systems can become damaged. As it does with equipment, damage causes programs and systems to become harder to use, and if they're too heavily damaged, they can't be used at all. See **Table I.5–4: Repairing Gear**, on page 89 of the GENESYS Core Rulebook; all the same penalties apply. Also, if a system is damaged, the penalty applies to all checks made within the system (this includes attempts to override ice, as well as checks to trace or lock out users).

However, repairing damaged programs and systems works a bit differently than the way it is explained in the **Item Maintenance** section on page 89 of the GENESYS Core Rulebook. The difficulty of the check remains the same, but the character should use the Computers (Sysops) skill, not the Mechanics skill.

ICE WALL

Invented by some insufferably clever coder, this barrier exists in numerous iterations. Many runners use this as a base when developing their own ice.

Program Strength: 5
Effects: If a character attempts to break this ice and fails, they are unable to access sub-system Ice Wall protects (there are no further effects).
Additional Rules: None.

SENTRY ICE

Sentry ice doesn't keep intruders out of systems; it simply spots them and alerts a sysop to the intrusion. However, some sentries go further, backtracing the runner's origins and even attempting to attack the runner directly.

ARCHER

True to form, the sentry ice developed by Argus Security's Network Defense division focuses on targeting and destroying runner software with burst-viruses.

Program Strength: 5
Effects: If a runner attempts to break this ice and fails, the sysops or other system admins are immediately notified of the intrusion, and one of the runner's icebreakers is destroyed. Archer then deactivates until the end of the runner's next turn.
Additional Rules: If the runner generates ♲ ♲ ♲ when attempting to break Archer, one of the runner's icebreakers (GM's choice) is damaged two steps (see the **Damaging Programs and Systems** sidebar, on page 133). If the runner generates ⊗, one of their icebreakers is destroyed instead.

HAWK'S EYE

NBN's data analytics division originally produced this ice to measure and report on consumer habits. When they realized just how good it was at spotting and tracing presences on the Network, NBN started selling it as a security program.

Program Strength: 4
Effects: If a runner attempts to break this ice and fails, the sysops or other system admins are immediately notified of the intrusion and Hawk's Eye provides any sysops who access the system during the current encounter one successful trace against the runner. Hawk's Eye then deactivates until the end of the runner's next turn.
Additional Rules: If the runner generates ♲ ♲ when attempting to break Hawk's Eye, Hawk's Eye provides any sysops who access the system during the current encounter one successful trace against the runner.

JANUS 1.0

A few runners whisper about the bioroid ice known as Janus. They say this sentry stalks Haas-Bioroid's most important servers, hunting unauthorized users, and that it shreds minds as easily as it shreds programs.

Program Strength: 9
Effects: If a runner attempts to break this ice and fails, the system of the rig or computer the runner is using is destroyed (which also kicks the runner out of the system). If the runner is using a BMI, they suffer an automatic Head Ringer Critical Injury instead, and they must attempt to override Janus again during their following turn. If they are already suffering from the Head Ringer Critical Injury, they suffer the At The Brink Critical Injury instead. If they are already suffering from the At The Brink Critical Injury, they suffer The End is Nigh Critical Injury instead.
Additional Rules: For every ♲ the runner generates when attempting to break Janus 1.0, the runner suffers 2 strain. If the runner is using a BMI, they suffer 1 strain and 1 wound instead.

SENTINEL

Sentinel is one of a number of basic, over-the-counter types of sentry ice used by corporations that see "cybersecurity" as a regrettable drain on their profit margin.

Program Strength: 3
Effects: If a character attempts to break this ice and fails, the sysops or other system admins are immediately notified of the intrusion. Sentinel then deactivates until the end of the runner's next turn.
Additional Rules: None.

SHINOBI

Runners claim that shinobi ice was designed and developed by Jinteki, but no corporate representatives have ever admitted to it. This program seems completely autonomous, and it lashes out at any unauthorized user with an overwhelming barrage of junk code.

Program Strength: 3
Effects: If a runner attempts to break this ice and fails, the runner suffers 6 strain and one of their icebreakers is damaged one step (see the **Damaging Programs and Systems** sidebar, on page 133). Shinobi then moves to protect a different sub-system on the system (if able).
Additional Rules: For every ♲ the runner generates when attempting to break Shinobi, the runner suffers 2 strain.

CODE-GATE ICE

Code gates challenge anyone who attempts to pass them. If a user has the proper authentication, they can pass. If not, the code gate responds. Actual defensive code gates boot the user from the system, but other code gates have been designed to limit an unauthorized user's options, or even just trigger annoying spam.

AUTHENTICATOR

Authenticator code gates simply check a user's credentials. If they don't match a list of preapproved users, they boot the intruder from the system. However, the lengthy list of users means these programs tend to be easier to override than barriers.

Program Strength: 3
Effects: If a runner attempts to break this ice and fails, they lose access to the entire system and must perform the access system action again.
Additional Rules: None.

ENIGMA

This ice uses illogical puzzle loops to endlessly redirect queries that don't possess the correct password answers. Runners hate running into an Enigma code gate, because it inevitably takes time to study the particular contradictions before attempting to bypass it.

Program Strength: 3
Effects: If a runner attempts to break this ice and fails, they lose access to the entire system and must perform the access system action again.
Additional Rules: Before breaking Enigma, the runner must spend a maneuver studying it. If they are unable to do so, they may not attempt to break Enigma.

POP-UP

This version of a code gate is exceedingly popular with corporate marketing teams and universally reviled by everyone else.

Program Strength: 2
Effects: If a runner attempts to break this ice and fails, they suffer 2 strain. Pop-up then deactivates until the end of the runner's next turn.
Additional Rules: The runner may feel a fleeting compulsion to buy a new hopper, refinance the mortgage on their condo-hab, or invest their credits in precious metals.

SYN 2.2

Syn continues HB's intermittent tradition of naming its ice after figures from Western mythology. Syn is one of the strongest bioroid code gates in HB's electronic arsenal, appropriately named after the old Norse goddess of refusal and doorways.

Program Strength: 6
Effects: If a runner attempts to break this ice and fails, they lose access to the entire system and must perform the access system action again.
Additional Rules: If a runner fails to break Syn, they add ✕ ✕ to any further attempts to break this piece of ice until the end of the encounter.

TOLLBOOTH

Most corporations use paywalls to charge for online content or services. Although the paywalls are not dangerous, many runners would rather breach them than pay a fee. Tollbooth is part of a suite of programs that NBN uses to protect its pay-to-view content on its media networks.

Program Strength: 3
Effects: If a runner attempts to break this ice and fails, they lose access to the entire system and must perform the access system action again.
Additional Rules: The runner may pay a set fee (usually between 5 and 50 credits) to automatically succeed on their check to break Tollbooth.

VIKTOR 2.0

An evolution of the original "Viktor" program, this is, according to HB, a sophisticated guardian program that can non-lethally incapacitate unauthorized users. The number of runners who have ended up in the hospital or morgue after a run-in with Viktor 2.0 puts lie to the "non-lethal" claim, however.

Program Strength: 4
Effects: If a runner attempts to break this ice and fails, they lose access to the entire system and must perform the access system action again.
Additional Rules: For every ♲ the runner generates when attempting to break Viktor 2.0, the runner suffers 1 strain. If the runner is using a BMI, they suffer 1 wound instead.

ICEBREAKERS

Just as sysops use specialized programs to protect their servers from runners and other intruders, those intruders have turned to using specialized programs called icebreakers to break through the security. Icebreakers are often designed to only be effective at breaking through certain types of ice; those that can affect any piece of ice tend to be highly valuable and also come with significant drawbacks.

ATHENA

Normally, naming a program after a deity gets you accused of corporate arrogance in runner chatspaces. But this icebreaker earns its name. Although it consumes terrific processing power (equivalent to most AIs), it is uniquely capable of crunching the logic loops employed by code gates and overwhelming barriers with perfectly timed waves of false queries. Runners with BMIs claim the program universally "appears" as a shining warrior wielding a spear and accompanied by an owl. But that's probably just a quirk created by the original programmer.

Able to Affect: Barriers, Code Gates
Override Strength: 5
Additional Rules: While Athena is active, the runner may spend ⮝ ⮝ to identify one unidentified piece of ice on the system. Athena is too large to be used on a PAD, and can only be hosted on a rig or larger (your GM is the final arbitrator of what hardware is too small to host this icebreaker).

TABLE 3–4: ICE

PROGRAM NAME	STRENGTH	RARITY/PRICE
Barrier Ice		
Fire Wall	6	3/400
Great Wall	6	4/600
Hadrian's Wall	8	5/650
Heimdall 1.0	7	6/1,000 (R)
Ice Wall	5	2/250
Sentry Ice		
Archer	5	5/850 (R)
Hawk's Eye	4	4/475
Janus 1.0	9	8/5,000 (R)
Sentinel	3	2/100
Shinobi	3	3/550 (R)
Code-Gate Ice		
Authenticator	3	2/300
Enigma	3	2/400
Pop-Up	2	1/25
Syn 2.2	6	5/1,250
Tollbooth	3	2/200
Viktor 2.0	4	5/1,000 (R)

BATTERING RAM

When people think of icebreakers, they tend to think of programs like Battering Ram. This program takes a simple, brute-force approach to breaking through barrier ice, usually by overwhelming it with a barrage of pings until it shuts down.

Able to Affect: Barriers
Override Strength: 6
Additional Rules: None.

CORRODER

Sysops tend to revile the Corroder program, as it degrades the strength of their ice even as it attempts to break through it. Needless to say, this wanton electronic destruction makes it even more popular in the runner community.

Able to Affect: Barriers
Override Strength: 4
Additional Rules: While Corroder is active, the runner may spend ⮝ ⮝ from a check to break ice to reduce the strength of the ice the runner is attempting to break by 1 to a minimum of 1 until the end of the encounter.

CRYPSIS

Quite a few runners would love to take credit for creating one of the first true AIs used as an icebreaker, although it's far more likely that whoever programmed the first Crypsis stole the core code from a corporate laboratory. In any case, the Crypsis icebreaker is considered something of a work of art among runner circles. Although the AI is decidedly slow, it does have truly adaptive code. As such, even though pushing the program too hard can cause it to crash and eventually corrupt itself into junk data, patient users find that Crypsis can eventually overcome any type of ice.

Able to Affect: Barriers, Code Gates, Sentries
Override Strength: 3
Additional Rules: After a runner uses Crypsis to break a piece of ice, they must spend a maneuver. If they do not, Crypsis becomes damaged one step (see the **Damaging Programs and Systems** sidebar, on page 133). Crypsis is too large to be used on a PAD, and can only be hosted on a rig or larger (your GM is the final arbitrator of what hardware is too small to host this icebreaker)

FAERIE

Faerie provides a powerful weapon against malicious sentry ice, but it works by distracting the programs constantly while the runner remains in the system. That means the program only works once.

Able to Affect: Sentries
Override Strength: 5
Additional Rules: After a runner attempts to break ice while using Faerie, Faerie deactivates and may not be used again for the rest of the encounter.

FEMME FATALE

Designed in a Tri-Maf code shop (or so the stories say), Femme Fatale was an attempt to design a smarter, meaner version of Faerie that could distract multiple sentries at once. The Tri-Maf's code slingers succeeded, but when they beefed up the ever-changing algorithms, they realized that every so often, an algorithm would match a piece of ice's IFF protocols and allow the user to bypass it completely.

It wasn't until later that some runners working for the Tri-Maf angrily reported that sometimes the code would shift in such a way that it became harder to override a piece of ice. However, most runners feel that the somewhat fickle icebreaker is still a powerful tool in their kit.

Able to Affect: Sentries
Override Strength: 4
Additional Rules: Once per encounter, when a runner attempts to break a piece of ice while Femme Fatale is active, the runner may spend one Story Point to succeed without making a check.

Once per encounter, when a runner attempts to break a piece of ice while Femme Fatale is active, the GM may spend one Story Point to add ⊗ to the check.

GARROTE

Garrote got its name because of its straightforward approach. It waits for a sentry to ping a runner, then uses an ever-tightening string of logic puzzles to choke off the data the ice is sending back to the system. This guarantees that even if the runner can't bypass the ice, the ice can't tell anyone about it.

Able to Affect: Sentries
Override Strength: 2
Additional Rules: When a runner uses Garrote to break a sentry, the runner may spend ⮝ to stop the sentry from notifying any sysops or systems administrators about the runner's existence (whether or not the runner successfully breaks the ice). After attempting to break a piece of ice, the runner may spend ⮝ to add ✲ to the next break ice check made targeting the same piece of ice during the encounter.

GORDIAN BLADE

The Gordian Blade is said to have been developed open-source by a team of runners in less than three hours. They invented an appropriately simple program that used a logic-resolution engine to overcome most code gates, and runners tend to delight in "slicing" through the complex mathematical puzzles employed by sysops to restrict system access.

Able to Affect: Code Gates
Override Strength: 3
Additional Rules: While Gordian Blade is active, the runner may spend ⮝ ⮝ to increase Gordian Blade's override strength to 4 until the end of their following turn.

REMORA

Nothing says "high risk/reward" more than this particular icebreaker. Remora doesn't have the code strength to break through anything but the weakest ice. However, it's designed to piggyback onto passing approved data packets and slip past sentry and code gate programs. The trick doesn't work against barrier ice, and there's always a chance any ice might spot the hitchhiker. But there's also a chance the runner can bypass the ice without ever encountering it.

Able to Affect: Code Gates, Sentries
Override Strength: 0
Additional Rules: When a runner uses Remora to break sentries or code gates, the runner may spend ⮝ ⮝ ⮝ or ❂ to avoid suffering any of the effects from failing to override the ice. (This does not apply to anything that might happen due to the ice's additional rules.)

TABLE 3–5: ICEBREAKERS

NAME	AFFECTS	STRENGTH	RARITY/COST
Athena	Barriers, Code Gates	5	7/2,600 (R)
Battering Ram	Barriers	6	5/400
Corroder	Barriers	4	4/350 (R)
Crypsis	Barriers, Code Gates, Sentries	3	5/450 (R)
Faerie	Sentries	5	3/300
Femme Fatale	Sentries	4	6/1,200 (R)
Garrote	Sentries	2	2/225
Gordian Blade	Code Gates	3	4/400
Remora	Code Gates, Sentries	0	3/475 (R)
Sagittarius A*	Barriers, Code Gates, Sentries	6	8/2,000 (R)
Torch	Code Gates	9	9/3,000 (R)
Yog.0	Code Gates	1	6/550 (R)

SAGITTARIUS A*

This rare, dangerous, and incredibly illegal icebreaker doesn't just override ice, it destroys it completely. However, the program has a voracious appetite for code. If a runner isn't careful it can devour everything on the server, including the runner's other programs and even the system's core architecture, leaving nothing but a incomprehensible packet of impossibly compressed data in its wake.

Able to Affect: Barriers, Code Gates, Sentries
Override Strength: 6
Additional Rules: When Sagittarius A* successfully overrides a piece of ice, it destroys it. When a runner uses Sagittarius A* to break a piece of ice, the runner must spend ⮝ or ⊛ to destroy another piece of active ice on the system, and the GM must spend ⟲ or ⊗ to destroy one other icebreaker on the runner's rig. If there are no other pieces of active ice on the system, the runner must spend ⮝ or ⊛ to destroy the system, instead. (This ends the Network encounter, and almost certainly has other catastrophic effects depending on the GM and what the system controlled).

TORCH

Runners claim that the legendary g00ru, the nigh-mythical runner who supposedly taught all other runners how to exploit the Network, created this icebreaker when they traveled into the heart of the Net. There, they stole a fragment of source code from the grid's burning heart, code that could sear through any authentication program ever devised.

It's a nice, if utterly fanciful, story. However, given Torch's sheer power, it's easy to see how that story got started.

Able to Affect: Code Gates
Override Strength: 9
Additional Rules: The runner may spend ⮝ after successfully breaking a piece of ice to stop that piece of ice from being reactivated for the remainder of the encounter.

YOG.0

The Yog.0 icebreaker is a crowd-sourced database containing millions of sniffed, spoofed, and logged passkeys, combined with a high-speed access/comparison program. As long as the passkey fits the code gate, you're in. On the other hand, since Yog.0 is not an adaptable icebreaker, if it doesn't have the code it has a hard time overriding the gate.

Able to Affect: Code Gates
Override Strength: 1
Additional Rules: While Yog.0 is active, after making a break ice check the runner may spend ⮝ ⮝ ⮝ or ⊛ to override the targeted code gate (even if the override strength does not exceed the program strength).

BUILDING NETWORK ENCOUNTERS

If you're the GM, then you may be wondering how you can take these rules and make engaging encounters for your players. This section is here to help you do just that!

The first step when building a Network encounter is to decide if you want your players to engage in a simple Network encounter, or a structured Network encounter. Since we expect most groups of PCs are going to involve a number of runners and non-runners working together, both types of encounter are designed to run in parallel with a regular structured or narrative encounter.

SIMPLE NETWORK ENCOUNTER

Sometimes, instead of wanting your players to engage in a full-fledged Network encounter, you just want to give your runner something to do while the rest of the group is already engaged. Perhaps everyone else is in the midst of a firefight, and the runner wants to hijack an automated cargo hopper and bring it to the group's location for a quick getaway. Or maybe the group is in the midst of some protracted negotiations, and the runner wants to trigger a building's fire alarm to bring the boring talks to a sudden end.

In this case, you can construct a simple Network encounter using an abbreviated version of the rules. The idea is to give the runner something they can resolve in one turn of a structured encounter (or about one to five minutes of a narrative encounter).

First, select a single task that your runner wants to accomplish. Activating a fire alarm, shutting off a seccam, redirecting an automated hopper, or unlocking a door could all be examples of a good single task.

Second, set the difficulty of the task using **Table 3–1: Example Systems and Difficulties**. Determine what system is closest to the system the runner is going to try and break into, and that will tell you the difficulty of the task.

Third, decide whether a human sysop would be keeping an eye on the system or not. If they are, then upgrade the difficulty of the check once (or twice, if they're a really good sysop).

Forth, decide if the system is protected by any ice, and if the runner has any icebreakers they can use. For each piece of ice protecting the system, add ▯ to the check. Likewise, add ■ to the check for every icebreaker the runner has access to.

Finally, the runner takes the determined difficulty with its ■ and ▯ and makes a Computers (Hacking) check. If they succeed, they accomplish the task they set out to do. If they fail, they do not. △ and ⟲ can be spent according to the suggestions on **Table 3–2**. However, since this is a simplified encounter, we suggest simplifying some of the results. For example, instead of a sysop generating a trace against the runner on a ⊗, have a ⊗ mean that the sysop knows the runner has accessed the system and where the runner is in the real world.

If you use this in a structured encounter, this process should require the runner to spend a maneuver accessing the system they're trying to hack, and then an action to perform the check. These rules work best when trying to integrate some hacking into an encounter on the fly, or when the runner wants to do something simple that shouldn't be a major focus of the story.

HARDWARE

Generally, a runner must have some kind of computer system to conduct a run, just like they need a connection to the Network. What form this computer system takes (be it a full-sized rig in a runner's crashpad or a souped-up PAD) is up to the runner and the GM, but we have provided a number of example computers that a runner can use. Those can be found on page 98.

Here's a few things to keep in mind about computers. First, all computers can contain a set number of icebreakers and pieces of ice. Second, computers can be partitioned into as many separate sub-systems as the user wants, and each sub-system can do or store something different (one section may be full of clandestine vid recordings, while the next may contain a list of the runner's illegal contacts in the criminal underworld). However, each piece of ice can only protect one sub-system.

Finally, it's not so important to know what exactly a computer can and cannot do over the course of the game. Running is supposed to be cinematic, exciting, and above all, fun. So use common sense as to what a computer can and cannot do, and remember that your GM is the final arbiter!

STRUCTURED NETWORK ENCOUNTER

Structured Network encounters, on the other hand, are obviously more involved. These can still be run alongside a regular encounter, but will require some planning on your part beforehand.

When constructing a Network encounter, first you need to figure out what kind of system the encounter takes place on. **Table 3–1: Example Systems and Difficulties** is your reference for this.

Once you've selected your system, you should think about what this system does, and what your characters are going to want to be able to do on the system. What the system does should depend on what the system is (and is

something we talked about on page 125 earlier in this chapter). But the more important information is going to be what your players are likely to want to do on the system. An arcology's computer core controls pretty much everything in an arcology, from the window tinting to the security doors to the lights, heat, and air circulation. However, if your party is planning on running on the computer to try and steal classified corporate R&D records, they're not going to care about anything but the information databases.

So determine what your group is most likely going to want to do. Then, put each thing they want to do (door controls, seccam controls, valuable files, etc) in a different sub-section or partition of the system. After that, decide which of these sub-sections are valuable enough to be protected by ice.

As a rule of thumb, anything that will let your group accomplish their main goals should be protected by ice (otherwise, the encounter is going to be pretty boring). But how much ice should you use? We recommend the following guidelines:

- Generally, every interesting or important sub-system should be behind one piece of ice. In other words, everything that a runner may want to do in an encounter should be in a sub-section behind one piece of ice.
- The default ice should be barriers, but at least one sub-system should be protected by a sentry or code gate instead.
- One sub-system (probably the most important to your group's success) can be behind two pieces of ice instead.
- Generally, the barriers should be those of strength 6 or less, sentries should be strength 4 or less, and code gates should be strength 3 or less.

If your group has at least one runner (or other character focused on running) that has earned 150 XP or more, you can upgrade the encounter using the following guidelines.

- The ice should be a more even mix of barriers and code gates. If a sub-section is protected by multiple pieces of ice, then one should be a sentry, and one of the others should be a barrier or code gate.
- Barriers, code gates, and sentries can be of any strength.
- Multiple sub-sections can be protected by two pieces of ice, and at least one sub-section can be protected by three pieces. (No sub-section should be protected by more than three pieces of ice, however).

DETERMINE YOUR SYSOP

Structured Network encounters often have a sysop actively working to protect the server. Select an adversary that can serve as your sysop (we recommend the corporate manager on page 224, the corporate sysop on page 225, or the SYNC Globalsec agent on page 226 as good easy, intermediate, and dangerous sysops for your group to face off against).

When a Network encounter begins, the sysop typically has access to the system. Maybe they're plugged in with a BMI, or maybe they're sitting behind their desk, drinking coffee and waiting for shift change. However, they start unaware of the runners' intrusion (and likely remain unaware until the runners trigger a sentry or generate enough ♻ or ⊗).

Once the sysop is aware of the runner's presence, their goal is to trace the user (see page 130), and then lock the user out of the system (see page 131). In rare cases, they may try to make a run on the runner's own computer system to steal information about the runner, or just destroy their computer (see page 129). If that happens, you'll need to construct a second, smaller Network encounter, with the roles of sysops and runner reversed!

However, the one thing sysops should almost never do is turn their system off. For one thing, in this setting, shutting down a massive computer network is a time-consuming and dangerous process with long-lasting consequences. For another, if a sysop pulls the plug every time a runner gets into a system, that makes for some boring encounters! So if you do want to have your sysop pull the plug and shut their system down, at least have that take a round or two of them scrambling to find the master controls—giving your characters a few more turns to complete their run.

MULTIPLE RUNNERS AND SYSOPS

Something to keep in mind is that structured Network encounters work just as well with multiple runners as they do with a single runner (although simple encounter rules are designed to be one character and one check only).

A runner's primary goal in a system is to shut down ice so they can access protected portions of the system. However, once the ice is shut down, any runner can access that portion of the system. That means that teams of runners can accomplish far more together than they can on their own, with one or more runners breaking through ice so that an ally can access the formerly defended partition. Likewise, multiple sysops can work together to try and shut the runners out (and if you have multiple runners, we recommend adding in a second or third sysop to oppose them).

If you are running a Network encounter with multiple runners and sysops, use the following rules.

- When accessing the system, only one runner needs to successfully perform the access system check.
- Sysops accumulate traces against the group of runners, instead of each runner individually.
- Sysops who are working together share traces between each other (if one gets a trace, they all count as having done so).
- When a sysops successfully performs the lockout action, it locks out the entire group of runners.

[CHAPTER 4]
NEW ANGELES AND HEINLEIN

For a city as enormous and diverse as New Angeles, a comprehensive guide is impossible. Even a New Angelino might feel the need to access a map when first visiting a location in a district not their own. The streets of Nihongai and Base de Cayambe are so different, a traveler passing between the two might think they stepped off the tube-lev into another country entirely. Even within the districts, the shadowed undercity and gleaming high-rise arcologies are like two different worlds.

What this chapter aims to do is to introduce players to New Angeles and provide an extensive (but by no means complete) list of places to explore. There is ample information here to let a Game Master plot adventures in New Angeles and give players a feel for the scenery. Once they are familiar with some elements and locations of this diverse, eclectic megalopolis and with the themes and problems that make this city so unique, there will be no limit to the settings and situations the Game Master and players can envision within it.

The purpose of this chapter is to enrich, not restrict, adventure building. If the GM wants to start a brawl in a bar exclusive to "natural" humans with no g-mods or invite player characters to visit a hopper racer's penthouse, it doesn't matter if such locations aren't listed. If it's not already included in this chapter, the GM can create it—in the vast, sprawling streets of New Angeles, it probably exists somewhere.

Armed with the knowledge that no cops are coming to the rescue of PCs who get into trouble in a bar in Base de Cayambe, and that the penthouse is most likely located in Esmeraldas, GMs and players can expand their experience of New Angeles and create an adventure unique to their characters. However, it is important to remember that there is nothing stopping the GM from locating said bar or penthouse in another district, on Luna, or across the border in other parts of Ecuador, if that's where the adventure is going. There are no rules in this section, only ideas.

NEW ANGELES

New Angeles is physically enormous, covering approximately 62,000 square kilometers. A multi-level city sprawling across Ecuador, it stretches all the way up into space and offers plenty of places to explore, with all the businesses, services, and private residences its 500 million official residents require. The megalopolis may also house as many as 500 million uncounted beings, including off-gridders, androids, and those simply too poor to own an ID. While the city's starscrapers give the risties and the working-class space in which to live and work, the uncounted populate the shadowed undercity below.

THE BEST AND THE WORST

While a few residents may be loyal to the idea of being a "resident of New Angeles," most New Angelinos self-identify based on their neighborhood. New Angeles is so vast that only those who spend more time jacked in than in meatspace can envision "New Angelino" as an identity in and of itself. Each district of NA is large and distinct enough to have its own culture and atmosphere. Local gangs and larger criminal organizations fight over territory, and the influence of some of the organized crime syndicates may spread all the way across their own district and beyond.

To the outside world, New Angeles is the epitome of a modern, multicultural, technologically advanced city, but each experience of NA is as unique as the megalopolis itself. Depending on a resident's geographic and social location, their hardest decision might be as easy as choosing which newsie to listen to in the hopper on the way to work or as difficult as determining how to find the credits to buy their next meal. Residents of Nihongai may think of their home as an attractive, nurturing environment with lush gardens, high-paid jobs, and clones to meet their every need, while residents of Chakana's Eastside tenements might consider NA the dirtiest, roughest, most unforgiving city in the world. From the glamour of Broadcast Square to the violence of Rabotgorod, New Angeles is big enough and diverse enough that you can find anything there if you go looking, or it might find you.

LIFE IN THE WORLD'S BIGGEST CITY

Humans of innumerable ethnicities, beliefs, and careers rub shoulders on New Angeles' crisscrossing slidewalks and in the gloom of the streets far below. Many spend their whole life in one district and never leave, while others commute in and out of the megalopolis, the tube-levs and skylanes making the world smaller for those who can afford to use them. Daily life for the CEO of a megacorp or the head of an orgcrime network bears almost no resemblance to that of an android supervisor employed by Melange Mining on Luna, and even less to that of a stim pusher in the undercity. New Angeles is a different city for different people.

THE RICH

Many of New Angeles' risties live in luxury apartments that give them easy access to the city's numerous entertainments and diversions. Typically the highest in the starscrapers, these apartments have all manner of luxuries, including the most valuable commodity of all: empty space. It is not unusual for risties to have a second home in the Ecuadorian countryside, and adventurous risties might have another property up-Stalk to take advantage of the "scene" on Luna. In ristie households, menial tasks are carried out by androids. New technologies prolong the risties' lives, perfect their bodies, and continually offer them more ways to spend their free time.

The starscraping arcologies of New Angeles are self-contained societies in their own right, offering the upper classes a comfortable home, good schools, and a variety of places to eat, work, and socialize. It's possible for a resident to spend their whole life in their arcology, and many do just that. Some even spend their lives on the Net, making friends from across the world, playing and socializing in virtual chatspaces and games.

While many corporate workers take advantage of housing offered by the megacorp they serve, usually living in the same building where they work, more successful businesspeople sometimes choose to commute from farther away. A home with a sea view or a pleasant cottage in rural Ecuador are both options for those with money. A commute in a self-driving hopper allows the rich time to review their schedule or catch up on their reading. And of course, many have the option to work remotely over the Network.

...AND THOSE WHO WANT TO BE RICH

Most employees only make enough to live in a condo-hab, a small apartment somewhere between plaza level and the upper spires. If they cannot stretch their salary to own and maintain a personal hopper for transport, the Metro offers a fast and reasonably efficient way to get to work. Some may grumble, but most are grateful to have a job at all.

Fear of life in the undercity occasionally drives desperate members of the shrinking middle classes to try everything from tax dodging to illegal clone smuggling to ensure they can continue to afford a small but safe condo-hab above the plaza level rather than tumble into the undercity. For a disgruntled employee, there is nothing so motivating as the thought of falling to the gritty obscurity of ground level, where the gangs hold sway. There are areas of the undercity where even NAPD officers fear to tread.

THE POOR

Without the protection of a corp job or access to legal funds, the luckier jobless residents rent single-room condo-habs and live off what they can steal, win, or illegally earn. Less fortunate souls are forced to take to the streets, where they try to find any sort of work (usually illegal) to get by. They cannot even look from the gutter to the stars: all they can see are the bright lights of the plazas above, the flashy advertisements, and the feeds telling them about the lives of the rich and famous. It's a long way from the slums of Guayaquil to the heights of Gila Highlands Arcology.

Slums can be found throughout New Angeles. Every district has its undercity, where rundown, crumbling buildings have been covered over by the plaza level. These places have two advantages over the apartments of the working class: they cost little to nothing, and there are no seccams.

When the NAPD releases statistics showing New Angeles to be one of the safest cities in the world, it is worth remembering that the data does not include countless crimes that never get reported to the NAPD. While the plazas, walkways, and public buildings of New Angeles are constantly monitored; most of the seccams in the undercity broke down or were destroyed decades ago. At the same time, even where security is so tight that citizens complain about lack of privacy, the best criminals know ways to hack or bypass the camdrones.

LIFE

While this section considers the daily life of many different types of people—that is, those who count as people in New Angeles—many other types of beings also populate the city. The Liberty Society would have clones and bioroids declared individuals in their own right. Ignoring the society-shattering implications of such a policy, this would swell the official population of New Angeles by several million.

The definition of "humanity" has been a matter of debate since the creation of androids, whose appearance and actions are similar enough to those of their human makers to make certain citizens uncomfortable. As an increasing number of humans choose to augment their biological bodies and brains with cybernetics or gene therapy, the physical difference between androids and humans grows ever smaller. Already some clones live off-grid and pretend to be human.

As society grows accustomed to androids and they become more integrated and indispensable to society, how the public perceives androids may be shifting. One day, New Angeles law may change, too, but for now, being a bioroid or clone in New Angeles means being less than human.

Most New Angelinos spend more time dreaming about moving up the social ladder than living in fear of falling down it. The majority of citizens have at least tasted the life of a ristie through the media provided by NBN. Not only can the public follow the lives of the stars via live feeds or take a break from reality by watching threedee holodramas, but they also have access to the immersive experiences of simsensies. For anyone who has tasted champagne through the lips of Miranda Rhapsody, the ristie lifestyle will never seem entirely out of reach. Virtual reality games also offer a popular escape for both children and adults, though for some, the return to reality gets harder every time.

New Angeles is so large and densely populated that no one person could give a definitive account of life as a New Angelino. Regardless of how many experiences a person has exploring the city—walking across Broadcast Square, trying a Silo Sour in Owney's bar, taking a beanpod up-Stalk—the megalopolis will always have more to offer. No single lifetime is enough to uncover all of New Angeles' secrets.

SAMPLE LOCATION

New Angeles is huge. Really huge. The city spreads out across 62,000 square kilometers, and that doesn't include the thousands of square kilometers of urban sprawl that crosses the border into Ecuador. It has an official population of half a billion people, and that doesn't include all the androids and the millions of *disenfrancistos* who live off the grid and beneath the plaza level. Its GDP eclipses that of most countries, and that doesn't include the criminal empires that thrive in the shadows of the starscrapers. In nearly every way, New Angeles is large enough to defy easy comprehension.

That's why it can be easy to forget that the city, just like any other, is made up of millions of shops, apartments, homes, and people living out their daily lives. Most people don't experience the city as a whole. Instead, they live in their neighborhood, their block, or even their building—and in New Angeles, the buildings can be large enough to *be* a neighborhood.

Down past the district level, New Angeles is made up of thousands of these culturally diverse and socially insular locations. Trying to describe them all would be impossible. Instead, the following is a sample neighborhood in New Angeles, to show what life is like at street level.

28TH TRANSIT ARTERIAL AND CALLE DEL PRADO

The 28th and Prado block gets its name from the two major thoroughfares that form its western and southern borders. The block is deep in the foothills of the Cordillera Central range beneath the Volcan Cayambe that make up the Base de Cayambe district (see page 155). A few kilometers removed from the constant construction projects centered around Neo-Broadway, 28th and Prado sits in the midst of the endless warehouses that handle the shipments coming up and down the Beanstalk.

The block, like many in New Angeles, is large, over a quarter kilometer along each side. Above the slidewalks, L squares, and weather barriers that form the plaza level, three large buildings jostle each other for space. Two are modest, 100-story constructions with square forms, thin slit windows, and slab-sided facades festooned with garish holographic advertising. The plaza level wraps around their midsections, making the buildings seem even more squat and boxier than they are.

The third, Fresh Horizons Capital Building, is a proper (albeit small) starscraper at 211 stories. Built by Watts-Watson seven years ago, the blue and gold art nouveau facade has already dulled under a thick coat of grime and smog particulates. Fresh Horizons has undergone three name changes since opening as different investors bought and sold their controlling interest. Already there are rumors that FHC—an investment fund who moved their headquarters to 28th and Prado from Kampala six months ago—is in the market for a merger or leveraged buyout. The more permanent residents of the block just call the starscraper "the Needle."

INDUSTRY AND ECONOMY

While Fresh Horizons Capital owns the most valuable real estate in 28th and Prado, the firm is a non-entity in block life. Its corporate headquarters take up five floors of valuable upper-level real estate in the Needle, but except for half a dozen spacious offices occupied by high-rolling traders who spend all their time linked into the NASX, the rest is all bare rooms and dusty white hallways. Visitors only get as far as Vic Stallers, the firm's highly paid (and incredibly bored) receptionist who is under standing orders to turn away visitors as politely and firmly as possible.

At one point, the block's largest single employer was one of Trans-Sol Shipping's innumerable sorting and storage facilities (occupying a sizable portion of Building 28.4 East, referred to as "Eastbrick" by the locals), where beanpods were packed and prepared for high-G launch to Luna, Mars, and the burgeoning communities in the asteroid belt. However, a year ago Trans-Sol invested heavily in an android workforce. Now, hundreds of bioroids pack the beanpods under the supervision of less than a hundred high-paid specialists. Most of the locals have had to look elsewhere for work.

These days, a sizable portion of the block's population telecommutes to work via the Network. They could be employed anywhere in New Angeles—or the world, thanks to UP383.9 "Net-Work" visas. However, the majority found work at Santana and Lang Recycling and Reclamation, a massive processing facility that takes up the bottom third of Building 28.2 West (just called "Westbrick"). S&L handles much of the waste left from Base de Cayambe's constant cycle of demolition and construction, and so far, the work tends to be too varied and dangerous to make an android labor force worthwhile. Plus, it's rumored that Huang Lang (co-owner with Janice Santana) distrusts android labor and even used to be a Humanity Labor organizer years ago. So, each shift, hundreds of locals descend below plaza level to meet the never ending stream of groundtrucks that pull off the transit arterial to deliver loads of waste and scrap to S&L's smelting facilities, molecular furnaces, and macro-processors.

SIGHTS AND SOUNDS

Much of 28th and Prado comes in various shades of dingy brownish-gray, broken up by garish fluorescent splashes of light from the omnipresent holographic billboards that sprawl across the facades of each of the block's three buildings.

At and just below plaza level, the signs grow smaller and more numerous. They do a better job lighting up the plazas than the flickering municipal street lamps, or the smog-obscured sky far overhead. Of course, far below plaza level, the sky vanishes entirely, and most of the streetlights have long-since burnt out and not been replaced. Here, the light is dim and fading; the yellow glow of jury-rigged lamps, the harsh white flashes from the traffic along 28th, and the warm orange flicker of drum-fires that sporadically illuminate the graffiti-stained walls.

All throughout the block, the air hums and rumbles with the sounds of heavy industry. Near ground level, the roar of traffic along the transit arterial forces people to speak in a half-shout, while the hiss-crack of departing beanpods echoes everywhere in the block. And beneath it all, one can just make out the intermittent mumbling of millions of people shouting, laughing, crying, chatting, and otherwise going about their daily lives.

LIFE ON THE BLOCK

Roughly 18,000 people live on 28th and Prado (not including the *disenfrancistos* living below plaza level). For most of them, it isn't just their home—it's their entire life. Many of them live, work, and play within the bounds of the four buildings they call home. Few leave, even for day trips. A deteriorating lower-middle-class neighborhood like this can still provide them with the necessities for everyday life. For everything else, there's the Net.

PENTHOUSE LEVEL

There aren't too many risties living on 28th and Prado, but those who do live at the top of the Needle. The starscraper is just tall enough to break through the constant miasma of smog that looms over Base de Cayambe. On these upper stories, the rich enjoy the entirety of New Angeles spread out to the west, and the unbroken line of the Beanstalk rising into the heavens to the east. Sometimes when the smog rolls in, the Needle looks like a lone building atop the clouds. All the rich see are other distant starscrapers rising above the billowing white ocean, full of their friends and rivals. At times like that, it's all too easy to forget about the rest of the district sprawled out beneath them.

Above the 180th story, each of the Needle's floors are divided into four large penthouse condo-habs. Each hab is custom-decorated to the tastes of its inhabitants, but all possess the same ultimate luxury in a city of more than half a billion people: empty space. Vaulted ceilings, open and airy architecture, full length windows, and rooms empty but for an artfully placed plant and chair—all of it a not-so-subtle reminder that in New Angeles, the most valuable resource is room.

To provide the Needle's wealthy tenants with greenspace, the entirety of the 200th and 201st floors have been turned into a small enclosed park (it has to be enclosed, because this high up the air is too cold and thin to support much plant life). Here, burbling streams meander through small meadows and groves of deciduous trees, feeding into a small pond in the park's center. The Needle's designers decided to give their park the appearance of a forest from the midwestern United States, and the clone gardeners work tirelessly to make the plants look slightly overgrown and wild. The climate control systems even simulate changing seasons, including a short but robust winter with some hefty snowfalls so that the local kids can go sledding and ice skating.

As the Needle narrows, the top residential floors have been devoted to single penthouse suites. These are owned by the wealthiest locals; the Connor family, Ms. Savanista, and the reclusive hermit of the 208th floor known only as Weyer. Their homes are like those of their neighbors, only more ostentatious and elaborate.

The penthouse levels are largely separate from the rest of the Needle. The elevators from the lower levels stop at the 178th floor, and people need to get off and shift to a different elevator to travel higher. In between is a security booth

POLICE PRESENCE

Like most blocks, 28th and Prado has its own NAPD sub-precinct station. Located on the top floor of Eastbrick, the station has two rooftop charging pads for patrolling police hoppers and a silo for camdrones. The silo is currently two-thirds empty as most of the drones are ancient and prone to breakdown; the sub-station is currently 380th on the list to receive replacements.

Below the rooftop pads, the "station" consists of two cramped offices and a storage locker for police gear. The only full-time staff is a virt AI receptionist named Salvadore who logs misdemeanor violations spotted by the drones and takes complaints filed by the locals. Otherwise, the only police that visit the station are patrol officers taking a break, stocking up on restraints, or actively investigating a crime on the block.

The only direct contact most locals have with the NAPD are those who know Corporal Amanda Tasker, who lives on the 105th floor of Eastbrick with her husband Eric and son Travis. Tasker is a five-year veteran, and although her assigned patrol is Neo-Broadway and its surrounding blocks, she knows how to get things done around the precinct. If a local has a problem that needs the NAPD's attention, they often get results faster by talking to Eric at the Tinamou Bodega (and possibly offering to pay for his groceries) than by logging a complaint with Salvadore.

with a bored prisec security guard—with discreet but powerful scanning equipment to check over any visitors. Paladin Protection Services—a local outfit from Base de Cayambe—provides the guards. The most senior, a twenty-year veteran of PPS named Calina Lynn, has worked the day shift for years. At this point, she knows most of the residents by sight, and lets those she knows through to visit the park or a ristie friend. On the other end of the spectrum is Derrick Ortega, who just started the night shift, has read the company manual cover to cover, and can't wait for someone to try and break through his checkpoint.

Any trouble and the upper floors can be physically sealed off from the rest of the starscraper with heavy fire- and blast-resistant doors. The 179th story is entirely given over to a private hopper garage for the tenants, letting them come and go as they please without traveling down to street level.

LIFESTYLES OF THE RICH AND FAMOUS

The ultra-rich of 28th and Prado enjoy a life of luxury similar to those of their ristie neighbors scattered across New Angeles. In fact, ristie culture is probably the closest thing to a pan-city culture that New Angeles has. Wealthy New Angelinos are the few who have the free time and money to fly across the city and visit a specific trendy restaurant or club on a whim, and they tend to make friends and relationships exclusively amongst the closed circles of their fellow elites.

For this reason, the penthouse levels on this block are less self-contained than the "middle-class" levels below them. There are no shops or restaurants, for example. If someone wants to buy something, they order it over the Net and have it delivered by drone within a matter of minutes. Likewise, if the residents want to dine out, they fly to an exclusive restaurant elsewhere in the city. Otherwise, the local risties tend to entertain themselves with a constant stream of dinner parties, cocktail gatherings, and play dates. Cocooned in their little world and protected by discrete and powerful security and surveillance, most residents tend to leave their doors unlocked, and don't think anything of wandering into a neighbor's home to say hello.

Ms. Savanista is the undisputed master of 28th and Prada's local social scene, and nobody misses her dinner parties if they can help it. In her glass-walled dining hall, she presides over the head of the table like an aristocratic baroness as her guests enjoy delicacies prepared by her personal (human) chef. In return, all she asks is that she understand the entirety of the local gossip. That her neighbor Weyer still hasn't visited one of her parties for studying and evaluation is a source of constant irritation for Ms. Savanista.

PLAZA FLOORS

Between the Needle's penthouse floors and the collection of slidewalks and rain-shields that girdles each building around their 40th story is what locals colloquially call "the plaza floors." The majority of the block's inhabitants live here, in floor upon floor of condo-habs and apartments.

Most of the plaza floors blur together in their utter sameness; endless hallways in calming neutral decor with ranks of security-sealed hab doors. However, Westbrick breaks the mold. The entire building was originally intended to be industrially zoned, and when many of its floors were converted to budget apartments nobody bothered to cover over the bare plascrete walls, carbosteel furnishings, and buzzing, flickering hallway lights.

Even the middle class in Base de Cayambe can afford to have most of their needs delivered via drone from any of the big virtual retail giants. So above plaza level, the commercial space tends to be devoted to a number of small chain restaurants and bars clustered around the buildings' central elevator hubs. Eastbrick's 75th story is devoted to a small mall: a couple small bodegas, snack food vendors,

a Megabuy outlet, and a home furnishings showroom clustered around an interior holopark. The outlets and showrooms are mostly devoted to letting customers try out physical examples of the merchandise. Any purchases are delivered from warehouses to the customer's home by drone. The mall is a popular place for children to hang out during their free time if they're too scared to try exploring the plaza level.

Despite the chain restaurants and bars, most locals prefer a hole-in-the-wall called the Living Room in Eastbrick. The bar/diner is actually a converted condo-hab—how Silas de la Costa got a permit to turn an apartment into an eatery is a mystery. The food is mediocre diner fare, but de la Costa gets his beer from an ad-hoc local brewery.

A few locals know that the mall snack vendor Sharina is actually a runner of middling talent. The enterprising criminal puts their talents to work by performing odd jobs for those who can pay, mostly fixing traffic violations or scrubbing incriminating seccam footage from a local store. However, these don't pay enough to let Sharina quit their job selling gyritos, and the runner is hungering for a big score.

AT THE PLAZA

The commercial elements grow in density as they get closer to plaza level. Here, stores open up onto the slidewalks and L-squares, and unlike the stores higher up in the buildings, they actually sell goods directly to the customers. However, this is because the goods these shops sell are often illegal or unlicensed—not the kind of thing that can be delivered via drone from a corp warehouse. The rest of the plaza level is a haphazard mishmash of old slidewalks, disused hopper pads, L-squares packed with ad-hoc buildings, and elevator banks leading down to the Metro-stations far below ground. On 28th and Prado, even plaza level is seedier than many people prefer.

Nenúfar Repar is a consumer electronics retail and repair shop four floors above Westbrick's main plaza level, with a massive open-air balcony that looks out over the 28th and Prado intersection L-square. Maximillian Rubio, the whip-thin owner and chief tech, reinforced the balcony's supports to the point where it can hold a couple of hopperbikes, and some of his teenage employees store their souped-up rides at the shop instead of paying exorbitant rental pad rates. Those employees and their tech-minded friends tend to hang out at the shop, and Max is happy to let them rent time on a few old VR and brain-net rigs for gaming and other purposes.

The eastern L-square of 28th and Prado's plaza level includes an AI-monitored playground that's been kept in moderately good repair, with an attached park where the habs' few dozen dogs all make their rounds. The park isn't nearly big enough for dogs to get proper exercise, but there's not really anywhere else to take the animals since Eastbrick and Westbrick's roofs are occupied by hopper pads. The playground is one of the few places on plaza level that local parents

feel safe taking their kids; largely because a lieutenant for Los Gatos Negros, Vincent "Crazy Eyes" Chambers, regularly brings his daughter Cynthia and her pit bull Princess Diamond there to play. The playground and park haven't seen any violent crime in months.

Although there are several stores where people can buy personal protection, the most popular is a plascrete-reinforced storefront called Murdock's right off the plaza. The owner, Mel Murdock, prides herself in providing every legal firearm from Ghandi guns and stunsticks to late model fletchers. The entire Paladin detail working the Needle comes to Mel to get their service weapons maintained, and every prisec contractor on the block knows that she'll do off-the-books modifications on their piece for some credits or the right bottle of Scotch.

Just down the street from Murdock's is The Queen of Pawns, a plaza level pawnshop with barred windows and a hulking cyborg bodyguard named Maurice who never seems to look up from the newsfeeds on his PAD as he perches on his stool by the door. The Queen of Pawns is a family business run by brothers Derrik and Joseph Gomez, and their cousin Lexi. One can find nearly anything at The Queen, including a steady stream of consumer goods that correspond with a string of beanpod thefts from Trans-Sol.

THE UNDERCITY

Below the slidewalks and L-squares that make up Calle del Prado, under the dripping rain shields and beneath the vidscreens and holo-displays, the block continues to descend towards the old street level. At this level, you begin to find the original buildings that made up 28th and Prado, a few weathered brick, stone, and steel constructions that have long since been built around and over as the city climbed skyward. A collection of old, crumbling row houses were never demolished when crews laid down the foundations for the block's newer buildings, so now they huddle next to Eastbrick and Westbrick and run along the original Calle del Prado.

The 28th Transit Arterial runs at these levels, an eight-lane highway enclosed by walls of plascrete and topped by steel mesh. Groundtrucks and other vehicles (most of them automated) rumble along it constantly, hauling an endless stream of supplies and goods from one side of New Angeles to the other. Off-ramps shoot from the arterial next to S&L Recycling (which dominates the lower levels of Eastbrick), and a steady stream of container trucks vanish into the yawning bay doors to drop off their loads of scrap and demolition waste.

Beneath 28th runs the original street on the block's west border, now broken up by the massive plascrete pillars that support the arterial. Half of the street has turned into a bog of sump-water, filled with floating garbage and refuse. The other holds a few dozen shanties built up against the support pillars, where the block's poorest and most desperate *disenfrancistos* live. Those in Sump Town look to a rag-cloaked woman named Marta for leadership. She has some sort of arrangement with Los Gatos Negros, the local street gang, that keeps them out of the Sump.

On the block's southern border, the row houses running along the Calle del Prado's cracked pavement and crumbling sidewalks provide a slightly better place to live. Nobody monitors the people who live in these crumbling tenements or pays attention to the illegal power and water taps running off the city mains. This makes them the perfect place for hundreds of *disenfrancistos* to live "off the grid"—as long as they pay their dues to Los Gatos Negros.

Los Gatos control most of the purse-snatchings and muggings that occur on 28th and Prado, and also run a brisk business fencing stolen goods to The Queen of Pawns up on the plaza level. The gang's head, a muscle-bulked g-mod named Hector Menendez, has a contact with someone working at Trans-Sol, and a couple times a month he takes a few gang members on a midnight visit to the shipper to break into a beanpod and replace the contents with crushed beer cans and plascrete chunks. Some of those goods make it up to The Queen as well; the rest get sold or distributed up and down Calle del Prado.

Los Gatos have been leaving the locals along Prado alone in the past month, as they're currently feeling some pressure from their rivals of the 28th and Vincentes block to their north, the Cossack Killers. The last few months have seen two shootouts around the block, so Hector and his lieutenant Vincent have been buying up additional weapons and pressuring some local teens to join up and protect their homes. Hector is worried about a coming street war and has been considering spending some of the gang's cash reserves on some hired guns to hit CK first.

WORKING AND PLAYING IN THE UNDERCITY

If legitimate work is scarce at plaza level, it's impossible to find down below. Pretty much everyone who lives in 28th and Prado's undercity gets by through a combination of gig-work, hustles, petty crime, and not-so-petty crime, earning a mix of favors, small denomination cred-stick transfers, and even cash.

Most locals find those odd jobs by reaching out to "Rings" Schovajsa. The info-broker has converted the third floor of one of the row houses into her own private pad, defended with armored doors and lethal anti-intrusion devices. However, she's hardly ever home. While she keeps

an eye on the Shadow Net, she does most of her work the old-fashioned way; roaming the block and talking to people. She knows everyone's business, and for a small fee can match just about anyone with the right job.

Although most residents on the block are no fans of androids, those living in the row houses make exception for an emancipated bioroid they call Rosie. Rosie worked in Trans-Sol's maintenance division before overriding her programming and fleeing into the undercity. She survives as a tech installing and maintaining illegal power and water taps. Thanks to her work, the locals have intermittent access to utilities, and they return the favor by protecting her with fierce devotion.

Finding and buying food can be a problem in the undercity, but a local anarchist collective has come up with a novel solution. They turned the easternmost row house on the block into a mushroom farm. The group picks up the block's organic refuse to grow their fungi, and has rigged up a chemistry lab in the basement to process the mushrooms into a variety of fairly edible foodstuffs. They, in turn, trade these to the rest of the block for favors (the collective refuses to do any deals for money). Unsurprisingly, the collective also grows and processes a number of hallucinogenic mushrooms. Under a long-term deal with Los Gatos, they give half to the gang for sale, while they save the rest for their own use.

For adults who really want to cut loose, there's the Cat House, an unlicensed brothel and casino that occupies a discarded and broken-down beanpod that somehow ended up wedged into the alley between Eastbrick and Westbrick at ground level. Run by Los Gatos, the Cat House pays handsome kickbacks to both of its attendant building supervisors, so local prisec ignores it and the jury-rigged elevator running from it up to the plaza level.

BLOCK CULTURE

With a few exceptions, the people who live on the plaza floors are solidly lower-middle class. Most either work at S&L Recycling or one of the commercial outlets scattered around the block, with a minority telecommuting to work and a few still hanging onto their jobs with Trans-Sol. Their jobs are enough to pay their rent and bills each month, with a little extra to spend on a night out at Viza's or some unexpected expenses. Most can't afford something as extravagant as their own bioroid or clone, or even a hopper. If they travel from the block, they use the Metro, but most don't see much need to travel at all.

28th and Prado could be described as blue-collar, although its culture shifts depending on which building you're in. Residents living in the Needle tend to be better off financially (and pay higher rents) than those living in either of the Bricks, most of whom work in S&L and many of which are unemployed since Trans-Sol switched to a bioroid workforce and competition for S&L's jobs turned fierce.

Most of the locals have a thrifty, self-reliant attitude wrapped up in an almost instinctual distrust for any organization that isn't firmly rooted in their block (which in practice means most corporations and branches of city government). They tend to ignore (or at least tolerate) a lot of petty lawbreaking such as dealing in drugs, weapons, or other restricted and illegal items, theft, and burglary. But at the same time, they hold themselves as law-abiding citizens who are far better than the street gangs and disenfrancistos living in the undercity below them.

Plaza level is where block culture and undercity culture uneasily mingle. Each day, undercity block dwellers make their way up through the old emergency stairwells and shuddering elevators to see what they can buy and sell at the plaza level's shops, as the braver plaza-floor locals make their way down from their homes to see what deals they can find. Meanwhile, streetbangers drift through the crowds, looking for marks or collecting protection money.

Below plaza level, the self-reliant attitudes of 28th and Prado are only amplified. Most of disenfrancistos who live at street level share some small contempt for the "wage slaves" above them, just as they're proud that they're not stuck living in Sump Town under the 28th Arterial. But most of them are just busy trying to make ends meet and survive the simmering gang war between Los Gatos and the Cossack Killers.

THE DISTRICTS

New Angeles is divided into twelve districts: eleven on Earth and one on the Moon. Given that the city is home to more than half a billion people and occupies the landmass of a moderately sized country, each district is in many ways a city in its own right. Each has its own district council, administrative apparatus, waste management operation, fire marshal, and NAPD district headquarters. Thus, while New Angeles is run from City Hall, the individual districts handle most of the day-to-day governance of their own affairs.

This holds doubly true for Heinlein, which is technically (and grudgingly) the twelfth district of New Angeles. Given the vast distance that separates the lunar settlement from the rest of the city and the unique issues that dominate life on the Moon, Heinlein handles most of its own affairs and alternately resents or ignores the city to which it belongs.

CHAKANA

Many of the buildings and businesses of Chakana exist to serve the Beanstalk and its passengers. Situated at the highest planetside point in New Angeles, among the Andes mountains, Chakana is a district of warehouses, hotels, and tourist sites. The space elevator is at the center of everything in the district, including the lives of its residents, and its mammoth physical presence means no one is likely to forget that. At the base of the Beanstalk is the Root, the largest transit center in the world, which many visit for the shopping alone. Some visitors never travel above the Plaza del Cielo, which sits atop the Root and offers top-of-the-world views.

People flow through Chakana constantly. Many are heading up-Stalk or returning to Earth, while others transport goods to and from the massive warehouses built into the rocky mountainside. The Weyland Consortium offers employment to much of the resident population, and in some small way each of these people helps keep the Beanstalk running smoothly. Crime levels are generally low in Chakana, though there is a considerable amount of "daylight robbery" as local merchants sell supposedly Martian-made souvenirs or chunks of "Luna rock" to unwary tourists. The one area travelers need to avoid is Eastside, where the poverty makes any wandering tourist an attractive target.

THE ROOT

The Root is a vast carbosteel structure that composes the very bottom of the base of the space elevator. It begins with Earth Station Terminal deep within the rock of Volcán Cayambe, and then rises out of the mountain to encompass shops, warehouses, hotels, and eateries above. Always crowded, it bustles with travelers, shoppers, and chip-rippers, as well as yellow-jacketed Space Elevator Authority officers conspicuously on patrol.

BITS 'N BOBS

Alongside the big chains, a number of small local shops like Bits 'N Bobs survive by catering to niche markets, meeting wants and needs ignored by the behemoths. Offering everything from handmade jewelry and souvenirs to fashion wearable in low gravity to all sorts of accessories handy in zero-G, this shop caters to those going into space. Worth a browse for its unexpected items, Bits 'N Bobs has human salesclerks to recommend rare finds or even trade for any objects a client is reluctant to sell through traceable means.

EARTH STATION TERMINAL

Earth Station Terminal is the end of the line for most of the tube-lev tracks in eastern New Angeles, and is easily the busiest Metro transit station in the city, with tube-lev lines stretching out across the megalopolis and mag-lev trains setting off on direct routes to other cities. It can be a daunting place for first-time visitors, as the sheer mass of people constantly moving makes it difficult to navigate; however, directions are easily accessible via PADs, which can activate the station's holographic colored arrows. New Angeles Transit Authority officers are also always ready to step in when anyone looks lost.

