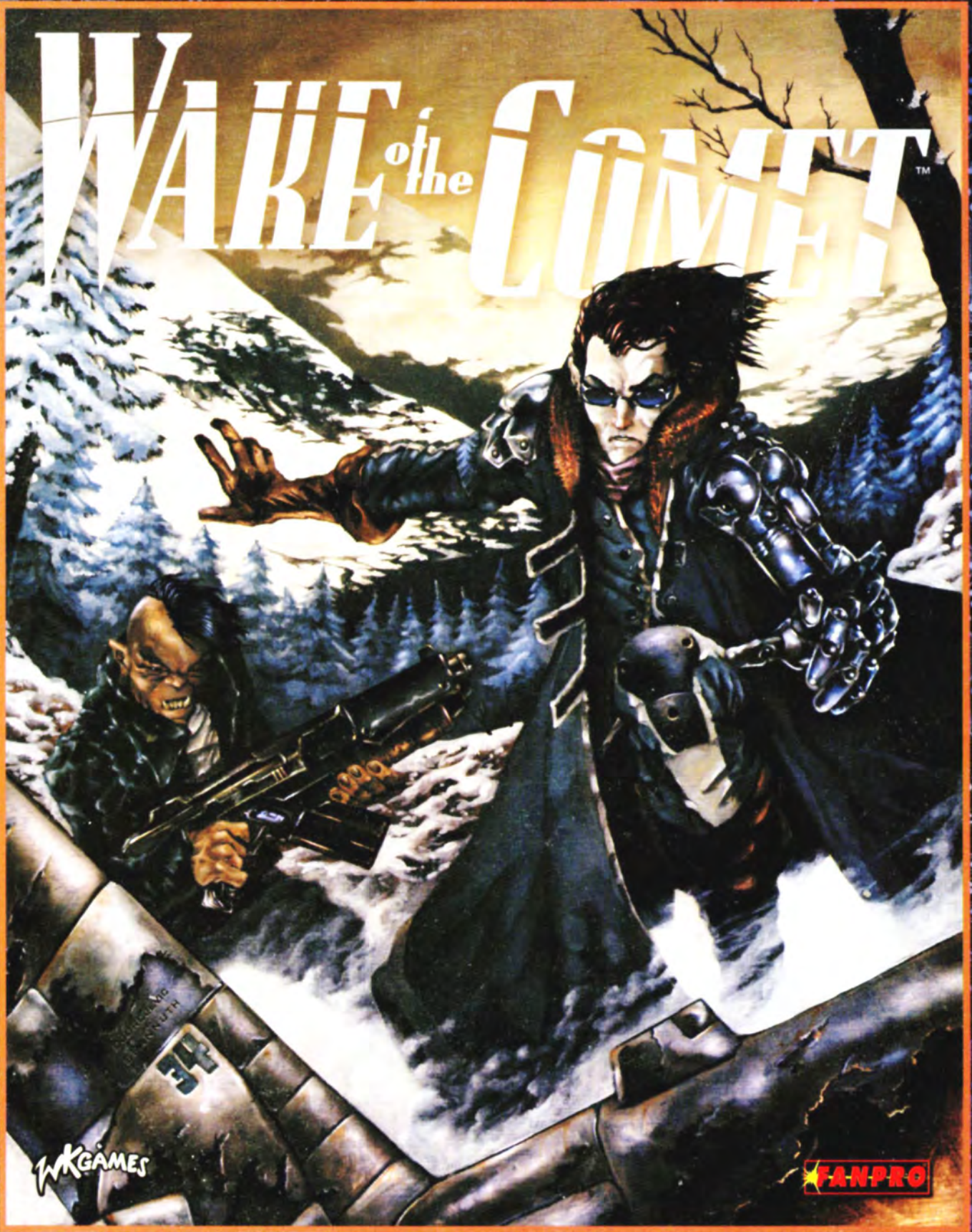


# WAKE of the COMET™



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# WAR of the COMETS™



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# TABLE OF CONTENTS



|                              |    |                                  |  |
|------------------------------|----|----------------------------------|--|
| <b>INTRODUCTION</b>          | 4  | <b>THE PRICE OF LIBERTY</b>      | 59   |
| The Adventures               | 4  | Opening Moves                    | 59   |
| Adventure Structure          | 5  | Preparing to Play                | 60   |
| Gamemastering the Adventures | 5  | World in Vertigo                 | 62   |
| General Adventure Rules      | 6  | Ad Astra                         | 64   |
| <b>THE MESSENGER</b>         | 7  | Down the Well, Into the Valley   | 68   |
| Open Your Eyes               | 7  | Liberation                       | 70   |
| Preparing to Play            | 8  | The Big Easy                     | 74   |
| A Venture                    | 10 | The Yard                         | 75   |
| Shock to the System          | 12 | Picking up the Pieces            | 80   |
| Close to the Edge            | 15 | Player Handouts                  | 83   |
| Going for the One            | 20 |                                  |  |
| Lightning Strikes            | 22 | <b>WAKE OF THE COMET CREDITS</b> |  |
| Masquerade                   | 25 | <b>WRITING</b>                   |  |
| Face to Face                 | 29 | <i>The Messenger</i>             | Brian Schoner                                  |
| Picking up the Pieces        | 31 | <i>The Price of Liberty</i>      | Michelle Lyons and Malik Toms                  |
| <b>CATCH A FALLING STAR</b>  | 33 | <i>Catch a Falling Star</i>      | Davidson Cole, Andy Frades<br>and Rich Tomasso |
| Out of the Dark              | 33 |                                  |  |
| Preparing to Play            | 34 |                                  |  |
| Sundae Treat                 | 36 |                                  |  |
| A Call to the Stars          | 37 | <b>PRODUCT DEVELOPMENT</b>       |  |
| Play It Again, Mr. J         | 42 | Rob Boyle                        |  |
| The Great White North        | 44 | Michael Mulvihill                |  |
| A Spoonful of Sugar          | 46 |                                  |  |
| Too Many Cooks               | 50 | <b>SHADOWRUN LINE DEVELOPER</b>  |  |
| Picking up the Pieces        | 53 | Rob Boyle                        |  |

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# INTRODUCTION

**W**ake of the Comet presents three separate *Shadowrun* roleplaying adventures linked to an ongoing event: the second leg of the megacorp "Probe Race" to reach Halley's Comet.

The return of Halley's Comet to the solar system in the years 2061 and 2062 sparked a resurgence of interest in space. Spurred on by media hype, a race broke out between the megacorps to be the first to have their probe land or fly by the comet, similar to the space race between the US and Russia in the 1960s. But the first leg of the Probe Race stalled when, one by one, each of the highly publicized probes fell victim to sabotage, accidents or unknown mishaps before reaching the comet. Only Yamatetsu's *Gagarin* probe even came close, though contact was mysteriously lost right before the probe came within close sensor range of the comet.

Halley's Comet has made its first pass by the Earth and is now in the process of swinging around the sun. It will make one more pass by the Earth on its way out to deep space once again. The megacorps have not given up on the race yet and are each scrambling to get their probes in place. As they get their probes in position and secure them from sabotage, they also seek ways to undermine their competitors. The stakes are high—their reputations and public image are on the line, and there will be no more chances.

The adventures in *Wake of the Comet* will take the player characters around the world—and above it. From the steamy jungles of French Guiana and the treacherous coasts of Devil's Island, to the lawless wilds of the Manitou Council, and finally to the *Apollo* orbital habitat, Silicon Valley and New Orleans.

## THE ADVENTURES

*The Messenger* takes place in French Guiana, where Proteus is secretly assembling their *Gotterbote* probe. The runners are employed by one Proteus scientist to kidnap a rival—ensuring that his telemetry package will be used onboard the probe instead of another. A simple kidnapping job turns complex when the victim turns out to be important to the plans of the Ragnarok-seeking Winternight cult.

*Catch a Falling Star* takes place when Yamatetsu's *Gagarin* probe—thought lost right before it reached the comet—mysteriously returns to Earth and drops its sensory payload package for pickup, according to its programming. The module misses its target, however, landing somewhere in the lands claimed by the secessionist anti-technology Manitou Council, on the verge of civil war with the Algonkian-Manitou Council government. The runners must beat Yamatetsu to the module—and deal with the neo-Luddites who rescue it first.

In the final adventure, *The Price of Liberty*, the runners are hired by an Ares programmer with a grudge—and the capability to remove Ares from the probe race. First the runners are sent to the *Apollo* habitat to unwittingly help him disable one of Ares' *Velox* probes, then they are hired to extract him from Ares's over-protective clutches in Silicon Valley. But the programmer gets greedy, and when he auctions the capability to remove Ares's second *Velox* probe from the race, the runners are faced with a choice of which side to take.

## PREPARING THE ADVENTURES

*Wake of the Comet* is intended for use with *Shadowrun, Third Edition (SR3)*. The *Shadowrun Gamemaster Screen* is recommended, since it contains all of the necessary tables organized for easy reference and is accompanied by the *Critters* book, which provides more detailed information on the abilities of various paranatural creatures. Also recommended are the following *Shadowrun* books:

- *Year of the Comet*, which details the first leg of the Probe Race as well as other events that rock the world in the years 2061 and 2062. Of particular interest is the *Return of the Comet* chapter, which details the various megacorps involved in the Probe Race and their launch facilities.

- *Shadows of North America* provides an overview of the nations of North America in 2062, including the Algonkian-Manitou Council, California Free State and other locales that appear in *Wake of the Comet*. Gamemasters may find this a useful reference for background information on these areas.

- *Target: Wastelands* includes a chapter on shadowrunning in space and the different orbital stations that shadowrunners might visit, such as *Apollo*. It also contains rules and game effects for operating in space and zero gravity.

Gamemasters may also want access to the other advanced rulebooks of *Shadowrun: Magic in the Shadows* (magic, meta-magic, spirits), *Man & Machine* (cyberware, bioware, and other implants), *Matrix* (decking and computers), *Rigger 3* (vehicles and drones) and *The Cannon Companion* (weapons and gear).

## ADVENTURE STRUCTURE

The adventures in *Wake of the Comet* are each a self-contained story with connections to the overall plot of the series. Generally, the adventure starts when an employer (a "Mr. Johnson") hires the player characters to carry out a particular job. The job may be a simple one, such as breaking into a corporate office to steal some valuable data. Alternatively, it may be quite complicated, such as traveling to an out-of-the-way place in the world, breaking into a high-security arcology, kidnapping a scientist and then babysitting him for a week in a hut with no water and no electricity while corporate security scours the area looking for him. Oftentimes shadowruns appear deceptively simple, but aren't, or simple runs are just part of a larger plot of which the shadowrunners aren't aware.

Adventures in this book are presented in the same basic format. They all begin with a *Preparing the Adventure* section, which contains background information, a synopsis of the plot, a timeline of events, and any other information the gamemaster may need to get things started.

Each adventure ends with a section called *Picking Up the Pieces*. It includes all the material for concluding the adventure and wrapping up any loose ends. It also has some important subsections:

- *It's a Wrap* covers the potential repercussions of the adventure, lingering questions, future developments, plot hooks, and other things that wrap up the adventure (or explain why certain things are left hanging).

- *Awarding Karma* provides guidelines for awarding Karma to the player characters based on their performance in the adventure.

- *Legwork* has all the information the player characters may be able to discover about various things through research and their contacts during the adventure, collected for easy reference.

- *Cast of Shadows* presents descriptions, background, and game statistics for the non-player characters that appear in more than one scenario or are very important in the adventure.

## SCENARIOS

Between the beginning and end of each adventure are several distinct encounters, ranging from important events in the story to particular places where the action may take place. These encounters are called *scenarios* and outline both the most likely sequence of events and how to handle unexpected turns and twists that inevitably crop up. Each scenario contains the following subsections, providing gamemasters will all the information necessary to run the scene.

- *What's Up, Chummer?* provides a quick synopsis of the scenario's action, allowing the gamemaster to get a feel for the encounter at a glance.

- *Tell It To Them Straight* is written to be read out loud to the players, describing what their characters experience upon entering the scenario. The gamemaster should feel free to modify the narrative as much as desired to suit the group and the situation, since characters may arrive at the scenario by different means or under different circumstances than the text assumes.

- The *Hooks* section describes the mood and helps set the stage for the encounter, pointing out different "staging tips" for the gamemaster to help make the scene come alive for the players. It also points out different plot twists or hidden things in the encounter that the gamemaster needs to keep in mind.

- *Behind the Scenes* covers the bulk of the scenario, describing what's happening, what the non-player characters are doing and how they will react to the player characters' actions, and so forth. It also covers the setting of the encounter, going over environmental conditions and other properties of the location and providing any necessary maps, descriptions of important items, and so forth.

- *Pushing the Envelope* looks at ways to make the encounter more challenging for experienced or powerful characters and other ways the gamemaster can add some "extra spice" to the scenario to liven it up, if need be.

- *Debugging* offers solutions to potential problems that may crop up during the encounter. While it's impossible to foresee everything that a group of player characters might do, this sec-



tion tries to anticipate any major problems and offer suggestions for handling them.

## GAMEMASTERING THE ADVENTURES

Gamemastering is more of an art than a science, and every gamemaster does things a bit differently. Follow your own personal style when it comes to preparing and running the adventures in this book and do whatever you feel is best to provide the best *Shadowrun* game you can for your players. This section offers some guidelines you may find useful in preparing to run *Wake of the Comet* (or any *Shadowrun* adventure).

### STEP ONE: READ THE ADVENTURE

Carefully read the adventure from beginning to end. This will familiarize you with the overall plot and what happens in each adventure, what the characters need to accomplish and potential pitfalls along the way. That way, if something different happens, you won't be caught off guard and you can adapt things smoothly.

### STEP TWO: ASSESS THE ADVENTURE

Once you've read over the adventure (or while you're reading it, for that matter), you may decide that certain parts don't work for you or don't suit your *Shadowrun* campaign. By all means, feel free to change them as needed to make the adventure more enjoyable for you and your players. Consider carefully any impact your changes may have on later scenarios or possible outcomes.

### STEP THREE: KNOW THE CHARACTERS

Get copies of the characters' record sheets for your reference and have basic information about their important abilities handy so you can refer to it during play. Also go over the char-

acters and keep their abilities in mind when reading through and preparing the adventures. While every effort has been taken to cover potential character actions, you know your characters and players better than we do, so you're better able to anticipate their actions during the adventure and be prepared for them.

### STEP FOUR: TAKE NOTES

Take notes for yourself while reading through the adventures that you can refer to later on. Possible things to note include: major plot points (so you can see them all at a glance), the names of various non-player characters, possible problems you notice, situations where you think a particular character can shine, and other things you'll want to keep in mind while running the adventure. Take notes during the adventure as well, so you can remember important things that happened and keep them consistent in future adventures.

### STEP FIVE: DON'T PANIC!

Gamemastering involves juggling a lot of different things. Sometimes you drop the ball and forget something or you just make a mistake. It happens, don't worry about it. Nobody is perfect all of the time and everybody makes mistakes. Just pick up from there and move on. Your players will understand and forget about it once you get back into the action.

## GENERAL ADVENTURE RULES

Published *Shadowrun* adventures use the rules presented in *Shadowrun, Third Edition (SR3)* and various sourcebooks for the game. Standard rules such as Success Tests, the Rules of One and Six, Perception Tests, Negotiation Tests, and the more common mechanics are described in *SR3* and are not repeated in this book.

### NON-PLAYER CHARACTERS

Non-player characters (NPCs) are essential to any adventure. They are the allies, antagonists and background characters in the adventure that interact with the player characters. NPCs in this book have already been created and can be found in the *Behind the Scenes* sections of individual scenarios in which they appear or in the *Cast of Shadows* in the back of the adventure, if they appear in more than one scenario.

The NPCs in this book should generally stand up to the average player character, but may need some adjustment to suit a particular group of characters, especially a more experienced and powerful group. The adventures and NPC descriptions offer tips on adjusting the NPCs to suit the abilities of the characters in your group. Take the player characters' abilities into considerable when assessing the NPCs in this book, and modify them accordingly.

All NPCs are given Karma Pool (p. 246, *SR3*) and Professional Rating (p. 248, *SR3*) to help level them out against player characters. If this isn't enough, the gamemaster may wish to consider using the rules for creating prime runners (p. 83, *SRComp*) to determine the general level of the NPCs against the player characters and adjust them accordingly.

# THE MESSENGER



## OPEN YOUR EYES: A PROLOGUE

"Herr Verdan, I cannot believe that you are permitting this travesty to go forward." Gunther Hoff paced rapidly back and forth in front of Emil Verdan's desk, ignoring the irritated looks his superior gave him. Three steps to the wall, a swift pivot, then three steps back to the desk. "Has this man—" Hoff waved his hand agitatedly at the closed door, as if to point through it at the scoundrel in question—"so seduced you with his overblown reputation that you are ignoring the most basic principles of science? Open your eyes!"

Verdan stifled a sigh before responding. These top-flight engineers were always the same: brilliant men capable of changing the world, but they still behaved like spoiled children fighting over who Mama liked best. "The science is sound, Gunther," he said patiently. "Doctor Hausmann's payload package has been put through the entire gamut of simulation testing—"

"Simulations? Bah!"

"—and it has consistently provided results well within the desired parameters."

"A child with a wrist computer could meet those parameters," Hoff sneered. "In the same mass and volume, my instrument cluster almost doubles the data throughput of Hausmann's, covers a much broader frequency spectrum, and also sends back chromatography data—"

"Your instrument cluster, need I remind you, failed three of the nine basic telemetry tests."

"That was a defective circuit!" Hoff slapped his hands on Verdan's desk in frustration. "You and I both know that once I replaced the core module, my payload outperformed Hausmann's in every test. I cannot be held responsible for a hardware failure!"

"We can't afford a failure of any kind, Gunther." Verdan steepled his fingers on the desk in front of him and looked Hoff straight in the eye. "This is our last chance at getting a good look at the comet, and if it fails for any reason, Proteus will have wasted billions of nuyen and tens of thousands of man-hours. Your instrumentation may well be better than Hausmann's, but you're pushing the systems too hard. I'd rather have a 100 percent chance of getting his data than a 75 percent chance of getting yours. I wish I could tell you otherwise, but the fact remains that we have only one chance to get this right."

"That's exactly my point." Hoff leaned over the desk. "Maybe Hausmann's payload is more reliable, though I doubt it. But what of the fact that none of us have even gotten a solid look at his design? Even if we don't use my payload, I'm sure some of the instruments that I've designed can be incorporated into Hausmann's with a minimum of trouble. But he won't even let us see a schematic of his design, much less the actual instruments!"





If something does go awry, and he isn't immediately available to fix it, none of us would have the slightest idea how to proceed. How will we explain *that* to the board, eh?"

Verdan tossed his hands up in exasperation. "I know what you're saying, Gunther. I've asked him repeatedly to consult with the rest of the team, but you know how temperamental he can be. If I prod him further, he'll walk right off the project, and we simply can't risk that at this late date. The Regional Director himself assigned Hausmann to this project, and if he doesn't get what he wants ... " He let that thought remain unspoken. "I'm sorry. I know as well as anyone how much you've contributed to this team, and I appreciate your position, but Doctor Hausmann's payload is going aboard the *Götterbote*, and I'm afraid that's all there is to it. Please help him in whatever way you can, and if he won't accept your help, then all I can ask you to do is have patience."

Hoff hunched over Verdan's desk for a few moments longer, then whirled around and stalked to the office door with what Verdan could only call a snarl. He looked back as he opened the door, as if to make another biting comment, then shook his head and seethed off down the hall.

\*\*\*\*\*

Gunther Hoff could barely contain his anger as he stormed back to the lab. *Stupidity. Foolishness. Madness*, he thought to himself. *How can they entrust a project of this magnitude to one man, without any accountability whatsoever? What would they do if Hausmann was hit by a bus? No one else could possibly operate his instruments, not that they're worth a damn anyway. If he were to disappear tomorrow—*

Hoff stopped dead in the middle of the hallway, nearly causing the intern walking behind him to spill a full cup of steaming soykaf on herself. Ignoring her glare as she stalked past, Hoff let his thoughts race down the dangerous turn they had just taken. *If he were to disappear, there would be no way to use his payload on Götterbote. They would have to retest the other designs to find the best choice, and mine will not fail again. Proteus wants the best data possible, and it's my responsibility to get it to them.*

He blinked a few times, standing there alone in the white-paneled hallway, one hand opening and closing nervously. *Am I really considering such a course of action? This could cost me my career. Am I serious enough to do this?* After a moment, he glanced down at his hand and slowly, deliberately, let it close into a fist.

Yes, he thought. Yes, I am.

## PREPARING TO PLAY

*The Messenger* is a linear, scenario-driven adventure. The gamemaster should read it thoroughly beforehand so that he or she knows what to expect and can improvise if the players divert from the storyline.

*The Messenger* is assumed to take place sometime during the second half of the megacorp probe race to reach Halley's Comet (see p. 13, *Year of the Comet*), though it can really take place anytime in the year 2061 or the first few months of 2062.

## BACKGROUND STORY

Proteus AG is one of the smaller megacorps with a significant presence in the space race. While its growth has been phenomenal, the corp relies more upon the abilities of a few scientific geniuses than upon the huge staffs utilized by the other space-oriented corps. Gunther Hoff is one of those geniuses. A brilliant telemetry specialist, Hoff has developed an extraordinarily compact, powerful and sensitive scientific payload for *Götterbote* (God-messenger), the probe Proteus plans to send to examine Halley's Comet.

Unfortunately, Hoff's payload is not going to be loaded aboard *Götterbote*, because Hoff is only the *second* most brilliant telemetry specialist working on the *Götterbote* project. The most brilliant is the arrogant young project lead, Heinrich Hausmann, who has developed his own payload package and refuses to let Hoff offer any input on it or even examine the instruments. Hoff has, however, seen the test readouts from Hausmann's design, and knows that it is far inferior to his own. Hausmann's reputation is such, however, that no one else on the staff will listen to Hoff's complaints, leaving Hoff with nothing to do except brood over how Hausmann's arrogance will cost Hoff a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity and possibly ruin a multi-billion-nuyen project. Unless, that is, something were to *happen* to Hausmann before the launch ... Convincing himself that he is acting for the good of the corporation, Hoff hires the runners to kidnap Hausmann and keep him incommunicado until after the launch of the *Götterbote*.

Both Hoff and Hausmann are stationed at Proteus' partially-submerged arkoblock at Devil's Island, French Guiana. Hoff can arrange to transport the runners to Guiana and provide a small safe house in Kourou on the Guianan mainland for their use. The runners may try to grab Hausmann from the arkoblock complex itself, probably during his morning jog, or they may rely on Hoff to give them an easier opportunity. No matter where they make the abduction attempt, Hausmann himself provides little resistance. The runners, however, must contend with a strange, unmarked drone which attempts to defend Hausmann.

Once Hausmann is abducted, things get interesting. Obviously, Proteus AG makes extensive efforts to track down their star scientist, but the runners have far more dangerous enemies to worry about. Unbeknownst to anyone at Proteus, Hausmann is actually a member of the Winternight cult (see sidebar), which sees Halley's Comet as an ideal means of achieving their desired end—the end of all life on Earth. Years of targeted scientific training and referrals from other highly placed Winternight puppets were carefully designed to put Hausmann in a crucial role in Proteus' Halley probe projects. His mission is to place a specially designed Winternight drone into the *Götterbote*'s payload just before launch and guide the probe to a safe landing on the comet. Once the landing is complete, Hausmann will deploy the probe, carefully position it on the surface of the comet and then detonate the probe's own payload: a small but powerful nuclear bomb, designed to knock the comet off its predicted course and send it hurtling directly towards the Earth. A direct hit from Halley might not destroy all of mankind, but it would certainly go a long way towards achieving Winternight's goals.





HI



Winternight needs Hausmann to be back at work in time for the launch, but the group does not want to risk revealing its existence. Using ritual sorcery, or perhaps more mundane means, they locate Hausmann and tip off Proteus AG and the local authorities, who strike quickly at the runners in an attempt to get Hausmann back. If the players avoid this, their trouble is still not over.

For some time, Hausmann had suspected that the overly ambitious Hoff might try something underhanded, so his cohorts in Winternight know whom to suspect when Hausmann is kidnapped. Winternight's local cell breaks into Hoff's home and coerces him to reveal what he has done. A few days after the kidnapping, the runners receive a call from an apparently normal Hoff. He simply says that his plans have "changed," and that he wants to meet the runners immediately in order to pay what he owes them and secure Hausmann's release.

When the runners arrive at the meet, "Hoff" is actually a toxic Raven shaman named Anderson, the leader of Hausmann's Winternight cell; he has disguised himself as Hoff via a Physical Mask spell. The real Hoff is nowhere to be seen, and several other Winternight operatives and combat drones are concealed nearby in case things go sour. The shaman will pay the runners off and reclaim Hausmann peacefully if he can, or attempt to take him by force if necessary.

Regardless of what happens at the meet, clues direct the runners back to Hoff's home, where they discover their employer's dead body—Anderson and company murdered him after learning what they wanted to know and have set the runners up to take the fall for the crime. The runners will also discover a recording Hoff was making in his diary when Winternight arrived; the video shows Hoff's murder clearly, and also provides several clues regarding the cult's plans. The runners may not know exactly what Winternight is up to, but should realize that Very Bad Things will happen if the scheduled launch of the *Götterbote* probe goes forward as planned.

In the end, the runners must find a way to stop the *Götterbote* launch and (potentially) save the world.

### THINGS TO KNOW

Deckers may find themselves with little to do during this adventure; you may wish to give a player whose main character is a decker the chance to play an alternate character on this run. A rigger (if the team doesn't already contain one) or a magician would be good choices, but any desired character type should be viable. Alternately, the gamemaster can incor-

porate some extra difficulties into the adventure that a decker is required to resolve.

All the details regarding this adventure's plot and adversaries are contained in the following pages. Gamemasters may find the rules for underwater combat in *Cannon Companion* useful during certain scenarios, and the rules for drones in *Rigger 3* will also prove helpful.

## A VENTURE

### WHAT'S UP, CHUMMER?

The runners are contacted by an anonymous Gunther Hoff, who wants to hire them to abduct Hausmann and keep him safely out of circulation until the *Götterbote*'s launch date. Hagglng ensues.

### TELL IT TO THEM STRAIGHT

It sounded like a standard piece of junk mail at first, but then you noticed that it was sent from an anonymous Shadowland email address. After reading it over with that in mind, it sounds like a potentially interesting job offer.

"TRY A WORKING VACATION IN THE TROPICS!" the spam said, glittering with animated images. "Talented, daring individuals wanted for a profitable island adventure. Want to delve into local industry and spend time with friendly locals in a quiet neighborhood? Then this is the 'job' for you! Travel, room and

board paid, plus flat fee and necessary expenses. Reply for confidential details." So you replied, and after exchanging a few more messages that hinted at the job without saying anything illegal, the Johnson on the other end finally agreed to an online meet to hammer out the details.

