



THE LAST PARSEC

IRONGATE - A FISTFUL
OF ONES AND ZEROES

THE LAST PARSEC IRONGATE

A FISTFUL OF ONES AND ZEROES

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A FISTFUL OF ONES AND ZEROES

This scenario pits the heroes against some of the worst scum and most powerful gangs on Irongate as they protect a new prisoner at Rellex Point. As she leads them on a treasure hunt across Rellex Point and deep into the outlands, it slowly becomes clear there's more to the treasure—and her—than she's telling them.

This scenario is suitable for characters of any Rank, but those of Seasoned or higher have a better chance to succeed. *A Fistful of Ones and Zeroes* assumes the characters are prisoners on Irongate, and it can be inserted into the *Escape Clause* Plot Point or played as a standalone adventure.

BURIED TREASURE

Long before Irongate became a JumpCorp prison planet, it was a mining colony run by MaxMineral. The mining company's corporate leadership was as sneaky as it was unscrupulous. When the company began "recruiting" xerin laborers for Ellia II, it knew it needed to keep those sorts of transactions off the company books. Not only could their financial advisors not find an approved deduction for effectively enslaving a developing culture of other sentients, their lawyers also explained there was a good chance they'd face massive legal repercussions in several systems.

To hide their crimes, MaxMineral financial wizards diverted a portion of the company's funds into an untraceable cryptocurrency. A small group of dedicated—and dodgy—accountants then managed all transactions involving the xerin using the digital money. Naturally, this group also had exclusive access to the private key access codes (or more specifically, the storage device holding the codes) necessary to access and spend the decentralized funds.

The supervisors of the cryptos-for-xerin scheme were well aware the accountants probably weren't of the highest ethical fiber. To remove any temptation, they thoroughly searched their

employees upon entry and exit of the site to ensure no storage devices of any sort made it in or out. You see, MaxMineral possessed a surprising amount of cryptos—millions and millions of credits worth at the time.

HUMBLE BEGINNINGS

GN-0132 was a relatively run-of-the-mill maintenance robot assigned to Ellia II. A dedicated inventory subroutine was the only thing differentiating it from dozens of others of the same model deployed to the mining colony. And it was that unexceptional nature which led to GN-0132's involvement in a heist of epic proportions.

LOST MONEY

When the xerin rebelled against MaxMineral, one of the shady accountants hired by the shady company to hide its shady dealings saw his chance. In the chaos of the evacuation following the xerin uprising, Wynn Treldak, brought GN-0132 into the facility under the guise of inventorying physical assets prior to the evacuation. The access codes themselves were relatively small, so the bot's memory was more than sufficient to hold them.

A higher-end model might have raised suspicions, but no one was looking too closely at a simple bean-counting automaton. He guessed once he downloaded the cryptos into another storage drive, no one would think to dig too deep into a simple inventory bot's memory log.

Even so, the security protocols would normally have caught the deception. However, by this time, everyone was too busy choking on Irongate's poison atmosphere., Treldak's cover story stuck long enough to get the bot in and out.

Once out, he took the bot overland to an abandoned mining camp about a two-day drive from Rellex Point. There, he uploaded the keys into the drive of an off-grid computer in the decommissioned, but still-functional facility.

BEST LAID PLANS

Trelldak reprogrammed the bot's memory to back up his cover story and everything went like clockwork. Or rather, did until the accountant's transport vehicle broke an axle almost immediately upon leaving the abandoned camp for Rellex Point. He couldn't risk signaling for pick-up by a flier without compromising his cover.

He and the bot set off on foot for the spaceport. By the time he got back, MaxMineral had concocted the plague story and quarantined the colony. The accountant never made it off the planet.

The maintenance bot was another story...

FIRE SALE

When MaxMineral declared bankruptcy, its assets went on the block to pay off creditors. While no one wanted a plague planet, it's fairly easy to sterilize machines so the trustees tried to auction off any equipment they could easily lay hands on. In short order, the company's physical assets were sold.

As far as the missing crypto keys went, Trelldak had thoroughly covered his trail when he stole them, frying the original hard drive so no record even existed anymore. A few MaxMineral corporate officers knew they existed and were missing, but little more. And they couldn't raise much of a fuss looking for them without risking exposing the entire coverup. By the time the bankruptcy proceedings had settled out, the trail had gone cold and dead.

One of the pieces auctioned was an unassuming, slightly modified maintenance bot. GN-0132 bounced around owners and the universe for decades. While it wasn't a new design or even a not-too-old one, plenty of small freighter captains had use for a reliable, if clunky, walking abacus. No one ever thought to delve too deeply into GN-0132's overwritten memory.

CHANCE ENCOUNTER

About 100 years ago, while in service to a particularly adventuresome captain, GN-0132 embarked on a voyage to the fringe of known space. There in an uncharted system, the crew stumbled on the remnants of a gth-kel probe lodged in an asteroid (see *Leviathan* for more details on the gth-kel). Fortunately, the probe was badly damaged and almost entirely inactive. Almost.

The only operational piece of alien tech was a single malfunctioning nanite, which infected GN-0132 as the bot performed a salvage survey on the probe. However, instead of converting the bot into a gth-kel drone it vastly improved the construct's neural circuits, granting it sentience.

The alien source of its intelligence meant GN-0132 had nothing resembling empathy for other sentient creatures. Simultaneously, its underlying inventory programming combined with the nanite's directive to co-opt other resources for its own use synched almost perfectly to create an utterly amoral entity driven by an almost overwhelming desire to accumulate material possessions. The most desirable item within light years of the newborn artificial intelligence was the spaceship on which it resided.

In short order, the robot purged the ship's atmosphere, killing the crew.

FREE AT LAST

After suitably altering the ship's log, GN-0132 flew the vessel back to civilized space. The robot-turned-android initiated emancipation proceedings to gain recognition as a free citizen and a salvage claim to the ship, producing "evidence" of the crew's accidental demise. The newly-recognized sentient being succeeded in both endeavors.

Renaming herself Gien Oh, she promptly sold the ship. Thanks to Gien's enhanced intelligence, organization programs, and utter lack of morality, she grew those initial funds into a rather sizeable fortune over the years. She spent much of it transferring her consciousness into a near-perfect android replica of a human after finding organic sentients were more comfortable interacting with other organics.

Throughout it all, Gien Oh's corrupted core continued to be guided by avarice.

TREASURE PLANET

Over the decades, Gien Oh substantially upgraded her housing and processors repeatedly. During one such modification, she stumbled across the scattered remnants of the cryptocurrency heist. Trelldak's manipulation of her memory all those years ago was good, but it was only meant to work on the limited resources of a maintenance bot, not the alien-enhanced artificial intelligence Gien Oh now possessed.