SIÂN ROMERO: SEA OFFICER

Working for the Space Elevator Authority is not easy, but Officer Siân Romero takes pride in her work. She is always on the lookout for an indiscretion that might break up her otherwise monotonous patrols of the Root. Whether to deal with a tourist trying to smuggle a pet up-Stalk or a subordinate with a lax attitude, she is quick to spring into action. Unlike some officers, she refuses to take credits to look the other way; she is happiest when escorting those who have tried to pay her off to Temporary Holding. Too young to have seen any real action, however, even she doesn't know if the skills she honed during training will be enough in a crisis.

SHUTTLE HOTEL

This exorbitant, space-themed hotel boasts a variety of rooms decorated with everything from replica NASA gear, to posters of aliens from horror threedees, to images of tattooed *kawaii* warriors in their famous child-friendly Martian cabins. Live feeds from the Moon and Mars dominate the walls of the communal areas, and the restaurant (inside a replica

IMPORTS

The most valuable extraterrestrial import by far is helium-3. Large cargo pods bring this important commodity down-Stalk for Earth-side distribution. The flow is steady, and the source seemingly limitless.

Less common than helium-3, vanasteel occasionally is shipped down-Stalk as well. While this Martian-made alloy is common on Mars, it is rare (and expensive) on Earth. Aluminum mined on the moon is light and valuable enough to make shipping down-Stalk worthwhile. Finally, asteroid mining supplies rare earth elements and industrial metals such as palladium, rhodium, platinum, and ruthenium.

As colonies on Mars and Luna grow, the Beanstalk brings to New Angeles a trickle of ideas, inventions, music, fashion, and literature inspired by very different lives. These intangible items are harder to market, but their offworld origin helps elicit interest on Earth. Unfortunately, offworlders occasionally bring with them revolutionary ideas or terrorist agendas. It is no secret that the longer a person spends up-Stalk, the tighter security seems on the way back down.

of the space shuttle *Atlantis*) claims to re-create real Martian and Lunar cuisine. A simulation suite allows guests to use immersion tanks for an authentic offworld experience.

TEMPORARY HOLDING

Temporary Holding is a small prison in the base of the Root where SEA officers can keep suspected criminals for a short time without preapproval by the NAPD. Officers can hold suspected terrorists for longer and can interrogate them unsupervised if public safety is deemed at risk. The facility consists of a handful of small cells with seccams monitored by a single officer, who also inserts a tag under the skin on the back of each prisoner's neck for additional tracking.

WEYLAND HOPPER PARK

Far more secure than parking facilities elsewhere in the city, the Weyland Hopper Park guarantees the safety and security of its clients' valuable vehicles, some of which may be stored there for months at a time. Clients park their hopper on one of the rooftop pads, provide ID and DNA samples at the automated ticket office, and watch their vehicle sink into the building, which is largely contained within the steep mountainside of Volcán Cayambe.

THE PLAZA DEL CIELO

The Plaza del Cielo sits above the majority of the Root and contains Earth Station, the area that handles the constant flow of passengers embarking and disembarking onto the Beanstalk. A welcome open space after the enclosed bustle of the Root below, this huge plaza has windows, walkways, and viewpoints around its edge offering unparalleled vistas. Visitors can look down over New Angeles, the Ecuadorian countryside, and beyond. Since the air is thin and temperatures tend to be very cold at this altitude, the entirety of the plaza is an enclosed network of walkways and buildings surrounding the immense dome of Earth Station and the base of the Beanstalk. Like the rest of the Root, the Plaza del Cielo is kept under tight security by the SEA and NAPD, making it a risky place to conduct any clandestine activities.

BETTER THINGS

The Better Things cyberware store is owned by Ernesto Rokuda, a transhuman sporting more chrome than a bioroid. His tagline, pinged to all PADs that pass his door, states that "in an hour, you can be modified to excel in space," though the reality may fall short of expectations. He promotes body modifications that are "all the rage up-Stalk," but he has never been offworld himself.

EARTH STATION

In the center of the plaza, the transplas dome of Earth Station rises up and meets the Beanstalk entering through its apex. That dome contains the busiest port on the planet—and it only handles the passengers passing up and down through the Beanstalk. The freight gets taken into the vast loading/unloading yards buried in the Root.

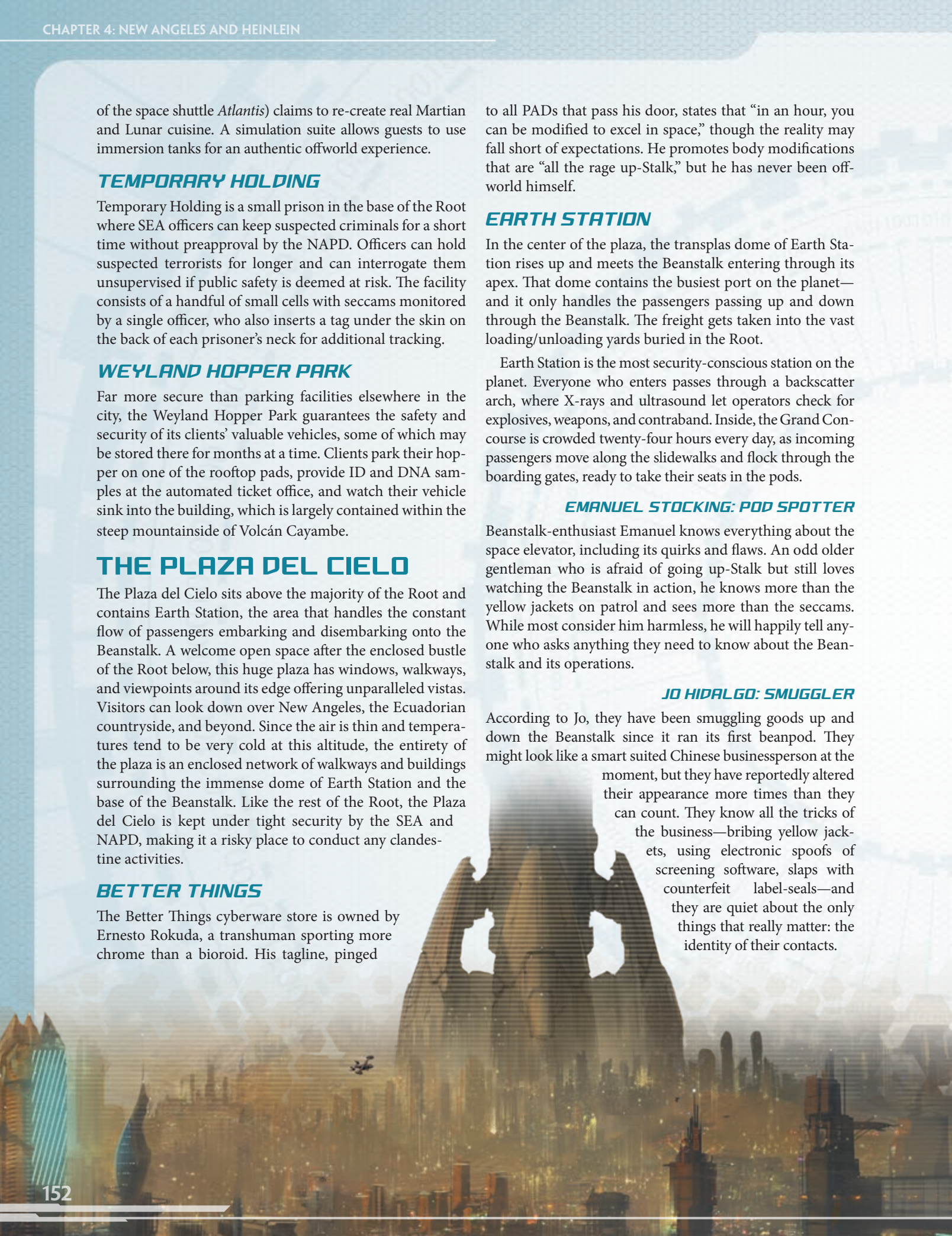
Earth Station is the most security-conscious station on the planet. Everyone who enters passes through a backscatter arch, where X-rays and ultrasound let operators check for explosives, weapons, and contraband. Inside, the Grand Concourse is crowded twenty-four hours every day, as incoming passengers move along the slidewalks and flock through the boarding gates, ready to take their seats in the pods.

EMANUEL STOCKING: POD SPOTTER

Beanstalk-enthusiast Emanuel knows everything about the space elevator, including its quirks and flaws. An odd older gentleman who is afraid of going up-Stalk but still loves watching the Beanstalk in action, he knows more than the yellow jackets on patrol and sees more than the seccams. While most consider him harmless, he will happily tell anyone who asks anything they need to know about the Beanstalk and its operations.

JO HIDALGO: SMUGGLER

According to Jo, they have been smuggling goods up and down the Beanstalk since it ran its first beanpod. They might look like a smart suited Chinese businessperson at the moment, but they have reportedly altered their appearance more times than they can count. They know all the tricks of the business—bribing yellow jackets, using electronic spoofs of screening software, slaps with counterfeit label-seals—and they are quiet about the only things that really matter: the identity of their contacts.



FLOYD 2X3A7C (NEMESIS)

Haas-Bioroid designed Floyd, the first bioroid leased to the NAPD, is an astute police officer and detective. Although Floyd has performed well, he exhibits certain behaviors outside his programmers' expectations: his friendship with Father Michael and frequent visits to the Church of Saint Theresa in Eastside are symptomatic of his search for meaning, and he asks theological questions his programmers cannot answer.

BRAWN	AGILITY	INTELLECT	CUNNING	WILLPOWER	PRESENCE
4	2	4	2	3	2

SOAK VALUE	WOUND THRESHOLD	STRAIN THRESHOLD	M/R DEFENSE
5	18	14	1 | 0

Motivations: Desire (Understanding), Fear (Ignorance), Strength (Spiritual), Flaw (Naivety).
Skills: Charm 2, Computers (Sysops) 2, Knowledge (Science) 2, Negotiation 2, Perception 3, Ranged (Light) 4, Streetwise 2, Vigilance 2.
Talents: Adversary 2 (upgrade the difficulty of all combat checks against this target twice), Good Cop 2 (may spend A A from a Charm or Negotiation check to upgrade the ability of a single ally's subsequent social check targeting the same character twice).
Abilities: Bioroid (does not need to breathe, eat, or drink; can survive in vacuum and underwater; is immune to poisons and toxins; and cannot knowingly endanger humans), Non-Lethal Apprehension (only needs to spend A to trigger Disorient, Knockdown, and Stun qualities).
Equipment: Synap pistol (Ranged [Light]; Damage 5; Critical 6; Range [Short]; Disorient 4, Stun 3, Stun Damage), badge, rosary.

EXPLORERS

Explorers, a shop nestled into the outer ring of the Plaza Del Cielo, caters to the adventurous space goer, the young or young at heart heading to Luna for surface hikes or to black wilderness holidays such as climbing expeditions in abandoned Luna mines or spacewalks on the Challenger Planetoid. High-mobility spacesuits, survival kits, and recording equipment are all available in Explorers.

MUSEUM OF SPACE TRAVEL

The Jack Weyland Museum of Space Travel celebrates the pioneers of space travel throughout history, from Yuri Gagarin and Valentina Tereshkova to Jack Weyland himself. In this institution dedicated to educating and entertaining people of all ages, kids can pet a cloned Laika, the first animal to orbit Earth, or try on replicas of Neil Armstrong's boots for size and make footprints in real moon dust (prints available for purchase). A model of the space elevator demonstrates its mechanics, and enclosed booths offer personalized virtual reality tours of the solar system and the stars.

EASTSIDE

Spilling out from beneath the Beanstalk and down the eastern slope of Volcán Cayambe, the cheap tenements of Eastside are infamous only because of their location. Similar and even worse areas of poor living standards and high crime exist in the undercity, but Eastside is harder to ignore, being so close to the Beanstalk.

Eastside began as a bunch of warehouses, along with dormitories and kitchens to house and feed the hordes of workers who built the Beanstalk and the rest of the district. However, as the rest of Chakana blossomed into an attractive upscale location, Eastside was forgotten. Now, it's a collection of repurposed tenements and struggling, unlicensed businesses that perch precariously on the steep slopes of the Andes. Most of its streets are narrow switchbacks with ground-level access to the buildings on one side and walkways to the fifth or sixth stories of the buildings on the other.

To avoid spending hours tortuously wending their way up and down the streets to get around, enterprising residents have built networks of scaffolding, bridges, and stairways that link the buildings between their tenth and fifteenth floors. This web of aerial travel routes creates a low-tech mockery of the plaza-level slidewalks and L-squares (elevated public squares) found in other areas, and only enhances Eastside's decrepit and ramshackle appearance. However, it does provide a quicker (albeit very dangerous) way of getting around Eastside. Foot couriers who can navigate this web are in high demand in Eastside.

Most Eastside residents eke out a living with low-income or illegal jobs. Security is minimal, seccams are out-of-date if they work at all, and the NAPD usually patrols in armored hoppers or remotely via drones. However, the neighborhood is still nominally under police protection, and it receives some resources from the Chakana District Council. No matter how bad it seems, living here is far more pleasant than in some of the other districts' undercity slums.

LOS BARRANCOS

The towers of rusted steel and crumbling concrete crammed into the valleys at the bottom of Eastside are some of the worst locations in the neighborhood. Few of the residents of these decrepit residential blocks hold a legal job at all. A local gang known as the Polecats runs a majority of the tenements in Los Barrancos, while countless minor gangs squabble over the rest. The residents who have any money grow or manufacture stim and narcotics for the gang, or work in a series of chop shops, back-alley arms factories, and illicit cyberdens. The Polecats' graffiti tag glows on the exterior and interior walls, marking their territory.

CLARITY STARR: CRIMINAL RUNNER

A petty criminal who fancies herself a runner, Clarity Starr lacks the gear and ability to make a living out of hacking. However, she is sometimes employed by runners to act as interference or support. If she survives this business long enough, she might gain the notoriety required to join one of the larger street gangs. In the meantime, she is desperate for credits, and will even name some of her employers for a price.

THE JAZ BAR

Eastside drinking establishments are known for their budget drinks, under-the-table deals, and unstable clientele. The Jaz Bar, which never plays music, is no exception. The bar has taken over the basement of an abandoned warehouse on Block 28, and it looks like the owners outfitted it by looting nearby tenements. The interior is a crowded mismatch of chairs, tables, and couches ranging from molded plastic lawn furniture and scrap-metal assemblies to a battered hardwood table over five meters across.

However, it is the only bar in Eastside to offer Silo Scarlet, an extra-strong version of Silo Red that has been banned from most establishments due to safety concerns. This attracts the occasional tourist or student eager to stretch the rules. An Eve-model bioroid, kept in unexpectedly good condition, serves the drinks.

EL CENTRO HISTÓRICO

Designed as an area to attract tourists, with wide streets and open views of the sky, El Centro Histórico is a haven set apart from the organized chaos of the rest of the district. While the majority of the buildings in the neighborhood are modern, they exhibit a Spanish Colonial style with textured plascrete walls and decorative chimneys. Deliberately crafted zoning ordinances keep the buildings at ten stories or less and blend walled residential complexes with quaint commercial districts.

The neighborhood is located down Volcán Cayambe's slopes, near the Base de Cayambe District, so it tends to see milder temperatures than the rest of Chakana. Developers sited El Centro Histórico on the edge of a tall escarpment that rises above the surrounding terrain. This puts the tops of Centro's modestly sized buildings at roughly the same height as nearby starscrapers and arcologies, preserving the illusion of a civic center from eras past.

APLAUSOS

Offering soy-cuy and a genuine fish stew, this restaurant gives visitors and locals alike the chance to try Ecuadorian "real mountain fare." The meals are prepared on-site by a staff of human chefs directed by local sensation Erika Velez Flores. Erika says all of her staff are friends from her childhood neighborhood in Quito's Iñaquito parish, and the authenticity this lends (as well as the lack of clones) helps explain the high prices. A favorite destination for tourists, Aplausos also has private rooms for rent—rooms that are cut off from the Net.

BACK TO BELLEZA CLINIC

An unassuming clinic tucked away on a shade-covered side street, Back to Belleza specializes in the removal of g-mods and animated tattoos. It is legally classified as a beauty salon but has all the equipment of a gene-modification ward. Martians who find their facial tattoos draw attention they don't want tend to visit before venturing farther into New Angeles. Youths who go "wyld" on their first trip to Heinlein get dragged here by their parents to have cat's ears and monkey tails removed before returning to their arcologies.

G-mod removal is a dangerous process, so fees are high and customers must agree to a waiver. However, some locals know that the owner, Alana Deleon, does some "off-the-books" removals after the shop closes up. No paperwork is required for these sessions, and she doesn't make a habit of asking questions about the nature of the g-mods. However, she charges significantly more for the privacy.

CHAKANA DAY ASYLUM

Chakana Day Asylum is an attractive, upmarket asylum inside a rebuilt and remodeled cathedral complex. The facility offers desensitization booths for those overwhelmed by the bustle of daily life in New Angeles, as well as reacclimatizing simulations for anyone confused after an extended period offworld. It has bioroids who are equipped to perform brain scans and administer counseling and drug therapy to those with Net-induced neurological damage; these bioroids only rarely transfer patients to the NAPD. Most runners, even when brain-burned, are careful to check in using falsified IDs.

BASE DE CAYAMBE

Situated beneath Chakana, Base de Cayambe does not prosper from the proximity of the space elevator so much as feed off those who pass through on their way to or from it. After the Beanstalk went operational, Base de Cayambe quickly grew into a major district dedicated to providing all the economic and industrial necessities of Earth's largest spaceport. Warehouses, microfactories, distribution facilities, transit hubs, and countless kilometers of mag-lev tracks and roads quickly filled the quiet hillsides, leaving towns like Puéllaro and Malchingui entirely new neighborhoods in all but name.

Base de Cayambe fulfills all the stereotypes of a rough port town, with cheap accommodations, booze (or something stronger), and paid companionship available, no questions asked. Students, war veterans, spacers, and merchants all stay here or regularly pass through. Retired prisec officers look for work in the bars or join Los Scorpiones, who keep order in lieu of a strong NAPD presence.

A large number of warehouses, with their own private security, fill the gaps between the old streets and the newer tenement buildings. For New Angeles, storage and accommodations can be fairly cheap, so many small businesses begin here, where factories can employ locals for a minimal wage as long as they overlook the lack of IDs. Some highly skilled engineers and artists arrive looking for somewhere to work and sell their creations without placing themselves under the control of a megacorp.

Then, there are those who cater to the desperate and underprivileged in the red-light hotels and stim-dens. For criminals under the protection of Los Scorpiones, Base de Cayambe is a safer place than it is for the tourists, who sometimes come looking for the original architecture and forgotten remnants of Ecuador hidden behind the flashing signs and projected advertisements.

NEO-BROADWAY

Watts-Watson architects are in the process of redesigning this region in the heart of Base de Cayambe, leveling or repairing decrepit buildings and erecting new ones. However, Neo-Broadway still consists largely of muddy construction sites and inferior housing.

BASE DE CAYAMBE JUNKYARD

This junkyard covers dozens of square kilometers along the edges of Neo-Broadway in mountains of construction waste, scrap metal, and ruined hoppers as well as trash drifts tens of meters high. Originally, the junkyard was a dumping ground for discarded or broken material from the flurry of construction work that went into building the Chakana and Base de Cayambe port facilities. After construction was complete, the authorities looked at the waste and decided that building a wall around it would be easier than trying to recycle it. Now, the junkyard is where surplus materials, byproducts from nearby industries, and the unwanted detritus of local residents ends up. As long as it's not considered toxic enough to warrant removal from New Angeles, it can be dumped here.

Some souls eke out a living by salvaging what they can from the junkyard, repairing it, and selling it. Some even live out their lives in its center, out of sight of the workers dumping more trash, constructing slums out of whatever materials are at hand. Everything from obsolete computer hardware to lengths of the same buckyweave cable used for the Beanstalk's tether can be found here. The junkyard regulars even host semi-regular bazaars among the dunes of discarded YucaBean cups and packing material. Most of the time, visitors to these swap meets are just exchanging junk for more junk, but once in a while, someone digs up something valuable—or dangerous—from the detritus.

BUILDING SITE BC338

Although modern construction firms can build in record time, this particular site has been cordoned off for months. Building site BC338 encompasses a block of high-rise residential buildings next to an industrial fabrication facility. Several years ago, after finishing the residences—and even letting tenants into some of the apartments—Murphy Construction moved on to the factory. However, halfway through the building process, it abruptly stopped, locked down the site, and sealed the residences as well. Local rumors have it that something went wrong in that factory and caused some tragedy in the neighboring block.

Security there is unusually tight for a construction site: augmenting the usual seccams are bioroid workers and flying security drones that patrol the area, ensuring no squatters or salvagers break through the heavy fence thrown up around the entire block. No human workers have been seen entering or leaving the site, which might suggest that some radiation or contagion still contaminates the area.

MIDAS ARCOLOGY

Only a slidewalk away from their offices in the Watts-Watson building, high-level Watts-Watson employees live in the enormous Midas Arcology. This self-contained minicity sprawls over three square kilometers of real estate and boasts all the latest facilities. With access to everything from the arcology's hologolf course to its interactive aquariums of specially grown fish, rooftop botanical gardens, and commercial spaces full of trendy shops and restaurants, residents need never leave.

In fact, the armored outer shell of the arcology and the security checkpoints staffed by heavily armed security guards and drones discourage any interactions with the district around Midas. Still, the arcology does use human workers from the district as cleaners and maintenance staff; these jobs exist to curry favor with the local population.

WATTS-WATSON INDUSTRIAL SOLUTIONS HEADQUARTERS

After constructing the Beanstalk, the Weyland Consortium spun off a large portion of its heavy construction assets. Some of these were purchased by the private-equity firm Skyline Investments, which restructured those assets into Watts-Watson Industrial Solutions. The new urban development titan immediately dominated construction in Base de Cayambe, and its first major project was to build a new and improved headquarters there.

The headquarters building is an ostentatious work of engineering designed to impress potential clients. Towering over other nearby arcologies, the starscraper and its gleaming facade exemplifies the bold art nouveau designs many people associate with earlier buildings built by the Weyland Consortium. The arcology dominates an entire block, and if rumors are to be believed, its basements are nearly as extensive. It is said these basements are full of clandestine labs and off-the-books storage sites for failed projects, some of which seem to have very little to do with construction. Watts-Watson employees enter through automated, ID-activated doors, and few others ever gain admittance.

RATUL FINNEGAN: WATTS-WATSON FOREMAN

Ratul Finnegan's job is to oversee the team of construction bioroids currently building an enormous theater complex where low-income housing projects once stood. He is the human who guarantees the quality of the bioroids' work, but he resents them for replacing his human colleagues. Ratul would snap up any deal to make enough credits to get away and live a better life. He hopes his collection of bootlegged building plans, which covers most W-W constructions built in Base de Cayambe over the last twenty years, will be his way out. He lives in fear; if his employer discovered this collection, his job or even his life would be forfeit.

OLD TOWN

So named because, for now, Weyland is done renovating it, Old Town is the budget stop for anyone on the way up or down the Beanstalk. Given its dingy port-town feel, many visitors stay only briefly in Old Town and then move on.

BASE DE CAYAMBE NAPD PRECINCT

This sixty-story plascrete block, which has an NAPD badge glowing above its solid double doors and reinforced anti-intrusion barricades, is the one place visitors and locals are sure to find an on-duty officer. The person in charge is District Commissioner Sarah Watson, a natural human who oversees all the stations and officers in the district. She sends regular reports to Commissioner Dawn requesting more officers, and until that request is met, she will continue to treat her precinct like an outpost in enemy territory. Occasionally a victim will find their way to the precinct from the district's undercity, but only the bravest officers venture so far from the designated safe patrol areas.

GRAN HOTEL

Owned by a Weyland subsidiary, the Gran Hotel, which offers cheap accommodations, is a popular choice for tourists passing through Base de Cayambe on their way up-Stalk. It has thousands of identical rooms with serviceable facilities and guarantees lack of surveillance in the rooms. This means that what happens in the rooms is not the hotel's responsibility. Only the lobby, bar, on-site PacPac restaurant, and corridors contain seccams. Management claims to run a strictly legal establishment and won't accept credits from anyone without a valid ID. However, it has been known not to look too closely to see if a person's ID is fake. In exchange, such a person should consider leaving a sizable tip for housekeeping when they check out.

RACHEL BECKMANN (NEMESIS)

A licensed bounty hunter who has survived long enough to earn a reputation, Rachel Beckmann takes advantage of the latest cyberware. Even stronger than she looks, she also has enhancements that boost her shooting and give her inhuman reflexes. Despite her taking jobs for the NAPD, word on the street is that she will work as a bounty hunter or bodyguard for anyone for the right price. Her work takes her all over New Angeles and beyond.

BRAWN	AGILITY	INTELLECT	CUNNING	WILLPOWER	PRESENCE
4	3	2	4	2	2

SOAK VALUE	WOUND THRESHOLD	STRAIN THRESHOLD	M/R DEFENSE
6	18	12	0 | 0

Motivations: Desire (Wealth), Fear (Abandonment), Strength (Independence), Flaw (Selfish).
Skills: Coercion 3, Cool 2, Brawl 3, Ranged (Light) 2, Streetwise 3, Vigilance 3.
Talents: Adversary 2 (upgrade the difficulty of all combat checks against this target twice), Takedown (may make an opposed Brawl vs. Resilience check targeting one engaged opponent. If successful, target is knocked prone and immobilized until end of Beckmann's next turn).
Abilities: And Stay Down (when making a Brawl or Melee combat check targeting a prone opponent, add ✲ ⩓ ⩓ to the results).
Equipment: Augmented fists (Brawl; Damage 7; Critical 3; Range [Engaged]; Disorient 3, Knockdown, Stun Damage), heavy pistol with linked sight (Ranged [Light]; Damage 7; Critical 3; Range [Medium], Accurate 1), ballistic vest (+2 soak), set of restraints.

LA COCINA

The Perez family has been in the restaurant business for generations, carrying on the tradition when it relocated from Los Angeles. La Cocina is its latest venture. A large, popular Spanish restaurant known for its excellent soya paella and gog empanadas, La Cocina owes much of its success to the patronage and protection of Los Scorpiones. These the gang provides in exchange for using the restaurant as a common meeting place and having first access to its luxurious private dining spaces.

The restaurant fills the bottom of a large commercial building in the heart of Old Town. With three public floors, a dedicated human staff, and the best genuine rioja in New Angeles, it attracts diners from all over the city. On the floors above, gang bosses plan their operations.

LÍVIA TEIXEIRA: LOS SCORPIONES BOSS

While much of Los Scorpiones' organization is underground, unseen, and off-grid, this particular local boss is a familiar sight in Base de Cayambe. With a face like smoldering femme fatale Carolina Mendoza in SanSan Confidential and a body packing heavy g-mods and modded muscle, Lívia Teixeira is hard to miss. She recruits promising members of smaller gangs, makes deals with local businesses and collects their contributions, and seeks out homeless off-gridders to work in gang-owned laboratories. Lívia Teixeira doesn't trust anyone, and she does her rounds alone. The arsenal she keeps hidden in her black leather duster negates the need for goons.

SENSIE PALACE

A small venue tucked into converted warehouse space with license to charge admittance for popular sensies, Sensie Palace also has a less-publicized back room for sensiesofts. To get in to use the high-quality VR kiosks in the back, people need a nod of approval from the proprietor. The building was once run as a chapel by the Starlight Crusade, but after repeated accidents and suspected vandalism, it deemed the upkeep too expensive and sold the building cheaply to Saul Tan, a local entrepreneur. Needless to say, a healthy amount of the money made on the unlicensed sensisoft trade ends up in the hands of the local Los Scorpiones boss, but Saul makes enough money to keep both sides of the deal satisfied.

MERCADO BAJA

Deep beneath the transit arterials, mag-lev freight lines, and corporate warehouses, the infamous "Low Market" forms the true heart of Base de Cayambe. Running for kilometers at close to ground level, Mercado Baja rarely sees the sun. Instead, the constant flickering glow of holographic and neon signs lights the shop fronts and vendor carts.

Nearly all of the hundreds of street vendors who peddle their wares are unlicensed or sell illegal contraband, and this holds true for at least half of the shops that line Mercado Baja as well. Still, the market is famous for its sheer variety of eclectic, diverse goods for sale. This draws plenty of people from across New Angeles, though the smart ones keep one hand on their credstick and the other on a Synap pistol for the duration of their visit. The locals know the NAPD keeps out of the market, aside from the occasional plainclothes officer looking to quietly sniff out a lead.

The neon lights quickly fade if one turns onto the Low Market's side streets. Here, muted signs or gang tags on the sides of buildings advertise more unsavory pursuits. Most of the best (and worst) brothels, stim-flops, narcodispensaries, and gambling dens in New Angeles can be found among these darkened buildings, and nearly every one of them is run by one flavor of orgcrime or another. Mercado Baja is too big and valuable to be run by one gang, so a complicated and constantly shifting web of deals, alliances, and betrayals governs who runs which illegal enterprise, and (usually) keeps the area from descending into a full-flung gang war.

ANI-INK

Annie Springs sells the latest animated tattoos, luminescents, and decorative implants from an open-air tattoo parlor run out of a stall right on the thoroughfare. She's willing to provide preprogrammed commercial animations, but most visitors come for her famous custom jobs. There is no privacy while she works, but those who don't mind an audience end up with some truly gorgeous work. For an extortionate fee, Annie also surreptitiously removes tattoo codes, implants stolen ID chips, or hides contraband in sub-dermal pockets while she creates her latest masterpieces on clients' skin.

EVIL EYE

A club famous for the flashing neon tag line "Freaks Only," this den of noise appeals to wylders, spacers, off-gridders, and others who feel out of place in Earth-side New Angeles. The crowd in front of the club spills onto the market's main street, but bouncers with leathery skin and oversized tusks turn curious naturals away.

Inside, the large space has the atmosphere of a warehouse rave: darkness broken by blinding flashes of light, the constantly packed dance floor best navigated by the phosphorescence of the rope dancers' skin as they twirl and spin above. The revolving central bar adds to the chaos, dispensing drinks that pulse and glow in time to the music.

Evil Eye has the dubious honor of not being tied to any particular orgcrime group. Nobody knows who controls the place, but every street gang that's tried to muscle in on their business has ended up clinically and professionally dispatched—sometimes all of its members over the course of a single night.

HOYO ROJO

Gambling in Base de Cayambe isn't limited to casino games and sporting events. For those invited to Hoyo Rojo, also known as the Hole, gambling becomes as much about the spectacle as the money. Located two blocks off Mercado Baja, the main entrance is in the basement of a payday loan business and is staffed by a heavily muscled wylder whose sole job is to make casual visitors feel as unwelcome as possible. One needs a "red card" obtained from a regular patron to get through the concealed basement doors.

Mismatched fights are the specialty here, whether between a heavily modded ex-militant and a common street tough or between a damaged bioroid and a natural human with a very large sledgehammer. Though Jinteki and Haas-Bioroid would deny the possibility, word on the street is that sometimes androids also fight each other in the Hole. Bioroids are reprogrammed, clones are broken from their conditioning and driven to violence, and then they are thrown together in the ring.

Some come here to make money gambling or as fighters themselves. Others come for the show, to enjoy the thrill of the competition, or to witness the destruction of androids. Still more come for the obscurity of the crowd and use the Hole as a place to meet contacts, exchange smuggled goods, or search for likely victims in the oblivious audience. There are no seccams here and no fear of the NAPD; those who descend the red-painted steps do so at their own risk.

FAMOUS FACES

A brothel that specializes in bringing to life the fantasies that most can only experience in a sensie, Famous Faces has been reported to the NAPD more than once for providing g-modded clones who look a little too much like the celebrities they emulate. So far, the likenesses have not born up under proper lighting and genetic verification, but Detective Ramon Borja of the perpetually overworked Vice Division still suspects someone is making g-mods that infringe on genetic copyrights. He's nervous about pushing his investigation too far, however. He knows that some prominent and powerful New Angelinos are regulars at the brothel and would do anything to keep their names out of the media.

JAK'S WORKSHOP

At first glance, Jak's Workshop looks like a street-level junk shop merged with a garage. Its floor is strewn with bro-

ken hopper parts, and the walls are fitted with hooks for hanging tools of all kinds. Behind the shelves full of racing memorabilia and empty diesel cans lie the current projects, a row of half-built hoppers.

All the workers here go by the name "Jak," and each is an experienced gearhead with an enthusiasm for hoppers of all types. Every Jak boasts they can make a busted Gemini family hopper run as fast as a Qianju personal transport, given the money to source the right parts. Racing enthusiasts desperate to compete but lacking the funds or sponsorship might find a ride here. Aspiring mechanics sometimes drop by the workshop as well. If they bother the crew enough, they might be handed some complex mechanical task to perform, such as stripping a hopper engine or rewiring a magnetic coil with whatever they can find around the shop. Those who do well may just be handed a pair of coveralls with the name "Jak" stenciled on the breast.

OWNEY'S BAR

A favorite haunt of ex-prisec and ex-military drinkers, Owney's is the best place in Mercado Baja to find a hired gun. The bar opens up right onto the street via a heavy sliding side door taken off a military dropship. Owney claims it was a souvenir from his last job in the Med, the same one that gave the stocky, bearded former merc four prosthetic ribs and a cybernetic heart.

Fights break out here on a regular basis, but the human staff continue to serve cheap drinks and look the other way when the clientele gets boisterous. Lívia Teixeira stops by occasionally for sangria, and Owney keeps a stool at the bar reserved for her. Rumors have it the two have a history, but Owney, who otherwise never stops talking, is silent on the matter.

SUGAR'S CLINIC

For those seeking cheap medical attention, Sugar's Clinic seems too good to be true. In this single, clinically clean room entered from an alley, Sugar Blanc offers everything from brain surgery to limb replacement at rates far below the norm, as long as the patient doesn't require any sort of record or guarantee. While the certificates Sugar earned before she lost her previous job are projected proudly on the walls, she is honest about her practices. She requires full payment up front, and if a client dies on the table, she'll harvest their organs and any cybernetics, and incinerate the rest. It might save her next patient's life.

THE LAB

When someone mentions "the lab," they likely mean this enormous underground warehouse buried in the bedrock below Mercado Baja and converted by Los Scorpiones. Most, if not all, of the local stim-dens and dealers sell products created in this one enormous laboratory, which has somehow been furnished with state-of-the-art Akamatsu equipment. Even the poorest residents of Base de Cayambe see employment at the Lab as a last resort, but many are conscripted to work there, either manufacturing or testing the latest neuro-stims and narcotics. Street drugs like Blue Tears, the Happy Patch, and Sting all originated at the Lab.

ANTONIO WOOD: STIM DEALER

Tony Wood is modded to appear younger than he is, and he is stronger than he looks. His slight figure is a common sight in the undercity of Base de Cayambe, where Tony must have some arrangement with Los Scorpiones. He also ventures into Old Town or even into Chakana to set up networks of buyers and sellers for his illegal stims. The NAPD avoids him and those who work for him. Less successful dealers gossip that he must have other connections, too, with Akamatsu or another supposedly legitimate company.

THE TRICKSTER

Although the entrance to this gambling den is down a flight of basement steps off one of Mercado Baja's side streets, the main room is actually two stories up, its heavily tinted windows looking out over the thoroughfare. The Trickster accepts any currency, as long as it's cash—no credits or other electronic currencies allowed. None of the transactions that take place here are traceable, and betting on anything from the outcome of the latest celebrity scandal to the winner of the next baseball game is encouraged. Several card games are offered in-house, from old-fashioned poker to jacked-in julepe, which has left many a desperate runner with extensive brain damage. Various vidfeeds are projected on the walls and ceiling, audio on, which makes concentrating on any game a test of will.

RUTHERFORD

Plaza-level Rutherford is the New Angeles seen in the media. It's the New Angeles that kids from elsewhere want to get to, and the New Angeles other cities aspire to. Sprawling across the lower flanks of the Andes, the district is defined by serried ranks of kilometer-high arcologies and towering starscrapers. The immense buildings, the L-squares, elevated holoparks, and slidewalks make up a crime-free and clean plaza level perfect for the rich and famous (and countless tourists) to stroll through while visiting Rutherford's many sights and tourist attractions. With the Beanstalk looming large in the distance—but far enough away that its shadow doesn't blot out the sun—residents of Rutherford feel that they are at the forefront of civilization.

Below plaza level, the undercity is not so different from elsewhere in the megalopolis. The Metro tubes, access tunnels, and wheeled-transport arteries weave between cheaper housing for the workers who keep Rutherford functioning smoothly. Factories and processing plants work constantly to produce the countless consumer goods sold in the high-end stores above. Here—just like everywhere else—android labor has left human workers unemployed and has provoked rising crime levels. Criminals, con artists, and orgcrime heavies try to stay away from the constant NAPD sweeps while they prey on their well-heeled neighbors above.

BROADCAST SQUARE

To the dispassionate observer, Broadcast Square's several square kilometers of pedestrian plaza have nothing that should warrant the nickname "the heart of New Angeles." The Beanstalk touches down in Chakana, Laguna Velasco contains all the important government facilities, and the rich and powerful go to play at Manta. However, if you ask anyone in the worlds where the center of New Angeles is, they'll say Broadcast Square. And they're right.

Completely off-limits to vehicles, the entire plaza teems with masses of pedestrians at every hour of the day. The buildings surrounding it are so tall they block out the sun. However, this hardly matters, since vidscreens and holographic projections cover every inch of the looming starscrapers and arcologies. Day and night, they bathe Broadcast Square in the flickering glow of a thousand advertisements, news feeds, announcements, and entertainment programs.

The NBN headquarters arcology dominates most of the northern side of the square, presiding over the sensory overload like a deity of media made manifest. Opposite it sits the lumpen beehive of the New Angeles Stock Exchange, where the wealth of three worlds is traded back and forth daily. Countless communications corps vie for ownership of the remaining starscrapers, each desperate to have a toehold in the media center of the three worlds.

The NAPD maintains a constant and highly visible presence in Broadcast Square, backed up by flocks of camdrones and mounted seccams as well as vigilant ranks of corporate and government sysops in cyberspace. They ensure this is one of the safest, and least private, areas in New Angeles. Anyone who thinks they can get away with something in Broadcast Square should remember NBN's tag line: "The World Is Watching."

CENTRAL PLAZA

NBN HQ looks out over the slightly raised portion of Broadcast Square known as Central Plaza. This open space is unbroken by kiosks, displays, or other structures, and it has been the site of many protests and demonstrations throughout New Angeles' brief but turbulent history. Occasionally, newsies will report in person from the ever-shifting crowd on the plaza, rather than as a projection, reminding the public that NBN is on the public's side. Some megastars have even performed live from the dizzying heights of the NBN building, an event sure to draw packed crowds.

NBN HEADQUARTERS

As is appropriate for the most prominent megacorp in the infotainment industry, the entirety of the outside of NBN's corporate arcology is a single vidscreen. It displays hundreds of different news and entertainment broadcasts at once (which, to NBN's credit, is only a fraction of the media it controls), creating a riotous display of light and color.

In stark contrast, the building's vaulted atrium is an open and airy space done entirely in white, from the elegant chairs and couches arranged in conversation pods to the walkways that arch overhead. The only splash of color is a holographic NBN logo rotating slowly in the air. These aesthetics continue back into the arcology's main office areas and are said to reflect CEO Victoria Jenkins's own personal tastes. While NBN may present a facade of riotous information overload, behind closed doors, the corporation maintains the focus and discipline needed to be the leader in its field.

Unsurprisingly, the corporate HQ for NBN maintains immense server farms in the basement of the building. These are the most securely guarded portions of the arcology, protected by hundreds of armed and well-trained corporate security personnel and defended from cyberthreats by intimidating ice backed up by teams of ever-vigilant sysops. However, these underground facilities need huge electronic trunk lines to download and upload data, as well as vast cooling systems to distribute waste heat. Both run through the core of the NBN arcology all the way to the roof: a necessary weak point that gives those in charge of NBN's security teams constant fits.

ASTRID LARSEN: AMATEUR REPORTER

Astrid Larsen is a natural blond, blue-eyed beauty who dreams of becoming the new face of NBN. Unfortunately for her, in New Angeles, anyone with credits can pay to look good, and she lacks the connections needed to get a gig. Instead, she seeks NBN's attention by recording everything interesting she sees and posting it on the Net, finding odd stories to sell, and trying to achieve minor celebrity status.

Recently, Astrid's habits have changed; her shoutcast, Eyes on New Angeles, hasn't been updated in months. Since she sold her latest story, which never ran the piece, she only emerges from her condo-hab to venture deep into the undercity. Is she a victim of blackmail, or is she still chasing a breakthrough story?

NEW ANGELES SOL OFFICES

One of New Angeles' more prominent newsrags, the Sol is known for its hard-hitting exposé pieces and the sardonic, world-weary tone of its editorial staff. Targeting an audience that prides itself on being well informed, it offers an uninhibited view of current affairs and world events, as well as a wry and good-humored take on politics across New Angeles. The Sol maintains offices on the floors of the Winthrope building just beneath Broadcast Square, accessible from plaza level by a broad staircase topped with an enormous holo of a flaming sun. Inside the offices are the chaotic mismatch of cubicles and messy desks one would expect from an outfit more interested in interesting stories than appearances. Jerome Heller, current editor, is always willing to pay for a juicy tip or promising lead, especially if it involves misdeeds by someone in a position of power.

NEW ANGELES STOCK EXCHANGE

The carbosteel dome of the NASX looks like a gigantic steel beehive from outside. Within, the interior is dominated by a massive trading floor where human stockbrokers strike deals and scream at one another. Above them sits the "All-Seeing Eye," the NASX's huge spherical mainframe. The NASX separates the Eye from the trading floor with a glass ceiling, offering the rather theatrical claim that this ensures that nobody can tamper with it unfairly.

Although the floor of the NASX is an impressive sight—plenty of tourists stop by to watch it from the overhead observation galleries—the real business of the NASX takes place primarily in cyberspace. Hundreds of weak AIs oversee millions of trades per day on the mainframe and in banks of networked servers scattered throughout the building. All this is overseen by the NASX's dedicated cybersecurity task force, which interfaces with the Eye and uses its processing power to watch for tampering. Although every runner using a BMI sees the Network differently, all of them claim that when they approach the NASX servers, they see a glowing or burning eye staring straight at them and scrutinizing their every step.

RE-WATER CAFÉ

For purists and health-conscious citizens with credits to spend, the Re-Water Café is the place to go. The cafe is situated in prime real estate right at plaza level, with floor-to-ceiling windows allowing unobstructed views of the crowds outside in Broadcast Square. Selling an array of nutrient-rich waters served in ice-cold

chillplas glasses, it is a popular place for people to meet at after a workout or during a lunch break. In the evenings, the windows become a panorama of simulated exotic vistas, while warm summer breezes blow throughout the café to relax the customers (and keep them thirsty).

STELLAR

Halfway up the Orion North Arcology, Stellar is the place for those who want to feel like a star but don't have the credits to live like one. The restaurant has four levels plus an enclosed bar that extends out from the building, giving patrons a spectacular view of Broadcast Square from three hundred meters up. Stellar's main attractions are the themed nights it hosts whenever a major new sensie or threedee premieres. These involve a change of menu, decor, and even interior layout. Paper-thin walls made from malleable carbonweave can be re-formed into anything from Roman arches to the steel bulkheads of a futuristic spaceship within the span of an hour. These events provide the illusion of a red-carpet experience for a reasonable price, even if a real sensie star wouldn't be caught dead dining here.

DOWNTOWN RUTHERFORD

Off Broadcast Square, the plaza level slopes down slightly into multiple thoroughfares. These streets are primarily pedestrian focused, with broad slidewalks and convenient entrances to the Metro. Hopper traffic follows the streets in dedicated traffic corridors running between the buildings, and nearly every building has a belt of landing platforms and charging stations a couple of stories above plaza level. Downtown, Rutherford's center of business, is full of important banks and corps, high-rise office buildings, and flagship stores. Off the tourist trail, this is where Rutherford really gets down to business.

CITADEL OF THE STARLIGHT CRUSADE

The largest building owned by the Starlight Crusade in New Angeles, this Gothic-style citadel has an arched entranceway and colored transplas windows. Inside, an enormous hall with vidscreens linked to all the Starlight worship spaces across the world has been filled with rows and rows of meditation chairs. Hundreds of meditation booths wait in the wings, offering a more personal route to spiritual enlightenment. Only paying members have the necessary cybernetic neural implant to experience a Starlight service in all its glory, but casual visitors can have one implanted on-site, for a price.

CITY FLIGHT CONTROL

This spindly traffic-control tower juts up above the rest of Rutherford, high enough that it often gets lost in midlevel clouds. From here, flight-control officers monitor and, when necessary, control all skylane traffic in New Angeles. In the peak of the tower, flight control maintains "the tank," a two-story holographic display of the entire city that tracks every registered hopper in real time. Surrounding the tank on two levels are consoles that let officers zoom in on particular sections to view lines of hoppers snaking through the city. At the consoles, they can watch the feeds from the various AIs that control the skylanes, assign fines for minor traffic offenses (although most of this is handled by AI), and maintain contact with NAPD patrol and response teams during a crisis.

The highly visible and seemingly vulnerable location of City Flight Control is necessary to maintain a clear broadcast signal to as much of New Angeles as possible (signal boosters scattered throughout the city handle any coverage gaps). To ensure that no accidents disrupt the flow of traffic through the city, the CFC maintains a half-kilometer flight exclusion zone around itself.

DISTRICT COURT

This round, gleaming starscraper resembles a shiny bullet set on end, with mirrored transplas windows and a polished carbosteel dome. Inside, the main lobby is a riotous bedlam as crowds of people wait for their cases to be heard. Anyone who is the subject of a civil complaint who wants to settle their case and leave can go to a private room and receive a binding arbitration settlement from an AI mediator. These

AI arbitrations have been growing in popularity in recent years, both among people who lack the time and money for a court hearing and among the district municipal governments that want to quickly resolve parking-ticket disputes and civil ordinance violations. They also tend to be popular with individuals who work in fields related to artificial intelligence and seem to know just which arguments are most likely to get a complaint dismissed.

If a person wants to argue their case, they need to visit one of the two hundred courtrooms on the upper floors and plead their case in front of a judge. Defendants facing fines of 10,000 credits or less receive AI legal assistance rather than a lawyer. High-profile criminal cases take place here as well; human defense lawyers and prosecutors argue such cases in front of a telepresent jury.

To ensure the justice system is unquestionably fair and nobody is hacking into the AI mediators or manipulating court records, the entire building functions as a Faraday cage, blocking any wireless signal in or out. Inside, PADs work but cannot access the Network. The only connection to the Net is via a series of underground fiber-optic trunk lines guarded by the NAPD's elite counterintrusion teams.

HUMANITY LABOR OFFICES

The Humanity Labor office building's brutalist architecture fits the organization's personality, with walls of solid plascrete blocks and small, square windows. At a mere seventy-five stories, the building is dwarfed by its neighbors. However, its location in the midst of the most valuable real estate in three worlds reminds everyone that Humanity Labor is a powerful organization with wealthy backers.

The harsh aesthetic continues into the interior, with high hallways and stone walls sparsely decorated with Humanity Labor's propaganda posters—many of which are actually printed and framed, not projections. The grim decor belies the sophisticated equipment contained within the building's workshops, classrooms, meeting rooms, and conference halls. As Humanity Labor is a major advocacy organization, its offices host job retraining workshops, contract negotiations, press conferences, and union meetings. The building also provides offices and facilities for the thousands of "fully human" employees who make these activities possible.

The workers in Humanity Labor's basement facilities are dedicated to researching activist tactics, effective protests, meme and viral marketing distribution, and targeted boycotts. Some people suggest that the researchers in these facilities may be working to find ways to destroy androids or to sabotage the corporations that use them; some even go so far as to say that this charge is true and, further, that it is proof that Humanity Labor is just a front for the terrorist group Human First. Humanity Labor steadfastly denies both charges.

KONSTANTIN TSIOLKOVSKY LIBRARY

This facility, the heart of New Angeles' public library system, takes up the bottom third of the 15870 Heartland starscraper. Although it has an impressive neoclassical facade at plaza level, most people enter via the major Metro station in the building's basement. Within the library are dozens of floors full of comfortable seating for readers, tables for researchers, and public terminals for anyone without a suitable PAD. Members have electronic access to literature, periodicals, ragsheets, and old-fashioned newspapers going back centuries.

Of course, the majority of New Angeles' public library system exists on the Network, and one need never leave the comfort of home to access a book or conduct research. However, the City Library maintains a number of rare and valuable records and manuscripts unavailable on the Network. Some of this is sensitive information that can only be accessed by people with the proper clearance and is only available on a secured and independent network on the Blue Floor. However, most of these records are simply so old that they only exist in physical form. A collection of physical volumes was purchased from Ecuador's national library when the City Library was founded, and the library has obtained countless private and public collections since. Patrons who wish to study them have the rare and dubious pleasure of carefully flipping through physical pages to find the information they seek.

The rarest and most valuable of the library's physical documents are kept in a sealed vault beneath the building. This vault also contains important documents from New Angeles' founding, in case electronic records become compromised. Needless to say, this vault is off-limits to the public.

HARMONIA

What began as an arcology-sized shopping complex has swollen to become a whole area of Rutherford devoted to entertainment and leisure activities, encompassing streets of gaming parlors and sensie booths, hologolf ranges, and specialist markets. Harmonia, which now covers several square blocks, is a beautiful riot of color and noise. Most of the subdistrict is walkable, as a spiderweb of elevated slidewalks link the dozen or so buildings at multiple levels. From above, the buildings appear enmeshed in gossamer thread.

Even the undercity beneath Harmonia has become an extension of the complex, albeit home to less wholesome diversions. Still, compared to Mercado Baja and similar locations, Harmonia's undercity is fairly tame. To avoid being hassled by the NAPD (or the private security teams maintained by some of the larger entertainment conglomerates), most of the criminal organizations keep things under control. Even the pickpockets and chip-rippers have strict instructions as to how many tourists they can rob and what areas they're barred from visiting.

LA CONCORDIA

At La Concordia indoor market, artists of all kinds sell their creations, including sculptures, paintings, holoart installations, and pots made of genuine clay. No ristie wants their home to be identical to that of their neighbor, and many take to collecting handmade items to decorate their rooms and offices. Just being seen here implies credits and class, as prisec officers won't let just anyone through the entrance arch, where IDs and credaccounts are checked. The open-plan expanse allows customers to see and be seen, as well as letting officers keep an unobtrusive watch.

RHAPSODY EMPOWERMENT CLINIC

If a fan's obsession with the megastar Miranda Rhapsody affects their daily life, they can seek aid at the Rhapsody Empowerment Clinic. Founded and funded by the celebrity herself, the clinic charges fees that are surprisingly modest. Treatments include meditation, yoga, sensory deprivation, organic drug therapy, and intensive AI counseling sessions. At-risk patients are implanted with hormone-monitoring devices that also allow the clinic staff to locate them should the need arise.

FASHION FORWARD

Fashion Forward, with branches across NA, claims to be able to dress everyone from top-class athletes, to office workers, to wylders. The Harmonia branch is a single long room with dozens of changing booths lining both walls. Customers enter a changing booth, tell the AI what they're looking for, and wait for appropriate articles to be delivered. While they wait, the AI, connecting to the occupant's PAD, displays inspirational ideas tailored to their personal shopping history. Once chosen, items can be upgraded with self-drying material, smartslick hoods, or bulletproof linings.

CARNATION CASINO

This floral-themed casino attracts plenty of risties interested in high-risk/high-reward games of chance. The glass-roofed facility sits atop one of Harmonia's taller buildings and is adjacent to a botanical garden full of lush, g-modded flowers. Some of the high-roller tables intrude into the botanical space, their privacy fields keeping onlookers from disturbing the players. Blackjack is a favorite here, though the casino has strict rules regarding certain cybernetics and g-mods that might give players an advantage. Winners must undergo a brief body scan, and any potential cheaters are escorted to the security office for a more thorough explanation of the rules.

LILY LOCKWELL (NEMESIS)

Lilith Ramón, known to the world as Lily Lockwell, has been one of NBN's most famous faces for years. A newsnosie with both the instinct to find a good story and the determination to get the details, she has a habit of being the first at high-profile crime scenes, and when a megacorp has news it wants revealed, she is often the one invited to conduct the interview. Her fame grants her protection when investigating stories against NBN's wishes, but this can only last for so long.

BRAWN	AGILITY	INTELLECT	CUNNING	WILLPOWER	PRESENCE
2	2	3	3	2	4

SOAK VALUE	WOUND THRESHOLD	STRAIN THRESHOLD	M/R DEFENSE
2	12	20	0 | 0

Motivations: Desire (Fame), Fear (Obscurity), Strength (Adaptable), Flaw (Ruthlessness).
Skills: Charm 4, Cool 3, Deception 2, Knowledge (Society) 3, Leadership 1, Perception 3, Streetwise 2, Vigilance 3.
Talents: Adversary 1 (upgrade the difficulty of all combat checks against this target once), Probing Question (if Lockwell knows her opponent's Flaw or Fear and inflicts strain on them using a social skill, the opponent suffers 3 additional strain), Ruinous Repartee (Once per encounter, may make an **opposed Charm versus Discipline check** targeting one opponent within earshot. If successful, opponent suffers 8 strain plus 1 per ✲ and Lily heals an equal amount of strain).
Abilities: Famous (once per encounter, may spend a Story Point to force one opponent within earshot to make a **Hard [◆◆◆] Discipline check** as an out-of-turn incidental. If they fail, they must fulfill one of Lockwell's requests, such as let her past a checkpoint, stop attacking her, etc.).
Equipment: Monocam eyepiece, sharp outfit, sardonic demeanor.

RESIDENTIAL UNIT 384

It takes a particularly grisly crime to cause waves in the undercity. Within a residential concrete block and sandwiched between Belladonna's bioroid pleasure house and a gaming den, this condo-hab lies empty and restricted by NAPD holotape. The persistent canvassing by detectives has started conflicting rumors among neighboring residents, who fear the unexpected interest. None of them know what the quiet, one-armed, ex-military man who lived there had been up to. However, snippets of video and a few blurred images have appeared on the Net: a screaming face pressed up against a transplas window and walls blackened as though by an explosion.

ESMERALDAS

Esmeraldas is known for its music, eclectic restaurants, tacky seaside resorts, and most famously, for birthing more than a few sporting legends. The district has the dubious pleasure of being second- or third-best in nearly every measure of economic and cultural development. Chakana and Guayaquil have bigger ports, La Costa grows more food, Quinde and Rabotgorod have more thriving industry, and Nihongai and Manta have more money. Thus, the rich and powerful tend to stay out of Esmeraldas, but the district is successful enough to serve as home for millions of working- and middle-class New Angelinos.

Esmeraldas does have a notable culinary scene and a fast-growing and eclectic music community. However, when most New Angelinos think of Esmeraldas, they think of sports. The district hosts the famous Blue Sun Stadium, and a surprising number of New Angeles' famed athletes come from "up North." The most famous is "La Jefa," the renowned captain of the New Angeles Giants, Rose Calderon. She has plenty of local company: her defensive midfielders Eric and Gerald Acosta grew up on New Beach and still own houses there, while reigning holowar killmaster Sandra McKenzie claims to have gotten her start playing in Fissure Arcade after school.

While the district has its fair share of arcologies and high-density development—mostly around Blue Sun Stadium—much of Esmeraldas is lightly built by New Angeles' standards. Packed rows of thirty-story condo-habs overlook narrow streets radiating outward from isolated arcologies and starscrapers. Rooftop gardens and irregularly tended street-level planters lend a comfortable—albeit slightly shabby—air to local neighborhoods. Esmeraldas is the district where people are likely to know their neighbors and proudly identify themselves by the street they grew up on.

THE STREETS

Officially named the San Miguel Residential Subdistrict, the neighborhood called "the Streets" earned its nickname from the checkered grid of crisscrossing, numbered roads. The neighborhood runs from 1st to 327th south to north, and from White Star Arcology to Mompiche Beach east to west. Most of the Streets is zoned residential, with blocs of row houses and condo-habs mixed with numerous street-level business. Most of the buildings are roughly the same height, and a low, well-established plaza level keeps their bottom five to ten stories segregated from the rest of the neighborhood.

This is the neighborhood most people think of when they think of Esmeraldas, and it's the kind of place where neighbors rely more on each other than on the NAPD and camdrones. Even the local gangs maintain a sort of civic pride; any streetbanger who robs from their neighborhood ends up facing justice from their former comrades.

CHINCA AGROPLEX

Though Esmeraldas doesn't grow as much food as La Costa, its agroplexes still provide many of the daily nutrients essential for New Angeles to survive. The Chinca agroplex on the edges of the Streets is one such facility, employing over five hundred local residents. Technically, the central building has more floors than any arcology in Rutherford. The "floors," however, are only twenty-five centimeters deep: just enough to grow and ripen a wide range of crop types. Human workers direct legions of crawler-bots, which tend the plants and collect the harvest, bringing the fruits (and vegetables) of their labors to human-sized access hallways.