So here you are, virtually lounging around in a virtual conference room waiting for your virtual employer to get off his virtual hoop and show up. It's

a no-frills "room" with blank walls and no windows, which makes the wait even more boring; the Johnson paid for a pretty secure server, but apparently didn't want to spend any extra money on the décor. Finally, another icon resolves itself, a generic, faceless, humanoid persona with no distinguishing characteristics. Just about what you expected.

"Thank you for coming," he says. His voice is deep and dry, and you think you detect a trace of an accent—German, or maybe Russian? "Let us get directly to business. I require a group of persons with your particular talents to kidnap a corporate scientist in Kourou, French Guiana. He must be abducted within one week and must be kept out of circulation until ten days from today. I do not wish him to be harmed, and

### WINTERNIGHT

Winternight is a cult with spiritual beliefs based in Nordic mythology. This cult seeks to bring about Ragnarok—the end of the world—so that Winternight's members can earn their place in the pantheon of Nordic deities that will once again rule the Earth. Winternight is organized into clandestine cells that each work towards this task. Many of its members are toxic shamans, followers of Raven or Wolf. The cult makes heavy use of custom-built, untraceable drones and BTL-programmed deep-cover agents. It avoids using the Matrix, considering it a tool of the trickster god Loki.

Winternight was described in detail in the (now out of print) *Threats* sourcebook.



there will be no ransom demands or exchanges that you need to be concerned with. Ten days from now, you may simply let him go. I can provide you with transportation to and from the area, information regarding the target's movements and whereabouts and a secure place to keep the target if you so desire. What would your fee be for such an assignment?"

### HOOKS

Hoff's initial speech sounds very professional and businesslike; it should, since he's been carefully rewriting and practicing it for days and is actually *reading* it to the runners so he doesn't mess anything up. Once he's finished his script, he will have to improvise the rest of his answers, and will be somewhat less confident. There should be a noticeable change in his attitude once the runners start asking questions. Hoff has never dealt with shadowrunners before, so the characters may be able to take some advantage of his naiveté. He is also nervous, and somewhat morally conflicted about what he is trying to do. He is an intelligent and cautious man, however, and will not risk compromising his own identity or subjecting himself to later blackmail from the runners.

### BEHIND THE SCENES

Hoff really has no idea how much it will cost to hire the runners, which is why he's asking them for their price first. He's willing to expend most of his savings on this mission, since he feels sure it will make his career. Given the expenses he'll incur in getting the runners to Guiana and renting the safe house, the absolute maximum he can afford to pay is 80,000¥ for the entire mission. He hopes that the mission will cost half that amount or less and will try to haggle the runners down if they ask for more than 40,000¥. Hoff's Negotiation skill is 4; however, add +1 to all of his target numbers when bargaining with the runners because of his unfamiliarity with what their services are really worth. He offers to pay 10 percent of the money up front (negotiable up to 20 percent), another 30 percent when the runners arrive in Guiana, and the remainder at the end of the ten-day period. As always, feel free to adjust these amounts to be more in line with your campaign's economy.

Once the financial arrangements are agreed upon, Hoff will transfer the down payment to the runners along with an information file on their target, Heinrich Hausmann. The file contains photographs and a physical description of Hausmann, as well as his approximate work schedule. The package also includes rough maps of the Proteus arkoblock floors where Hausmann lives and works, as well as a map of the facility's exterior. (See *Close to the Edge*, p. 15, for more information on the arkoblock complex.)

Naturally, Hoff does not reveal his own name, or why he wants Hausmann abducted; he merely advises the runners of the desired time frame for the kidnapping and provides an emergency contact number they can use to reach him (a disposable, audio-only portable phone he purchased just for the run).

As far as the travel arrangements go, Hoff knows nothing of smuggling routes or the other complexities of international travel for shadowrunners. He plans to simply purchase standard commercial airline tickets from the runners' home city to

Cayenne, the capital of French Guiana; he will have a rental van waiting for them in Cayenne, with which they can drive the 40 kilometers along the coast to their destination in Kourou. He assumes that the runners will have whatever false documentation they may need for the trip.

If the runners want to make any more sophisticated travel plans than this, they will be largely on their own; Hoff will do what he can on his end, but he has no real contacts in the Guianan shadow community (such as it is). The runners also don't have a great deal of time to make alternate travel plans, since they only have a week to get to Kourou, develop a plan of attack and make the extraction.

Hoff's plan, naive as it is, should actually be fairly safe since French Guiana is not a particularly security-conscious nation. (The only significant national industry revolves around Saeder-Krupp's and Proteus's space programs, which are responsible for their own security.) As long as the runners don't do anything foolish (and what are the odds of that?), they should have no trouble reaching their destination, even on a commercial flight.

Of course, unless they have some very good documentation, they'll have a very hard time bringing weapons aboard the plane. Any North American airport large enough to have a regularly scheduled flight to French Guiana will scan all passengers with both a magnetic anomaly detector and a chem sniffer, both Rating 8. (See pp. 237 and 292, *SR3*, and p. 90, *Cannon Companion*, for details on weapons detection.) Also, anyone with dangerous-looking cyberware, or even just a bad attitude, will probably be subjected to a pat-down search by airport security.

Weaponry may be the runners' biggest worry, since they probably have no contacts in Guiana with which to get new armaments. Some inquiries on Shadowland or among well-traveled contacts, however, will enable the runners to make a connection. A local smuggler named Bala is willing to sell them part of a shipment of illegal weapons originally intended for Amazonian revolutionaries in Belém. Her selection is fairly small (nothing with an Availability higher than 4 and no heavy or special weapons) and her prices are high (double the cost, including Street Index, for all her weapons), but it's probably the best deal the runners will find on such short notice. If the runners agree, she will take their order and suggest that the deal be made at a small fishing village about thirty minutes outside of Cayenne, along the road to Kourou. She will meet the runners at the village's dock shortly after dark on the day of their arrival in Guiana (see *Shock to the System*, p. 12).

### PUSHING THE ENVELOPE

This is a meet, not a fight, and the runners will be in plenty of trouble soon enough. If you want to spice it up, perhaps Hoff commits an etiquette blunder and invites another team to the virtual meeting at the same time, expecting the two teams to bid against each other if they want the job. Or perhaps the meeting server isn't as secure as he thought, and word of the run leaks out ... perhaps falling into the hands of an old enemy of the runners who hopes to interfere with their plans.



## DEBUGGING

If the runners want significantly more money than Hoff has to offer, it's probably safe to promise it to them (after a lot of pleading and hand-wringing from Hoff, of course). Hoff can scrounge up some additional cash from his corporate savings account, and with all the mayhem that's to come, the runners may not be able to collect the last of their pay anyway.

The runners may balk at Hoff's poorly arranged travel plans. If they're worried about a trap, point out how unlikely it is that anyone would fly them halfway across the world in order to capture or kill them. You may want to let them handle their own travel arrangements if their worries about Hoff might lead to them to pass up the run; smugglers from the Caribbean League would certainly be willing to make the trip, albeit for a fairly high price.

If the schedule of the run presents problems, you can always fudge the launch dates to give the runners more (or less) time. Hoff wants Hausmann captured at least three days before the launch, to allow enough time for his own payload package to be swapped in. Hausmann must remain incommunicado until after the launch, when the payload is safely on its way to Proteus' orbital facility. The launch is initially scheduled for ten days after Hoff initially contacts the runners, but feel free to move those dates around if it fits the story better.

## SHOCK TO THE SYSTEM

### WHAT'S UP, CHUMMER?

In this scenario, the runners travel to French Guiana and begin making their plans for the abduction and "storage" of their target. They may also run afoul of the greedy gun-runner who is supplying them with local weaponry.

### TELL IT TO THEM STRAIGHT

For just a moment, as the plane door opens, you're sure the pilot managed to land underwater. Then you realize that the hot, wet wave that just came rolling into the cabin isn't water, just incredibly humid air. The light reflecting from the faded concrete runway is enough to make you squint through your mirrorshades, not that you could make out much through the rippling heat waves anyway. Well, regardless, somewhere down there is a van with your name on it, which will eventually lead to a credstick with your name on it. Time to get moving.

Your entire body breaks out into a sweat as you make your way down the stairway into the massive oven that is Rochambeau Airport. This place is so fraggin' hot, it's no wonder the city is named Cayenne. You hate to imagine what it's like in the summer ...

### When the runners arrive for their meet with Bala, the gun-runner, read the following:

Squinting in the fading light as you steer the van down the two-lane coast road, you start to wonder if you've already passed the village where Bala wanted to meet. Then you see the abandoned truck she told you to look for; it's an ancient, overgrown plastic hulk, all the glass long since broken and the metal rusted away. The grass along the shoulder is slightly

shorter here than it is elsewhere; you assume this is the "road" she referred to and turn the van onto it, threading your way among the vine-covered trees that line the highway.

After a minute or so, a few buildings come into sight—a very few. When Bala described this village as "two huts and a dog," she wasn't exaggerating by much. The whole population of the place could probably fit in two good-sized Barrens apartments with enough room left over for a pack of devil rats. The villagers, dirt-poor locals by the looks of them, stare apathetically at you as you arrive. A quick look at the village's rickety dock makes it easy to see that Bala has already arrived: the boat waiting out there is old and rundown, but it's still probably worth more than the village and everything in it.

Bala herself is a slender but muscular human woman, forty-something years old, dressed in faded combat fatigues with long, grimy auburn hair and a face pockmarked with tiny scars. She doesn't appear to be carrying any weapons, but the ork and the dwarf behind her are armed for bear. She gives you a once-over before jerking her head towards the rear of her boat, where you can dimly make out a number of crates covered with oilcloth. "Let's get this over with," she says. "You and you, come with Ebaninho and I; the rest of you stay here with Paco." The ork—Paco, you assume—grins a broken-tusked grin at you over his AK-97.

### HOOKS

While most of French Guiana will seem old-fashioned, even primitive to the runners, try to emphasize the curious mixture of high- and low-tech that characterizes Kourou. Massive radio telescopes, top-drawer hotels and bleeding-edge research facilities coexist side by side with street-corner craft stalls, dilapidated shacks and decrepit shrimp fisheries. And of course, it's brutally hot and humid.

The runners are also far from the places and faces that they have come to rely on, and they don't really know how street life in Guiana works. Bala and her crew hold all the cards in their meeting with the PCs; make sure the players know it. She is tough and confident and only gambles in a situation where she knows the odds are in her favor.

### BEHIND THE SCENES

Assuming the characters take the flight that Hoff has arranged for them, they arrive in the port city of Cayenne in the late afternoon of the fourth day before the deadline for the kidnapping. Unless they're particularly aggressive or sporting obviously combat-oriented cyberware, customs in Cayenne should be a joke; the officers here think that if anyone was allowed on the plane by UCAS authorities, they're unlikely to present a threat here.

### Cayenne

Cayenne, Guiana's capital, is a crowded city of about 50,000 people, full of attractive (if somewhat archaic) colonial buildings. The streets are two lanes at best and few of the buildings are more than three stories tall. Its only significant modern facilities are the international airport where the runners arrive and the massive aerospace complex that Novatech is

building outside of town. Unless the runners are fond of botanical gardens, there's really not much here for them to do. Most likely, they'll pick up the van Hoff has reserved for them (an aging but reliable VW Superkombi III commuter model, see p. 171, R3) and head up the coast towards Kourou. The trip takes a little over an hour.

### Kourou

The town of Kourou, while smaller than Cayenne, is considerably more modernized. The local headquarters of Saeder-Krupp dominates the town center. The area within a few blocks of the S-K building is relatively clean and prosperous, as it provides housing, shopping and entertainment for the corporate employees (and the occasional tourist). Anything beyond that area is run-down and poverty-stricken. Proteus' employees generally meet all their shopping and recreational needs within the arkoblock, and rarely even see Kourou proper.

### The Safe House

The safe house Hoff has rented for the runners used to be one of a series of bungalows in an upscale tourist resort. The resort went out of business years ago, and most of the bungalows have had their interior walls knocked out for use as makeshift warehouses. This one is still intact, a one-story apartment with boarded-up windows, threadbare carpeting and little or no furniture. The area around the bungalow is lightly wooded and overgrown with tall grass. Most of the other buildings in the complex are some distance away, with none in a direct line of sight. Hoff has stocked the bungalow with a week's worth of prepackaged foods and bottled water, as well as a prepaid portable phone set up to accept incoming calls only. He has also provided a small, portable generator and a chemical toilet, since neither the plumbing nor the electricity in the building is working.

### The Meet

If the runners arranged to buy guns from Bala, they arrive at the village where they will be meeting her about half an hour after leaving Cayenne. When they arrive at the dock, the smuggler will only permit one or two of the runners aboard her boat to examine the guns. The rest must remain on the dock, under the watchful eye (and gun-sights) of one of her crew. If the runners balk at this, Bala smirks and explains that she can't afford to take the risk of trusting the runners; they could be thieves, undercover cops or anything else for all she knows.

Once the runners have been split up, she will let the characters aboard her ship examine the weapons. They are used but in good working order. Before handing the guns over, however, she will demand double the agreed-upon price from the runners, blaming it on "an unexpected business expense." She figures that the runners are foreigners with no local friends and that they're most likely unarmed (otherwise, why would they be buying guns from her?). The extortion plan should be fairly safe.

The characters are in a bad situation here, split up and probably outgunned. If they can get the guns away from Bala and her crew, the smugglers will probably be no match for a team of experienced shadowrunners, but Bala's crew has the drop on them. The weapons they are here to buy are not loaded (the ammunition is stored in separate crates from the guns), and Bala and her crew are ready for trouble. Bala isn't carrying a weapon but she has a sawed-off shotgun hidden near the crates, which she'll pull out in case of trouble.

The characters' best bet is probably to pay the extra money, or as much of it as they





can. If the runners seem particularly dangerous (i.e., they significantly outnumber her crew, have obvious combat cyberware or weapons with them or have an obvious magician among them), Bala will be willing to accept the original price, after a lot of haggling. Otherwise, she won't settle for anything less than double her fee (or as much money as the runners have, if they can convince her they don't have the full amount). If the runners refuse to pay, she and her crew will simply escort them off the boat at gunpoint; she gains nothing by killing the runners.

If a fight does break out, the villagers will take cover in their huts and stay there, since they have no interest in helping either side. If the characters win, the boat (treat it as an unarmed Blohm & Voss River Commander, pp. 161–162, R3) may prove useful during the rest of the adventure, if they have someone to pilot it and can find someplace to keep it. The smugglers also have a prize weapon in the hold, on hand for emergencies: a spike disposable rocket launcher (p. 27, CC) with an anti-vehicular rocket or two.

### Bala

Bala is a smuggler's daughter and has been running contraband all her life, since the days when Amazonia was still Brazil. She started out as an idealistic kid, trying to help supply the Amazonian resistance with what it needed to fight back against the government; now she's bitter and disillusioned, and her only concern is looking out for herself.

| B | Q | S | C | I | W | E | R |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 4 | 4 | 4 | 4 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 4 |

**INIT:** 4 + 1D6

**Dice Pools:** Combat 6

**Karma Pool/Professional Rating:** 3/3

**Race:** Human

**Active Skills:** Clubs 4, Edged Weapons 4, Etiquette 3 (Smuggler 5), Intimidation 4, Leadership 5, Motorboat 5, Motorboat B/R 4, Negotiation 5, Pistols 4, Shotguns 4

**Knowledge Skills:** Smuggling Routes 6

**Weapons:** Sawed-off Remington 990 [Shotgun, SA, 6S (slug), 8(m)]

Range (TN): 0–10 (4), 11–20 (5), 21–50 (6), 51–100 (9)  
Knife (4L)

**Armor:** Secure Ultra-Vest (3/2)

### Ebaninho

Ebaninho (eh-bah-NEEN-yu) is a young dwarf with a bad attitude and the hardware to back it up. Like Bala, he is originally from Amazonia, but unlike her, he never had any illusions that running guns was anything other than a source of money. He's been working with Bala for about six months now, but hasn't developed any particular loyalty to her.

| B | Q | S | C | I | W | E    | R     |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|------|-------|
| 7 | 4 | 5 | 2 | 4 | 6 | 4.45 | 4 (5) |

**INIT:** 4 + 1D6 (5 + 2D6)

**Dice Pools:** Combat 7

**Karma Pool/Professional Rating:** 2/3

**Race:** Dwarf

**Active Skills:** Cyber-Implant Combat 5, Etiquette 2 (Smuggler 4), Intimidation 4, Motorboat 3, Motorboat B/R 3, Pistols 4, Submachine Guns 5

**Knowledge Skills:** Smuggling Routes 4

**Weapons:** Beretta Model 70 [SMG, BF/FA, 6M, 35(c) with 2 extra clips, laser sight, sound suppressor]

Range (TN): 0–10 (3), 11–40 (4), 41–80 (5), 81–150 (8)  
Browning Max-Power [Heavy Pistol, SA, 9M, 10(c)]

Range (TN): 0–5 (4), 6–20 (5), 21–40 (6), 41–60 (9)  
Retractable Spur (5M)

**Cyberware:** Boosted Reflexes (2), Retractable Spur

**Armor:** Secure Ultra-Vest (3/2)

### Paco

Paco is an ork, originally from Aztlan, who fell into crime at a young age. He was a pirate crewman in the Caribbean League before joining up with Bala. He's not especially bright, but is tough and knows how to fight.

| B | Q | S | C | I | W | E | R |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 8 | 4 | 7 | 2 | 2 | 3 | 6 | 3 |

**INIT:** 3 + 1D6

**Dice Pools:** Combat 4

**Karma Pool/Professional Rating:** 2/3

**Race:** Ork

**Active Skills:** Assault Rifles 5, Clubs 4, Etiquette 1 (Street 3), Intimidation 3, Launch Weapons 2, Motorboat 3, Motorboat B/R 3, Unarmed Combat 5

**Knowledge Skills:** Smuggling Routes 2

**Weapons:** AK-97 [Assault, SA/BF/FA, 8M, 38(c) with 2 extra clips, sound suppressor]

Range (TN): 0–50 (4), 51–150 (5), 151–350 (6), 351–550 (9)  
Club (7M Stun)

**Armor:** Secure Ultra-Vest (3/2)

### PUSHING THE ENVELOPE

Depending on how difficult you want to make life for your players, all sorts of things *could* happen during their trip to French Guiana. Perhaps customs agents are particularly edgy after a bomb threat was called into the airport, and the runners are randomly selected for a more thorough examination of their travel papers/luggage than usual. If the runners make their own way to Guiana via smugglers or pirates, there's no end to the sorts of trouble they could run into. Also, Guiana is mostly covered with tropical rain forests, and there's no telling what might crawl out of the jungles to cause trouble for the players along the lonely coast road to Kourou. Bala and her crew could decide to just kill the runners and take their money, or they could be part of an anti-terrorist sting operation with heavily armed backups standing by.

We recommend that you take it easy on the runners during this scenario, though, since they'll be in plenty of trouble soon enough.

### DEBUGGING

The main risk during this scenario is that the runners will botch the meet with Bala, either by not getting the guns or by

getting themselves shot up. If they end up weaponless, give them a chance to scrounge up a few cheap guns (nothing with an Availability higher than 3) in Kourou with some legwork and some hard Etiquette (Street) rolls.

If the runners get seriously wounded here (or at any other point during the adventure), they'll most likely need to rely on themselves for healing. The only public hospital of any size in Guiana is in Cayenne, and it's overcrowded and understaffed (not to mention suspicious of tourists with gunshot wounds). If you're feeling generous, the runners can be directed towards a shaman who lives in the slums for healing. The shaman won't care for sprawl attitudes or for attention from the authorities, but she will care about the runner's relative wealth.

## CLOSE TO THE EDGE

### WHAT'S UP, CHUMMER?

This scenario details the Proteus arkoblock where the runners' target lives and works. While Hausmann himself will provide no resistance to the runners, Proteus' security is another matter. Hausmann also has an unusual drone acting as his "bodyguard."

### TELL IT TO THEM STRAIGHT

Staring out over kilometer after kilometer of empty blue ocean, you wonder why anyone would want to live in such an isolated place. These islands give "the middle of nowhere" a new meaning—no wonder they used to use them as a prison camp. Sure, the arkoblock is probably just as comfortable as any office building back in the Sprawl, but why the frag would Proteus want to build one out here in the first place? The construction costs must have been astronomical; this place isn't anywhere near the size of the Seattle arcology, but you wouldn't be surprised if it cost almost as much to build.

And yet, there it is, rising suddenly out of the sea like something out of a fairy tale. Forty meters of sheer, rocky cliffs topped with twenty-some stories of concrete and glass, indifferent to the waves crashing constantly around its base. At the edge of the islands, the building keeps going, plunging down to sea level in a massive curved wall of windows overlooking the ocean. The arkoblock is plunked down in the middle of the ocean, surrounded by swirling currents and circling sharks, and it looks like it could sit there for a thousand years undisturbed.

### HOOKS

The arkoblock continues the high-tech/low-tech dichotomy the runners encountered in Kourou. The Salvation Islands are sheer-sided slabs of stone in the middle of a raging sea, covered with palm trees and tropical vegetation. These ancient isles are crowned, however, by a massive, high-tech facility of chrome, steel and plastic, bristling with antennae and satellite dishes. If the runners enter the arkoblock, all traces of the wilderness outside will be shut away, leaving only the artificial corridors and generic labs which could belong to any corporate building in the world.

### BEHIND THE SCENES

While it's usually said to be located on Devil's Island (*Île du Diable*), Proteus' arkoblock actually spans all three of the so-called *Îles du Salut* (Salvation Islands), all of which are now owned by Proteus AG (see map, p. 18). The islands are located roughly 15 kilometers north of Kourou, through choppy, shark-infested waters.

The complex consists of a single massive building, extending some twenty stories above the islands themselves and spanning the distances between them. Where it reaches the cliffs on the eastern side of the islands, the building extends over the edges, down the cliffs and below the turbulent surface of the Atlantic. Another three to four floors of underwater labs and living facilities fan out between and beyond the islands, extending over a kilometer along the shallow sea floor. Unlike many of Proteus' other facilities, only a small portion of this complex is actually underwater. The underwater wing of the arkoblock is primarily used for storage and aquatech research labs, while the upper section is where the majority of the aerotech labs and construction facilities are found. Most employee quarters are located along the massive, slablike outer wall of the building, facing away from the islands and providing a spectacular view out over the Atlantic. Some residents, including Hausmann, prefer underwater views, and so maintain apartments in the submerged portion of the building.

Other facilities outside the main arkoblock building occupy the remainder of the islands' surfaces. *Île Royale*, the largest of the three islands, is where the actual rocket launch pad is located. *Île Saint-Joseph* contains the arkoblock's docks, hangar and helipad—the only legitimate entry points for outsiders—and is the most heavily guarded of the islands. Devil's Island itself is largely unused, except for a 3 kilometer-long jogging trail and a small fitness center.

At any given time, there are usually two roving three-man security patrols on Saint-Joseph, and one such patrol on each of the other islands. Another three-man unit is stationed at each of the following locations: the docks, the hangar, the launch pad, and at each entrance to the arkoblock itself (one on each island). Proteus also has three security mages stationed at the arkoblock, though only one is on duty at any given time.

Motor launches travel from Kourou to the Proteus complex each day at dawn and dusk for the benefit of those employees who need to visit the mainland for some reason. Trips other than the two daily runs can be scheduled by special request, though this is rarely necessary; most Proteus employees are happy to remain in the arkoblock rather than visit Kourou. Air trips are only made by special arrangement, and are usually reserved for facility executives.

### Planning the Extraction

Hoff's notes to the runners provide them with all of the above information. The notes also say that Hausmann takes two laps around the Devil's Island jogging trail around 0630 local time every morning. Other than that, Hausmann's time is spent either in the facility's telemetry lab (in the aboveground portion of the arkoblock, on Royale) or in his own quarters (in the underwater section of the arkoblock). He apparently does





little socializing with other Proteus employees and almost never leaves the arkoblock.

The runners have several options when deciding how best to infiltrate the facility. The hardest part of the trip will probably be getting onto the islands. Due to their isolated location, excellent sensors and significant natural defenses, Proteus assumes that most intruders will be detected or defeated before they reach the facility. As a result, the defenses within the complex are relatively light.

The runners may decide that trying to break into the arkoblock is simply too risky. In that case, Hoff offers them a chance to get at Hausmann elsewhere (see *Going for the One*, p. 20).

### Up the Cliffs

The runners can approach the islands by water by buying, renting or stealing a small boat in Kourou (or using Bala's boat from the last scenario). While the arkoblock has very powerful radar, it is extremely unreliable at surface level due to the rough seas around the islands; this enables the runners to arrive at the facility undetected if they use a little caution. There is only one viable docking point on the islands, however, and it is occupied by Proteus' own heavily-guarded dock. Unless the runners want to assault the dock and alert the whole complex to their presence, they will have to scale the thirty- to forty-meter cliffs on one of the islands.

The base target number for Climbing Tests on the cliffs is 5, due to their rough and broken surfaces, but runners will receive a +4 target number modifier for the height of the climb and an additional +2 since the rocks are slick with seaspray. The characters will also have a hard time starting their climb, since they will need to bring their boat very close to the cliffs, where the water is at its roughest. If one of the characters has a grapple gun, the boat pilot will need to make a Driving Test in order to give the shooter a steady platform from which to make his shot. The water near the islands is considered Restricted terrain, making the driver's target number equal to the boat's Handling rating + 1. A successful grapple gun shot will reduce the target number for the climb by 4.

If the runners didn't bring a grapple gun, the pilot will have to steady the boat right next to the cliffs in order for the runners to reach the cliffs and begin climbing. This is considered Tight terrain for a +3 difficulty modifier. Failing this roll will necessitate an immediate Crash Test as the boat collides with the rocky cliff face. Each success on this roll will enable one character to begin his climb.

Once they've made it up the cliffs, the runners can prepare to snatch Hausmann. If they're planning to grab him during his morning jog, they can set up somewhere on the jogging trail. In order to provide a pleasant seaside view for joggers, the trail often wanders within a few meters of the cliff edges.

Unlike the other islands, most of Devil's Island is still heavily wooded, limiting visibility. The three-man guard squad generally patrols back and forth between the main arkoblock building and the fitness center, since there's not much else on the island to guard.

The biggest risk of discovery here is probably not from the guards, but from other joggers. Most of them will be more concerned with their own workout than with looking around them, but runners who aren't cautious may well be spotted. Any jogger who spots an unauthorized person will probably keep running and notify the guards when he reaches the arkoblock building. Depending on the runners' appearance and actions, however, the jogger may just yell for help, probably leading the guards to check out the situation (and possibly trigger an alarm).

### Underwater

Characters with diving skills or equipment may try to infiltrate the underwater portion of the arkoblock, snatching Hausmann from his apartment and avoiding the surface security entirely. The arkoblock's sonar will not be able to distinguish anything smaller than a minisub approaching the facility. The water here is fairly shallow; the arkoblock is built on a submerged plateau on the eastern side of the islands and the sea floor here is only 12–13 meters below the surface.