Doing some research, she discovered the cryptocurrency MaxMineral purchased was still in circulation—particularly in criminal circles. And thanks to demand and speculation, it had greatly increased in value over time. What was worth millions of credits then was now worth several orders of magnitude more.

With it, someone could literally buy their own planet—and not one of those cheap, airless desert ones, either.

In spite of her superior intellect, the knowledge of the location of the lost drive is incomplete. The information simply wasn't recorded by her "ancestor." She knew only it was an outpost on the prison planet, Irongate. Otherwise she had only a few key clues to its location, like snatches of a misremembered dream or half-forgotten song.

THE PLAN

Gien Oh's very nature wouldn't let her ignore the trove once she discovered it, but by this time JumpCorp had converted the planet into a prison. The android spent large sums to gather as much intel on the prison as possible. She ran probabilities on a vast number of possible plans for retrieving the drive. Not only did she have to find a way to get onto Irongate and locate old data nodes to identify the outpost where Trelldak hid the crypto, but she'd also need to secure a way off.

It seemed almost impossible—then she uncovered stories about several former Irongate prisoners who had recently escaped.

PRISON BREAK-IN

Gien Oh liquidated her assets and spent copious amounts in bribes to set up a connection with an anonymous contact who guaranteed her passage off Irongate for a significant amount of money. The fee was more than even the value of her current fortune, but a mere drop in the bucket against the horde of cryptos she knew were still on the planet.

Next, she robbed a financial institution, taking many hostages—and executed several on camera. Attorneys she'd already retained put up just enough of a defense to make sure she was sentenced to Irongate instead of summarily executed. Other agents seeded rumors among prisoners bound for Irongate about a new arrival who somehow knew *something* very valuable about the old colony. Exactly what varied from the location of a hidden armory to another

functional powerplant and scrubber to secret hangar complete with a luxury yacht.

Thanks to her array of upgrades, Gien Oh is a formidable opponent, but even she knows she's going to need help once she hits the surface. She plans on manipulating one or more gangs to assist her in her search. When she's done with them, she intends to play them against another gang or just eliminate them herself.

The word began to filter to the various gangs, and nearly everyone found a reason to get their hand, claws, or clamps on the new arrival inbound to the surface. While the gang leaders don't take notice themselves, several mid-level members of their organizations see Oh as a potential lead to elevating their profiles within their own gangs.



WELCOME PARTIES

The team is in Rellex Point when Gien Oh's transport shuttle is due to touch down. Depending on the situation, the heroes learn of the inbound high-value prisoner from any of a number of sources.

If they're associated with the Blood Runners, that gang may send the team to see if she knows the location of an untouched horde of supplies. Burrch Ranzo may have caught wind of one or more rumors and points the team in that direction to see if there's anything of concern to JumpSec. Or, if they've not made contact with that gang, Darquani or another low-level scavenger merchant who's caught wind of the rumors asks them to round her up.

Finally, if the characters are just a group of random prisoners, one of them may simply stumble across the scuttlebutt on the streets of Rellex Point just in time to get involved—and maybe nab a nice bargaining chip to trade off to one of the gangs.

In any case, no rumormonger is really sure what information Gien Oh has, only that a female by that name is generating more whispers than anyone in years, so she must be important... maybe even a way off the planet.

TOUCHDOWN

Regardless of how they get the information, by the time the characters get the heads-up the shuttle is almost overhead. Even so, they arrive at the drop zone only a few minutes after the shuttle has touched down. Luck is with them, as the shuttle landed near the edge of the concrete pad closest to Rellex Point.

A band of Nullvoids are already on scene and almost done loading up their captives by the time the team reaches the area. It doesn't take a genius to know if the Nullvoids get the team's target back to their territory, the other gangs—or at least those who've got an inkling to Oh's potential value—are going to start a high-stakes bidding war to claim the new blood and tap her knowledge.

The heroes have to move fast or find themselves out of luck.

FEEDING FRENZY

This prisoner drop was a fairly small one, and apparently the Nullvoids didn't get the skinny on Oh so there's a relatively small crew on scene for this pickup. They have one large transport vehicle to haul both the gang members and their charges. There's also a small group of outriders on motorcycles to escort the transport and run down any jackrabbits that make a break for the poison zone.

The Nullvoids already have most of the unlucky new arrivals herded onto their transport. There are also a handful of gang members on the transport to ride herd on the captives. Several of the Nullvoids are still on the tarmac as the characters reach the drop zone.

The Nullvoids are well acquainted with rival gangs trying to skim captives from them at the pick-up site, so the members who are still on foot move to intercept the strangers. The drop zone is a two-mile square area of concrete, and other than the Nullvoid transport and motorcycles, there's no cover in sight.

The motorcycle riders initially continue rounding up stragglers who slipped through the initial cordon. The gang members already on the transport, including the leader, prepare to depart.

At the start of the fight, the gang has the heroes outnumbered and they're feeling pretty confident about their odds. Still, the gang has several birds already in hand, and the leader sees no reason to risk losing what they have for the few escapes scampering for the edges of the drop zone.

Once the team downs half the gang members facing them, two things happen. First, one outrider per hero rides in from the north and west sides of the map. They dismount, positioning themselves between the heroes and the transport. This takes their first round to accomplish.

At the same time, the transport pulls out, heading into Rellex Point. The remaining two outriders fall in behind the truck to provide cover. The driver tries to swing wide of the team, especially if they have weapons capable of damaging his vehicle. Should the characters manage to stop the transport before it can escape, you can find the stats of it and the crew in **Hot Pursuit**, below.

- **Nullvoids (2 per hero):** Use Nullvoid from the Irongate setting book.

- **Outriders (2, plus 1 per hero):** Use Nullvoid from the *Irongate* setting book. Mounted on Motorcycle, Dirt Bike, from the *Science Fiction Companion*.

HOT PURSUIT

If the transport gets away, the vehicle is far too fast to pursue on foot. If the characters did not arrive in a vehicle(s) of their own, they have to take dirt bikes from the defeated Nullvoids.

Handle the pursuit like a standard, five-round Chase from *Savage Worlds*. Make two Driving rolls for the Nullvoids: one for the transport truck and one for the motorcycle outriders.

One gang member drives the transport and the leader rides shotgun in the cab. Two more Nullvoids ride in the back with captives. They fire on any characters approaching from the rear of the vehicle, but the cargo compartment has solid sides, so they can't attack any heroes who make it alongside the truck.