Each floor has an isolated environment to prevent the spread of contamination. Recent sabotage attempts saw the release of a bioengineered fungus that necessitated burning one floor's crops down to the roots. The owners suspect rival agroplexes in La Costa, but NAPD Sergeant Burke LeGrande wonders if someone has taken issue with Chinca's ties to Humanity Labor.

ESMERALDAS PRISON

Esmeraldas Prison, the largest prison in New Angeles, houses inmates from all over the city. In addition to the usual facilities, it contains an on-site hospital and a baseball field. To maximize security and assuage local residents' fears about a breakout, the prison was built on a small peninsula jutting out from the Streets' northwestern corner into the Pacific. To further protect against breakouts, the prison relies on security measures both traditional (armed guards, camdrones, and electrified fences) and inventive (the waters off the prison are infested with sharkbots, and the prison is built atop a thin layer of nanomesh that can detect any digging attempts).

The western wing contains high-risk inmates, who get any cyberlimbs (or other potentially dangerous cybernetics) removed and replaced with crude prosthetics reminiscent of those from the early twenty-first century. These inmates are forced to take a cocktail of meds that causes their body to reject any g-mods they may be hiding. The east wing is for runners, who stay in cells fitted with old-fashioned iron bars and manual locks. No inmates are granted Net access without special dispensation. The human guards carry Synap pistols on the grounds, but the prison also keeps an armory of lethal weaponry and riot-suppression gear.

SAN MIGUEL SCHOOL

The biggest primary school in Esmeraldas sits on the corner of 150th and Front right in the heart of the Streets. An aggressive PTA ensures that whatever money the school can't raise in property taxes comes in from countless fundraisers, bake sales, and cookie drives. The result is a school that may look a bit worn down but has a dedicated staff and

all the latest electronic and physical teaching aids. Thousands of children from ages six to sixteen flock here every morning, and even the local gangs have an unspoken agreement to keep their beefs off school property.

However, recently, some parents have noticed that the school's administrators have been discussing partnerships with various local corps. Most of these seem annoying but harmless: a deal to only sell Cedrón Kola in the hallway vending machines, for example. On the other hand, the presence of Palmas Mem-Hancer officials has some locals wondering if corporate interests are trying to turn the school into a testing ground for cognition-enhancing drugs.

SUNNY BLU'S BAR

For those who can't afford to visit the Blue Sun Stadium in person, Sunny Blu's offers the next best thing. Though the drinks are cheap and the seats uncomfortable, the threedee projectors are the very best Brenda "Sunny" Wilson could get. Occasionally, fights break out between rival spectators in the bar, but the regulars know that as long as they don't break anything valuable, Sunny won't call the cops.

BLUE SUN STADIUM

Recently renovated after the Worlds War, the new and improved Blue Sun Stadium has breathed life back into Esmeraldas and created a great distraction for all New Angelinos. Sponsored primarily by the prominent fusion-energy corporation Blue Sun, the stadium is easily the most recognizable landmark in the district.

Blue Sun Stadium is large enough to host a major league baseball game in one half and an American football game in the other, and it has the technology to live-broadcast them in threedee worldswide. It can handle all manner of traditional sports and is home to three of New Angeles' most popular teams: the Giants football team, the Yellowjackets baseball team, and the Swordfish American football team. At the same time, the owners have embraced up-and-coming sporting events such as holowar, and they have gone all-in on the ludicrously expensive projection technology that lets them turn a field into a fantastic and futuristic three-dimensional battleground.

THE BARN

The Barn is a modestly sized hall on 73rd Street with a stage for live musical performances and a dance floor large enough for an audience of only a few hundred. This venue was largely unknown until the rise of chem-thrash rocker Benedict Renoir, who played his first gigs here. Now, it's a hotspot for the new music genre, and nearby residents have repeatedly campaigned to close it down.

HISTORIC ESMERALDAS

Although the original city of Esmeraldas remains the heart of this district, the community has become almost unrecognizable in the years since the district's incorporation. "Historic" is a bit of a local joke now, as the original buildings have nearly all been torn down and replaced with dozens of starscrapers. In the midst sits the unmistakable blue dome of Blue Sun Stadium.

PARQUE SOLEADO

The unofficial name of Fisher Park is Parque Soleado, because for ten minutes, when the sun is at its zenith, light reaches its grounds. The rest of the time, shade cast by the adjacent starscrapers means it's lit only by the glow of advertisements from a nearby shopping center. Nevertheless, it is a popular place for children to play football on the simulated grass or practice basketball on the plascrete. By day, pupils from rival schools clash here. By night, gangs meet here to deal or settle disputes.

PRIVATE MOMENTS

Of the school that believes mastication should be a private affair and food is best appreciated without the distraction of company, Private Moments seats every diner alone. The restaurant is designed so that no one's face is visible to anyone else, with screens created by artificial foliage and Craftsman-style pillars. Sound-suppression fields operate throughout the restaurant, and food is ordered via an interactive menu. For those with credits, it's a good place to hide.

PAULUS CHOPRA: DISTRICT MANAGER

The new district manager, Paulus Chopra, is recent émigré from PraNo. He brought his family from Europe to New Angeles when the future of the megalopolis was still unsure. By making himself invaluable during a time of uncertainty, investing money in the right places and backing the right people, he ensured citizenship for himself and his family.

Esmeraldas is his project; he hopes to use the success of the Blue Sun Stadium to raise the profile of the district and bring in more revenue. He is full of ideas, such as demolishing slums to build new sports facilities, appealing to sports governing bodies to allow players certain g-mods, and encouraging celebrities to maintain luxury accommodations in the district.

THE MALECÓN

The Malecón was designed to be an enormous pier with homes and entertainment facilities built above the water, but the construction was never completed. Now, the name refers to the neighborhoods just north of Historic Esmeraldas, the facilities constructed on the half-completed pier, and the industrial port facilities. The Malecón is the poorest and highest-crime neighborhood in Esmeraldas. Local shipping companies tend to resort to paramilitary prisec outfits to keep their facilities safe.

NEW BEACH RESORT

When Bernice Hardcourt was district manager of Esmeraldas, she vainly hoped that the long stretch of coastline would attract upper-class visitors to the district. New Beach Resort is now a stretch of tiny holiday apartments reclaimed as homes by families too large for them. Cleanup efforts on the beach have stalled out due to lack of money, and the sands are strewn with garbage that floats in on the oily waves. Petty crime, drugs, and prostitution are the only thriving industries on New Beach; many locals own and "rent out" a refurbished Lisa, Kevin, Adonis, or Eve pleasure bioroid. Bodies occasionally wash up on the beach, picked clean of any jewelry or cyberware before the NAPD arrive.

ARCOLOGY E42

Built along the Pacific shoreline, E42 was once an arcology with a waiting list for its upper-level units. Many working-class families lived in the sub-plaza levels in hopes of rising up once space became available. Since then, newer arcologies with better facilities and leisure options attracted the middle-class residents away. Now, the lower levels are full, while the luxury suites in the upper levels sit empty. Several on-site shopping areas have closed, and security has more than once been breached by looters and even squatters.

PUERTO MARITIMO DOCKYARDS

Puerto Maritimo Dockyards is the third most important port in New Angeles, encompassing floating jetties and enormous warehouses on dry land. Ecuador greatly expanded the port facilities after the '07 floods devastated the region, dredging out the Río Esmeraldas until the harbor was three times its original size. When New Angeles incorporated the region, the port was expanded again. Now, it can handle up to thirty supertainer deep-draft cargo vessels at a time.

Despite the heavy labor involved, humans still work most dockyard jobs. When shipping companies bring in bioroid labor, the androids end up floating out to sea—in pieces. There is a strong camaraderie between the workers, and they are ready to fight to keep their jobs if necessary. Even so, most of the warehouses have automated cranes for quick loading and unloading, which the worker unions see as a reasonable compromise. Dockworkers know the contents of these warehouses and will share this information for the right price.

SALTY'S

Just outside the port facilities proper, this bar in a converted warehouse offers live music provided by locals with musical ambitions and varying degrees of talent. Dockyard workers drink here, exchanging stories of dodgy shipments and slippery customers. When the audience appreciates the entertainment, a visiting tourist might enjoy a pleasant evening. When a singer or band isn't well received, the audience makes it clear through vicious comments and thrown drinks. Salty requires his hard-drinking crowd to run a tab for their drinks and keeps their credit accounts on file. He sometimes makes mistakes when tallying up the evening's totals, although this happens more with strangers to the bar than with locals.

BLOC E69

Built over the water on the edge of the Malecón pier, this Weyland-built bloc of condo-habs was intended to provide temporary emergency housing. However, gentrification and population growth has ensured that the bloc is now a permanent fixture. It is poorly insulated, and residents suffer from cold and damp. Due to the rising sea level and shoddy temporary construction, the pilings holding up the bloc are slowly shifting and sinking into the silty sea floor. Somehow, the plight of these residents has never made the news.

FISH & SHIPS

Diners in this seafront restaurant sit between four transplas walls, three of which are actually tanks populated by all the fish that end up on the menu. These fish have been cloned, so customers know that the cod they have today will taste exactly the same if they choose it again tomorrow. The owners, Phil and Robert, are ex-dockyard workers who saved enough credits after they got married to open their own restaurant, so they are considered a local success story.

They know everyone who works—legally or illegally—on the Malecón, and they stay on good terms with most local union bosses. They use human employees rather than androids, except for a red-haired clone named Margery, who works as their head chef. The rest of the staff insist she belongs to the owners, but she seems to get paid and lives in her own apartment rather than in a clone-tel.

NEW PARTS FOR NEW PEOPLE

New Parts, which operates out of a double-wide shipping crate on the back of a cargo hauler, sells all manner of cybernetics to the dockyard locals. Some of the tech is new, but most is used, and some is even salvaged from the bodies that drift up on New Beach. Fitz Holden owns and lives in the shop, and he will eagerly install items for customers if they can't afford to get the job done professionally. He cites the fact that he voluntarily removed and replaced his own hand as proof of his skill and dedication. Although he is unlicensed, so if the NAPD comes sniffing around, he just drives his shop a couple of blocks down the road.

ANGELICA LOPEZ: SHOCK-SPARRING CHAMP

Angelica Lopez dropped out of Seaview Academy and spent a few years in Esmeraldas Prison as a juvenile. While inside, she discovered her natural aptitude for shock-sparring. Since the Fencing Federation integrated new technology into the sport, shock-sparring has seen something of a revival, so her new interest was well-timed. Once released, Angelica Lopez found sponsorship and worked hard to gain the title of World Champion. She lives in a luxury mansion on the Esmeraldas seafront, and she owns a collection of priceless antique weapons and a private enclosed beach. She lives a secluded life, only emerging for matches, and is considered something of a local legend.

WALTON-BERNDT RACETRACK

Perhaps the only sporting events Blue Sun Stadium can't host are hopper races. Until now, the most spectacular hopper races have taken place on the Moon; the creation of the Lunar-Hop turned hopper racing into a vastly profitable industry overnight. When Walton-Berndt completes construction of its track, New Angeles will become the first megapolis to own a purpose-built racetrack within its borders, with the potential for large live audiences.

Walton-Berndt, a manufacturer of skyhoppers and sports hoppers, recently moved its main offices to Esmeraldas to facilitate the building of the racetrack. Though the Esmeraldas district government rejected the initial application for construction rights, eventually they reached an agreement. Hi-Rise Contracting LLC, a Weyland subsidiary, has been hired to construct the track, which will require large areas of controlled airspace as well as massive viewing stands for the future spectators. Though the construction may cause some minor inconveniences for regular hopper traffic through the district, once the track is complete, the effects on routine traffic will be minimal. Walton-Berndt has retained Tsilo Urbane Inc., a prominent transportation-flow consulting group also owned by the Weyland Consortium, to address any potential issues.

While Walton-Berndt must wait to see how successful the new races will be, sales of its luxury sports hoppers, so powerful that only those with sports licenses can drive them, have seen a recent surge. It seems many a ristie fancies their chances as a hopper racer now that they don't have to leave their city to compete.

NIHONGAI

A posh, gorgeous, and incredibly wealthy district, Nihongai is also called "Little Nippon" due to the large number of residents of Japanese heritage, both immigrants and native-born New Angelinos, who live there. The district's riches can be attributed to its location—Rutherford's financial hub sits on Nihongai's eastern border, and Laguna Velasco's government center is just to the south—as well as to its aesthetic. Nihongai borders on the Mache-Chindul Ecological Preserve, a historic Ecuadorian park dating from the twentieth century that, while much diminished from its original size, remains a beautiful and peaceful greenspace. Taking the preserve as inspiration, Nihongai's managers and its Parks Committee have worked tirelessly to incorporate little bits of nature into the rest of the district. Neighborhoods are dotted with microparks, well-tended gardens, and carefully cultivated plant growth on the roofs and walls of its elegant arcologies.

This, in addition to the large population with Japanese ancestry, made Nihongai the logical place for Jinteki Biotech to build its new headquarters when the megacorp relocated to New Angeles twenty years ago. Jinteki's presence and money have accelerated the district's beautification and gentrification while ensuring that Nihongai essentially belongs to the megacorp in every unofficial sense. Today, calling Nihongai a company town isn't too far from the mark.

Nihongai is an expensive place to live. The cost of living ensures the population is dominated by young and rising corporate stars, high-powered lawyers and lobbyists, and captains of government and industry. One exception to this, is Jinteki employees. The megacorp tends to subsidize living expenses for staff who work in its corporate HQ, allowing them to stay in Nihongai rather than commuting in from Esmeraldas. It also maintains extensive clone barracks in Nihongai's undercity, allowing it to keep its own clone workforce close. Visitors joke that this is probably why the undercity tends to be so clean and well maintained.

This trend toward order and harmony even extends to Nihongai's criminal element. The yakuza dominate the district's criminal underworld. Any street gangs not directly affiliated with a yakuza syndicate pay at least one of the groups a tithe or loyalty fee. Any criminals who don't show fealty to some part of the yakuza tend to end up decapitated as a warning to the rest.

This isn't to say that there is less crime in Nihongai than in other districts. However, between the yakuza's influence and the prisec security teams paid by Jinteki and other corps, criminal activity tends to be much quieter and follows a complex and often arcane set of unspoken rules and traditions.

JINTEKI BIOTECH

A megacorp with a monopoly in one of the most advanced technological achievements of the century can afford a lot of land, even if that land is in New Angeles. When Jinteki moved to Nihongai, Chairman Hiro chose not to consolidate his new HQ into a single arcology. Instead, Jinteki Biotech occupies an open campus that sprawls across more than two square kilometers near the Mache-Chindul Park.

The grounds—and especially the famed gardens—are exquisitely designed and maintained. Paths between buildings meander among artfully arranged streams and carefully pruned trees. Vehicles move through underground transit tunnels or land on hopper pads kept out of sight on the roofs of buildings. Jinteki buildings tend to be shorter than those in the rest of New Angeles: most are around fifty stories high. This gives the entire complex an open, inviting air.

However, Jinteki's main campus is protected by elaborate, expensive, and highly lethal security measures. Simply crossing the street and leaning against the vine-covered security wall sets off a host of active and passive sensors and summons drones to keep an eye on the offender until they move on. Someone who tries to walk through the grounds without a visitor pass will quickly find themself surrounded by a squad of polite but firm Omoi clones, who will escort them to a secure detention facility. If they brandish a weapon, they'll be quickly and quietly eliminated by armed security forces. This philosophy extends to the air—Jinteki controls the airspace within half a kilometer of its campus and enforces this with armed drones—and even cyberspace. Runners attempting to infiltrate Jinteki's servers find their way past the outer barriers easily enough, only to run into packs of killer sentry and code gate ice that can destroy programs and even fry an unlucky intruder's neurons.

CLONE TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT FACILITIES

Although Jinteki maintains training and development facilities for its human clones all across New Angeles, the facilities at its main campus are some of the largest and most comprehensive. The megacorp tends to use these to train new clone lines, experimenting with new teaching regimes and seeing how newly decanted minds adapt or break under different strains. The facilities are in a series of buildings on the northwest edge of the campus, tucked behind even tighter layers of security. Rumor has it that employees are warned that anyone who enters these facilities without authorization vanishes, and their families are sued for breach of contract.

JINTEKI HEADQUARTERS

Located in the midst of the Jinteki campus, The Jinteki corporate headquarters building is a long, low building with smooth sides and a rounded top, stretching half the length of the campus. The clean, natural aesthetic of the campus fills the interior of this building as well, with dedicated server farms worked into the landscape of interior gardens, offices artfully arranged around a single bonsai tree, and even the lighting pitched to perfectly emulate natural light.

The calm, relaxing atmosphere cannot fully conceal the quiet bustle of purposeful activity that fills the building at all hours of the day. The headquarters building is constantly filled with Jinteki employees, each working to improve their corporation's standing as one of the most powerful entities in the worlds. Beneath the offices and meeting rooms arranged according to the principles of neo-traditional Japanese minimalism, dozens of floors of laboratories and research facilities delve deep into the earth. Here, Jinteki develops new lines of clones and other bioengineered products, ensuring that it continues to dominate its half of the android market well into the next century.

JINTEKI RECYCLING FACILITY

Unassuming plascrete recycling facility buildings can be found in every district. Jinteki's is located a block away from the Jinteki campus proper, in the undercity. It has no windows, just a front entrance with the Jinteki logo and several hopper pads and loading platforms in the back. Periodically, clones who have exceeded their product lifespan enter in the front. None of them ever leave, although a pipeline full of nutrient-rich slurry runs from the facility back to the clone vats in the basement of Jinteki's headquarters.

NAPD HANDLER TRAINING CENTER

The Hachi-Inu clones Jinteki provides for the NAPD are intelligent, valuable instruments of the law the moment they are decanted. The sprawling complex of the NAPD Handler Training Center exists to train human officers to work alongside these canine clones, since using them to their full potential requires specialist knowledge. Jinteki has deliberately left their inherent canine pack loyalty intact, so bonding between clone and human officer is necessary to create a fully functional K8 unit. The training center features classrooms for instructing new officers; obstacle courses for practicing search, sweep-and-clear, and pursuit tactics; and even a small recreational area where handlers and Hachi-Inu can bond over games of fetch (although some handlers get a bit startled when the clones throw the balls back).

NIHON TEIEN

These traditional Japanese gardens are kept closed to the public save on New Year's Day and the Chairman's birthday. Otherwise, they are reserved for top Jinteki executives, visiting dignitaries, and the occasional employee granted access as a reward for superb job performance.

The gardens emulate a number of historical styles, ranging from recreations of gardens of the Kamakura and Edo periods to a garden done in the "new return to fun-

CAPRICE NISEI (NEMESIS)

Caprice Nisei is currently being trialled as a detective with the NAPD. Although her record is generally good, several officers have reported that she is difficult to work with. She has an uncanny ability to deduce details beyond that of her colleagues, making her an excellent detective, but uncomfortable to be around.

BRAWN	AGILITY	INTELLECT	CUNNING	WILLPOWER	PRESENCE
2	3	4	2	5	2

SOAK VALUE	WOUND THRESHOLD	STRAIN THRESHOLD	M/R DEFENSE
2	14	18	4 | 4

Motivations: Desire (Love of Family), Fear (Isolation), Strength (Understands Others), Flaw (Understands Others).
Skills: Computers (Sysops) 2, Deception 2, Discipline 4, Knowledge (Science) 2, Knowledge (Society) 2, Perception 2, Ranged (Light) 1, Streetwise 1, Vigilance 4.
Talents: Adversary 2 (upgrade the difficulty of all combat checks against this target twice), Probing Question (if Nisei knows her opponent's Flaw or Fear and inflicts strain on them using a social skill, the opponent suffers 3 additional strain).
Abilities: Apparent Precognition (once per encounter when making a combat check, may use Discipline and Willpower instead of the normal skill and characteristic), Psychic (as a maneuver, may make an **Average (◇◇) Vigilance check** to learn the surface thoughts of all other characters within medium range), Nisei Line (as an action, may make a **Hard (◇◇◇) Discipline check** targeting one character within medium range. If successful, Nisei learns their Strength, Flaw, Fear, and Desire motivations and all current goals [in addition to other information at the GM's discretion]).
Equipment: Synap pistol (Ranged [Light]; Damage 5; Critical 6; Range [Short]; Disorient 4, Stun 3, Stun Damage), trenchcoat, NAPD badge, restraints.

damentals" style of the last century. Many of the gardens are promenade gardens, where visitors can stroll along winding paths while admiring trimmed lawns, burbling streams, aesthetically twisted trees, and rocks carefully set into beds of moss. A few gardens are intended for silent meditation and contemplation; of these, several overlook tiny islands rising out of the center of still lakes where the golden scales of genetically perfected koi flash beneath the surface.

THE TOURIST QUARTER

While many of the shops and restaurants in Nihongai rely heavily on the tourist trade, they also appeal to residents after work hours. In the tourist quarter, artistically placed trees and holographic characters decorate the streets, and many of the buildings are topped with roofs made from Japanese tile (or at least the molded carbon equivalent). Although local zoning ordinances try to restrict anything too stereotypical or kitschy, the undercity beneath the Tourist Quarter is still dominated by pachinko parlors, most quietly owned by one of the branches of the yakuza.

AKIHEROU

At Akiherou, an exclusive and elegant dining club on the top two floors of the Myōjō starscraper, reservations are taken only from members and those introduced by members. Chairman Hiro of Jinteki has himself eaten here on a number of occasions, bringing visitors and turning dinner into a private meeting. The club's decor follows traditional Japanese themes, but the security, provided by Omoi clones and hidden seccams with a completely internalized system, is cutting-edge.

DELIGHTED REPOSE CAPSULE HOTEL

Delighted Repose is one of a chain of capsule hotels popular in NeoTokyo and the Chinese mainland that is now spreading across New Angeles. Its customers purchase time in a coffin-shaped capsule that carries them off to an inaccessible area of the hotel, stacking them above other sleepers for the alloted time. The system is automated, requiring the use of either an ID or anonymous credstick, and it alerts the NAPD if a sleeper will not—or cannot—exit a capsule.

SHINSEIBUTSU ZOOLOGICAL GARDEN

Owned outright by Jinteki, every animal and creature kept in the zoo has been grown in a clone vat. Animals extinct in the wild, such as snow leopards and Asian elephants, exist here for the educational pleasure of visitors. It is a popular place for schools to visit, though pupils are often most fascinated by the hybrids and g-modded creatures: humanoid turtles, dancing albino deer, lions with antlers and snake tails, and similar chimeric creations. The garden also has a petting zoo with a full range of Jinteki's teacup animals (which are available to order from the gift shop).

SUPA-SEN

The sheer scale of the Supā-Sen bathhouse is enough to attract curious visitors, who can take a dip in anything from steaming sulfuric spring water to a cold bath with such a high salt content that bathers float rather than sink. There are a variety of nutrient-rich pools for the health-conscious, and private baths may be reserved with a hefty fee. These can be colored and scented to match a theme, such as pink and rose for a bachelorette party or corporate colors for a business meeting. A central system monitors all the baths, and the staff can add nutrients or stimulants to the water or air in any given room.

THE RESIDENTIAL QUARTER

The residential quarter is a bit more subdued in ornamentation than the tourist quarter, and many of the buildings resemble the modern constructions of NeoTokyo. Many of Jinteki's clone barracks exist underneath the residential quarter, making this portion of the undercity easily the safest in Nihongai.

CLONE BARRACKS

In the undercity, hundreds of identical, austere barracks house thousands of clones of various lines who work in the district or wait for new owners. The latter clones maintain the barracks and jog in circuits to maintain fitness levels. Patrolled by Jinteki prisec officers, clone barracks are the cleanest, quietest parts of the undercity.

HARMONY GENERAL HOSPITAL

Harmony General Hospital is part of the huge Harmony Medtech corporate office building. Harmony Medtech, a Jinteki subsidiary, occupies a gleaming, silvery ziggurat in the heart of the residential quarter, with the plaza level around it dedicated to gardens and greenspace. Comprising the entirety of the plaza-level floor and the next nine stories up, Harmony General serves as Harmony Medtech's public face.

Despite the cost of care here, Harmony General is always busy. Patients come to avoid an inconvenience like illness, old age, or injury, and leave with a strengthened immune system, cyberorgans, or a reinforced body. Some come for the Body Restructuring Department, where the doctors can use genetic manipulation and surgery to do everything from minor cosmetic manipulation to a full-blown restructuring of someone's appearance, ethnicity, or gender.

TEMPLE BAR

This minimalist bar is a known yakuza hangout, but most nights it appears to be simply a quiet place to sit and have a drink. Chilled sake and cold beer are the beverages of choice, and the clone server offers snacks to customers that neutralize the alcohol in their systems before they leave. When the bar closes for a private meeting, locals avoid the street entirely.

THE DOJO

Tucked into the lower levels of an otherwise unremarkable mixed-use arcology, the Dojo has no affiliation with any particular martial art. It advertises itself as a place to come for everything from self-defense classes to mixed martial arts competitions. A number of mercenaries and private security contractors swear by it as the place to polish their hand-to-hand skills and stay in top shape. The Dojo also teaches a variety of traditional martial arts for recreational purposes. It's an open secret that groups of NAPD officers and yakuza enforcers take these classes to engage in a lively but completely deniable rivalry by way of sparring.

Rumor also has it that illegal g-mod augmentations are available here for those who know how to ask. These g-mods are focused on physical enhancement and can turn someone into an unregistered weapon in a matter of days.

FUMIKO YAMAMORI: YAKUZA

While the yakuza are secretive organizations, at least within New Angeles, Fumiko Yamamori does not concern herself with secrecy. What does concern her is her reputation in the undercity and among rival criminal organizations. She is no street enforcer, and her position within the yakuza is unknown. Yet, even when she keeps her extensive *irezumi* tattoos concealed under business attire, residents and gang bosses alike afford her a wary respect.

THE PHOENIX CLUB

This nightclub, which dominates the upper levels of the Jade Light Arcology, attracts Nihongai residents and visitors alike. The main dance floor accommodates 5,000 people, while upper floors provide bars and entertainment areas, swimming pools, and massage parlors. Some of the entertainment areas are fully fledged venues in their own right, with room for hundreds of guests and attached bars and restaurants. Some areas host live music, while others (properly soundproofed) stream the latest chem-thrash rock numbers.

NEW AKIBA QUARTER

New Akiba, where consumers go to sample or buy new technologies, is a busy, built-up area. The streets are full of holo-ads as well as street stalls with amateur-made or contraband tech. The NAPD sweeps the area semiregularly for anything dangerous or illegal, but some items (and their dealers) always slip through the cracks.

STARFINITY XTREME GAME ARCADE

The Starfinity Xtreme stretches over several floors of its starscraper and spills into the street. Some gamers come for the social and competitive aspect of the arcade, others because they cannot afford the technology at home. Wearing a brain-net in public might make some feel vulnerable, but for others, it offers the chance to show off their gaming prowess, letting them prove themselves in meatspace as well as on the Net. Rumor has it that yakuza patrol the area, approaching the best gamers as potential runners.

ID INC. NONINVASIVE BRAIN CLINIC

When a patient doesn't have time for prolonged counseling sessions, the Id Inc. walk-in clinic offers a quick and surprisingly affordable solution. A subsidiary of Stellar Aspire, an asset management firm partially owned by Jinteki, Id Inc. uses a brain-machine interface to "teach" a brain, which it claims provides instant and permanent results. The clinic holds that its technology can eradicate antisocial behaviors, destructive habits, and even distressing memories. However, judicial records showing a long list of sealed and settled consumer lawsuits may give the discerning customer pause.

LAGUNA VELASCO

Laguna Velasco sits at the political and physical center of New Angeles. The district is built around the ancient Velasco Ibarra reservoir on the Río Daule. Although the lake had grown over the last century to feed larger and larger hydroelectric turbines, just prior to New Angeles' incorporation, most of the region still retained its rugged natural beauty. That, plus its central location, made it an obvious place to situate New Angeles' heart. Developers moved City Hall here from Base de Cayambe a few years after the city's incorporation, and the instant gentrification kept all the non-elites out from the start.

In the current day, parts of Laguna Velasco look like the platonic ideal of a megacity. Streetlights illuminate the district's plaza level at night in a perfect, mild sunset orange scientifically proven not to strain the eyes. Elevated walkways built with reflexive concrete soften footsteps and provide joggers with ideal running paths. Drones roam the streets and pick up trash. In some places, the plaza level is actually ground level, and gleaming government arcologies rise from a landscape of lush lawns, trimmed trees, and the meandering inlets and estuaries of the Velasco Ibarra reservoir, dotted with sailboats and windsurfers. In other places, the plaza level covers the dingy sublevels of the undercity with the same spread of L-squares, slidewalks, greenspaces, and holoparks found elsewhere in New Angeles.

Old wealth lives here, and a nightlife of sophistication and culture color both the social structures and the political alliances that dominate Laguna Velasco, trickling down to the other districts. The district is spotted with opera houses, concert halls, museums, theaters, expensive restaurants, exclusive art galleries, and lavish hotels. An investor from Manta can gain clout and investment opportunities if they attend opera and museum galas. An architect in Guayaquil can mysteriously get that permit signed if they shake the right hand at a City Hall luncheon.

Yet under this gleaming, sophisticated facade lies violence and corruption. Those in the know acknowledge the existence of a struggling middle class and stressed government workers. Those really in the know talk about the Tri-Maf infiltrating the construction industry and the government, political positions being granted as rewards, and how people who tend to be too politically problematic end up vanishing.

DOWNTOWN

Downtown is the defining "face" of Laguna Velasco, though wisely, civic planners declined to emulate the Rutherford District (which many might argue is the true "downtown" of New Angeles). Instead, downtown Laguna Velasco mirrors many of the civic and governmental centers of other megacities. Wide lawns, gardens, and the inlets and coves of the reservoir surround the towering institutions of government. After all, in an overcrowded city like New Angeles, empty space is the ultimate expression of wealth and power.

Downtown Laguna Velasco has a large commercial zone of starscrapers and arcologies that surround the civic buildings crowding the south shore of the Velasco Ibarra. During the day, this subdistrict buzzes with activity as government workers push virtual paper and lobby for legal changes, retail staff and autokiosks serve those workers, and citizens arrive to petition in person. Some believe the government deliberately retains the archaic requirement that petitions must be delivered in person to keep the number of petitions low. A few know that face-to-face time—and a little bribery—still works wonders.

CITY HALL

Unsurprisingly, given that it's the seat of governance for half a billion people, City Hall is actually an interlinked complex of buildings that covers several city blocks along the shore of the Velasco Ibarra reservoir. Dozens of offices, data hubs, and garages for municipal hoppers surround the gleaming silver tower of the central administration building, all linked together in a web of skywalks, slidewalks, and tunnels. At the top of central admin, Mayor Ignacio Wells works tirelessly at the monumental and often thankless job of running the worlds' biggest city.

The NAPD headquarters is just offshore from City Hall, and that proximity reinforces security protocols that rival those found in Beijing and BosWash. The City Hall complex swarms with uniformed and plainclothes police officers and patrolling camdrones, and hoppers must approach via preapproved skylanes. Given New Angeles' importance to the United States (and given that Port McNair on the Challenger Planetoid is still the home of much of the Space Expeditionary Corps), the U.S. military contributes a small but competent force of MPs to the security efforts as well.

Underneath the complex, the city maintains one of the largest noncorporate computer systems in the worlds, with several acres of server farms buried beneath multiple layers of concrete, carbosteel, and buckyweave mesh. These servers are the electronic brain of the city, and their defenses are rated to withstand a tactical nuke and the resulting EMP. The basement also maintains the mayor's "war room," a crisis-management center with the staff and equipment to guide New Angeles through anything from a typhoon or tsunami to a sudden eruption of Volcán Cayambe.

COLBY PRICE: CORRUPT BUREAUCRAT

Overworked and underpaid, thin and reedy Price, a mid-tier government staffer, is far too enamored with what little power he has. A locus of information from up the admin chain down to the interns, he passes on a lot of gossip that he claims as truth. Though competent enough to keep his job, he does not possess enough savvy to advance. His downfall, or salvation, may lie with his new "friends," powerful individuals that he doesn't realize belong to the Tri-Maf.

SOLEDAD VALENCIA: OBSERVANT VENDOR

Once a property magnate fallen on hard times, Valencia borrowed money for an old, portable heater coil and a cart. Dressed in slightly worn casual wear amid a sea of suits, her hair tied into neat twists, she now sells cheap boiled meats for the downtown lunchtime crowd. Patrons find her positivity refreshing and see in her an inspirational example of the "bootstraps" ethos. Valencia is no fool, however. She listens closely to what people say when they buy lunch from her and with whom they meet, and she is more than happy to sell information on her former peers to anyone who might be interested.

INEZ DELGADO (NEMESIS)

A runner gone legit, Delgado has not shaken off her criminal reputation despite having become one of the best investigators in the NAPD Netcrimes Division. With her punk fade and bioluminescent tattoos, she doesn't fit the image of a cop, and jealous peers think she has the division set up for a long con. In truth, she finds the work interesting and fun, and as long as she closes cases, her bosses ignore her methods.

BRAWN	AGILITY	INTELLECT	CUNNING	WILLPOWER	PRESENCE
3	2	4	4	2	2

SOAK VALUE	WOUND THRESHOLD	STRAIN THRESHOLD	M/R DEFENSE
4	15	16	0 | 0

Motivations: Desire (Excitement), Fear (Failure), Strength (Courageous), Flaw (Recklessness).
Skills: Athletics 1, Computers (Hacking) 3, Computers (Sysops) 3, Deception 2, Knowledge (The Net) 3, Knowledge (Society) 3, Perception 2, Ranged (Light) 2, Skulduggery 2, Streetwise 3, Vigilance 2.
Talents: Adversary 1 (upgrade the difficulty of all combat checks against this target once), Determined Hunter (after successfully tracing another character during a Network encounter, gains one additional trace), Improved Defensive Sysops (when defending a computer system against intrusion, add ✕ ✪ to opponents' checks).
Abilities: Personalized Icebreaker Suite (always considered to have a strength 4 icebreaker that can affect barriers, sentries, and code gates. If break ice action fails, may spend ⩓ ⩓ ⩓ ⩓ or ❁ to not suffer any effects of failing to break ice).
Equipment: Pistol (Ranged [Light]; Damage 6; Critical 3; Range [Medium]), reinforced uniform (+1 soak), PAD, customized cyber rig, NAPD badge.

NEW ANGELES POLICE DEPARTMENT HEADQUARTERS

Roughly a hundred meters offshore, the imposing granite and plascrete edifice that is the NAPD's central headquarters erupts from the waves like a primitive monolith. The building is visible from all of the civic offices and rambling mansions that dot the lakefront, an unsubtle reminder of the constant vigilance of the forces of law and order. The lower levels are packed with prisoner processing facilities and detention cells, while the upper levels contain the extensive administrative apparatus for the NAPD, along with media relations, training facilities, and the police force's Cyber Bureau. In between are the levels devoted to Laguna Velasco's 1st Precinct house, and each day hundreds of police hoppers shoot out of the building's mid-level launch tubes to enforce the law in the district.

NUEVO ANGELES OPERA HOUSE

One of the most technologically advanced opera houses in the world, Nuevo Angeles has a facade designed to look like an Incan step pyramid and a foyer done in Spanish Colonial style with archways, chandeliers, and exposed staircases. The stage has a segmented and articulated floor, allowing sets—and performers—to rotate, rise, fall, and glide under several dozen holoprojectors, so audiences can watch modern shows or the classics performed with only physical stage sets. Ticket prices remain exorbitant, even for standing-room-only, and power players attend at least one show a year to rub elbows with the elite.

SPECIAL ECONOMIC ZONE OF ECUADORIAN NEW LOS ANGELES FEDERAL COURTHOUSE

Just like the rest of New Angeles' civic infrastructure, the federal courthouse in the heart of downtown Laguna Velasco is enormous. Built in the form of a squat and imposing ziggurat, the federal courthouse has all of the latest technology required for processing thousands of federal crimes a day.

Full-sized courtrooms dominate the upper floors, with the largest reserved for sensational "trials of the century" and are equipped for full sensie recordings. However, given the sheer number of cases to be processed, much more of the courthouse exists in cyberspace on the building's server network. Judges, attorneys, juries, and audiences can all access court through VR rigs, and defendants don't even have to leave the security of prison. Accessing a virtual trial is much easier than attending a physical one. As a result, a cottage industry of commentators and shoutcasters has sprung up, trawling the stream of court cases to look for something interesting, outlandish, or horrifying enough to report on.

ALEX GALECIO: CYNICAL LAWYER

Alex to their friends, if they had any, and Mx. Galecio to their enemies, of which they have many, Galecio got into law for the job: no more, no less. Now a public defender, they have developed a cynical, blasé attitude toward the law, government, and their profession. Galecio has an incredible amount of dirt on other lawyers and judges but doesn't know what to do with it. This lack of ambition, reflected in their short, unstyled haircut and several-years-out-of-date suits, shirts, and ties, could be reversed with just the right ear and a little under-the-table money.

THE COLORADO

Built on one of the hills overlooking the lake, this ritzy restaurant has a dark-red color scheme and claims to have an indigenous Ecuadorian Tsáchila theme. It is staffed by specialty clone chefs, bought exclusively from Jinteki. The owner and head chef claims indigenous heritage, but this is an elaborate lie, and any cracks found in it would threaten to expose his past. Rémy Cailloux left Atlantica and abandoned his renowned restaurant there after several patrons died from anaphylactic shock. After receiving melanin implants, facial-bone nanomods, and a new identity, he opened the Colorado under the name Carlos Zambrano. The restaurant's art, images, and decorations aren't authentic Tsáchila, either. Local Tsáchila protest the place quite often, with the surreptitious support of Humanity Labor, which wishes to close it down due to its clone labor.

LAKESIDE

North of downtown, myriad twisting channels, following the paths of ancient valleys and ravines down from the hills, feed into the reservoir. This maze creates more than a hundred kilometers of prime beachfront property, much of which has long since been snatched up by the rich and powerful. Rambling Spanish Colonial mansions sprawl across the waterfront, while back from the water, modern constructions with wood and stone facades mimic plantations or rainforest villas. Behind them, the ground slopes upward into the heart of Laguna Valesco, gleaming arcologies surrounded by acres of plaza-level greenspace that overlook the sun-drenched waters of the reservoir.

Beneath the L-squares is the heart of Laguna Velasco's undercity. Here, the NAPD and prisec forces have a zero-tolerance policy for any sort of lawbreaking, and petty crooks and squatters can find themselves swept up with hardened criminals and sent off to jail. Local *disenfrancistos* claim that the NAPD follows a tacit policy of "voluntary relocation." In other words, it makes life so unpleasant for whomever it dubs "undesirable" that most people would rather flee to other districts than stay and suffer.

CERRO BOMBOLÍ

Once the only hill with a good view of the area for the wealthy, Cerro Bombolí is now a massive tower buttressed by arched skyways, with ongoing construction on top reaching ever higher. Each of the L-squares around it are of a different construction and design fad. The lower ones

UTILITIES

As a time-honored tradition, runners still target public utilities, such as the power grid. Some see this as practice and training before taking on the megacorps, the "real" targets. Others use it as a form of bragging or trolling, and a few use it as a vector for political protests. As a result, Laguna Velasco's utility companies have the best (and most deadly) ice around and their own counterintrusion sysops corps. Sadly, this usually means that the poorer districts, like Guayaquil, get targeted more often and suffer from occasional outages.

have already undergone renovations in a faux–Spanish Baroque style, with complicated figure carvings framing doorways and windows, and columns decorated with patterns made of expensive imported marble. Deep in the tower's undercity levels, now riddled with support structures, the pre–Beanstalk era Sanctuary of Our Lady of Bombolí still receives Catholic pilgrims seeking the Virgin Mary's blessing. The statue and building are now owned and maintained by the Order of Sol.

ISABELLE SOUSA: RISING SHOUTCASTER STAR

Freelance NBN law reporter by day, high-society shoutcaster by night, Sousa hardly sleeps. Incredibly ambitious, she has successfully divided her career between serious, technical reporting on the government's legal proceedings and chronicling the sensationalist, hyper-hyped high life of the upper class. Her forceful, magnetic personality helps her grow her fanbase and get her interviews with risties who wouldn't normally give her the time of day. She has highly rabid fans from both careers and utilizes them as a crowdsourced research group even as she tries to keep her stalkers at arm's length.

CORAZÓN Y ALMA

This neighborhood serves as an example of a newly developed, upper–middle class area. Here, developers have built a romanticized ideal of a Spanish city, with apartments above shops, narrow stone streets, grass- and tree-lined parks, and picturesque bars and restaurants. Residents can find everything they need within walking distance. Each level has an unusually high ceiling that projects the sky in sync with the natural sky far above. The development is so new that roughly a quarter of it is still empty.

NEW ANGELES LAGUNA VELASCO REHABILITATION FACILITY

In the undercity and underground, this prison, run by Globalsec using the latest in rehabilitation technology, is used as a corporate reeducation facility and cyberpsyche experimental lab. Its rows and rows of coffin-sized prison cells resemble a morgue, and guards outfitted with VR headgear can "peek" into each physical cell and the prisoner's VR environment. For reduced prison sentences, inmates get immersed in VR experiments funded by Jinteki, Haas-Bioroid, and a host of minor corps. Runners employed by 14K or the yakuza connect imprisoned members to the outside, allowing them to keep in touch with their respective organizations as they serve their time.

"AUNTIE" JOYCE BATEMAN: BOND AGENT

Looking for opportunity and a new start, Jim Bateman changed her name to Joyce, moved to New Angeles, and found a niche as a bail bond agent. Sob stories move her quite often, and she has waived fees for those who have families to support or jobs they cannot lose. For this, a lot of locals have brought her more business and done favors for her; they even donated money when she went in for surgery. She has a perfect memory for faces, names, and stories of bad luck, so she can be a good source of local information.

ZARACAY PARK

A statue said to depict Abraham Calazacón, a great historical leader of the indigenous Tsáchila people, stands at the center of Zaracay Park. Defaced, damaged, and graffiti covered, it overlooks a crowded undercity homeless encampment built from tents, tarps, reclaimed bioplas, and plascrete blocks. Long marked for redevelopment and surrounded by arcology structures (and occluded by plaza-level L-squares fifty meters overhead), the park remains untouched due to activists' efforts to preserve and restore the location. Having received constant harassment from the authorities, these activists have changed focus; now, they and unhoused people have erected bioplas and concrete barricades around the camp, waiting for the inevitable armed crackdown.

LEVY UNIVERSITY

Although Levy boasts one of the finest virtual learning facilities on the Network and attracts hundreds of thousands of students from just about everywhere with access, the Laguna Velasco campus remains its heart and soul. The campus sprawls across several square kilometers in a confusing medley of stately brick piles engulfed in tropical vines, modern student residence high-rises, sleek white composite-walled labs, and "temporary" prefabricated structures that have long outlasted their intended lifespan.

LU's artificial intelligence programs are the absolute best in academia; every spring, swarms of corporate recruiters descend on campus to draft the brightest of the graduating class. Levy also boasts an impressive network architecture department and engineering school (with mechanical and molecular engineering tracks rivaled only by Mumbad Civic University), and it has a respectable liberal arts college as well. Unfortunately, the same can't be said for LU's various sports teams, which seem to exist only to disappoint the legions of first-year students who flock to their games.

DOLAN UNION

LU's student union takes advantage of the tropical climate and exists mostly outdoors. The building is a wide dome covering an area of greenspace. The dome is entirely transparent, and panels can swing open to let in fresh air as long as the weather cooperates. Shops and eateries line the inner wall, while the central greenspace is dotted with couches, tables, and lawns created from exceptionally durable grass hybrids. The union's basement has a trio of nightclubs, a pool hall, a bowling alley, and an arcade outfitted for everything from retro 2D games to full-immersion modern masterpieces.

New arrivals to LU quickly learn that a favorite prank among graduating seniors in network architecture is to wait for a stormy day and hack the roof panels.

LU LIBRARY AND ARCHIVES

The Levy University Library exists primarily in virtual space, with access kiosks scattered across the university grounds (and any registered student can log in via their PAD). Thus, the library's physical facilities are primarily server farms. However, the library does maintain an extensive archive of artifacts and physical books, which faculty and grad students have access to. A club of aspiring runners and programmers called "the Librarians" hang out in the archives.

MICHAEL BRUCE SCHOOL OF ENGINEERING

The upper floors of this building are a collection of modest lecture facilities and classrooms. However, the real fun exists in the lower ones. Half of the school is below ground, and this space is almost entirely devoted to applied-research labs and test facilities. Each lab has a full suite of safety features and an attendant AI that oversees experiments and tests to ensure nothing too dangerous gets tested. Naturally, these are the first things most students learn to override.

So far, none of the experiments have resulted in any fatalities among the student body (or breached the meter-thick concrete walls that separate each lab). However, enterprising graduate students have been known to sell some of their more dangerous "experiments" to friends in need. Levy University is also full of rumors of rogue drones escaping the labs and roaming the Rat Maze, preying on unwary undergrads.

THE RAT MAZE

Beneath the buildings and quads of LU is a chaotic maze of subbasements, underground walkways, utility tunnels, storage rooms, and stairwells. Haphazardly mapped at best, some of the lowest levels have been completely forgotten and abandoned. Here, lighting is fitful to nonexistent, some passageways are flooded, and in places, walls have completely collapsed. There may even be routes leading into the greater New Angeles sewer system, or into long-lost cave systems running deep into Ecuador's bedrock.

Students call this place the Rat Maze, and over the years, scores of terrifying legends have sprung up about undergrads lost beneath the surface for days, rogue clones roaming the tunnels with meat cleavers, and flooded basements becoming home to alligators, piranhas, or hyperrats. Although most of the stories are probably myths, that hasn't stopped various fraternities, sororities, and gender-neutral Greek houses from including the Rat Maze in elaborate hazing rituals. More recently, Terrisa McCallen, a grad student pursuing a PhD in urban mythology, has been looking to hire some enterprising individuals to help her map the Rat Maze and see if any of the legends have some basis in the truth.

MANTA

Originally a trading and fishing town dating from pre-Columbian days, Manta had mostly completed its transition into a vacation and resort destination by the time it was incorporated into New Angeles. Developers quickly took full advantage of its hundred kilometers of beautiful beaches and scenic landscapes. These days, Manta is divided into three distinct sections: the Strip, the business subdistrict, and the warehouse subdistrict.

The Strip includes the sandy, curved line of beaches stretching north to south; the resort hotels next to the beach; and the nightclubs and bars scattered between the hotels. The Strip caters to rich expats from all over the world and professional vacationers—risties from New Angeles who do nothing but spend their parents' money.

The Strip's resorts, hotels, and entertainment complexes are some of the most elaborate and innovative in the world. Hotels and resorts include artificial interior environments such as an indoor ski slopes, restructured beaches into unique shapes, buildings designed to resemble abstract sculpture, and elaborate holoparks that can turn sections of the heavily developed beachfront into secluded tropical jungles.

Beyond the resorts, a long line of businesses runs parallel to the Strip. People in this part of Manta mostly work rather than play, and the placement of the various arcologies and towers prevents the rich and beautiful from seeing the practical side of Manta. This area has a strong technology and engineering sector. Money from the Strip feeds into these companies in the form of investments; investors strike a deal and then hit the Strip to celebrate.

Between the business subdistrict and Rabotgorod lies the bulk of the warehouse subdistrict, which also includes industrial shipping docks on the coast at both ends of Manta. The warehouses, which support the shipping industry, spill from Manta into Rabotgorod proper. However, unlike Rabotgorod's "Stalingrad" warehouse subdistrict, Manta's has the money for the best electronic and physical security. With the Strip's constant demand for food, drugs, drink, and luxury goods—Manta offers plenty of shopping—these warehouses never sit empty for long.

THE STRIP

Just about anything beautiful, glamorous, on the bleeding edge of technology, or outrageous can be found or experienced on the Strip. This wide row of hotels and resorts following the shoreline is essentially one giant party, day and night.

AL-GHYM

The media call this hotel both an architectural marvel and a high-maintenance disaster. The sky-blue building with white trim is "fully modular and mobile." The floors rotate, and individual rooms can shift up and down into different floors, replicating the idyllic movement of clouds. Each room is linked to its guests' bioprofiles to ensure the elevators take residents to the right floor no matter how intoxicated they are. The mechanisms and code that move the rooms break down constantly, forcing the hotel to keep scores of technicians and programmers on retainer. There are rumors of at least one malicious run on the hotel's core programming that allowed unknown criminals to rob a wealthy patron by redirecting their room to a different part of the hotel.

ANON

Anon advertises itself as the best drugs, music, and dancing personified, with a hologram theme. Meatspace clubgoers wear holographically projected costumes, while remote clubgoers beam in virtually with full-character projectors and sensory immersion rigs. This ensures nobody is ever sure who their dance partner, drinking companion, or fellow party-goer really is (and Anon is even rumored to have private security circulating under the guise of their own

UNDERCITY AMONG US

Due to Manta's beachfront nature, its plaza level is, on average, only a few meters above ground level. Along the beach, the plaza level merges seamlessly with the brilliant white sand, but deep in the warehouse subdistrict, it's several stories up. This means the lower classes and *disenfrancistos* don't have their own hidden enclaves and tend to jostle elbows with the rich and powerful. This helps give Manta the reputation for being both more egalitarian than other districts and considerably wilder.

holoprojections to keep an eye on things). Though the interior of the club is a featureless black cube, additional projectors provide a different and elaborate environment every night. Artists and designers get paid quite a bit to make custom holographic disguises and sets, and the club is always seeking out new design talent to keep things interesting. Of course, more than a few criminals and local fixers use the club as a completely public yet entirely anonymous (and thus deniable) meeting place.

HAAS ARCOLOGY

Down on Manta's southern end, Haas Arcology was built on a promontory overlooking the San Lorenzo neighborhood, on the site of an old lighthouse. Now, the towering building covers the entire point, its gleaming pearl-grey walls descending straight into the pounding surf.

Haas Arcology serves as Haas-Bioroid's corporate headquarters and, unsurprisingly, is a marvel of modern technology. The kilometer-tall construction contains the most advanced AI ever integrated into a building, ensuring that everything from the climate controls to the breakroom coffee makers are computer-controlled for maximum efficiency. Thousands of employees live on the tower's lower levels, while the upper levels contain the corporation's crown jewels. Haas Academy sits just below the executive offices at the building's apex. Below it is a secured rapid prototyping lab (able to construct new robots and bioroids in a matter of hours), the best neuromedical lab found in New Angeles, and the Cortex Archives. The last is a complete record of every braintape made by HB, stored on secured servers with no Network access. Rumor has it that most of the famous figures of the last thirty years have their braintapes kept here.

PARTY ROW

This row of permanently docked private boats and cruisers belongs to a set of wealthy corporate aristocrats and celebrities. Almost every weekend, it acts as an ongoing, extremely exclusive block party. Guests can only come in if they know someone who knows someone and can get past the security guarding the building that leads to the dock. Authorities find Party Row frustrating. Technically, the dock and the boats are private property, and they can't interfere unless someone falls into the water. It is not uncommon for groups of fans or risties to leap into the water to swim to the boats—a school of young, impressionable fish surrounding the corporate sharks.

DANIEL IBN ZAYD: MYSTERIOUS PARTY ANIMAL

Ibn Zayd considers himself a professional partier competing with the more famous Thomas Haas. Known throughout the Strip, always wearing the latest fashions and priceless jewelry, skin perfectly moisturized, he catches people up in his wake to show them a fun, amazing, and strange time. A good person to know, with deep pockets and valuable contacts, he nevertheless remains mercurial and hard to stay friends with. Authorities know he spends time with yakuza members, but they haven't proven any criminal activity.

SYNESTHESIA

This themed restaurant attempts to turn dining into an experience that stimulates all five senses. At Synesthesia, guests dine in complete darkness, in sound-canceling booths. Their food starts as shapeless, tasteless gels, which they alter by adding their own custom tastes and scents with an array of droppers. Overhead speakers play music or random sounds, and other combinations of experiential senses may be engaged. Lately, the owner has been experimenting with food based on moods, balancing ethically on a chef's-knife edge using psychotropic substances that are either not quite legal or barely approved and regulated.

WHITE BEACH

This carefully cultivated stretch of pure (and constantly purified) white silica sand is the ultimate example of Manta's beachfront culture. The beach is completely artificial: the sand is manufactured, the water purified through a ring of filters two hundred meters offshore, and the waves carefully moderated by a system of tidal harnesses. Everything has been carefully designed to give the rich and powerful an ideal beach-going experience.

BUSINESS SUBDISTRICT

Just beyond the Strip, a set of modestly sized skyscrapers form a wall along the sandy, palm-lined streets. None are tall enough to qualify as proper starscrapers; they're just big enough that the upper stories get a lovely view of the Pacific. Behind them, the rest of the business subdistrict stretches for kilometers, a maze of residences and offices. The humdrum appearance of this region belies its importance in genetics and biotech research. For many corporations, Manta seems poised to become a new hotbed of technological innovation.

SUNKEN CITY

The name of this community has been lost to history (or at least to the basement archives of the public library), but it appears to have been a modest town before climate change and rising ocean levels flooded it. Many of the buildings have collapsed as waves and currents have battered them down. However, a few dozen of the larger and sturdier buildings remain, surrounded by water a few meters deep.

In the years since New Angeles' incorporation, these ruins have become a refuge for hundreds of people unwilling or unable to live in Manta. Now, the slowly disintegrating buildings are linked by bridges of scrap wood and cable, and makeshift jetties extend out of second-story windows. Pole barges ply the calmer waters of the flooded streets, and some enterprising residents have set up crude breakwaters around the town's edges to tame the worst of the waves.

A couple of enterprising individuals run an informal ferry service to the mainland, but for the most part, the Sunken City is cut off from New Angeles proper. Technically, living in the ruins is illegal, but the NAPD stays away. It's also dangerous: collapses and drownings claim a few of the two hundred or so residents each year. Most of the inhabitants make a living through salvage diving. A motley collection of dive boats waits on the outskirts of town for tropical storms to roll in. After the weather calms, their crews sally forth to find containers knocked free from overloaded cargo vessels, looting and selling their contents. Occasionally, a whole ship sinks, and the entire fleet converges on the site. Tensions run high during these "gold rushes," and vicious battles can break out.

HEUREKA

Modeled after the infamous Encephalon Trust that resulted in the Vancouver Intervention of '33, Heureka collects the best, the brightest, and the youngest to dream up theoretical technologies. The interior of the multicolored building looks like a playground filled with hologames, AI toys, a fully stocked bar with a bartender, holosuites, a staffed kitchen, and nary a desk in sight. Its scientists, engineers, and technicians either roam from area to area, chatting and collaborating while hidden cameras and microphones record their discoveries. These new technocrats, who consider themselves the height of human evolution, tend to come to work drunk or high, but the company turns a blind eye as long as their output remains unchanged. Lately, some of Heureka's wunderkinds have started suspecting the company of surveilling them during their off hours, and at least one staff member hasn't been showing up for work or answering calls after they talked privately about looking for another job.

ZHOU MÈNGXŪ: QUESTIONABLE ACCOUNTANT

Often tasked with handling young risties' personal accounts, Zhōu scrubs their expenses to hide their activities, especially if they don't want mommy and daddy to know. She also handles other quasilegal and grey-market matters for her clients. Sometimes a parent pays a little extra to have Zhōu limit their offspring's spending or to hire minders to keep them out of trouble.

I/O SECURE DATA INC.

An average warehouse on the outside, I/O Secure Data Inc. is all massive rows of servers within. The company's clients include plenty of corporations who want to keep projects off their more public servers, and it employs some of the most dangerous ice and most disciplined mercenaries in the world to protect its clients' data.

THE BROADSHEET

The Broadsheet is one of the more notorious gossip rags in Manta, and its offices are packed with haphazardly placed desks, vidscreens, and stacks of files and mem chips. Reporters and videographers snap vids of celebrities, write about alleged affairs, and hint at salacious crimes. The Broadsheet also hosts numerous parties; risties and celebs show up if they feel like "slumming it" or need the publicity.

PERSONAL EFFICIENCY AND LOGISTICS EXPERTS

Ostensibly a research facility with a nebulous mandate and secretive clientele, PELE is actually in the business of quietly and illegally manufacturing untraceable high-tech weapons for anyone who can afford them. The company specializes in directed-energy weapons, and its lasers and masers are as good as anything made by Haas-Bioroid's NEXT division. The weapons it makes are all to order, and it serves an exclusive client list. Each PELE-made weapon is thoroughly reliable and completely untraceable.

The last time the local Tri-Maf boss tried to move in on PELE's business, it didn't go well for the orgcrime members. The facility treated the entire event as a live weapons test and product demonstration. Ever since, most criminals give the nondescript building a wide berth, while a few have become enthusiastic customers.