The area around the underwater portion of the complex is regularly patrolled by drones and frequently occupied by sharks. The drones are Proteus' own *Haifisch II* models and are intended primarily as mobile underwater observers. In addition to letting scientists observe underwater experiments from a safe location, the drones are used to patrol the area around the arkoblock for any unauthorized activity.

Various ecoterrorist and anti-corporate groups have threatened the facility, and while none of them have actually made an attack yet, Proteus is always wary of the threat of sabotage. There are eight drones distributed evenly around the underwater perimeter of the arkoblock. Each is tethered to the base by a communications cable and can go a maximum of 200 meters from the cable's connection point.

#### Haifisch II Drone

| Handling | Speed | Accel  | Body  | Armor |
|----------|-------|--------|-------|-------|
| 4/4      | 30    | 4      | 2     | 0     |
| Sig      | Pilot | Sensor | Cargo | Load  |
| 5        | 2     | 5      | 0     | 0     |

**Other Features:** One firmpoint armed with a gyrojet gun [SA, 12M (12S underwater), 10(c)]

Range (TN): 0–5 (4), 6–20 (5), 21–40 (6), 41–60 (9)

#### Proteus Security Rigger

| B | Q | S | C | I | W | E | R     |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|-------|
| 4 | 4 | 4 | 3 | 5 | 5 | 3 | 4 (8) |

**INIT:** 4 + 1D6, Rigging INIT: 8 + 3D6

**Dice Pools:** Combat 6, Control 8

**Karma Pool/Professional Rating:** 2/3

**Race:** Human

**Active Skills:** Gunnery 4, Motorboats 4, Pistols 3, Submarines 4

**Knowledge Skills:** Proteus AG 4

**Cyberware:** Vehicle control rig (Level 2)



If underwater intruders are detected, the drones will be used to keep an eye on them while Proteus's underwater defense forces ready themselves. Within five minutes of an underwater alarm, two patrol boats will leave the dock and head to the area under attack. In addition to the boats' crew, each carries three Proteus "Sub-Marines", guards specially trained in underwater combat. They will give the intruders one chance to surrender then open fire. Note that blood in the water here will draw sharks in short order. While the patrol boats are en route, all airlocks leading into the arkoblock will have a six-man guard squad in light security armor stationed just inside them.

#### Proteus "Sub-Marines"

| B | Q | S | C | I | W | E | R |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 5 | 4 | 5 | 3 | 4 | 4 | 6 | 4 |

**INIT:** 4 + 1D6

**Dice Pools:** Combat 6

**Karma Pool/Professional Rating:** 1/3

**Race:** Human

**Active Skills:** Athletics 5, Diving 5, Submachine Guns 5, Underwater Combat 5

**Knowledge Skills:** Proteus AG 4

**Weapons:** Colt M24A3 Water Carbine [SMG, SA/BF, 6M, 30(c), usable underwater]

Range (TN): 0–10 (4), 11–40 (5), 41–80 (6), 81–150 (9)

**Armor:** Diving armor (4/2)

**Gear:** SCUBA gear

#### In the Air

Ambitious runners may decide to obtain a plane or helicopter and arrive at the island by air, either landing directly on the island or parachuting in. Since the arkoblock is primarily used for space launches, it contains an extraordinary array of radar and other sensing equipment (the equivalent of Rating 10 sensors), making the odds of an undetected arrival slim indeed. In addition to patrol helicopters, the arkoblock building itself has several AVM missile launchers distributed across the roof. Finally, there are no usable landing areas on the islands except for the helipad or the rocket launch pad, both of which are heavily guarded. All other areas are either too rugged, too heavily wooded or too full of buildings to be viable landing spots.

All in all, an air assault is likely to prove extremely difficult and Hoff will actively discourage this approach if the runners mention such a plan to him. Escaping by air in a stolen Proteus aircraft, however, may be a viable option if the runners have a capable pilot or can force a Proteus pilot to fly them home.

#### Scamming Their Way In

The runners may try to fast-talk their way into the complex rather than sneaking in. This is a difficult prospect at best, since the facility gets few visitors and no unscheduled ones, and entering an "official" visit into the arkoblock's Matrix is a tall order. The runners might try to have their boat or aircraft make an "emergency" landing on the island, but the guards will be very suspicious of any such event, since travel near the islands by non-Proteus traffic is rare. Even if the runners do convince

the guards of their sincerity, they will be confined to a small conference room in the hangar (with guards posted outside the door) while Proteus techs repair their vehicle. The odds of getting anywhere near Hausmann with this approach are slim. There is a jackpoint in the conference room, however, which may help the runners set up for another try.

Mugging some Proteus employees in town and stealing their identification is a more viable option. A handful of Proteus employees will travel to Kourou on business on any given day, and new employees transferring to the facility usually come from the mainland. The driver of the motor launch checks each passenger's Proteus ID card with a portable Rating 3 scanner, so anyone with a decent fake ID or a stolen card should be able to get to the island with little trouble.

Getting into the arkoblock, however, is another matter. The doors into the facility have Rating 6 scanners, and the guards stationed at the doors also have a daily record of who is expected to arrive on any given boat. Anyone with a fake ID will not be on that list and will be closely questioned by the guards. Runners with a valid stolen ID should be okay, since the guards usually don't look too closely unless the computers signal a problem. For each runner that uses a stolen ID, however, roll a single Intelligence (6) check for the guards. One success means they glance at the name on the ID; this will only be a problem if, for instance, a male troll tries to use a badge assigned to "Linda Goldblossom." Multiple successes mean that the guard recognizes the employee's name and will realize the runners' deception unless the runner is a fairly close physical match for the employee in question.

#### Decking the Arkoblock

The arkoblock's Matrix system is not accessible from outside except by hacking through the heavily protected Proteus satellite network, so runners without a top-notch decker will not be able to get into the system remotely.

If the runners do manage to get past the satellite or jack in from inside the facility, they gain access to the arkoblock's internal PLTG. In addition to the main building, jackpoints into the arkoblock's matrix can be found at the docks, the hangar, the launch pad and the fitness center. The gamaemaster will need to create security sheafs for any specific hosts the decker wishes to access within the arkoblock PLTG.

#### Proteus Satellite PLTG

**Security Code:** Red-10/15/15/13/13/14

##### Trigger Step Event

|    |                         |
|----|-------------------------|
| 2  | Probe-5                 |
| 4  | Binder-5                |
| 6  | Killer-6, Passive Alert |
| 8  | Blaster-6               |
| 10 | Blaster-8, Active Alert |

#### Proteus Arkoblock PLTG

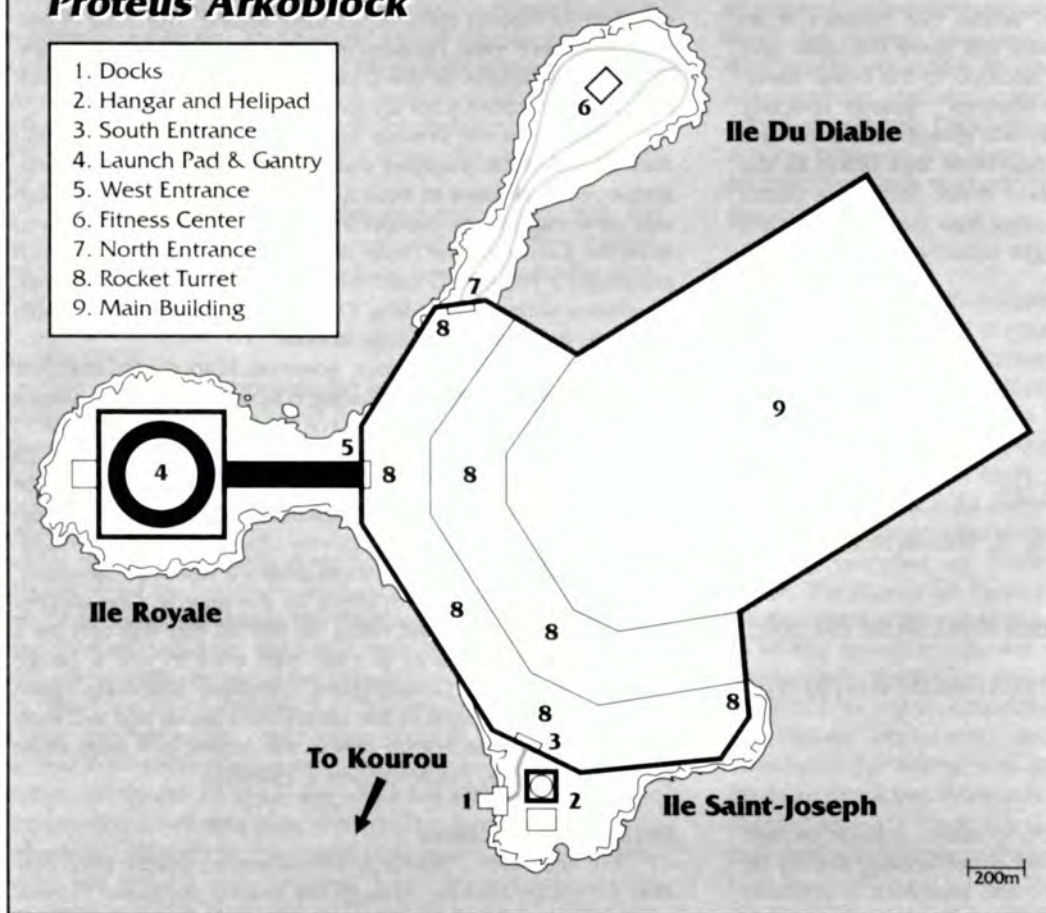
**Security Code:** Orange-6/10/10/9/8/10

##### Trigger Step Event

|   |          |
|---|----------|
| 3 | Probe-5  |
| 7 | Binder-5 |

## Proteus Arkoblock

1. Docks
2. Hangar and Helipad
3. South Entrance
4. Launch Pad & Gantry
5. West Entrance
6. Fitness Center
7. North Entrance
8. Rocket Turret
9. Main Building



- 11 Tar Baby-6
- 14 Killer-6, Passive Alert
- 17 Blaster-6
- 20 Blaster-8, Active Alert

### Island Map Key

**1. Docks.** The motor launch (a Zemlya-Poltava Swordsman) and a pair of Surfstar Marine Seacop patrol boats are usually moored here. Three guards watch the area from a small guardhouse and one pilot for each of the patrol boats (Motorboat 5 skill) is stationed there at all times as well. A cargo truck is parked nearby to transport incoming equipment to the main arkoblock building.

**2. Hangar and Helipad.** This large hangar houses a Hughes Airstar helicopter and an Ares Executive tilt-wing jet for executive travel, an Ares Cargoliner for heavy lifting and a trio of Northrup PRC-44F Yellowjackets for security. At least one of the Yellowjackets is fueled up and on the pad at all times, ready for launch at a moment's notice, and three pilots (appropriate vehicle skill 5) are always on station within the hangar. Three guards are stationed at the hangar as well.

**3. South Entrance.** This is the main entrance to the

arkoblock proper, and as such, it is the most decorative as well as the most secure. Three guards are always on duty in the lobby, with more on call in the ready room only a few meters away.

**4. Launch Pad and Gantry.** This is where payloads are launched to reach Proteus's Treffpunkt Raumhaufen orbital platform. The booster rockets are assembled within the arkoblock building itself and transported to the launch pad on a mobile launch platform. Three guards are stationed at the base of the launch gantry, though they retreat to an underground bunker for the actual launch to avoid being incinerated by the blast.

**5. West Entrance.** There is a human-sized door in this wall, but it is dwarfed by the 60-meter-tall by 50-meter-wide entrance to the Assembly Room, which is as tall as the arkoblock itself. Three guards are stationed at this entrance.

**6. Fitness Center.** This is a large, well-equipped fitness center and spa, filled with a wide variety of cutting-edge exercise equipment. An outdoor pavilion with volleyball and tennis courts, picnic areas and the like is located behind the building itself. No guards are stationed here, though trainers and other staff are present during business hours.

**7. North Entrance.** This is the "back door" to the arkoblock. It sees little traffic. Nonetheless, a three-man guard unit is stationed here.

**8. Rocket Turret.** A remotely controlled mini-turret containing an anti-vehicle missile launcher is located on the roof of the arkoblock at each of these locations. Unidentified aircraft approaching the complex are warned twice before the turrets open fire.

**9. Main Building.** The main, semi-circular portion of the arkoblock extends twenty stories above the islands, and another fifteen stories down over the edge of the islands to the sea below. An additional four-story rectangular section extends almost a kilometer along the seafloor. The interior of the arkoblock is largely indistinguishable from any other corporate office building, with clean corridors, expensive offices, and plenty of bland "art" decorating the walls.



**Making the Grab**

Hausmann himself should present no problems at all for the runners. He is not particularly strong or fast and has no combat skills worth speaking of. If attacked, his main strategy will be to run like hell and scream for the guards. A tranquilizer dart or stun spell should render him unconscious without much trouble. Since Hausmann is so important to Winternight's plans, however, the cult has not left him completely defenseless.

One of Winternight's custom-made robotic drones has been assigned to protect Hausmann, hovering high overhead whenever Hausmann leaves the confines of the arkoblock. If Hausmann undergoes any sort of attack, the drone will speed to his defense. Hausmann is aware of the drone's presence and will attempt to stall his attackers until it arrives, hoping to use the attack as a distraction to permit him to escape.

The drone is not actively being operated by a rigger so it reacts strictly on robotic autopilot. It has been programmed not to reveal its presence to Proteus and to kill anyone who attempts to kidnap or harm Hausmann. It is equipped with a Safe Target system (p. 33, CC) which prevents it from firing in such a way as to endanger Hausmann.

The drone itself is a small, quiet vectored-thrust unit, dark gray in color and without any identifying markings. Riggers or other characters knowledgeable about drones may recognize some basic similarities between the drone and Ares' Guardian series drones. This drone appears to be somewhat more advanced and bears no indications of where it was made.

The runners will probably have few opportunities to examine the drone in detail since it is programmed to self-destruct after taking Deadly damage. This explosion (and the resulting shrapnel) will do 12D damage to anyone within a one-meter radius of the drone and 6D to anyone from 1-2 meters away. The drone's Safe Target system prevents it from exploding within three meters of Hausmann: it will, however, go off once he moves beyond that range. This explosion will almost certainly attract the attention of any nearby security guards.

**Winternight Drone**

| Handling | Speed | Accel  | Body  | Armor |
|----------|-------|--------|-------|-------|
| 4        | 60    | 6      | 2     | 8     |
| Sig      | Pilot | Sensor | Cargo | Load  |
| 12       | 3     | 4      | 0     | 0     |

INIT: 6 + 3D6



**Pools:** Adaptation 3

**Other Features:** Autosoft interpretation system (Clearsight 3, Sharpshooter 2), Robot-pilot advanced programming, Robotic Reflexes 2, One mini-turret armed with twin SMGs [SA/BF, 7M, 28(c), APDS ammunition, sound suppressor, half recoil due to turret]  
Range: 0-10 (4), 11-40 (5), 41-80 (6), 81-150 (9)

**Proteus Guards**

Use the following statistics for all Proteus security troops on the surface of the islands. Use the same stats for guards within the arkoblock, but note that guards stationed in the underwater sections of the facility have their weapons loaded with flechette ammunition. If a formal alarm is raised, troops within the arkoblock will don light security armor and helmets, raising their armor ratings to 7/6 and dropping their Combat Pools to 3.

| B | Q | S | C | I | W | E | R |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 5 | 4 | 4 | 3 | 3 | 4 | 6 | 3 |

INIT: 3 + 1D6

**Dice Pools:** Combat 5

**Karma Pool/Professional Rating:** 1/3

**Race:** Human

**Active Skills:** Athletics 3, Interrogation 3, Intimidation 3, Pistols 4, Submachine Guns 5, Unarmed Combat 4

**Knowledge Skills:** Proteus AG 4

**Weapons:** HK227 [SMG, SA/BF/FA, 7M, 28(c), laser sight, gas-vent (2), retractable stock]

Range (TN): 0-10 (3), 11-40 (4), 41-80 (5), 81-150 (8)

Walther PB-120 [Light Pistol, SA, 6L, 10(c)]

Range (TN): 0-5 (4), 6-15 (5), 16-30 (6), 31-50 (9)

**Armor:** Secure Jacket (5/3)

**Gear:** Micro-transceiver, plastic restraints (2 sets)



### Proteus Security Mage

While three security mages live at the facility, only one is on duty at any given time. He remains in the arkoblock's main security office and will astrally project to investigate any alarms raised by guards. Medical personnel are stationed nearby in case the mage is injured while projecting.

**B** 3   **Q** 3   **S** 3   **C** 4   **I** 5   **W** 5   **E** 6   **M** 6   **R** 4

**INIT:** 4 + 1D6, Astral Init: 25 + 1D6

**Dice Pools:** Astral Combat 7, Combat 6, Spell 5

**Karma Pool/Professional Rating:** 1/3

**Race:** Human

**Active Skills:** Aura Reading 4, Conjuring 4, Pistols 3, Sorcery 5

**Knowledge Skills:** Magic Theory 4, Proteus AG 4

**Spells:** Analyze Truth 4, Mind Probe 4, Spiritbolt 4, Stunball 4, Stunbolt 5, Treat 4

**Weapons:** Walther PB-120 [Light Pistol, SA, 6L, 10(c)]  
Range (TN): 0-5 (4), 6-15 (5), 16-30 (6), 31-50 (9)

**Armor:** Secure clothing (3/0)

**Notes:** The mage on duty keeps three Force 4 elementals on station at any given time, one each of Air, Fire and Water.

### PUSHING THE ENVELOPE

One way to make things harder on the runners is to throw some heavy weather at them. Storms will make any kind of vehicular travel to the island much more difficult, and may prevent the motor launch from making its scheduled trips to the mainland. Heavy rain will also keep Hausmann off the jogging trail, forcing the runners to go into the arkoblock building to get him.

The guards and mages at the facility are relatively low-powered. If you think the runners need more of a challenge, they can easily be beefed up or their numbers increased.

### DEBUGGING

If the runners are captured by Proteus they're in deep trouble, since the corp has little patience for those who attack corporate property. If they tell Proteus the details of their hire, Hoff will be arrested; if they lie or say nothing, Hoff will be questioned, but will manage to cover up his involvement. Either way, the runners themselves will either be executed, or forced into long-term jobs with Proteus' own shadow ops division (cortex bombs are wonderful recruitment tools). Go to *Picking Up the Pieces*, p. 31.

If the runners fail in their first attempt at the kidnapping, they'll have a very hard time going back for another try. If Hausmann knows (or even suspects) that he was the target of a kidnapping attempt, he certainly won't go out on his morning run for a few weeks, and Proteus will assign an extra guard or two to Hausmann's quarters, lab, etc. Hoff will be very upset at the runners' failure, but will give them one more shot at capturing Hausmann away from Proteus' security. Proceed to *Going For the One*.

If the runners are too intimidated by the arkoblock to even make the attempt, Hoff will make arrangements to get Hausmann off the island. Proceed to *Going For the One*.

Finally, if the runners succeed in kidnapping Hausmann, proceed to *Lightning Strikes*, p. 22.

## GOING FOR THE ONE

### WHAT'S UP, CHUMMER?

This scenario covers a second approach to kidnapping Hausmann, this time at a dinner party on the mainland at Hoff's home. While they won't have to deal with Proteus security here, Hausmann's bodyguard drone is still a factor.

### TELL IT TO THEM STRAIGHT

As run-down as the rest of Kourou may be, this area is actually fairly nice. The buildings aren't particularly new, and the whole place is still hotter than a Vindicator after ten minutes of sustained fire, but it generally seems like a fairly pleasant, old-fashioned suburban neighborhood, without the mass-produced sameness of most corporate housing facilities.

The target building itself is a smallish two-story A-frame house made with dark wood and lots of windows. A deck runs around two sides of the building. There's a small garage nearby. Lots of trees screening the neighbors' view, and the neighbors themselves are pretty far away ... looks like this shouldn't be too hard. But then, it always looks like that, doesn't it?

According to Mr. Johnson, the guests should arrive around 1830 hours, and dinner will be served at 1930. Your target apparently isn't fond of socializing, so Johnson expects him to be leaving no later than 2100 or so—just enough time to finish dinner and have a drink or two before excusing himself. He also told you to try to avoid any collateral damage, but that's always easier said than done.

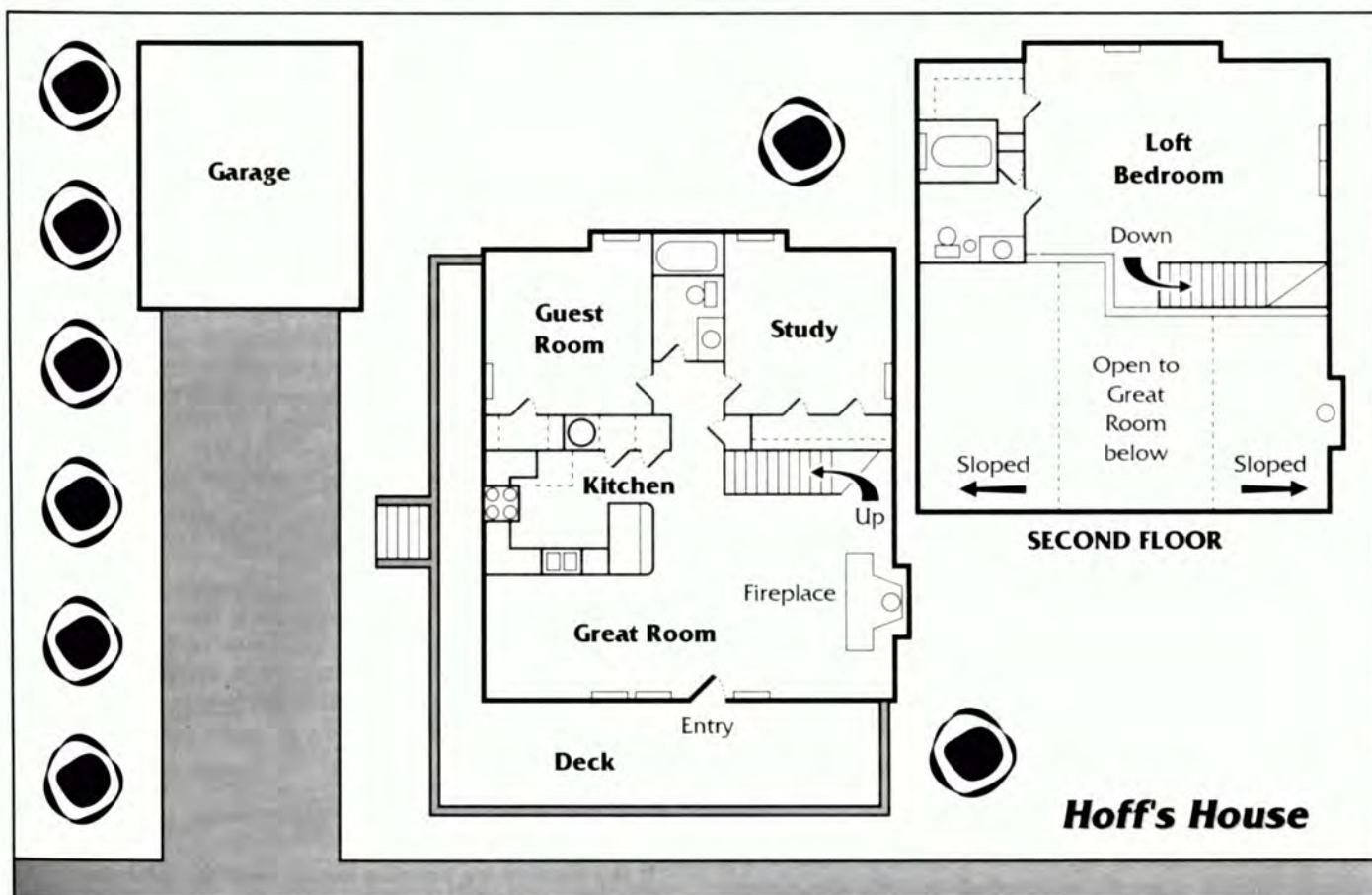
### HOOKS

Depending on how the runners handle the extraction, this scenario may be quiet and painless or fraught with tension. None of the guests at the dinner party are expecting any trouble except Hoff, and if the runners do make their presence known, he does his best to act just like everyone else. Hausmann should appear to be every bit the typical corporate egghead; though he does not panic when the runners arrive, he is surprised and attempts to resist them. He has no abilities, however, which should even slow the runners down.

The arrival of Hausmann's protective drone (see p. 19) should be an unexpected twist, and may suggest to the characters that there might be more to Hausmann than meets the eye.

### BEHIND THE SCENES

If the runners are unable to snatch Hausmann from the arkoblock complex (or are too scared to try), Hoff has an alternate possibility. He has invited the entire *Götterbote* payload development team to a dinner party at his house. (Unlike most of the Proteus employees, Hoff does not live in the arkoblock; he bought this home in Kourou years ago, while he worked for Saeder-Krupp, and elected not to move when he took his new position with Proteus.) While he would prefer that the runners not come anywhere near his house to avoid possibly implicat-



ing him, he is willing to risk it if the alternative is having the whole mission fail.

Hoff does not inform the runners that the site of the dinner party is his home, since he doesn't want them to know his identity, but he does ask them to try to avoid damaging any property or hurting any bystanders at the scene. He also suggests that they grab Hausmann when he leaves the party, rather than bursting in. If they do decide on the blatant approach, Hoff suggests that they try to make it look like a robbery, and grab Hausmann as a hostage, seemingly as a random afterthought. (If Hausmann is an obvious kidnapping target, Hoff feels that suspicion would fall on him since he's hosting the party.)

As noted above, dinner is scheduled for 1930 hours local time, with the guests expected to arrive an hour or so beforehand. A total of nine guests will be attending the party: Hausmann, two other single employees and three couples. The guests will all ride in the same helicopter from the arkoblock to the mainland, then hire a few taxis to bring them to Hoff's house.

Hausmann is fond of neither parties nor Hoff, and while he is not rude enough to snub the invitation, he will make his excuses and leave shortly after dinner. He plans to take a taxi to the docks and catch the nightly motor launch back to the islands, leaving the helicopter for the other guests. The launch departs at 2130 hours, so Hausmann will probably be leaving the party no later than 2115 or so. This is probably the best

time to grab him, since he will not be missed until the following day; grabbing him before or during the party is liable to attract attention much sooner.

The alarm system in Hoff's house has been turned off for the party, and none of the guests are armed or magically active so there should be little resistance for the runners. The driver of Hausmann's taxi carries a light pistol for self-defense, but is not very good with it and has no desire to get into a gunfight over someone he doesn't even know; he will let the runners take his passenger, his cab, his wallet and his pants, as long as they don't hurt him.