The ten new arrivals the gang has captured are all tied or handcuffed to bolts in the floor and can't aid in their own escape.

The Nullvoids do not surrender. The Chase continues until either the heroes manage to stop or gain control of the transport, or five rounds pass. If they're not stopped by the end of five rounds, the Nullvoid vehicles reach their gang's territory and escape.

- **Nullvoids (see above):** Use Nullvoid from the *Irongate* setting book.
- **Nullvoid Leader:** Use Nullvoid, armed a laser pistol (Range 15/30/60, Damage 2d6, RoF 1, AP 2) instead of the stun blaster.
- **Transport Vehicle:** Use the stats for Cargo Truck from the *Science Fiction Companion*.
- **Motorcycle Outriders (1, plus 1 per 2 heroes):** Use the stats for Motorcycle, Dirt from the *Science Fiction Companion*.

DEAD END

Even if the characters are successful in stopping the Nullvoid press gang, they're in for a disappointment. Gien Oh is not onboard the vehicle.

A successful Intimidation roll coerces a ganger to tell the team another group actually beat them to the drop zone. They were already leaving by the time the Nullvoids reached the tarmac. A raise

on the roll reveals the other gang were members of the Hungry Ghosts.

A simple Persuasion roll—or just good roleplaying—reveals the same information from one of the captives if the characters rescue any of them. While the new prisoners don't know it, anyone who's been on Irongate any time at all realizes the muscle making the grab were clearly Hungry Ghost thugs.

Neither the Nullvoids nor the new arrivals know where the Ghosts may have taken Gien Oh, though.

PRISONER RUSTLIN'

Assuming the heroes discovered the Hungry Ghosts kidnapped Oh, they've got to locate the gang's hideout quickly before she is sold to one of the bigger gangs or dragged off into the poison zone in search of whatever cache to which she holds the key.

If the characters didn't talk to one of the new prisoners or Nullvoids, they've got to do a little more work. Use the same process described in **Legwork** to handle that bit of information gathering.

LEGWORK

Should any of the characters have Connections or at least a minor favor with either the Machine Syndicate or Hungry Ghosts, they can cash it in to learn the location of the group who pulled the snatch-and-grab. This takes two hours.

Otherwise, the team can make a cooperative Streetwise roll.

On a failure, it takes six hours of talking to every piece of Irongate scum they can find to get a lead. The lead character also must either take a level of Fatigue from Bumps and Bruises from prisoners who answer noisy questions with their fists instead of their mouths, or the character promises a significant favor to whatever squealer eventually coughs up the location of the Hungry Ghosts.

On a success, it takes two hours of canvassing the usual joints and hangouts. The lead character has to promise a minor favor to whomever points the group in the right direction. On a raise, the silver-tongued adventurer wheedles information out of a trusted source in only an hour of using just kind—or not-so-kind—words and a smile.

NOT-SO-SAFE HOUSE

One of the mid-level enforcers who heard about Gien Oh's arrival was Tarkon Sluhd, a member of the Cartel. Seeing a chance to snag himself a potentially valuable piece of leverage, she alerted a small group of Ghosts near the drop zone when Oh's shuttle arrived. They rushed in before the Nullvoids arrived and picked her up.

The gang took her to a small building they maintain on the northern edge of Rellex Point, where they occasionally make exchanges. While they wait for Sluhd to arrive, they try to pry secrets from their captive. The android stirs the pot with false hints at what she knows, but the Ghosts ultimately learn nothing from her.

THE LAYOUT

The building is a fairly standard construction for Rellex Point, made of resilient composites and alloys. It stands on a largely abandoned side street just a rock's throw from the poison zone, at the edge of an open lot. Paved, open ground surrounds it on all sides, but sneaky characters can approach from one of the unguarded sides with Stealth rolls at -2.

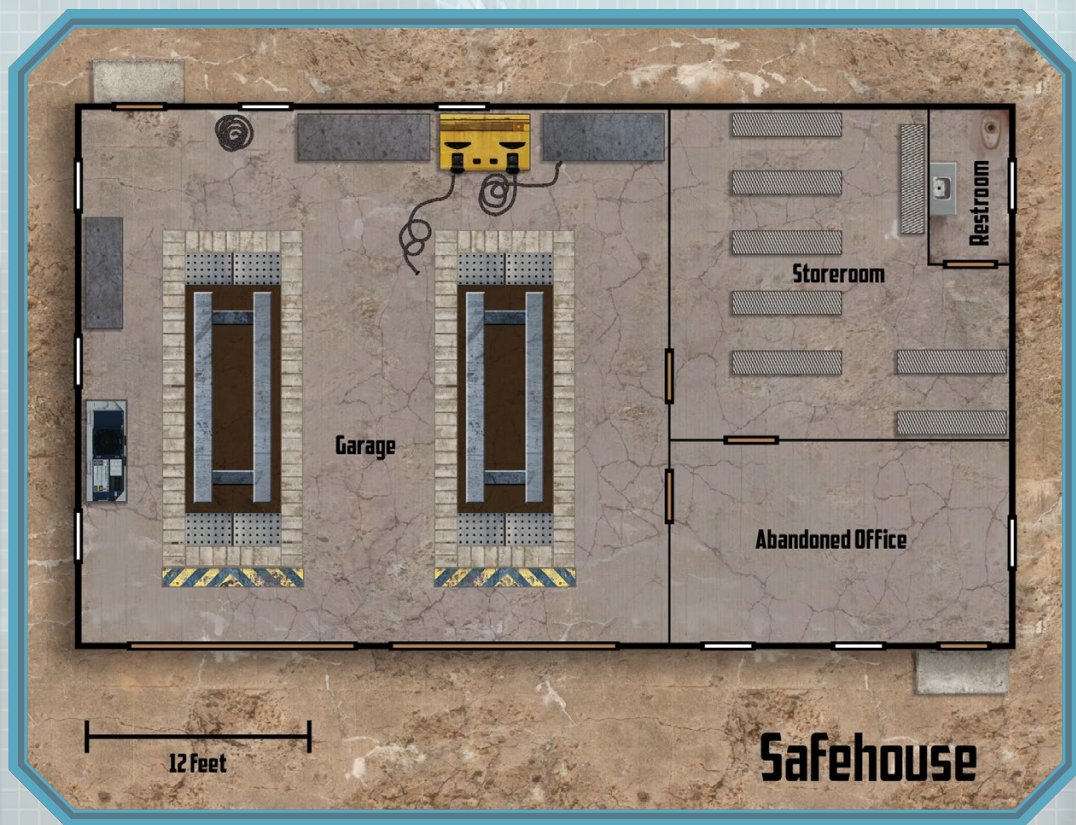
All exterior windows are welded or at least boarded over. Removing the covering takes 1d4 rounds and a successful Strength roll. Doing so without alerting the Ghosts inside requires a Stealth roll at a -4 penalty.