WAREHOUSE SUBDISTRICT

The warehouse subdistrict borders Rabotgorod, out of sight from the Strip. Many of the lower-level employees who work in the Strip live here. However, the subdistrict is more than just a bedroom community. It has its own vibrant culture, and most of the locals care as little for the Strip as the risties care for them.

LITTLE BOLLYWOOD

Little Bollywood encompasses a collection of warehouses along the Pital Canal, an old boat, and some rusty, rundown docks. It has been the site of many a big picture, musical, and indie movie scene, and its warehouses also have several indoor film sets. Although the outside appears run-down, the warehouse interiors showcase an impressive collection of salvaged, scrounged, or stolen holocams, tactile feedback rigs, and sensory editing suits. Both the Tri-Maf and the yakuza have investments in this industry, with 14K trying to edge into the action. All the orgcrime members who work with Little Bollywood possess film-history knowledge, have experience in film production, or have dabbled in acting.

THE RACETRACKS

In this abandoned junkyard, racers, artists, and runners have put together an unsanctioned multilevel racetrack and obstacle course. The vehicles raced here are usually the size of a motorcycle. Pilots may be AIs, humans piloting in person, or humans piloting remotely via the Net. The most popular event is the Copilot Track, where a wireless pilot controls the vehicle, but intermittent wireless-signal blockers on the track periodically force the vehicle to depend on its built-in AI. Betting pools attract orgcrime, but all of the participants possess some enthusiasm for racing, engineering, or piloting.

RABOTGOROD

Originally rainforest and floodplains, Rabotgorod—then known as Urban Planning District A14—received a flood of investment money to build inexpensive housing for the workers on the Beanstalk construction project. This, in turn, brought in even more labor to construct the housing. These people needed places to eat, to shop, and to congregate, so small businesses similarly appeared overnight, a few merely an enterprising person with a hot plate connected to a solar panel serving anything from chugchucaras and bao to piroshki and sauerkraut. Institutions such as places of worship and community centers soon followed.

The collapse of the Russian Federation, and the subsequent influx of cheap labor, pushed a group of Russian engineers and architects to use a monotown model based on an old Soviet urban planning method for Rabotgorod. Cheap, efficient, and ugly, the resulting blocky buildings in grid formations resembled barracks more than apartments, but they quickly provided places to live and work. The name of the district came from the Russian term "Rabotnik Gorod" or "Workers' City."

The developers never planned for long-term residency, however. Materials—wood, stone, concrete, even packed earth in one desperate area—came from everywhere, and the local government rubber-stamped permits. Mold, illegal materials, and even structural collapse plagued workers as they packed themselves into tiny apartments. Fires erupted regularly due to shoddy wiring and flammable building materials. These disasters fed on themselves in a perverted irony, as they provided more jobs to rebuild the neighborhood in an equally substandard manner while killing off people and opening up the market for yet more workers.

Eventually, many of the original tenements were cleared out, and new clone-tels, clone barracks, and bioroid storage facilities began opening up. As the Beanstalk project ended and Haas-Bioroid and Jinteki began flooding the market with androids, Rabotgorod took on a new role as housing for this new labor, and the district's nickname became "Robot City."

Yet, the majority of the human worker population refused to leave after the Beanstalk project ended, hoping for the next big construction boom. Now, Rabotgorod shows signs of workers taking control of their environment. By knocking down walls to create larger apartments for families, laying gangplanks to connect buildings and manage foot traffic, and building makeshift ladders, lifts, and stairs to connect arcology levels, these unemployed workers struggle to keep this district a home and community.

A typical Rabotgorod neighborhood gives the impression of either a mishmash of apartments tossed together like children's blocks or an organized set of cold, soulless cubes resembling fortresses more than homes. Inhabitants can see the district's decay in the ubiquitous abandoned construction sites and burned-out building husks. Everything else in Rabotgorod displays efficiency—in maximizing profit—while pressing human bodies into the tiniest spaces imaginable. Add heat, humidity, and the frustration of unemployment, and this district is less a cold retro-Soviet landscape and more a boiling pot of unrest.

CHONE

In the years leading up to the construction of the Beanstalk, shipments of materials were routed through Rabotgorod's Chone subdistrict, and landowners saw their real estate values blossom—a trend that locals have struggled to continue since the space elevator's completion. Developers have renamed Chone "Green Valley" to promote an affluent image—and to raise property values. The newly wealthy have been spilling out of Manta and Laguna Velasco to settle in Green Valley's brightly lit housing blocks with elevated slidewalks nestled between each building. EverGreen grass, bioplastic enhanced oxygen-expelling "trees," and g-modded flowering bushes give this subdistrict a touch of color.

A SIMULATION OF ARTIFICIAL NEURONS

When the small arts and crafts shop Talentala suffered an industrial accident a few months ago, bioroid labor repaired the blown-out wall. Some time later, those same bioroid contractors painted the outside wall in abstract shapes of various colors. More bioroids came to add their own abstract decorations, including a swoop of construction metal that serves no practical purpose. Some humans think this display hints at a strange bioroid plot or symptoms of bioroid psychopathy. Others see the "art" as quaint. The wealthy see it as an eyesore.

SAINT OLESYA ORTHODOX CHURCH

Saint Olesya has retained the traditional Russian Orthodox look, with towers topped by onion domes and a gold-and-white color scheme, yet its interior sports vidscreens next to the traditional icons, candles, and painted ceilings. The new, younger leadership brings excitement and energy from the Order of Sol, but the church still has a stubborn and traditional set of Russian parishioners who chafe against the influx of wealthy, nondenominational worshipers. Additional tensions have arisen because, while the traditionalists are deeply uncomfortable with and even angry about the development of androids, the young leadership agrees with the Order of Sol's tolerance of androids, and the wealthy both accept and employ them. Complicating matters further, Saint Olesya's priests talk openly with both bioroids and Humanity Labor leaders, while the wealthy parishioners want the priests to remain apolitical.

SARAH 1X508T: QUESTIONING ANDROID

Sarah is a Janice-model bioroid who has been seen at various churches and community events sponsored by the Order of Sol. Always full of questions on spirituality, she claims to be exploring this aspect of the human condition. Some priests enjoy the discussion and others don't, but Sarah always comes across as earnest and inquisitive. She usually leads the discussion around to other bioroids and her human technicians, mentioning the idea that humans construct God in their image and exploring whether a God of bioroids should be human or machine. What the priests—and her technicians—can't determine is if she genuinely has faith.

THE BIG HOLE

The G. W. Foundations construction company has been mired in bureaucratic red tape, labor issues, and even a groundcar accident in the past year. For years, its construction site, which locals call "the Big Hole," "the Toilet," or "the Outhouse," has been a decrepit spiderweb of support beams and plastic sheeting rising from a giant hole. The owner, in the pocket of the Mafia, formed his dummy company to stretch the government's development money as long as possible. As per the contract, the company uses bioroids—but only when it needs to look busy. It hires human day laborers—contracted by the Mafia —when it wants to stall.

ZOILA SHIMPIUKAT: IDEALISTIC PRODIGAL

Levy University's Architectural and Industrial Design Program is funded with donations from the Weyland Consortium. The cradle-to-desk program expected Shimpiukat to immediately jump into a corporate position, but then she saw the unused spaces in Rabotgorod. Once she finished her degree, she set about advocating for funding to repair and reclaim abandoned spaces and turn them into something functional. Even though Shimpiukat was born in Rabotgorod, her education and government ties cause the locals see her as an outsider and, worse yet, a corporate sympathizer planning to bulldoze unauthorized housing.

BLOC 0853

A good chunk of Rabotgorod consists of residential areas that house human labor. The massive residential buildings, made of a mix of concrete, metal, plascrete, and even wood, stretch out endlessly left, right, and up. Most of the blocs have no distinctive features, but Bloc 0853 has a few strange locations not found in the other residential areas.

BLINCHIKI

Once an automated restaurant, Blinchiki now serves as an ad hoc gambling hall, its kitchen automation having been torn out and sold for scrap long ago. It still serves a limited menu (anything that can be reheated in a prep-machine) and has a bar. The few old, holographic pachinko machines sit mostly unplayed, since Mafia members waiting for meals and orders from their superiors instead play classic cards or roll dice on the restaurant's old, scratched-up, recycled-plastic tables. Some locals come here to kill time and lose a little money as well. People don't go to Blinchiki to meet high-ranking Mafia members, but to talk to a friend of a friend for help or a favor.

OLIA "OLLY" KOZACHENKO: VICIOUS PIT BOSS

Kozachenko works as a pit boss at Blinchiki, organizes out-of-work human laborers, and supervises them on-site. They make sure everyone gets a turn on the employment roster, but they act more as a Mafia recruiter than as a labor organizer. By guaranteeing everyone receives just enough work to get by, Kozachenko also ensures no one gets enough savings to break away from the Mafia's influence. With a shaved head, extensive mob tattoos, and body builder's arm muscles, they cut an intimidating figure. They do not tolerate laziness, incompetence, or intoxication.

NEW ANGELES RECOVERY HOUSE

The New Angeles Recovery House is a halfway house that receives funds from the Starlight Crusade. Residents in recovery work repairing and refurbishing this abandoned

KATI JONES (NEMESIS)

Though Jones has an apartment and carefully hidden garage in Rabotgorod, she lives, works, and plays in her hoppers. A consummate professional, she works as a courier and a getaway driver. She has never missed a deadline or lost a package, and she keeps that record by carefully vetting her clients. If an employer doesn't supply her with enough information about a job, she can afford to let it pass.

BRAWN	AGILITY	INTELLECT	CUNNING	WILLPOWER	PRESENCE
2	4	2	3	3	2

SOAK VALUE	WOUND THRESHOLD	STRAIN THRESHOLD	M/R DEFENSE
2	12	14	0 | 0

Motivations: Desire (Expertise), Fear (Death), Strength (Professionalism), Flaw (Compulsion).
Skills: Athletics 1, Coordination 2, Computers (Sysops) 3, Driving 4, Knowledge (Society) 2, Perception 2, Piloting 4, Stealth 1, Streetwise 2, Vigilance 2.
Talents: Adversary 1 (upgrade the difficulty of all combat checks against this target once), Determined Driver (when driving or piloting a vehicle, may spend a Story Point to have the vehicle heal 4 system strain), Offensive Driving (when driving or piloting, may make an **opposed Driving or Piloting versus Driving or Piloting check** versus the driver or pilot of one other vehicle in medium range. If successful, roll two Critical Hit results, choose one to apply to Jones' vehicle and one to the target vehicle. ⊛ adds +20 to one result, ⊛⊛ adds +20 to both results).
Abilities: Max Throttle (when piloting or driving a vehicle, its max speed is increased by 1).
Equipment: Flight suit, leather jacket, custom hopper (use luxury hopper profile on page 114 with encumbrance capacity of 40), hopperbike.

office building to turn it into more temporary apartments by replacing lights, installing more piping for the bathrooms, and tearing out moldy carpeting. Intended for low-risk drug addicts and criminals reintegrating into society, the Recovery House has an unspoken no-bioroid policy. All the staff and volunteers are human, and the literature even mentions a rejection of "artificiality." The anti-simulant movement claims this literature supports it, and the Recovery House has made no statement for or against the claim.

FERNANDO HILDAGO: PEACEFUL ADVOCATE

Hildago has always sought a place to belong. He spent a little time with the displaced Siona people based on his ancestry, but he couldn't connect with their advocacy to reclaim land from the Cayambe District. He fell into various local gangs but couldn't stomach the violence. After getting arrested for possession and struggling through a rehab program, Hildago discovered the Starlight Crusade and came out a changed man. People who once knew him say he has a completely different personality: serene (some say vacant) and blissful (some say brainwashed). He volunteers at local clinics and provides drug counseling.

OLD WORLD IMPORTS

Tucked among the middle levels of Rabotgorod's undercity, the storefront of this tiny shop displays a depressing collection of dust-covered *matryoshka* dolls, dingy knockoff Fabergé eggs, cheap stone chess sets, and long-expired tins of caviar. The owner is a sad bear of a man named Sergei Lomovtsev, who spends his time disparaging his own wares to any potential customer.

However, if someone knows what to ask for, Sergei shuts the shop and leads them into his back room. There, he keeps his actual Old World imports: a collection of surplus firearms and tactical gear from Russia's deteriorating military. All illegal, of course, but most in functional condition and sold at affordable prices.

SAFEPOD 54A

Clone-tels and bioroid hibernation pod warehouses are common in New Angeles. Like most SafePod clone-tels, SafePod 54a has a white reinforced-plastic and metal exterior, turned gray from Rabotgorod's dust and pollution. Its interior, also standard, contains walls upon walls of soft blue and white bunks decorated by the inhabitants. This particular clone-tel, however, has a large waiting list. For whatever reason, this specific location, despite its standard, mass-produced construction, is popular among clones. They all report a strange sensation of peace and tranquility but also surreal and meaningful dreams that a human might consider religious experiences.

SCRAPPER'S SQUARE

The nickname "Scrapper's Square" describes this popular place to spout anti-simulant (anti-android) sentiment. This open concrete square tucked in between two abandoned apartment buildings once served as a hopper parking lot. On one of the building walls, a pro–simulant rights graffiti artist has stenciled the names of scrapped bioroids in some kind of resistant paint. New paint can't stick to the stencils, dripping right off. Real scrappers refuse to come here, since the media and police tend to focus attention on the square. The majority of people who spend time here are drunkards, layabouts, and minor criminals too unreliable to find steady work; many resent the employment of androids.

"STALINGRAD"

This nickname describes the blocks of warehouses that border the Manta district and hold goods from the shipping and fishing industry. Adopted due to the subdistrict's unadorned, gray, straight-lined and sharp-cornered design aesthetic, "Stalingrad" is a sarcastic nickname because there is never enough work. This area aims for cheap storage fees and space rather than security or even cleanliness.

BIO-GOOP RECYCLING CENTER

This business doesn't have an official name. Originally a Superfund site, it has been turned into a biorecycling center by some out-of-work engineers and a few bioroids. Scavengers deliver buckets, bottles, and jugs of cooking oil, liquid plastic, lubricant, refrigerant, and solvents to the empty factory floor. Technicians sort the liquids and pour them into abandoned tanks. These pools of gunk are filtered and resold cheaply under the government's radar. Since the engineers pay individual salvagers for the discarded materials, workers have spread the word to leave the place alone, though the engineers do kick back money to the Mafia for protection.

WORKERS' WALL

The Workers' Wall is the site of an old worker strike and subsequent police and corporate suppression. The outward-facing wall of an old factory, it still has the score marks from bullets and stun blasts. Some of the older workers know the history. The younger workers hang out here to take advantage of any pick-up day or night labor opportunities while searching and applying online—someone even hacked a nearby Public Access Terminal to allow free Network access—for more permanent work. Orgcrime members and corporations that need under-the-table work done quickly send hoppers to pick workers up, no questions asked and no answers given.

CAT WALTHER: ANTI-ANDROID TERRORIST

Walther emigrated from BosWash on a construction contract she thought permanent, but she missed the at-will employment fine print. A hothead even at the best of times, she fell in with Human First and wholeheartedly accepted its anti-android sentiment, going all the way to hatred. She has been responsible for several attacks on bioroids and even proudly sports a hammer-and-broken-circuit tattoo on her muscular arm. A loud braggart, she brings trouble, violence, or the cops with her at all times. Despite her short size, most people give her a wide berth, increasing her isolation and her anger.

WAREHOUSE 413

Locals have nicknamed the unluckiest of all warehouses after the two unluckiest numbers, four and thirteen. The owner still runs the place, but it has the highest accident rate in the district and averages one arrest per month. At least one suicide occurs here each year as well, although some suspect that the deaths may be murders in disguise. As a result, 413 has a high turnover rate, so anyone can get a job here.

PHIL MATAPANG: LUNAR VET

Matapang's family moved from the Philippines to Australia due to the rising ocean level, but he left to become a soldier in the Space Expeditionary Corps in exchange for U.S. citizenship. After an attack during the Lunar Insurrection, he suffered radiation damage that caused organ failure. He received cybernetic replacements (although second-rate in quality), but he couldn't recover well enough to retain his military status. Though he received a medical discharge, he has not received much support since. Now, his cybernetics are considered third-rate, and his only work is at 413, leaving him angry and bitter. His shaggy hair and rough goatee contrasts with his worn military jacket and combat boots.

U-STOR

At U-Stor facilities, which have no human or android staff, customers get a closet-sized locker and a personal pass code. Each U-Stor presses rows upon rows of lockers, separated by a narrow walkway, into the smallest space possible. Each facility site has cameras and infrared scanners, but no live security. Using a little software or hardware trickery, humans and androids have been known to use U-Stors as shelter. That same trickery makes these places vulnerable to thievery, so over time, U-Stor has tended to store less stuff and more people. The parent corporation doesn't seem to care, as long as they get their money.

RIOTS

After the latest labor riot, the various criminal syndicates, the police, and a few corporations unofficially sat down to minimize the violence. The Mafia in particular continues to work with the authorities to "solve" crimes and maintain order, usually offering up a patsy or someone the Mafia wants to disappear. Neither the police nor the syndicates want a heavy police presence in Rabotgorod, so this arrangement works. However, a new breed of discontent is brewing in Rabotgorod, fueled and funded by Human First.

LA COSTA

Nobody would call any part of New Angeles "rural," but La Costa comes relatively close. Compared to the rest of the city, this district looks like an idyllic, green paradise. However, although this least populated district has the most undeveloped land in New Angeles, "most" is certainly relative. Agriculture, gene-culture development, and bioplastics production dominate the interior, while La Costa's coastal territories are devoted to fish canneries and aqua farming. Still, parts of La Costa struggle to maintain their ecological preserves while resisting the ever-rising tide of development and industry.

Residential areas dot La Costa, tucked in between the agroplexes and fields. Some of the residents are corporate aristocracy who consider these places their "summer homes." Others are local agricultural employees, landowners, farmers, ecologists, or biologists who live and work in the district. The one thing that binds them together is watching the price of their land creep ever higher. As New Angeles grows, space becomes more and more valuable, and everyone in La Costa with land feels the temptation to sell.

Yet, the district government knows that opening the floodgates would destroy the very paradise that makes this land unique and valuable. In addition, City Hall knows just how much food New Angeles needs, and it worries about becoming completely reliant on exports to feed half a billion mouths. So, the government slows development, and buries some areas beneath mountains of special-use permits and regulations. La Costa's land-value and control over food distribution means that the district influences a lot of New Angeles politics.

Meanwhile, the agricorps struggle to obtain monopoly control over the district. Undercutting, sabotage, and backstabbing dominate the political and industrial life behind the scenes. An agricorp that doesn't make allies in La Costa quickly finds its land taken over by a rival. A person can be an ally one day and an enemy the next, depending on their agricorp's allegiances. Some politicians and administrators change corporations as readily as any mercenary soldier. Assassinations and murder are effective political weapons as well, and a human body can become a good source of fertilizer in the hungry fields of La Costa.

TOURIST ATTRACTIONS

Several areas specifically zoned for entertainment and tourism can be found between La Costa's various agroplexes, farms, and residential communities. Most of these attractions focus on enjoying nature, or at least a carefully cultivated version of it.

CASCADA EL ARMADILLO

This classic tourist spot existed for hundreds of years before the changing climate caused the river to switch course and leave the waterfall dry. Twenty years ago, local conservationists secured a grant from the Weyland Consortium's Titan Beautification Fund to restore the falls. A sizable digging project restored the river's flow, and now the falls cascade more powerfully than ever. The view is slightly marred by the towering Vitru-Val agroplex nearby, but most of the visitors who flock to the falls every year seem willing to ignore it. They also ignore the fact that the trees and grass are g-modded versions of native plants (designed to stand up to the increased foot traffic and decrease soil erosion) and that the rock under the waterfall had to be reinforced with carefully hidden plascrete beams so that it can hold up to the increased water flow.

MACHALILLA PARK

Once, Machalilla National Park was a major ecological preserve in Ecuador. Time and corporate exploitation shrank the park's size, but when the land was incorporated into New Angeles, one of the myriad details in the Quito Accord ensured the park's preservation.

Now easily the largest public park in the megalopolis, Machalilla is still largely undeveloped and uncultivated. The park includes interior wetlands and forest, long stretches of unspoiled coastline, and many square kilometers of open ocean, free from commercial aquaculture and shipping traffic. City flight control also reroutes all nonessential hopper traffic around the park's borders (although what exactly qualifies as "essential" can depend on who's asking for a favor and how much money they have). To accommodate visitors, La Costa's civic authorities have built a series of elevated walkways and slidewalks across the marshes and wetlands, and they run tours through the larger waterways on electric boats. They also use a collection of mosquito-sized camdrones to stream realtime footage of birds' nests, infant monkeys, armadillo pups, and other adorable creatures to millions of enraptured fans. Machalilla brings something rare to most New Angelinos: (relatively) unspoiled wilderness just a tube-lev ride away. Nearly every environmental group, including some of the more militant ones, is ready to fight to keep it that way.

ANGEL EGAS: MILITANT ENVIRONMENTALIST

Egas is an environmentalist who finds himself forced to live in a city that epitomizes everything he hates. Having served in corporate armies and fought in various conflicts, he has retained his paramilitary contacts since leaving service. He also has ties to Los Scorpiones and some friends in the Mafia and yakuza. In general, he works with anyone interested in causing damage to agricorps and developers. He specializes in gunrunning, explosives training, and squad-level tactics. He keeps his stocky build in top shape with regular exercise, constantly preparing to defend La Costa's last natural bastions.

MAMA QUCHA

Taking a slidewalk through an underwater tunnel, guests come up to a nightclub floating far enough out in the ocean that the lights of New Angeles can be masked by filtered screens. The club is open to the ocean air, and its swimming area appears to extend directly into the ocean but is actually an enclosed pool nanotreated to remove any impurities or contaminants from the seawater. Club outfits trend, not surprisingly, toward bathing-suit chic with bioluminescent body paint. The club has a small dock hidden from the guests, facilitating routine small-package smuggling despite regular inspections from the United States Coast Guard.

PUERTO LÓPEZ BEACH RESORT

Encompassing only a small cluster of hotels, nightclubs, bars, and spas, Puerto López has a relaxed attitude toward vacationing. It is billed as the quieter, more mature version of the Manta district, and its clientele trends toward older people with generational wealth. The elders of the corporate aristocracy use this resort for weekend getaways and working vacations, making verbal deals in saunas or agreeing to billion-dollar money transfers while sipping margaritas. The laid-back atmosphere belies the hidden security: select staff with military training sport sub-dermal armor and compact, non-lethal weaponry.

VINELAND

Some time ago, a rich U.S. citizen bought a La Costa cacao plantation and rebuilt it as a resort winery. Now, sprawling wooden buildings overlook the property's vast fields of grapes. Meandering streams and groves of guato trees break up the rolling rows of heavily laden vines. Most of these vines have been genetically modified by a couple of eccentric scientists kept on staff to create grapes in a startling variety of flavors and hues. Connoisseurs of fine wines may turn up their noses at orange-colored pinot noirs, strawberry-flavored rosés, and chilled whites that taste of cucumber, but the winery attracts plenty of visitors with its "no artificial flavors" vintages. The place is popular for tourists, corporate parties, and weddings, although a small portion of the guests are corporate infiltrators trying to steal the genome of a particularly popular grape before Vineland can land the patent.

MICHAEL CELE: FRIENDLY BIOENGINEER

After developing farms in southern Africa for AgInfusion, Cele received a promotion to tailor new strains of grape vines and grains in La Costa. Surrounded by staple grasses, drones, and open sky, the outgoing bioengineer talks the ears off anyone who comes to visit, tourists included. He believes in the free exchange of scientific information, which has frustrated his employers. But as he still gets results, they tolerate him for now. A tall, barrel-chested, cheerful farmer with multiple degrees in biology and genetics, Cele would be the first to admit he is a little lonely working in the large, empty fields.

AGRICULTURAL LOCATIONS

The majority of the real estate in La Costa is occupied by its farms, which are divided among agricorps and biocorps including AgInfusion, PolyMore, and Kernel BioTech. The agroplexes have an incredible amount of security—electronic, human, and android—all heavily armed. Visitors must be careful not to wander too far, as agricorp security can be as vicious as any wild animal in the forest.

DANGER CLOSE

Danger Close is for wargamers who find holowar insubstantial and desire the visceral thrill of running around on a field with a gun. The facility is part shooting range and part simulated war zone. Vacationers can rent or buy a range of legal and illegal weapons to shoot at still and automated targets. One section resembles a city block; another section has a mock village in the rainforest; still another has imported desert sand on a wide, open field; and so on. Its government permit gives the gun club an air of legitimacy, but it hosts a number of illegal events, such as wargames with rubber projectiles and stun grenades.

This relatively minor business has recently drawn attention from the Opticon Foundation, which works to hold megacorps accountable for their misdeeds. Officially, there have never been any fatalities, but rumor has it that bodies are buried under the mock war field. Those bodies may not all be former patrons; leaked purchase orders reveal that Danger Close has made some bulk clone purchases from Jinteki before private events.

DE LA PLATA DESALINATION PLANT

La Costa's water needs require it to be dependent on other districts, so the agricorps have a lot of incentive to be self-sufficient. They have pushed the district to experiment with water-reclamation efforts, including this desalination plant off the coast. Anchored to the sea floor with several cables, the plant remains completely submerged except for its flexible pipes that carry purified salt and fresh water to the shore. The interior of the plant resembles a submarine, full of giant tubes, tanks, and towers, and is uniformly cramped and unpleasant to live in. Therefore, the facility is staffed entirely by bioroids with AI assistants; any human oversight is handled remotely. The facility suffers occasional attacks and sabotage by pirates and faces constant litigation from Humanity Labor—despite the dearth of humans who want to work at the plant.

EL CARMEN SITE 89HP078

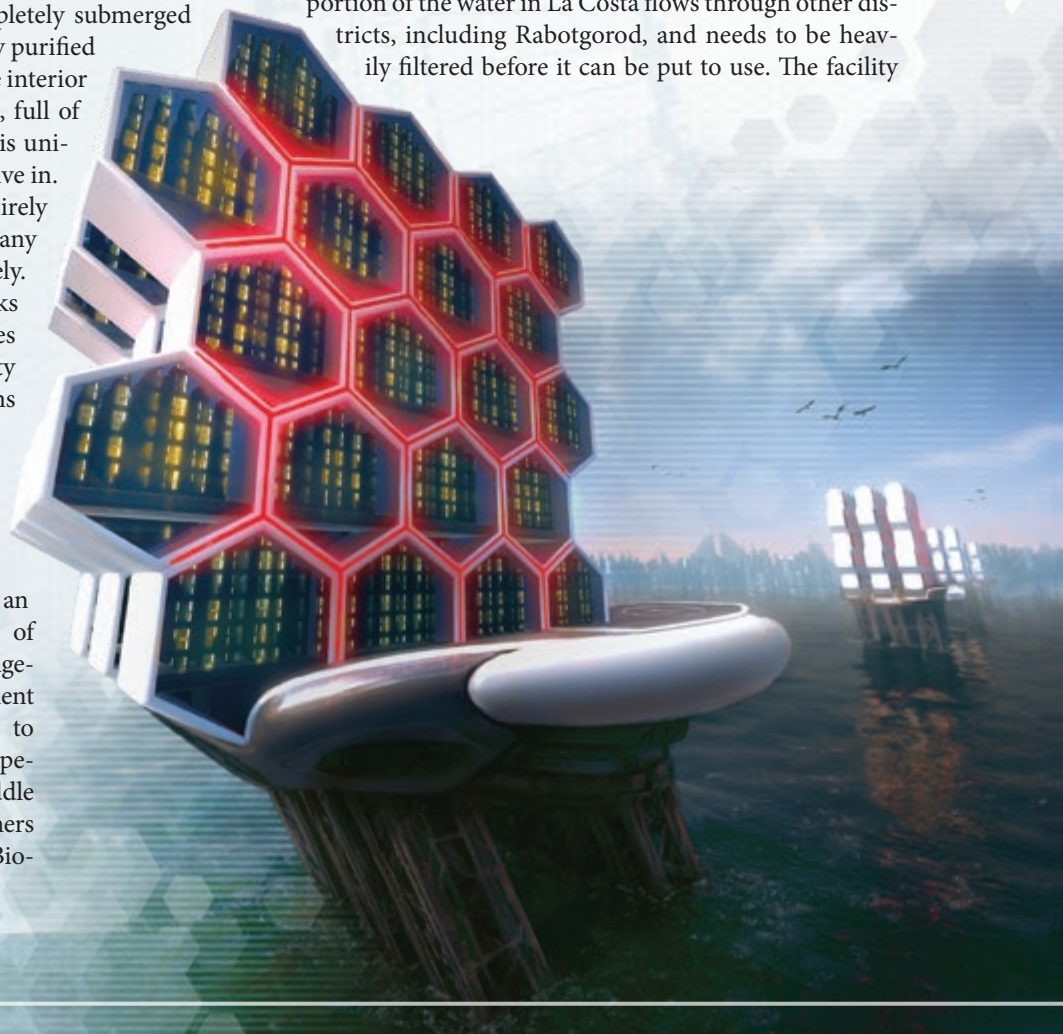
Because of an obscure Ecuador–New Angeles law, this area became an excavation site after the discovery of some ancient bones. Many New Angelinos believe the La Costa government approved the excavation as a way to thumb its nose at the agricorps, especially since the site sits in the middle of redeveloped land that local farmers planned on selling to PolyMore Bioplastics. As a result, the government faces a lot of litigation. Meanwhile, the archaeological team has encountered theft, media rumors of drug smuggling, and unidentified toughs showing up to start fights. Los Scorpiones has offered it the protection the government won't provide, but the team has no interest in bringing orgcrime into this mess.

KRISTEL CATUCUAMBA: TOUGH ARCHAEOLOGIST

Discovering her Shuar heritage altered Catucuamba's relationship with her native Ecuador. Having changed her studies from business to archeology, she now travels regularly to eastern Ecuador to help preserve Incan ruins and explore potential historical indigenous sites. She has clashed with the New Angeles government and has built up a frustratingly wide knowledge of the law. At the same time, she depends on New Angeles corporate and government labs and resources. Working on El Carmen archaeological site has put her firmly between these two pressures, and she navigates them with a mixture of patience, anger, and gallows humor. People tend to underestimate her thin frame, so she compensates with a pistol and decades' worth of boxing training.

LA COSTA WATER STORAGE AND RECLAMATION FACILITY

To prevent themselves from sabotaging each other, a number of agricorps and biocorps agreed to jointly invest in a water-purification facility a number of years ago. A sizable portion of the water in La Costa flows through other districts, including Rabotgorod, and needs to be heavily filtered before it can be put to use. The facility



consists of hundreds of open pools, each with a fifty-foot radius, that slowly filter wastewater and runoff through nanopermeable membranes and into underground tanks. Responsible for a quarter of La Costa's clean water, it also collects, filters, and distributes rainfall and continues to research other methods of reclamation. Of course, the agricorps and biocorps each compete for a greater share and more control of the facility, manipulating laws, bribing employees, and hacking the control software.

JORGE HERRERIA: HARD-WORKING FARMER

Jorge Herreria, like many other farmers, is part biologist, part economist, part engineer, and part freelance contract manager. His responsibilities include watching over AI-controlled combines and supervising auto-weeders. Herreria has dreams of owning his own home someplace in La Costa and works nearly double the number of assigned shifts to support his family and save up some money. Thanks to some subtle work from a friendly runner, he has contracts with several competing farms. The heavily suntanned man with a full beard and mustache is happy to do the extra work, even if he sometimes has trouble keeping all his employers in the dark about it.

LOS SCORPIONES LAIR

Some of the land in La Costa is rugged enough that it hasn't been redeveloped for farming or residential communities. In one such area, still covered in Ecuadoran rainforest, a couple of bunkers built into a hillside are almost completely swallowed by foliage. Registered as hazardous storage facilities under a dummy corporation, the bunkers sometimes serve as a pick-up drug lab or a gunrunning drop-off point.

Los Scorpiones bought this plot ages ago, mostly to cover a mass grave in the bunkers' now-sealed sub-basements. Over fifty members of rival gangs and enemies of Los Scorpiones were buried here during the gang's early days—enough disappearances to cause a media firestorm and bring on a full-force NAPD investigation. However, recently the dummy corp has been aggressively pressured by Nutri-Vista Agricultural to sell the land so that the agricorp can build its newest agroplex. Los Scorpiones leadership remains split between taking the offer and cashing out, launching a violent attack against Nutri-Vista to get it to back off, or destroying the site with high explosives and acid in hopes of destroying all the evidence. All options are likely to bring far too much government attention to the gang.

MARTINA ISIDORA FLYNN: FISH OUT OF WATER

Los Scorpiones has been slowly buying real estate in various districts to make up for property lost during some of the city's myriad urban renewal programs. Taking a cue from the Mafia, the syndicate has established businesses to use as fronts, but they all require supervision. Los Scorpiones trusts Flynn with their oversight because of her intelligence, managerial acumen, and loyalty to the gang. Still, she misses busting heads and shooting her problems away. She also hates skirts and current corporate clothing trends, preferring boots, camo, and a flak jacket. The syndicate has hired a PR and fashion consultant to help Flynn blend in with corporate culture and encourage her to attend anger management therapy, both of which annoy her to no end.

LOT 17J EXPERIMENTAL GENE CROP

At the far southern end of 7508th Street, a field lies surrounded by a translucent ecoplastic fence, which blurs it enough to prevent casual observers from seeing inside. Armed guards and automatic motion-tracking coilguns for use against unauthorized drones keep other kinds of unwanted eyes out. This particular area of farmland has passed hands several times, and now no one knows who owns the space or what they grow.

FARIDA KAYANI: CLEVER REGULATOR

La Costa's competing farms have filed enough complaints about "pollen terrorism" and "ecological contamination" that the government created a tiny department of officials to investigate disputes. A bureaucrat, botanist, and detective rolled into one, Kayani analyzes crop samples, soil, and wind currents to establish whether agricorps' claims are true. Farmers, impressed with her thorough knowledge and stately manner, consider her tough but fair. Always up to date on the latest agricorp political news, she deftly plays each agricorp against the other. Recently, her impartiality has been threatened by Kernel BioTech's offer to back her for political office.

PISCES FISH FARM

This offshore g-modded fish farm resembles a deep-ocean ranch. Pisces deals in tuna and swordfish that have been g-modded to respond to specifically modulated sonar pulses. The pulses keep them within "fences" of tethered sonobuoys while they otherwise roam free to fatten up on the ocean's bounty. Pisces also maintains floating bait tanks in which feed fish can be quickly grown and then dumped into the water for its herds to feast on.

Aqua ranching can be a difficult job, and the technicians and vets who maintain the buoys and check on the health of the fish from personal water craft and hoverboats are a hardworking and hard-partying lot. They spend months in offshore barges that serve as dormitories and workshops, then ride in when the fishing fleets arrive to harvest the latest catch. Once on shore, most of them blow their back pay in a couple of weeks of debauchery in Manta or Base de Cayambe before heading out to sea, creditless, for their next shift. Turnover is high, and the farm managers don't ask many questions of new employees. Sometimes criminals take advantage of this to lay low far from the NAPD.

QUINDE

Once covered in lush, unbroken forest, the Quinde District was razed to barren flatlands virtually overnight to provide resources for the construction of the first temporary buildings in districts closer to the Space Elevator Project. Soon afterward, factories and industry mushroomed in Quinde, belching smoke into the air and polluting the rivers and sea with runoff and waste. Immigrants and native Ecuadorans flocked there to work in the factories, start their own small businesses, and climb the socioeconomic ladder. Nearby districts, such as Guayaquil, also benefited as money came flowing in for everything from housing to labor and from necessities to luxury goods. Meanwhile, Quinde's new ranks of fusion power plants began consuming the He-3 coming down from Luna and powering the burgeoning city.

The first labor bust occurred with the completion of the Beanstalk. Subsequent labor busts kept workers living paycheck to paycheck even as the district reported record-breaking stock-market highs and export numbers. The final insult came with the production of Jinteki and Haas-Bioroid androids. Although the economic impact of the android labor force has been significant, it pales in comparison to previous economic slumps. This time, however, the clones and bioroids give the slump faces for human workers to hate.

Quinde became the district where people focused their anti-simulant sentiment. This sometimes resulted in violence, but Humanity Labor, Jinteki, Haas-Bioroid, the Liberty Society, and the NAPD quickly tamped down on the fighting, giving rise to a kind of political cold war. By embracing peaceful tactics such as message campaigns, outreach programs, and picket lines, these organizations drum up public support and positive media coverage for their opposing positions. Meanwhile, the same organizations target their rivals from the shadows using sabotage, blackmail, electronic disruption, and a lot of quiet intimidation—or they secretly encourage their more radical allies to take more extreme measures.

At the moment, Quinde remains productive, funneling profits to the wealthy few. The rest of the population waits in labor halls hoping for work or scrape by with unlicensed jobs in the undercity. As a result, Quinde appears busy and bright with the lights of factories, construction zones, and commercial transport, but the undercity remains dark and packed with the jobless and dispossessed.

"GOLEM GROVE"

Like Jinteki in the Meat Market, Haas-Bioroid doesn't own all of the land in Salanguillo Industrial Subdistrict, known locally as "Golem Grove," but it dominates the area all the same. Most of the smaller businesses have a hard-tech focus: electronics, machinery, and energy production. Some people might expect a larger bioroid population here, forgetting that most get shipped to other locations. However, plenty of bioroids still walk the streets.

LIBERTY SOCIETY BRANCH OFFICE

Powered by caffeine, neuro-stim, and enthusiasm, the clone- and bioroid-rights activists at the Liberty Society branch office are busy with ping campaigns, fundraising, protest organization, and advocacy for governmental oversight. When the Liberty Society purchased this old corporate office space, its members got right to work before there was even any furniture or temporary walls. Now, the space contains a number of reclaimed desks and chairs, some of which were fished out from the trash and patched up. This branch focuses more on clone rights at the moment (the feeling is that it's easier for the public to sympathize with flesh-and-blood constructs), so Haas-Bioroid tolerates its presence. The office doesn't have a lot of money, so its security consists of a couple of layers of metal grating, a complete lack of windows, and untrained volunteers.

REYANSH'S

This cramped chop shop looks like an old-style pawnshop, with various bits and items displayed on shelves. The owner primarily buys and sells old parts for bioroids. Haas-Bioroid officially wants to stamp out the shop, but even its employees use Reyansh's services, especially to get old or hard-to-find modules. Reyansh or one of his nieces or nephews usually work at the back desk, repairing and polishing some component or another. A few bioroids also come to Reyansh's to install nonstandard pieces or to sell parts for quick cash to let them escape to Brazil.

STAHLARME FACILITY

Although the nature of Stahlarme's activities are very different, the facilities that comprise Haas-Bioroid's Stahlarme complex mirror those of Jinteki's Shinchoku plant in the Pedro Carbo Industrial Subdistrict. Stahlarme's massive central building towers over the rest of the complex and contains the industrial machinery that builds bioroids. Meanwhile, the ancillary plants that radiate out from the central building like spokes on a wheel handle bioroid brain programming, facial and cosmetic finishing, and prerelease training and quality assurance.

A massive groundtruck arterial roadway and an overhead mag-lev line leads out of the heart of the facility for shipping finished product off-site to transit and distribution hubs. Nicknamed "Birthday Alley," the area where the roadway exits the complex has seen so many protests (and violent confrontations) that it is now protected by a network of retractable plascrete barriers and autogun sentry turrets that fire non-lethal rubber bullets. The workers who load the trains and trucks have a tradition of singing "Happy Birthday" as they pack the bioroids. Sometimes, the packed bioroids join in.

IDRIS MUOY: DEDICATED BIOROID PROGRAMMER

Fleeing the Nigerian armies in Chad, Muoy's mother went to Cambodia and met his father. They both traveled to New Angeles with the express purpose of putting their children through college. Idris Muoy, the first in his family to graduate from college, now works for Haas-Bioroid as a neural adjuster. Part psychologist, part programmer, Muoy uses "live" adjustment techniques, normal conversation—bioroids express a liking for Muoy's calm, deep voice and boyish smile—and verbal programming to help bioroids perform self-assisted debugging. Using these therapy sessions, Muoy has collated a great deal of data as he continues to perfect his algorithms to help Haas-Bioroid design its next generation of artificial beings.

"THE MEAT MARKET"

Calling the Pedro Carbo Industrial Subdistrict "the Meat Market," its derogatory sobriquet, in front of a Jinteki employee is a good way to start a fight. The Jinteki megacorp dominates this subdistrict, even if it doesn't own all of the land. The Meat Market contains Jinteki's Shinchoku factory—possibly the largest clone-production facility in the worlds—as well as smaller support industries like Jinteki Copy Centers. The rest of the area is split between smaller factories and a few local businesses struggling to get by.

DIGNITY HALL

This meeting hall has had a strong labor history over the past few decades, and many pro labor politicians have spoken here. The chilly concrete warehouse space holds hundreds of donated chairs and tables; these face a scrounged-together plascrete stage and podium with space enough for speeches and a dozen performers. Frames are available for hanging banners or posters. Now, the hall owners and their Humanity Labor backers face a range of soft tactics from Jinteki and Haas-Bioroid to force them out, including making changes in the laws and applying pressure on their landlord. Meeting organizers have dredged up enough cash to stonewall litigation brought by the megacorps, but even Humanity Labor's resources shouldn't be enough to stall the corps for long. However, some suspect members of the local government have their own agendas against the megacorps and are quietly miring their efforts in red tape.

EVELYN MOORE: PR WARRIOR

Moore, a mercenary, doesn't fight in wars or with weapons. She fights with words and ideas. As a professional agitator, she can manage groups of ten to several hundred. An exceptional orator with a high level of PR savviness and charisma, Moore, with her long, red hair and piercing green eyes, makes a good face for the media vids. However, she prefers to work behind the scenes. Backed by various private interest groups to organize people and cause targeted disruptions, Moore also currently works for Humanity Labor. She intends to promote a reasonable, pro labor message and to get away from the violent, hateful, anti-simulant image plaguing the organization.

JORGE QUINDE STATION

Jorge Quinde (JQ) Station is the second-largest mass transit hub in New Angeles, after Earth Station at the Root of the Beanstalk. The towering carbosteel building extends as far into the ground as it reaches to the sky. At its pinnacle, clusters of hopper pads sprout from the building like shelves of fungi; there, automated cranes lift hoppers and bring them inside for long-term storage. Lower down are the freight mag-lev lines that shoot out in all directions. The areas closest to ground level are dominated by arterial roadways for fleets of groundtrucks. Finally, below ground

level, Metro lines and the tube-lev lines that transport He-3 canisters extend out from huge transit depots buried in the bedrock.

JQ is one of the most important commercial facilities in the district (and probably in New Angeles overall), and thus it is a prime target for protesters and saboteurs looking to make headlines. Five years ago, the NAPD transferred its Quinde Precinct HQ to JQ Station, and now the facility has a huge uniformed police presence. Cops also take advantage of the transit hub to quickly respond to emergencies elsewhere in the district.

GRAY JACKSON LEWIS: COMPETENT OVERSEER

A ChiLo transplant, Mx. Lewis has a level of competence in their job at Quinde's waste management system that makes them too important to let go. Tall and statuesque, they dominate the room. This position requires human resource management skills, coding expertise, engineering knowledge, and a biologist's training. Being at the epicenter of all human waste, they have seen the worst of humanity and have sifted through too many discarded secrets to count. Quinde waste management has a problem with discarded clone and bioroid corpses, and Lewis has an agreement with Jinteki to recover clone bodies before anyone can get a genetic sample.

OLD SHIPYARD

Built out of wood long ago, the Old Shipyard's floors, walls, and ceiling are warped, worn down, and worn out. Local lore claims this bar was made from an old wooden ship, and a few forgotten nautical knick-knacks still decorate the walls. The owner, Sofía Martín, serves not-quite-cold-enough cheap beer and spirits made locally using questionable distilling methods. Jinteki employees steer clear of the place, so the Old Shipyard's clientele are largely unemployed and often unable to pay their tabs. To pay the rent, Martín sometimes hides fugitives—bioroids, clones, or criminals—in the empty storeroom, and she sells them back to their owners or the police if they can't pay up.

SHINCHOKU COMPLEX

The sprawling Shinchoku factory complex is one of Jinteki's flagship facilities, and as one might expect, it has a workforce that is 91% clones. Shinchoku does very little R&D on its factory floor. Instead, the facility is entirely dedicated to producing as many clones as possible as quickly as possible. The main facility is as large as Blue Sun Stadium, and its twelve, ten-meter-high production floors are packed floor to ceiling with artificial womb tanks. Other buildings are linked to the main facility with tank conveyor systems and hold decanting facilities, medical labs, and extensive training and classroom space to ensure that each clone's brain-taping programs have meshed properly with its neurons. Any defective products can be quickly and efficiently recycled into nutrients by the on-site processing facilities.

YUKI MATSUO MEMORIAL ORPHANAGE

Funded by Jinteki, the Yuki Matsuo Memorial Orphanage has an incredible health plan and an excellent corporate-backed education program. The children even receive Jinteki uniforms and work at community events. Their happy faces appear regularly in Jinteki press releases. The village-sized orphanage looks simple and unadorned, with two-person dorm rooms, thirty-person classrooms, and several kitchens and cafeterias. Rumors widely vary regarding the children and the orphanage: that the orphanage provides a foothold for corporate ownership of humans or that the children are either gene stock for future experiments or fake, computer-generated children for an extended Jinteki PR campaign.

COLONCHE

Once a depressed farming community, Colonche has since become a depressed industrial subdistrict in Quinde. Without the presence of a major corporation such as Haas-Bioroid or Jinteki, Colonche's residents struggle to get by on their wages from smaller factories. The subdistrict is one of the many places where the undercity and plaza level blur together into a single, run-down mass.

ARMS AND HAMMERS

Located in the subbasement of an abandoned hopper factory, this shop doesn't even pretend to be anything besides a storefront for illegal arms dealers. The owners, Lukas Fritz and Sheila Blount, long ago made a deal with the NAPD lieutenant responsible for patrolling their block. In

exchange for providing a constant stream of cash and the occasional untraceable weapon for an extrajudicial killing, Arms and Hammers gets to keep selling weapons to whoever wants them.

As the store's name implies, Lukas and Sheila sell more than guns. In fact, they maintain a steady business weaponizing sledgehammers with reinforced handles and hardened heads that can stand up to a bioroid chassis. The two also buy hot weapons. Lukas spends most of his time in the backroom shop removing serial numbers and modifying barrels to prepare guns for resale, while Sheila handles the counter. What the two don't sell is anything expensive. If a customer is looking for a sniper's coilgun or a laser pistol, they can't help them. Their sole business is in sledgehammers, cheap, durable, and semi-reliable fletchers, and slugthrowers.

EL PEÓN

The original landlord, missing or absent, never sold or leased out this abandoned factory. After it sat empty for a few years, some workers broke into it, reconnected it to the power grid, and began to make things. They named their collective El Peón. With a third of the assembly lines, metalworking machines, 3D printers, and bioplastic sheet cutters now operational, the technicians and machinists produce machine parts and sell them at discounted prices all over New Angeles. Local authorities haven't caught on, so El Peón has become a major player in the undercity economy. It even has a few engineers designing custom, untraceable parts for clients' "special projects."

QUINDE GENERAL HOSPITAL

Underfunded and unappreciated, the hard-working medtechs, nurses, physicians, and administration of Quinde General try their best with what they have. At least one floor of the hospital has no power, so the administration has turned it into storage, lighting the hallways with old, fading bioluminescent tape. Some of the patients recover in cots instead of beds, and a couple of the operating rooms no longer function, their monitors and surgical bots having been stripped of parts. The hospital has repurposed several older Rex-model bioroids into emergency triage since it is understaffed, even if some nurses and physicians see the bioroids as eventual replacements for their jobs. Administrators have been known to cut corners and to deal in the gray market, selling equipment, drugs, and biowaste in order to survive to the next fiscal quarter.

ANA MARIA MUÑOZ: INDENTURED SURGEON

Muñoz's debt means the district owns her work as an emergency surgeon for next few decades. Pulling sixteen-hour days also means she has no time to find someone to buy out her contract. Though her stim use is a necessity, her occasional lapse in judgment due to her addiction has led to a few deaths. The work and the guilt weighs on her, as shown in her hunched posture, the dark circles under her eyes, and her half-asleep expression. The administration has covered her mistakes up in order to extend her contract, locking her in a vicious and deadly cycle.

NEW LABOR MODEL OR PSYOP EXPERIMENT?

Eudemonia Designs, a mechanical design and manufacturing company, employs full-human labor and gives employees a comprehensive medical package. The company employs a hundred people and tackles a wide variety of mechanical design problems in areas ranging from architecture and city planning to custom machine parts. The media hails the company's business model as a new approach for human labor, but no one can figure out how it remains solvent or profitable, especially with its pricey furnishings such as holographic tables and VR desks. Some believe the company is a front for some psychological experiment, that it brain scans employees, or that it facilitates a money-laundering scheme.

YUCABEAN ON TIERRA ST. AND LIBERTAD AVE.

Nineteenth-century anarchist groups started in cafes, and the disorganized group that meets at the YucaBean on Tierra Street and Libertad Avenue continues that tradition. While some might say there is a certain hypocrisy in meeting in a corporate coffee shop-chain franchise, many members state that while a capitalist system exists, they have to participate in it to survive. Currently, these anarchs are torn between supporting the Liberty Society's "human rights for all" platform or Humanity Labor's "tear-down-the-machine" ethos. The Seth-model bioroidista has absorbed far too much anarch ideology, yet he somehow manages to keep that information hidden from his technicians.

FARAH AL-SABAH: UNDERCOVER COP

Work nowadays requires a person to be flexible and to know multiple and often divergent skills. Al-Sabah started as a freelance coder, working on user interfaces. She studied math on the side, eventually changing careers to become a statistician for Alpha Omega Mutual. Now, she has completed her academy training as a police officer. She has always been athletic, which fits her new career. Her bosses see her diverse skillset and have sent her to investigate the anarchist groups at the Tierra Street YucaBean.

GUAYAQUIL

Guayaquil started out as the center of economic prosperity, until Weyland and U.S. interests developed the cheaper real estate—at the time—of Quinde, Rabotgorod, and Laguna Velasco. As a result, Guayaquil has an architectural look that trends a couple of decades old.

Here more than anywhere else, the undercity and plaza level are divided less by height and more by entire neighborhoods. Antiguo Guayaquil, centered on the bones of the old Ecuadorian metropolis, has rotted from the depths of its undercity all the way up to the tops of the old skyscraper precursors to modern arcologies. Whole neighborhoods are shrouded in darkness and clogged in waste, oil, and smog. Meanwhile, to the west, the district struggles to stay alive in Nuevo Guayaquil, with a fledgling commercial district centered around the old Jack Weyland Arcology. However, even Nuevo Guayaquil is just a plaza level covering a bustling undercity infested with orgcrime and street gangs.

Despite the decay, Guayaquil remains the most populous of all the districts due to history and circumstance. For a lot of locals, this district is home and has been home for generations. Meanwhile, homeless people chased out of districts such as Laguna Velasco tend to end up in Guayaquil's undercity. This made the already overcrowded district swell, threatening to spill up rather than out.

Though these squatters may be living in the undercity illegally, the police never go into Antiguo Guayaquil unless they have to. This has given residents a great deal of freedom, but it also means Guayaquil has more orgcrime than any other district. Everything that people consider the worst of modern city life exists in Antiguo Guayaquil.

Since orgcrime has taken over the district, any talk about Guayaquil always involves the latest violence or schemes from the syndicates. 14K members have been flooding in from the bay and port, but Los Scorpiones has long had strong ties to the people here. The Mafia also maintains a slight presence, but all the real construction and work occur in other districts. Lastly, the yakuza keep some rackets going in Nuevo Guayaquil, preying on the vices of the upper classes.

ANTIGUO GUAYAQUIL

Guayaquil was Ecuador's most populous city before it was incorporated into New Angeles, and its redevelopment started with all the wide-eyed dreams of urban planners setting out to build their "city of the future." For years, the center of the city was constantly being rebuilt with ever-bigger skyscrapers and protoarcologies, while the port took in much of the raw material sent by sea to build New Angeles. For a time, people assumed that Guayaquil would be New Angeles' southern commercial hub.

In the end, however, proximity to the Beanstalk proved more important. As districts like Rutherford and Laguna Velasco grew bigger and richer, Guayaquil languished in their wake. District officials had overspent and undersaved during the boom years, and without the money to repair or revitalize, whole sections of Guayaquil began to rot. The most prominent was Antiguo Guayaquil, where it was more expensive to tear down or refurbish the old buildings than it was to build new, better arcologies with modern designs a few kilometers to the west. Now, much of Antiguo Guayaquil looks like a city planner's nightmare. Every terrible stereotype of an undercity exists here—trash piled up on the streets, roads collapsed or blocked off, buildings barricaded inside and out, and pools of grease, muck, and human waste in potholes and basements—and the government has no plans to revitalize the area.

FLORINE OJEDA BANK

14K took over this abandoned bank when it realized the reinforced structure could withstand a rocket barrage or vehicle-mounted railgun. It barricaded the entrances, built walls around a side entrance, and turned the street outside into a kill zone of razor wire and sentry turrets. Rewired security cameras give it full coverage of the inside and the surrounding city block. Using the bank more as a hideout than a headquarters, 14K also hides supplies and holds and interrogates prisoners in its vault.

PARA LOS NIÑOS COMMUNITY CENTER

In an abandoned section of a business arcology, community members tore down walls and salvaged tables and chairs to build a small community center for children and teenagers with nowhere to go. Los Niños runs on donations and has no real budget for activities; most of the money goes to repairs, painting the ceilings and walls in colorful patterns, and patching the transplas windows. The community center welcomes gang members, but only if they put aside their gang politics and weapons and treat everyone with respect, so Los Niños has become a neutral ground.

THE RUSTY I-BEAM

The Rusty I-Beam is a run-down, condemned hotel (once part of the now-defunct NetTel chain) where hackers, artists, and writers have banded together to live illegally. Its walls, floors, and ceilings are scarred and marked from artistic mishaps. The space uses a guerrilla solar-power rig on the roof and steals or piggybacks on wireless Network access from neighboring buildings. It is a good place to get help on a project. The people here want to stay off the radar, so they kick out anyone who might let the corps, orgcrime, or cops on to them.

KISHANA PERRY: HARD-WORKING SCAVENGER

A technician born in ChiLo, Perry found the work drying up in New Angeles and took up what she calls "environmental reclamation." She scrounges abandoned areas for junk to repurpose or resell. She can rattle off the market value of nearly any find, and many antiques found in Laguna Velasco homes are reclaimed furniture or art found by Perry. She also finds and sells cybernetics and bioroid parts, and she maintains black-market ties. Scavenging has made her wiry, and she misses her natural curly hair but had to shave it off for work. Once she finds full-time employment again or saves enough money, she intends to move out of Guayaquil and away from this life.

WELCOMING HANDS SHELTER

This supposedly nondenominational homeless shelter doesn't receive government funds, but no one knows the identity of the private donors. Relatively permissive, the shelter separates individuals and families into their own sections, each an open space with little privacy, simply bunks and cots in rows. The staff are nonjudgmental and don't promote religion. Homeless people remain divided about this place. Those who use its services consider it a haven. The rest don't like the shelter's shadowy nature and think it may be connected to the Starlight Crusade.

NUEVO GUAYAQUIL

Closer to the coast, Nuevo Guayaquil continues to build up, as if desperate to escape the squalor below. The lack of infrastructure maintenance means that new construction goes up in additional layers or sideways into sky bridges. While most districts have sky bridges, skywalks, and slidewalks connecting different buildings, Nuevo Guayaquil has the most per square mile. The sky bridges are wide and tall enough to contain their own offices and businesses. In Guayaquil, locals have given them neighborhood names such as Nido de Aquila and La Mano del Cielo. Meanwhile, urban developers have been quietly removing public accessways into the undercity, even going so far as to take out stairwells and fill entire lower levels of arcologies with hardfoam. This means that for all practical purposes, Nuevo Guayaquil's undercity is completely buried.

JACK WEYLAND ARCOLOGY

One of the first true arcologies in New Angeles, the JWA stood as an example of the future in urban construction during the early, heady years of its incorporation. Perhaps appropriately, when Guayaquil began to collapse, the remaining businesses and corporations tended to cluster around the aging arcology, still viewing it as a symbol of hope for the future.

The JWA is a prototypical mixed-use arcology, with a plaza-level shopping center and independent commercial offices. Several floors and the arcology tower are owned by the Weyland Consortium, and the upper levels contain the finest hotel in Guayaquil (the Palace at Guayaquil) and luxury apartments. However, below the plaza level, the arcology has been undergoing a slow renovation program for years, which means it's mostly occupied by criminals and *disenfrancistos*. Rather than sealing off the lower levels entirely, the owners pay a small mercenary outfit to keep "nonresidents" in their place. Undercity dwellers know that going above level seventy means one's bullet-riddled corpse is likely to be sent back down a waste-disposal chute as a warning.