As described in *Close to the Edge*, Hausmann has a Winternight drone guarding him whenever he's outside the arkoblock; it hovers high above Hoff's house during the dinner party, ready to swoop to Hausmann's defense if necessary.

If the runners cause a great deal of noise via unsilenced gunfire, or maybe an exploding drone, they will attract the attention of the police. Two patrol cars will arrive on the scene in 1D6 minutes. If the runners appear heavily armed, this will lead the police to call in heavy backup.

The average beat cop in Kourou is not prepared to deal with a team of shadowrunners, and the city has no SWAT teams to speak of. The local authorities do have a good working relationship with Saeder-Krupp's local security teams, however, which are far more experienced in dealing with such individu-



als. If the S-K troopers are called, they will arrive in 1D6 additional minutes; if the runners are still sticking around when they arrive, use the same stats as the Proteus counterstrike team in *Lightning Strikes*, p. 22. Two more Kourou police cars will accompany the S-K squad.

### Kourou Policemen

These officers travel in pairs, driving a General Products COP (pp. 165–166, R3).

| B | Q | S | C | I | W | E | R |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 4 | 4 | 4 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 6 | 3 |

**INIT:** 3 + 1D6

**Dice Pools:** Combat 5

**Karma Pool/Professional Rating:** 1/2

**Race:** Human

**Active Skills:** Interrogation 3, Intimidation 4, Pistols 4, Shotguns 4, Unarmed Combat 4

**Knowledge Skills:** Kourou 5, Police Procedure 4

**Weapons:** Defiance T-250 [Shotgun, SA, 10S, 5(m)]

Range (TN): 0–10 (4), 11–20 (5), 21–50 (6), 51–100 (9)

Fichetti Security 500 [Light Pistol, SA, 6L, 12(c)]

Range (TN): 0–5 (4), 6–15 (5), 16–30 (6), 31–50 (9)

**Armor:** Armor jacket (5/3)

**Gear:** Micro-transceiver, plastic restraints (2 sets)

If the runners make their move near Hoff's house, loud noises will also attract the attention of Hoff and his dinner guests. While the guests will not confront a group of armed shadowrunners, they will describe the runners in detail to the police. Hoff will skew his descriptions to help the runners escape, but he cannot do much about the other guests.

### PUSHING THE ENVELOPE

Perhaps Proteus is concerned for the safety of its top scientists, and stations guards outside Hoff's house during the party. This is particularly likely if the runners have already gone after Hausmann once. In this case, two Proteus security guards (pp. 19–20) will accompany Hausmann from the arkoblock to the party and back again.

The Kourou police can be made tougher to give the PCs more of a challenge. Perhaps they've managed to increase their training and equipment budget recently, or maybe they've finally given up on the idea of a government-managed police force and have contracted security out to Knight Errant or a Saeder-Krupp subsidiary.

If you really want to make things challenging, perhaps Hausmann declines to attend the dinner party after all, or leaves before the runners arrive due to a tiff with Hoff, forcing the runners to go out to the arkoblock and get him.

### DEBUGGING

If the runners fail here, their job becomes a lot tougher. If this was their first attempt to get Hausmann, they will need to go to the arkoblock to make another attempt, and Hausmann will be very watchful. He won't be going for his morning run if he thinks someone is trying to kidnap him, forcing the runners

to go into the arkoblock and get him. Security at the arkoblock will also be beefed up after a failed abduction attempt. Go to *Close to the Edge*, p. 15, for an attempted extraction at the arkoblock.

If this is their second failure, Hoff will be furious and will call the whole run off unless the runners find a way to convince him they can succeed. If he does call off the run, go directly to *Picking Up the Pieces*, p. 31.

If the runners manage to get themselves arrested, they have until morning to escape from the Kourou jail; in the morning, they will be turned over to Proteus security, who will take them to the arkoblock's own small jail for "processing." See *Picking Up the Pieces* for the details of such an eventuality.

If the runners bring Hausmann back to their safe house, proceed to *Lightning Strikes*, p. 22.

## LIGHTNING STRIKES

### WHAT'S UP, CHUMMER?

After an uneventful day or so in the safe house with their captive, the runners receive a shocking wake-up call when a Proteus counterstrike team raids the building in an attempt to recover Hausmann. They may be able to escape the corporate troops, but will need to find another place to stash their captive. They'll also probably want to figure out how the corp goons found them.

### TELL IT TO THEM STRAIGHT

#### If the runners are keeping watch, read the following:

Another boring day baby-sitting the target, waiting for the deadline to pass. No trid, no beer, nothing to do but wait and watch, watch and ... wait a minute. Vehicle coming this way, straight for you in fact, and fast. Looks like a van, a big one—no, make that a personnel carrier. And you're willing to bet it's not here to deliver flowers. Ladies and gentlemen, the drek is about to hit the fan.

#### If the runners aren't keeping watch, read this section:

BANGCRASH! Something just smashed through several of the safe house windows. There's a blindingly bright burst of light, and you smell some kind of gas. What do you do?

### HOOKS

If the runners spend any time talking with Hausmann, he seems like a very down-to-earth, friendly guy who has no idea why he's been abducted and just wants to go home. Be as sincere and honest as possible while lying through your teeth as Hausmann. Try to generate some sympathy for him, perhaps leading the runners to doubt the morality of their actions; this will make the impact of the later revelations about Winternight's plans that much greater.

The combat itself should be hard, sudden and unexpected. This should certainly be the toughest part of the adventure so far; the Proteus guards are numerous and well-equipped. The runners' only advantages are planning (Proteus is acting upon a tip and is rushing into the situation without a tactical plan,



whereas the runners may have an escape plan) and magic (the Proteus mage can't protect all the troopers, and their Willpower isn't that high).

#### BEHIND THE SCENES

Once the runners evade any pursuit and get Hausmann to the safe house, determine what they intend to do with their captive. Keeping him unconscious is always a popular option, though he will become dehydrated after a few days unless the runners periodically wake him up to eat and drink (or, alternatively, run an IV drip to keep him hydrated).

They may also check his body for bugs, trackers, loose change or anything else of interest. His credstick confirms that he is the Heinrich Hausmann they were hired to abduct, and he has a fair amount of research-related cyberware. Other than that, the only item of any interest is a golden ring bearing the Proteus logo. This ring was actually made for him by Winternight and contains the Safe Target chip that keeps Winternight drones from firing on him. A bug scanner will indicate that the ring is constantly transmitting some kind of data, and smart runners should dispose of the ring immediately upon learning this.

If the runners talk to Hausmann at all, he will freely admit his name and that he is an aerospace engineer for Proteus. He will attempt to be friendly with the runners, trying to determine why they kidnapped him and what they want. He also offers to double whatever money the runners are getting if they will just let him go (this offer is completely sincere, since money will be

meaningless if Winternight's plan succeeds). If asked about the ring, he will claim that he received it when he hired on with Proteus and knows nothing of any transmitter within it. If asked about the drone, he will claim ignorance about its origin or purpose. If the runners use *Analyze Truth* or similar spells, Hausmann will simply stop talking as soon as he realizes that he cannot fool them.

Hausmann will not talk about the *Götterbote* probe unless coerced, and will not reveal the probe's true purpose or his connection to Winternight under any circumstances. If some form of magical coercion or interrogation is about to reveal Winternight's existence, Hausmann will trigger his own cranial bomb, killing himself instantly. While this will prevent the *Götterbote* project from proceeding, it will at least let Winternight continue its other plans without interference. Alternatively, if you prefer, you can let the runners find out about Winternight's plan before Hausmann kills himself, forcing them to try to stop the probe's launch themselves.

If they decide to return to the arkoblock to stop the *Götterbote* launch themselves, use the information in *Close to the Edge*, p. 15, to resolve the attempt. The runners must invade the arkoblock and either damage the booster rocket enough to delay the launch, or get to the launch control center and force the rocket to self-destruct. Neither option will be easy, as Proteus' security will be at its tightest after Hausmann's abduction.





### Counterstrike

While the runners are sitting on Hausmann, Proteus and Winternight are both working hard to find the missing scientist. Proteus can only rely on traditional searches, questioning eyewitnesses, etc., unless the runners left a clue somewhere along the line. Winternight, however, has two advantages in trying to find Hausmann. First, the Safe Target ring constantly broadcasts his location; while the range of the transmitter is only a few hundred meters, it enables Winternight to send drones sweeping back and forth above the city looking for the signal. Second, Winternight's shamans have access to samples of Hausmann's DNA, enabling them to use Ritual Tracking (p. 39, *MITS*) to find him. (If you wish to roll for this ritual, assume that Anderson (p. 28) is assisted by two other shamans with statistics identical to his.)

If the runners dispose of Hausmann's ring before taking him to the safe house and manage to circumvent the ritual tracking by some means (placing a ward around the safe house, observing Hausmann astrally and disrupting the sending before it is complete, etc.), then Winternight will be unable to find him and no attack will take place. Congratulate your players on being thorough, and proceed to *Masquerade*, p. 25.

Otherwise, even if the runners bring Hausmann somewhere other than the safe house Hoff provided, Winternight is able to determine Hausmann's location within 24 hours of his abduction. Rather than rescuing him themselves and risking discovery, they simply pass the information off to Proteus as an "anonymous tip." Proteus responds by sending an astrally projecting mage to check out the site and assense anyone it finds

there. The mage will not recognize Hausmann's aura, since he has not assensed the scientist before. If the mage sees anything suspicious, however, including magical defenses, firearms, a drugged person, etc. or if he is attacked while investigating, he will report back that the tip appears valid. A Proteus strike team is standing by and will arrive on the scene within 1D6 minutes of the mage's report.

The team's primary objective is to recover Hausmann alive and preferably uninjured; its secondary objective is to capture (or, if necessary, kill) whoever abducted him. The troops will deploy from their vehicle and surround the building as quickly as possible, then begin the attack. They will hit the building fast and hard, launching flash grenades through the windows and following those up with Neuro-Stun gas grenades. They will then enter the building through the front and back doors simultaneously, taking down anyone they find and systematically checking the entire building. They intend to render everyone unconscious, then sort out who's who later.

### Proteus Rescue Squad

The squad arrives on an Ares Mobmaster transport (pp. 169–170, *R3*). Use these stats for the 10 infantry troopers on the squad; they are also accompanied by a rigger (same stats, but add Car (6) skill and a Vehicle Control Rig (2)) and a mage (see below).

| B   | Q | S | C | I | W | E | R |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 5   | 4 | 4 | 3 | 4 | 4 | 5 | 4 |
| <b>INIT:</b> 4 + 1D6 (4 + 2D6)  |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
| <b>Dice Pools:</b> Combat 6   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
| <b>Karma Pool/Professional Rating:</b> 2/3  |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
| <b>Race:</b> Human  |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
| <b>Active Skills:</b> Assault Rifles 5, Athletics 3, Interrogation 3, Intimidation 4, Pistols 4, Unarmed Combat 4   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
| <b>Knowledge Skills:</b> Proteus AG 4   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
| <b>Cyberware:</b> Boosted Reflexes 1, Smartlink   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
| <b>Weapons:</b> Colt M22A2 [Assault, SA/BF/FA, 6M Stun, 40(c) with 2 extra clips (one gel, one normal), smartlinked, gas-vent (1)]<br>Range (TN): 0–50 (2), 51–150 (3), 151–350 (5), 351–550 (7)<br>Underbarrel Mini-Grenade Launcher [Heavy, SS, special, 6(m), loaded with flash grenades]<br>Range (TN): 5–50 (4), 51–100 (5), 101–150 (8), 151–300 (9)<br>2 Neuro-Stun VII Grenades [Grenade, 6S Stun]<br>Range (TN): 0–12 (4), 13–20 (5), 21–40 (8), 41–80 (9)<br>Walther PB-120 [Light Pistol, SA, 6L, 10(c), smartlinked]<br>Range (TN): 0–5 (2), 6–15 (3), 16–30 (4), 31–50 (7) |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
| <b>Armor:</b> Light security armor and helmet (7/6) with transceiver, chemical seal and respirator  |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |

### Proteus Mage

| B   | Q | S | C | I | W | E | M | R |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 3   | 3 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 5 | 6 | 6 | 4 |
| <b>INIT:</b> 4 + 1D6, Astral Init: 25 + 1D6 |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |

**Dice Pools:** Astral Combat 7, Combat 6, Spell 5

**Karma Pool/Professional Rating:** 1/3

**Race:** Human

**Active Skills:** Aura Reading 4, Conjuring 4, Pistols 3, Sorcery 5

**Knowledge Skills:** Magic Theory 4, Proteus AG 4

**Spells:** Analyze Truth 4, Mind Probe 4, Spiritbolt 4, Stunball 4, Stunbolt 5, Treat 4

**Weapons:** Walther PB-120 [Light Pistol, SA, 6L, 10(c)]

Range (TN): 0–5 (4), 6–15 (5), 16–30 (6), 31–50 (9)

**Armor:** Light security armor and helmet (7/6) with transceiver, chemical seal and respirator

**Notes:** The mage has three Force 4 elementals on station, one each of Air, Fire and Water.

If the runners escape, they will need to find a new place to hole up. Since they have no contacts in the area, this may be harder than it sounds. Many people in the poorer areas of Kourou would be willing to accept the runners' money in return for letting them hide in their homes or stores. Of course, these same people would also be willing to accept Proteus' money for turning in a group of wanted criminals, so that may not be such a good idea.

Another alternative is to hide in the jungle, which begins literally a few meters outside of town. Proteus won't be searching the jungle right away, so this may be a safe option for the runners, if you classify heat, humidity, disease, quicksand, caimans and poisonous snakes as "safe." A third option would be to stay in their van (or steal another one), moving around periodically to avoid arousing too much suspicion.

Of course, if the runners haven't gotten rid of Hausmann's ring or taken precautions against ritual tracking, the whole ugly scene may repeat itself in another day or so. If this is the case, it's probably best to proceed onward to *Masquerade*, before things get too bloody.

### PUSHING THE ENVELOPE

What, nearly a dozen troopers in security armor with magical backup isn't enough for ya? Well, the Mobmaster *can* hold up to 15 troops plus the rigger and mage, so you can add some extra numbers. You could also give them better armor and/or stats, give the rigger some drones to play with, add another mage or some local police backup and so forth.

### DEBUGGING

If the runners are captured, Proteus returns them to the arkblock to face prosecution. Proceed to *Picking Up the Pieces*, p. 31.

If they escape but Hausmann is rescued, they can attempt to recapture him, though Hausmann won't leave the arcology and will have extra guards stationed near him at all times. Otherwise, Winternight may decide to wrap up their loose ends before Hoff and the runners cause any more trouble. Have "Hoff" call the runners and ask to meet with them, then continue with *Face to Face*, p. 29, modifying the descriptive text accordingly.

If they get away with Hausmann, or manage to avoid the attack entirely, go on to *Masquerade*.

## MASQUERADE

### WHAT'S UP, CHUMMER?

In this scenario, "Hoff" contacts the runners and makes arrangements to have Hausmann released early. The "Hoff" that meets them, however, is actually Anderson, a disguised toxic Raven shaman working for Winternight. If the runners hand over Hausmann, everything goes smoothly; if not, all hell breaks loose.

### TELL IT TO THEM STRAIGHT

Something's ringing. After a moment, you realize that it's the phone your Johnson left you.

"Hello," a familiar voice says when you answer. There's no video, but you recognize Mr. Johnson's voice. "There has been a change in plans. Meet me tonight at midnight at the Sporting and Aero Club, and bring him with you. You will receive the rest of your fee; turn him over to me and your job will be complete. Any questions?"

### When the runners arrive at the meeting site, read the following aloud:

It turns out that the Sporting and Aero Club has been abandoned for years; there's a chainlink fence around the whole property and a big padlock on the front gate, but the lock has been cut open—and pretty recently, by the looks of it. It's very quiet out here this time of night; you almost wish you could hear the familiar low murmur of the sprawl traffic rather than all this silence.

You're not sure where exactly to go: the building is pretty big, and the thin moonlight doesn't reveal much of a clue as to where Mr. Johnson might be. You start to head towards the front door when you hear a low whistle off to one side of the building.

Exchanging glances with the rest of your team, you move cautiously around the corner. This used to be the pool area, apparently, though it dried up long ago and is now nothing but a cracked concrete hole in the ground. A covered walkway runs around the edge of the building filled with rusting stacks of wrought-iron patio furniture. In the shadows of that walkway you can just make out a lone figure, standing in the corner.

"Hello," he says. "Let's conclude our business." You recognize his voice; it's Mr. Johnson, all right. He produces a small vinyl bag, unsnaps the top, and shows you what looks like a number of credsticks inside. Leaving the top open, he steps forward and places the bag at the edge of the pool, directly opposite you. "Leave my friend Heinrich there, if you please," he says. "I will go this way around the pool to get to him, you go around that side of the pool to get your money, and everyone leaves happy, hmm?" He looks expectantly over at you.

### HOOKS

Play up the creepiness factor during this scenario. The abandoned spa complex is dark and silent, and yet exposed enough that anyone driving by could see the runners. There's no telling who or what might be hiding in the shadows.

Mr. Johnson, however, is apparently unaffected by the unsettling nature of the whole situation. No matter how badly



the runners have him outnumbered, he acts like he's in total control of the situation. That may just be the creepiest thing of all.

Don't forget to provide one or more clues to lead the runners back to Hoff's house, which is the only place they'll be able to find out what's really been going on all along.

#### BEHIND THE SCENES

After their first attempt to recover Hausmann (via Proteus) failed, Winternight decided to take matters into their own hands. Several of Hausmann's reports to the cult suggested that he found Hoff's ambition suspicious, and felt that the older scientist might try something underhanded which could cause problems for the *Götterbote* project. With this in mind, Anderson, the leader of Hausmann's cell, decided to pay Hoff a visit and ... discuss the situation with him. Hoff does not handle death threats well, and confessed his complicity to Anderson and company.

Wanting to resolve things as simply as possible, Anderson persuades Hoff to contact the runners and arrange for Hausmann's release. During this call, a Winternight goon has his pistol pressed to the back of Hoff's head while Anderson watches and listens carefully for any hit of trickery or betrayal. Hoff is terrified, but doesn't want to reveal that for fear of what Anderson will do to him. His objective is to arrange for the meet and get off the phone as quickly as possible; he will defer any questions that don't relate directly to the meet, saying that he

"will answer that tonight." If the runners do ask questions about the meet, there will be a slight pause while Hoff gets his answers from Anderson. Once the meet has been arranged and the call completed, Anderson kills Hoff and leaves. He will go to the meet himself, posing as Hoff via a Physical Mask spell (since he doesn't know if the runners have ever seen Hoff in person).

#### The Meet

The Sporting and Aero Club was once Kourou's best physical fitness center, with handball, racquetball and tennis courts, pools, Jacuzzis, saunas, massage tables, and so forth. It was kept in business by employees of the French space facility nearby and the occasional tourist, and when Saeder-Krupp took over the French base and built its own health club for its employees, the club could no longer afford to remain open. Now it is abandoned, dilapidated, dark and dreary.

Anderson awaits the runners near the pool area as described above. He is not alone. Two drones hover at a discreet distance (controlled by a rigger waiting in a nearby car), and three cybered razorboys are hiding inside the club building in case of trouble. Anderson wants to resolve the matter without bloodshed if possible, but does not intend to let the runners get away with Hausmann again. The reinforcements are ready just in case.

When the negotiations begin, Anderson simply offers to pay the runners the rest of their agreed-upon fee in exchange



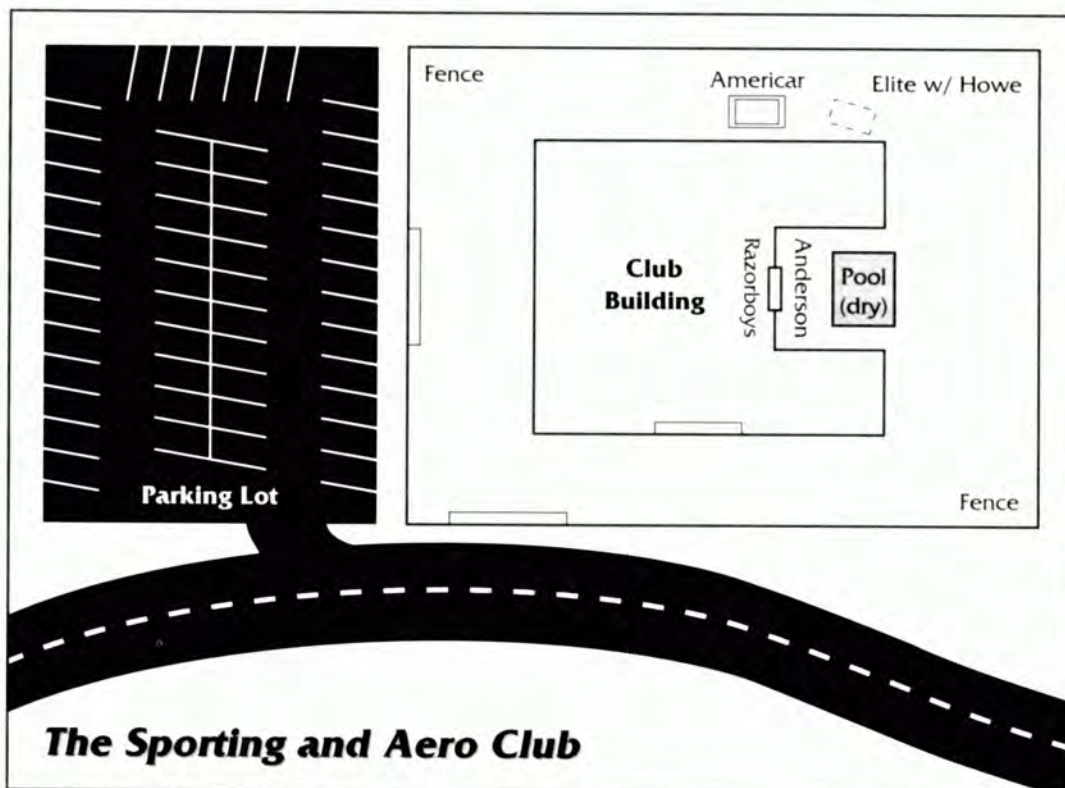
for Hausmann. If the runners balk at this or complain about the level of opposition Proteus sent after them, Anderson does not hesitate to offer a "flexibility bonus" equal to an additional 50 percent of the runners' total fee. This itself may tip the runners off that something is afoot, considering how tight-fisted Hoff was in earlier negotiations. As a last resort, Anderson will offer to pay the runners double their fee.

If the runners agree, Anderson produces the appropriate amount in certified credsticks and adds it to the bag laying by the pool. The walk-around-the-pool routine puts the runners in prime position to be ambushed by Anderson's cronies, should that become necessary. Anderson will listen to any reasonable alternative plan for the exchange, however, though he will not pay any money without being certain that Hausmann is alive.

The runners have several possible ways to figure out that Anderson is not their original Mr. Johnson. The Physical Mask spell is probably the best tip that something is not right. Characters who make a successful Resistance Test will see Anderson's real face under the illusion, and characters who successfully assense Anderson will become aware of the illusion as well. Anderson also doesn't know all the details of the deal Hoff made with the runners; he knows the basics, the pay rate, etc., but doesn't know the details of any conversations they had with Hoff (except the phone call setting up this meet). If a runner makes some reference to an earlier conversation, Anderson will not catch it.

If the runners tell Anderson that they don't think he's the man that hired them, the shaman will smile thinly and shrug his shoulders. "Does it really matter?" he says, voice oily and sharp. "You will get your money, and your original employer will never complain about your service. You won't hear from him again, so I think it best that you conclude your business with me." He will drop the spell at this point.

If the runners try to put one over on Anderson, such as taking the money without producing Hausmann, the shaman grows displeased. "This is a very simple matter," he says sternly. "Please do not make it more complicated than is necessary. Return Herr Hausmann to me, take your money and go. Otherwise, things might become unpleasant for everyone." If



## The Sporting and Aero Club

necessary, he will signal Howe (his rigger) to bring the drones in low to "encourage" the runners to cooperate; there are two drones, each identical to the one which was defending Hausmann in *Close to the Edge* (p. 15). The drones will not open fire unless combat breaks out, but Anderson hopes their presence will help intimidate the runners into leaving. Anderson will not reveal the presence of the three razorboys, though, saving them as his ace in the hole in case of combat.

The Winternight agents' first priority in this scenario is getting Hausmann out alive; the money, and even their own lives, are comparatively unimportant. If the runners hand Hausmann over, Anderson will freely let them take the credsticks (which are valid and in the correct amounts) and leave without incident. If combat does break out, his first targets will be anyone directly threatening Hausmann, even if he or his cronies are in greater danger; he will not use any damaging area-effect spells which might affect Hausmann, and so forth. Anderson is likely to summon a high-Force spirit to aid his team. If any of the Winternight agents are able to get to Hausmann, they will immediately try to withdraw from combat with him, get to their cars (a rigger-equipped but otherwise nondescript Toyota Elite sedan and a Ford Americar) and flee.

As in *Going For the One* (p. 20), unsilenced gunfire will eventually draw the police. The club is in a more desolate area of town, however, so they will take 2D6 minutes to arrive.

However this scenario ends, try to provide one or more clues leading the runners back towards Hoff's house. Anderson wants them to return to the house so he can frame them for



Hoff's murder; also, the house holds information the characters will need to figure out Winternight's plot. Here are some suggestions:

- The bag containing the credsticks has a label inside reading, "If found, please return to" and Hoff's address. The real Hoff wouldn't have used this bag for the payoff, but Anderson just grabbed whatever he could find.

- If the runners kill of some or all of Anderson's team, one of the bodies may be carrying a slip of paper with Hoff's address on it.

- Anderson will give the runners the address of another safe house they can use, since their first one has been compromised; it's actually the address of Hoff's home. If the runners recognize the address, Anderson smiles and says he "won't be needing it any more."

### Anderson

Anderson, a toxic Raven shaman, is a tall, slender elf with long, wavy blond hair and dark brown eyes. Despite his handsome appearance and pleasant (if cool) demeanor, he is a merciless opponent who will sacrifice anyone and anything to achieve his goal—the destruction of all life on Earth. Born in one of Germany's most heavily polluted states, Anderson always believed that mankind should be punished for its abuse of the Earth and its creatures. He never fell from the "normal" shaman's path into the Toxic Way—he started out toxic. Winternight just gave him a path for the beliefs with which he grew up.

|          |          |          |          |          |          |          |          |          |
|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|
| <b>B</b> | <b>Q</b> | <b>S</b> | <b>C</b> | <b>I</b> | <b>W</b> | <b>E</b> | <b>M</b> | <b>R</b> |
| 4        | 7        | 4        | 7        | 6        | 6        | 6        | 8 (11)   | 6        |

**INIT:** 6 + 1D6

**Dice Pools:** Astral Combat 9, Combat 9, Potency 3, Spell 6

**Karma Pool/Professional Rating:** 4/4

**Race:** Elf

**Active Skills:** Aura Reading 4, Conjuring 5, Edged Weapons 5 (Sword 7), Etiquette 4, Interrogation 5, Intimidation 5, Leadership 5, Negotiation 4, Sorcery 7, Stealth 4, Unarmed Combat 4

**Knowledge Skills:** Kourou 4

**Totem:** Raven (toxic), +2 dice on all Manipulation spells (marked with an asterisk) and +2 dice to summon toxic sky spirits. He receives a +1 penalty on all his magical target numbers when not under the open sky.