None of the doors are locked, but guards at the front and rear attempt stop anyone from opening them. The Ghosts have absolutely no interest in opening a discussion with the characters. Any strangers approaching the area are told in no uncertain terms to leave immediately. If the trespassers refuse or attack, the guards immediately raise the alarm, alerting their comrades inside.

THE GANG'S NOT ALL HERE

Luckily for the heroes, there aren't a lot of gang members present at the safe house—at least initially. If the team arrives within two hours, there are only two Ghosts plus one additional per hero. One stands guard at each entrance and one is in the storeroom attempting to interrogate Oh. The rest are inside the main garage.

After two hours, four more Ghosts show up to reinforce the safe house crew. The number of guards at the two entrances increases to



two, and a second gang member assists the interrogation efforts. The last reinforcement is in the main garage.

At four hours, Garo Chiva, an enforcer from the Machine Syndicate, arrives and bribes the Ghosts to let him talk to Oh before they pass her to Sluhd. Two Machine Guards settle into the garage. Chiva is in the storeroom, taking charge of Oh's interview. He does not have any more success than the Ghosts but begins to suspect there's a lot more to Oh than meets the eye.

GUNS BLAZING

As soon as the gang members become aware of the heroes' attack, then move toward the source of the incursion. The Ghosts fight until only a single one remains, at which point he surrenders. The Machine Guards fight to the death or until Garo Chiva orders them to stop. He surrenders once either his guards fall or he takes two wounds.

Gien Oh doesn't provide much assistance during the fight for several reasons. First, it bolsters her own story by making her seem less dangerous. Second, she knows doing so might end up getting her current shell damaged. Finally, she doesn't care who wins until she's got her hands on her prize. Everyone on the prison is just another pawn in her eyes.

★ **Garo Chiva:** See page 17.

- **Machine Guard (2):** Use Machine Guard from *Irongate*.
- **Hungry Ghost (variable, see text):** Use Hungry Ghost from *Irongate*.

CLEARING THE SMOKE

Neither the Ghosts nor Machine Guards have any information of value to the team. Chiva utters threats about crossing the Machine Syndicate and adds cryptically, "I don't think you know what you've got your hands on." He refuses to elaborate but invites them to stick around and wait for more Syndicate members to arrive, promising they're on their way.

They aren't. So far, Chiva kept this whole affair to himself, hoping to snag a nice bartering chip to advance his position in the gang. If it looks like the team intends to do him further harm, he bargains, cajoles, or threatens as seems best suited to the situation to convince them to let him live.

If a character decides to loot the safehouse, every ten minutes picking through the various piles of accumulated salvage lets her make a

Survival roll as if she were scavenging in the poison zone. See **Scavenging** in *Irongate*. After three total attempts, the repair facility is picked clean and no more Survival rolls are possible.

Oh, however, seems to believe Chiva's warning and continually urges the group to leave as soon as possible. In reality, she doesn't, but believes the characters are better suited as pawns. To provide incentive, she refuses to tell them anything until they're away from the Ghosts' hideout, claiming she doesn't want to risk being overheard—or monitored remotely if the characters left no one alive.

OH KNOWS

Once the heroes leave, Oh becomes more talkative. Although she has no empathy herself, she completely understands the motivating influence emotions have on organic beings. She tries to gather as much information on her "rescuers" as she can for later use against them. The android pretends to be human with only a few simple, data-access cybernetics.

When they reach a temporary resting point, the android spins her tale for them.

"I was a research specialist carrying data for an unclaimed property litigator. He'd been digging into MaxMineral, the company that used to hold this planet, and came across the location of a site overlooked by the original bankruptcy proceedings. It was a lodging facility for the very top of corporate leadership and visiting VIPs.

"According to all the records I could find, there's a yacht equipped with a hyperspace drive still in a hangar there. He filed the paperwork to claim it and a criminal cartel got word of the find. Millions of credits is tempting, but that's not what caught their attention. The cartel wants to use it to get one of their own off planet.

"They tortured my boss—to death—but all the data is stored in a secure cybernetic drive I have here." She taps her skull. "We work with this sort of thing all the time. It's triple-encrypted, isolated, and psi-shielded. They threatened me, but I can purge the drive with a thought, and it's on a dead-man switch.

"I knew if I told them, they'd kill me. They knew if they tortured me or killed me, they'd lose the data. They were a lot smarter than I gave them credit for, though.

"They framed me for a big crime and got me sent here. I guess the plan is for their guy to find me. Now, I can either then help him to the ship in exchange for a way off this rock or die here."

Gien Oh claims to have no idea who the prisoner she's supposed to meet is nor know the name of the criminal organization that framed her. That's true, since the entire story is fabricated. Oh goes on to say she has no idea how to fly the ship if she can find it. However, she's willing to help the heroes find the craft if they'll just take her with them. If the group raises the question of other loot, she says she's mostly concerned with escape...but her life was destroyed and she is giving the team a way out, so it seems only fair she gets a share.

After any additional questions the characters may have—which she likely just makes up answers to—Oh explains she doesn't know *exactly* where the site is located. After all, she says, it was hidden well enough even the bankruptcy processors never found it. However, she does have some very solid leads, and more importantly,

the necessary codes to override the hidden site's lockdown procedures.

The good news is she knows where to look for a map. The bad news it's likely held on Machine Syndicate turf.

FINDING THE MAP

While she was being questioned by her kidnappers, Oh was able to gather some information of her own from the gang using a few interview techniques she learned from an old boss. She discovered the Machine Syndicate has restored a few of the old MaxMineral data cores. Given a little time, she says she can mine one for the location of the former corporate retreat by cross-referencing various maintenance records, etc.

She reassures her new friends there's a site likely to contain one of these outside the Factory itself. It's in the hydroponics facility nearby. She says it's probably less defended, and the fact the Syndicate got the vats back up and running means some of the old MaxMineral data cores on site there must be intact.

CHASING THE ZEROES

Although we only deal with a couple of the prison's gangs directly in this adventure, word is on the streets Gien Oh knows *something* valuable. Even if the actual gang leadership isn't involved, members of each are looking for her in the hopes of getting their hands on whatever it is she knows. Most figure even if they can't use it themselves, at the very they can barter it for favors with someone on Irongate.