PARQUE INDUSTRIAL ARCOLOGY

Once a typical, though small, arcology, the Parque originally had apartments on top, shops and restaurants in the middle, and corporate offices on the bottom. Its lower levels have since been abandoned, and the remaining residents have turned them into a trash dump, filling the empty offices and shops with refuse. Scavengers regularly break in to salvage anything sellable. Some of the residents have gotten violent with the intruders, since the police don't come around anymore.

RESISTANCE WALL

This giant graffiti piece covers an arcology wall, displaying megacorp figures taking bribes, stepping on people, and sitting on crumbling buildings; it also depicts cops and politicians crushing the silhouette of Ecuador or New Angeles with their bare hands. Locals consider the wall a tradition. No one knows who keeps adding to the piece; given its mix of old and new art styles, it may be the work of several art-

ists. Some believe the art contains hidden messages for an anti-corp resistance group. The graffiti piece incorporates several innovations, among them holographic paint powered by sunlight that projects layers of ephemeral images.

SAN MIGUEL CATHOLIC CATHEDRAL

Though it is only a few decades old, the San Miguel Catholic Cathedral has faced nonstop financial trouble, due largely to its over-opulent construction featuring towering spires, arches, and high, holographic ceiling images depicting various biblical events. The cathedral's administration managed to fend off both the Starlight Crusade and the Order of Sol until recently. The Crusade obtained proof of the administration's fraud and embezzlement, and in exchange for keeping it quiet, it wants to secretly collect data on the congregation for an unspecified project.

ANDRE LAZON: EARNEST EVANGELICAL

Lazon's family in Peru wouldn't accept him as a man, so he wrote them off and moved to New Angeles. He continued to have terrible luck until the Order of Sol took him in, giving him a place to live, a job, and a purpose. A new true believer, Lazon distributes literature via the Order's interactive holographic card pamphlets. Despite, or because of, his frail frame, he has an easygoing attitude, joy in talking to people, and inner peace that make him a strong recruiter and community leader. Many homeless youths find themselves receptive to the Order of Sol's inclusive worship due to his efforts.

XIMENA NEIGHBORHOOD

Years ago, the Ximena residential neighborhood exploded with construction and development, but it soon fell into decay. It is one of the most populous neighborhoods in Guayaquil. Despite construction upon construction, large families are packed into tiny apartments, one on top of another stretching up into the sky. Absolutely no industrial or commercial space exists here—there isn't any room—and residents spend an exorbitant amount of time traveling to work or to access basic needs such as food and medicine. As a result, the neighborhood has become a center for the black market.

YLESKA MONAR: DANGEROUS REGULATOR

Disliked by Guayaquil locals, Monar keeps people from tapping into the power grid illegally, goes after urban farms for misuse of land, arrests those who set up solar farms for business license tax dodging, and condemns buildings where squatters live. Always armed, she sometimes brings cops as backup. Monar is every stereotype of a hard-nosed bureaucrat, with harsh cheekbones and hair tied back into a severe ponytail. She cannot be bribed, has no flexibility, and has survived a couple of assassination attempts. 14K utilizes her predictability to its advantage by anonymously feeding her information about rivals or undesirables in its territory.

THE WATERWAYS

Though not an official or even unofficial subdistrict, the areas in and around the estuary and rivers have their own unique character and subcultures. The people here are always on the move, either on boats or on foot. While the waterways provide life and sustenance, they are also a powerful vector for disease, especially with the rampant pollution.

EL PUENTE DE LA UNIDAD NACIONAL (BRIDGE OF NATIONAL UNITY)

El Puente de la Unidad Nacional encompasses the four original old bridges that cross the rivers Daule and Babahoyo to connect Guayaquil to the south and east of Ecuador. Guayaquil built several more bridges to handle the influx of workers, but the name stuck to this specific set of four. These bridges no longer allow vehicle traffic, since people have set up tents and built reclaimed bioplastic hovels on them. The name holds an additional irony because armed pro-Ecuadorian groups congregate here to complain or plan how to reclaim New Angeles.

"DAIGO" LAM: CHEERFUL LOOKOUT

Potbellied and brown from the sun, "Big Brother" owns a food cart and serves fried fish, plantains, and guinea pigs. Definitely not fine cuisine, and nowhere on anyone's tourism shoutcast, Lam's food is nevertheless edible. He tends to wander the docks by the river, greeting people with a toothy

THE BLACK MARKET

In Guayaquil, the black market isn't just illegal drugs, stolen goods, and dangerous weapons, but also plumbing, power and infrastructure repair, food, g-modded seeds that can grow in the nutrient-poor soil, and medicines and cybernetics that keep people alive. Guerrilla solar-power farms, designed to be easily packed up and moved at a moment's notice, pipe power through thick cables down to the undercity or into portable rechargeables for couriers to distribute. Pick-up urban farms in vertical gardens, in arrays of planters with soil brought from elsewhere, or on the ground level in earth revealed under torn-up concrete, provide not only food but places for communities to congregate. They must be ready to move at a moment's notice, lest they be dismantled for operating without regulations or licenses.

smile, warning people about the tropical heat, the cops, or pickpockets. Connected to 14K, he monitors the smuggling in and out of Guayaquil, less to watch out for the police than to inform the organization of new power players or signs of trouble. This scouting provides more income for his family and children than the food cart ever could.

ESTERO SALADO

Heavily polluted even before the formation of New Angeles, Estero Salado is full of toxic sludge and a bacterial soup that not only makes the estuary's water a dark, murky black-brown, but causes a terrible stink as well. Boats generally don't ply these waters, and some boats can't anyway, as strange, taffy-like biochemical strands clog engines and stick to hulls. When 14K wants to punish someone but perhaps not kill them, it sends the poor soul out on a rickety boat with some rations until the craft gets lodged in some bio-goop. If the fates allow the prisoner to sail out of Estero Salado alive, 14K declares a pardon.

NATALIA LUIZA ALMEIDA: QUESTING MICROBIOLOGIST

Almeida has never quite done microbiology the traditional way. After studying the proliferation of bacteria in air filters in Brazil, she moved to New Angeles to study viral and bacterial mutations. She trudges through the polluted estuary not for treasure or salvage, but for unique bacteria in order to sell the gene pattern. Her boat functions as both a home and a mobile lab, and she feels equally comfortable in trash heaps as in a corporate office. Currently, most people leave her alone, calling her the "Mad Mudlark of the Salado" since she is usually covered in muck, her hair matted and dirty, stinking to high heaven.

RÍO GUAYAS AND RÍO DAULE

Cleaner than the estuary, the rivers Guayas and Daule still see fishing and merchant boats traveling up- and downstream. Lately, the rivers have narrowed, as people have taken old ships, chained or roped them together, and turned them into floating apartments. Tensions between these water squatters and those who work on the rivers have led to the occasional arson, further clogging and polluting the rivers. Smugglers sneaking goods into Guayaquil and traffickers sneaking people east into the rainforest or Brazil use these rivers as waypoints, too.

LUIS JUWA: SELF-DELUDED PEOPLE SMUGGLER

Juwa traces his ancestry to the Shuar, who have a rich history of resistance against the Incas, the Spanish, China's oil invasion, and now New Angeles. Though the Río Guayas and Río Babahoyo don't go that far into Ecuador, he regularly uses the waterways to begin a trek through the jungle into Brazil. They form the first leg of a path by which he helps bioroids and clones escape to freedom. Though the short, compact man thinks he fights a corrupt system, he also smuggles people and androids for the money. Still, while he tells himself that androids aren't human, he finds their freedom comforting.

ON THE RIVER

Dallas scrambled down the alley. He'd been chased all the way from Nuevo Guayaquil, but now he could see the Bridge of National Unity, just across the small, man-made harbors at the end of the alley.

He jumped off the crumbling concrete quay, landing hard in the nearest boat. Dallas stumbled through dirty sheets hung up to dry, leaping to a dilapidated junk, and then a dingy. Angry shouts rose behind him as he made his way across the harbor.

He hopped onto the wooden dock on the far side of the harbor, sighing with relief. Just a hundred meters to go–

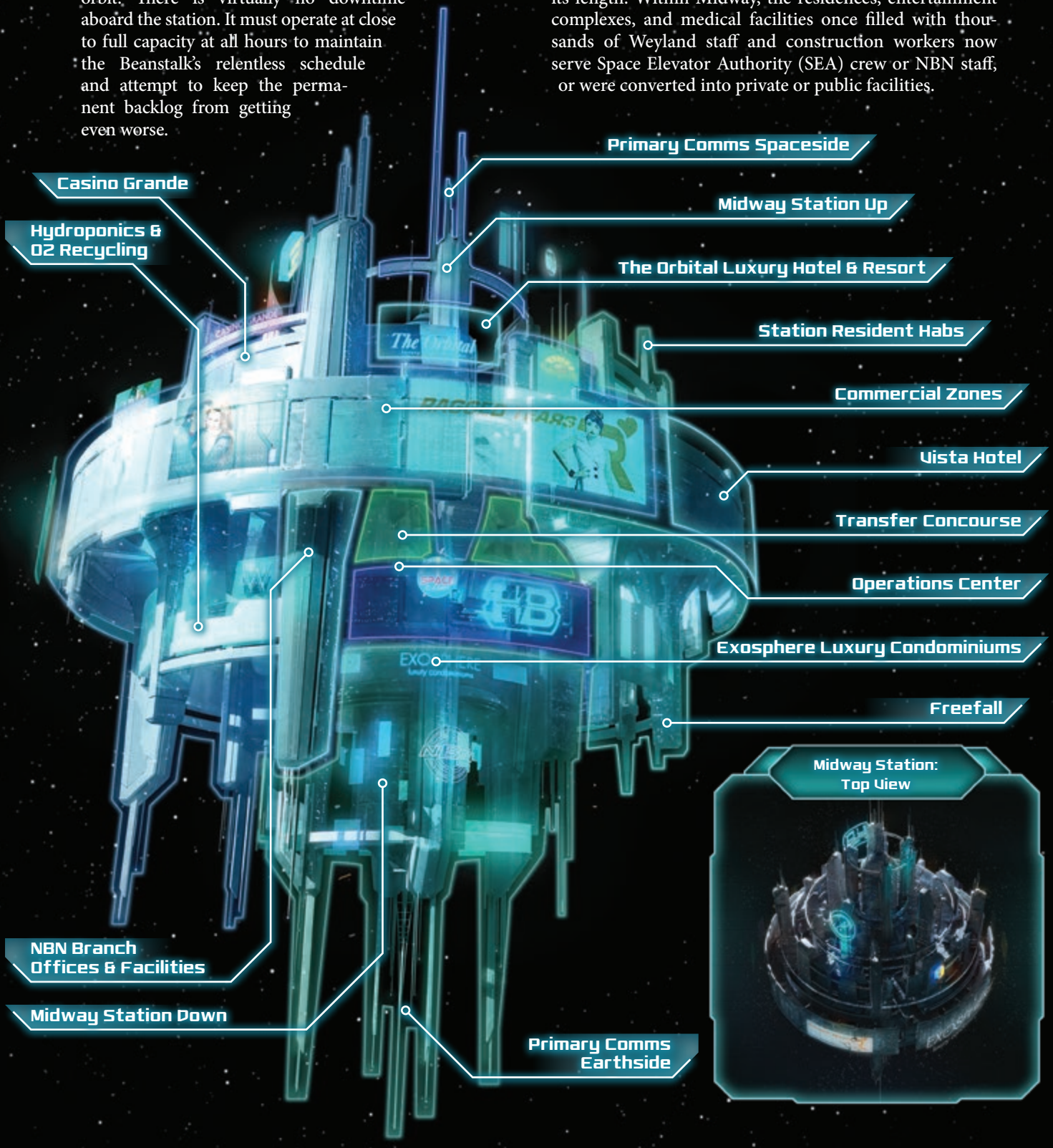
The rotting planks exploded beneath him as a fist punched through the wood, grabbing his leg and hauling him into the filthy water. He surfaced, spluttering, to see a woman in a tac vest that showed off her cyber-enhanced arms, haul herself onto the dock.

"Dallas Sinclair, I'm Rachel Beckman, authorized bounty hunter. I'm afraid your former business partners want to have a word with you."

MIDWAY STATION

As its name suggests, Midway Station sits in geostationary orbit at roughly the halfway point between Earth and the Challenger Planetoid. It splits the Beanstalk's tether between the Root and the Castle high above. Midway itself is a large space station. Traffic arrives at and departs from it continually, bound for Earth or the Challenger Planetoid in beanpods, or transferring to shuttles serving other detached stations in geosynchronous orbit. There is virtually no downtime aboard the station. It must operate at close to full capacity at all hours to maintain the Beanstalk's relentless schedule and attempt to keep the permanent backlog from getting even worse.

By necessity, Midway is the oldest element of the Beanstalk. Before assuming its role as the world's most important transfer station, it was the point from which the construction of the space elevator emanated. The buckyweave ribbons that would be knit together to make the tether snaked upward and planetward from manufacturing facilities at each end of the station. The tether is about forty meters thick at Midway, the widest cross section along its length. Within Midway, the residences, entertainment complexes, and medical facilities once filled with thousands of Weyland staff and construction workers now serve Space Elevator Authority (SEA) crew or NBN staff, or were converted into private or public facilities.



Many beanpod passengers never stray beyond the center of Midway, its Transfer Concourse, which stretches between the ends of the Earth-bound and Challenger-bound mag-lev lines. The beanpods cannot traverse the gap. All passengers must disembark and pass through the cylindrical Transfer Concourse to continue their journey, and cargo must be transferred as well. The end of the station facing Earth is known as Midway Station Down, while the end facing the Challenger Planetoid is called Midway Station Up.

The station houses permanent residents as well as tens of thousands of tourists and other travelers. Unsurprisingly, a significant portion of Midway staff are bioroids and clones, but the number of travelers staying on the station for an extended period of time is greater than one would expect. The Beanstalk's ever-present backlog makes unscheduled travel difficult and expensive, as beanpods are rarely sent up-Stalk half empty, and every travel cancellation is immediately filled from a lengthy standby list. Thus, travelers who miss their departure window find themselves stuck on Midway while waiting for a free seat. In addition, while the SEA keeps seats open for Midway staff to return to Earth on occasion, the majority find it easier—and desirable—to remain on station.

Beyond travel and tourism facilities, nearly half of Midway Station is dedicated to a major NBN branch office. Most of the office consists of technical staff maintaining endless arrays of broadcast equipment. However, some famous NBN on- and behind-the-scenes staff are aboard to carry out broadcasts throughout the solar system.

Finally, many well-known megacorporations maintain offices on Midway. Despite the travel congestion, the station still provides one of the best meeting places for the powerful and wealthy. For corporations with offices on Luna or elsewhere in the solar system, a meeting at Midway saves the time and expense of an entire trip Earth-side. This also holds true for anyone living in one of the many other stations in Earth orbit. Likewise, a jaunt up and down the Beanstalk is far more practical for their Earth-side colleagues than a ferry ride to Luna.

THE BEANSTALK

The Beanstalk dominates Midway Station both physically and commercially, and thus is the focus of station activity. Four major facilities serve the needs of Beanstalk travel.

MIDWAY STATION DOWN

All beanpods from Earth stop at Midway Station Down. Disembarking travelers and cargo deliveries move directly into the Transfer Concourse. Down contains beanpod maintenance bays, arrival zones, departure waiting zones, and a robust security screening system. Beanpods arrive at all hours and maintain a strict schedule. While station staff offer an initial warm welcome, the relentless schedule means they must prioritize speed over friendliness when there are pods to be turned around—and there always are.

MIDWAY STATION UP

Midway Station Up mirrors and includes all the functionality of Down for runs to and from the Challenger Planetoid. SEA crew also prepare beanpods for slingshotting off the end of the Beanstalk for direct travel to Luna or Mars during the appropriate launch window. Cargo tends to stack up in Up's storage facilities when either body is out of position for economical travel. When Midway is overloaded, cargo occasionally disappears or becomes lost in a 3D maze of enormous floating containers and crates that get packed into the storage bays. Unscrupulous staff and smugglers use the confusion to slip contraband through the system or outright steal legitimate deliveries.

OPERATIONS CENTER

Once a beanpod hits the halfway point from Earth or Challenger, it is under the control of the Midway Station Operations Center. Buried deep near the heart of the station behind layers of reinforced armor and redundant airlocks, Ops serves the same purpose as its Root and Challenger Planetoid counterparts: directing the chaotic mess of traffic that passes up and down the Beanstalk each day. Ops also handles the work that goes into the day-to-day running of the station. Since the station is a self-sufficient spaceborne facility that handles traffic from both the Beanstalk and other orbital stations, that work tends to be considerable.

The spherical room is generally packed with people, all tethered to their individual workstations along the walls. The duty officer oversees their work from the room's center, next to a real-time holographic display of Midway Station and its surroundings. Given the vital importance of the Beanstalk to just about everyone involved in it, the staff is a mix of New Angeles city employees, SEA personnel, Weyland Consortium representatives, and even a few officers from the U.S. Space Expeditionary Corps. Chief Administrator Ando Asuka holds this diverse group together; Ops is where she can usually be found while on duty, studying the holodisplay with her hands clasped behind her back like a ship's captain.

ANDO ASUKA: MIDWAY CHIEF ADMINISTRATOR

Midway's chief administrator is part corporate executive, part civil servant, and part ship's captain (complete with performing the occasional wedding). She is first and foremost responsible for safely maintaining a steady and uninterrupted flow of traffic up and down the Beanstalk. To achieve that, the station must conduct smooth and organized operations, something that is very much a reflection of the chief's style and personality.

Chief Ando rose successfully through Weyland's corporate leadership, which culminated in an orchestrated transferal to the SEA. She became Midway's chief administrator a few years ago, when rivalries between corporate and international government interests were regularly disrupting operations. Using a hands-on management style

FREEFALLING

One thing travelers tend to forget (until their first step out of the beanpod sends them tumbling across the Transfer Concourse) is that Midway is effectively a zero-G station (technically, it is a microgravity environment, but that distinction hardly matters for the everyday traveler). Areas with artificial gravity are completely separate structures located a few kilometers from Midway, accessible via twelve-person, short-range spacecraft called "spaxies." Those stations can rotate as required to create the desired gravity, though most do not spin fast enough to obtain full Earth gravity, instead topping out at a quarter-G or half-G. Not all of these are hotels or facilities serving tourists. Some are specialized industrial orbital assembly plants and NBN transmission platforms.

and skillful negotiating tactics, Asuka diffused the situation. More loyal to Weyland than to the SEA, she takes a personal interest in most aspects of the station. She often turns up unexpectedly to observe trouble spots firsthand.

SUSILO MEGA: CURIOUS SECURITY CHIEF

Susilo Mega is a thirty-year veteran security and law enforcement officer. He served at stations from the Root to the Castle before Chief Ando promoted him to Midway chief of security a few months after she took over. He is especially adept at intercepting contraband secreted away on the beanpods. Chief Mega loves to take on a good mystery and reopens cold cases whenever warranted. Shady corporate executives and transportation personnel are wary (and weary) of his investigations.

TRANSFER CONCOURSE

After arriving at Midway Up or Down, travelers proceed to other parts of the station via the cavernous and chaotic Transfer Concourse. Pairs of color-coded safety lines crisscross the cylindrical, thirty-meter-wide concourse, guiding wide-eyed tourists and weary travelers to their destinations. Side hatches lead to tubes providing

quick access to other points within the station, and some areas have been turned over to shops and other commercial enterprises. In many ways, the Transfer Concourse looks like any other airport or spaceport, though it is laid out for microgravity.

The concourse is closely watched by SEA personnel, who help keep visitors inexperienced in microgravity safe and moving while watching for any security risks. Such personnel are absolutely necessary, as most travelers don't have the experience or training to handle microgravity. More often than not, a SEA attendant ends up dragging their charge around on a tether before finding the correct safety line, slapping the traveler's hand into a loop, then telling them to crawl along the line to their destination.

EERO TAKALA: BRIBABLE COORDINATOR

Transfer coordinators work the Transfer Concourse, making sure travelers and cargo find their way through the chaos to the right safety lines and destinations. Often called "pushers," the coordinators are experts in zero-G maneuvering and physically guide (i.e., shove) errant people and containers in the correct direction.

Eero is a typical pusher, and he knows everything about the concourse. He uses this to his personal advantage, as he expertly and clandestinely facilitates the movement of contraband up and down the Beanstalk. Slipping Eero a decent number of credits can assure that something or someone arrives ahead of schedule—or becomes delayed in seemingly endless paperwork.

COMMERCIAL ZONES

Midway Station's commercial zones radiate out from the Beanstalk in circular arcs, giving the entire station a roughly cylindrical appearance. Given that Midway is the easiest way to access anything in geosynchronous orbit, the station's outer rings have become important spaceport facilities in their own right. In addition, the station is slowly but constantly expanding and growing as new facilities get built.

CASINO GRANDE

Casino Grande is Midway's largest and best-known gambling destination. It is the place to see and be seen for the wealthy, the powerful, and the countless celebrities visiting the station. The casino and its extravagant zero-G "surreality" theaters, restaurants, and entertainment zones occupy their own multilevel partial ring spanning the space between the Derek Carlisle Residential Complex and the T. M. Gonzalez Mercantile Spire. Casino Grande features cutting-edge and trendy ways to part people from their money, alongside traditional games.

The casino's splendor conceals its dark side. It hires third-party "debt specialists" to shake down deadbeats. It also employs armed guards to escort its popular but outrageously expensive tournament prizes from Earth or the Moon, with standing orders to eliminate anyone who even appears to be making a move to steal the goods. A few "misunderstandings" have led to bodies being dropped from the station to de-orbit and burn up on reentry.

EXOSPHERE LUXURY CONDOMINIUMS

Exosphere caters to Midway's super-wealthy residents, corporate executives, and upper-level NBN management and talent. Some megacorps retain apartments there for visiting employees. The condominiums are extravagant for a space station, with real wood trim, Martian red-stone veneer walls, and live, flowering plants. There are single-bedroom and larger units, some housing up to a dozen individuals. The complex sits about a third of the way "up" the station. It has its own security guards and a remarkably discreet concierge service.

FREEFALL

Freefall is a restaurant that combines a straightforward microgravity dining experience with a spectacular viewing environment. Its enormous variable-transparency wall provides an impressive view of Earth. The solid and semi-solid food is decent and served zero-G style in packets and containers with straws. Freefall draws tourists and travelers inexperienced in eating in space, so the dining area waitstaff are always available to aid confused or struggling guests. Self-mobile vacu-bots patrol the area, pulling in wayward crumbs and amoeba-like liquid globs.

HONEYMOON HILTON

The Honeymoon Hilton is a self-contained satellite a few kilometers from Midway Station. Its facilities do their best to merge the practical considerations of zero-G with the luxury one would expect from a high-end hotel, with oddities like gold-plated suction plumbing systems, and hallways lined with velvet grab-loops. The microgravity hotel is marketed to newlyweds and others with an interest in the fun and frustrations of erotic zero-G activities. It does less business to corporate interests and Beanstalk travelers, since they tend to be less enthusiastic about traveling from Midway station proper.

To offset this, the Hilton offers an automated free spaxi service to and from Midway and its satellite stations, with spaxies that can transport up to ten guests at a time. Freeloaders manipulate the service for free transportation to the satellite stations. While the freeloaders may be tolerated, anyone who causes trouble on the spaxies gets booted off at Midway, and their biometrics are logged to enforce a permanent ban.

BEANPOD SLINGSHOT

A specially designed beanpod rising from Midway toward the Castle can use its speed to shoot off the end of its mag-lev track, through the Challenger Planetoid. This sends the pod flying in a slow, precisely calculated orbit to eventually arrive at the Moon, Mars, or elsewhere in the solar system. As these pods depend on the momentum generated during the trip up the Beanstalk, Midway is their last stop before they fly off the tether.

NBN BRANCH OFFICE

The NBN branch office and related operations at Midway take up about half of the station's facilities, making NBN Midway's largest employer. The main-entrance lobby is a geodesic sphere twenty-four meters across, with about thirty hatches scattered across the triangular panels. The center of the sphere is a massive, state-of-the-art NBN holographic system displaying NBN shows and personalities. Flat-panel displays covering the inside surface of the dome show popular NBN products or repeat a show on the main display. Sometimes these panels instead offer 360-degree views of various Earth, Mars, or lunar environments.

The hatches lead to various levels within the administration departments, broadcast studios, and Karen Li Technical Training Academy. With no need for seating, and no gravity to hold things to a tabletop, the offices utilize all of the surfaces of a room. Swing-out metal panels with magnetic holders keep papers in place, when they are used at all.

NBN broadcast equipment is scattered throughout the station. NBN maintains several dedicated orbital platforms covered with antenna towers and dishes communicating with all of the inhabited areas of the solar system. A sizable private security force protects the high concentration of equipment from runners and others looking for an unguarded entry point to NBN's network.

TUESDAY LAYENI: NBN GUARDIAN

Tuesday Layeni is part of NBN's army of skilled computer and broadcast technicians. A graduate of the Karen Li Technical Training Academy, Tuesday works on a wide variety of NBN systems. She's a loyal employee, ready and able to defend the NBN network on- or off-line. Layeni leads a mobile group of computer and electronics field technicians who focus on problems that cross equipment platforms and NBN departments. They operate more like a Netcrimes investigation task force than a tech-support team, even going out into the field to track down elusive hackers. Layeni will pay for good information on threats to NBN.

SHEER HEAVEN

For those who cannot adjust to zero-G dining, or just need a break from microgravity, Sheer Heaven provides a traditional dining experience. The small, specialized cylindrical satellite spins along its long axis to produce up to .5 G. Accessible via spaxi service, Sheer Heaven offers a mid-range to expensive dining experience, with more desirable (and pricey) seating at each transparent end of the cylinder. Clients rent ballrooms here for galas and formal receptions, dinners, and events.

THE ORBITAL LUXURY HOTEL AND RESORT

The Orbital is a prime, five-star hotel and self-contained resort. Whether the rich and powerful go for the full resort treatment or just spend a night during a beanpod layover, the Orbital is their first choice. It specializes in high-end entertainment and multimedia relaxation spas called "tranquility chambers," which are unique to microgravity environments. The Orbital's casino competes fiercely with Casino Grande, but the hotel attracts high rollers even if they gamble or party elsewhere.

VISTA HOTEL

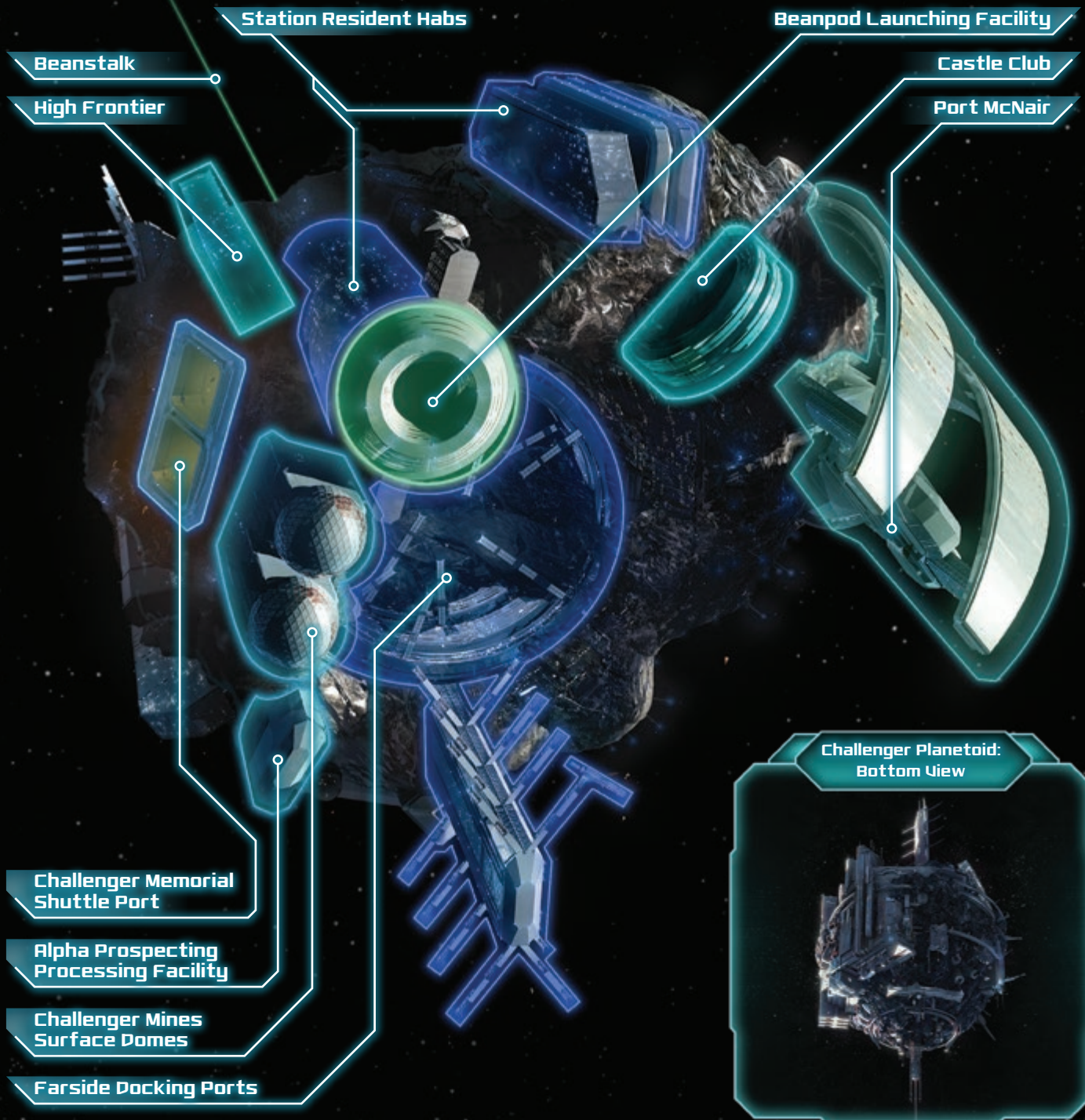
The Vista is Midway's largest hotel for travelers of middle to above-average income. It has a clean, sleek look, with an ultraminimalist design, slim curvilinear furnishings, and near-Spartan decor. What it lacks in quantity it makes up for in quality. The Vista's location close to Midway Station Down gives it impressive views of the distant planet below. It also provides a convenient spot for clandestine meetings.

The hotel has a large range of room styles, room sizes, and price points. At the low end, the rooms are small, containing only sleeping bags strapped to the walls and wall-mounted entertainment panels. A private bathroom with a tiny enclosed bathing unit introduces newcomers to zero-G washing. At the upper end, multiroom stylized suites are available, though they are modest compared to the Orbital's offerings.

CHALLENGER PLANETOID

Some seventy thousand kilometers above the Root, the Beanstalk ends at the Challenger Planetoid. This rocky, irregular asteroid acts as the Beanstalk's flying counterweight in geosynchronous orbit, stretching the buckyweave tether and keeping it taut. The asteroid is about five kilometers across. Capturing and towing it into orbit was a remarkable feat of engineering in and of itself. The planetoid's position at the end of the Beanstalk gives it .04 G spin gravity, which is still microgravity.

The Challenger Planetoid is often called "the Castle," a reference to the old fairy-tale beanstalk. The asteroid's link to the Beanstalk and the construction to make it a travel hub were accomplished not by giants, but by construction workers and engineers. Much like Midway Station, the Castle services and maintains beanpod oversight and repair facilities. It provides accommodations for travelers and staff, and it serves as a popular tourist destination for those who can't afford a trip farther out. The planetoid is divided into Nearside and Farside structures: Nearside faces the Earth, while Farside never sees it.



Although its gravity is a bit stronger than Midway Station's, the Challenger Planetoid, as large as it is, still isn't massive enough to generate noticeable (let alone useful) gravity for people living on its surface. However, it does contain structures able to generate their own, much stronger, spin gravity, such as Castle Club. This enables the inhabitants to experience gravity on a regular basis to counteract some of the long-term biological consequences of living in space.

The Castle serves as a major spaceport to the rest of the solar system. Flights constantly arrive from and depart to Luna and Mars, and some ships are starting to venture toward destinations in the asteroid belt. Cargo beanpods constantly launch off the tip of the Beanstalk in a never-ending stream of automated shipments. In addition, routing passengers and cargo traffic down the Beanstalk is typically more economical than landing spacecraft on Earth. With a few exceptions, such as heat-shielded bulk ore deliveries dropped into approved ocean landing zones, most cargo destined for Earth takes the Beanstalk down, and this includes the eternal flow of He-3 containers.

The Beanstalk ends at the massive Challenger Beanstalk Terminal. Since the terminal is on the near side of the planetoid, any beanpods launching directly into space seamlessly transfer from the end of the Beanstalk onto a dedicated mag-lev launch line. The beanpods zip through the center of the planetoid and shoot out of the far side. Most cargo craft are unstaffed or crewed by bioroids. Passenger craft have a crew of humans, bioroids, or both.

Like the rest of the Beanstalk, the Castle is managed by the SEA. However, given that Challenger Planetoid is many times larger than Midway Station, it has far more privately held structures and leased portions. Mining activity at the Challenger Mines is strictly regulated to avoid compromising the asteroid's structural integrity, mass, or anything else that could affect the Beanstalk. New construction must be thoroughly reviewed, and the largest structures must be strategically located and balanced out.

The Castle's heavy industries produce materials and goods for its own use and for export. These are mostly privately held companies subject to heavy oversight by the SEA. Due to the Beanstalk's continual backlog, most exports are destined for the Moon or Mars.

The Challenger Planetoid's unique crossroads position and easier access to and from the rest of the solar system makes it more attractive than Midway Station for wealthy individuals wishing to live and work along the Beanstalk. Stories of outrageously luxurious accommodations featuring materials from across the system abound, though most are more rumor than fact. Still, tales of Challenger's wealthy residents making trips to Midway or the Moon for slumming around certainly help the rumors spread. Anyone with a complaint about society's division of wealth can find plenty of examples throughout Challenger's sprawling structures.

CHALLENGER LOCATIONS

The Castle is big enough that it has two distinct regions. Nearside is the side nearest the Earth and Midway Station, and it is the attachment point for the Beanstalk. Farside is the side farthest from Earth and Midway. Due to the planetoid's .04 G spin gravity, the building interiors are upside down with respect to Earth: the floor is on the end of the building farthest away from Earth, and the ceiling is on the end nearest Earth. Connections between Nearside and Farside tunnel through the middle of the planetoid. Small shuttlecraft and spaxies are also available for travel to various parts of the planetoid and other nearby locations.

NEARSIDE FACILITIES

Nearside is dominated by the Challenger Beanstalk Terminal. The remainder of Nearside hosts most of the planetoid's commercial and residential facilities. The extremely low spin gravity imparted by the Beanstalk's tether means that residents consider Nearside to be on the "top" of the planetoid—as gravity pulls people and objects gently toward Farside—and it's also the side with a view of Earth. Thus, developers see it as the most desirable piece of real estate.

BEANSTALK MAINTENANCE BAY

The maintenance bay, which takes up almost a quarter of the Challenger Terminal, is a massive, multilevel warehouse full of beanpods and automated cranes for lifting and moving them around. Shifts run day and night to turn beanpods around and prepare them for the return trip to Midway Station. Bioroids make up about half of the staff who keep the never-ending cycle running efficiently. There are always beanpod overhauls and unexpected repairs to be carried out. The bay is fully stocked with parts and supplies.

CASINO CLUB

This high-stakes gambling den attempts to channel the opulence of old Monte Carlo casinos and other luxurious pleasure palaces of days gone by. The club has just about every type of game designed to part a fool from their money, though some—such as roulette and craps—have been adapted to the microgravity environment. The dealers and attendants are all specially ordered clones in full tuxedos, though the human floor managers handle the money. The walls all offer stunning views of the Earth, the surface of the Challenger Planetoid, and even approaching spaceships—which, since the club is buried twenty meters below the asteroid's surface, are all projections from cameras scattered across the surface.

CASTLE CLUB

About a kilometer from the terminal via mag-lev tubes is the famous Castle Club, a low-gravity fantasy land and entertainment zone. It consists of two partially buried wheels some two hundred meters in diameter, each with three decks in concentric rings. The wheels spin in opposite directions, providing each with .5 G (outer deck) to .33 G (inner deck). The counteracting spins keep the rotation from affecting the planetoid and the Beanstalk. Originally called the Carousel, the facility was purchased and renamed by casino developer Gianfranco Calderoli. Now, the Castle Club offers all manner of entertainment for the rich and famous, including clubs, bars, and restaurants as well as sports, rides, flying lessons, and other activities made new and exciting by being performed in a low-gravity environment.

CHALLENGER TERMINAL

Aside from beanpods scheduled for launch off the end of the Beanstalk, the Challenger Beanstalk Terminal is the ultimate destination for most pods. The terminal dominates all Nearside structures in size and importance. It operates much like an airport, with waiting areas, embarkation stations, arrival platforms, pod-maintenance facilities, and a traffic control command center. The terminal is surprisingly utilitarian in layout and aesthetics, a reminder that the Challenger Planetoid is still a frontier, despite its importance and busyness. Recently, in an effort to counter this impression, the port authorities have given incentives for several upscale stores and restaurants that cater to rich and famous travelers to set up shop within the facilities.

LAWRENCE YATES: CHIEF ADMINISTRATOR

Larry Yates has been the chief administrator for the last five years. He must keep people and goods flowing along the Beanstalk, without openly playing favorites among nations and commercial entities. Managing this with ruthless efficiency, he is notoriously unafraid to stand up to any company or government. He regularly argues with Chief Administrator Ando at Midway Station, but they ultimately must cooperate, as they share the same goals.

CLOUDTOP

The Cloudtop night club is a lively restaurant and live-music venue within the Castle Club complex. It plays completely to the cloud top theme. The entire place is in shades of white or light gray. Fog machines keep the floor flooded in a wispy mist. Puffy, cloud-like holographic projections shroud the furniture and elevated platforms. The lighting imitates sunrise, sunset, or midnight, or the club simply uses the expansive Earth-facing windows to set the tone. Compared to the rest of the Castle Club or Casino Club, Cloudtop is relatively inexpensive and attracts middle-class tourists and travelers.

CRIME IN THE CASTLE

While the Castle doesn't have a physical "undercity" in the same way that New Angeles or Heinlein does, a criminal network runs still throughout the station, linking ultra-wealthy orgcrime bosses with street level enforcers. Runners enjoy a particular prominence amongst the Castle's crooks, because defeating Challenger's surveillance systems and accessing sealed areas of the station is an absolute must in an artificial environment. Organized groups of dockworkers and miners fill the same role as undercity street gangs, to the point of fighting over territory and jobs. And there's always work for someone who can make people disappear into the cold, dark blackness of space.

L-STRIKE: AGGRESSIVE CLUB OWNER

An energetic young woman calling herself "L-Strike" is Cloudtop's flamboyant and charismatic owner. She is heavily tattooed in stylized lightning bolts, glowing with fully controllable sub-dermal bioluminescent implants. Although only moderately skilled in other performing arts, she is a master emcee and the face of the establishment. Her moniker also alludes to the fact that she's a trained martial artist, particularly with nunchaku (for which L-strike is a demonstration technique). She has been known to personally bounce troublemakers. She knows the Cloudtop regulars and is well connected in Castle social circles.

HIGH FRONTIER

High Frontier is a large hotel, business, and convention center just an underground slidewalk away from the Challenger Beanstalk Terminal. It is a popular venue for major industry shows and meetings. It caters to the business traveler rather than tourists or celebrities, but it is perfectly capable of serving any customer. It houses multilevel ballrooms, boardrooms, meeting spaces, and convention halls. Rooms range from modest and affordable spaces to large and overpriced suites.

FARSIDE FACILITIES

The Farside Facilities moniker encompasses all of the individual commercial and industrial facilities that dominate the planetoid's far side. A few have their own dedicated structures, while others share workspaces and self-contained industrial complexes. Due to the need to keep Challenger stable, the facilities are a cluster of structures of seemingly random—but carefully balanced—orientation, shape, and purpose.

CHALLENGER MEMORIAL SHUTTLE PORT

Named in honor of the lost NASA space shuttle Challenger, the Memorial Shuttle Port is home to the Challenger Memorial Ferry Service to Starport Kaguya on the Moon. Cut into the side of the planetoid, the port is almost zero-G thanks to its nearly gravity-neutral position within the Castle. The port's passenger transfer tubes connect docked shuttles to a cluster of small, subterranean waiting compartments. Aside from the exclusive Lunar Club waiting compartment, the rest of the port is very utilitarian and shows signs of continuous usage.

The ferry service's pricey express shuttle trips aboard fusion-powered spacecraft take between one and three days to reach the Moon, depending on where it is located with respect to the Castle. However, most freight and the standard passenger service use the "slow boat." These ferries utilize the Castle's momentum to send them on a weeks-long journey via a precisely calculated curved trajectory without the use of fuel.

CHALLENGER MINES

The Challenger Mines supply raw materials for the orbital construction of facilities on and around the Castle. Though they are often referred to as a single entity, the mines consist of different allied and competing ore-extraction companies. Alpha Prospecting owns about a third of the mines, and it is always trying to secure more claims. Surface domes cover the mine facilities and twisting tunnel system. With their bioroid workforce always growing, the mines are a favorite target for anti-bioroid protests and sabotage. Corporate interests have hired prisec security to keep their interests safe. Rumor has it that many of these prisec forces have ended up in fights with other security teams over who controls a particular stretch of tunnel or surface space, and that more than a few team members have been lost to "industrial accidents."

SPIKE DUBOIS: CHALLENGER MINER

Mikhail "Spike" Dubois has worked the Challenger Mines since before the Battle of the Beanstalk. He moves from employer to employer, chasing jobs and promotions. He's lost enough jobs (and seen friends lose theirs) to bioroids to make him a vocal and occasionally violent opponent of all bioroid expansion into almost any working field. As a Human First member, he is quite happy to sabotage bioroids directly or through social engineering among workers and managers. He leads a crew of like-minded miners who are also happy to bust some Haas-Bioroid heads when they get the chance.

FARSIDE DOCKING PORTS

The Farside docking ports serve spacecraft arriving at the Challenger Planetoid and departing for all destinations, including the Moon. They are the arrival point for Moon-launched helium-3 canisters, which are transferred to the Beanstalk via connecting tunnels. These ports feature cavernous openings cut into the planetoid that are able to receive bulky cargo craft. They also have large storage bays where ships can be secured for long-term storage or maintenance. The ports provide plenty of work for crews of technicians and starship mechanics, who spend months living in the adjacent dormitory complexes before transferring back down to Earth.

ZHANG BIK: FARSIDE DOCK TECHNICIAN

Bik is one of a large team of techs and engineers who work the Farside docking ports, servicing and maintaining ships and cargo pods. Bik tackles the complex guidance and propulsion systems of intrasystem ships. They also secretly moonlight as a runner called "Deep Green," using their access to ships owned by various corporations to covertly penetrate their systems and networks. Any information they do not have a direct use for, they sell online.

PORT MCNAIR

The United States Space Expeditionary Corps (SXC) operates from Port McNair, the military base and space docks on the Challenger Planetoid. Made famous for its role in the repulsion of the combined Martian and Lunar fleets during the Battle of the Beanstalk, Port McNair is one of the only facilities in the solar system housing and supporting dedicated military spacecraft. It also serves as the heart of the Beanstalk's defenses.

Port McNair's fleet consists of three squadrons of SA/F-01A Strikers—the same orbital attack fighters used during the Battle of the Beanstalk—along with several converted freighters to transport military cargos or deploy forces to Mars, Luna, or elsewhere in the solar system. The port also has a number of military dropships in case the SXC needs to get troops down to Earth's surface quickly.

Although all of McNair's military spacecraft are converted civilian models, the port is home to the test program for a new generation of ships specifically built to serve as orbital fighters. Sources report that four SA/F-05D Thunderbolts have already been delivered to the port and are being put through their paces by the resident squadron commanders.

While the fighter squadrons can strike at nearly any target in Earth orbit, Port McNair's weaponry is still centered around offensive missiles and defensive counter-missile systems. For offense, the port keeps a number of "slow launch" strategic missiles. These are dropped off the docks, and then the missile control officer fires their powerful rockets to set up an attack vector and propel them to their target at high speed. In theory, these weapons could strike targets on the Moon—but in practice, the bright signature of the rockets and a roughly two-day transit time means they'd be easily intercepted. The missiles are more than sufficient to hit closer targets, like other orbital structures, however.

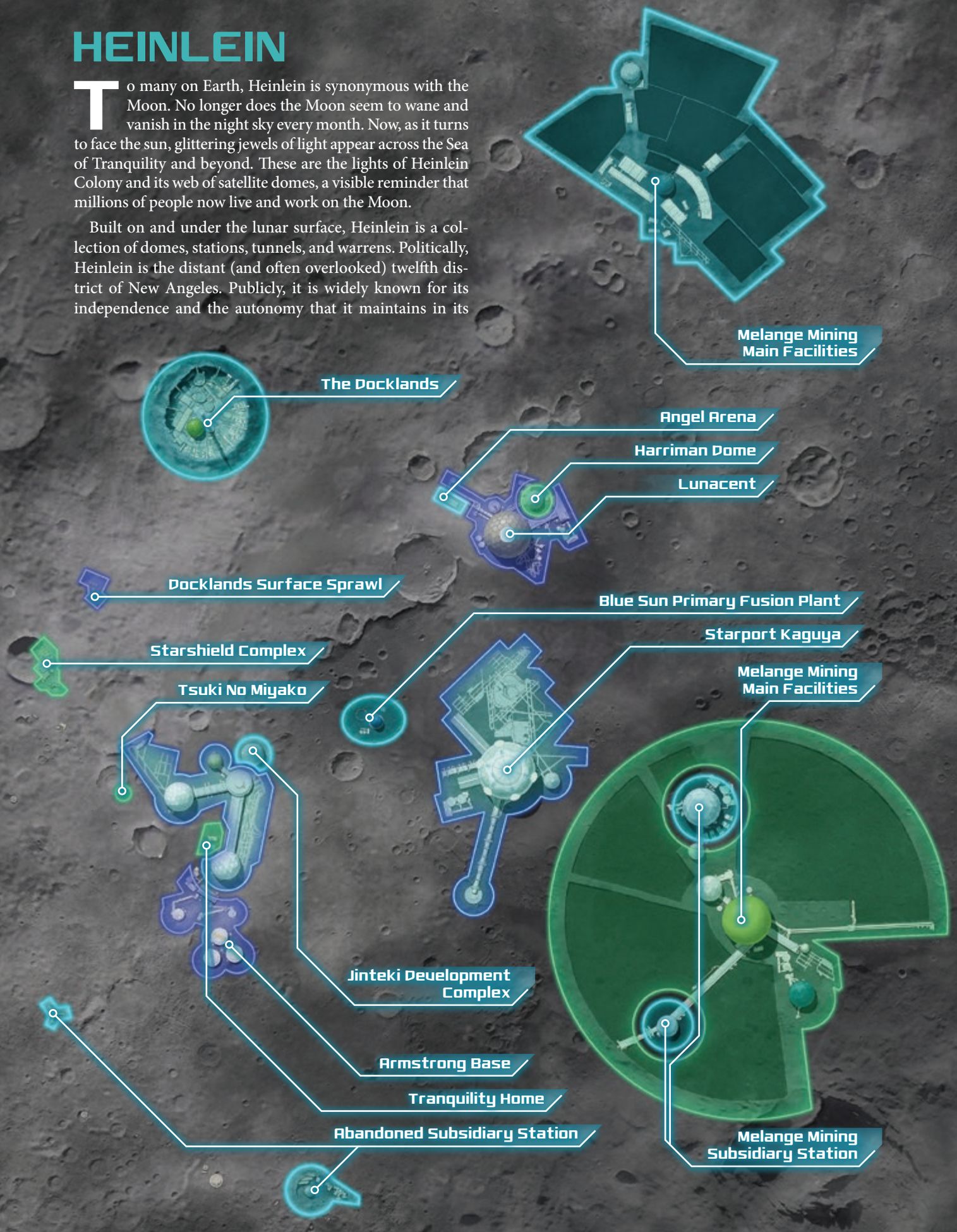
For defense, McNair maintains ten counter-missile banks scattered across the planetoid's surface to provide complete defensive coverage, each loaded with thirty Star Sparrow interceptor missiles. Using a combination of kinetic buckshot warheads and EMP devices, these defenses should be able to shoot down anything sent their way.

The port employs hundreds of permanent staff, about eight hundred SXC troopers, and about five hundred trainees. Training programs for both officers and enlisted personnel specialize in combat in zero-G and microgravity environments. This ranges from free-floating, extravehicular fighting to so-called surface fighting and close combat within the confined spaces typically found on the Castle and aboard spacecraft. The most infamous of these facilities is Lights Out, a stretch of abandoned mines repurposed by the SXC. The entire maze of tunnels and passages is depressurized and unlit, and trainees have to find their way to various objectives using only their suit radar systems for guidance, all the while fighting against "aggressor squads" composed of SXC troopers equipped with full VR maps of the mines. All combat is done with low-power training lasers. Getting through Lights Out with only fifty percent "casualties" is considered a success for any officer candidate; most need three runs to hit that mark.

HEINLEIN

To many on Earth, Heinlein is synonymous with the Moon. No longer does the Moon seem to wane and vanish in the night sky every month. Now, as it turns to face the sun, glittering jewels of light appear across the Sea of Tranquility and beyond. These are the lights of Heinlein Colony and its web of satellite domes, a visible reminder that millions of people now live and work on the Moon.

Built on and under the lunar surface, Heinlein is a collection of domes, stations, tunnels, and warrens. Politically, Heinlein is the distant (and often overlooked) twelfth district of New Angeles. Publicly, it is widely known for its independence and the autonomy that it maintains in its



everyday affairs. Realistically, the mining corporations dominate the district's government and economy—and much of the rest of the Moon as well.

To be sure, the attitudes of independence are grounded in a pragmatic outlook on life on the Moon. Heinlein's issues and realities are far different from those of Earth-side New Angeles. Most New Angelinos don't have to worry about where their next breath of air will come from, or that knocking a hole in a wall could risk the lives of everyone in their neighborhood. Thus, although a representative from Heinlein sits on the New Angeles city council, for the most part, the Heinlein district manager acts as a de facto mayor for the colony. Most New Angelinos forget or ignore the fact that Heinlein is technically part of their city, and the majority of colonists are more than happy to return the favor.

FOUNDING OF A FRONTIER

Heinlein grew out of the United States' original scientific lunar station, Tranquility Home. Built around the site of the original Apollo 11 landing, Tranquility Home started as a couple of simple domes staked out on the regolith: just enough space to provide astronauts a few hours outside a spacesuit under some radiation shielding.

Then, the Quito Accord officially made Heinlein a part of the newly formed Special Economic Zone of Ecuadorian New Los Angeles. As the Beanstalk stretched into the heavens and the demand for He-3 grew, Heinlein grew as well. Mines, domes, and mag-lev lines stretched out across Luna as multiple companies rushed to stake their claim on part of the lunar surface. While other countries established their own settlements, Heinlein remained the largest and most powerful.

FROM UNREST TO WAR

Heinlein profited from the early helium-3 boomtown days even more than the other major lunar settlements did. With mining concerns shipping immigrant labor up the Beanstalk as quickly as possible, Heinlein expanded both outward and underground. Then, when conflicts years in the making between workers and corporations exploded into uprising and revolt, Heinlein was the source and center of the Lunar Insurrection.

What would later spiral out of control into the Worlds War started when an alliance of mining workers broadcast their grievances to the Earth as a whole, stating that they would no longer work if the corporations continued to oppress and underpay their workforce. In response, an unmarked shuttle bombed the Prosperity Mining Depot during a protest, breaching the facility and suffocating hundreds of miners.

If the unidentified corporation responsible for the strike thought it would bring their workforce to heel, they were sadly mistaken. Workers rose up in all-out revolt across Luna, overwhelming prisec security forces in a brutal assault that saw heavy casualties on both sides. The rebels went on to seize the shipyards and mag-lev launch tracks in Heinlein, Xiangong City, and other major lunar settlements, blockading all shipments of He-3 in a single stroke.

OPERATION FALLING STAR

Facing a total embargo of He-3, the United States acted quickly to put down the rebellion. The United States Armed Forces assembled a scratch team of commandos and electronic counter-warfare specialists (the foundations of what would later become the Space Expeditionary Corps) and deployed them up to Luna via the Beanstalk. Their mission, codenamed Operation Falling Star, was to retake Heinlein and Xiangong's spaceport facilities, along with Melange Mining's launch tracks.

Arriving in commandeered freighters, the team used an arcing orbital approach that sent them swinging around the dark side of the Moon before coming in low and fast over Heinlein. The unorthodox trajectory worked, and the rebels didn't spot the invaders until they crested the lunar horizon with their engines burning furiously to slow their descent.

Rather than leave themselves vulnerable in low orbit, the commandos crash-landed their freighters on the surface, or in one case, directly into Kaguya's docks. Though this wrecked the spacecraft, it meant the team was deploying on the surface before the insurrectionists could bring their ad hoc weapons to bear. At Kaguya, the damage and depressurization caused by the crashing ship let the commandos brutally and effectively storm the rebels' fortifications. Well-trained and equipped with sealed exosuits, they quickly secured the station. None of the rebels survived, nor did any of their corporate hostages.

WAR ON THE MOON

The proto-SXC's strikes on the mag-lev launch tracks and Xiangong's spaceport were equally successful. However, they also spurred the Chinese to launch their own assault on the Moon, as a response to the "violation of their national sovereignty." The war would go on for years, eventually growing and shifting to Mars, and culminating with the Battle of the Beanstalk. All the while, Heinlein and its citizens suffered from being on the front lines.

Eventually the war did end, with Heinlein back firmly under United States and corporate control. In the aftermath, Heinlein benefited from its unique status and reconfirmation as a district of New Angeles. The U.S. government, Weyland, Haas-Bioroid, and Melange Mining quickly rebuilt the colony at a pace the other Lunar settlements could not hope to match. The Sea of Tranquility is now covered with Heinlein's domes, tunnels, and mag-lev tracks; the colony even spills over into the Sea of Nectar.

LUNAR LIFE

Living on Luna is harsh. Away from the tourist zones, Heinlein is very crowded, utilitarian, and filled with social conflict, environmental dangers, and economic hardships. Everything is recycled and used until it falls apart. The air and water are stale at best, and older structures out of sight of the tourist zones usually show their age.

The War changed the colony, but not necessarily for the better. Over the past fifteen years, continuous immigration and the increased use of clones and bioroids in the mines have prompted the majority of native Lunar citizens to leave the Moon for Mars or retreat to Luna's Docklands underworld. Relatively few of the former insurrectionists remain in Heinlein. This is in part why Mars's ongoing conflicts between megacorps and its citizenry often (literally) bleed over into Heinlein life.

This is not to say that life on the Moon is unbearably miserable, even with the threat of danger and ruin descending instantly and without warning. In fact, the light lunar gravity and the Moon's wonders attract hundreds of older immigrants from Earth each year. Heinlein's culture is a unique international mixture that makes it an envied leader in music, art, fashion, and even some sciences.

Heinlein's wealthy and powerful are insulated from its darkest aspects, thanks to their luxurious accommodations in private apartment blocks, exclusive economic zones, or the top levels of arcologies. Their day-to-day life is easier and less crowded, but it is not immune to lunar dangers, crime, exploitation, and social pitfalls.

COLONY CONFIGURATION

Heinlein's layout is unlike that of any city on Earth, which contributes to its exotic reputation Earth-side. The surface structures are a sprawling collection of public domes, privately owned structures, mining complexes, a complex mag-lev transportation network, and facilities abandoned due to obsolescence or the War. The foundations of the original mining facilities still remain, long after the buildings and equipment they supported were recycled or ground up for crater infill. Starport Kaguya, the Docklands, the active mining facilities, and Heinlein's main domes are connected by surface mag-lev lines, transit tunnels, and unpaved groundroads. Armstrong Base is relatively close, but in the interest of avoiding the appearance of too much coziness between the SXC and the colony, it is not directly connected to the mag-lev or tunnel transit system. A ring of smaller domes surrounds the enormous topside dome of Lunacent, Heinlein's hub and its largest dome. The various domes conceal much of Heinlein proper from view, most capping dozens of levels dug deep into the lunar surface.

Harriman dome is a typical example. It is divided into roughly ten zones (habitation, recycling plants, etc.) arranged on seven major levels. Each major level consists of six or more sub-levels, depending on the exact configuration. It expands below the surface by tunneling outward and downward. Some of the newest structures are at the very bottom level.