**Spells:** Agony 5, Alter Memory 5\*, Armor 5\*, Compel Truth 4\*, Detect Individual 4, Dream 4, Eyes of the Pack 4, Influence 5\*, Lightning Bolt 6\*, Manaball 5, Mind Probe 5, Physical Mask 5, Redirect 5\*, Thunderclap 4\*

**Weapons:** Force 2 Weapon Focus Sword (6M) Knife (4L)

**Armor:** Secure clothing, Secure Ultra-vest (4/2)

### Ein, Zwei and Drei

These are three local razorboys who have been working for Anderson for a year or so, but have no idea that he's connected with Winternight. Anderson pays them well, buys them most of their cyberware and provides them with BTL chips as a reward for a job well done. As a result, they are very loyal to

him. As for his occasional mutterings about destroying life on Earth, well, who takes those things seriously?

|          |          |          |          |          |          |          |          |
|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|
| <b>B</b> | <b>Q</b> | <b>S</b> | <b>C</b> | <b>I</b> | <b>W</b> | <b>E</b> | <b>R</b> |
| 5 (7)    | 5        | 5        | 3        | 3        | 4        | 2        | 4 (6)    |

**INIT:** 4 + 1D6 (6 + 2D6)

**Dice Pools:** Combat 6

**Karma Pool/Professional Rating:** 3/4

**Race:** Human

**Active Skills:** Car 3, Cyber-Implant Combat 5, Etiquette 2 (Street 4), Intimidation 4, Stealth 4, Submachine Guns 6

**Knowledge Skills:** Kourou 4

**Cyberware:** Cybereyes (flare compensation, thermographic, low-light), Dermal Plating (2), Retractable Spur, Smartlink, Wired Reflexes (1)

**Weapons:** SCK Model 100 (SMG, SA/BF, 7M, 30(c) w/2 extra clips (all APDS), smartgun link, sound suppressor]

Range (TN): 0–10 (2), 11–40 (3), 41–80 (4), 81–150 (7) Retractable Spur (5M)

**Armor:** Secure jacket (5/3)

### Howe

Howe is the Winternight team's rigger, and the only one (aside from Anderson and Hausmann) who knows for whom he's really working. A metahuman born to a wealthy human family, his race was an embarrassment in polite society and he was disowned at an early age. He grew into a bitter, resentful man and is happy to help Winternight in its quest to destroy mankind.

|          |          |          |          |          |          |          |          |
|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|
| <b>B</b> | <b>Q</b> | <b>S</b> | <b>C</b> | <b>I</b> | <b>W</b> | <b>E</b> | <b>R</b> |
| 5        | 4        | 5        | 3        | 4        | 4        | 2.3      | 4 (8)    |

**INIT:** 4 + 1D6, Rigging INIT: 8 + 3D6

**Dice Pools:** Combat 6, Control 8

**Karma Pool/Professional Rating:** 2/3

**Race:** Ogre (Ork)

**Active Skills:** Car 6, Electronics 4, Etiquette 2 (Street 4), Gunnery 6, Pistols 4, Vectored Thrust Aircraft 3 (Remote Operations 6)

**Knowledge Skills:** Kourou 5

**Weapons:** Savalette Guardian (Heavy Pistol, SA/BF, 9M, 12(c) w/1 extra clip, smartgun link]

Range (TN): 0–5 (2), 6–20 (3), 21–40 (4), 41–60 (7)

**Cyberware:** Datajack, Smartlink, Vehicle Control Rig (2)

**Armor:** Secure jacket (5/3)

**Gear:** Remote Control Deck (6)

### PUSHING THE ENVELOPE

You may decide that Anderson wants to eliminate the runners regardless of whether they cooperate or not, in which case this scenario becomes a simple ambush. You can always give the Winternight team more drones, but if you really want to brutalize your players, you can add a few extra toxic shamans. Unlike most toxics, the members of Winternight work together for a common cause, and you can combine their Potency ratings into a single pool, to be distributed among the shamans as you like on any given combat turn.



## DEBUGGING

If the characters take any or all of Anderson's clues and go back to Hoff's house, continue with *Face to Face*.

If they still have possession of Hausmann, Anderson will continue attempting to find them via ritual magic and any other means available. If Anderson's cell is destroyed, however, Winternight will not continue to pursue the characters, since the rest of the cult knows little of the plans for *Götterbote*.

If they do not go to Hoff's house, proceed to *Picking Up the Pieces*, p. 31.

## FACE TO FACE

### WHAT'S UP, CHUMMER?

Following a clue from the meeting with Anderson, the runners reach Hoff's apartment and discover his corpse. More importantly, they discover a recording of his murder, which also reveals the importance of tomorrow's *Götterbote* launch—and the deadly effect it will have if it succeeds. They will also have to evade a police assault, thanks to a going-away present from Winternight.

### TELL IT TO THEM STRAIGHT

The house is quiet and dark except for a single light towards the back. No sign of anyone moving inside, either. As you look more closely, though, you notice that the front door of the house hangs ajar, swinging back and forth in the hot breeze.

### If the characters enter the house and start looking around, read them the following:

You enter the house cautiously, listening for any sign of life, but it's dead quiet inside. Everything in the front room seems to be in order, but as you head towards the back of the house, your nostrils catch the unmistakable coppery tang of blood. The study door is open, and the light is still on, revealing the source of that smell.

Mr. Johnson is sprawled in his desk chair in the center of the room. His hands are cuffed together behind the chair; his head is flung back, his eyes open and staring. There is a neat bullet hole in his forehead, obviously inflicted from very close range; the hole in the back of his head is much larger, and the back of the chair and the carpet below are covered with dried blood and bone fragments. A small-caliber revolver is lying on the floor a few feet away from the body.

There is no movement in the room, except for a small, blinking message on the telecom screen at his desk. "RECORDING ENDED—OUT OF STORAGE SPACE," it says. "PLAYBACK NOW? (Y/N)"

### If and when the characters play back the telecom recording, read the following aloud:

The recording begins with Mr. Johnson sitting at this desk, in this very room. He looks at the telecom for a moment, then composes his face into a sad expression. "Herr Verdán," he says, "I regret what happened to Heinrich as much as anyone. But we cannot—no, that's not right." He shakes his head, pauses for a moment, then starts again. "Herr Verdán, Heinrich's

safety is more important than the probe's launch, but that's in the hands of the police now. We must—no, no. Sincere. Be sincere." He pauses again, this time looking gravely into the camera. "Herr Verdán, Heinrich would want us to continue with the launch. I know he would. But we can't use his payload package without him. I hate to seem heartless, but we *must* choose an alternate payload, and—"

This time, Johnson is interrupted by a crash from somewhere off-camera. He leaps to his feet, startled, and slaps hastily at the keyboard in the direction of the PAUSE key. Apparently he missed, because the recording keeps running as he takes a few steps towards the door of the study. A few seconds after he moves out of the camera's line of sight, he's literally thrown back into the frame, slamming against the far wall and falling heavily to the floor. A muscular and obviously cybered man walks into the frame and kicks him viciously in the ribcage as he tries to rise. As Johnson flops back to the floor, the vatjob rears back for another kick but is stopped by the arrival of a tall, blond-haired elf.

"Patience, Zwei," he says in a smooth, cultured German accent. "Let us not harm Herr Hoff, at least until he has told us what we want to know." Another cybered human enters the frame, and together they haul Johnson—or Hoff, you suppose—into his desk chair and cuff his hands behind him.

"Herr Hoff," the elf says, "we know that you are responsible for Heinrich Hausmann's disappearance." Hoff stares up at him, wide-eyed and sweating, apparently too terrified to reply. "While your desire to improve your standing within Proteus AG is admirable, it is very important to us that Herr Hausmann gets his payload loaded aboard the comet probe. That requires him to be at work to operate it. This is very important to us. A matter of life and death, in fact. Do you take my meaning?" Shaking, Hoff nods. "Good. Now first, you will tell me all about your little plan."

Stammering and sweating, Hoff tells the elf about his deal with you, the money, the safe house, and so forth. He doesn't even try to hold anything back. When he finishes, the elf taps his fingers together thoughtfully as he thinks.

"I assume that you have some way of contacting the persons you hired?" he asks. Again, Hoff nods. "You will do so. Now. Explain that matters have changed, and that you wish to secure Herr Hausmann's release. You will pay them the rest of their fee, and they will release Herr Hausmann to you. Have them meet you at midnight tonight at the Sporting and Aero club, and bring Herr Hausmann with them. Do you understand? Say nothing of what is going on here; say only exactly what I have told you." One of the razorboys punctuates that comment by cocking his revolver noisily next to Hoff's ear.

Hoff nods, and looks over towards an end table. "Phone over there," he stutters out. "Second drawer. S-speed dial number 1." The second razorboy gets the indicated phone, dials, and holds it up to Hoff's ear. You hear one side of a conversation that you've already heard.

When Hoff gets off the phone, the elf smiles. "Well done, Herr Hoff. As a reward, I give you a quick death: one far kinder than the rest of mankind will suffer after the *Götterbote* probe is launched tomorrow."



Hoff begins to babble. "But they're expecting me! I must be there tonight! You need me there!"

The elf shakes his head, smiling. "No, I don't." He looks down at the man in the chair for a moment, then his image shimmers. Suddenly, an exact duplicate of Hoff is standing where the elf was, looking down at his twin in the chair. "You see," he says, his voice an exact match for Hoff's own, "they will see exactly whom they expect tonight." His image flickers again, and once more the elf stands where he was. "So you see, we no longer need you at all."

As Hoff begins incoherently spewing pleas for his life, the razorboy with the revolver places the barrel directly in the center of Hoff's forehead and fires. Blood sprays; Hoff twitches for a second or two, then goes limp.

"Won't look like a suicide, shot there." the second razorboy grunts. The first one shrugs and drops the pistol to the floor. He moves to sever Hausmann's bonds with his wrist spur when the elf stops him.

"No, leave him like that," he says. "I believe that we can find someone else to take responsibility for Herr Hoff's murder. I so despise loose ends. Give me that phone." With that, the trio leaves the room.

The video continues for some time, showing only Hoff's corpse, before it abruptly ends with an "INSUFFICIENT STORAGE SPACE" error message.

## HOOKS

This is where it all comes together. The runners will be able to piece the story together, but need to figure out what to do with it in time to make a difference. The scene should start as a slow burn, with the tension rising as they view the recording, and climax with the arrival of the police forces to catch the "murderers" red-handed.

## BEHIND THE SCENES

As described in the video sequence, Hoff was practicing how he would raise the subject of the *Götterbote* payload with his boss, recording it on his telecomm for review. Luckily for the runners, Hoff accidentally left the recorder running, enabling the runners to find out what has been happening. Not realizing that his words were being saved for posterity, Anderson proceeded to deal with Hoff in his usual brutally efficient manner.

If the runners saw Anderson without his Physical Mask spell, and/or encountered the Winternight razorboys during *Masquerade*, they will certainly recognize them in the recording.

## Frame-Up

Once the runners have had a chance to view the recording, or as they're leaving if they downloaded the recording for later review, they have a last surprise. As Anderson hinted at during the recording, he plans to frame the runners for Hoff's murder. Mimicking Hoff's voice through his spell, Anderson recorded "Hoff" reporting men with guns breaking into his house, then the phone being abruptly cut off. A high-altitude Winternight drone was assigned to watch Hoff's house, and when the runners entered, it called the Kourou police and played back the recording. The police naturally contacted

Proteus, and both Proteus and police forces race to the house just in time to encounter the runners standing over the dead body of a top Proteus scientist. Needless to say, this does not look good for them.

The police will try to surround the house before the runners are aware of them, if possible. They first give the runners a chance to surrender, not wanting to get into a gunfight. Anderson, however, wants the police to kill the runners; the police will assume that the runners killed Hoff, and with no living witnesses to question, should close the case and not raise any questions which might endanger Winternight. If Howe is still alive and sees the runners attempting to surrender, he will have the drone open fire on the police from the direction of the house, which should be enough to trigger the police into firing at the runners.

The runners' opposition in this scenario consists of eight Kourou police officers (using the stats from *Going For the One*, p. 20) and a Proteus strike team (using the stats from *Lightning Strikes*, p. 22).

## PUSHING THE ENVELOPE

If any of the Winternight agents are still alive after *Masquerade*, they may well observe the scene from a distance to ensure that all the runners are killed. With a pair of optical binoculars for Anderson and a sniper rifle for each surviving razorboy, the Winternight team has a very good chance to keep any of the runners from reaching custody alive. Of course, they police will frown on anyone attempting to kill their prisoners, so Winternight will need to be cautious or risk revealing themselves.

## DEBUGGING

If the runners ignore the message on Hoff's telecomm, they'll probably never find out what happened. The police will eventually find the message and realize that the runners are innocent, though it may be too late for them at that point.

If they decide to get the message to Proteus and/or the Kourou police, they can foil Winternight's plot.

If they decide to return to the arkoblock to stop the *Götterbote* launch themselves, use the information in *Close to the Edge*, p. 15, to resolve the attempt. Proteus' security will be at its tightest after the kidnapping of Hausmann and the murder of Hoff. The runners must invade the arkoblock and either damage the booster rocket enough to delay the launch or get to the launch control center and force the rocket to self-destruct. Neither option will be easy.

Whatever happens, proceed to *Picking Up the Pieces*, p. 31, to wrap things up.

## PICKING UP THE PIECES

### IT'S A WRAP

The runners' best bet for survival is to somehow get a copy of the recording from Hoff's telecomm to Proteus and/or the Kourou police. While it won't get them entirely off the hook for Hausmann's kidnapping, it will prove their innocence in Hoff's murder and will also raise some questions about what



Hausmann was up to. Proteus will certainly question Hausmann closely (if he's still alive) and examine his payload package, thus discovering the nuke before it's too late. The news will never be made public, of course, and Hausmann will quietly disappear; it's up to you whether Proteus terminates Hausmann or Winternight manages to free him in time.

Then again, Winternight might kill Hausmann themselves to keep him from revealing anything about Winternight. If the runners' information leads directly to the discovery of Hausmann's treachery, Proteus will probably be willing to let the runners go, although they may ask the runners to reimburse the corp for any damage they did to corp property or personnel.

If Hausmann is dead, the nuke will still be discovered as Proteus loads a duplicate payload into the *Götterbote*. Without the video, the corp will have no idea what Hausmann was up to, and will still want to capture the runners for questioning. The runners' story will fit in with what Proteus has learned, however, and the runners can still probably talk their way out of trouble.

If the runners manage to stop the *Götterbote* launch themselves, they will attract all of Proteus' attention, and not in a good way. This project was a huge priority for the corp, and whoever foiled it has cost Proteus millions of nuyen. Unless the runners can prove what Hausmann had in mind, they will have Proteus agents after them for quite a while.

If the launch goes ahead with Hausmann's nuke on board, the runners have failed. Unless you really want Halley's Comet to hit the Earth and send the planet into nuclear winter, you'll need to find a way to get the probe launch to fail. Of course, other space-oriented megacorporations (Saeder-Krupp, Ares, Novatech and Yamatetsu) want Proteus' launch to fail, even without knowing about the nuke. Any of them might well try to send a shadow team up to Proteus' Treffpunkt Raumhafen orbital facility to stop the launch.

You can have this happen in the background of your campaign or even hire the runners to make the attempt if they're ready to take another mission so soon. If you really want to make your players wonder, you could have another corp's anti-*Götterbote* run go bad and have the entire Treffpunkt station destroyed by an unexplained nuclear blast. This would certainly raise tensions between the various megacorps and could become a major event in your campaigns' history.

Unless the runners get Proteus on their side (or have managed to keep their faces hidden from the police for the duration of their stay), they will not be able to use any return tickets purchased for them by Hoff. Getting back to the UCAS may become an adventure in itself, requiring the runners to deal with Caribbean League smugglers, Amazonian border security or any number of other obstacles.

If Anderson or Howe are alive, the runners may have to deal with retaliation from Winternight in the future. The cult doesn't normally put a lot of stock in revenge, as there is too much risk of exposure. If the runners know too much about Winternight (or if the cult *thinks* they know too much), however, and particularly if they foiled Hausmann's plan, the cult will make an extra effort to silence the runners. These efforts will

involve hired guns rather than actual cult members, so as to reduce the risk of further exposure.

#### AWARDING KARMA

Award individual Karma according to the rules on p. 244, SR3. Award Karma to each team member based on the following achievements:

|                                    |          |
|------------------------------------|----------|
| Surviving the run                  | 2 points |
| Threat level                       | 2 points |
| Preventing the nuke from launching | 1 point  |

#### LEGWORK

Since the characters will be in a foreign country for most of this adventure and thus away from their regular contacts, there won't be much opportunity for traditional legwork. Matrix research and long-distance calls are still possible, but most of the topics the runners may want to ask about are little-known back in the UCAS.

#### FRENCH GUIANA

The information below can be easily found via a simple Matrix search (Target Number 4).

French Guiana is often referred to simply as Guiana these days; the "French" part of the name was used mainly to distinguish the territory from neighboring Guyana, which is now just another part of northern Amazonia. In fact, French Guiana is one of the few areas of northern South America which has not been conquered by Amazonia, though it is surrounded by Amazonia on three sides (with the Atlantic Ocean on the fourth). This is not because of Amazonia's lack of interest or Guiana's strong defenses, but because French Guiana is, as the name implies, a protectorate of France, and the Amazonian government is unwilling to take on Europe for less than a hundred thousand square kilometers of land.

Guiana's physical resources are minimal; other than subsistence agriculture, the main industries are forestry and gold mining, neither of which generates a great deal of income for the nation. Its main asset is actually its location: the country sits almost directly atop the equator, which makes it ideal for launching rockets into geostationary orbit. In addition to Proteus' offshore facility, the former European Space Agency base in Kourou is now owned by Saeder-Krupp. Novatech is currently building its own launch facility outside Cayenne.

The population of the country is strongly divided between the small percentage of wealthy, highly-educated corporate employees who work at the various aerospace facilities, and the poor, uneducated masses who operate Guyana's farms, lumberyards and mines, if they're lucky enough to have a job at all. In this respect, it's actually fairly similar to the UCAS, except that the poor are even poorer in Guiana. Crime, alcoholism, drug and chip use are rampant among the lower classes, and while there is a lot of resentment towards the privileged corporate suits, the corporate facilities are sufficiently well-defended to ward off any would-be troublemakers.

French is the country's official language, but most of the population actually speaks a French-Amerindian creole. English is also widely spoken. Yellow fever and rabies are fairly com-





mon, and vaccinations are recommended. Travelers are also advised to stay away from local milk and dairy products, and to stick to bottled water outside major metropolitan areas.

### GÖTTERBOTE

At several points during the adventure, the runners may come across the name *Götterbote*. A simple Matrix search (Target Number 5) will enable them to learn that it is Proteus' name for its comet probe, as well as the planned launch date. The probe will be boosted from Proteus' Devil's Island arkoblock up to the Treffpunkt Raumhaufen orbital station, where it will be loaded onto a deep-space rocket and launched towards Halley's Comet. Any other information about the probe is classified, and can only be found inside Proteus's own Matrix system.

The name is German for "God-messenger."

### HEINRICH HAUSMANN

#### Matrix Research Only (Target Number 6)

#### Successes Results

- 0 Null data, chummer.
- 1-2 German national, born 2034. BSE in Electronic Engineering from Aachen University of Technology, four years of advanced studies at Astrophysics Institute of Potsdam, currently employed by Proteus AG, unmarried, no living family members.
- 3 Excellent grades and employee evaluations through his entire career. Won a national science prize in Germany during his senior year in college. Currently assigned to Proteus' arkoblock at Iles du Salut, French Guiana. Exact assignment unknown.
- 4+ Believed to have designed primary sensor systems for Proteus' Treffpunkt Raumhaufen orbital facility.

### PROTEUS AG

#### Any Corporate Contacts (Target Number 4)

#### Successes Results

- 0 Hmph. They're not a triple-A megacorporation, so I can't be bothered to keep tabs on them.
- 1-2 A German AA megacorp. They specialize in heavy industry, including a lot of aquatechnology.
- 3 They've been extraterritorial for about ten years and they're beginning to draw a lot of attention from the Big Ten.
- 4 Proteus is beginning to expand into the aerospace field; they've just completed a big new arcology in South America dedicated solely to orbital launches. They're not a threat to Ares and Novatech yet, but they're being watched very closely.

5

Yes, I believe that new Proteus arcology is in French Guiana, now that you mention it.

### CAST OF SHADOWS



### Heinrich Hausmann

Hausmann is 26 years old, short and slender, and looks like he'd fall over if he was hit by a stiff breeze, much less a good punch. That said, he's quite capable of killing a majority of the Earth's population, and he's more than willing to do it. Years of indoctrination into Winternight's principles have turned him into an almost perfect psychopath, though he didn't really need much help along the way.

Hausmann is an extraordinarily intelligent man with a charming personality and a remarkable ability to lie his way out of almost any situation. Despite the duress of his capture and imprisonment, he appears calm and unafraid throughout the ordeal. If he sees any chance at an escape, he will take it; if recaptured, he will simply shrug off any punishment and keep his eyes open for another chance.

Note that while Hausmann is equipped with a Vehicle Control Rig, he's not a rigger in the usual sense. He uses the rig to control survey drones and remote equipment, but would be a lousy choice as a combat driver.

**B** 3   **Q** 4   **S** 3   **C** 5   **I** 6   **W** 6   **E** 3   **R** 5 (9)

**INIT:** 5 + 1D6, Rigging INIT: 9 + 3D6

**Dice Pools:** Combat 8, Control 9

**Karma Pool/Professional Rating:** 2/2

**Race:** Human

**Active Skills:** Car 2 (Remote Operations 4), Etiquette 4 (Corporate 6), Leadership 4, Negotiation 6, Unarmed Combat 3

**Knowledge Skills:** Astrophysics 6, Computer 5, Electronics 6, Electronics B/R 6

**Cyberware (all alphaware):** Datajack, Headware Memory (100 Mp) Math SPU (3), Microbomb, Vehicle Control Rig (2)

# CATCH A FALLING STAR



## OUT OF THE DARK: A PROLOGUE

*Beepeeppeepeep ...*

The fully lit console and the staccato beeping shook everyone out of their routine.

"What's going on?" asked Ivan Kolenko, project manager for *Gagarin*, startled away from a progress report.

"It's back! *Gagarin* sent us a signal!" The engineer was nearly jumping out of his skin.

"Are you sure, Richards?"

"Positive, the datastream came from dead center on our satellite tracking."

Ivan picked up a nearby phone. "Yoshi, get to the control room. You're not gonna believe this!"

\*\*\*\*\*

Yoshi Hakeda's running footsteps thumped from down the hall, announcing his breathless arrival. He skittered into the room and skidded to a stop in front of Ivan and the dancing lights of the console.

"What? What is it?" Yoshi gasped, his chest heaving. Three packs of cigarettes a day left him breathless from even the briefest of physical exertions.

"Congratulations, Yoshi. It looks like we won't have to write off *Gagarin* after all." Ivan smirked, knowing the news could possibly throw Yoshi into a full on coronary.

Yoshi was speechless for a full minute, looking from grinning face to grinning face, desperately trying to recover his breath.

"Yoshi. We're not kidding. It's good news!" said Ivan, smacking him on the back.

"No. I'm elated. Hoooo. I'm breathless. Speechless." Yoshi instinctively flipped a cigarette between his lips and lit it. "I knew everything was going to be okay. I just knew it." He took a drag, exhaled, then bent over to catch his breath. "So, what's it saying?"

"Not much so far, there is some corruption in the data and some of the numbers don't make any sense. We're filtering it now." Richards kept his eyes locked on the screens to catch anything and everything. "The sensor memory module is offline—"

"What?" The word came simultaneously from both Yoshi and Ivan.



"The sensor module. It's offline." Richards repeated the words though he knew they heard him the first time, "which may indicate a problem with the primary systems. Basically, all we've got is some basic housekeeping data, no images or scientific measurements so far. We know most of the other systems including guidance are operational, though the communications system is only half-functional. Long-range monitoring shows the probe to be intact, though it's hard to tell this far away. We can't access the memory, so we don't know if it scanned anything on its comet flyby. It's still programmed to deposit its sensor module when it passes by Earth, though it's slightly off course. So we're still not sure where that module will touch down."

Yoshi's eyes drifted skyward and panic set in. Ivan felt it too and stood in silence, waiting for Yoshi to make the first move.

"Excuse me for a second. I have to make a phone call." Yoshi's skin paled as he stepped away to relay the news to his boss, Saru Iwano, Yamatetsu's CEO. He wandered into the hall and lit up another cigarette, his thirty-second of the young day.

He dialed the private number and waited. One ring barely finished before Iwano's voice picked up on the other end. Voice only.

"Yes?" His voice was deep and dark.

"Pardon the intrusion, Mr. Iwano-san, but I have some news."

Yoshi waited for a response but there was only silence, so he continued with his report, coating his speech with an air of false confidence.

"Sir. We have received contact from *Gagarin*. I knew it was not lost." Yoshi took a long drag after he delivered the good news and exhaled. He needed to prepare himself for the bad.

"I am glad to hear it. Now give me the bad news." There was no fooling Saru Iwano, and Yoshi knew it. He was actually relieved that Iwano was able to hear the concern in his voice.

"Well. Sir. We don't yet know if it recorded any sensor readings on the comet after we lost contact with it; it may simply have shut down and recorded nothing. We can't claim a victory until we retrieve and analyze the sensor module, which we'll have to retrieve from an unknown splashdown point." The words flew out of Yoshi's mouth. Better to get it over quickly than prolong the agony with excuses.

Silence.

Finally, Iwano responded. "Yoshi, I find none of this news to be good. In fact, I find it entirely sickening." Iwano paused briefly. During the gap in the conversation, Yoshi prayed to whoever or whatever would listen that his life would be spared.

"We cannot claim a victory until we have concrete sensor information in our hands. In fact, we cannot even let word of *Gagarin*'s return leak out, because if we cannot retrieve the module or it holds no data, we look like even bigger fools. If that is the case, I would have preferred *Gagarin* to have been lost forever.

"Your team is now working on this twenty-four seven. Get *Gagarin* back on-line and determine if it collected anything—if it did, retrieve it at all costs. Our enemies will seek to keep that

data out of our grasp by any means they can. Nothing about this leaves your circle and you update me immediately on anything. Understood?"

"Yes, sir."