The other prisoners aren't going to give the characters much time to lick their wounds—or even catch their breath. Members of each gang have come to believe she holds the secret to whatever their organization values. Tarkhon Sluhd is very interested in recapturing her prize, and Garo Chiva hasn't forgotten the heroes either. Members of Zandar's Claw might even become concerned Oh is aware of the matter transporter.

Should the team try to hole up for more than a couple of hours after an encounter, feel free to toss a few prisoners or gang members their way to keep them moving.

ROOM TO GROW

Although it is barely two stories tall, the lab is approximately the size of an aircraft hangar, making it one of the largest buildings in the immediate area. It is also one of the more heavily guarded ones outside the Factory complex itself.

GETTING INSIDE

Each door is guarded by two sentries. The doors are also locked, requiring Lockpicking -2 to open. All windows have been covered by welded metal plates.

A small patrol of sentries led by a pair of Machine Guards circles the building every 15 minutes. One camera monitors every entrance as well, but any hero closely observing them can make a Notice roll at -2. On a success, she spots a route of approach avoiding the camera's field of view (with a successful Stealth roll.)

The sentries and patrol are treated as active for Stealth purposes. If the team attacks and doesn't drop both before they can act, they call out the alarm, alerting the other guards, who run to reinforce them.

The characters could also try to bluff their way past them. This is a Persuasion roll at -4, resisted by the Guards' Smarts, or Intimidation resisted by

Hydroponics Facility



Spirit. The heroes get a +2 bonus if they thought to take any identifying clothing from the Ghosts or Chiva's thugs.

Finally, a character with Connections (Machine Syndicate) or a favor with the gang can gain access without either hook or crook.

- **Sentry:** Use Scav Ganger from *Irongate*.
- **Machine Guard (2):** Use Machine Guard from *Irongate*.

DATA FARMING

The interior of the facility is a large, open area filled with hydroponic vats. A control room sits above the floor level, overlooking the production site. Several workers and overseers move among the vats, as well as a handful of Machine Guards. They don't immediately notice the team unless their entry was particularly violent.

Gien Oh tells the heroes she's headed for the control room. They need to distract the guards so she can get to the data core. Simultaneously, they must quickly deactivate any cameras and alarms before the Syndicate becomes aware of their presence.

A character making a Notice roll spots a nearby junction box that allows them to tap into the security feeds for the facility. Disabling the security system is a five-round Dramatic Task using either Knowledge (Electronics) or Knowledge (Computers) at -2. In a pinch, a hacker can use Lockpicking, but that imposes a -4 penalty.

While a hero is dealing with the electronic security, the others must handle the facility staff. The building is well insulated, so the sounds of a fight don't draw the attention of the sentries or patrol outside. Particularly loud noises, like an explosion, do bring them into the fight.

The android tries to dissuade any team member who tries to accompany her as a guard, but if he insists then she relents after a brief discussion. Having a witness means she can't use her full array of abilities, after all. In that case, some of the facility's guards and staff attack the control room while she taps into the data core. Otherwise, Gien Oh isn't noticed by any of the Syndicate crew, or at least none who survive.

The Machine Guards fight until Incapacitated. The workers and overseer surrender once the gang's muscle is taken down.



- **Machine Guard (1 per hero):** Use Machine Guard from *Irongate*.
- **Worker (8):** Use Prisoner from *Irongate*. Armed with shovels, rakes, and other makeshift weapons (Str+d6).
- **Overseer:** Use Boss Prisoner from *Irongate*

HARVEST TIME

Including the time to reach the control room and return to the group, it takes Gien Oh 15 rounds to recover the information she's seeking from the data core.

If they managed to disable the security system, the only obstacles to their escape are any guards they left outside. If the team is stealthy, they may be able to avoid them on the return trip.

If they did not disable the plant's security, a group of Machine Guards has been dispatched from the Factory to stop them. The Factory group links up with any remaining sentries outside the hydroponics facility and attacks the heroes when they emerge. The reinforced group fights to the death.

- **Machine Guards (2, plus 1 per hero):** Use Machine Guard from *Irongate*.

OUTLAND BOUND

Armed with the data from the Machine Syndicate's computer, Gien Oh runs a few cross-references through her own memory core and pinpoints the site Treldak hid the vault drive. It is a two-day trip overland from Rellex Point through the Badlands and beyond, assuming the team has access to a vehicle. If they don't, it takes five days.

The trip is largely off-road. The old complex predated a lot of the original colony's infrastructure, so that combined with its distance from the primary city helped it remain undiscovered by the planet's current inhabitants.

If the heroes aren't affiliated with the Blood Runners, this helps reduce the chance they run afoul of that gang but also complicates the journey. Draw cards for encounters as described under **Outland Encounters** in *Irongate*, referring to the **Beyond the Dome** table.

Additionally, the driver of each vehicle in the team's convoy must make a Driving roll at -2 each day or suffer a vehicle breakdown. Getting their transport (off-) road worthy again takes 2d6 hours and a Repair roll at -2.

Along the way, there's plenty of opportunity to play up Oh's personality quirks. She constantly queries the group about the current supplies of foodstuffs, filters, fuel, ammunition—anything that's inventoriable, even those clearly of no importance. The characters also might begin to notice some of her own peculiarities, such as the fact she never seems hungry or her “normal” interactions seem a little stilted or calculated.

THE BADLANDS HAVE EYES

In addition to the usual dangers of stannions, twitchers, and road pirates, there are a couple of additional predators prowling the Badlands.

Garo Chiva is tailing the characters' expedition from several hours behind. Thanks to the fact they're traveling through largely unexplored territory, it's relatively easy for the Machine Syndicate enforcer to track them. Unless the heroes specifically send someone to watch their backtrail for hours, there's no chance of spotting him.

Unknown to Chiva, Sluhd is also tailing *him*. While the heroes probably aren't high enough profile to be immediately recognizable around the prison, Sluhd was able to identify his mechanical hand in the botched kidnapping.

BAITED AND SWITCHED

Winding through the badlands requires them to backtrack a few times, but eventually the party's route leads them past a broken-down hulk of transport, Treldak's old vehicle. Not long afterward, they arrive at an abandoned mining complex nestled in the mountains beyond the Badlands. The dead-ends and doubling back result in Chiva and Sluhd both closing the gap between the groups considerably, but the twisting canyons serve to hide their presence completely.

Actually, the site was less abandoned than never completed. Before they'd learned to calibrate their gear correctly for Irongate's mineral content, anomalous readings on ground-penetrating radar often misled the early MaxMineral surveyors. The company realized this attempt was a bust before they'd even finished construction on the outbuildings.