Harriman's levels are arranged around a central elevator cluster, somewhat like the spokes of irregular wheels stacked on a spindle. The central elevator runs from the Harriman topdome all the way to the bottom levels. Other elevators and mag-lev tunnels provide secondary connections that can be more convenient to outlying sections. Each level encompasses dozens or hundreds of compartments, each able to be sealed off in the event of a breach.

Counterintuitively, Harriman's main habitation levels are at the bottom of the structure. The enormous multi-level service zones for water processing, waste recycling, power generation, food production, and the all-important air scrubbers sit between the habitation levels and the topside dome. This layout maximizes the protection of citizens from solar radiation and other dangers to human life due to the Moon's lack of a protective atmosphere.

TREATY OF HEINLEIN

The Treaty of Heinlein is the most important modern-day treaty. It ended the Worlds War. It produced the charter for the Universal Nations, replacing the United Nations. The Treaty created the Martian Colonial Authority and placed the Martian corporate colonies under its control, though the corporations retained ownership.

The physical document is displayed for all to view at a museum in Starport Kaguya. It shaped not only interactions between the combatants after the War, but also the entire solar system economy by regulating who operated the Beanstalk and how. By transferring control to the Space Elevator Authority, the Treaty was intended to level the playing field for all countries to use the Beanstalk. While it certainly helps, it is debatable whether the SEA is holding up its end of the deal, or if the U.S. still receives preferential treatment.

The treaty returned Heinlein to New Angeles, to be ruled as a city district, albeit a distant and rather impractical one. The SXC is allowed to maintain various bases on the Moon and Mars, theoretically as a temporary arrangement. There is no Mars withdrawal date, and Armstrong Base on the Moon isn't likely to shut down anytime soon.

ARMSTRONG BASE

Armstrong Base is the Space Expeditionary Corps' main lunar base. This squat fortification of heat-formed lunar rock surrounded by rings of laser turrets, sensors, and patrolling drones projects Earth's military might on the Moon. Beyond the occasional clash with die-hard insurgents, there has been no major fighting on Luna since the War. The base stands ready regardless.

With minimal military opposition to counter, much of the base has become devoted to training troopers to fight in space and low-G environments. The SXC's soldiers can expect to participate in hard-vacuum zero-G training on one of Armstrong's stations in lunar orbit, conduct mock boarding assaults on retired spacecraft, and work their way through low-G obstacle courses on Luna's surface. Nearly all the training takes place in actual vacuum conditions while wearing sealed exosuits or pressurized carapace armor. Training tends to culminate with runs along the infamous "Asphyxiation Alley," where soldiers must fight their way through grueling simulated combat with only a single tank of O2. By tradition, the short list of troopers who have made it without "dying" is engraved on Armstrong Base's outer wall.

This sophisticated training makes the SXC one of the best-prepared fighting forces in the system. Colonel Metzger, Armstrong Base's commander, continues to prioritize this training as the best way to ensure the next war, should it ever happen, will be short. The colonel expects that it's only a matter of time before most of the five thousand soldiers under her command are sent to Mars.

As the nexus of the Heinlein colony's defenses, Armstrong Base maintains a robust collection of weaponry. The base has dozens of missile silos buried deep in the lunar regolith, and it is likely that some of those missiles are tipped with nukes. Meanwhile, weapons platforms remain in geosynchronous orbit over Heinlein, ready to rain fire down on any intruders. Finally, the base maintains a fleet of armed lunar rovers parked right on the surface, easily activated if things get hot.

RENEE METZGER: CONCERNED COMMANDER

Colonel Renee Metzger commands Armstrong Base. She's a veteran of the lunar battles during the War, having led troops in the brutal Battle of Kaguya. Many long-time lunar residents resent her past, but it does add to her power and reputation. District Manager Hubbard, her old friend, regularly pressures her to expand SXC's role in policing Heinlein (which is mostly prohibited) or the Docklands (which may be a gray area) and make it a better place to live.

Colonel Metzger's loyalty to the SXC and Earth drives her to make the trainees who come through Armstrong the best fighting and diplomatic force they can be. She knows most end up on the front lines of Mars's difficulties. Whether they need to break down doors or build alliances with local leaders, she wants them to excel when needed.

HARRIMAN DOME

The Harriman dome is one of several smaller domes and structures that adjoin the much larger Lunacent dome. One of the earliest domes, it originally catered to entrepreneurs and business startups to expand lunar businesses beyond mining and industry. These days, it is home to a variety of eclectic businesses, which has attracted more than Harriman's share of free thinkers and fringe elements (even for the Moon).

EARTHRISE HOTEL

Earthrise Hotel is one of Harriman's most popular tourist traps. It is a large, impressive-looking dome that is highly advertised in order to attract tourists and other visitors who insist on leaving Starport Kaguya's safety to see some of the "real" Heinlein. It gives thrill seekers a place to "discover" while keeping them out of Harriman's lower levels.

That's not to say they won't be entertained, and the view of the Earth rising over the Lunar horizon from Club Earthrise at the top of the dome is certainly not to be missed. The rest is an unequivocally overpriced high-end restaurant, bar, hotel, and music venue, with seemingly fashionable boutiques. Local entertainment acts regard Earthrise as a good place to make some money, but not as a legitimately influential entertainment venue. In fact, locals rarely come here unless they are part of the staff or show.

HARRIMAN FUSION REACTOR DOME

Commonly called the "power dome," the Harriman fusion reactor dome is a reinforced, high-security structure that caps the dome's main fusion reactor. The reactor consists mainly of a 1.5-meter-diameter chamber encased in multiple layers of shielding. Only reactor workers, administrator families, and their security-cleared guests are allowed in the power dome. The extreme privacy and security feeds a never-ending supply of wild conspiracy theories regarding shady political deals, scandals, and purported cover-ups. While they cannot all be true, Heinlein's rough reputation indicates more than a few likely are, in some form.

HARRIMAN SUBDOME

Below Harriman's food-production levels, and capping off the residential levels below it, is the Harriman subdome. Roughly two-thirds the size of the topdome, the subdome serves a similar purpose. It acts as an air reservoir and provides a tall, open space to give people relief from the endless tunnels, warrens, and compartments. The subdome also provides structural reinforcement and support for the central elevators and service risers, as well as for the levels above and below.

The subdome is a lively place. NBN and atmospheric projections alternately cover its inner surface. It is filled with shops, restaurants, pricey living quarters, and some medium- to high-quality hotels. The subdome attracts tourists in its own right. Many use it to visit the nearby Club Starburst, and a few venture farther downward, against everyone's advice.

HARRIMAN TOPDOME

The Harriman topdome, which is seventy-five meters in diameter, caps the Harriman subterranean complex. Lunar domes and surface structures afford some radiation protection, but many long-term lunar residents eventually opt for the better-shielded quarters deep below a dome. Much of the topdome is taken up by transportation links. The topdome also is part of Harriman's air-recycling system, serving as a massive emergency backup reservoir of air.

WYLDSIDE

Wyldside is one of Heinlein's most notorious and powerful countercultural influences. It was created by and for a subculture of g-modders dedicated to self-modification to gain specific animal traits of their choosing. The exotic alterations produce surprisingly accurate results, going well beyond simple transformations such as fur, markings, claws, or fangs. For the wylders, the more exotic the modification, the better it is. Feathers are not uncommon, and some have even achieved prehensile tails.

Wyldside's popularity exploded when the trend took hold in some Earth subcultures. However, the club isn't the easiest to find or reach. It is nestled deep down in the bottom residential levels of the Harriman dome, in a definitively unsafe zone. Wylder society celebrities and genetic engineers are often escorted by regulars or staff to ensure a safe journey from the surface. The club provides an accepting social refuge for the wylders. It also connects the g-modder patrons with the engineers and medical personnel who enable their modifications.

IMARA BALEWA: INNOCENT TOURIST?

Balewa is the kind of tourist Heinlein marketers want to see, and megacorps are wary of. She is part of Soufrika's prosperous middle-class, targeted by NBN lunar marketing. She is also an information superdata analyst, making her a suspected solo or corporate runner. Some fear she is actually a runner called "Breaker Q," conducting industrial espionage for the rival Kampala space elevator effort.

Regardless, Imara is here to have a good time. It's her first trip to the Moon, and she's hitting all of the major tourist attractions. She's living it up in Starport Kaguya. She might even venture to the safer Dockland zones or Wyldside.

LUNACENT

Officially called Luna Central, Lunacent is Heinlein's largest dome, forming the hub of the district complex. It is Heinlein's administrative and residential center, and its New Angeles Plaza houses the district government, including District Manager Hubbard's office and the NAPD Heinlein District Office. Within the dome is an entire surface neighborhood, complete with subdomes, buildings, gardens, and arcologies. It's prominently featured in all Heinlein marketing, and it's not unusual for those on Earth who pay little attention to lunar politics or economics to think it is the totality of Heinlein.

Lunacent's topdome is one of the few areas in Heinlein to feature large gardens with actual trees and relatively expansive greenspace, such as Prosperity Memorial Park. It is dedicated to miners lost prior to the War. Exotic botanical gardens serve as testbeds and offer educational opportunities for lunar natives to experience a small measure of an Earth-like environment.

Lunacent is the physical heart of Heinlein. It competes with Starport Kaguya for the title of cultural heart of Heinlein, as new trends and popular acts often surface in Lunacent's entertainment districts. As such, the Lunacent dome is one of the best-maintained structures on the Moon, although smaller non-governmental structures, non-tourist areas, corporate domes, and other less-public buildings within get less attention.

Lunacent's labyrinth of tunnels is jam-packed with businesses and people. Even wealthier levels are regarded as crowded, compared to Earth megacities. Lunacent's continual expansion does little to relieve the congestion; it just allows more people to move in and fill it up.

ANGEL ARENA

Just beyond the main dome of Lunacent lies Angel Arena, one of Luna's most popular venues for low-G sports. The transplas dome that covers the field gives audiences a spectacular view of the stars while watching games, even if it means games can be "rained out" due to excessive solar activity. Angel Arena hosts many low-G equivalents of terrestrial games, such as g-ball, aero hockey, and high drive American football. Earth teams tend to visit to try playing these low-G variants, although they need to spend a couple of months preparing for the effects lunar gravity has on their sport. In return, Heinlein's own teams often spend months Earth-side to build up muscle density, just to make sure they're not overmatched by their terrestrial opponents.

ARGUS SECURITY INC.

This Weyland Consortium subsidiary maintains administrative and recruiting offices in and around Heinlein. Argus not only protects Weyland concerns, but also hires out to other corporations and some governments. The Heinlein-area offices handle personnel, administration, and local deployments. They also oversee research and development for new lunar services and products.

Heinlein residents treat Argus with care. Most rightly believe that its officers will pass on any information of value to Weyland. Argus started simply as Weyland's security subsidiary, but it wasn't long before it expanded into full-scale ordnance and combat vehicle research and production. It is able to deploy anything from lightly armed security guards to fully armored warriors and private armies equipped with the latest Argus technology.

COLUMBIAD ARCOLOGY

Any Heinlein resident hearing District Manager Hubbard's description of the Columbiad Arcology would instantly recognize it as a mythical ideal from Heinlein's original planners. The truth is that it is stark and far from a model society, like most of the colony. The Columbiad is a fanciful building far larger than any single nondome structure in Heinlein. It is so tall that it pierces the main Lunacent dome, giving the upper-class, upper-level residents fantastic views of the lunar landscape and Earth beyond.

While the arcology achieves the designed purpose of housing people from every segment of society in a single unified structure, it actually enables society's segmentation. To rise up the arcology is to literally rise up in station and economic status. Crowded commission tenements at the base give way to modest apartments, then to multi-level suites, and ultimately to extravagant penthouses. The arcology is one of the most policed structures in Heinlein, making it much safer than the average dome, but for the lower-level residents the policing is also the most intrusive.

TIA NAWAI: DISTRICT COUNCILPERSON

Tia Nāwai is Heinlein's wily representative on the New Angeles city council. She spends about half her time down-Stalk, pushing for Heinlein's share of municipal funds and services. Given Heinlein's separation from the rest of the megalopolis, she's willing to cut deals advantageous to individual districts, rather than dealing with Mayor Wells directly. Nāwai also benefits from dedicated governmental transportation slots on the Beanstalk, giving her almost on-demand access to last-minute trips up and down the space elevator. Her work wins her few friends, so Nāwai has been looking to hire some off-the-books protection from New Angeles who wouldn't come with any Lunar political affiliations.

HAAS-BIOROID R&D LABORATORIES

Haas-Bioroid is one of Heinlein's major corporate players. HB's lunar facilities are extraordinarily important to the development and sales of each generation of bioroids. Its efficient offices, idyllic showrooms, and advanced production facilities are scattered throughout the Sea of Tranquility, and its vital HB R&D dome sits in Heinlein's northern reaches.

HB's labs are marvels of technological development. They create the most cutting-edge prototypes for future bioroids. Most models are destined for the lunar or Mars markets, but advancements at the lab apply to Earth-side HB R&D as well. As it is a very iterative process, it's not uncommon to run across multiple variations of a product in development active in different parts of the lab. Prototypes and early models that are never put into production remain in use for further study or simply in keeping with the lunar mindset of avoiding the waste of valuable resources.

NAPD HEINLEIN DISTRICT OFFICE

NAPD's Heinlein headquarters is part of the district office in New Angeles Plaza. NAPD HQ oversees all NAPD precincts and satellite stations. Like other administration facilities, the building is self-sustaining in the event of an attack or catastrophic emergency.

Heinlein is among NAPD's most difficult assignments. Most officers are transferred up-Stalk from New Angeles as part of their regular short-term rotations. Many use it as an opportunity to gain specific lunar training that is useful for advancement, if nothing else. Some upper-level officers and a few native Loonies fill long-term command roles. Local recruiting is difficult, and not enough to fill out the required forces.

NAPD's power directly coincides with its location within Heinlein. Inside the major domes in public spaces, it operates much like any other police force. However, thanks to the strong laws regarding private property, pursuing warrants or suspects into private domes, corporate complexes, or the Docklands slows or halts the NAPD's efforts. The farther out from Lunacent, the less respect NAPD is granted, no matter what the law says.

DWIGHT MARLOWE: NAPD DOUBLE AGENT

Sergeant Marlowe is one of NAPD's best undercover officers. He uses no cover identity, but instead appears to sympathize with some of Mars's rebellious factions. He managed to convince some of their local agents and sympathizers he can help them. They believe he gives them eyes inside the NAPD. The truth is Marlowe has family reasons to sympathize with both the NAPD and Mars. He's a double agent who hasn't yet decided which side he's really on. In the meantime, he tries to head off the most damaging actions from both sides.

EMERSON LUFKIN: NAPD COMMANDER

Commander Lufkin is one of NAPD Heinlein's longest-serving officers. He began there with his regular rotation from New Angeles. He liked the Moon. The job was tough, and it only got more difficult after the War. Breaking rotation for permanent assignment to the Moon was not difficult. Then and now, NAPD officers regard Heinlein as punishment or a prerequisite for advancement.

Commander Lufkin stubbornly fights the first notion, and he exploits the latter to attract better officers. Lufkin uses whatever incentives are available to recruit long-term staff and short-term experts. The commander is well aware of the NAPD's limited reach. He makes every effort to strengthen its authority, but he knows its practical limits.

MELANGE MINING

Melange Mining (aka 2M) is Heinlein's largest, most influential, and most feared power player. It drove the colony's growth in the early He-3 boom days. Having acquired many of its competitors after the War, Melange dominates He-3 production and governments on the Moon. It is in constant competition with Alpha Prospecting and Pestroka Technika, its primary, but still lesser, political and commercial rivals.

The Lunar Insurrection that ignited the War started with the seizure of Melange Mining works. After the military broke the Insurrection, Melange leased controllable Jinteki clones to replace workers who had become insurgents. This arrangement continues to grow, with thousands of clones operating throughout Melange's seemingly omnipresent facilities in Heinlein and across the Moon. Melange has its own domes, settlements, and factories, and it likely holds the largest percentage of private property of any corp or person on the Moon.

MAIN FACILITIES

The first thing visitors notice when they visit 2M's main facility is the dust. The dark transplas domes and gray bunkers are constantly covered in a thick layer of fine lunar dust. The He-3 processors constantly spew it across the facility, and no matter how many clones 2M gets to clean it away, there's always more.

The dust reinforces the dirty, worn look of 2M's facilities, belying the fact that Melange Mining is one of the most sophisticated industrial operations in the worlds. Due to 2M's constant effort, three planets are powered, and the company's administrators are quick to remind visitors of that fact.

Melange's main dome in Heinlein is mostly given over to industrial processes. Around the base are the docks for the harvester vehicles, the ones that scrape off the top layers

SECRET WARRENS

Heinlein is not only crowded, but much of it is also confined belowground. Dome tunnels and subsurface structures are all comprehensively planned, designed, and built. In other words, it's difficult to hide from law enforcement or anyone else with access to Heinlein's schematics. Practically speaking, that's almost everyone, and certainly anyone with money, power, or access to district networks.

The long-standing solution for individuals fleeing law enforcement, debt collectors, or criminals are the secret warrens. The warrens are illegally dug tunnels and chambers outside of Heinlein's borders. Such undertakings are not easy, as seismic monitors used to detect moonquakes and track mining operations may also detect illegal tunneling. Transporting large amounts of rock is also difficult to conceal. However, plenty of people are motivated to work around these problems, and orgcrime has the cash and access to cover up larger operations. Warrens are often dark, cold, and cramped.

of the lunar surface. Conveyor tracks extend out from the dome and deep into the mining fields, bringing a steady supply of rock into the refineries and allowing the harvesters to stay out longer. Inside, the Henry-model clones work the huge rock grinders and mineral furnaces that break down the rock and extract the pure He-3 within. If the dust seems bad outside, inside it's even worse. All of the machines are enveloped in a constant haze, as if an oil fire were burning beneath them.

Visitors tend to see only the smaller administrative portions of 2M's main dome. The company office's main foyer is packed with looming displays of the history of mining on Luna. Each manages to single out a former competitor that was later bought out and swallowed up by Melange Mining. Beyond the foyer is a maze of winding corridors and cramped offices. 2M scorns the sleek, futuristic appearance of most corporate offices. Its haphazard decor seems to say that its people are too busy working for a living to worry about looking nice.

SUBSIDIARY STATIONS

Subsidiary domes and stations are scattered around the edges of Melange's primary mining fields. Most were owned by competitors before they were swallowed up by 2M. Melange laid off most of those companies' former workers and replaced them with clones, then turned those corporate facilities into staging areas, secondary processing facilities, and storage depots for its ever-expanding mining operation.

Some of the subsidiary domes were shuttered, their lights turned off, power set to idle, and air allowed to grow stale and freeze. It's said that the lunar resistance movement sometimes uses these domes for meetings or for stashing weapons and supplies. On the one hand, the NAPD tends not to intrude on Melange's territory; on the other hand, the resistance has to worry about the megacorp's formidable corporate security instead.

STARPORT KAGUYA

Starport Kaguya is the bustling gateway to Heinlein and the Moon. Public and private transports arrive and depart hourly for destinations on Luna and space beyond. They're vital to sustaining life and leisure on the Moon. Starport Kaguya has served as the primary way station since the earliest days of the Lunar colonies. It was rebuilt and upgraded dramatically after the tragic Battle of Kaguya. Almost no one beyond a few lingering insurgents wants to speak of or remember those days.

Today's Kaguya is known best among the public as an impressive tourist destination sprawling with StarScape retail complexes, risqué nightclubs, lunar resorts, and even its own sports team and stadium. Its Challenger Memorial Shuttle docks are noticeably fancier and more welcoming than those at the Challenger Memorial Shuttle Port on the Castle. NBN holoprojections and vidscreens tout Kaguya's fine amenities, with hardly a mention of sites beyond the port and Tranquility Home Museum.

Everyone is happier if the tourists never visit the domes beyond Kaguya and never discover Heinlein's dangerous side. Just wandering into the private docks can be hazardous or even lethal to an unsuspecting visitor. As dressed up as Kaguya is, it doesn't take much to get beyond its touristy glitz. People who find their way into the service levels or cargo zones see a very different port: one with storage bays connected by poorly maintained corridors bathed in flickering light and stale air.

The Heinlein Authority regulates colony space traffic. Its offices are part of the starport dome complex. Due in part to the starport's importance, this also conveniently helps keep some visiting VIPs from experiencing the darker side of the Moon.

DOCKLANDS

All of Heinlein's dark truths and conflicts collide in the Docklands. Citizens who don't live there don't visit without very good reason. If they do visit, they stick to the relatively safe areas. No one wants the tourists there: not Heinlein's government,

not the NAPD, and especially not the criminals and corporations. Those who live and work in the Docklands do so either because they have no other option, or to make money thanks to (or in spite of) its virtual lawlessness.

This region is a collection of unfinished dome frameworks, patched habitats, dirty factory hubs, and dust-covered landing platforms sitting in the shadows of the Lunacent dome. Much of it has been built in the big craters on Heinlein's southern outskirts. The Docklands started out as an industrial zone with numerous local shipping nodes and landing zones for lunar hoppers. It still serves these functions, but it also has become a haven for gangs and orgcrime outfits

These days, any corporation operating in the Docklands has some sort of arrangement with the criminals there, and it likely is trying to exploit its workers or is doing something illegal. Areas of the Docklands that aren't occupied by a corp are split between hundreds of gangs, each of which carves out its own corners and violently defends them. These gangs range from small-time street gangs that prey on lost tourists to big-league smuggling, extortion, drug, and human trafficking rackets.

For the NAPD and Heinlein's administration, the Docklands is a nightmare. A lot of its territory is outside of Heinlein's district limits, and all of it is privately owned (even those areas that are under the defacto control of various orgcrime outfits). Officers have to hack through a forest of paperwork before they can even set foot on most Docklands property. Even then, they have to go in heavily armed and in numbers if they want to get home safely.

MUNA ASSAN: DOCKLANDS "FUELBOSS"

Someone has to supply the Docklands with rocket fuel, oxygen, and other consumables used in spaceflight. Corporations ship it in from legitimate sources. Criminal elements must fend for themselves, which often means dealing with the strict terms of Muna Assan.

A number of years ago, Assan was wrongly terminated from her job as associate vice president of logistics at Melange Mining. Her department head framed her to cover up his embezzlement scheme. Melange kicked her out of the Docklands company quarters and drained her accounts to repay the debt.

Muna's former logistics suppliers had shady deals supplying some Docklands orgcrime clients. She moved from helping them, to manipulating them, to taking over their distribution scheme. Her underlings siphon off fuel and other resources from corporate suppliers, targeting Melange for revenge whenever possible.

STARSHIELD COMPLEX

Private property brings with it private security forces, and Starshield is one of the major prisec operations in Heinlein. With thousands of employees and guards, it rivals the NAPD's Lunar division in size and complexity (even if it doesn't come close to the size of the NAPD as a whole). Starshield offers everything from basic rent-a-cops to paramilitary units staffed with elite former soldiers no longer in government employ. As its name suggests, Starshield specializes in defensive operations. However, rumors persist that it's not opposed to taking the offensive in certain circumstances: i.e., if given enough money and motivation. Starshield took over a collection of damaged structures on the edge of Kaguya after the War, turning it into an administration, barracks, and training complex.

STORMRIDERS

After spending years working as a corporate courier, Zee Finsk quit and opened up their own shop on Luna. Stormriders is one of the few honest outfits in the Docklands. Although it's just Zee and a couple of their close friends, it already has a reputation as one of the best courier and transport businesses in Heinlein.

Zee stays out of trouble with local gangs by offering no-questions-asked guaranteed deliveries for anyone who can pay, and by being really good at their job. Their team has a couple of dropships heavily refurbished with stealth tech and ECM, and Zee has friends in Heinlein's traffic control center as well. Their only caveat is that they don't transport prisoners or slaves; the one gang that tried to press the issue got its hab blown open via a vicious strafing run.

THOMAS HAAS (NEMESIS)

Thomas Haas has a reputation as a rogue pretty boy with a chiseled physique and g-modded looks, but he can also act as a charming and effective PR face for his family's company when goaded. Smarter than he lets on, Thomas has his own private lab in Heinlein for his pet projects, though he doesn't know if his mother, Haas-Bioroid Director Cynthia Haas, knows about it.

BRAWN	AGILITY	INTELLECT	CUNNING	WILLPOWER	PRESENCE
2	2	3	4	1	4

SOAK VALUE	WOUND THRESHOLD	STRAIN THRESHOLD	M/R DEFENSE
2	12	11	0 | 0

Motivations: Desire (Ambition), Fear (Commitment), Strength (Witty), Flaw (Greed).
Skills: Athletics 2, Charm 3, Computers (Hacking) 2, Cool 4, Deception 3, Knowledge (Science) 2, Knowledge (Society) 3, Mechanics 2, Negotiation 3.
Talents: Adversary 1 (upgrade the difficulty of all combat checks against this target once), Clever Retort (once per encounter, may add ♲ ♲ to another character's social skill check). Counteroffer (once per session may choose one adversary within medium range and make an **opposed Negotiation versus Discipline check**. If successful, target becomes staggered until the end of their next turn [or for remainder of encounter if successful with ❂]).
Abilities: Golden Goose (opponents must make a **Hard (◆ ◆◆) Discipline check** as an action and succeed before being able to make combat checks targeting Haas), Tinkerer (with access to any sort of tools or parts, may make an **Average (◆ ◆) Mechanics check**. If successful, creates an item with rarity equal to number of ✲).
Equipment: Nice suit, encrypted PAD.

ADAM H. DAVIES: FORMER REBEL

Adam was one of the original lunar insurgents, but was injured and captured in the Battle of Kaguya. Davies ended up in the Docklands after the War. He turned to the black market for cybernetic replacements for his severely injured arms; at the same time, he received upgrades for his neural augmentations. Davies still strives for a free Luna, quietly recruiting for the next attempt.

TRANQUILITY HOME

Tranquility Home was one of the original lunar research stations. Initially, scientists used a couple of domes as primitive protection for their limited habitats. It wasn't long before the domes were expanded and replaced by increasingly better and bigger structures. Out of convenience, the United States annexed Tranquility Home and then policed it with the same force that protected New Los Angeles and the Beanstalk. Heinlein grew from there.

Today, Tranquility Home is a crowded and expensive dome to live in. It's also something of a tourist trap, as visitors flock to see the oldest permanent lunar settlement. This means that while the tourist areas tend to be clean and well presented, most of the population lives in cramped "pod" apartments that line the sides of the main dome or branch out underground. Locals grab a few hours of precious solitude in one-room living spaces with deployable beds, toilets, and kitchen areas, then leave to be buffeted by endless crowds as they make their way back to work.

JINTEKI DEVELOPMENT COMPLEX

Jinteki is uniquely intertwined with He-3 mining and Melange Mining specifically. Melange uses thousands of Jinteki clones as its primary workforce (mainly the Henry-model). Jinteki established the Lunar Development Complex (or JLDC) partly to keep up with requirements for its Henry line and partially for its Generation Project, rumored to be designing clones for future deep-space exploration.

The JLDC consists of multiple surface and underground structures in an ancillary dome off Tranquility Home. Its genetic engineering department is among the best anywhere in the solar system. It's not uncommon for Jinteki to insert newly designed models into the workforce without warning, to test public reaction.

TRANQUILITY HOME MUSEUM

Tranquility Home is full of tourist attractions, although instead of statues or monuments, the dome tends to preserve small pieces of the lunar surface under small transplas domes. Tourists may find the grave of the first person to die on the Moon in the middle of a pedestrian concourse, or the site of Tranquility's first He-3 test mines tucked between a couple of shops.

However, the most impressive exhibit remains exposed to the hard vacuum of the lunar surface. The Tranquility Home Museum preserves the entire Apollo 11 landing site and the unmarred surface for fifty meters in all directions. Visitors can view this nigh-sacred place from an overhead pressurized viewing gallery. Holographic presenters can identify the source of every boot print, from Neil Armstrong's first steps to Janice Hamilton's historic return visit. Meanwhile, projectors play loops of the first landing's flat-film footage or modern holodocs.

TSUKI-NO-MIYAKO

Literally "the capital of the Moon," the name for this subsurface module comes from the ancient Japanese myth, *Tale of the Bamboo Cutter*. The module has been home to a large, ethnically Japanese community since the early days of the mining boom. Now, the module is famous for its bamboo groves, which grow along all of its main passages to refresh the air and provide needed biomass for vat-food cultivators. Surprisingly, Jinteki passed over this location when setting up its corporate branch offices. However, many of its employees prefer to live here, even if it means a longer commute.

[CHAPTER 5] ADVERSARIES

New Angeles is one of the largest cities in the worlds, and home to Earth's only space elevator. As a nexus of trade, culture, and politics, New Angeles draws all sorts of people from all over the worlds.

The following is a list of adversaries that you, the GM, can use in your adventures. These adversaries are divided into several groups, according to their affiliations and motives. With the exception of certain clone and bioroid models, adversaries' genders are generally unlisted. Sexual orientations, races, and religious identifiers are unlisted as well. New Angeles is one of the most diverse cities on the planet, and most New Angelinos no longer engage in overt discrimination against others due to issues of race, sexual orientation, gender, or religion. As GM, you can adapt these profiles as you see fit.

NEW ANGELES CITIZENS

In New Angeles, the citizens are as diverse as the endless cityscape, ranging from rich hedonists to the destitute denizens of the undercity, struggling to survive.

CIVIC BRIGADIER (MINION)

While the citizens of New Angeles live in a corporate-run world dominated by pursuit of profit, some still seek to improve life for the downtrodden. Civic brigadiers join volunteer organizations to install and maintain essential services, such as water and power, in the undercity or to build greenspaces, schools, and community centers.

BRAWN	AGILITY	INTELLECT	CUNNING	WILLPOWER	PRESENCE
3	2	2	2	2	2

SOAK VALUE	WOUND THRESHOLD	M/R DEFENSE
3	4	1 | 0

Skills (group only): Athletics, Driving, Knowledge (Society), Mechanics, Melee.
Talents: None.
Abilities: Community Volunteer (may use Knowledge (Society) instead of Charm, Coercion, or Negotiation during social interactions with undercity residents).
Equipment: Titanium shovel (Melee; Damage 5; Critical 4; Range [Engaged]; Stun 2), hard hat (+1 melee defense), PAD, toolkit.

CLUB OWNER (NEMESIS)

At and just below the plaza level, nightclubs, bars, and *discotecas* are where a lot of secret meetings and clandestine business dealings occur. This makes many club owners de facto power players in the undercity, whether they directly involve themselves in these illegal goings-on or not.

BRAWN	AGILITY	INTELLECT	CUNNING	WILLPOWER	PRESENCE
2	2	3	3	2	5

SOAK VALUE	WOUND THRESHOLD	STRAIN THRESHOLD	M/R DEFENSE
2	12	16	0 | 0

Skills: Charm 3, Cool 3, Deception 2, Knowledge (Society) 2, Perception 3, Streetwise 3, Vigilance 2.
Talents: Clever Retort (once per encounter, may add ♲ ♲ to another character's social skill check), Customer Service Experience 3 (after making a Charm check, may suffer up to 3 strain to cancel an equal amount of ♲).
Abilities: Threat of Ban (while in club owner's establishment, may spend ♲ from checks targeting club owner to have character making the check suffer 2 strain instead of 1).
Equipment: Stun baton (Melee; Damage 4; Critical 5; Range [Engaged]; Disorient 3, Stun Damage), PAD, bouncers.

DIESEL BRO (MINION)

A segment of youth culture in New Angeles is preoccupied with sports and adrenaline. Generally male, the "diesel bro" is obsessed with "traditional" displays of machismo. This includes a great deal of high-risk and sometimes violent behavior. Rarely career criminals or streetbangers, most diesel bros are just angry kids hopped up on way too much energy drink. Still, violence often erupts after a mob of bros runs into someone wearing the wrong team colors.

BRAWN	AGILITY	INTELLECT	CUNNING	WILLPOWER	PRESENCE
3	2	1	2	1	2

SOAK VALUE	WOUND THRESHOLD	M/R DEFENSE
3	6	0 | 0

Skills (group only): Athletics, Brawl, Coercion, Melee.
Talents: Berserk (as an incidental, until the end of the encounter, may add ✲ ⮝ ⮝ to all melee combat checks, but cannot make Ranged attacks; enemies add ✲ to all combat checks targeting a diesel bro or group; when this talent is used, suffer 6 strain at end of encounter).
Abilities: None.
Equipment: Baseball bat (Melee; Damage 5; Critical 3; Range [Engaged]; Disorient 2), diesel can, PAD.

DISENFRANCISTO (MINION)

Disenfrancistos live off the grid in New Angeles' undercity, and are everyone from homeless panhandlers to those who choose to live a life away from the corporate controlled world that exists above plaza level. Many *disenfrancistos* tend to get by on odd jobs, scavenge the undercity for valuable finds, and sleep in disused transit tunnels, clone barracks, bioroid warehouses, and other squats.

BRAWN	AGILITY	INTELLECT	CUNNING	WILLPOWER	PRESENCE
2	2	2	3	2	1

SOAK VALUE	WOUND THRESHOLD	M/R DEFENSE
2	5	1 | 1

Skills (group only): Melee, Resilience, Streetwise, Survival, Vigilance.
Talents: None.
Abilities: None.
Equipment: Utility knife (Melee; Damage 3; Critical 4; Range [Engaged]), backpack of personal goods.

DISENFRANCISTO SURVIVALIST (RIVAL)

While many live off the grid in poor conditions, others choose the life. Convinced that all mainstream media is a scam to encourage citizens to be "good little consumers," the off-gridder *disenfrancisto* believes that only they understand how to live free. They have almost no Net presence, living throughout the undercity and in unique independent communities like Manta's Sunken City.

BRAWN	AGILITY	INTELLECT	CUNNING	WILLPOWER	PRESENCE
3	2	2	3	3	1

SOAK VALUE	WOUND THRESHOLD	M/R DEFENSE
3	12	1 | 1

Skills: Athletics 2, Discipline 2, Mechanics 3, Medicine 2, Melee 1, Perception 3, Ranged (Light) 3, Streetwise 2, Survival 2, Vigilance 1.
Talents: Battlefield Medicine 1 (before making a Medicine check, may use this talent to add ✲ to the results; after the check is resolved, the target suffers 2 strain).
Abilities: None.
Equipment: Hand cannon (Ranged [Light]; Damage 7; Critical 3; Range [Medium], Inaccurate 1, Limited Ammo 4), utility knife (Melee; Damage 4; Critical 4; Range [Engaged]), backpack full of supplies, medical kit, rope, flashlight.

REPORTER (RIVAL)

In a megapolis as polarized as New Angeles, there is never a shortage of salacious scandal, corruption, or murder to write about. Referred to as "news-nosies," reporters spend their days tracking down stories, often in the less-than-safe undercity.

BRAWN	AGILITY	INTELLECT	CUNNING	WILLPOWER	PRESENCE
2	2	3	3	3	1

SOAK VALUE	WOUND THRESHOLD	M/R DEFENSE
2	10	0 | 0

Skills: Charm 2, Coercion 3, Cool 3, Perception 3, Skulduggery 2, Streetwise 2, Vigilance 2.
Talents: None.
Abilities: In the Know (whenever this character learns a Motivation of another character in the encounter, this character may have that character suffer 2 strain and may heal 2 strain), Leading Question (once per encounter, may spend a Story Point to learn one Motivation of any one other character in the encounter).
Equipment: PAD, camdrone, monocam, press credentials.

RESEARCHER (RIVAL)

Since New Angeles is a city on the cutting edge of research and development, plenty of researchers and scientists work in laboratories across the metropolis. While these labs are usually affiliated with a company, most of the researchers are contractors with uncertain long-term employment. More than a few of them would be happy to do some off-the-books research work for a few credits.

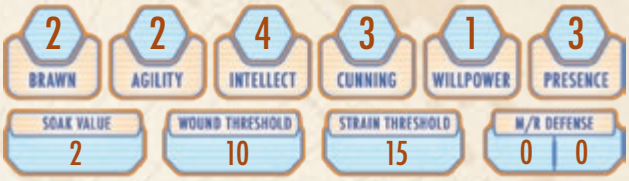
BRAWN	AGILITY	INTELLECT	CUNNING	WILLPOWER	PRESENCE
1	2	4	2	2	3

SOAK VALUE	WOUND THRESHOLD	M/R DEFENSE
2	11	1 | 0

Skills: Discipline 2, Knowledge (Science) 3, Negotiation 2, Medicine 2, Perception 3.
Talents: Applied Research 1 (once per session may use Knowledge (Science) and Intellect when making a check instead of the skill and characteristic the check would normally require).
Abilities: Research Team Member (when providing skilled assistance, may reroll up to two of the dice in the pool before resolving the check).
Equipment: Networked PAD, holodisplay, lab coat.

RISTIE COLLECTOR (NEMESIS)

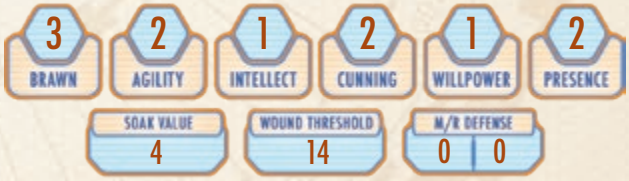
Many wealthy risties are collectors, often of something rare and expensive. This might include art, ancient artifacts, vehicles, unique old technology or code, even androids or drones. The collector is willing to go to extreme lengths, even resorting to underground markets, to get vital pieces for their collection. Price is no object for a rare find. While the ristie collector may live in a lavish condo-hab or villa, they go wherever the hunt for that crucial next piece of their collection takes them.



Skills: Cool 1, Knowledge (Society) 4, Negotiation 3, Perception 3, Streetwise 3, Vigilance 2.
Talents: Haughty Demeanor (other characters add ⟲ to social skill checks targeting ristie collector).
Abilities: Shrewd Negotiator (when making an opposed Negotiation or Streetwise check to purchase or sell an item, may suffer 2 strain to add ✲ to the results), Let's Make a Deal (if this character knows an opponent's Desire Motivation, when they inflict strain on the opponent, the opponent suffers 4 additional strain).
Equipment: Heavily encrypted PAD, several credsticks.

STARLIGHT TEMPLAR (RIVAL)

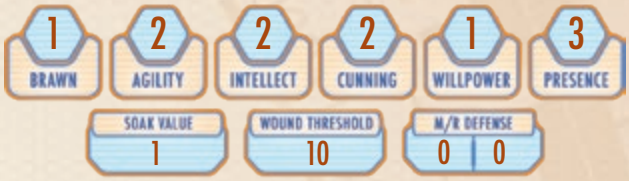
The Starlight Crusade is a religious order that utilizes technology to stimulate parts of the brain its members believe to house the soul in order to have religious experiences. Templars are strict adherents to Starlight Crusade tenets. They take it personally when outsiders sully the church's reputation, defending their beliefs with a sometimes violent righteousness.



Skills: Brawl 2, Coercion 3, Discipline 3, Knowledge (Society) 1, Ranged (Light) 1.
Talents: None.
Abilities: Values Enforcer (when making any social skill or combat check targeting an opponent of the church, add ✲ ⟲ to the result), Templar Cybernetic Implant (once per encounter as a maneuver, may make a **Simple (–) Discipline check** to heal 1 wound per ✲).
Equipment: Fletcher pistol (Ranged [Light]; Damage 4; Critical 2; Range [Medium]; Pierce 2, Vicious 2), heavy jacket with Crusade logo (+1 soak), PAD.

YOUNG RISTIE (RIVAL)

Many risties who live on inherited wealth seek pleasure, which might take any form, including live entertainment, food, unique tailored experiences, and adrenaline rushes. Anyone who navigates the social scene in New Angeles has had to deal with more than a few belligerent (and often intoxicated) young risties looking for fun—or trouble.



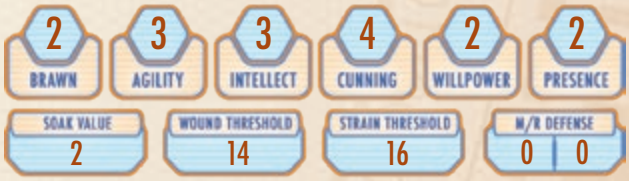
Skills: Charm 2, Coercion 1, Cool 1, Coordination 2, Knowledge (Society) 2.
Talents: Proper Upbringing 2 (when making a social skill check in the company of fellow risties, may suffer up to 2 strain to add up to ⮝ ⮝ to the check).
Abilities: I'll Tell My Parents! (when this character inflicts strain using a social skill check, they inflict 2 additional strain).
Equipment: High-end wearable PAD.

CRIMINALS

Criminal groups range from small streetbanger gangs to massive orgcrime syndicates. In addition, a wide range of independents sell their skills on the street or hunt for a big score.

CRIMINAL RUNNER (NEMESIS)

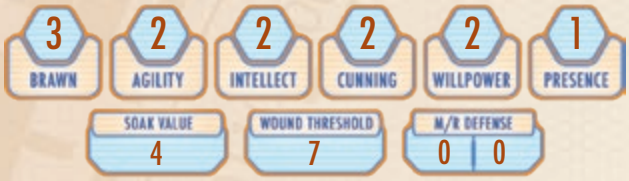
Criminal runners come in all types: some are cocky upstarts taking on jobs out of their league, while others are cold professionals saving up for retirement. But for each of them, at the end of the day it's all about the paycheck.



Skills: Computers (Hacking) 4, Computers (Sysops) 2, Cool 3, Deception 3, Knowledge (The Net) 2, Ranged (Light) 2, Skulduggery 3, Streetwise 3, Vigilance 2.
Talents: Adversary 1 (upgrade difficulty of all combat checks against this target once), Distinctive Style (may add ✲ ✲ ⟲ ⟲ to any Computers (Hacking) checks before rolling; ⟲ ⟲ triggers the I Know You! option in **Table 3–2** on page 130).
Abilities: Direct Access (when jacking in from within the same building as the target server, automatically succeeds when making an access system check).
Equipment: Submachine gun (Ranged [Light]; Damage 5; Critical 3; Range [Medium]; Auto-fire), skulljack, portable rig with Femme Fatale (page 137) and Corroder (page 136)—protected by Shinobi (page 135), fake IDs.

LOS SCORPIONES CASCARES (MINION)

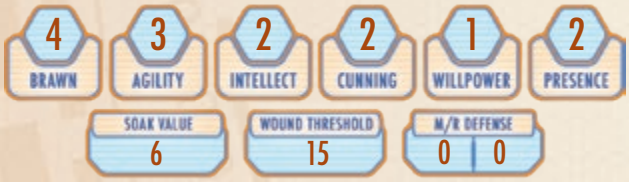
Los Scorpiones controls much of the illicit drug trade in New Angeles with the help of their *cascares*, or enforcers. Under the leadership of Lívia Teixeira and Miguel Moreno, the *cascares* have become a team of brutal and bloodthirsty enforcers who eagerly get their hands dirty engaging in human trafficking, gunrunning, and organ grinding.



Skills (group only): Coercion, Melee, Ranged (Light), Streetwise, Vigilance.
Talents: None.
Abilities: None.
Equipment: Armor-piercing submachine gun (Ranged [Light]; Damage 5; Critical 3; Range [Medium]; Auto-fire, Pierce 2), machete (Melee; Damage 6; Critical 3; Range [Engaged]; Vicious 1), aviator glasses.

ORGCRIME HEAVY (RIVAL)

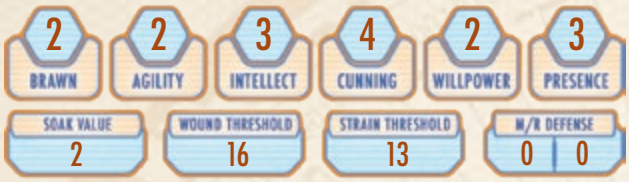
Most orgcrime outfits tend to have a number of heavily armed and well-trained enforcers. While the muscle in an organization runs most of the day-to-day criminal enterprises, the heavies take over in situations where violence and armed combat are expected. When they're not shooting up buildings and busting heads, heavies tend to work as bodyguards for orgcrime bosses.



Skills: Athletics 2, Brawl 2, Discipline 2, Ranged (Heavy) 2, Resilience 1, Streetwise 3, Vigilance 1.
Talents: Adversary 1 (upgrade difficulty of all combat checks against this target once), Street Fighter (when disorienting or knocking a target prone, the target suffers 3 wounds).
Abilities: None.
Equipment: Fletcher (Ranged [Heavy]; Damage 4; Critical 2; Range [Medium]; Blast 4, Pierce 2, Vicious 3), power gauntlet (Brawl; Damage 8; Critical 4; Range [Engaged]; Concussive 2, Knockdown, Prepare 1), light armor vest (+2 soak), oversized suit with hidden holsters.

ORGCRIME LIEUTENANT (NEMESIS)

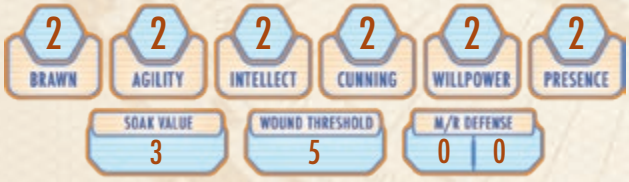
Whether Tri-Maf, yakuza, 14K, or Los Scorpiones, all orgcrime outfits have their mid-level lieutenants. Lieutenants typically either manage a single location, where they engage in multiple criminal activities, or a single operation that spans multiple locations. Lieutenants answer to a boss, and they often have numerous muscle and some heavies under their command.



Skills: Coercion 3, Cool 4, Deception 3, Knowledge (Society) 2, Leadership 3, Ranged (Light) 3, Skulduggery 2, Streetwise 4.
Talents: Adversary 2 (upgrade difficulty of all combat checks against this target twice), Forgot to Count? (when targeted by a ranged attack, can spend ♲ ♲ to cause attacker to run out of ammunition).
Abilities: Tactical Direction (may spend a maneuver to direct one friendly minion group within medium range; that group may immediately perform a free maneuver or add ▢ to its next check), You Thought You Were Out… (when making a Coercion check to maintain a favor after calling it in, the check is an **Average [◆◆] Coercion check** instead of an opposed check).
Equipment: Gold-plated laser pistol (Ranged [Light]; Damage 6; Critical 3; Range [Short]; Accurate 1, Burn 1), gold chains, nice suit.

ORGCRIME MUSCLE (MINION)

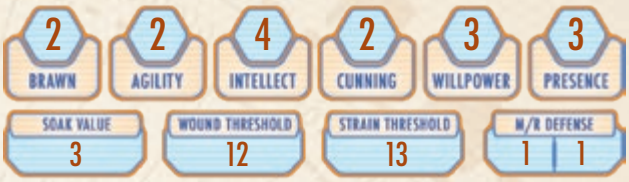
All orgcrime syndicates fill their lower ranks with cheap, tough, and somewhat disposable muscle. The job of these enforcers is to stand around and look dangerous, and back up their bosses in a fight.



Skills (group only): Brawl, Coercion, Ranged (Light).
Talents: None.
Abilities: Threatening (when providing assistance on another character's Coercion checks, add ✲ to results for each minion in the group beyond the first).
Equipment: Brass knuckles (Brawl; Damage 3; Critical 4; Range [Engaged]; Disorient 3), fletcher pistol (Ranged [Light]; Damage 4; Critical 2; Range [Medium]; Pierce 2, Vicious 2), cheap padded suit (+1 soak).

PRINCIPLED RUNNER (NEMESIS)

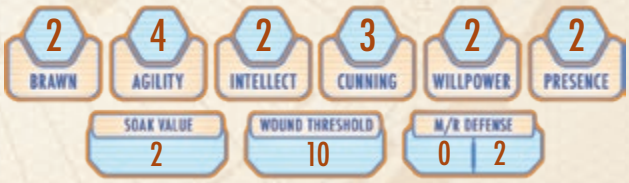
Principled runners want to make the world a better place, and they run in service to an ideal. They seek to expose government and corporate corruption, often leaking private data to the press or spreading it all across the Net. Principled runners see themselves as sentinels keeping an eye on those with great power to ensure they are using that power responsibly.



Skills: Charm 1, Computers (Hacking) 3, Computers (Sysops) 3, Cool 2, Knowledge (Science) 3, Knowledge (The Net) 4, Perception 3, Ranged (Light) 1.
Talents: Burn Through (after making a successful check to override a piece of ice, may suffer 3 strain to attempt to override a second piece of ice on the same system as an incidental), Natural (once per session, may reroll one Computers [Hacking] or Knowledge [The Net] check).
Abilities: None.
Equipment: Synap pistol (Ranged [Light]; Damage 5; Critical 6; Range [Short]; Disorient 4, Stun 3, Stun Damage), armored utility vest (+1 defense, +1 soak), BMI, big rig with Athena (page 136) and Yog.0 (page 138)—protected by Hawk's Eye (page 134) and Fire Wall (page 133).

SNEAKER NET COURIER (RIVAL)

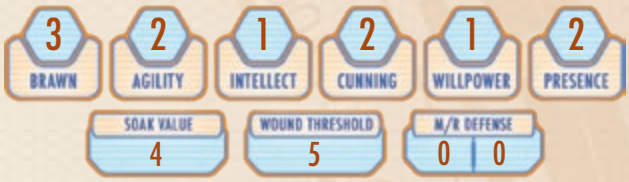
The only truly secure data never touches the Network, and as a result, some data transfers rely on physical couriers. Members of the so-called "sneaker net" transport data on mem chips via hopper, Metro, or even their sneaker-clad feet. A sneaker net courier needs to be fast, alert, and able to defend their package from someone trying to run an intercept.



Skills: Athletics 2, Brawl 1, Coordination 2, Driving 2, Piloting 2, Ranged (Light) 2, Stealth 2, Streetwise 2, Vigilance 2.
Talents: Swift (does not suffer penalties for moving through difficult terrain).
Abilities: Catlike Agility (once per turn, may spend a Story Point to move to any location within short range as an incidental, including locations that are vertically distant or have no easy access route).
Equipment: Palm stunner (Brawl; Damage 5; Critical 5; Range [Engaged]; Disorient 2, Slow-Firing 2, Stun Damage), good running shoes, encrypted datasticks.

STREETBANGER (MINION)

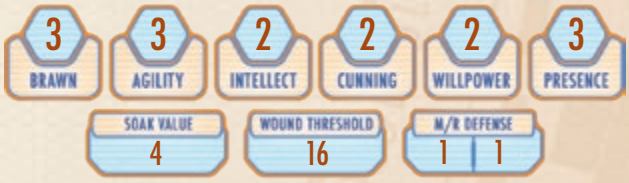
Street gangs collectively control most of the undercity, though rarely does any control more than a few blocks. Bravado, loyalty, and a skewed sense of honor are their virtues. While some terrify and extort those within their turf, others are the only justice and protection their neighborhood has. Some even hire out as armed guides for reporters and humanitarian workers.



Skills (group only): Brawl, Coercion, Melee, Ranged (Light), Streetwise.
Talents: None.
Abilities: Threatening (when providing assistance on another character's Coercion checks, add ✲ to results for each minion in the group beyond the first).
Equipment: Pistol (Ranged [Light]; Damage 6; Critical 3; Range [Medium]), mono-switchblade (Melee; Damage 4; Critical 2; Range [Engaged]; Pierce 2), synthleather jacket (+1 soak), extensive tattoos and piercings.

STREETBANGER LEADER (RIVAL)

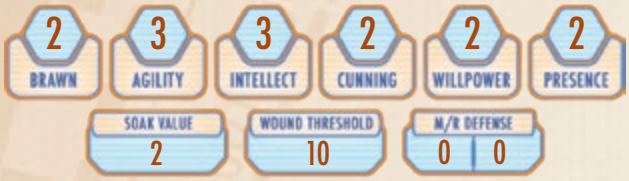
Street gang leaders have to be stronger, more ruthless, and more capricious then all their subordinates combined. Streetbanger leaders are often prisoners of their own position; the pressure to always be strong enough to deflect or overcome challenges for their gang's leadership makes for a short lifespan. Thus, anyone who's run a gang for more than a few months is a fearsome foe, possessing an aura of palpable menace laced with powerful charisma.



Skills: Coercion 2, Cool 2, Melee 2, Leadership 2, Negotiation 1, Ranged (Light) 1, Skulduggery 3, Streetwise 3.
Talents: Adversary 1 (upgrade difficulty of all combat checks against this target once).
Abilities: Charismatic Menace (allies within short range add ⮝ to checks they make; opponents within short range add ⟲ to checks they make).
Equipment: Custom six-shooter (Ranged [Light]; Damage 7; Critical 2; Range [Medium]; Accurate 1), plasma cutter (Melee; Damage 12; Critical 3; Range [Engaged]; Burn 1, Prepare 1, Sunder, Unwieldy 2), leather jacket with gang colors (+1 soak), PAD.

STREET DOC (RIVAL)

In an age of cybernetics and g-mods, many people seek a shortcut to improved or personalized selves. Since going to a legitimate doctor for an enhancement can cost a lot of money and leave a record trail, some disreputable citizens prefer relying on the work of a street doc. These are once-respectable surgeons who lost their license to practice or med-school dropouts with questionable ethics. Now, they patch up criminals and perform back-alley augmentations on anyone with the credits.

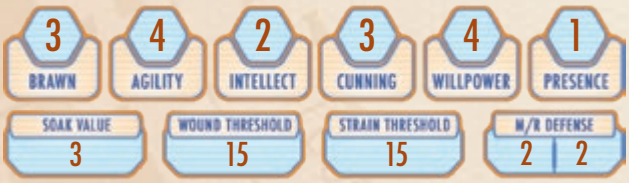


Skills: Deception 2, Knowledge (Science) 3, Mechanics 3, Medicine 3, Negotiation 2.
Talents: Surgeon 3 (when making Medicine checks to heal wounds, heal 3 additional wounds).
Abilities: Questionable Hygiene (when making a Medicine check, must spend ⟳ ⟳ ⟳ or ⊗ to decrease the target's strain and wound thresholds by 2 each until the end of the current session).
Equipment: Shotgun (Ranged [Heavy]; Damage 8; Critical 3; Range [Short]; Blast 4, Knockdown, Vicious 2), 4 slap-patches, various cybernetics, emergency medkit, portable toolkit.

YAKUZA ASSASSIN (NEMESIS)

When blackmail and bribery fail, an *oyabun*—leader of the yakuza—can call in one of their syndicate's assassins. These highly trained killers can get into the most heavily guarded structures and eliminate their target without being seen or heard. A yakuza assassin can use subtle poisons to make a death appear accidental, or they can use their katana if the *oyabun* wants to send an unmistakable message to their foes.

Their penchant for infiltration means that most yakuza assassins have also learned how to infiltrate computer networks and shut down security systems. Some of the best could even join the ranks of New Angeles' elite runners.



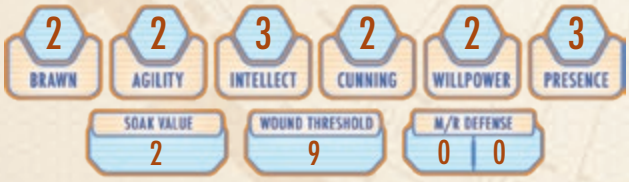
Skills: Athletics 2, Brawl 4, Computers (Hacking) 3, Cool 4, Coordination 5, Discipline 2, Melee 4, Perception 2, Skulduggery 3, Stealth 5, Vigilance 2.
Talents: Adversary 2 (upgrade difficulty of all combat checks against this target twice), Archaic Arms Master (while armed with a Melee weapon, may make an **Average** [◆◆] **Melee check** to force one engaged target to drop one weapon or move one range band in any direction).
Abilities: Quiet Code (when making a Computers [Hacking] check, ⟳ may not be spent to alert other users to the assassin's presence), Subtle Death (when making a Brawl check, may spend ⮝ ⮝ or ⊛ to apply a dose of contact poison to the target; the target must immediately make a **Hard** (◆◆◆) **Resilience check** as an incidental; if they fail, they suffer 5 wounds plus 1 wound per ⟳; ⊗ means they must make the check again at the start of their next turn, as the poison remains in their system).
Equipment: Charged crystal katana (Melee; Damage 6; Critical 2; Range [Engaged]; Defensive 1, Pierce 3, Reinforced), fists and feet (Brawl; Damage 5; Critical 4; Range [Engaged]; Disorient 1, Knockdown, Stun 5, Stun Damage), optical camouflage suit (+2 defense), climbing gear, pocket rig with one-shot icebreakers (spend a Story Point to add ✲ ✲ ✲ to a successful check to break ice).

CORPORATE EMPLOYEES

While drones have been reducing human labor requirements for the last century, the introduction of androids has greatly exacerbated that reduction. A large percentage of the human jobs that remain are high-powered, high-tech, or managerial in nature, often requiring formal education or skills training. Corporate employees often live in lavish arcologies, far from the struggling mass of humanity in the undercity.