"And I want a thorough list of everyone in your facility who knows about this within the hour. Make it clear there will be consequences for failure. Do you understand me, Yoshi?"

"Yes. I do."

Without another word, Iwano ended the conversation. The line clicked dead and Yoshi stood still and alone in the hall.

His life had just become hell.

## PREPARING TO PLAY

### BACKGROUND AND PLOT SYNOPSIS

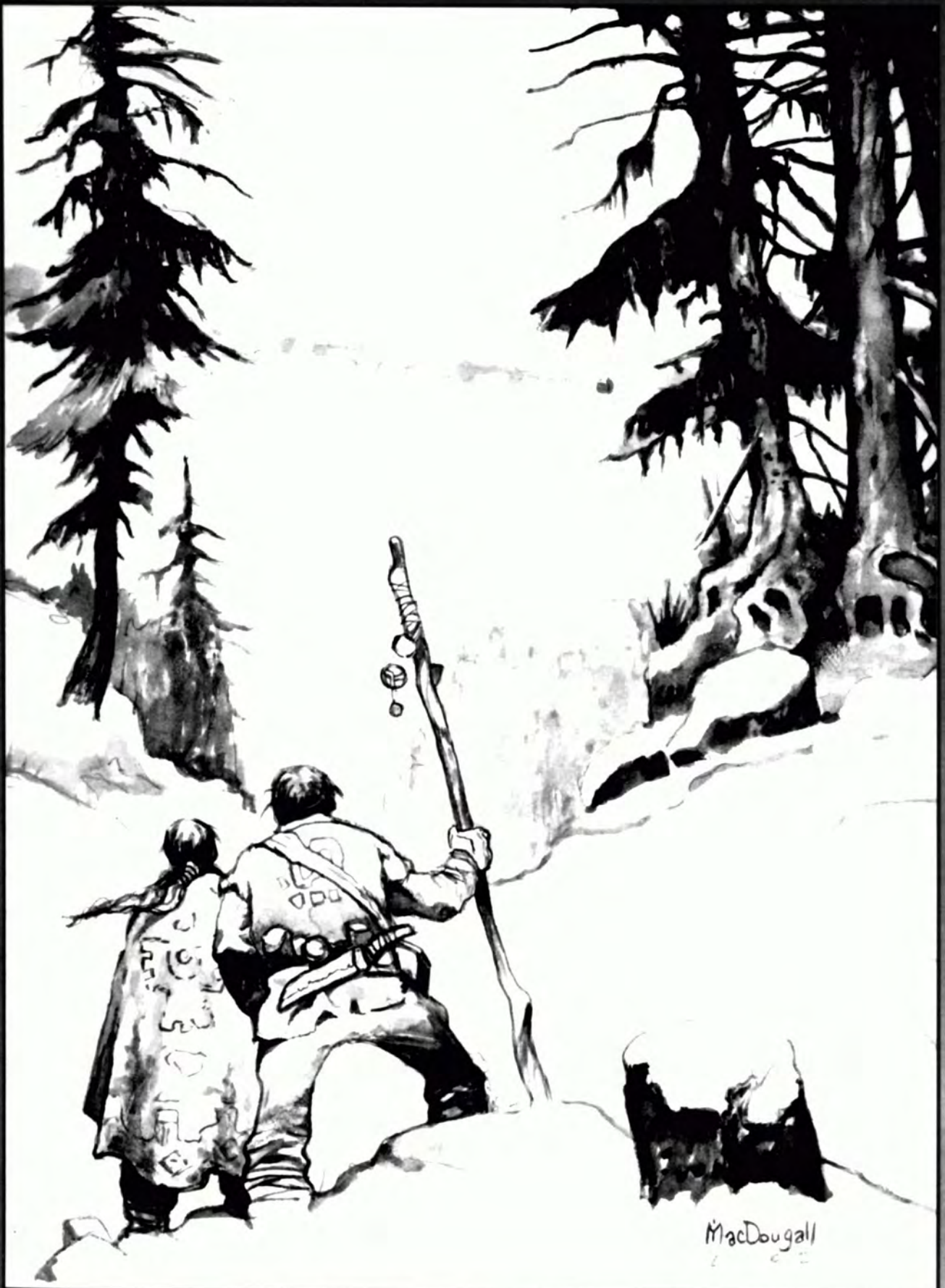
During the first leg of the probe race in 2061, the only megacorp to get a probe close to Halley's Comet was Yamatetsu. Their "victory" was short-lived, however, as contact with *Gagarin* was lost shortly after its sensors were able to begin gathering information on the comet—much to Yamatetsu's embarrassment. All attempts to regain communication failed and the probe was presumed lost. Something went wrong, but no one knew exactly what that was.

Then in early 2062 after Halley's perihelion, *Gagarin* sent a burst transmission back to Earth, shocking Yamatetsu's defeated staff. They quickly realized that *Gagarin* was not fully operational. Most importantly, they were frustrated to find that they could not access any sensor data the probe may have accumulated, or even tell if it was able to do so. The data was locked away in a sensor module that *Gagarin* was programmed to drop on its flyby past the Earth. Unwilling to risk another loss of face, Yamatetsu opted to keep this development a secret until they could verify the module's contents. The only problem was that *Gagarin* was slightly off course, and no one knew where the module would touch down.

As data traffic and transmissions picked up between Yamatetsu and *Gagarin*, other corps began to suspect that Yamatetsu was up to something. Enter the runners, who are hired to retrieve the data that proves that Yamatetsu has re-established contact with *Gagarin* and other significant details about the project for an unnamed party. To accomplish this, the runners need to gain access to a secure Yamatetsu PLTG onboard the *Shibanokuji* orbital station, which can only be accessed via satellite uplink from certain Yamatetsu facilities. If they succeed, all is fine and they get paid and go on with their lives.

Some time in early May 2062, after completing other jobs, the runners are hired again by the same party. Using the data retrieved earlier, their employer has been following *Gagarin*'s trajectory and watching for it to deploy the sensor module. The module has crashed in the middle of nowhere, in the area of the Algonkian-Manitou Council controlled by anti-technology secessionists.

The runners' mission objective can take several forms, based on who their actual employer is as determined by the gamemaster (see *Gamemaster Notes*, p. 36). They may be asked to retrieve the module (or at the very least be the only



MacDougall



team to recover the data), destroy it outright, corrupt the data but leave the module intact or plant evidence of sabotage.

The runners are transported to the newly seceded Manitou territory to search for the crash site. Yamatetsu was quick enough to send a team in to retrieve it before anyone else, but they ran afoul of the Manitou rebels. The module is now in Manitou hands. The runners are forced to track it down to a nearby Manitou village. Whether they enter the town willingly or as captives, they must determine where the module is—not to mention convince the Manitou to hand it over. When a second Yamatetsu team shows up on the scene, an already tense situation gets even more interesting.

Despite the high stakes of this run, it will not require a powerful team, just a skillful one. Firepower may not be needed at all—finesse and smooth talking will be far more important.

### GAMEMASTER NOTES

It is entirely up to the gamemaster to determine which interested party is hiring the runners. This choice will have an effect on the course of events. The major players are broken down below by their goals and their mission parameters for the second mission (they all have the same goal for the first mission). In certain scenes, there will be notes providing details on what is to happen in the scene to match the motivations of the specific employer.

#### Ares

Damien Knight is as interested in getting his hands on the data—and, if possible, the module as well (even if the runners can only recover pieces of wreckage)—as he is in seeing Yamatetsu lose. If the runners can't obtain the data exclusively for Ares, they will have orders to destroy it.

#### Aztechnology

The Azzies want the module and data destroyed and don't much care how it happens. They simply don't want Yamatetsu to win the probe race.

#### Saeder-Krupp

Lofwyr is curious to see what data the probe collected, but he does not want it to fall into anyone else's hands—especially Yamatetsu's. The runners will be instructed to download the data, leave no traces and to wipe the module clean and leave it behind.

#### Shiawase

Shiawase wants the data and the module destroyed, and they would prefer if it looks like the damage came from the crash.

#### Other Possibilities

If the gamemaster has another employer in mind, there is likely some way to fit them in. Other possibilities include Novatech, Proteus, Shibata or the UCAS or other governments. Most of these simply want to ensure that the *Gagarin* probe didn't obtain any sensor readings on the comet, as that would give Yamatetsu a valid claim on winning the probe race. Others

may want the data for their own purposes, or they may want to frame another rival for destroying it.

### THINGS TO KNOW

To get a further grasp on the background story, it is recommended that gamemasters read the probe race section of Year of the Comet. The chapter on the Algonkian-Manitou Council in *Shadows of North America* will also be useful for understanding the history and politics of this region in crisis. Finally, *Corporate Download* may be useful for understanding the motivations of some of the potential employers.

## SUNDAE TREAT

### WHAT'S UP, CHUMMER?

The runners are asked to meet with a Mr. Johnson at an ice cream parlor. He hires them to steal data from a private Yamatetsu grid on *Shibanokuji* orbital station. The grid can be accessed by breaking into Alaxa, a small biotech subsidiary that has a dedicated satellite link to the orbital station.

### TELL IT TO THEM STRAIGHT

This is definitely one of the strangest places you've ever had a meet. The neon sign that hangs out over the sidewalk reads "Lickety-Splits Old Fashioned Ice Cream." The fixer wasn't lying—a storefront ice cream parlor it is. A thick ork stands outside the door. Through the window of the shop, you can see nothing but inky blackness and the shadowy outlines of an ice cream counter and a smattering of chairs turned upside down, crowning the tables. The ork looks you up and down, then mutters, "Sherbet?" The word seems odd coming from such a hulking individual with a face scarred from a lifetime of fisticuffs.

### After the Runners Utter the appropriate Response:

The ork opens the door to Lickety-Splits. "All the way to the back." He steps aside and motions for you to enter. The pleasant smell of waffle cones and confections fills your nose. When you reach the back room, Mr. Johnson is waiting, seated at a flimsy card table with a half-eaten banana split in front of him. He is extremely short but not a dwarf, with gnarled limbs, all of which appear to still be functional. A thin, tightly groomed mustache sits on his upper lip. Another large ork stands over his shoulder holding a waffle cone heaped with chocolate ice cream. A row of stools is set out for your arrival.

When Mr. Johnson speaks, it is with a surrealistic squeal, as if his vocal chords were twisted in accordance with the rest of his body. "I'm glad you could all make it on such short notice. Please sit. Would any of you like some ice cream? It's quite good here."

### After The Runners Place Their Ice Cream Orders:

Mr. Johnson nods to the ork, indicating that it is okay to leave the room and fetch your ice cream. "The job in question requires operating within strict windows of opportunity, but I have no doubt you can handle it. Simply put, we would like you to enter a small biotech facility, that is new to the area and



appropriate some data for us from a secure remote server. Shall I continue?"

#### If They Agree To Hear More:

"Excellent. Your job will be to enter and leave as quietly as possible, break into their secure network and use their satellite uplink to retrieve data from an orbital databank. My principals would like the data post haste and will provide a significant bonus for delivery within 48 hours." The ork re-enters the room with your ice cream. "Shall we do business?"

#### HOOKS

Though this is, in many ways, a standard meet, there is a twist of surrealness to it. Play up the unusual location, Mr. Johnson's unusual appearance, and the unusual great taste of real old-fashioned dairy (not soy) ice cream.

The runners are given the minimum amount of details necessary to complete the run. Specifics are a luxury the runners will not have until much later. Speed is the most important thing to the employer, even more so than the actual quality of the take (though it never hurts to have both) and the runners should be pressed to act quickly.

#### BEHIND THE SCENES

The runners are originally contacted for this job through one of their usual fixers. All the fixer knows is that it's a B&E datasteal job—light physical security, heavy Matrix sec. The fixer gives them the location, meeting time and the passphrase response: "Rainbow."

Mr. Johnson (see *Cast of Shadows*, p. 55) deals straight with the runners, though his choice of places to meet is downright weird. If asked about the choice of locations for the meet, he adopts a "to each his own" or "who would suspect a place like this?" attitude. He will encourage the runners to partake in the ice cream, even to the point where they may find it suspicious. His intentions are innocent and the ice cream is quite good.

#### The Run

Mr. Johnson will offer data in layers—as each level of agreement is reached, more information is revealed. Their target is Alaxa, a small biotech firm located in Everett. Yamatetsu owns Alaxa, but the megacorp has been very quiet about its investment in the firm, hoping some anonymity will provide some security.

Alaxa is conducting research on new bioware designs and stress reduction. Part of this work involves sharing data with Yamatetsu's zero-g bio lab on *Shibanokuji* station. This lab happens to be on the same PLTG used by Yamatetsu's other classified space-oriented projects, including the *Gagarin* mission.

Mr. Johnson is hoping the runners can break inside Alaxa and gain access to that PLTG through their satellite uplink. The uplink normally happens once per hour while the station is overhead, which is generally a two to six hour span. The satellite uplink uses one-minute burst transmissions, so there will only be a short window of opportunity to get the data.

Once they have accessed the PLTG, Mr. Johnson wants the runners to locate details regarding a specific set of transmis-

sions Yamatetsu has made and received (he will provide dates, times, lengths and transmitter numbers). He suspects that these transmissions are communication between Yamatetsu and the crippled *Gagarin*, but he will not tell the runners that. Instead he wants to know the following details: who the transmission were to/from, what they were about, and any and all other relevant details. Once they have the data and are safely away, they should contact their fixer for final delivery.

Once the methods of payment and delivery are settled, the runners are provided with everything they need to get started: the layout of the Alaxa grounds, a listing of times when an uplink connection can be made, and a searchbot for use on the orbital system (see *Finding the Data*, p. 40).

#### The Pay

The pay is 8,000¥ per runner, with a 10 percent bonus for completion within 48 hours. Mr. Johnson will offer up to 25 percent in advance. The individual pay can be raised by 500¥ per runner or the quick completion bonus can be raised by 5 percent for each success on a Negotiation (5) Test.

#### PUSHING THE ENVELOPE

This scenario is more about roleplaying than fighting, so play up the weirdness factor. Mr. Johnson may insist on meeting at the ice cream parlor while it is open, rather than after hours. In this case, the meet will be surrounded by screaming, playing, ice-cream smeared children, while their nearby parents eye the runners nervously. Some of the children may become fascinated (or frightened) by the runners, interrupting the meeting with their questions or screams. Alternately, Mr. Johnson may come from a culture where refusing hospitality is a serious offense, putting the runners in the position where they must accept the mysterious ice cream if they want to take the job.

To increase the challenge of the offered run, Mr. Johnson may ask the team's decker to leave behind a smart frame in the Yamatetsu PLTG. This smart frame will monitor transmission to and from *Gagarin*, forwarding the data on to Mr. Johnson's employer.

#### DEBUGGING

If the runners are based in a city other than Seattle, then the Alaxa facility can be in the nearest light industrial district.

If the runners do not have a decker in their team, Mr. Johnson can provide them with a smart frame that will acquire the data he desires—the runners merely need to break into Alaxa and upload it at the proper time.

Alternately, Mr. Johnson can recommend a few decker contacts, allowing the gamemaster to bring in an NPC decker for the job (use the Combat Decker sample character provided in *SR3*).

## A CALL TO THE STARS

#### WHAT'S UP, CHUMMER?

The runners break into the Alaxa facility, access the satellite uplink and steal the data from Yamatetsu's orbital datastore.



## TELL IT TO THEM STRAIGHT

The Alaxa building is small and unassuming. Two floors of gray brick ribboned with two rows of one way windows. It looks about as high tech as a mattress factory. A two-meter chain link fence topped with rusty barbed wire runs around the entire perimeter. The grounds are terribly neglected. Weeds and dandelions choke the patchy dull green and brown grass and a few dry, thirsty bushes dot the lawn. A main entrance gate with a keycard-swipe access post appears to be the only gap in the fence.

## HOOKS

This run is not a great physical challenge—it's about subtlety. Things may get interesting if the runners get cocky. Time is of the essence, so make sure the team feels the tick-tock of the clock.

The runners may find other useful data within Alaxa (research data, links to Yamatetsu, info on field testing, supply shipments) or have time to see what else is in the orbital's data systems (list of patients, satellite imagery, security codes, info on supply shipments). In this case, use the rules under *Paydata*, p. 49, *Matrix*.

## BEHIND THE SCENES

A two-meter high chain-link fence topped with razor wire surrounds the Alaxa property. There are low-light cameras on several of the posts, and thermographic cameras on the building's corners, giving full coverage of the area. A parking lot with a detached garage (housing an ambulance and a security vehicle) is just inside the security gate.

During business hours, the runners will have a difficult time pulling off the datasteal as there is too much activity swirling around the office. When the clock strikes five, however, Alaxa empties out as quickly as if the building were on fire—with the potential exception of a low-level executive and his secretary (see *Pushing the Envelope*, p. 40) who are partaking in some "extra-curricular activity."

Since Yamatetsu has hidden their ownership of Alaxa (or at least, they think they have), Alaxa property does not enjoy the benefits of extraterritoriality.

## Alaxa Building Security

Aside from the guarded main entrance and an emergency rear exit (locked to the outside), there are few ways to access the building. The roof has a maintenance access, some vents, a few antennas and a satellite dish (watched by security camera). The building's windows are mirrored, one-way glass and don't open. The ventilation system is heavily filtered and is separate for each floor, making it useless as a means of egress. The building is kept at a slightly negative pressure to prevent any airborne samples from escaping.

Security is average. Infrared cameras and motion detectors (Rating 5) monitor corridors and the labs. The external doors and labs require keycards to access (Rating 4 maglocks). There are fire doors in each major corridor that will close if a fire is detected.

In the hopes of publicly keeping their distance from Yamatetsu, Alaxa does not use Yamatetsu security guards. Instead, they hire off-duty Lone Star cops who need some extra income (see below). They have also hired a single licensed mage named Alice Hernandez to handle their magical security. She has placed Force 4 wards around the building's exterior and each of research labs and the security office. Even if she is not on site, she will be alerted if these wards are tripped.

At any given time, Alaxa will have three guards on site (two if Hernandez is also onsite). Hernandez cannot be on duty all of the time, so she staffs the facility in staggered eight-hour shifts. If there have been any unusual or unexplained security incidents recently, Alaxa will bring in an extra guard or two.

## Alaxa Guards

These off-duty cops are generally tired from overworking, and so are not as alert as they should be. As cops, they tend to respond to security situations with cop bravado and can handle themselves in a crisis. They will attempt to immobilize intruders with their splatguns (pp. 114 and 116, *M&M*) or tasers. As soon as they realize they're dealing with shadowrunners, they will be on the phone to Lone Star calling for backup. One guard will always stay in the security office monitoring the cameras and alarms, while the others patrol or handle other duties.

|          |          |          |          |          |          |          |          |
|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|
| <b>B</b> | <b>Q</b> | <b>S</b> | <b>C</b> | <b>I</b> | <b>W</b> | <b>E</b> | <b>R</b> |
| 4        | 5        | 4        | 4        | 4        | 4        | 5        | 4        |

**INIT:** 4 + 1D6

**Dice Pools:** Combat 6

**Karma Pool/Professional Rating:** 3/3

**Active Skills:** Athletics 2, Biotech 1 (First Aid 3), Car 3, Computer 3, Etiquette 2 (Corporate 4), Intimidation 3, Launch Weapons 3, Negotiation 3, Pistols 5, Stealth 2, Unarmed Combat 4

**Martial Arts:** Brawling 4

**Knowledge Skills:** Alaxa Personnel 2, Corporate Policies 3, Law 3, Security Procedures 3, Small Unit Tactics 3

**Weapons:** Defiance Super Shock [Taser, SA, 10S, 4(m), low-light imaging scope]

Range (TN): 0-5 (4), 6-10 (5), 11-12 (6), 13-15 (9)

Splatgun [Launch Weapon, SS, 1 shot and 1 refill]

Range (TN): 0-10 (4), 11-20 (5), 21-50 (6), 51-100 (9)

HK 277 [SMG, SA/BF, 7M, 32(c), integral laser sight]

Range (TN): 0-10 (3), 11-20 (4), 21-50 (5), 51-100 (8)

**Armor:** Armored Coat [2/1]

**Gear:** Micro-transceiver (Rating 2), PanicButton, wristphone, access card.

## Alice Hernandez, Alaxa Security Mage

Alice Hernandez discovered her magical talent while on a field trip to Aztlan when she was 18, and has been working on refining her talent ever since. She's always had a protective side and found easy work in security. She doesn't like using her magic to hurt people, but will overcome her distaste to protect herself or her charges.

**B** 4   **Q** 4   **S** 4   **C** 4   **I** 5   **W** 5   **E** 6   **M** 6   **R** 4

**INIT:** 4 + 1D6, Astral INIT: 24 + 1D6

**Dice Pools:** Astral Combat 7, Combat 7, Spell 5

**Karma Pool/Professional Rating:** 3/3

**Active Skills:** Athletics 2, Aura Reading 5, Biotech 1 (First Aid 3), Car 3, Conjuring 6, Edged Weapons 4, Electronics 3, Etiquette 3 (Corporate 5), Launch Weapons 1, Negotiation 4, Pistols 4, Sorcery 6, Stealth 3

**Knowledge Skills:** Leadership 2, Magical Threats 4, Security procedures 3, Small Unit Tactics 3

**Spells:** Armor 4, Astral Barrier 6, Entertainment 4, Hot Potato 6, Levitate 4, Magic Fingers 5, Manabolt 5, Physical Barrier 4, Stench 5, Treat 5, Wreck 5

**Weapons:** Defiance Super Shock [Taser, SA, 10S, 4(m), low-light imaging scope]

Range (TN): 0-5 (4), 6-10 (5), 11-12 (6), 13-15 (9)

Splatgun [Launch Weapon, SS, 1 shot and 1 refill]

Range (TN): 0-10 (4), 11-20 (5), 21-50 (6), 51-100 (9)

Knife [5M]

**Armor:** Armored coat [2/1]

**Gear:** Expendable focus 3 (Hot Potato), expendable focus 4 (Manabolt), sustaining focus 6 (Physical Barrier), PanicButton, wristphone, access card

**Notes:** Hernandez has two elementals on call, a Force 3 air elemental (3 services) and a Force 5 water elemental (3 services).

### Alaxa Building Layout

The coloring of the interior is uniformly gray and antiseptically clean. The office areas are carpeted while the lobby and labs are tiled.

**Offices:** Each office is essentially a clone of the one next to it, aside from a smattering of personal items (photos, plants, office "toys"). A desk with a workstation and a storage cabinet can be found in each one. The office workstations connect to the Alaxa host with a passcode.

**Testing Labs:** The double-door system maintains a clean environment. The flat surfaces are slick and stark white in color. All manner of bio-lab equipment is here—petrie dishes, centrifuges, DNA mockups, test tubes, filters, refrigerators and so forth. There are some workstations as well.

**Cold Storage:** A chill hangs in the air in this room. It is filled with rows of glass-door refrigeration units. All the samples have an alphanumeric label (i.e., "SFTS-4596", "Receptor 8-N42B", "Neurocyst-J149V65X", etc.) and a bar code. The doors are all pad-

locked. Most of the items look like tissue samples or small puddles of goo.

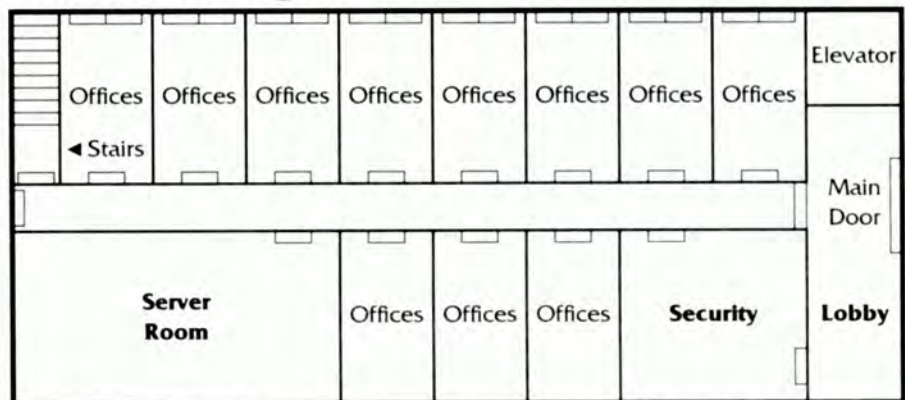
About half the samples here are worth something, the rest are common tissue types found in any decent biotech or medical lab. If the runners take any of it, assume the value per sample is equal to 100¥ times the result of an Open Test of an appropriate skill (Biotech, Medicine and Science being the best). If the runners just grab a random assortment, the whole is worth 3D6 x 50¥.

**Security Office:** There are two desks at opposite sides of the room, each with six monitors and a control console. A locked cabinet containing gas masks and spare weapons, a few chairs, some lockers and storage shelves with backpacks and briefcases complete the inventory. This room has a Rating 6 maglock; only the guards and a few key employees have valid key cards.

From here, the entire facility can be monitored and most personnel movements tracked. All the doors can be locked or opened and the communications grid taken offline.

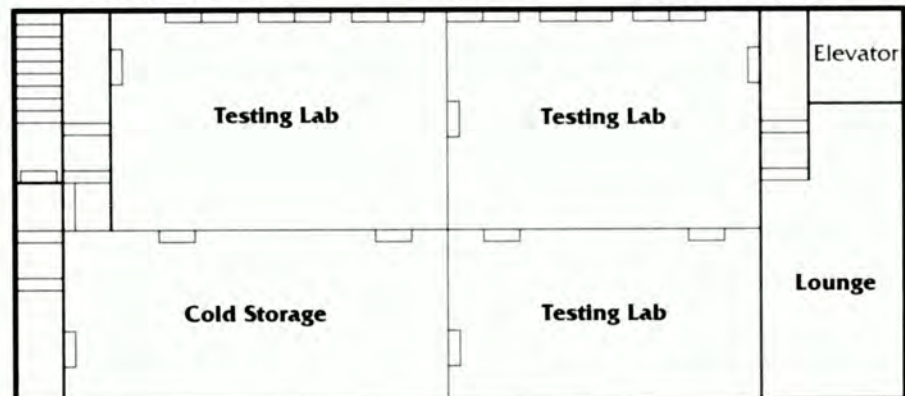
**The Server Room:** Racks of various computer hardware line the room. There are two worktables and two cyberterminals. A few filing and storage cabinets containing backup media, optical disks, some diagnostic equipment and printer paper are against the far wall. Most of the systems are up and

## Alaxa Building



### ▲ FIRST FLOOR

### ▼ SECOND FLOOR







running. This room has a Rating 6 maglock; only the guards and some key employees have valid key cards.

### The Alaxa Host and Yamatetsu PLTG

The Alaxa host is not accessible from the Matrix. It can be accessed from any of the workstations inside the Alaxa building, the satellite dish on the rood or the computers in the server room. It is sculpted to appear as a swarming mass of jigsaw-puzzle pieces set against a light background. Whenever an operation is successfully completed, a few puzzle pieces come together and form an appropriate icon or scene.