Most of the buildings were either never completed or have been reclaimed by the environment. Only the central structure still stands largely intact.

SQUATTER'S RIGHTS

Thanks to its unoccupied status, the mine escaped notice during the initial xerin uprising centuries ago. Recently, however, a band of nomadic xerin hunters have moved into the area and picked over the outbuildings. The xerin are still in the area and have come to see the complex as their land.

Any explorer making a Survival roll spots the telltale signs of humanoid tracks. A raise notes the tracks have only three toes.

FIGHTING WITHDRAWAL

When they approach the main building, the heroes discover the main door is closed. Without a source of power, the door cannot be easily opened.

At that moment, a small group attacks the interlopers. The xerin are armed with weapons

MINING COMPLEX OUTBUILDINGS

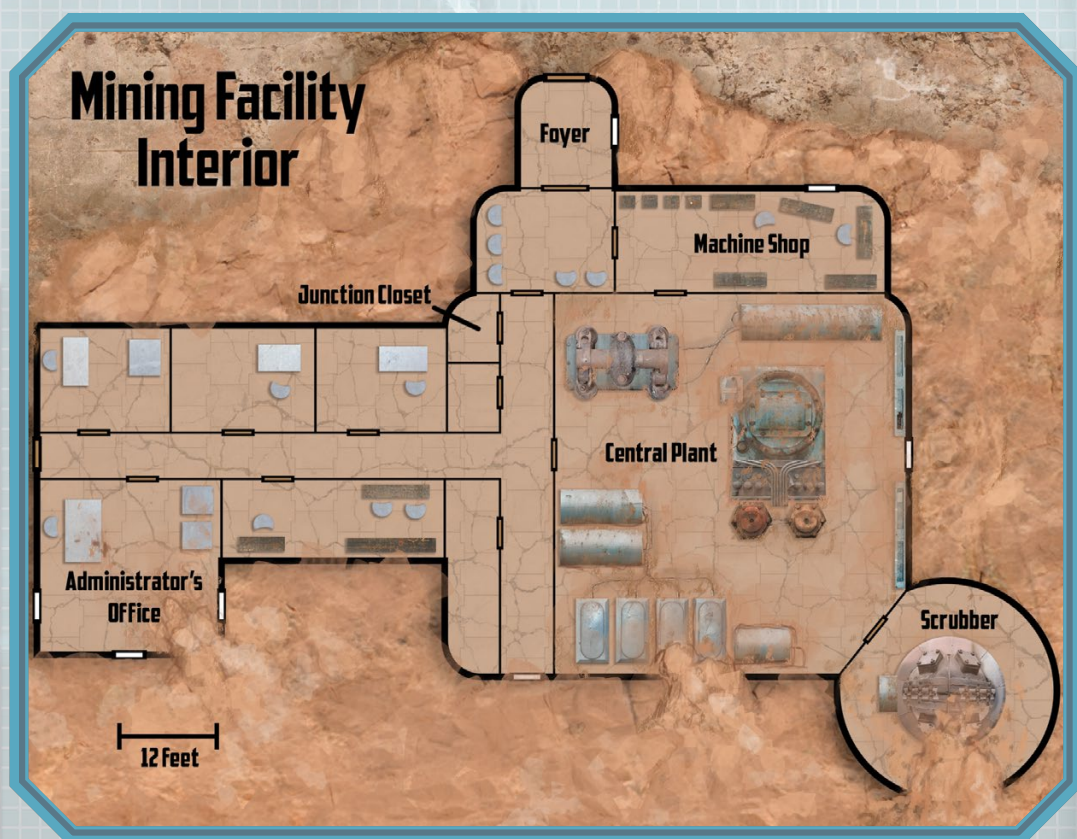
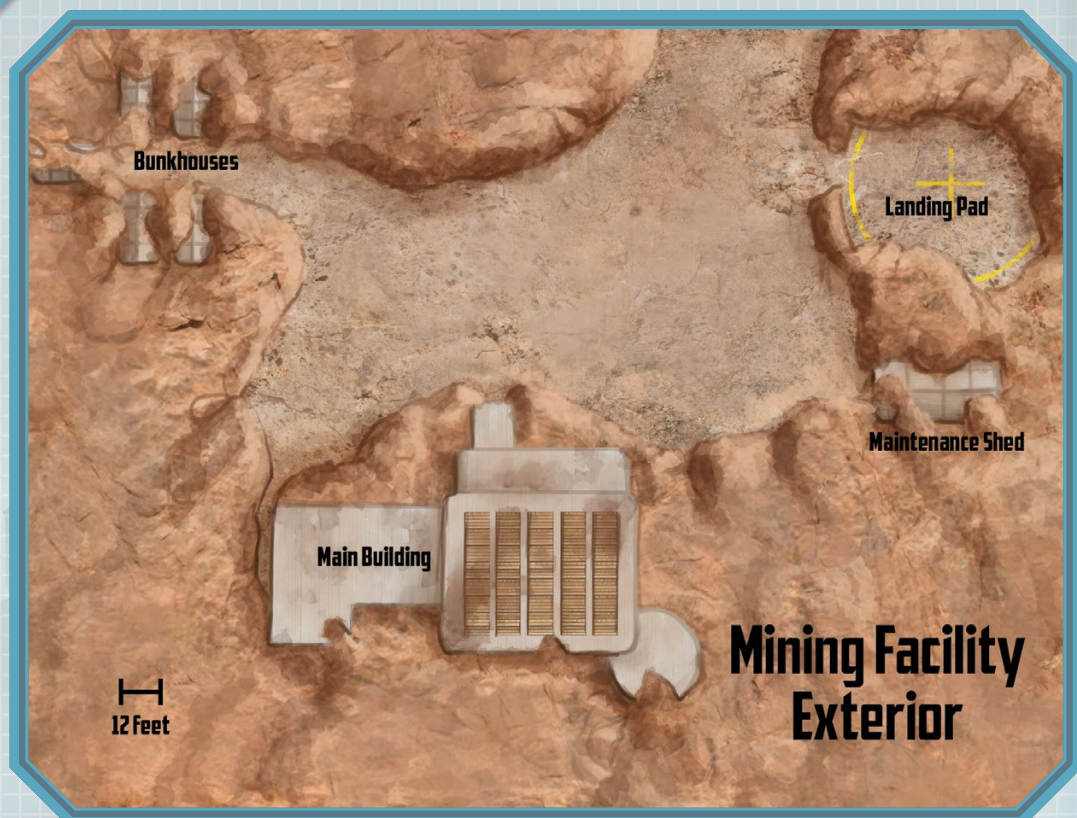
The complex has been abandoned for 200 years. Even with advanced composite materials, the buildings are beginning to succumb to the ravages of age.