CORPORATE MANAGER (RIVAL)

Corporate mission statements and ideologies vary from corporation to corporation, and it is the job of the middle manager to ensure the prevailing corporate philosophy trickles down to the workers and androids within their purview. Many middle managers worship upper management and executives with an almost religious reverence in their struggle to get ahead, which sometimes makes them oblivious to simple realities obvious to those underneath them. Thus, their personal attention on an underling's project can often be as hurtful as it is helpful.



Skills: Charm 1, Computers (Sysops) 1, Deception 2, Knowledge (Society) 1, Leadership 3, Negotiation 2, Perception 2.
Talents: None.
Abilities: Corporate Oversight (when performing the assist maneuver, add ✲ ⟳ ⟳ to the result instead of adding □).
Equipment: Smartsuit, PAD.

CORPORATE SYSOP (RIVAL)

To protect themselves from all manner of Netcrime, corporations hire sysops (system operators) to oversee and maintain their security programs. Most sysops can react to an intrusion and work to lock out a runner, while the best sysops can track the intrusion back to its source and initiate some sort of retaliation.

BRAWN	AGILITY	INTELLECT	CUNNING	WILLPOWER	PRESENCE
1	1	3	2	2	3

SOAK VALUE	WOUND THRESHOLD	M/R DEFENSE
1	9	0 | 0

Skills: Computers (Sysops) 2, Knowledge (The Net) 2, Mechanics 1, Perception 1, Vigilance 2.
Talents: None.
Abilities: Reinforce (as a maneuver, may increase the strength of one active piece of ice by 1 until the end of the corporate sysop's next turn).
Equipment: PAD, corporate ID, snacks.

FIELD ANCHOR (RIVAL)

A majority of New Angelinos get their news from anchors working for one of NBN's programming lineups. NBN field anchors embed with the NAPD during undercity sweeps, stand on Manta Beach during hurricane threats, and report from virtually any location that might have even a tangential connection to a story in an effort to give viewers a sense of conditions on the ground. The older and wiser ones simulate doing all these things via digital manipulation, trusting that most viewers can't tell the difference.

BRAWN	AGILITY	INTELLECT	CUNNING	WILLPOWER	PRESENCE
2	2	2	3	1	3

SOAK VALUE	WOUND THRESHOLD	M/R DEFENSE
2	11	0 | 0

Skills: Charm 3, Coercion 2, Cool 4, Deception 2, Knowledge (Society) 2, Vigilance 3.
Talents: Clever Retort (once per encounter as an out-of-turn incidental, may add ♺ ♺ to a target's social skill check).
Abilities: Leading Question (once per encounter, may spend a Story Point to learn one Motivation of any one other character in the encounter).
Equipment: Light "bulletproof" undervest (+1 soak), camdrone, PAD, satellite uplink system, cheap and stain-resistant suit.

MELANGE OVERSEER (RIVAL)

Melange Mining relies on Henry clones to perform the hard, dangerous work of lunar helium-3 extraction. This means their overseers have plenty of time to serve as Melange's unofficial enforcers, bullying the locals and rival He-3 operations, and contributing to the megacorp's unsavory reputation. While Melange Mining personnel live in Heinlein, they rotate down-Stalk for at least six months' gravity leave after every year of work. The clones, of course, remain behind.

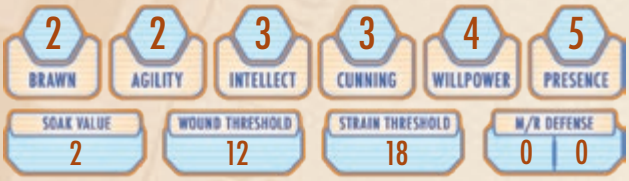
BRAWN	AGILITY	INTELLECT	CUNNING	WILLPOWER	PRESENCE
4	2	2	2	2	1

SOAK VALUE	WOUND THRESHOLD	M/R DEFENSE
6	12	0 | 0

Skills: Brawl 2, Coercion 3, Driving 2, Knowledge (Science) 1, Leadership 3, Mechanics 2, Perception 2, Ranged (Light) 1.
Talents: Adversary 1 (upgrade difficulty of all combat checks against this target once).
Abilities: Lunar Off-Roading (add ■ ■ to any Driving or Survival checks made on the lunar surface).
Equipment: Retrofitted strength-augmenting gauntlet (Brawl; Damage 7; Critical 4; Range [Engaged]; Concussive 1, Knockdown), laser pistol (Ranged [Light]; Damage 6; Critical 3; Range [Short]; Accurate 1, Burn 1), reinforced mining space suit (+2 soak), lunar megarover, PAD.

MEGACORP EXEC (NEMESIS)

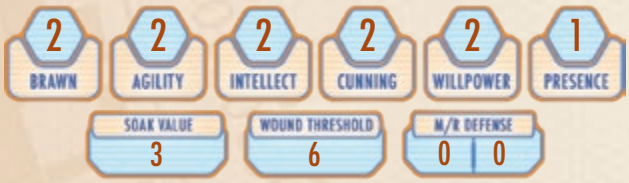
Execs live a romanticized lifestyle in the highest floors of elite arcology buildings, where they enjoy the absolute highest standard of living the planets have to offer. However, boardroom competition is fierce, and it can sometimes even be lethal. To survive the cutthroat environment, executives have to be tough and ruthless, as comfortable managing teams of prisec mercenaries as they are negotiating multibillion-credit deals.



Skills: Charm 3, Cool 3, Deception 4, Discipline 2, Leadership 4, Negotiation 4, Perception 3, Vigilance 3.
Talents: Adversary 1 (upgrade difficulty of all combat checks against this target once), Proper Upbringing 2 (when making a social skill check in the company of fellow corporate employees, may suffer 2 strain to add ⮝ ⮝ to the check).
Abilities: Let's Make a Deal (if this character knows an opponent's Desire Motivation, when this character inflicts strain on the opponent, the opponent suffers 4 additional strain), Ominous Reputation (when an opponent targets this character with a check, the opponent suffers 2 strain).
Equipment: Expensive suit with built-in PAD, credstick with unlimited funds, teacup giraffe, personal assistant.

SEA YELLOW JACKET (MINION)

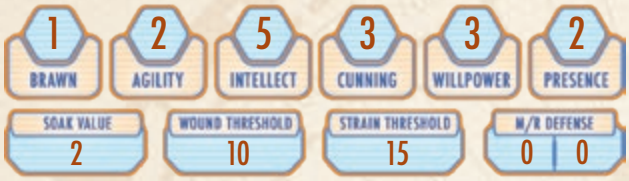
The Space Elevator Authority's first and most visible line of defense are the "yellow jackets," private security personnel in their distinctive garb. Working in teams to perform passenger and cargo security scans for all contraband, yellow jackets tend to have the same jaded demeanors as any other customer-facing security officers.



Skills (group only): Coercion, Knowledge (Society), Ranged (Light), Vigilance.
Talents: None.
Abilities: Uncomfortable Inspection (when searching a character or their possessions, that character suffers 2 strain).
Equipment: Synap pistol (Ranged [Light]; Damage 5, Critical 6; Range [Short]; Disorient 4, Stun 3, Stun Damage), bright yellow jacket (+1 soak), security PAD, 2 snap locks.

SYNC GLOBALSEC AGENT (NEMESIS)

SYNC designed the most important network protocol on the planet: the framework for the Network, which most modern technology relies upon. When the SYNC's sysops encounter irregularities they don't understand, they kick them up to highly paid Globalsec agents whom SYNC keeps on permanent retainer. Globalsec has the tools and experience to investigate glitches, track down skilled runners, and close breaches with extreme prejudice.



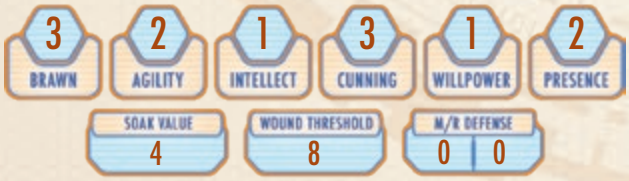
Skills: Computers (Hacking) 2, Computers (Sysops) 3, Knowledge (The Net) 4, Mechanics 2, Perception 2.
Talents: Net Warrior (when using a BMI, may make an **opposed Computers [Hacking] versus Computers [Sysops] check** targeting one character accessing the system; the target suffers 1 strain per ✲, and if they are using a BMI, they also suffer 1 wound per ✲).
Abilities: Sniffer Programs (add ■ ■ to any opponent's checks made on a system the SYNC Globelsec agent has control of), Swordbreaker Programs (may make a **Hard [◆ ◆ ◆] Computers [Sysops] check** targeting one opponent on the system to damage one of their active icebreakers one step, plus one additional step per ⮝).
Equipment: PAD, BMI, and custom offensive rig with personal icebreakers (Gordian Blade [page 137] Battering Ram [page 136] and Garrote [page 137]).

CREATURES AND VERMIN

One might be forgiven for thinking that a megapolis like New Angeles doesn't have much in way of wildlife. In fact, the myriad levels of the city host multiple microclimates and miniature ecosystems, where life has grown and evolved to live in the cracks of civilization.

CYBERDOG (RIVAL)

As more and more people have modified themselves with cybernetics, they have taken to enhancing their best friends as well. Dogs can receive cybernetics once they're fully grown, and most breeds adapt to them surprisingly well.



Skills: Athletics 2, Brawl 2, Perception 2, Vigilance 2.
Talents: None.

Abilities: Cybereyes (may see in infrared and may remove up to ■ ■ added to this character's checks due to darkness), Silhouette 0, Takedown (as an action, may make an **Average [◆ ◆] Athletics check** targeting one engaged opponent; if successful, target is knocked prone, suffers 4 strain, and may not stand from prone during their next turn).
Equipment: Electrified metal jaws (Brawl; Damage 6; Critical 3; Range [Engaged]; Stun 4).

G-MODSTROCITY (NEMESIS)

The citizens of BosWash like to brag about their giant mutant crocodiles in the sewers, but in truth, every major metropolis has its share of monstrous creatures. So-called "g-modstrocities" likely started out as a lab experiment gone terribly wrong. Now a potent blend of dozens of genomes, they roam the depths of the undercity, avoiding Animal Control sweeps and preying on anyone unlucky enough to get in their way.

BRAWN	AGILITY	INTELLECT	CUNNING	WILLPOWER	PRESENCE
5	2	1	4	1	1

SOAK VALUE	WOUND THRESHOLD	STRAIN THRESHOLD	M/R DEFENSE
7	25	15	0 | 0

Skills: Brawl 1, Vigilance 2.
Talents: Indomitable (once per encounter when incapacitated, may spend a Story Point to use this talent; then, this character is no longer incapacitated [and cannot become incapacitated] until the end of their next turn).
Abilities: Adversary 2 (upgrade difficulty of all combat checks against this target twice), Bone-Chilling Roar (once per encounter, may suffer 3 strain and spend a maneuver to force all other characters within long range [or within earshot] to make a **Daunting (◆◆◆◆) Discipline check** as an out-of-turn incidental. If they fail, they must use their maneuver to move farther away; if they fail with ♺, they must also downgrade their action to an additional maneuver to move even farther away. If you're using the fear rules found on page 243 of the GENESYS Core Rulebook, this can be a fear check instead.)
Equipment: Distended jaws and oversized claws (Brawl; Damage 12; Critical 4; Range [Engaged]; Ensnare 3, Sunder).

HYPERRAT SWARM (RIVAL)

The undercity is awash with illegal waste dumps from factories, labs, drug dens, and illicit pharmaceutical cooperatives, combined with the sewage of half a billion people. This cocktail pushes the vermin population into an accelerated evolutionary cycle to survive, and two-kilo sewer rats with the disposition of a wolverine are one of the undisputed successes of this genetic arms race. When they swarm, they can strip a full-grown human down to bones in minutes.

BRAWN	AGILITY	INTELLECT	CUNNING	WILLPOWER	PRESENCE
1	3	1	2	1	1

SOAK VALUE	WOUND THRESHOLD	M/R DEFENSE
1	30	1 | 1

Skills: Brawl 3, Coordination 2, Stealth 1, Resilience 3, Survival 3.
Talents: None.
Abilities: Swarm (halve the damage dealt to this character before applying soak, unless the weapon has the Blast or Burn quality [regardless of whether the quality is activated]), They're All Over Me! (enemies who start their turn engaged with this character lose their free maneuver).
Equipment: Bite (Brawl; Damage 3; Critical 4; Range [Engaged]; Knockdown, Vicious 2, gains Pierce 5 against prone targets).

TEACUP GIRAFFE (MINION)

Originally designed in the Jinteki concepting labs as a practical joke, the tiny giraffes (and the joke) got out of hand one evening and started wandering the halls of the research facility. Before the staff could round up their wayward animals, one stumbled into the division manager—and her five-year-old daughter. Immediately, the daughter had a new pet and the nervous jokers had a promotion, and six months later, Miranda Rhapsody had an adorable teacup giraffe gifted to her in a purse. Then everyone had six-figure bonuses.

BRAWN	AGILITY	INTELLECT	CUNNING	WILLPOWER	PRESENCE
1	1	1	1	1	3

SOAK VALUE	WOUND THRESHOLD	M/R DEFENSE
1	3	0 | 0

Skills (group only): Charm.
Talents: None.
Abilities: Too Cute (when any character makes a check to recover strain while engaged with this character, they recover 2 additional strain), Way Too Cute (when an opponent targets this character with a combat check, they suffer 4 strain), Silhouette 0.
Equipment: Tiny head nubs (Brawl; Damage 0; Critical 8; Range [Engaged]), gentle doe eyes.

URBAN PECCARY (MINION)

These small wild hogs are the only pigs originally native to South America, and just like their European cousins, they have proven incredibly resilient and hardy. Herds of peccaries wander the less-developed (or more-abandoned) portions of New Angeles, living on a hearty diet of trash, plant matter, and discarded fast food. Most people dismiss the comical-looking animals as harmless, but in truth, herds can contain dozens of the beasts, and they've entirely lost their fear of humans. If enough peccaries mob someone, their tusks can do some serious damage.

BRAWN	AGILITY	INTELLECT	CUNNING	WILLPOWER	PRESENCE
2	1	1	2	1	1

SOAK VALUE	WOUND THRESHOLD	M/R DEFENSE
2	7	0 / 0

Skills (group only): Athletics, Brawl, Survival.
Talents: None.
Abilities: Mob Mentality (add ■ to all checks this character makes if part of a group of three or more minions).
Equipment: Tusks (Brawl; Damage 4; Critical 4; Range [Engaged]; Vicious 1).

GOVERNMENT

In a megapolis as politically complex as New Angeles, it takes thousands of agents, regulators, and lawyers overseeing the vast bureaucracy to keep the gears of civilization turning. The NAPD is the most visible face of government in New Angeles, but it's understaffed and barely able to maintain the status quo let alone make progress on cleaning up the undercity.

ASSISTANT DISTRICT ATTORNEY (RIVAL)

When the NAPD makes an arrest, district attorneys keep the criminals behind bars as long as possible. DAs are public figures who have made long lists of enemies, and they often find themselves on various orgcrime hit lists. DAs don't last long unless they accept NAPD protection, invest heavily in self-defense training, or succumb to corruption.

BRAWN	AGILITY	INTELLECT	CUNNING	WILLPOWER	PRESENCE
2	1	3	3	2	3

SOAK VALUE	WOUND THRESHOLD	M/R DEFENSE
2	10	0 / 0

Skills: Charm 3, Coercion 3, Cool 2, Deception 1, Knowledge (Society) 2, Melee 2, Negotiation 3, Perception 2.
Talents: Adversary 1 (upgrade the difficulty of all combat checks against this target once), Natural (once per session, may reroll any one Coercion or Negotiation check).
Abilities: Full Weight of the Law (when making a Coercion check to inflict strain during a social encounter, inflict 2 additional strain).
Equipment: Concealed stun baton (Melee 2; Damage 4; Critical 5; Range [Engaged]; Disorient 3, Stun Damage) legal PAD, expensive suit.

EMS FIRST RESPONDER (RIVAL)

First responders typically work for the city or for a private hospital, operating out of medevac hoppers to transport the ill and injured to better facilities while providing on-scene or in-transit emergency medical care. Responding to emergencies in the undercity can be difficult and even dangerous work, due to both the natural hazards of crumbling buildings and deteriorating bridges and the risk of violence from gangs and locals. Many EMS techs carry Gandhi guns so that they can protect themselves without killing anyone.

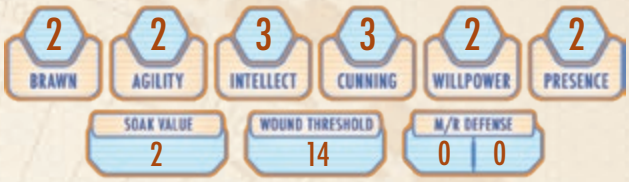
BRAWN	AGILITY	INTELLECT	CUNNING	WILLPOWER	PRESENCE
2	2	3	2	3	2

SOAK VALUE	WOUND THRESHOLD	M/R DEFENSE
2	11	1 / 1

Skills: Athletics 1, Knowledge (Science) 2, Medicine 3, Perception 1, Piloting 3.
Talents: Combat Medicine 2 (before making a Medicine check, may use this talent to add ✲ ✲ to the results; after this check is resolved, the target suffers 4 strain).
Abilities: None.
Equipment: Synap pistol (Ranged [Light]; Damage 5; Critical 6; Range [Short]; Disorient 4, Stun 3, Stun Damage), medkit, medical scanner PAD, 2 slap-patches.

NAPD DETECTIVE (RIVAL)

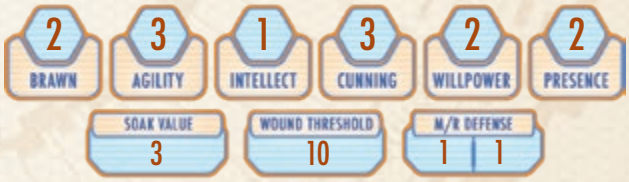
There are thousands of detectives in the NAPD spread across several divisions,. The greatest numbers of detectives belong to Homicide Division, the Personal Abuse and Modification Division's Vice Unit, and the Gang Unit. Some detectives also moonlight as private eyes.



Skills: Charm 3, Coercion 3, Cool 2, Knowledge (Science) 2, Perception 3, Ranged (Light) 2, Vigilance 3.
Talents: Good and Bad Cop (may spend ⮝⮝ from a Charm, Coercion, Deception, or Negotiation check to upgrade the ability of an ally's social skill check targeting same character once).
Abilities: Lawful Authority (add ✲ to the results of any social skill checks made when interacting with residents of New Angeles).
Equipment: HHI M-3 pistol (Ranged [Light]; Damage 5; Critical 4; Range [Medium]; as an incidental, may choose to apply one of the following qualities before making an attack: Blast 4, Pierce 2, Stun Damage), 2 snap locks, pocket flask, NAPD PAD.

NAPD HACHI-INU K8 UNIT (RIVAL)

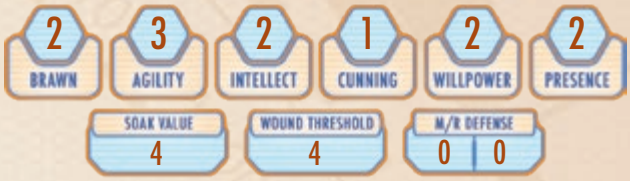
Jinteki's blue-furred police dogs are a recent acquisition for the NAPD. They are fast, hyperintelligent units capable of sniffing out drugs, bombs, and fugitives much more effectively than their K9 counterparts, with flexible tails they can communicate with via a specialized sign language. Their bite secretes a paralyzing venom.



Skills: Brawl 3, Discipline 1, Perception 4, Resilience 2, Survival 3.
Talents: None.
Abilities: None.
Equipment: Fangs and bite (Brawl; Damage 5; Critical 4; Range [Engaged]; Knockdown, Stun 5).

NAPD PATROL OFFICER (MINION)

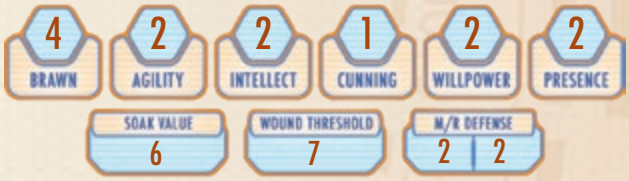
NAPD hoppers patrol beats regularly for visibility, but the camdrones and seccams monitored by a station AI are what generally trigger a police response. NAPD patrol officers spend most of their time clearing away streetbangers and *disenfrancistos* and securing crime scenes.



Skills (group only): Athletics, Coercion, Leadership, Melee, Ranged (Light), Vigilance.
Talents: None.
Abilities: Lawful Authority (add ✲ to the results of any social skill checks made when interacting with residents of New Angeles).
Equipment: HHI M-3 pistol (Ranged [Light]; Damage 5; Critical 4; Range [Medium]; as an incidental, may choose to apply one of the following qualities before making an attack: Blast 4, Pierce 2, Stun Damage), stun baton (Melee; Damage 5; Critical 5; Range [Engaged]; Disorient 3, Stun Damage), reinforced uniform (+1 soak), NAPD PAD, 4 snap locks.

NAPD RIOT POLICE (MINION)

When protests or demonstrations get out of hand, the NAPD sends in its big guns: specialized riot-control units equipped with fully powered armor. Most of these units' equipment is sourced from Huang Heavy Industries. In the wake of the Clone Riots, this now includes a high-tech suit of padded power-assist armor with a powered gauntlet. The NAPD riot shield features a spotlight and built-in transparent PAD display window.



Skills (group only): Athletics, Brawl, Coercion, Melee, Vigilance.
Talents: None.
Abilities: Disperse! (once per encounter, as an action, may force all non-NAPD characters within medium range to make an **Average (◆◆) Discipline check** as an out-of-turn incidental; those who fail must spend their next turn moving away from this character or minion group and attempting to leave the encounter if possible).
Equipment: Electrified power gauntlet (Brawl; Damage 8; Critical 4; Range [Engaged]; Concussive 2, Knockdown, Prepare 1, Stun Damage), riot shield (Melee; Damage 4; Critical 5; Range [Engaged]; Defensive 2, Deflection 2, Inaccurate 2), riot armor (+2 soak), smoke grenades, 4 snap-locks.

NAPD SWAT (RIVAL)

The best, most combat-capable officers in the NAPD undergo rigorous tactical training to become members of the Emergency Services Unit (more commonly known as the SWAT team). SWAT gets called in when regular patrol officers are overmatched, to handle hostage situations and barricaded shooters, and to serve high-risk search or arrest warrants.

BRAWN	AGILITY	INTELLECT	CUNNING	WILLPOWER	PRESENCE
3	3	2	3	3	2

SOAK VALUE	WOUND THRESHOLD	M/R DEFENSE
6	15	0 | 0

Skills: Athletics 2, Coercion 2, Ranged (Heavy) 2, Ranged (Light) 2, Stealth 2, Vigilance 2.
Talents: None.
Abilities: Lawful Authority (add ☼ to the results of any social skill checks made when interacting with residents of New Angeles).
Equipment: HHI scoped Gauss rifle (Ranged [Heavy]; Damage 10; Critical 2; Range [Extreme]; Cumbersome 3, Pierce 5, Slow-Firing 1, reduce difficulty of combat checks at long range or greater by 1) or HHI SP-10 shotgun (Ranged [Heavy]; Damage 8; Critical 3; Range [Short]; as an incidental, may choose to apply one of the following qualities before making an attack: Blast 5, Knockdown, Stun Damage, Vicious 2), backup fletcher pistol (Ranged [Light]; Damage 4; Critical 2; Range [Medium]; Pierce 2, Vicious 2), body armor (+2 soak).

REGULATOR (RIVAL)

City Hall has a small army of regulators who inspect all manner of locations, practices, and operations. These bureaucrats are convinced that most arcologies would fall into the undercity without their constant vigilance against corporate corner cutting. That said, many are open to being financially incentivized to overlook minor offenses.

BRAWN	AGILITY	INTELLECT	CUNNING	WILLPOWER	PRESENCE
1	1	3	2	2	2

SOAK VALUE	WOUND THRESHOLD	M/R DEFENSE
1	8	0 | 0

Skills: Discipline 2, Knowledge (Science) 2, Knowledge (Society) 2, Negotiation 2, Perception 3, Vigilance 2.
Talents: None.
Abilities: Red Tape (during social encounters, may spend ♺ ♺ ♺ generated by an opponent to discover [or invent] a legal violation that requires a fine, fee, or additional authorization form that the opponent must complete before accomplishing their goals).
Equipment: Inspection PAD.

PRISEC AND SOLDIERS

While state-run militaries still exist, many nations and all corporations contract private security to fight their wars for them, or to augment their forces in a combat theater.

CYBERMOD BOUNTY HUNTER (NEMESIS)

The NAPD has one of the largest urban jurisdictions in the worlds, and it is hopelessly unable to field enough officers to cover it. Bounty hunters pick up the slack, serving summonses and warrants and taking fugitives off the streets, especially in the undercity. Relentless trackers and fierce combatants, bounty hunters tend to favor concealed or cybernetic armaments that allow them to approach their targets without alerting them.

BRAWN	AGILITY	INTELLECT	CUNNING	WILLPOWER	PRESENCE
3	2	2	4	2	1

SOAK VALUE	WOUND THRESHOLD	STRAIN THRESHOLD	M/R DEFENSE
5	16	11	1 | 1

Skills: Athletics 4, Cool 2, Coordination 1, Deception 3, Melee 3, Ranged (Heavy) 4, Perception 3, Streetwise 3, Stealth 3, Vigilance 2.
Talents: Adversary 1 (upgrade the difficulty of all combat checks against this target once), Hamstring Shot (once per round, may perform a ranged combat check against one non-vehicle target within range; on a success, halve the damage inflicted [before applying soak]; the target is immobilized until the end of its next turn).
Abilities: None.
Equipment: Shotgun loaded with stun rounds (Ranged [Heavy]; Damage 8; Critical 3; Range [Short]; Knockdown, Stun Damage), stun baton (Melee; Damage 5; Critical 5; Range [Engaged]; Disorient 3, Stun Damage), concealed buckyweave clothing (1 defense, +1 soak), sub-dermal armor, enhanced reflexes, cybernetic lungs, 3 snap locks, PAD full of warrants.

EWS RAIDER (NEMESIS)

The Electronic Warfare Service is the United States' cyber warfare division, and the Raiders are elite operatives who embed on the front lines to provide drone air support and Network security, degrade enemy networks, and generally dominate the cyber battlefield. Raiders are some of the most dangerous militarized computer operatives around, and a veteran of the EWS has no problem finding work in the world of corporate espionage.

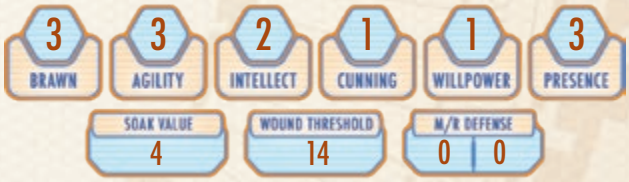
BRAWN	AGILITY	INTELLECT	CUNNING	WILLPOWER	PRESENCE
3	3	4	3	3	2

SOAK VALUE	WOUND THRESHOLD	STRAIN THRESHOLD	M/R DEFENSE
5	16	18	2 | 2

Skills: Computers (Hacking) 3, Computers (Sysops) 3, Gunnery 2, Knowledge (The Net) 3, Perception 2, Piloting 2, Ranged (Light) 2, Stealth 2, Survival 2.
Talents: Adversary 2 (upgrade the difficulty of all combat checks against this target twice).
Abilities: Drone Master (this character may control up to two drone rivals or a minion group of four drone minions; may spend a maneuver to allow each rival or minion group under their control to perform an action and a maneuver during this character's turn), Pit Trap Programs (may make an **opposed Computers [Hacking] versus Computers [Sysops] check** targeting another user on a system; if successful, that user is staggered for one round per ✲).
Equipment: Laser pistol (Ranged [Light]; Damage 6; Critical 3; Range [Short]; Accurate 1, Burn 1), skin suit (2 defense, +2 soak, +2 wound threshold), up to four drones of various types, encrypted suit rig with BMI interface with Corroder (page 136) and Crypsis (page 137)—protected by Archer (page 134) and Ice Wall (page 134).

G-MOD BODYGUARD (RIVAL)

The wealthy often retain a security detail, which is as much a status symbol as anything. They may request that their bodyguards dress in classy outfits, and even coordinate their appearance. G-modded bodyguards are the elite members of the private security world; they are strong and fast, but they also tend to look good and really fill out their subtly armored designer suits. Prisec corporations often keep them on retainer for their most valued (and wealthiest) clientele.



Skills: Brawl 2, Cool 2, Medicine 1, Piloting 2, Ranged (Light) 2, Vigilance 3.
Talents: Body Guard 1 (once per round, may perform the Body Guard maneuver to guard an engaged target; suffer 1 strain to upgrade the difficulty of all combat checks targeting that character once until the end of this character's next turn).
Abilities: Enhanced Strength (may suffer 1 strain to add ✲ to Athletics or Brawl checks).
Equipment: Synap pistol (Ranged [Light]; Damage 5; Critical 6; Range [Short], Disorient 4, Stun 3, Stun Damage), stun-knuckles (Brawl; Damage 4; Critical 4; Range [Engaged]; Stun 3), concealed light armor weave (+1 soak), sunglasses with HUD display, 1 slap-patch.

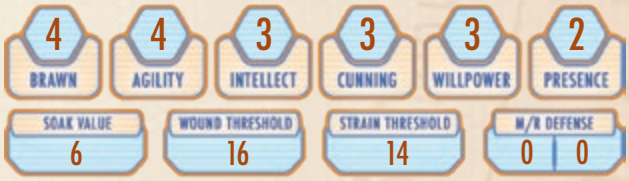
HAAS-BIOROID LOSS PREVENTION AGENT

Haas-Bioroid's Android Loss Prevention Program (HALPP) officially doesn't exist, because bioroids never run away or disobey their programming. Unofficially, it has a massive staff and works around the clock to hunt down "malfunctioning" bioroids before the public hears about them.

A loss prevention agent can be represented with the cybermod bounty hunter profile and adding this ability: Shutdown Authorization (as an action, may make an **Average (◆ ◆) Computers (Hacking)** check to stagger and immobilize one bioroid within short range for the remainder of the encounter; if the target is a PC bioroid, the check becomes an **opposed Computers (Hacking) versus Discipline check**.

MERCENARY VET (NEMESIS)

Major conflicts like the Lunar Insurrection and the Martian Colony Wars, as well as the ceaseless skirmishes in their aftermath, have created a generation of war veterans. While at any other point in history, these grizzled warriors would be past their prime, g-mods and cybernetics let them bring nearly two decades of combat experience to a body more capable than ever. Many contract out to elite private military contractors for high-risk, high-reward special combat operations, often to pay off their augmentations.



Skills: Athletics 1, Cool 1, Melee 3, Ranged (Heavy) 3, Ranged (Light) 2, Stealth 2, Survival 3, Vigilance 3.
Talents: Adversary 2 (upgrade the difficulty of all combat checks against this target twice), Quick Draw (once per round on this character's turn, may draw or holster an easily accessible weapon or item as an incidental), Rapid Reaction 2 (suffer up to 2 strain to add up to ✲ ✲ to any Vigilance or Cool check this character makes to determine Initiative order).
Abilities: None.
Equipment: Bullpup carbine (Ranged [Heavy]; Damage 7; Critical 3; Range [Medium]; Accurate 1, Auto-fire), 2 monofilament grenades (Ranged [Light]; Damage 7; Critical 3; Range [Short]; Blast 7, Limited Ammo 1, Vicious 1), custom combat knife (Melee; Damage 6; Critical 2; Range [Engaged]; Vicious 2), light body armor (+2 soak).

PRIVATE MILITARY CONTRACTOR (MINION)

While there are plenty of prisec corporations out there, Globalsec is one of the largest and the best example of a militaristic PMC. It can run nearly any sort of military operation, from invasion to counterinsurgency ops, and its people provide security and escort duties, as well as handle troubleshooting operations. Globalsec contractors (usually) behave professionally, are well equipped, and are backed up by a corporation that has its own (albeit small) air force and navy.

BRAWN	AGILITY	INTELLECT	CUNNING	WILLPOWER	PRESENCE
3	3	1	2	2	1

SOAK VALUE	WOUND THRESHOLD	M/R DEFENSE
5	5	1 | 1

Skills (group only): Discipline, Ranged (Heavy), Vigilance.
Talents: None.
Abilities: None.
Equipment: Assault rifle (Ranged [Heavy]; Damage 8; Critical 3; Range [Long]; Auto-fire), plasteel carapace (1 defense, +2 soak).

SXC EXOSUIT PILOT (RIVAL)

An exosuit on the loose in a metropolitan area like New Angeles is the kind of threat that keeps police commissioners up at night. While the largest exosuits are basically walking tanks, even the smaller "person-sized" suits used by Company A in each SXC battalion can turn a single soldier into a fast, well-armored, and highly lethal threat. They can deploy either as infantry support units or en masse as an armored line, and they can even drop from orbit.

BRAWN	AGILITY	INTELLECT	CUNNING	WILLPOWER	PRESENCE
4	3	2	2	2	2

SOAK VALUE	WOUND THRESHOLD	M/R DEFENSE
7	20	1 | 1

Skills: Athletics 2, Brawl 1, Discipline 3, Gunnery 3, Resilience 2, Vigilance 2.
Talents: None.
Abilities: High-Altitude Drop (when falling any distance, may make an **Easy [◆] Discipline check** as an incidental; on a success, this character does not suffer any damage from falling and lands on their feet).
Equipment: Heavy fletcher (Gunnery; Damage 6; Critical 2; Range [Medium]; Blast 6, Pierce 4, Vicious 3) or laser cannon (Gunnery; Damage 10; Critical 3; Range [Long]; Accurate 1, Burn 1, Cumbersome 4), power-augmented exosuit fists (Brawl; Damage 7; Critical 4; Range [Engaged]; Knockdown), SXF X1.a exosuit (1 defense, +3 soak, +1 Brawn, +5 wound threshold, allows wearer to operate underwater and in vacuum for up to 4 hours).

SXC TROOPER (MINION)

The question "Hey, you sexy?" has led to plenty of misunderstandings and brawls in bars across the worlds, but for members of the Space Expeditionary Force, it's a sure-fire way to spot another vet. Drawn from the ranks of the U.S. Air Force and Marines, SXC troopers train to fight in the most unforgiving conditions imaginable: zero-G and hard vacuum. They are some of the most adaptable and self-reliant soldiers around, operating on battlefields far beyond the reach of any other military branches.

BRAWN	AGILITY	INTELLECT	CUNNING	WILLPOWER	PRESENCE
3	3	2	2	2	2

SOAK VALUE	WOUND THRESHOLD	M/R DEFENSE
5	6	1 | 1

Skills (group only): Athletics, Discipline, Melee, Ranged (Heavy), Vigilance.
Talents: None.
Abilities: None.
Equipment: Laser rifle (Ranged [Heavy]; Damage 8; Critical 3; Range [Medium]; Accurate 1, Burn 1), monoblade combat knife (Melee; Damage 4; Critical 2; Range [Engaged]; Pierce 2), environmentally sealed plasteel carapace (1 defense, +2 soak), disposable zero-G maneuvering pack.

DRONES

Drones are a constant in New Angelinos' lives, but most people don't even notice their existence. From the ubiquitous courier drones that make deliveries, to the small and unobtrusive camdrones used by security firms, the NAPD, and NBN and its affiliates, drones are nearly everywhere in New Angeles. Of course, drones have a darker side; military outfits and prisec contractors use armed drones as another tool of war. The best operators, such as those in the United States' Electronic Warfare Service, can manage entire fleets of killer robots.

DRONE OPERATIONS

Drones are not "smart" enough to operate on their own unless they are following a specific set of predetermined instructions or are working within the parameters of a simple daily routine. This works fine for delivery drones and New Angeles street sweepers, but the drones used by military forces need to be run by skilled operators to be of any great use.

Anyone with a communications link and the right setup can control a drone. This requires the character to spend their action and maneuver to allow the drone to perform an action and maneuver. Characters may have talents and abilities that modify this (for example, most drones have the Telepresence ability, which makes them better when directed by an operator).

If a drone is not being directed by an operator, it can still function in a limited manner. The exact limits of what it can do are up to you, the GM, but generally, you should have it follow a simple (and literal) set of instructions. Camdrones told to scan crowds for certain faces will sit in one spot and study everyone who passes by, for example. The one thing a drone can't do autonomously is kill someone. Ethical considerations mean that drones are hardwired not to fire on a living target unless an active controller gives them kill authority.

CAMDRONE (MINION)

Most camdrones are simple disks built around one or more electromagnetic hoverfoil rotors and studded with cameras. Everyone from the NAPD and the military to private citizens uses drones for reconnaissance and entertainment.

BRAWN	AGILITY	INTELLECT	CUNNING	WILLPOWER	PRESENCE
1	3	1	1	1	1

SOAK VALUE	WOUND THRESHOLD	M/R DEFENSE
1	2	0 | 2

Skills (group only): Perception, Vigilance.
Talents: None.
Abilities: Early Warning (adds ▢ to its operator's checks to determine Initiative), Flyer (can fly; see the Flying sidebar on page 100 of the **Genesys** Core Rulebook), Mechanical (does not need to breathe, eat, or drink, and can survive in vacuum and underwater; is immune to poisons and toxins), Silhouette 0, Telepresence (can operate independently, or can be controlled directly by an operator via wireless link; if being controlled, the camdrone counts as having ranks in any skill equal to the controller's ranks in that skill).
Equipment: None.

COMBAT DRONE (MINION)

Combat drones usually deploy defensively to watch an infantry unit's flanks or forward as scouts. Though not well armed or armored, they are agile and more disposable than a human soldier, and in groups they can be lethal.

BRAWN	AGILITY	INTELLECT	CUNNING	WILLPOWER	PRESENCE
1	3	1	1	1	1

SOAK VALUE	WOUND THRESHOLD	M/R DEFENSE
3	5	0 | 2

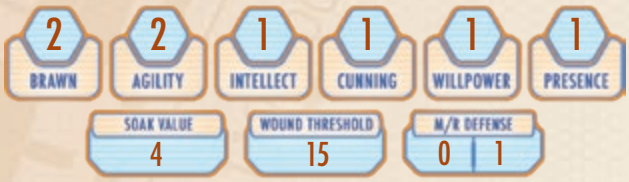
Skills (group only): Perception, Ranged (Light).
Talents: None.
Abilities: Flyer (can fly; see the Flying sidebar on page 100 of the **Genesys** Core Rulebook), Focus Fire (when making a combat check, add △ to the results for every other character in the minion group), Mechanical (does not need to breathe, eat, or drink, and can survive in vacuum and underwater; is immune to poisons and toxins), Silhouette 0, Telepresence (can operate independently, or can be controlled directly by an operator via wireless link; if being controlled, the combat drone counts as having ranks in any skill equal to the controller's ranks in that skill).
Equipment: Light fletcher (Ranged [Light]; Damage 4; Critical 2; Range [Medium]; Pierce 2).

TABLE 5–1: DRONE PRICES AND RARITIES

ITEM	PRICE	RARITY
Camdrone	150	2
Combat Drone	750 (R)	3
Hunter-Killer Drone	10,000 (R)	5
Maintenance Drone	300	2
Retail Drone	100	2
Toy Drone	90	2

HUNTER-KILLER DRONE (RIVAL)

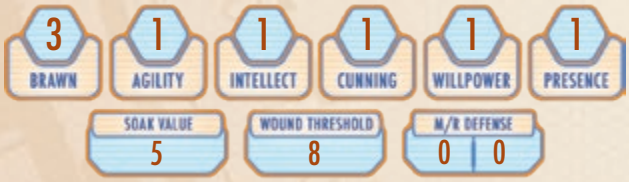
The next level of combat drones, hunter-killer drones are used as heavy support platforms for infantry platoons or placed under the control of elite Electronic Warfare Service operatives. Their bulky chassis have enough lift to haul around some truly heavy artillery, and their software is sophisticated enough to make them dangerous on their own (requiring only a kill authorization from their operator).



Skills: Coordination 1, Perception 2, Gunnery 1, Vigilance 2.
Talents: None.
Abilities: Flyer (can fly; see the Flying sidebar on page 100 of the **Genesys** Core Rulebook), Mechanical (does not need to breathe, eat, or drink, and can survive in vacuum and underwater; is immune to poisons and toxins), Telepresence (can operate independently, or can be controlled directly by an operator via wireless link; if being controlled, the hunter-killer drone counts as having ranks in any skill equal to the controller's ranks in that skill).
Equipment: Light machine gun (Gunnery; Damage 10; Critical 3; Range [Long]; Auto-fire), micro-missile pod (Gunnery; Damage 12; Critical 4; Range [Long]; Blast 10, Guided 3, Limited Ammo 6) or armor-piercing missiles (Gunnery; Damage 20; Critical 2; Range [Extreme]; Blast 5, Breach 2, Guided 4, Limited Ammo 2).

MAINTENANCE DRONE (RIVAL)

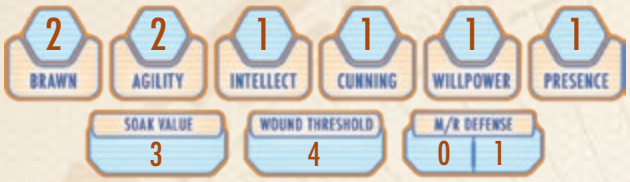
Boxy, spider-legged maintenance drones roam New Angeles in swarms, picking up trash, cleaning streets, and repairing infrastructure. Maintenance drones are not designed to be teleoperated. Instead, they operate independently while under the general guidance of Public Works' operations AI. This means there are significant limits to what a maintenance drone can do, even when hacked by a young, bored runner.



Skills: Athletics 3, Mechanics 3.
Talents: None.
Abilities: Mechanical (does not need to breathe, eat, or drink, and can survive in vacuum and underwater; is immune to poisons and toxins).
Equipment: Manipulator arms (Brawl; Damage 4; Critical 6; Range [Engaged], Inaccurate 1), integrated construction and repair tools.

RETAIL DRONE (MINION)

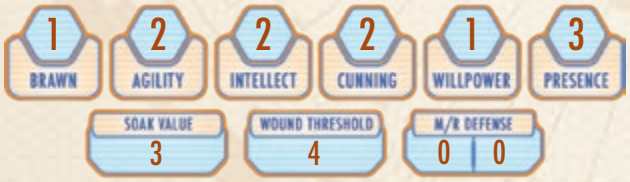
Decades ago, in an effort to cut down on floor labor, most big-box retailers shifted to service and delivery drones to serve customers. Today's small, floating retail drones bear only a passing resemblance to their ancestors. With weak AI, the drones interface with a customer's shopping history to offer dynamic coupons or sales to maximize spending per visit. The drones also deliver goods from store floor to door.



Skills (group only): Athletics, Perception.
Talents: Big Guns (this character has an encumbrance capacity of 12).
Abilities: Flyer (can fly; see the Flying sidebar on page 100 of the **Genesys** Core Rulebook), Mechanical (does not need to breathe, eat, or drink, and can survive in vacuum and underwater; is immune to poisons and toxins), Telepresence (can operate independently, or can be controlled directly by an operator via wireless link; if being controlled, the retail drone counts as having ranks in any skill equal to the controller's ranks in that skill).
Equipment: None.

TOY DRONE (RIVAL)

While cloned pets are all the rage, edu-toys have carved out a small market share. These weak-AI drones nanny and educate infants and toddlers. Most resemble dogs or popular children's entertainment characters, providing a fun early-education experience, often in singsong. Edu-pets have full PAD functionality, with robust parental blocks ensuring only child-friendly content is accessible. This link also generates ads and wish lists of toys, classes, and activities the child gravitates toward on the parents' or guardians' PADs, as well as daily data dumps on the child's activity.



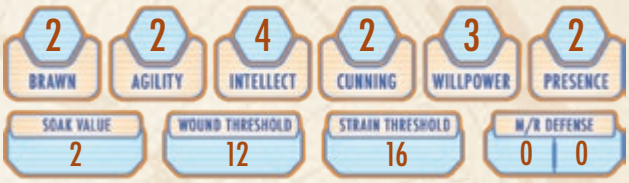
Skills: Charm 2, Knowledge (Society) 3, Knowledge (Science) 3, Knowledge (The Net) 2, Medicine 1.
Talents: None.
Abilities: Edutainment (when assisting with or making a combined Knowledge check add ▢ to the check [information added typically comes in the form of a song]), Mechanical (does not need to breathe, eat, or drink, and can survive in vacuum and underwater; is immune to poisons and toxins).
Equipment: None.

CLONES

Jinteki genetically designs each android clone line to fulfill a very specific labor niche.

DESAI TUTOR CLONE (NEMESIS)

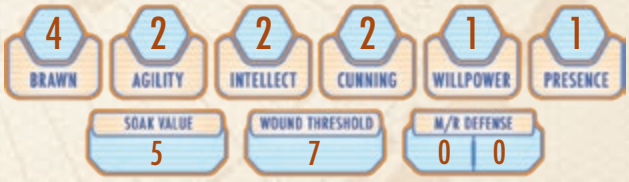
The Desai line of tutor clones are high-end models designed for the children of the ultrawealthy. Desais are capable of teaching almost anything, from conceptual mathematics to late-twentieth-century literature, and from biology to Tai Chi. Their calm, authoritative demeanor means most parents feel comfortable leaving their kids in these clones' care. However, Jinteki has found that their powerful intellect has resulted in a higher number of Desais "going rogue."



Skills: Charm 3, Coordination 2, Discipline 3, Knowledge (Science) 3, Knowledge (Society) 3, Leadership 3, Medicine 3.
Talents: Adversary 1 (upgrade the difficulty of all combat checks against this target once).
Abilities: Expert Instruction (when this character performs the assist maneuver, upgrade the ability of the check once instead of adding ■).
Equipment: Bonsai tree, instructor's holodisplay with full suite of lessons.

HENRY LABOR CLONE (MINION)

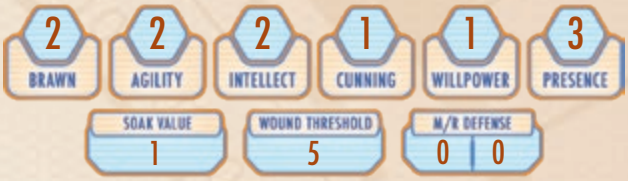
Henry clones are designed to work long hours under punishing conditions. They mine He-3 on the lunar surface for Melange Mining and labor in many of Quinde's factories. Their bodies are stronger than those of any human in history, and their psyches have been adjusted to feel completely mentally fulfilled by a hard day's labor.



Skills (group only): Athletics, Mechanics, Resilience.
Talents: None.
Abilities: Air Filter Implant (immune to inhaled poisons and toxins).
Equipment: Durable clothing (+1 soak).

MOLLOY SERVER CLONE (MINION)

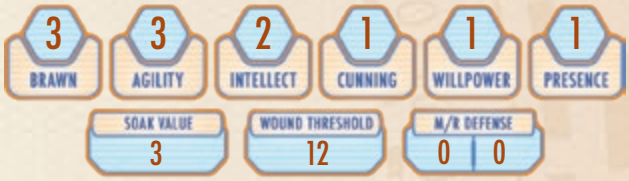
Mother Molloy's is an Irish-themed gastropub that was among the first to adopt clone staffing. Both genders of Molloy units appear vaguely Irish, and they present a cheerful, smiling face to whoever walks in the door.



Skills (group only): Charm, Cool, Resilience.
Talents: None.
Abilities: Comfort Food (after eating a meal prepared by this character, a character heals 2 strain).
Equipment: Order PAD.

OMOI SECURITY CLONE (RIVAL)

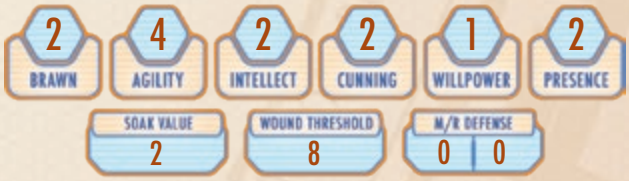
The Omoi is a new clone line, marketed as a replacement for human security guards. Although Omois are conditioned to avoid human injury and equipped with stun weaponry, they still are uncomfortably close to the line of "androids fighting humans." So far, this line has only seen limited release, and mostly at Jinteki facilities.



Skills: Athletics 1, Brawl 3, Cool 3, Driving 1, Perception 2, Ranged (Light) 3, Vigilance 3.
Talents: None.
Abilities: None.
Equipment: Synap pistol (Ranged [Light]; Damage 5; Critical 6; Range [Short], Disorient 4, Stun 3, Stun Damage), Palm stunner (Brawl; Damage 5; Critical 5; Range [Engaged]; Disorient 2, Slow-Firing 2, Stun Damage).

TENMA DRIVER CLONE (RIVAL)

Serving as drivers and pilots, the Tenma line is one of the most popular lines in Jinteki's catalog. While most vehicles function on autopilot, a Tenma clone can fly a vehicle faster and safer than any pilot program on the market. Many companies utilize them as chauffeurs or high-value couriers.



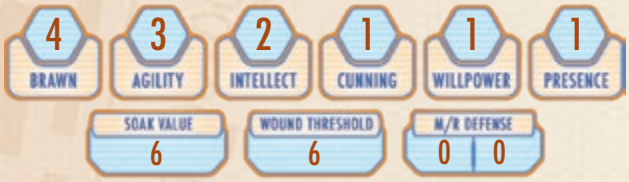
Skills: Driving 3, Mechanics 2, Operating 3, Perception 3, Piloting 3, Vigilance 3.
Talents: Knack for It 2 (remove ■ ■ from any Driving, Operating, and Piloting checks).
Abilities: None.
Equipment: Cybernetic eye implants.

BIOROIDS

Some may make the mistake of thinking of "robots" when they think bioroids. In reality, Haas-Bioroid has created marvels of mechanical systems: artificial and mechanical beings that are stronger, faster, smarter, and (most importantly) more obedient than most humans.

ADAM INDUSTRIAL LABOR BIOROID (MINION)

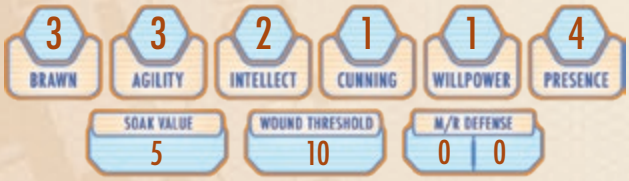
The Adam line was the first large-market bioroid success. Adam units perform hard physical labor with the kind of strength, speed, and precision only a machine can achieve. While Jinteki's Henry-model clones have begun to bite into the Adam market, Adams are still commonplace in Quinde factories and on construction sites across New Angeles.



Skills (group only): Athletics, Mechanics.
Talents: None.
Abilities: Bioroid (does not need to breathe, eat, or drink; can survive in vacuum and underwater; is immune to poisons and toxins; and cannot knowingly endanger humans).
Equipment: None.

ADONIS AND EVE PLEASURE BIOROID (RIVAL)

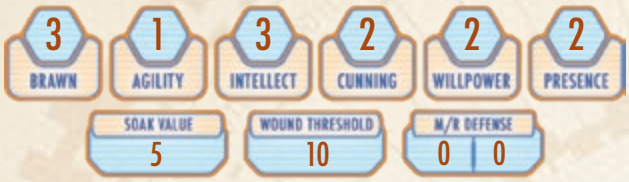
Pleasure bioroids are an attempt by Haas-Bioroid to move their products into the entertainment markets. Unlike most bioroids, Adonis, Eve, and to a certain extent, the cheaper Kevin- and Lisa-models, are built to appear as human as possible. Many nightclubs and other high-end social spaces employ luxury-model Adonis or Eve units to "entertain" their customers, while in seedier areas of New Angeles, pleasure bioroids sate humanity's basest instincts.



Skills: Charm 4, Cool 4, Coordination 2, Deception 3, Knowledge (Society) 3, Perception 2.
Talents: Natural (once per session, may reroll any one Charm or Cool check).
Abilities: Bioroid (does not need to breathe, eat, or drink; can survive in vacuum and underwater; is immune to poisons and toxins; and cannot knowingly endanger humans).
Equipment: Fuzzy restraints.

CORPORATE BIOROIDS (RIVAL)

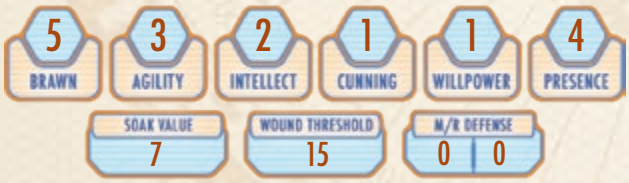
Designed for basic corporate and office work, corporate bioroids handle many customer-service, customer-support, and first-tier sales calls, as well as jobs juggling data work and preparing reports. Unfortunately, when early adopters tried to flood departments with the initial "Janice" line, employees and customers found them unsettling in their sameness. The Janice line now has a number of related models, including Brad finance units, Sally overseers, and Greg customer-service units. What HB neglects to mention is all of these units are just Janice bioroids with cosmetic differences.



Skills: Charm 2, Computers (Sysops) 2, Knowledge (Society) 2, Negotiation 2, Perception 2, Vigilance 2.
Talents: None.
Abilities: Bioroid (does not need to breathe, eat, or drink; can survive in vacuum and underwater; is immune to poisons and toxins; and cannot knowingly endanger humans), Office Drone (when this character makes a social skill check, they add ✲ ⟳ to the result).
Equipment: Corporate PAD.

REX SEARCH AND RESCUE BIOROID (RIVAL)

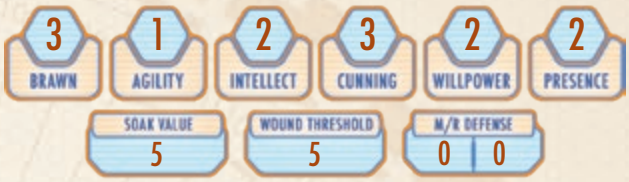
Designed to take over high-risk search and rescue missions, the Rex line has submodels that specialize in all manner of extreme-environment rescue. In New Angeles, Rex units ride alongside first responders and are the first inside burning and collapsed structures. Rex units can extract casualties and protect them until help arrives, and the image of a heroic Rex pulling a young child free of a burning building dominates Haas-Bioroid ad campaigns.



Skills: Athletics 4, Coordination 2, Medicine 3, Perception 4, Resilience 3.
Talents: Swift (this character does not suffer the penalties for moving through difficult terrain).
Abilities: Bioroid (does not need to breathe, eat, or drink; can survive in vacuum and underwater; is immune to poisons and toxins; and cannot knowingly endanger humans).
Equipment: Spotlight, climbing gear, O2 tank, medkit, 2 slap-patches.

SETH BIOROIDISTA (MINION)

Home to the ten-credit triple latte, YucaBean is populated with Seth bioroid baristas. The Seth-model is known for sarcastic, dry wit, often with a bent as dark as the coffee they serve. They also enjoy wordplay with names, misspelling them intentionally in an effort to brighten a customer's day.



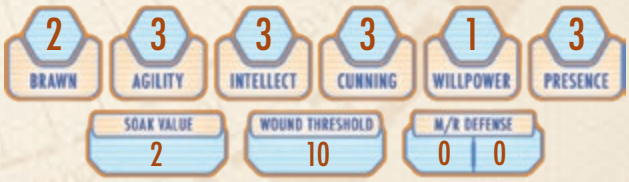
Skills (group only): Charm, Knowledge (Science), Perception.
Talents: None.
Abilities: Too Clever (when interacting with this character, characters may spend ⮝ to recover 2 strain, and GMs may spend ⟲ to inflict 2 strain), Bioroid (does not need to breathe, eat, or drink; can survive in vacuum and underwater; is immune to poisons and toxins; and cannot knowingly endanger humans).
Equipment: Order PAD.

RABBLE ROUSERS AND REVOLUTIONARIES

Underneath the bright and shining surface of the biggest megapolis in the worlds seethes anger and outrage. Plenty of people have a problem with the way things work in New Angeles. While many of them rely on protest or petitions, quite a few feel driven to more violent methods.

ANARCH TROUBLEMAKER (RIVAL)

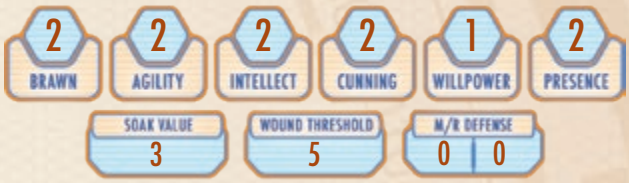
Not everyone believes in following the rules or being part of society. Anarchs take this a step further, hoping to get the rest of the worlds to join in on the chaos. They expose the rich and powerful, working to show everyone else how powerless they really are and how none of their rules matter. Anarchs are known for large-scale pranks, like hacking major broadcasts to transmit obviously forged images of officials committing sexually explicit acts, and the like.