When *Shibanokuji* is overhead, the Alaxa host uplinks to it once an hour for a one-minute burst transmission. For a decker to access the PLTG, he must be in the host when the uplink occurs and successfully logon. He will then need to accomplish everything he needs to do within 1 minute (20 Combat Turns). After that he will be kicked off and will have to wait for the next burst transmission.

The Yamatetsu PLTG is sculpted like a fantastic alien landscape, with massive heavenly bodies rotating by in the starry sky above.

## SECURITY SHEAFs

### Alaxa Host

**Security Code:** Orange-6/8/12/8/10/12

| Trigger Step | Event                     |
|--------------|---------------------------|
| 5            | Probe-5                   |
| 12           | Probe-7                   |
| 17           | Passive Alert, Tar Baby-6 |
| 21           | Active Alert, Blaster-8   |
| 27           | Shutdown                  |

### Yamatetsu PLTG

**Security Code:** Red-8/14/14/12/12/16

| Trigger Step | Event                    |
|--------------|--------------------------|
| 2            | Probe-9                  |
| 6            | Jammer-6                 |
| 10           | Marker-6                 |
| 12           | Scramble-9 (Access)      |
| 15           | Passive Alert, Blaster-6 |
| 19           | Jammer-7                 |
| 22           | Active Alert, Tar Baby-8 |
| 25           | Sparky-9                 |
| 30           | Tar Pit-10               |

### Gagarin Transmission Host

| Trigger Step | Event                    |
|--------------|--------------------------|
| 3            | Probe-5                  |
| 8            | Probe-9                  |
| 12           | Marker-6                 |
| 15           | Passive Alert, Blaster-5 |
| 19           | Jammer-7                 |
| 22           | Active Alert, Tar Baby-8 |
| 25           | Sparky-9                 |
| 30           | Tar Pit-10               |

### Finding the Data

To find the data Mr. Johnson wants, the decker must first perform a Locate Access Node operation to find the host that contains data from communication with the *Gagarin*. Once found, the decker must perform a Logon to Host operation, then a Locate File operation to track down the paydata. The search will start finding relevant data once the decker achieves 5 successes. At that point he can stop the search and download what he has, or keep searching and download all the files as one operation.

The search operation can turn up many things, depending on how thorough the decker is. Most of the files will pertain to instrument readings and reports on *Gagarin's* condition, position, trajectory and other telemetry data. A full analysis of *Gagarin's* sensor module and various trajectory simulations are also available. In all, the complete set of relevant files is 500 Mp.

To determine how much information the decker obtains, consult the *Gagarin* Search Table. The gamemaster should note exactly how many successes are achieved on the Locate File operation(s), as they will affect the runners' bonus at the end of the mission.

If any character bothers to sift through the files after they have been downloaded, have them make an appropriate Technical or Knowledge Skill (4) Test. Each success will reveal one piece of information, as noted in parentheses on the *Gagarin* Search Table.

## GAGARIN SEARCH TABLE

| Successes | Search Results  |
|-----------|---|
| 0-4       | Can't find the data.  |
| 5         | 25 Mp of summary files and basic probe data (Yamatetsu has re-established contact with <i>Gagarin</i> ).  |
| 6         | 50 Mp, including probe condition reports ( <i>Gagarin</i> is partially crippled, only partially communicative and slightly off-course).   |
| 7         | 100 Mp of telemetry and probe correspondence ( <i>Gagarin's</i> sensor data cannot be remotely accessed).   |
| 8         | 250 Mp of trajectory data and detailed probe reports ( <i>Gagarin</i> will be depositing a sensor module when it passes by the Earth).  |
| 9+        | All relevant files (500 Mp), including simulations (Yamatetsu expects the sensor module not to land on target (the Sea of Japan, near Vladivostok), but to touchdown somewhere in North America instead.) |

### Delivering the Goods

If the runners get offsite with the data in one piece, they make the exchange with Mr. Johnson (at whatever location the gamemaster or shadowrunners prefer) without complications. Mr. Johnson will check the data in his pocket secretary and, after a moment or two of looking it over, will give them a bonus payment equal to 1,000¥ times the number of successes on their search success test minus five (1000 x [successes-5]).



Mr. Johnson isn't interested in buying any bio-samples they may have taken, though he may be interested in other data the runners scored. He'll ask to examine it first and get payment to them later.

### PUSHING THE ENVELOPE

The easiest way to challenge the runners here is to simply increase Alaxa's security. Extra guards may be on hand, or the company may have installed several new intruder prevention systems (pressure pads, laser trip beams, gas delivery systems or worse). If the runners alert the guards, Lone Star may respond to their fellow officers' call with maximum speed and force.

If the runners steal some of the bio-samples, one of the containers could break and cause a rash or some other reaction, possibly even something that will require major medical attention.

For some roleplaying fun, the runners could stumble upon Charlie Davis and his secretary, Marla Munns. Charlie is a fifty-two-year-old married dwarf and low-level executive at Alaxa who has been having an affair with Marla, a thirty-four year old, multi-divorcee human. For the last three months, the two have kept their trysts to passionate encounters after hours at the office and are debating whether or not to venture out into pub-

lic (the security guards know, but ignore them aside from regular joking). Have the runners hear their pleasurable moans and lead them to discover the adulterers "engaged" atop a copy machine. Both Charlie and Marla will be cooperative with the runners for fear of their affair being revealed, and they have little loyalty to Alaxa. They will, however, adamantly deny their activities (Charlie's wife at home would kill him if she found out) and plead for their secret to be kept. The runners may even be able to work a little nuyen out of the deal or Charlie may be able to provide the runners with some information if they are stumped.

The Yamatetsu PLTG does have security personnel and system administrators, so if the decking is going too easy or quickly, have a security sysop (see p. 127, *Matrix*) show up. Assume the sysop has Computer skill 6, Small Unit Tactics 2 (*Matrix* 4), Hacking Pool 4, a Transys Highlander cyberdeck, and various utilities at Rating 6. Alternately, the files Mr. Johnson is after may be encoded with scramble IC (Rating 9) or even data-worms (see p. 93, *Matrix*).

If the gamemaster really wants to make this run a challenge, then the runners may be required to travel up the well to *Shibanokuji* to get the data. Though *Shibanokuji* is an orbital resort, it's costly to visit and the run won't be easy. More detail on *Shibanokuji* and space-based adventures can be found in *Target: Wastelands*.



## DEBUGGING

If the runners botch the Alaxa break-in or draw Lone Star's quick attention, they may need to find another way to access the Yamatetsu PLTG. This will require finding another Yamatetsu facility with a dedicated uplink, and these are few and far between. As a last resort, they may have to go to *Shibanokuji* itself.

If the Matrix systems are too tough for the decker, the window of opportunity can be extended to give the hacking more time. If the runners don't have their own decker and are relying on an NPC or Mr. Johnson's smart frame, then the operation will take a full minute to complete and the runners will obtain the minimum amount of data.

If it turns out the runners cannot get the data, even after several tries, they'll have to report their failure and they won't be hired for the second part of the run.

## PLAY IT AGAIN, MR. J

### WHAT'S UP, CHUMMER?

Some time after the first mission, Mr. Johnson contacts the runners with an emergency job opportunity. The runners are flown into Thunder Bay (in the Algonkian-Manitou Council) where the meet takes place. The job involves the recovery of a crashed data module in the Great White North. Depending on who has hired the team, they may also be given special equipment or information as well as specific goals.

### TELL IT TO THEM STRAIGHT

This time, Mr. Johnson seems to have picked a more appropriate spot for a meet. The rundown log cabin posing as a bar may never have seen better days, but there has definitely never been any ice cream served here. Various animal carcasses are mounted throughout the main room—some respectfully, others not so, like the squirrel on skis wearing goggles. A room in the back has been prepared for you and Mr. Johnson sits at the carved wooden table, with his familiar ork bodyguard over his left shoulder and a towering stuffed grizzly over his right.

"Nice to see you all again. I trust you had a pleasant trip. Our last business was conducted well, so I hope we can work together again. This task is rather different than our prior engagement. It will require speed, travel and perhaps some delicate negotiations. The mission itself will take you further into Algonkian-Manitou land, in the territory the Manitou tribal secessionists have claimed as their own. A small craft has crashed there. Your goal centers on its recovery. It is vitally important that you reach this craft before any others and that you alone access its contents."

"Now, I trust you didn't travel all this way just to turn me down, but before I tell you any more, I need to know that you are committed. Will you take this mission?"

### Once The Runners Agree:

"Excellent. We can provide you with a few items to make your task easier. We desire completion within 24 hours, but we

will understand if events transpire to extend the timetable." The tone in Mr. J's voice is not convincing and it probably pained him to say it, but you'll take it. In this business, everyone wants everything done by yesterday.

"Per our last agreement, we will offer a bonus for speedy completion. The mission itself will take you inside the Manitou lands. We'll get you close to the area and provide you with transportation, and get you back home once the mission is completed. You will have to travel north on your own from our staging point in the town of La Ronge. You may have some trouble getting past the declared border and moving around Manitou territory, given the heightened state of tension, so don't draw attention to yourselves."

"The target itself is a spacecraft that crashed, oh—" he raises a gnarled arm and looks at his watch, "about two hours ago. We have rough coordinates for the crashpoint, but you may have to do some searching. I'll tell you right now that others are already looking for it, and may even beat you there. Luckily the political situation has created some problems that we can exploit to our own advantage."

### HOOKS

Though Mr. Johnson gives the runners a "flexible" timeline, they should leave the meet with a sense of urgency. Emphasize Mr. Johnson's disdain for having to offer the team an extended deadline. Make them feel it is in their "best interest" to make it quick—as with any run, reputations are at stake.

The runners may put some of the pieces together and ask point blank what the connection is between the crash and *Gagarin*, but Mr. Johnson will reveal as little as possible (despite being impressed with any valid insights on their part).

### BEHIND THE SCENES

Yamatetsu (and their competitors who are in the know) have been carefully monitoring *Gagarin*'s progress. Due to the crippled status of the probe, no one can predict exactly where or when the sensor module will touch down. Mr. Johnson responds to the situation by contacting the runners about a week in advance and putting them "on call." All he tells them is that he will need their services sometimes in the next week. When he calls, he wants them to jump on an airplane immediately and meet him in city that he will specify at that time. He cannot provide more details, but he will offer 500¥ per runner to come and meet him on short notice, as well as covering airfare and incidental expenses during their absence. They are told to bring whatever gear they think they will need for an extended mission. When the call comes, Johnson tells the runners to meet him in Thunder Bay, in the Algonkian-Manitou Council. The flight is as uneventful as necessary, and the runners are met at the airport and driven to the meet.

### The Meet

The meet takes place in The Pines Club, a rustic dump that definitely has a backwoods charm. The runners arrive while the club is closed. Mr. Johnson will likely have a fire burning in the stone fireplace, so there should be either an eerie or inviting flickering quality to the light in the room, depending on the



runners' attitude towards log cabin life.

The exact goals for the mission depend on who the actual employer is (see *Gamemaster Notes*, p. 36). Whoever their backer is, the runners are expected to get to the crash site and the sensor module first. The Johnson is counting on the fact that Yamatetsu will have trouble gaining access to Manitou land to retrieve the module.

The pay is 20,000¥ each, with up to 25 percent up front. A 10 percent bonus will be paid for completion within 48 hours. The rate can be negotiated up by 1,000¥ (or they can raise the quick completion bonus by 5 percent) for each success on a Negotiation (5) Test. They can get any advance directly, or the money can be deposited in accounts of their choosing. Mr. Johnson will also want some proof of success upon their return.

They may also ask for certain gear which they think will be vital to the mission, most of which can be provided by Mr. Johnson (see *Who's The Boss?* below). The rest will be subject to negotiation—most likely coming out of their pay—or they'll have to get it on their own.

The runners will be flown from Thunder Bay to La Ronge, a town 50 kilometers south of the Churchill River. They will also be given transportation they can use from there, most likely a modified SUV (like a Land Rover or Gaz Willys Nomad, p. 166, R3).

#### Who's The Boss?

Depending on who employs Mr. Johnson, the runners may get some additional aid on this job:

**Ares:** Ares has the best data on the module crash site and good contacts in Thunder Bay. Ares can also offer Algonkian and Iroquois linguasofts, survival gear, weapons and accessories.

**Aztechnology:** Aztechnology has significant clout within the AMC—some think that they are the power behind the throne. Mr. Johnson can provide survival gear, valid AMC identity documents, extra transportation (a second vehicle, horses, etc.) in La Ronge, a decent map of the Manitou area and an approximate crash location. Aztechnology power does not extend into Manitou territory, however; in fact, the Manitou hold a serious dislike towards Aztechnology interference. If word gets out who the runners work for, there could be serious problems.

**Saeder-Krupp:** S-K has little influence in the AMC, but it can provide Algonkian linguasofts, a GPS unit and survival gear. If the runners need a rigger, Johnson can hook them up with a vehicle rigger (use the SR3 sample character).

**Shiawase:** Shiawase can provide the runners with a MAD (p. 293, SR3), a chip storage unit with a datalock, and medical supplies.



### THE MANITOU SUCCESSION

Things are not as friendly as they once were in the AMC. For those of you without *Shadows of North America*, here is the short version: the mostly-elven, anti-technology Manitou tribe has declared independence from the AMC, seizing all land north of the Churchill River and claiming it as theirs. Many people were removed from the territory and there have been consistent border clashes with the AMC military. For some, it is like the old days of native activism and a chance to make a place for themselves. For Aztechnology and the AMC elite, the Manitou are troublemakers driving the country towards civil war.

### In Thunder Bay

If the runners want to take some time to check things out and maybe buy some more gear on their own, they can. It's a major smuggling port and the economic center of the AMC, so almost any gear they'd want to buy before leaving is available—but at smuggler prices. Johnson will press them to hurry along, though, so the runners may not have time to establish good connections or deals. If the runners are hired by Ares or Aztechnology, they'll be given some contact references.

### In La Ronge

The plane lands in the northern town of La Ronge. People who seem to be expecting the runners meet them on the airfield. They are given the remainder of any gear or information they were promised and passcodes to transportation that is parked in the nearby lot.

Prospecting for clues will be different than in Thunder Bay. It is a much smaller community, and there has been a lot of change with the recent Manitou declaration of independence. Most of the newcomers will have clear resentment toward the Manitou. There are also sympathizers in town. The runners can get reports of sightings of the crash and, if they are really good or lucky, maybe even a report of the Yamatetsu recovery team, or at least of people going out that way.

If they look for a guide to the area, they can find one. He'll be a rough sort, local to the area, who will want payment up front and won't want to be involved in any of the troubles with the fighting up there. Use the stats given for the Amerindian Tribesperson, p. 74, *SRComp*.

Characters have little time in La Ronge as it is merely a staging point for their continued journey north. From here the characters are on their own. They are equipped with whatever equipment they have requested and have 50 kilometers or more to travel north, through a border standoff, before reaching the crash point. They may not have much time, but La Ronge is the last place they can receive any aid.

### PUSHING THE ENVELOPE

To give this mission a stronger sense of urgency, Mr. Johnson may simply call the runners out at the last minute,

rather than giving them warning a week or so in advance. In this case, he may have to offer more incentive for the runners to drop everything they are doing and rush over to a strange country for an odd job.

Alternately, Johnson may have more details about the landing location in advance, in which case he will bring the runners to Thunder Bay early and have them wait on standby for the module to crash to Earth. This allows the runners to spend some time in seedy Thunder Bay and have run-ins with smuggler gangs, pickpockets and young bravos looking to make a name for themselves.

Any elven characters, especially those of tribal ancestry, might get a few cold shoulders in Thunder Bay, particularly from anyone who was sorely affected by the Manitou secession. This hostility could explode with a verbal or physical attack, perhaps drawing in passers-by.

### DEBUGGING

The runners may want hazard pay or more info. If it looks like it will be a make-or-break issue, give them something reasonable and move on. Mr. Johnson wants this run to get underway as soon as possible.

Odds are the runners will not be from Thunder Bay, so reaching contacts may be harder, especially those that expect face-to-face exchanges. They'll just have to deal. Thunder Bay is a real city, so they have easy access to the outside world.

If the runners have their own vehicles (and rigger), you may want to adjust the scheduling so Johnson gives them enough time to bring their transport with.

## THE GREAT WHITE NORTH

### WHAT'S UP, CHUMMER?

The runners must travel into Manitou territory and locate the crash site. The module is no longer there, so they must do some detective work to track it down. In doing so, the runners stumble across the aftermath of a battle between a Yamatetsu team and the Manitou.

### TELL IT TO THEM STRAIGHT

Even through the low-lying mist, you can tell something obviously came down here fast and hot. A crash trench several dozens of meters long still steams. Trees lay flattened along its length. At the end of the trench is a crater, surrounded by scorched trees and the charred remains of a few four-legged beasts. The ground remains noticeably warmer than the surrounding area, keeping the light snow you have been crossing for hours at bay. The mist creeps eerily from the center of the furrow as if the empty ground was spilling it forth. Something metallic gleams from inside the crater—but that's not all. You see tracks. Someone has been here already.

### When They Reach The Ambush Site:

You're following the tracks when you suddenly spot some telltale signs: rake marks in the snow, impact points in the trees, blast holes on the otherwise pristine earth. Shreds of cloth dan-



gle from snapped branches. Then you spot the bodies, the bloodstained snow. All that is missing is the smell of cordite and the scene would be complete, but that was probably covered by the light snow that has fallen since the battle raged.

Looking around, you realize that the terrain is a perfect ambush site. A death trap. Attacked on all sides by people who knew the territory well—the poor saps never had a chance. Only two questions remain: who did this and where are they now?

## HOOKS

This scenario includes several scenes of discovery. First the runners discover that someone else has beat them to the target. Then they discover that the claim-jumpers are dead. The runners will probably have more questions than answers as each encounter is met.

The runners are most likely out of their element here. Traveling through snow-covered tundra, thousands of clicks from the nearest sprawl, they should feel like outsiders, interlopers on foreign soil, strangers in a strange land. Feel free to up their paranoia about being watched or followed.

## BEHIND THE SCENES

The runners can take several routes into the Manitou lands, depending upon their transport and information provided by their employer. The first challenge is making it past the border that the Manitou secessionists have declared—the Churchill River. AMC Troops guard this border, hoping to prevent the Manitou from engaging in sabotage missions and keep any Manitou aid away. On their side, the Manitou vigilantly watch for signs of an AMC invasion. Luckily, the AMC is a big place, and there are lengthy stretches of land that are relatively unmonitored.

For the purposes of this adventure, the runners should have some tense moments crossing the border, but otherwise should get across the river without difficulty. Many of the bridges have been destroyed or mined by the Manitou, and the rest are heavily guarded, so the runners will have to improvise a way to cross the river. The river has many stretches that, while quite wide, are not terribly deep and are easily forded. At the gamemaster's discretion, the river may be frozen enough for characters to cross on foot.

The land within Manitou territory is composed of small hills, waterways, trees and light forests and rocks. The area receives little precipitation, but a light snow has recently covered the area. It is also sparsely populated, though the runners might come across rural-dwelling Manitou (or supporters).

### Finding the Crash Site

The information provided by their Johnson will get the runners close enough to the crash site that it will only take them 1D6 hours of searching to find it. If the runners are searching by air, they should find it quite quickly, as the crash zone has scarred the earth. The runners can try talking to locals to get info (it is the gamemaster's choice if they heard, saw or know anything about the crash), though the locals will be suspicious of the runners' intentions.

## The Yamatetsu Team

Unknown to the runners, Yamatetsu sent in a retrieval team to recover the module shortly after it crashed. Though the Yamatetsu team reached the site several hours ahead of the runners, they found that they were not the first to arrive. As it happens, a group of local Manitou investigated the crash site, recovered the module and transported it back to their settlement.

The Yamatetsu team told their helicopter transport to move out of the area and await a pickup call, then started up on the Manitou trail and tracked it back towards the town. The Manitou suspected that outsiders might be drawn to the area, so they staged an ambush. The Yamatetsu team was confronted about trespassing on Manitou territory and given the chance to surrender. The Yamatetsu team leader made the wrong move, however, and fighting broke out. Despite their gear and training, the Yamatetsu team was outnumbered and unprepared for the Manitou tactics and magic. They were wiped out, with no survivors.

## The Crash Site

A deep, long scar in the earth and some scrap metal are all that remain of the module's carrier. A pile of upturned soil looms high at the end of the gash, indicating the final resting-place. The ground here is warmer by several degrees than the surrounding air, causing a surface fog as the crack in the frozen ground leaks what little heat remains within it. Any character that examines the wreckage and succeeds in an Electronics (4) Test can tell that some component of the craft's payload has been physically removed. They will find no sign of the sensor module they were sent to obtain.

The tracks left by the Yamatetsu team make it obvious that someone has beat the runners to the site. If the runners search the area, have them make Perception (6) Tests, then consult the Crash Site Search Table.

## CRASH SITE SEARCH TABLE

| Successes | Results   |
|-----------|---|
| 1         | There are six sets of prints.   |
| 2         | It looks like a helicopter landed nearby.   |
| 3         | The footprints originated from the helicopter.  |
| 4         | The footprints criss-cross the area, then head off to the northeast.  |
| 5         | There is a slightly older, better-concealed set of tracks around the crash site. This group was at the site before the other one, and they wore different boots with flatter soles. |
| 6         | The second tracks also lead off to the northeast.   |

## The Ambush Site

When the runners stumble across the ambush site, they will find six corpses (the Yamatetsu team) scattered in the snow. The Manitou finished them off, stripped the bodies of gear then left them for the wolves. A successful Perception (8) Test will determine that a concealed set of tracks continues to



lead off to the northeast. The Manitou took their casualties too, so there may be other signs leading the runners to the town of Niwimaja (see *A Spoonful of Sugar*, p. 46).

If the characters examine the bodies, they will find insignia and labels that indicate Yamatetsu employed them. The Manitou did not leave any useful gear or weapons behind. If any examining characters succeed in a Biotech, Medicine or Forensics (4) Test, they will note that the majority of the Yamatetsu team seems to have died from cuts, slashes and puncture wounds rather than bullets—indicating that the Yamatetsu team was finished off in close proximity and/or by “low-tech” weaponry. If a character assenses the area, they will notice a slight Background Count of 1 from the killing, but the Manitou were careful to remove their astral signatures.

**The Wind Spirit**

Before they left the area, a Manitou shaman summoned a Force 7 wind spirit and asked it to watch the area, with instructions to prevent anyone from tracking the Manitou past this point. If the runners move to follow the tracks northeast, the spirit will subtly materialize as a gust of wind that swirls over and around the area. It will use its power of Confusion to get the characters lost, targeting magicians first. It may use its Concealment power to conceal one character from the others,

leading the party on a wild goose chase to search for them. It may also use its Movement and Accident powers to impede the runners. Though careful not to reveal its presence too openly, perceptive runners may quickly realize that something is amiss.

**PUSHING THE ENVELOPE**

The first recommendation for increasing the difficulty in this scenario is to add in some heavy weather. Strong winds, severe cold, hail or fog conditions will make the characters’ job harder.

If the runners are itching for some gunplay, throw a hostile border-crossing encounter at them with either the Manitou, the AMC army or Aztechnology forces. Neither side will pursue the runners over the border, but they make enough noise to draw the runners to their rivals on the other side. If the characters try to cross a bridge, make it trapped; if they cross the ice, it may collapse underneath them.

Another option for an action-hungry team would be an encounter with some of the local wildlife. A piasma (p. 39, *Critters*) or a horned bear (p. 144, *YOTC*) are both possibilities, as are wolves or other scavengers feasting on the corpses of the Yamatetsu team, or drawn to the scent of blood.

The runners can even encounter a rival “retrieval team” when they find the crash site, sent in by yet another megacorp trying to prevent Yamatetsu from winning the probe race.



Finally, the game-master can increase the creepiness factor of the ambush scene. The runners may stumble into the middle of it without noticing at first—choose a character particularly inept at wilderness survival or perception to discover the first Yamatetsu body. The poor sap may sink his foot right into a corpse's collapsed chest, getting his foot caught and forcing him to shake it off. There will be bits of the body left on his boot and pants, which won't come off easily.

### DEBUGGING

If the runners somehow fail to notice the tracks leading off to the northeast or they decide to retreat back to AMC land after they discover the module is missing, you'll need to figure out a way to get the runners to Niwimaja. Maybe they get lost and discover the ambush site, or they run afoul of a Manitou patrol and are captured. As a last resort, they may run into a serious AMC military presence on the border, forcing them back into Manitou lands.

If the wind spirit proves too much for the runners, remember that it only lasts until the next sunset or sundown after it was summoned. Eventually it will disappear and leave the runners alone.

## A SPOONFUL OF SUGAR

### WHAT'S UP, CHUMMER?

The runners track the module to the small town of Niwimaja, a holding of the Manitou tribe. The runners will need to decide how to deal with the tribe—violence will not get them far, but the tribe will not easily reveal that it has the module or turn it over to the runners. The runners will have a chance to stay and get to know the tribe and its internal conflicts, perhaps their only chance at retrieving the module for themselves.

### TELL IT TO THEM STRAIGHT

Your feet hit the hard-packed dirt of a trail—no, wait, on closer inspection, it used to be a road. It looks like the asphalt was dug up and the road reclaimed as a decorated trail. Looking down the passage, you see a cluster of buildings nestled among the hills and trees a few clicks down, surrounded by a perimeter of tents and some sort of biofabricated huts. Several storage silos loom over dirt footpaths and extensive gardens. Rows of residential buildings lead into the center of the town, where a large, rustic, steepled building sits. You don't see any signs of roads or vehicles, just decorated pathways, small parks and horses.

You glance around for signs of organized patrols that might be scouting for intruders, but all you see are the signs of daily life and movement within the town.

### If The Runners Enter Niwimaja Openly:

You try to act like you belong here as you move in slowly and casually, heading towards the center of town, but it's obvious from the looks you get that you don't fit in. No one screams or starts waving guns in your direction, but you start accumulating stares and questioning glances. A lot of the looks linger on the gear you're carrying.

Word of your presence must be spreading, though. You've only gotten a few blocks when a group of tribals slips easily and confidently from various nook and crannies, keeping pace with you while keeping you surrounded. They're openly armed, but none of them act aggressively; their gear is mismatched and older, including old rifles and archaic hunting weapons. A stocky elven woman with raven hair takes the lead, looking back and gesturing for you to follow without a word.

### When the Runners Enter The Council Chambers:

Your escorts take you to the large building in the center of town, crossing a community garden that was once a parking lot. A pair of animal pelts has replaced the glass entranceway to the building across the entranceway, acting as an airlock to keep the heat inside the building.

Their methods may be old fashioned but the effect is excellent—the inside of the building is stiflingly hot, fueled by two large and smoldering fire pits, centered near each end of the building. To one side of the building are various tables and tack boards advertising trade or need as well as services and gatherings. The other side is filled with built-in storage bins and what looks to be tribal ceremonial garb and items.