Bunkhouses: MaxMineral shut down operations before most of these were even finished. They are little more than skeletal shells or at best a few composite walls or section of roof. Nothing of value remains.

Maintenance Shed: This building was meant to service mining equipment and provide short-term or emergency repairs on aircraft and ground transport. Time and xerin have taken their toll, and only a few scattered, badly rusted hand tools and spare parts are left to identify the structure's purpose.

Landing Pad: While it's obvious this was meant to allow fliers to land at one time, any character examining it can make a Notice roll. A success tells her this was never capable of handling orbital vehicles, much less luxury spaceships.

Main Building: This is the only structure largely intact. It served as a combination of administrative office, power plant, air scrubber, and machine shop during the initial—and final—days of the mining outpost.



they've pilfered from the complex. They try to maximize cover in the ruins against the better-armed heroes.

On the fight's third round, Garo Chiva and his thugs arrive. They engage whichever side has the upper hand, switching between the two as the tides of battle shift. Neither side gives nor receives quarter in the fight. If his muscle gets taken out, Chiva does retreat into the wilderness to regroup. The xerin fight until only two remain, then those survivors attempt to escape—to bring more of their tribe.

★ **Garo Chiva:** See page 17.

- **Machine Guards (2, plus 1 per hero):** Use Machine Guard from *Irongate*.
- **Xerin (2, plus 2 per hero):** Use Xerin from *Irongate*. One in three is armed with an old laser rifle (Range 30/60/120, Damage 3d6, RoF 3) that shorts out on a 1 on the Shooting die.

OPEN THE BLAST DOORS!

Once Chiva and his men arrive, Oh realizes her plan might be in jeopardy. She urges the most tech-oriented character in the group to help her get into the main building, so "We can take cover!" She suggests routing the power from one of the team's data devices, energy cells, or even hand weapons to provide power to the door. (This is a good time to reveal exactly how extensive her inventorying of the group's resources has been.)

The hero must achieve five successes and/or raises using either Repair or Knowledge (Electronics). Lacking those, the hero can instead fall back on Lockpicking or Knowledge (Computers), but at an additional -2 penalty. Once the hacker achieves requisite number, the doors open and Oh beckons the team to shelter inside.

SECURITY ONLINE

By the time the heroes manage to bypass the doors (or begin to put a serious dent in the xerin and Machine Syndicate opponents), Sluhd and her enforcers arrive and turn the fight into a four-way brawl. As soon as the doors open, Oh rushes everyone inside and tells them to guard the entrance while she looks for a way to lock down the building. She quickly locates the junction closet and reconnects the building's grid to the

MAIN BUILDING INTERIOR

Most of the rooms are now unidentifiable in purpose, as xerin looters and the passage of centuries have devoured most artifacts. A few doors remained sealed over the decades, protecting their contents from the worst of the deterioration befalling the rest of the facility.

Foyer: Both doors to this foyer have been sealed since closure. It's in surprisingly good shape as a result, but empty except for a few MaxMineral promotional posters. A pair of inert security bots stand inside the second doorway.

Machine Shop: Also sealed for centuries, most of the tools and equipment in here are intact.

Central Plant: This contains the power converters, pumping equipment, and other machinery necessary to operate the outpost. While the walls are breached in the rear, these components were built to a higher tolerance. The power core, buried under the facility, is still operational.

Scrubber: The small scrubber is hopeless damaged and unrepairable.

Administrator's Office: This is where Trelldak hid the crypto drive and one of the first places the xerin stripped of value.

still-functional power core under the facility. This takes her three rounds.

Once she gets the building back online, she locks the door between her and the heroes. Opening the door requires another five successes as described under **Open the Blast Doors!**

Simultaneously, Oh activates the two security bots in the foyer. The bots immediately register the team as foes and attack. They fight until Incapacitated.

She does not close the exterior doors. After another round or two, members of either Sluhd's gang or Chiva's begin moving toward the entryway. Closing the exterior door follows the same process as opening it.

Oh hopes the melee between the team, the prison gangs, and the facility's bots eliminate any potential "complications" for her. If any of

the characters insisted on accompanying her to activate the power grid, she claims the machinery must have malfunctioned. She only engages in combat directly at this point if attacked.

- ★ **Tarkon Sluhd:** See page 18.
- **Cartel Soldier (2, plus 2 per hero):** Use Scav Ganger from *Irongate*. Rellium sword (Str+d6), laser pistol (Range 15/30/60, Damage 2d6, RoF 1, AP 2).
- **Security Bot (2):** Use Security Bot from the *Science Fiction Companion*.

DO ANDROIDS DREAM OF ELECTRIC MONEY?

Gien Oh moves quickly through the facility, her memory being supplemented by the visual input from her sensors. She reaches the administrator's office and rushes to the desk. The desk is battered and broken, having been picked over by the xerin who entered ages ago through the hole in the back wall.

If any characters are with her, she turns on them and attacks. Oh fights until she's taken three wounds, then tries to negotiate her survival with promises of a share of the crypto vault drive.

If no one is with her, when the team manages to reach her location after hacking the door, hopefully defeating the security bots in the process, the characters find her clawing through the wreckage screaming in rage. If they question her, she angrily reveals the gist of her plan through rants and shrieks.

"It's gone! Hundreds of millions of credits gone! I'm stuck on this hellhole with you animals!"

There is no sign of the drive containing the access codes. (It was taken decades ago by xerin hunters who dropped it somewhere in the Badlands. Now it lies covered by the elements.)

Oh has no way to barter her escape—or anything else at this point. "Life" for an android with as advanced a shell as she occupies is a *very* long time. Unless the team attacks her, she sits on the dirt-covered floor and stares blankly.

- ★ **Gien Oh:** See page 17.

THE MORALITY OF THE STORY

Allow the characters time to question Oh and learn the backstory on both her and the access codes. Oh has run the numbers and realizes the drive is almost certainly out of her reach. She sees no reason to hold anything back.

At some point during their questioning, sounds of the fighting outside fade, then stop. Allow the heroes a Notice roll to realize this.

Moments later, members of both gangs appear, one at the hole in the back wall and the interior door (or wherever the team has set guards). Chiva and Sluhd approach, weapons lowered.

"Those weird xenos ran, but they'll probably be back with more any minute. We decided we could kill each other over whatever's in here, then probably die when those savages get back—or we could come to an agreement," Chiva says.