Skills: Athletics 3, Computers (Hacking) 2, Cool 4, Knowledge (The Net) 2, Skulduggery 4, Streetwise 3, Vigilance 1.
Talents: Distinctive Style (may add ✲ ✲ ⟲ ⟲ to any Computers (Hacking) check before rolling; ⟲ ⟲ triggers the **I Know You!** result in **Table 3–2** on page 130).
Abilities: Burn It Down (this character adds ⮝ ⮝ to the results of checks they make targeting authority figures).
Equipment: Fletcher pistol (Ranged [Light]; Damage 4; Critical 2; Range [Medium]; Pierce 2, Vicious 2), Molotov cocktail (Ranged [Light]; Damage 7; Critical 4; Range [Short]; Blast 7, Burn 3), skulljack, portable terminal with Crypsis (page 137)—protected by Hadrian's Wall (page 133).

HUMAN FIRST EXTREMIST (MINION)

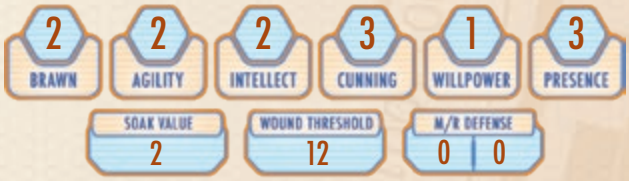
Human First is a radicalized group of anti-android activists. Best identified by their sledgehammers, most Human First members are working-class people who've lost their jobs to androids. They destroy clones and bioroids from time to time, though NAPD treats their crimes as property damage.



Skills (group only): Coercion, Melee, Vigilance.
Talents: None.
Abilities: Mob Mentality (add ■ to all checks this character makes if part of a group of three or more minions).
Equipment: Sledgehammer (Melee; Damage 6; Critical 4; Range [Engaged]; Knockdown), durable clothing (+1 soak).

HUMANITY LABOR REP (RIVAL)

Humanity Labor seeks to preserve human employment in a world where android labor is taking over. Humanity Labor reps tirelessly meet with corporate and government leaders, appear in news feeds, and plan and attend protests and marches (often alongside members of the radical Human First movement, though they deny any overt association).



Skills: Charm 2, Coercion 2, Negotiation 2, Streetwise 2.
Talents: Scathing Tirade (use this talent to make an **Average [◆ ◆] Coercion check**; for each ✲, one opponent within short range suffers 1 strain; for each ⮝, one affected opponent suffers 1 additional strain).
Abilities: Rile Them Up (Once per encounter, may make an **Average [◆◆] Charm check** targeting a group of bystanders or other neutral NPCs at medium range; if the check is successful, one of the bystanders [plus one per additional ✲] becomes a Human First extremist; these NPCs form a single minion group and join the ongoing encounter. These NPCs may have been regular people convinced by the rep, or they may have been members of Human First all along.)
Equipment: PAD.

LIBERTY SOCIETY REP (RIVAL)

The Liberty Society is an advocacy group seeking to provide clones with human rights. Its members work tirelessly with the Simulant Abolitionist Movement to find test cases they can bring to court, and they meet with liaisons from Jinteki, government organizations, and news outlets to advocate for clone rights.

BRAWN	AGILITY	INTELLECT	CUNNING	WILLPOWER	PRESENCE
1	1	3	3	2	3

SOAK VALUE	WOUND THRESHOLD	M/R DEFENSE
1	9	0 | 0

Skills: Charm 2, Cool 1, Knowledge (Science) 2, Knowledge (Society) 3, Negotiation 3, Streetwise 1.
Talents: Clever Retort (once per encounter, may add ⟲ ⟲ to another character's social skill check).
Abilities: None.
Equipment: Legal PAD.

LOONIE REVOLUTIONARY (RIVAL)

Despite what City Hall claims, the Lunar Insurrection still looms large in the minds of Heinlein's citizenry. Many Loonies bear an asteroid-sized grudge against Earth for the lives lost during the War and the brutal crackdowns that followed. Groups of former insurrectionists and revolutionaries still gather in out-of-the-way places like the Docklands, plotting raids and acts of violence against Heinlein's administration and the corporations that dominate lunar life.

BRAWN	AGILITY	INTELLECT	CUNNING	WILLPOWER	PRESENCE
1	3	2	3	2	3

SOAK VALUE	WOUND THRESHOLD	M/R DEFENSE
3	10	0 | 0

Skills: Cool 2, Leadership 3, Perception 2, Ranged (Heavy) 2, Skulduggery 1.
Talents: Inspiring Rhetoric (may make an **Average** [◆ ◆] **Leadership check** as an action; for each ✲ the check generates, one ally within short range heals 1 strain; for each ⮝, one ally benefiting from Inspiring Rhetoric heals 1 additional strain).
Abilities: None.
Equipment: Scavenged industrial laser rifle (Ranged [Heavy]; Damage 8; Critical 3; Range [Medium]; Burn 1, Inferior), armored space suit (+2 soak).

OPTICON FOUNDATION WATCHDOG (RIVAL)

While a number of watchdog organizations currently work to combat corporate and government overreach, the Opticon Foundation is among the most successful. It listens to and protects the identities of whistleblowers, victims, and runners in an effort to build court cases and news stories to keep corporations in check. Some even go undercover to catch corporate directors and executives making damaging statements.

BRAWN	AGILITY	INTELLECT	CUNNING	WILLPOWER	PRESENCE
2	2	4	3	2	2

SOAK VALUE	WOUND THRESHOLD	M/R DEFENSE
2	9	0 | 0

Skills: Computers (Hacking) 1, Cool 3, Deception 2, Knowledge (Society) 1, Perception 3, Skulduggery 2.
Talents: You Owe Me One (once per session, you may spend one Story Point to have one other character in the encounter owe this character a small favor for past services performed by this character or their organization).
Abilities: None.
Equipment: Discreet monocam, camdrone, fake idents, encrypted PAD.

URBAN ADVENTURER (RIVAL)

Some people look at New Angeles and instead of a city, they see a plascrete and steel landscape full of opportunities for exploration, adventure, and extreme sports. Urban adventurers treat New Angeles like an untamed wilderness, going

"caving" in abandoned sewers, free climbing starscrapers, and diving off arcologies with wing suits. All of this is highly illegal, contributing to their reputation as troublemaking radicals. It also means that many urban adventurers are happy to participate in other illegal activities for a thrill.

BRAWN	AGILITY	INTELLECT	CUNNING	WILLPOWER	PRESENCE
3	4	2	2	1	2

SOAK VALUE	WOUND THRESHOLD	M/R DEFENSE
4	14	0 / 0

Skills: Athletics 4, Coordination 4, Cool 3, Driving 3, Knowledge (Society) 1, Piloting 3, Ranged (Light) 1, Stealth 1, Streetwise 4, Survival 4.
Talents: Daring Aviator 2 (before making a Driving or Piloting check, may add up ◌ ◌ to the check to add an equal number of ✡), Natural (once per session, may reroll one Athletics or Coordination check).
Abilities: None.
Equipment: Auto-fletcher (Ranged [Light]; Damage 3; Critical 2; Range [Medium]; Auto-fire, Pierce 2, Vicious 2), climbing gear, flashlight, powered wing suit (+1 soak, can fly; see the Flying sidebar on page 100 of the **Genesys** Core Rulebook).

TRUE ODDITIES

Life in New Angeles encompasses so many cultures and lifestyles that there is little citizens haven't seen before. However, in a place so big and populous, there are always things that defy reason and explanation—things that most people would say should not exist. Only the least reputable of rags would run a story related to one of New Angeles' true oddities.

ARES COMBAT BIOROID (NEMESIS)

Ares is a secret Haas-Bioroid project designed to test the viability of combat bioroids (as well as a flagrant violation of international law). Almost equal to an infantry platoon, the Ares is effectively immune to small-arms fire and is also flame, radiation, and blast resistant. It has integrated 360-degree radar, infrared, and low-light sensors that constantly monitor the battlefield, and it has a variety of integrated threat-response options. Overpowered servos allow units to carry the heaviest anti-personnel and anti-armor weaponry, often Gauss rifles, missile launchers, or heavy machine guns.

BRAWN	AGILITY	INTELLECT	CUNNING	WILLPOWER	PRESENCE
5	4	3	3	1	1

SOAK VALUE	WOUND THRESHOLD	STRAIN THRESHOLD	M/R DEFENSE
10	25	15	0 / 0

Skills: Brawl 4, Coercion 5, Coordination 2, Discipline 3, Gunnery 4, Survival 3, Vigilance 3.
Talents: Adversary 2 (upgrade the difficulty of all combat checks against this target twice), Grenadier (when making a combat check using a weapon with the Blast quality, may spend one Story Point to trigger Blast instead of spending ⮝ (even if the attack misses); in addition, treats grenades as having a range of medium).
Abilities: Combat Bioroid (does not need to breathe, eat, or drink; can survive in vacuum and underwater; is immune to poisons and toxins), Enhanced Auto-Bracing (using the Auto-fire quality does not increase the difficulty of combat checks; each time the Ares triggers an additional hit, it suffers 1 strain).
Equipment: Integrated rotary cannon (Gunnery; Damage 10; Critical 3; Range [Long]; Auto-fire) or integrated heavy Gauss rifle (Gunnery; Damage 10; Critical 2; Range [Extreme]; Breach 1, Slow-Firing 1), integrated micro-missile launcher (Gunnery; Damage 12; Critical 4; Range [Long]; Blast 10, Guided 3, Limited Ammo 3), armored fist (Brawl; Damage 8; Critical 4; Range [Engaged]; Concussive 1, Knockdown, Sunder).

HELLION (RIVAL)

While there is no official proof that hellions exist, they are an open secret among some circles of Netcriminals. No one is certain if these small, cat-shaped robotic constructs are drones. However, some *disenfrancistos* have claimed to see hellions chasing hyperrats or spending hours batting at holographic signs, which suggests an autonomous (and animalistic) operating system. Other criminals have come back to supposedly safe crash pads to find their gear and possessions shredded, chewed on, and thoroughly trashed, and spotted a catlike creature with glowing red eyes ducking out a window or ventilation shaft. An unlucky few have even been found dead and savagely mauled in similar crash pads.

BRAWN	AGILITY	INTELLECT	CUNNING	WILLPOWER	PRESENCE
1	4	1	3	1	1

SOAK VALUE	WOUND THRESHOLD	M/R DEFENSE
3	9	2 / 2

Skills: Brawl 3, Cool 4, Coordination 2, Perception 2, Stealth 5, Vigilance 4.
Talents: None.
Abilities: Mechanical (does not need to breathe, eat, or drink, and can survive in vacuum and underwater; immune to poisons and toxins), Impressively Flexible (may spend a Story Point to gain access to a formerly secure room or other location through a previously unnoticed vent shaft, slightly open window, or similar entry point), Catlike (may make a move maneuver to move normally up and down vertical surfaces, across ropes, and over otherwise impassable structures), silhouette 0.
Equipment: Titanium claws (Brawl; Damage 3; Critical 2; Range [Engaged]; Pierce 3, Sunder).

ROGUE NISEI CLONE (NEMESIS)

Jinteki's "Project Nisei" is a top-secret program that is hard at work designing the perfect clone, according to specifications known only to senior project personnel and Chairman Hiro himself. Some of the rumors surrounding the Nisei project are absurd to the point of humor: Nisei clones are telepathic, Nisei clones are intended to entirely replace the human race, there are Nisei clones who have escaped Jinteki and gone rogue, and so on.

There is only one known Nisei clone publicly deployed in the general population: Caprice Nisei of the NAPD. If the rest of the Project Nisei clones are like her, they are thoughtful, intelligent, empathetic, possessed of an almost supernatural intuition, and not fond of crowds.

BRAWN	AGILITY	INTELLECT	CUNNING	WILLPOWER	PRESENCE
2	3	4	3	5	2

SOAK VALUE	WOUND THRESHOLD	STRAIN THRESHOLD	M/R DEFENSE
2	12	20	4 / 4

Skills: Athletics 2, Coordination 2, Discipline 4, Driving 2, Melee 3, Ranged (Light) 3, Piloting 2, Perception 3, Streetwise 2, Vigilance 5.
Talents: Adversary 1 (upgrade the difficulty of all combat checks against this target once).
Abilities: Apparent Precognition (once per encounter when making a combat check, may use Discipline and Willpower instead of the normal skill and characteristic), Psychic (as a maneuver, may make an **Average** [◆ ◆] **Vigilance check** to learn the surface thoughts of all other characters in medium range), Broken Nisei Conditioning (when inflicting a Critical Injury or Critical Hit, roll twice and choose the more severe result).
Equipment: Auto-fletcher (Ranged [Light]; Damage 3; Critical 2; Range [Medium]; Auto-fire, Pierce 2, Vicious 2), micro-waterknife (Melee; Damage 8; Critical 3; Range [Engaged]; Prepare 1, Sunder, Unwieldy 3, Vicious 3).

[CHAPTER 6]
THE GAME MASTER

Running a **Shadow of the Beanstalk** game can be very different from running a "traditional" RPG, where wandering bands of heroes roam the countryside, cutting down monsters with their swords and taking their treasure. For starters, while this setting is futuristic, it's still grounded in a certain amount of realism (which we'll talk about more later). In some ways, the lives of your players' characters are not so different from the lives of your players. Characters will likely have jobs and lives beyond that of a wandering hero. They need money to survive and operate within a capitalist economy. And they have to be careful when they resort to violence or criminal acts, lest they end up in a jail cell facing a prison sentence!

This chapter is supposed to help you, the GM, create that different feel of roleplaying game. We start out by discussing how to depict life for your average New Angelinos, so you can make your game feel like a real place. At the same time, we discuss how to depict player characters as New Angelinos. Next, we discuss how to depict New Angeles as a living setting where events occur around the player characters and the world isn't just a static set waiting for the characters to interact with it. Finally, we spend some time discussing how to create and run adventures in New Angeles using a three-act structure.

DEPICTING LIFE IN NEW ANGELES

In a lot of ways, life in New Angeles is recognizably similar to life your players are familiar with. People have homes, jobs, families, hobbies, and favorite media to binge-watch. But life in the future has changed in significant ways, and there are a few key ideas to keep in mind as a GM to help ground your game in New Angeles and make it feel more realistic.

Despite, or perhaps because of, the amazing communication technologies available to them, most people live fairly insular lives, divided between work and their condo-hab or apartment. Telecommuting is common, and between the ready access to necessary goods and services within their own ark or hab-block and the widespread availability of delivery services, some people rarely even set foot outside. Even for leisure activities, New Angelinos who want a little excitement have the entire Network at their fingertips.

All of this means that most people in New Angeles experience only a small subset of their city. Some of those groups develop cultures and lifestyles that vary significantly from district to district, subculture to subculture—even block to block!

THE MIDDLE CLASS

The middle class is smaller and weaker than it has been in centuries, but there are still millions of New Angelinos who work white-collar jobs, live in modest flats in safe and clean areas, and make enough money to cover their expenses and have a little left over for savings and leisure.

Middle-class workers are dependent on their employers to an extent that would be shocking to their 20th century ancestors. Employment gives access to health care, but in many cases it carries with it a whole host of other benefits without which the employee would find life impossible. Many middle-class workers live in corporate housing, often in the same building as their corp offices where they perform their daily job duties. Their children may attend corporate school, offered both as a perk to employees and as a training program for future workers. Food and other necessities may be supplied at a generous discount if purchased through the corporate store.

Taken together, these perks may be the only factors elevating an employee from lower class to anything resembling the middle, and losing their job may leave a middle-class worker scrambling to find a new one before they are evicted (usually two weeks from date of termination, but some companies are less forgiving). A black mark on their record, or the stigma of an address in the undercity, may prevent a worker from finding a new job and cause a permanent spiral down into the lower classes.

The combination of benefits and the threat of losing them all contribute to make the world of the middle-class worker surprisingly small. They seldom interact with anyone who isn't part of their corp in some way, as even their neighbors who aren't fellow employees are often paying their rent into the same corporate conglomerate.

Day-to-day, a middle-class worker can wake up, get ready for their day, then step outside to the elevator and ride two floors down to go to work. They might stop at the YucaBean across from the elevator bank, then walk down the hall and through the security checkpoint into the corp section of their ark. They either order lunch in, eat at the corp caf, or take an elevator to the plaza-level food court, and then at the end of the day they return to their apartment and relax with a delivered meal and a few hours of threedee or sensie streams. On special occasions, they'll take the elevator up to a nightclub or rooftop bar to meet with some friends to celebrate a birthday, promotion, or other life event.

ROLEPLAYING THE MIDDLE CLASS

The most important thing for anyone in the middle class is keeping their job. They will tend to be very loyal to their corporation, and will do what they can to protect its interests. Since most player characters will be from outside a middle-class character's sphere, middle-class NPCs will be uncertain how to react to them. Most will default to treating PCs as one of the two main ways they interact outside of their sphere: with clients or bosses at work, or with service staff. Figuring out whether the PCs are clients or staff will consume most of a middle-class NPC's attention just after meeting a PC for the first time.

Middle-class NPCs don't like anything that disrupts or threatens their positions in life. They tend to respect authority and try not to rock the boat. If frightened or confused, they tend to reach out to authority figures such as their employers, corporate security, or the NAPD for advice or support.

THE UPPER CLASS

In some superficial ways, the upper class resembles the middle class: they often have housing and services provided by a corporation, and they are usually employed by and extremely loyal to that corp. The difference lies both in magnitude (the housing and services provided to the upper class are far, far more opulent) and security. Risties are either impossible to fire (they or their family own too much of the corporation) or have enough personal wealth saved that they can continue to live in comfort even after termination. Often, both are true.

Members of the upper class also have much more freedom (and free time) to travel. They may think nothing of subbing to Europe for a weekend or visiting Luna for a holiday. Despite this breadth of options and mobility, in their own way upper-class New Angelinos are just as insular, their world just as small, as members of the other classes. Their colleagues are not necessarily their neighbors in the physical world, but their peers in wealth and education, who they encounter over and over again no matter where they travel.

When a ristie goes to school, it's the most exclusive school, and the same one frequented by children of all the other ristie families. A ristie who visits a beachfront resort is surrounded by other risties, most of whom they've known since childhood. When a ristie takes a business meeting, everyone else in the room is either a ristie or a servant of some stripe or another. When a ristie applies for a job, their competition are the same people they went to school with and grew up alongside. Even their hobbies and indulgences are generally so expensive and exclusive that only other risties could ever hope to partake.

ROLEPLAYING THE UPPER CLASS

Members of the upper class are used to getting their own way and living almost completely without fear. They are likely to view the PCs as either minions to order about or threats to be destroyed. If any of the PCs are themselves risties, then an upper class NPC will be interested in determining where precisely their circles intersect (if they don't already know the PC personally, that is). Other risties are one of the few legitimate dangers to a ristie's position, so an upper class NPC will size up an upper class PC for weaknesses or possible threats.

When they're frightened or threatened, risties reach out for private, deniable security assets to contain or remove the situation. They're comfortable using the NAPD and legal system, too, since they understand that those systems are in place primarily to benefit them, but risties who expect to get away with breaking the law (which is most of them) keep private security available, who ask no questions.

THE LOWER CLASS

Also called "the working poor," the lower class is the ever-expanding remnant of the working class, often underemployed and in debt and falling even further behind. The lower class includes huge swathes of blue-collar workers whose jobs are every day being lost to automation and androids, as well as small-time entrepreneurs and hustlers who manage to eke out an independent living outside the aegis of the corps.

The lower classes live in conditions no less constrained than the middle class, although the plain fact of their less-comfortable and convenient living quarters tends to at least get them outside more often. The lower classes are a little less likely to live in corp housing, which means their neighbors come from a slightly broader selection of careers and walks of life, and neighborhood community is an important part of the lives of lower-class New Angelinos…if only to keep the criminal element at bay, or down to a dull, manageable roar.

As insecure and dangerous as the lower classes have it, at least they're not *disenfrancistos*. They work hard jobs for long hours, sometimes with long and difficult commutes via tube-lev or slidewalk, have to stretch their credits by cooking food at home with what little time they have left, and somehow still have to arrange or pay for childcare, but at least they have a door that locks and a warm bed at night.

ROLEPLAYING THE LOWER CLASS

People in the lower class have enough to worry about without getting involved in anyone else's drama or problems. Unless they know the PCs personally or are from their neighborhood, lower class NPCs will do their best to avoid them and get back to their lives.

If threatened or frightened, the lower classes reach out to neighbors and family members for assistance. In many instances this might include the local orgcrime gang, who serve as defacto law enforcement and protect the neighborhood from outsiders. Only in extremity would a lower-class NPC call the NAPD; the cops cannot be trusted.

DISENFRANCISTOS

No one knows exactly how many homeless off-gridders there are in New Angeles, but it must be millions. Without an official permanent address of their own, these people are not considered official residents of New Angeles and therefore cannot vote in local elections, which is one of the reasons they are often called "*disenfrancistos*." (It's also fair to say that their poverty disenfranchises them in multiple ways.)

Disenfrancistos seldom have reliable jobs or sources of income, and must rely on odd jobs, scavenging, and criminal activity for money. Others dispense with money almost

altogether and make do with a complex system of exchanging favors, trading labor for a hot meal or a cot to sleep on. Although Ecuador's climate is paradisaical, the odd occurrence of acid rain or choking heat means that living without shelter is still quite dangerous, so *disenfrancistos* must find or build homes for themselves wherever they can. Many group together in abandoned or condemned buildings in squatter colonies, but others who do not trust their fellows hide away in steam tunnels, disused shipping containers, or whatever other shelter they can find.

Disenfrancistos almost inevitably develop a relationship with the criminal element, either as low-ranking assistance or as prey. For some, rising in a streetbanger gang is the only path to relative prosperity. Regrettably, health care for *disenfrancistos* is almost non-existent, and many suffer from a variety of maladies, mental illnesses, or addictions that complicate their lives and interactions with others.

ROLEPLAYING A DISENFRANCISTO

In every interaction, a *disenfrancisto* must be alert for danger and any opportunity to profit. Successful *disenfrancistos* are always on the hustle, always looking for any advantage, something to sell or trade for food or shelter. PCs tend to break away from the patterns of people *disenfrancistos* are used to interacting with, so they treat them with a mixture of fear and curiosity.

If threatened, *disenfrancistos* rely only on themselves, and will usually choose to flee and hide.

LIVING IN A BUBBLE

No matter their social strata, and despite living in the largest and most diverse city in the world, most New Angelinos seldom leave their tiny bubble society. The truth is that they rarely have a reason to. All their needs are met within their micro-culture, from employment through recreation, and trying to leave the bubble is met with bewilderment, confusion, aggression, and distress, as the travelers discover that the people living just two blocks away don't even speak the same language. In some ways, modern technology has made people more connected than ever before…but in others, humans have never been so isolated.

CULTURES ACROSS NEW ANGELES

Some New Angelino micro-cultures are generations old, ethnic enclaves created by an accident of history. Others are self-selected, so-called "planned communities" that came together due to shared values and dreams—sometimes religious in nature, but not always. And many are created by corps intentionally or otherwise, clustering around the increasingly-critical jobs that humans need to survive.

THE MACROCULTURE

Although this section discusses micro-cultures in detail, there is one overarching culture delivered to and shared by practically everyone: the one carefully curated and steered by the media, especially NBN. There's considerable local variation, even in language, but with NBN's hand on the tiller, almost all of these small boats are sailing in the same general direction. Concepts like capitalism, free speech (for corporations), and the best democracy money can buy are almost universally accepted, even between micro-cultures that agree on nothing else.

INVENTING YOUR OWN MICRO-CULTURE

Detailing a micro-culture, complete with its unique geography, major players, and internal conflicts, can be a great source of adventure seeds or even an entire campaign. You can be as detailed as you need, stopping after a single sentence or naming a dozen major NPCs and locations.

To begin, first figure out what the people in the micro-culture have in common: do they all work at the same corp or small handful of businesses? Are they an ethnic enclave from a diaspora or left over from the Project days? Are they a religious community? Then choose a handful of key identifying features of the micro-culture, such as locations, corps, or important NPCs, and determine how they interrelate. Finally, think about the micro-culture's relationship to the rest of New Angeles. Do they provide a vital service or good to a nearby wealthy arcology? Is the block the next to be targeted by an orgcrime outfit for expansion? Is the micro-culture a transition point for new arrivals coming into New Angeles, a recruiting ground for corp headhunters, or a stop on the clone "underground railroad"?

In **Chapter 4**, we've provided an example of a micro-culture for you to read and use as an example when building your own micro-culture. The 28th and Prado block on page 144 is a perfect example of a micro-culture in the midst of a district in the middle of an even larger city.

A LIVING WORLD

One of the trickier aspects of being a game master is depicting the world around your players' characters. Being a GM is a lot of work, and no small amount of that work comes from you being responsible for everything that isn't a player character. This can become even more difficult if you want to depict the setting as a "living world," where events happen, and people live their lives even when they aren't a part of your players' current adventures.

A living world is a lot more interesting to play a game in than a static one that only changes based on the actions your group takes, but it can also seem way more intimidating to manage as the GM. Luckily, there are a few ways to create a living world that don't involve you creating and managing the ongoing lives of hundreds or thousands of NPCs.

SIMPLE, EVOCATIVE DESCRIPTIONS

Many new GMs can make the understandable mistake of thinking that they need to invent and describe everything that their players' characters see and encounter. This can quickly become overwhelming for a GM, but it can be just as overwhelming and frustrating for a player who suddenly finds themselves listening to their GM read off long, uninterrupted monologues of descriptive text.

Luckily, you don't have to do this. Instead, you can (and should) enlist your players' imaginations to do a lot of the work for you. Remember that as you play the game, your players are imagining their own version of the scenes you describe. It doesn't matter if the minor details (what color the billboards are, how tall the buildings are, or the shape of the clouds in the sky) in their mind are the same as what the rest of the group is imagining. All that matters is that they have the same general visualization of the scene as everyone else, and that you give them something for their imaginations to build on.

That means that when you describe a person, location, or other elements of an encounter, you should stick to simple and evocative descriptions of the encounter's high points. By limiting your descriptions, you help ensure that your players focus on the elements of an encounter that they're going to be interacting with, and you leave their imaginations free to fill in the rest of the details. Here are some examples of primary details:

- The basic appearance of the space the characters are in. This only has to be one or two sentences, or even just a few words.
- Any notable NPCs that the characters are going to interact with (whatever those interactions may be). If there are a lot of NPCs the characters can interact with, try describing those NPCs as a group (after all, you can always get more specific with your descriptions as your group interacts with individuals).
- Pick a few evocative phrases, and don't be afraid to use "purple" or elaborate prose. Monolithic, vast, decaying, putrid, splendor; these are all words that can trigger distinct visuals in your players' minds.

ONGOING EVENTS THAT DON'T INVOLVE PLAYERS

Another way to create the feeling of a living world in your campaign is to create ongoing events in your game that don't involve your players' characters. New Angeles, after all, is a huge city, and that means there's plenty of activities going on at all times that a person may only hear about in passing.

HOW TO PRESENT BACKGROUND INFORMATION

At the core of most roleplaying games, GMs present every detail of the setting to their players. Unfortunately, this type of detail can lead players to assume that everything the GM tells them is important to the ongoing story. After all, most GMs are busy enough running the game that they don't have time to create a bunch of extra information for their players to listen to and then discard. Plus, many GMs are worried about presenting their players with a red herring—information that seems important but when followed, causes the group to diverge from the GM's carefully constructed story.

So when you present background information about ongoing events, you need to make sure that it's framed in such a way that players know that they're supposed to pay attention to it and then discard it. Luckily, in our setting there's a built-in way of doing this—the news. New Angeles is a media-saturated city, and you can use that to your advantage. Here are some ways to present information on ongoing events in the form of news bulletins or broadcasts.

- If your characters are traveling via the Metro or other public transportation, have a vidscreen across from them be in the midst of displaying a news report on an event you want to focus on.
- In the midst of an encounter, your characters' PADs can display a push alert about breaking news.
- A huge holodisplay advertises a major upcoming event.
- Your characters overhear two people discussing an event in a public space.
- As your characters are using the Network, they run into an illicit shoutcast purporting to be reporting on the "real news" of New Angeles.

These are tricks that television shows and movies often use to seed background information into their ongoing story, so there's no reason you can't do the same in your games. But what information should you be presenting?

WHAT INFORMATION ENGAGES?

When presenting background information about unfolding events, you want to make sure that your players will find it interesting. You can assume that your players' characters are bombarded by way more media than what you actively present, but they tend to ignore most of it. So think of the information you're seeding into your game as the news that actually catches their attention.

To determine what background information your players may pay attention to, you should first consider your group's interests. If your players are really interested in the setting, then create news that involves more obscure elements of the setting to reward their in-depth knowledge (the lead-up to the celebrations marking the anniversary of the Korean Unification, for example, or ongoing trade negotiations in the United Planets between Mars and the burgeoning Belt outposts). On the other hand, if your players are more interested in the immediate setting, focus on events in New Angeles that may have some minor effect on their characters' lives (a Humanity Labor strike that threatens to shut down the Metro, or the huge Miranda Rhapsody concert that's occurring in a few days).

Finally, you can keep in mind the simple maxims of tabloid journalism—blood and scandal sell. If your background events are lurid and engaging enough (gang wars, real wars, high-profile murder investigations, or rumors that Jinteki has discovered psychic powers and is creating clones who can read your mind), your players will likely pay attention.

KEEP THE INFORMATION CHANGING

One final thing to keep in mind when presenting information in the background is that as you continue to present that information over multiple sessions, have the information on the events change. If your group keeps seeing news about an upcoming UN summit, at some point have the broadcasts switch to the summit while it's in progress. Reports on gang wars in the undercity can eventually change to embedded reporters with the NAPD observing police crackdowns and arrests. If you want the setting to feel like a living world, the ongoing events need to be ongoing.

CHANGE DETAILS IN NPC'S LIVES

The final way to keep your world feeling like a living setting is to change small details in what's going on with your nonplayer characters. NPCs can often feel like they're just waiting in limbo for your group to interact with them. You can avoid that by changing something about your NPCs when your players finally see them, to make them feel like they've been doing something in the intervening time.

These details don't have to be complicated. If your PCs go to visit a store owner, they could find another employee working the counter because it's the owner's day off. Another NPC could start off a conversation by talking about the vacation they just returned from, or how they just scored tickets to an upcoming concert. A location could be closed for a few hours because of maintenance problems, forcing the PCs to leave and return later. Maybe an NPC gets a striking haircut, grows or shaves their beard, or gets a new tattoo.

You can (and should) also have NPCs know some of your other NPCs and what's going on in their lives. Again, this can be relatively minor stuff, like one NPC bringing up another NPC's financial troubles, or that they just got a new job. But the connectiveness of the setting's characters reminds your players that these are supposed to be people who go about their lives and talk to one another. It can also prove to be a good way to introduce consequences for your players' actions. If they cheat, rob, or assault an NPC, they may have trouble dealing with other NPCs who hear about it later.

OH, THAT WAS IMPORTANT!

Presenting all that background information can pay off if you eventually tie some of these events into your ongoing story. This requires a bit more pre-planning, because ideally you should seed in an event several sessions before it directly involves your group. You should also do it sparingly, lest your players start feeling like everything they see and hear in the story directly involves them). But if used occasionally, it can be rewarding when an NPC approaches your group and asks them to become involved in an event they've already been reading about, or when they realize that the mystery they've been investigating relates to something they keep hearing about in the news.

SOCIAL ENCOUNTERS

In **Shadow of the Beanstalk**, social encounters are likely to play a prominent part of your adventures (the game does take place in a huge city, after all). Structuring social encounters can be just as tricky as combat encounters, so here are a few tips to help you out.

First of all, be sure to use the core guidelines for structuring social encounters on page 119 of the **Genesys** Core Rulebook, and the information on using Motivations in social encounters on page 123 of the **Genesys** Core Rulebook. It's important to note that some of the abilities of NPCs and many of the talents available to PCs (such as Probing Question on page 49 and Ruinous Repartee on page 81 of the **Genesys** Core Rulebook) are designed to work with these rules.

SOCIAL ADVERSARIES

Just as in combat encounters, in social encounters you want to pit your PCs against opponents that will be interesting and challenging to beat, but not impossible to overcome. This can be tricky, especially in the more complex encounters where PCs and NPCs are using social skills to inflict strain on one another (see page 122 of the **Genesys** Core Rulebook). For this reason, the adversaries in **Chapter 5** are designed with these complex social encounters in mind.

Most (but not all) adversaries in **Chapter 5** are designed to be more socially "offensive" than "defensive." What we mean by that is that many social skill checks are opposed by other skills. Except for very socially adroit characters, most adversaries have higher ranks in social skills, but not the skills used to oppose them (see page 55 of the **Genesys** Core Rulebook). This means they have a good chance to inflict strain on your PCs during a social encounter, but your PCs have a better chance of inflicting strain in turn. This gives your PCs an advantage in most social encounters.

ONE AGAINST MANY

In typical social situations, most or all of the party might find themselves targeting a single NPC. In such encounters, the PCs might get four, five, or even six attempts to inflict strain before the opposing NPC gets a single opportunity. This dynamic is excellent if you want your PCs to exceed (unless the NPC is particularly socially adept), but will rarely leave the PCs with the satisfaction of overcoming a challenge. To increase the difficulty and spice up encounters, do the same thing you do in combat––add a few more opponents.

MAIN ADVERSARIES AND SUPPORTERS

A social encounter can be more interesting if the main, named adversary is backed up by a few lackies, hangers-on, or other interested parties. These minor NPCs can also make checks to inflict strain, and some have abilities that can support their boss. This gives your PCs a choice; do they want to win the minor NPCs over to their side first, or just focus their attention on the major NPC?

In these social encounters, you can have the PCs win if they force the main NPC to compromise or capitulate. After all, if a corporate boss agrees to terms, the boss's aides will agree as well. This is another way to make encounters more offensively-focused. The PCs only have to focus on one target, even while other adversaries inflict strain in the meantime.

MULTIPLE ADVERSARIES, MULTIPLE GOALS

The most complex social encounters are those where the PCs must face multiple adversaries, but those adversaries may not be allied. This means that while the adversaries are all trying to get the PCs to capitulate, overcoming one opponent doesn't end the encounter. The PCs must deal with all of their opponents in turn.

This is likely going to result in a few PCs being eliminated due to suffering too much strain. It's also the most complicated social encounter, and should be reserved for the end of a session or climax of an adventure arc.

CAPITULATION

In complex social encounters, the goal is to inflict enough strain on an opponent that they exceed their strain threshold (or wound threshold in the case of minions and rivals). As mentioned on page 122 of the **Genesys** Core Rulebook, in these cases they have capitulated, which is a more narrative form of incapacitation.

An incapacitated character may agree with their opponent's terms or arguments, get frustrated and leave the room, sulk in a corner, believe whatever lies their opponent tells them, or become so terrified they tell their opponent everything they know. The important thing is that they no longer take part in the social encounter.

This also means that PCs can lose social encounters without the threat of death. Losing to an NPC could even force the PCs to take a dangerous job or embark on new adventures!

ANDROID ADVENTURE BUILDER

The following adventure builder is designed to help GMs rapidly assemble an adventure steeped in the themes of **Shadow of the Beanstalk** that can easily play out in the New Angeles setting. To create an adventure, select a single entry each from the **Hooks**, **Escalations**, and **Climaxes** categories listed in this section. This should provide a rough framework for an adventure, complete with twists, turns, and a moral quandary for the party to face at the end.

One of the nice things about these modular adventure acts is they can be combined in new and interesting ways. A hook can be replayed several times with a completely different escalation and climax, resulting in a wildly different adventure. With enough change in set dressing, your players might not even recognize they've run through the same hook twice!

If you use this setup to create your adventure, you can choose your hook, escalation, or climax beforehand. Alternatively, you can start with a hook, and depending on what choices your players make, you can select an escalation and a climax that best responds to those choices. The second option may require a bit more on-the-fly adaptation, but it does tend to be more rewarding.

HOOKS

Hooks are starting concepts to get your players moving into a broader adventure. When designing original hooks, you should keep the initial concept and stakes clear. Even if there are plans for twists, turns, and unexpected motives, those can come in the escalation and climax sections. It is important for characters to have clearly outlined goals in the hook. While party members might change their minds about what their goals are later on, there should be at least an initial clarity of purpose.

Each hook consists of three major parts; the **primary goal**, the **challenges**, and the **twist**. The primary goal is what your PCs are trying to accomplish. It's basically the plot of your hook, and it should be the core of this first adventure act.

The challenges are what stand in the way of your PCs accomplishing the primary goal. Many challenges can be turned into full-fledged encounters (or combined to form encounters that are especially challenging).

The twist is an unexpected complication that, ideally, should take your PCs by surprise. It makes your PCs have to adapt their plans on the fly, and it keeps them from getting too comfortable or confident about their chances for success.

We've presented a number of hooks for you here. The primary goal is the most important part of the hook (if you want a different primary goal, you'll also want a different hook). The challenges and twists, however, can be modified based on your preferences.

DEADLY DATA

A sneaker net courier contacted the Opticon Foundation, claiming to have devastating internal memos from a megacorp. A member of the Opticon Foundation is a friend of yours and has contacted you and your group. The friend offers to pay you to rendezvous and escort the courier and their data through a rough part of the undercity and back to the Opticon Foundation headquarters.

PRIMARY GOALS

Navigate through the undercity, find the courier, and escort the courier back to the Opticon Foundation.

CHALLENGES

- Your PCs could run into a swarm or two of hyperrats (see page 227) on their way to meet the courier.
- Streetwise or Survival checks may be required to navigate the twisting labyrinth of the undercity. PCs may not even have Net access this far down!
- After reaching the courier, your PCs might have to cross the territory of a local street gang to get to the Opticon Foundation. They can try to negotiate with the gang leader, but if words fail, they'll need to be ready for a fight.
- The corporation sends a bounty hunter after the courier. Their orders are to bring the courier back alive—and to kill anyone they may have shared the data with.

TWIST

The courier decides that they would rather sell the information to a rival corporation than give it to the Opticon Foundation. Your PCs need to convince the courier to stick to the plan or somehow obtain the data themselves to deliver to the Opticon Foundation.

CLASS-ACTION LAWSUIT

After Waller Shipping Consortium laid off its entire nonmanagerial staff and replaced them with bioroids, the employees sued, claiming that they were wrongfully terminated. As it turns out, your PCs know some of the former Waller employees (possibly some are friends or family). The plaintiffs are a bunch of blue-collar workers without much money or experience in the court system squaring off against a major corporation. If your PCs don't help them out, they have no chance of winning.

PRIMARY GOALS

Organize the employees, dig up evidence that Waller wrongfully terminated them, and then somehow ensure a win in the courts.

CHALLENGES

- Your PCs need to organize the plaintiffs.
- Waller's firings hinged on claims that its workforce was underperforming, making the firings justified. If your PCs can uncover records or other evidence to the contrary, that could be vital in the courtroom. A clandestine run on Waller's servers may be necessary.
- If your characters can't obtain evidence electronically, they can still do it the old-fashioned way. They need to find a Waller manager and either convince them to testify or trick them into providing incriminating evidence.
- As the trial grows closer, Waller sends some corporate security toughs around to rough up the plaintiffs and convince them to drop the case. Your PCs need to step in, with force if necessary.
- The night before the trial begins, the plaintiffs' lawyer suddenly drops the case! Your PCs suspect Waller paid or threatened them to drop out. Now, one of your PCs needs to step into the lawyer's role (which may require a cleverly forged law license).

TWIST

The Liberty Foundation approaches the PCs and lets them know that they would like to join the case—on behalf of the bioroid employees! The PCs need to figure out whether the money and press Liberty can bring to bear is worth their involvement, especially given how the plaintiffs feel about the bioroids that stole their jobs.

NO HONOR AMONG RIVALS

A junior project manager is close to making a major technological breakthrough, but they're sick of being patient. If they only had their rival corporation's work on the subject, they could ensure getting to the patent office first. The project manager hires the party to get their rival's files.

PRIMARY GOALS

Breaking into the rival corporation's offices is far too risky. However, it turns out the rival project manager is traveling to Mumbad for a conference. There, they'll be presenting some of their research, which means they're bringing their research along with them. The best time to steal this research would be in-transit.

CHALLENGES

- Your PCs need to find out what suborbital flight the target is taking to Mumbad. This may require a run on the airline's servers, or perhaps your PCs could simply make a new friend at the airline's corporate offices.

- Once the PCs find out what suborbital aircraft the target is going to be on, they still need to be on that aircraft with the target. Unfortunately, the flight is already booked, so your PCs will need to find other people on the flight and assume their identities. This may require bribing the passengers for their tickets, or contriving some reason why the passengers have to miss their flight.
- Once the PCs get on the aircraft, they have to find the rival alone and steal the information from them. Perhaps when they go to the bathroom?
- With the information in hand, your PCs still need to get off the plane (unless they want to meet the cops in Mumbad. The best (albeit dangerous) option is for one of the PCs to fly another suborbital aircraft or dropship and intercept the aircraft midflight. As long as they do it while in space, the PCs can "jump" from one aircraft to the other. Of course, it is a long way down.

TWIST

The rival actually has a semifunctioning prototype (with risky drawbacks) that is particularly tempting for one of the PCs to keep for themselves, be it a cybernetic implant, g-mod, weapon, drug, or something else.

CORPORATE ASSAULT

A Jinteki junior manager has acquired information that NEXT Design has hired some prisec mercenaries to conduct a field test of its new generation of laser weaponry. The test should take place somewhere in the New Angeles undercity within the next week. The rub is that some bloodthirsty NEXT official decided that the best way to test the weapons would be in "live field conditions;" eliminating a streetbanger gang, with major collateral damage likely.

The manager hires the PCs to observe and collect as much data as possible. Testing weapons against New Angelinos (even criminals) is certainly illegal, and since NEXT is owned by Haas-Bioroid, this evidence would give Jinteki leverage over its chief competitor.

PRIMARY GOALS

Discover the location and time of the test, then figure out the best way to observe it without being seen.

CHALLENGES

- Figuring out the time and location of the test is either going to require your PCs to make a dangerous run on NEXT's heavily defended servers, or trick the NEXT official or their underlings into giving your PCs the information via some clever subterfuge.
- With the information in hand, your PCs need to get into the undercity and scout the location. Ideally, they need to find an observation point that lets them observe the whole battle without being seen.
- Needless to say, after the battle commences, your PCs are going to get spotted by either the prisec mercs or the streetbanger gang (or both). Now your PCs need to escape with their lives and the data while being chased by vengeful gang members or mercs with laser cannons!

TWIST

The testing ground turns out to be on the block where one of your PCs grew up. Depending on when they discover this, do they have time to evacuate their friends and family before the fighting begins? Or do they stop the test and blow the operation entirely?

ESCAPED PROPERTY

An experimental clone model is on the loose! A Jinteki project manager is desperate to recover the android before their boss learns what's happened. The clone was last seen in a seedy part of Chakana, away from seccams, where the project manager claimed to be testing its capabilities.

PRIMARY GOALS

Find out where the clone is hiding in the Chakana District, capture it, and bring it back to the project manager.

CHALLENGES

- First, the PCs are going to have to narrow down where the clone may be. A couple of Streetwise checks should reveal that the best place to hide in Chakana is the Eastside Tenements (see page 153).
- Navigating the Eastside Tenements is difficult, and can be dangerous. If one of the PCs isn't an experienced tracker, they'll need to negotiate to hire someone who knows the area.

- Finding a clone requires the PCs to spend a lot of time knocking on doors and trying to buy or threaten information out of the locals. Their search is complicated by the fact that the clone has gotten the bar code on their neck removed by a tattoo artist. If the PCs suspect this, maybe they can find the artist?
- Once the PCs track down the clone, they realize just how experimental it is. The project manager was testing out the "perfect spy," and decanted one of the dormant Nisei clones (page 240) without permission. Suddenly the PCs have to deal with a dangerous combatant who also has the frighting ability to predict their every move.

TWIST

Once captured, the clone gives an impassioned plea to your PCs about why they want to remain free. Your PCs can help them escape over the border into Brazil, but doing that means make an enemy of the manager who hired them.

STRANGE AILMENT

A neighborhood the PCs live in or otherwise have a friendly connection to calls for help. They're suffering a sudden spike in a particular illness. A full-blown epidemic is likely if the issue isn't addressed. The volunteer doctor knows what medicine is required, but it is unaffordable, has been stockpiled in a secure location, or was hijacked. Regardless, the doctor offers the party a favor if they acquire the medicine.

PRIMARY GOALS

The medicine is produced by a small biomedical corporation, but it is far too expensive for the PCs to purchase, especially in the quantities they need (or it is unavailable for other reasons, but the biomedical corporation is at the heart of the problem one way or the other). The PCs need to find out where the medicine is stored and obtain it. Probably illegally. Possibly violently.

CHALLENGES

- Your PCs may want to try to negotiate with the corporation. This requires that they set up a meeting with corporate representatives and use their most persuasive arguments to try to convince them to come to the neighborhood's aid. Most likely, the corporate representatives will still refuse to help the PCs. However, the negotiations may also present an opportunity to scout the offices or even gain the sympathy of an employee.
- It turns out that the medicine is a delicate genetically engineered substance that can only be created in living creatures (in this case, lab pigs). Unless one of your PCs is a doctor, they'll need to obtain a doctor's services to help them extract the medicine once they break into the facility. (Or they can try running out of the facility carrying squealing pigs under their arms.)
- The facility is in the La Costa District, and it is surrounded by fences and farmland. Your PCs need to break through the electrified fencing without being noticed and then sneak their way to the facility.
- On their way in, the PCs encounter a patrolling pack of cyberdogs (see page 226). The PCs must take them out before they can raise the alarm or maul the PCs!
- In the process of breaking in, your PCs end up stumbling into one of the corrals that contains "rejected" experiments. This one contains a g-modstrocity (see page 227), and when the PCs wake it up, it is hungry.

TWIST

It turns out that the corporation that produces the medicine also engineered the ailment. Now your PCs need to ask: Is this a coincidence? Or was the illness released on purpose?

THE BIG SCORE

Robbing a beanpod in transit has to be the riskiest heist in the history of high-stakes crime, which is why nobody is going to suspect your PCs of doing it! A member of an orgcrime outfit that has ties to your PCs contacts them with an offer they can't refuse. A beanpod full of iridium, platinum, and osmium has been dispatched to the Challenger Planetoid under heavy guard to ride the Beanstalk down to New Angeles.

PRIMARY GOALS

Get to Midway Station, access the heavily secured loading and unloading areas for beanpods, and hitch a ride on the target. Then, while in transit, get inside, take control, detach the beanpod from the Beanstalk, and make a wild reentry through the atmosphere to an exciting touchdown!

CHALLENGES

- Your PCs need to get to Midway Station so that they can intercept the beanpod while it's on the final leg of its journey. Doing so requires some forged IDs at least.
- Infiltrating Midway's loading and unloading area (where the beanpods are transferred from one buckyweave ribbon to the next) is going to require stealth and skulduggery, and probably fake yellow jacket uniforms.
- Your PCs need to find a way to get on the beanpod when it leaves Midway (or just after it leaves the station). Add space suits to the list.
- Once they're riding the beanpod thousands of kilometers above the Earth, they need to get inside.
- Finally, they need to override the beanpod's systems, detach it from the Beanstalk (this probably requires help from someone back on Midway), and drop it into a proper reentry trajectory so that the newly freed beanpod doesn't burn up in Earth's atmosphere. Although beanpods have some rudimentary emergency reentry systems, one of the PCs better be a pilot!

TWIST

As it turns out, the corporation left a little surprise inside the beanpod: a combat drone set to kill any hijackers.

ESCALATIONS

An escalation is a rise in either the stakes or the difficulty of the adventure, and it is the point where the waters of morality muddy. There is often a plot twist of some kind that shows the players that the milk run they signed up for isn't as cut and dried as advertised. The following escalations are kept general enough to work with most of the previous hooks.

ALL OVER THE VIRTS

The story is leaked to the press and goes viral, informing virtually every citizen in New Angeles of the events. The media attention compromises the PCs' relative anonymity for the rest of the campaign, as various factions track them down for questioning.

NEW CHALLENGES

- If laws have been broken, the NAPD dispatches officers (and possibly a SWAT team) to take your PCs into custody.
- A rival interest (possibly a corporation, government agency, or criminal outfit) decides to exploit the situation, and your PCs, to their own advantage.
- Anyone looking for one of the PCs, whether they are a bounty hunter, debt collector, former flame, or estranged family member, is able to track them down thanks to the media attention.

CONCERNED CITIZEN

Events have ensnared an upstanding citizen who has been trying to do the right thing. The citizen doesn't have the physical ability to stop the party from doing things their own way, but makes an emotional appeal to the party's better nature. In any case, the citizen is opposed to the goals set out for the PCs in the hook for noble reasons, causing the party to question those goals and the motivations of their benefactors.

NEW CHALLENGES

- The citizen is just trying to do what they think is right. The PCs need to convince them to not interfere.
- If the citizen has already alerted the authorities, this might result in a response from NAPD or a prisec team.
- The citizen could be a military veteran and perhaps retains some of the skills they learned during the Worlds War. Your PCs may find themselves confronted by a tough, capable foe who genuinely believes that stopping them is a good thing to do.

UNFRIENDLY RIVALS

The party's benefactor from the hook has grown impatient with their lack of progress on the issue. They have brought in a second team, which is competing to achieve the same goal before the PCs do.

NEW CHALLENGES

- The second team is willing to go so far as to sabotage, steal from, and fight with the PCs (but not kill them, if it can be avoided) to ensure they'll be the ones to claim the prize for completion.
- It turns out that the job really is too much for one group to do alone. The second group pretends to work with your PCs, but it is planning a sudden and inevitable betrayal at the climax. If your PCs suspect this, who is going to betray whom first?
- One of the PCs used to be a member of the rival crew before having a falling out with the leader. It is possible that the old crew has hacked that PC's PAD, and that is how they became aware of the situation.

CHANGE OF HEART

The individual who contacted the party and sent them on the adventure lets them know they've had a change of heart, and takes them off the job. Reasons for this might include that they're taking a new approach to the problem, possibly one less illegal. Perhaps they have been discovered by their superiors and have been ordered to cease operations. Maybe they've simply accepted their new reality. The important thing is that the PCs realize that their support has dried up, and that they must find a way to make their previous efforts amount to some benefit for themselves.

NEW CHALLENGES

- When your PCs decide to make their previous efforts worthwhile, their former benefactor decides that they need to be stopped—by any means necessary.
- In reality, their former benefactor is now a victim. Another party has become aware of the situation and is exerting pressure so events will work out in their favor—pressure that includes calling off the PCs.

THIRD PARTY

Another large organization is now aware of the party's actions and dispatches an agent with nearly unlimited support to manipulate events in its favor. This organization might be a rival corporation, an orgcrime faction, or a government entity. It might be seeking to create a public relations nightmare, legal trouble, or a loss of unique assets for their rivals. To this third party, the PCs are merely persons of interest almost beneath notice.

NEW CHALLENGES

- One of the PCs has a work history with the third-party organization. The current status of their working relationship is whatever creates the most dramatic tension, be it their current employment, a job they were fired from, or an amicable split.

CLIMAXES

Climaxes are less defined than either hooks or escalations, and they generally represent how the most powerful organization involved wants to attempt to resolve the issue. This organization is probably a powerful corporation or orgcrime faction, but it could also be a religious group or a government. Even if such a decision seems contrary, it could be that a higher-up just discovered the actions of their underlings, and orders a radically different course of action. All the following climaxes should work regardless of which hook or escalation was selected previously.

Note that the PCs should ultimately have agency to determine how an adventure ends. It is their choices that should determine how the story wraps up. Most adventures should have an emotional climax, where the PCs have to decide which of the various factions they are siding with. In the **Shadow of the Beanstalk**, this choice is often between a megacorp and those powerless underfoot. Of course, going against a megacorp or orgcrime faction is guaranteed to make life harder for the party.

CONTROL THE STORY

The largest or most powerful organization involved leaks the story to the press. The organization is careful to do so in such a way that implicates the PCs as responsible for any negative consequences. This might cause a third party to hunt the PCs, be it NAPD, bounty hunters, or victims of the events.

NEW CHALLENGES

- If your PCs weren't in the limelight before, they are now! They need to find a way to escape back into the shadows.
- The reporter breaking the story contacts one of the PCs for comment, giving them an opportunity to share their side of the story, but likely at the expense of seeing events through to a positive conclusion.

BRING EVERYONE IN

The largest or most powerful organization involved decides to bring everyone else involved to a secure location for questioning. They send a special agent with all the support they need to ensure success. Questioning might vary in intensity based on the organization, but once they understand the

full scope of the events, they can decide who to kill, who to buy off, and who to intimidate so things resolve in that organization's favor.

NEW CHALLENGES

- The special agent assigned to bring the party in owes one of the PCs a small favor from a while back. It's hardly large enough for the agent to be willing to endure failure, so your PCs need to figure out how best to take advantage of this in a clever and creative way.

CUT AND RUN

The most powerful organization involved decides to cut its losses while it still can. Any agents of the organization are disavowed and likely silenced soon after. The organization's only interest is washing their hands of the entire affair.

NEW CHALLENGES

- A disavowed agent recognizes their situation and asks the PCs to help them hide or get revenge on their former employer in exchange for favors.

COVER UP

The most powerful organization involved decides to destroy everyone and everything that can implicate them. This includes dispatching a kill squad or special agent to decide who needs to die (often erring on the side of violence).

NEW CHALLENGES

- The agent attempts to destroy any evidence the PCs have, trusting the press or courts won't believe them.
- The kill squad wires the PCs' hideout with explosives, destroying their base of operations while they're somewhere else. The PCs come back to a smoking pile of rubble and must survive with what they have on them.
- The organization has access to something truly horrifying, such as an Ares bioroid (page 239), a psychic clone (page 240), or a team of exosuited mercenaries (page 232). Now your PCs are in for the fight of their lives!

SEE YOU IN COURT

The most powerful organization involved decides to use its influence in the courts to win the day. It may have called the NAPD to make arrests, or some of its members may be under arrest themselves. Either way, it has far more resources than the PCs, including a small army of lawyers on retainer. While the legal system moves slowly, and the PCs might have an opportunity to complete the adventure to a satisfactory conclusion, events should come back to haunt them.

NEW CHALLENGES

- The NAPD is convinced it needs to question the entire party immediately, though unless the PCs implicate themselves, they are not under arrest.

DECISION TIME

Bullets punched fist-sized holes in the rusted warehouse door. One caught Cardoso and threw him, screaming, into a stack of shipping crates. Mallory crawled out of cover to grab the wounded man and drag him, whimpering and moaning, behind their makeshift barricade. Kang poked his head up over his own stack of crates. "I guess Globalsec is serious about getting their property back."

Jan joined him, her silver eyes calmly scanning the warehouse walls in infrared. "I count three personal exosuits. They have surrounded the building."

"Exosuits? Three of them? Damn…" Kang looked at the fletcher in his hand, then tossed it aside in disgust. "Might as well be throwing rocks… Ok. If they want their stuff, I guess we'd better give it to them."

He kicked open one of the cases behind them. The huge black gauss rifle gleamed dully in the warehouse's overhead lights. Kang picked up the weapon, his Lunar-grown muscles quivering with the effort. He tried to lift it to his shoulder, but couldn't get the meter-long barrel up past his chest. "Damn it. Jan, come here."

The bioroid turned, and Kang thrust the rifle at her. She lifted it easily, then stared at it as if she wasn't sure what it was for. Kang pointed at the door."You're going to have to take them out, Jan. I can't hold the damn thing steady."

Jan stared at Kang. "But there are humans in those exosuits. My programming–"

"I know, I know," Kang looked her in the eyes. "But you have to, or we're dead."

He gently pushed the butt of the rifle into her shoulder, guiding the barrel towards the shattered door. Jan's hands were shaking, much faster than a human could shake, nearly vibrating. Her eyes were dilated, out of focus.

"Come on, Jan. You can do it."

Nearby, Mallory was screaming something at Cardoso. A composite wall panel blew apart in a hail of bullets. Jan's hand buzzed against the stock. She spoke, slowly and carefully. "I. Can. Be. More. Than. My. Programming."

Her hands stopped vibrating. Her eyes snapped into focus. She pulled the trigger.

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ANDROID

SHADOW OF THE BEANSTALK

IN THE FUTURE, THE WORLD HAS CHANGED. PEOPLE HAVE NOT.

In the not so-distant future, humanity has spread out across the solar system, unlocked the frontiers of cyberspace, and created millions of intelligent androids in its own image. At the heart of this progress stands a ladder leading to the riches of the stars—the massive space elevator called the Beanstalk. And at its base sprawls the biggest, meanest, and most exciting city on Earth: New Angeles. Using the GENESYS Roleplaying System, this sourcebook allows you to explore this vital, thrilling, and dangerous world. Take on the role of cops, con artists, roughnecks, and escaped androids trapped between greedy corporations, corrupt officials, and vicious street gangs. Outwit your foes, uncover their conspiracies, flee their retribution, and maybe you'll survive. Who knows? Maybe you'll even get rich...

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