"We split the find three ways, me, the lizard, and you, then we get out. Fair?"

The gang members are understandably unhappy when they find out the entire affair was a bust. Sluhd's torn between anger at the team and Chiva for stealing her prisoner in the first place, but doubly so at Gien Oh for playing her for a fool. However, while it's likely the team has made an enemy, she's willing to put it on hold until the prisoners can get back to Rellex Point.

Chiva is likewise displeased but makes the heroes an offer once he learns of Oh's true nature: Give the android to him and he'll count it as a major favor. He believes her advanced shell might be just what Lord Thrax is looking for—or at least contains tech the Syndicate can mine. If not, the characters now have *two* fairly powerful enemies in the colony and very little to show for it.

Discussions over what to do with Oh may make for an excellent roleplaying opportunity for the characters. She is unquestionably amoral and maybe even evil, but are the characters willing to condemn her to what is surely death at Chiva's hands?

Regardless, unless another fight breaks out between the three factions, the groups can escape before the xerin tribe returns in much greater numbers.

SENTIENTS

★ GARO CHIVA

Garo Chiva is an opportunistic human who discovered he had a natural affinity for cyberware once he got to Irongate. Unfortunately, the skills and facilities available to the cyber chop-shops in Reflex Point aren't quite up to the level of those elsewhere, and his enhancements have exacerbated existing character flaws. Since Chiva was already a hardened criminal and murderer, the end result was one nasty customer.

Those defects aren't as big a drawback on Irongate as they would be back in civilization. Here, they've catapulted him through the ranks of the Machine Syndicate—often over the dead bodies of his rivals. Now, he sees Oh and whatever secret she's hiding as a ticket to the next level of power in the gang.

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d6, Spirit d8, Strength d8, Vigor d8

Skills: Fighting d8, Intimidation d8, Notice d6, Stealth d6, Shooting d8

Cha: -2; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 12 (6)

Hindrances: Greedy (Major), Mean, Vengeful (Major), Vow (Serve Lord Thrax)

Edges: Cyborg

Gear: Body armor (+2), rellium sword (Str+d6), laser pistol (Range 15/30/60, Damage 2d6, RoF 1, AP 2).

Cyberware: Adrenal Surge, 2 × Armor, Filters, Attribute Increase (Str), Trait Bonus (Targeting Eye, +2 Shooting), Vision Enhancement.

★ GIEN OH

Gien Oh's current housing looks like a human female, about 5'6" in height, with brown eyes and short, black hair. Her android form is beyond bleeding edge. Short of highly advanced sensor arrays or direct surgical examination, she is indistinguishable from a normal human. Although Gien Oh appears athletic, she is not particularly physically imposing. She has no tattoos or piercings.

As her artificial intelligence was not developed by another sentient, Gien Oh sometimes has difficulty interacting convincingly with other intelligent beings. The android has no empathy with other creatures, for example. She's not bloodthirsty or cruel per se. She simply places no inherent value on other beings' lives. In most interactions, the android simply seems distant or distracted.

Oh's original programming integrated into her sentience. This manifests as an almost obsessive-compulsive drive to manage inventories and figures. Gien Oh keeps a running track of any supplies, ammunition, fuel, or the like available to her or her partners, often noting when another character is wasteful with a limited resource.



Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d10, Spirit d8, Strength d12, Vigor d10

Skills: Fighting d10, Intimidation d8, Notice d6, Stealth d6, Shooting d8

Cha: +1; **Pace:** 8; **Parry:** 7; **Toughness:** 11 (4)

Hindrances: Greedy (Major), Quirk (Obsessed with inventories), Habit (Minor—No Empathy)

Edges: Ambidextrous, Attractive, Fleet Footed, Level Headed, Two-Fisted.

Gear: Prison jumpsuit.

Cyberware: Adrenal Surge, 2 × Armor, Filters, Attribute Increase (Str), Trait Bonus (Targeting Eye, +2 Shooting), Vision Enhancement.

Special Abilities:

- **Android:** Gien Oh appears to be a human female.
- **Armor +4:** Subdermal fibers.
- **Construct:** +2 to recover from Shaken; does not breathe, immune to poison and disease.
- **Cybernetic Interface:** +4 to Knowledge rolls dealing with electronics and computers.
- **Damage Control:** Ignores all wound penalties, as her advanced systems isolate and reroute vital functions to redundancies. Gien Oh makes “healing” rolls once a day as her internal processes quickly repair her shell.
- **Fearless:** Immune to Fear and Intimidation.
- **Enhanced Sensors:** +2 to Notice rolls and ignores all penalties for illumination.
- **Integrated Lasers:** Each arm contains a concealed laser pistol deployable as a free action (Range 12/24/48, Damage 2d6, RoF 1). The pistols have unlimited shots.
- **Retractable Claws:** Each arm. Str+d6.
- **Targeting Systems:** Negates up to 2 points of Shooting, Fighting, or Throwing penalties.

✦ TARKON SLUHD

Tarkon Sluhd is a cold-blooded killer—and not for the obvious reason. This Saurian was a former assassin for the Invisible Hand who got careless and then caught. In spite of her one mistake, Sluhd is a consummate killer who favors finesse over force.

The Hand cut ties with her on her arrest, so she found herself selling her considerable talents to the highest bidder on Irongate until the Cartel picked up her contract long term. She has a name in Rellex Point as someone to keep happy. Still, Sluhd doesn’t think she’s getting the full respect in her organization due someone of her skill level and reputation. A potential bargaining chip like Oh might be the key to changing that situation.

Attributes: Agility d10, Smarts d8, Spirit d6, Strength d6, Vigor d6

Skills: Climbing d6, Fighting d8, Intimidation d8, Notice d8, Shooting d8, Stealth d8, Streetwise d8, Throwing d6

Cha: 0; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 8 (3)

Hindrances: Vow (Serve the Cartel)

Edges: Alertness, Connections (Cartel), Dodge, First Strike, Marksman, Quick Draw, Thief

Gear: Body armor (+3), blaster pistol (Range 12/24/48, Damage 2d6+2, RoF 1, AP 2), molecular knife (Str+d4, AP 2).

Special Abilities:

- **Natural Weaponry (Bite):** Str+d6.
- **Keen Senses:** Saurians’ tongues can taste the air, giving them +2 to relevant Notice rolls. This stacks with Alertness.
- **Environmental Weakness (Cold):** Saurians suffer a –4 penalty to resist cold environmental effects and suffer +4 damage from cold or ice-based attacks.