A grizzled, but somehow soothing, voice comes from the unadorned elf that warms his hands by the fire on the near side of the building. "I can never seem to get all the cold out of my bones during this time of year. I am Chief Youngman. I suspect that you want to talk."

### HOOKS

The runners are outsiders, and it should feel apparent to them in every glance, word or gesture tossed their way while in the town. The Manitou take their lifestyle, politics and culture seriously and will give the runners as much respect as they receive. The anti-tech bias of the tribe will be felt in both subtle and obvious ways.

The runners' arrival has started a chain of events that will escalate out of their control if they do nothing (which is possible). Much of what happens is based on the personal motivations of the NPCs in addition to the natural development of events. The runners will need to find allies and take a side to have a real chance of success.

The runners will find themselves in the middle of a "family squabble." There is an opportunity to play people off each other and to take advantage of existing rivalries and alliances if they can be discovered. If the runners have the foresight to realize that Yamatetsu will be coming for the module, they can try to predispose the Manitou against the megacorp. Again, subtle maneuvering and razor sharp roleplay is what will get the runners what they want, not blazing guns.

### BEHIND THE SCENES

The runners trace the tracks to the Manitou town of Niwimaja. The tribal militia retrieved the module that the runners are after and brought it back to Cloud Talon, the tribe's medicine man. Only Cloud Talon knows where it is, and for now he isn't interested in telling anyone. The runners need to determine if the Manitou have the module and then how to get





it from them. Neither will be easy. Violence and force are not likely to get the runners the module. The runners' best bet is to negotiate with the tribe for it. This will involve dealing with the Manitou face to face, getting involved in local politics and possibly playing various local factions against each other.

**The Manitou NPCs**

The Niwimaja Manitou are split into various factions, embodied by a few NPCs who want to either: a) kill the runners and be done with them, b) destroy the module, c) sell the module to the highest bidder, d) get the data and publish it worldwide, e) get it away from here and wash their hands of the whole affair as quickly as possible, or f) resent everyone for bringing this onto the tribe. The gamemaster should thoroughly familiarize himself with various Manitou NPCs and their specific motivations, as detailed in the *Cast of Shadows*, p. 55.

**Niwimaja**

The town of Niwimaja has been redeveloped by the Manitou to conform to their permaculture principles (the integration of communities with local ecology using low-impact, sustainable and eco-friendly methods). Most of the town is without electricity, save for a few dwellings that use solar

power or electricity generated from windmills. Vehicles are rare, and the roads have been replaced with a more pedestrian-friendly urban layout.

The town has few permanent structures, most of them clustered in the center of town. The rest of the community uses semi-permanent and mobile structure, from prefab geodesic domes constructed from recycled materials to tents made from preserved animal skins. A few tree-homes are even built amidst the sturdier trunks. Small fires are used to heat dwellings, and thin plumes of smoke rise across the town.

The town has only a single Matrix connection, hidden and unused in the clutter of the council hall.

**Niwimaja Townspeople**

The Manitou tribe is a manufactured tribe, originally formed as an all-elf grouping, but open to all metatypes. Many of its members are actually from other ethnic tribal groups, while others are so-called "pinkskins." There are representatives of the warlike and territorial Cree, the peaceful but highly anti-technology Montagnais and the Naskapi tribe of wanderers who fiercely cling to the old ways in a desperate attempt to carve a new future.

The town of Niwimaja is predominantly elven, with a good number of tribal humans and a smattering of the other metahu-



man races, though this is perhaps less glaring than in other parts of Manitou territory due to the prevalence of older tribes that coexist with the Manitou in the town. There are over 500 people currently in and about the town, mostly armed and intimately familiar with the surrounding territory. The residents work together and share in the responsibilities of the town, including defense. They send out regular border patrols to watch for AMC military incursions.

The town itself, led by Chief Youngman, collects supplies as it can throughout the year in preparation for the winter population increase. During the winter months, the permanent townsfolk trade and barter with the new arrivals for news, exotic supplies and whatever currency they can for the coming year. It is a time of great rejoicing and entertainment, barely held together through mutual need, despite their individualist tendencies. All is not perfect, however; disruption does occur more often than anyone would like, thus the need for intertribal policing. Of course, there are difficulties the populace and police can't handle on their own and it is then that the Chief, his council, and Cloud Talon step in to resolve disputes.

Being made up mostly of local tribals, not everyone in Niwimaja speaks English or other European languages like French or German. The vast majority will speak Algonkian or Cree, with a decent percentage of Naskapi and Montagnais. Some of the elven population also knows Sperethiel. So there could be a language barrier between the runners, the Yamatetsu team and the tribals. All the leadership of the tribe speaks English, though most official tribal business is conducted in a tribal language.

Given the generally anti-tech bias of the Manitou, characters with obvious cyberware will tend to be shunned (any social modifiers are increased by +1). Likewise, gear heads and other characters that rely heavily on tech will be lectured about the impact their toys have on the world. If the characters have a vehicle, they'll be asked to keep it outside of town. If it's a fossil fuel-guzzler, it may be sabotaged when the runners aren't looking.

#### The Tribal Council

Made up of five members, including the chief, the councilors are all elected, though some do have a hereditary claim to authority for their tribe. Few of the council sessions are closed and various people attend regularly, especially Cloud Talon (the tribe's unofficial Medicine Man) and Thunderwalker (the unofficial militia leader). The councilors are:

**Chief Youngman**, an older elf and one of the original Manitou.

**Shaun Ojibwan**, a dwarf academic who sees both danger and opportunity in the module.

**Mawnee Eaglefeather**, an elf Eagle shaman who desires to take Cloud Talon's place.

**Jamis Bearpaw**, an ork and the most radical of the anti-technologists.

**Dallanis Starseeker**, a Naskapi elf woman and Raven shaman.

More information on these NPCs and their goals can be found in *Cast of Shadows*, p. 55.

#### Sneaking Into Town

A covert entrance into town will provide no additional benefits for the runners and may even bring more mistrust their way. People do keep an eye out for anyone approaching the town, and the town is relatively busy, so stealth will be required to move around without being noticed.

If the runners do something to draw suspicion, a militia group will respond and attempt to apprehend them. The runners will be dealt with as criminals unless they can offer a compelling explanation for their activities. Runners who are captured and determined to be hostile will be escorted to the AMC border and expelled from Manitou land.

#### Arrival in town

If the runners openly approach Niwimaja, they will be met by Thunderwalker and her patrol as described above. Outsiders aren't exactly common, and it will be assumed that the runners have something to do with recent events (the probe module crash and the skirmish with the Yamatetsu team). They will be "invited" into town to talk to Chief Youngman. Thunderwalker will keep the runners under guard until Youngman has questioned them and says otherwise.

If the runners play innocent and keep their intentions hidden, the Manitou will be suspicious, but will allow the runners to stay if they have a good cover story. If the runners offer up some sort of half-lie, such as claiming to be searching for a "meteor," Thunderwalker will tell them that it crashed about a day southwest of Niwimaja and ask them to be on their way.

If the runners come right out and say they are looking for a crashed satellite or probe module, they will be questioned thoroughly about who they work for and what their intentions are. They will specifically be asked if they are working with the Yamatetsu team (it will be obvious that Thunderwalker has a low opinion of that team and how they reacted). Youngman and Thunderwalker will not surrender any information about the module at this time, saying that will need to consult with the other elders first. After the interrogation, the runners will be allowed to stay within Niwimaja and move freely about the town, as long as they don't stir up trouble. They will not be under arrest or openly guarded, but Thunderwalker and the others will keep an eye on their activities. If necessary, Thunderwalker will find them a place to stay in one of the common houses—communal living with a dozen or so tribals. Far from the Ritz, it's more like a youth hostel, only colder.

Unless the runners are openly hostile, the town as a whole will be quite happy to see them, trade with them and talk to them. Outsiders are a rarity, especially in this time of crisis, and some Manitou will appreciate having some new faces around. Not everyone, however, will be in perfect agreement about the team. Many will resent their drain on the town's resources and could easily react with violence if provoked. Others will see the timely arrival of outsiders as a perfect chance to vie for power and influence within the tribe. A few will resent the arrival of any non-Manitou influence in the town.

#### The Module's Impact

As events start, very few people in town know about the



module; those that do keep quiet about it. Once the runners arrive and give their story, Mawnee Eaglefeather (see *Cast of Shadows*, p. 55) sees an opportunity to work against Cloud Talon and starts plotting and planning against what she thinks is his plan. Part of this is to start spreading dissent within the town over the taking and hiding of the crashed module. As more people find out, things get more complicated, with factions forming and public opinion running the spectrum.

Cloud Talon has not predicted Mawnee's rabble-rousing, figuring she would clearly see the usefulness of having the module despite the problems she has had with him. In this case, Mawnee's jealousy has superseded her reason, and she will take this opportunity to weaken Cloud Talon's position and strengthen her own.

Even without Mawnee's machinations, those in the know are divided. They uniformly want the best for the town and their people, but are unclear as to who has the best solution.

Initially, the various NPCs will be neutral or suspicious of the runners. A few may befriend them (Shaun Ojibwan) or at least pretend to be friendly (Mawnee). Thunderwalker will think they are dangerous, but will follow Cloud Talon's lead on how to treat them. See the individual character descriptions for specific attitudes and biases. In particular, a runner's race and cyberware will be important.

The runners' presence will inspire at least one, if not more, council sessions. Each faction will send a representative to the council to state their case and persuade one or more councilors to take their preferred course of action. The longer the runners stay, the more frequently these sessions will occur, so some councilors will be busy either in session or meeting with others most of the time, especially once Mawnee starts stirring things up. The runners will most likely NOT have an opportunity to plead their case before the Tribal Council themselves, so they need to focus on gaining "representation" by roleplaying their way into the hearts of one of the factions.

Barring some amazing political maneuvering by the runners, the council will not have come to a decision before the Yamatetsu team arrives. Some councilors may be leaning one way or another, but that could all change with a new player in town.

### The Module Hiding Place

The data module is, literally, right underfoot. Upon receiving the module from Thunderwalker, Cloud Talon summoned a Spirit of the Land to help him hide it deep underground in a warded crate (Rating 6 ward). No one saw him do it, and no one in town is aware of the hiding place. Those who know about the module and Cloud Talon's involvement suspect he hid it within his medicine lodge or home, but very few are willing to risk tearing them up to prove the theory.

Should negotiations proceed well enough that the module will be given to someone, Cloud Talon will summon the spirit to dig up the crate, which he will then open for them.

### Searching for the Module

If the runners decide to go looking for the module, they won't find it unless they decide to dig and dig deep. Even then, it will not be easy to find, and the tribe would certainly object

to them digging up the ground or summoning a spirit to do it. Also, without ground-penetrating radar or a sonar imaging setup, the runners wouldn't even know where to begin to look. A spirit with the Search power (see p. 99, *MITS*) may be an option, but still will have a tough time locating the module, especially if the runners don't know what it looks like. Spells such as Detect (Object) might also work, if the correct version of the spell is known, but the ward and being underground will make it more difficult.

### PUSHING THE ENVELOPE

If the runners do not have any elves in their group, they could encounter a fierce bias from the elven tribals. An all-Anglo party may encounter the same. If the runners are feeling too cozy, a wave of xenophobia could erupt in the town and turn the council discussions away from the module and towards a hasty exile of the "strangers." This may provide the platform for the runners to have to "prove their worth" through a series of tests.

The gamemaster can also escalate the attitudes of the radical anti-tech Manitou. They may demand that the runners destroy some of their gear before entering the town, or "donate" it to the recycling bin or other uses.

The gamemaster should improvise random scenarios involving the runners and the townspeople. These can range from good-natured (playing games with Manitou kids, drinking and storytelling around the fire) to neutral (bartering for goods) to hostile (a young Manitou calling out the runners as AMC or corporate spies). The gamemaster can even include some romance—Mawnee Eaglefeather, Thunderwalker or Shaun Ojibwan are all potential love interests for shadowrunners.

### DEBUGGING

The biggest challenge to the gamemaster here is to keep the scenario moving along after the runners have spoken with Youngman. The gamemaster should thoroughly acquaint himself with the motivations and personalities of the NPCs and devise a series of potential encounters that will help to move the plot along. The shadowrunners themselves may be proactive enough in stirring up trouble that the gamemaster may merely need to craft the NPC responses to their actions—but you should keep some short encounters on hand just in case.

If the runners completely botch their opening negotiations with the Manitou, they may find themselves arrested and taken to the AMC-Manitou border, where they will be exiled. In this case, you may want to have the captured runners and their Manitou escorts run into the Yamatetsu team (see *Too Many Cooks*). The runners may be able to turn the situation to their advantage, or escape if hostilities break out.

The runners might also opt not to enter the town openly at first, instead watching from the outskirts and trying to determine the module's location. If the runners linger too long and fail to take any action, have a Manitou patrol surprise and capture them, then take them directly to the meeting with Youngman.

If the runners seriously consider taking on the whole town, remind them that they are outnumbered at least 50 to 1, and that the Manitou are well armed, know the area and have



strong magic. If the shadowrunners take hostages and threaten to kill them, Youngman will hand over the module, but the Manitou will do their damndest to ensure that the runners don't leave their territory alive (and they may also report the runners' presence and acquisition to Yamatetsu, putting the megacorp hot on the runners' tail).

If the runners are having no luck at all in their political maneuverings or negotiations, one of the Manitou could take their side or counsel them on how to approach Cloud Talon or Chief Youngman.

## TOO MANY COOKS

### WHAT'S UP, CHUMMER?

As the runners maneuver to acquire the module from the Manitou, a second Yamatetsu team reaches the area and approaches the town. This encounter should match the success the runners are having so far. If they are becoming new best friends with the Manitou, then the Yamatetsu reps will lay on all the charm and offer just what the Manitou need. If the runners are struggling to win over the tribe, the Yamatetsu team comes in cocky and demands the module back.

### TELL IT TO THEM STRAIGHT

#### If Yamatetsu Makes a Smooth Approach

An old Manitou man approaches you, his face carved with lines of age and wisdom. He pauses before you, a slight smile on his lips. You have not seen him before but his presence seems familiar. You can see your reflection in his charcoal black eyes. The reflection shimmers for a second then disappears into blackness. "There are others. They seek what you seek. They are here." He blinks, and your reflection returns in his eyes. He smiles wider, holds up a leathery hand in a gentle salute, then turns and walks away.

#### If Yamatetsu Charges In

An old Manitou woman approaches you. Her mouth is slightly agape as if she needs it open to pull in wheezy breaths. Years of arthritis have twisted her into a grotesque parody of life. Her eyes are milky white and blind. She moves to within a few meters and shakes her head from side to side, slowly, as if her dead eyes were able to see, taking each of you in one at a time. "You have brought this. Evil." Her voice is hoarse but booming. Her withered hand shakes violently as she points at you. "Evil." Her reprimand finished, the old woman turns and walks away. As if on cue with her exit, the rumble of a gathering crowd can be heard in the distance. Townspeople are dashing toward the perimeter of Niwimaja, weapons in hand. Something is happening, and it can't be good.

### HOOKS

It's put up or shut up time. One way or the other, Yamatetsu is here to resolve the situation—and they plan on coming out on top, at all costs. If the runners are doing nothing to bolster their case, the Yamatetsu team will get the mod-

ule and leave. The runners then only have two options—deal with the Yamatetsu team immediately or ambush them later. Neither will prove simple.

### BEHIND THE SCENES

Less than a day after the runners entered Niwimaja, a second Yamatetsu team touched down near the crash site. Like the runners, they have followed the trail back to Niwimaja. There they approach the town to see what they know and if they have the module.

The runners may be making good progress with the Manitou, or they may be up a creek without a paddle—but now everything changes. Runners with any experience can tell the Yamatetsu team is professional. Their leader knows how to talk and the rest of the team follows his lead without question and watches each others' backs.

#### The Yamatetsu Angle

If the Yamatetsu team makes a smooth approach, they will want to talk to the chief or council to strike a deal for the module. The runners will probably not be invited to this discussion, but some careful roleplaying might get them in, depending on their efforts so far. Some Manitou will consider the corp team to be unwelcome intruders, but they will merely claim to have come to retrieve their property, which they have a valid claim to, and will promise to leave as soon as they get it. Regardless, the various factions will play the runners and the Yamatetsu team off each other to see who deserves the prize.

If the recovery team makes a hostile approach, they will walk in the town, weapons in hand, and demand the return of their corporate property. No deal. No questions asked. This Yamatetsu team saw what the Manitou did to the first team, and they're not going to give the Manitou a chance to do the same to them. The Yamatetsu recovery team is professional, though, and will not initiate violence unless provoked. They know killing tribe members will not get the module back and will likely turn the mission into a bust. In this case, the town will turn to the runners as an alternative. One thing the people of Niwimaja do not like is being told what to do, especially when it comes in the form of corporate threats.

Alternately, the Yamatetsu team could attempt to sneak into town and steal the module, but since Cloud Talon is the only one who knows its whereabouts, this approach is doomed to failure. They will resort to this tactic, however, if they do discover the module's location and negotiations have broken down.

Regardless of the approach, the arrival of the Yamatetsu team will let the cat out of the bag—perhaps not as to the exact nature of what the module contains, but that something of import to the outside world is in the town. If the runners have not been entirely straight with any new-found friends, these bonds may crumble quickly when Yamatetsu starts gabbing.

#### Resolving the Contest

In addition to pleading their own case, the Yamatetsu team will attempt to cast doubt on the runner's honesty, motivation, credibility or reliability. They could even try to eliminate



the runners or plant evidence implicating them in a crime or other offense against the tribe. The Yamatetsu team can also offer the Manitou quite a bit in the way of resources, information on Aztechnology or the AMC government. Some councilors will see this as a distinct opportunity to further the Manitou claim of independence from the AMC, and will attempt to get Yamatetsu to back their secession in return for the module.

Since there's a contest of sorts between the runners and Yamatetsu to get the module, feel free to make them jump through all sorts of hoops. If neither the runners or Yamatetsu make a strong enough argument, the council could determine who wins the module based on who can stand the most frustration or humiliation. Possible events include: having both sides partake in a sweat lodge, a storytelling contest, coming up with the best joke or riddle, babysitting the children while a hunting party goes out, cleaning a recent kill, or carving a totem pole. This is an opportunity for the gamemaster to have some fun—"Okay, Mr. Shadowrunner, let's see how quickly you can skin an arctic fox with a bone knife."

Should events turn hostile, any help the runners offer to the Manitou will be appreciated and can only help their case. If the runners attack the retrieval team without provocation, the Manitou won't care until it endangers them, though it will color how the runners are seen by many of the Manitou.

Eventually, a decision will be made as to what to do with the module. The gamemaster will need to conform the Manitou NPCs' decision based on the arguments and actions the runners have taken. If the runners win, the Yamatetsu team will come after them once they leave the "friendly confines" of Niwimaja. Pierre O'Rourke, the Yamatetsu recovery team leader, will play the good sport in the town, but will be lying in the bushes to deal with the runners. Failure is not an option for him.

#### Yamatetsu Recovery Team Leader

Pierre O'Rourke is a Québécois elf who signed on with Yamatetsu six years ago and made a name for himself in their security and operations divisions. His goal, straight from his section commander, Nikoli Rostov, is to get the data module back intact, or at least copy the memory core and destroy the module so no one else can get it. He's been fully briefed on the political situation within the AMC and will do anything he must to complete the mission. He will attempt to get authorization from his commander for any major deals, but he does carry enough authorization to draft a deal in the company name. Yamatetsu wants the module back; they'll worry about keeping up their end of any bargain later.

Note that Pierre communicates with his team in Japanese.

**B** **Q** **S** **C** **I** **W** **E** **M** **R**  
6 6 5 5 5 5 6 8 5 (9)

**INIT:** 5 (9) + 1D6 (3D6)

**Dice Pools:** Combat 8

**Karma Pool/Professional Rating:** 7/4

**Race:** Elf

**Active Skills:** Athletics 6, Biotech 2 (First Aid 4), Bike 3, Car 3, Centering 4, Clubs 6, Computer 3, Electronics 3, Etiquette 4

(Corporate 5, Street 6), Leadership 4, Negotiation 5, Intimidation 4, Small Unit Tactics 6, Pistols 6, Assault Rifles 6, Stealth 8, Throwing Weapons 5, Unarmed Combat 6

**Knowledge Skills:** Algonkian 4 (R/W 2), AMC Politics 4, Apache 3, Bushido 4, Corporate Politics 4, English 2 (R/W 1), French 4 (R/W 2), Japanese 3 (R/W 1), Meditation 4, Microtronics 3, Psychology 5, Recon Operations 4, Spirit Combat 4

**Martial Arts:** Aikido 6 (Close Combat, Throw, Whirling)

**Metamagic (Initiate Grade 2):** Centering (Meditation), Masking

**Adept Powers:** Astral Perception, Enhanced Perceptions (Direction Sense, Low-Light Vision, Thermographic Vision), Improved Reflexes 2, Nerve Strike, Quick Draw

**Nanoware:** Nanosymbiotes

**Weapons:** AK-97 [AR, SA/BF/FA, 8M, RC 3 (4), 38 (c) 3 extra clips, folding stock, gas vent 3, laser sight]

Range (TN): 0-50 (3), 51-150 (4), 151-350 (5), 351-500 (8)

Ares Viper Slivergun [HP, 9S(f), SA/BF, 30(c) extra clip, laser sight]

Range (TN): 0-5 (3), 6-20 (4), 21-40 (5), 41-60 (8)

Concussion Grenade [12M Stun]

3 Throwing Knives [6M]

Jo Stick [6M Stun, +1 Reach]

**Armor:** Armored vest [4/3]

**Gear:** Micro-transceiver (Rating 3, w/encryption Rating 3), Nav-Dat GPS, satellite phone, survival kit, Weapon Focus 2 (Jo Stick)

#### Yamatetsu Recovery Team Enforcers (4)

These Yamatetsu troops are all well trained and have been a team together for over a year. In a combat situation, two will cover the electronics and magic specialists, one will cover the team leader, and the fourth will cover the first three enforcers. Three are human, one is a dwarf (the dwarfs stats are noted with an asterisk).

**B** **Q** **S** **C** **I** **W** **E** **R**  
6 (7\*) 5 5 (7\*) 4 5 5 (6\*) 4.1 5 (6)

**INIT:** 5 (6) + 1D6 (2D6)

**Dice Pools:** Combat 7 (8\*)

**Karma Pool/Professional Rating:** 6/4

**Race:** 3 Human, 1 Dwarf

**Active Skills:** Assault Rifles 6, Athletics 4 (5), Biotech 2 (First Aid 4), Bike 3, Car 3, Computer 4, Electronics 4, Etiquette 3 (Street 6), Intimidation 4, Negotiation 3, Pistols 5, Stealth 6, Unarmed Combat 3

**Knowledge Skills:** AMC Politics 3, Corporate Politics 4, English 3 (R/W 1), Japanese 3 (R/W 1), Microtronics 3, Psychology 3, Recon Operations 4, Tactics 4, Yamatetsu Structure 4

**Martial Arts:** Karate 3 (Full Offense)

**Cyberware (all alphaware):** Boosted Reflexes 2, Cybereyes [low-light, thermo, flare comp], Datajack, Knowsoft Link, Smartlink

**Bioware (all cultured):** Synthacardium

**Nanoware:** Nanosymbiotes

**Weapons:** AK-97 [AR, SA/BF/FA, 8M, RC 3 (4), 38 (c) w/3 extra clips, folding stock, gas vent 3, smartgun link]



Range (TN): 0–50 (2), 51–150 (3), 151–350 (4), 351–500 (7)  
Ares Viper Slivergun [HP, 9S(f), SA/BF, 30(c) w/extra clip, smartgun link]

Range (TN): 0–5 (2), 6–20 (3), 21–40 (4), 41–60 (7)  
Concussion Grenade [12M Stun]  
Knife [6M (8M\*)]

**Armor:** Armored vest [4/3]

**Gear:** Micro-transceiver (Rating 3, w/encryption Rating 3), Nav-Dat GPS, survival kit, medkit, trauma patch, various linguasofts (Rating 3)

#### Yamatetsu Recovery Team Electronics Specialist

The specialist's job is to locate the module and verify its contents. She has orders to upload the module's data to Yamatetsu via satellite uplink as soon as she gets her hands on the data module.

| B | Q | S | C | I | W | E   | R |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|-----|---|
| 5 | 5 | 5 | 4 | 6 | 5 | 4.3 | 5 |

INIT: 5 + 1D6

**Dice Pools:** Combat 8, Task 1

**Race:** Human

**Karma Pool/Professional Rating:** 5/4

**Active Skills:** Assault Rifles 5, Biotech 2 (First Aid 4), Bike 3, Car 3, Computer 6, Electronics 6, Electronics B/R 4, Etiquette 4 (Street 6), Intimidation 3, Negotiation 3, Pistols 5

**Knowledge Skills:** AMC Politics 3, Corporate Politics 4, Cybertechnology 4, German 5 (R/W 2), Japanese 4, (R/W 2), Microtronics 5, Psychology 3, Recon Operations 3, Security Systems 4, Tactics 4, Yamatetsu Structure 4

**Cyberware (all alpha):** Cybereyes [low-light, thermo, flare comp], Datajack, Headware memory [200 Mp], Data Lock, Knowsoft link, Smartlink

**Bloware (all cultured):** Cerebral booster 1

**Nanoware:** Nanosymbiotes

**Weapons:** AK-97 [AR, SA/BF/FA, 8M, RC 3 (4), 38 (c) w/3 extra clips, folding stock, gas vent 3, smartgun link]

Range (TN): 0–50 (2), 51–150 (3), 151–350 (4), 351–500 (7)  
Ares Viper Slivergun [HP, 9S(f), SA/BF, 30(c) w/extra clip, smartgun link]

Range (TN): 0–5 (2), 6–20 (3), 21–40 (4), 41–60 (7)  
Concussion Grenade [12M Stun]  
Knife [6M]

**Armor:** Armored vest [4/3]

**Gear:** AOD locator and 2 tracking signals, CMT Avatar cyberdeck with satellite uplink, magnetic anomaly detector (Rating 5), memory chips with data lock, electronics kit, maglock passkey (Rating 6), shotgun microphone (Rating 4)

#### Yamatetsu Recovery Team Magical Specialist

This wagemage knows that they're dealing with some powerful shamans, so he'll have his eyes open for spirit activity. In a combat situation, he will shield himself and Pierre O'Rourke first, and he may shield the rest of his team if he feels he can take it. He will target opposing magicians first.

| B | Q | S | C | I | W | E | M | R |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 7 | 5 | 4 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 6 | 7 | 5 |

INIT: 5 + 1D6 (2D6), Astral INIT: 26 + 1D6

**Dice Pools:** Astral 1, Astral Combat 8, Combat 8, Spell 6

**Karma Pool/Professional Rating:** 6/4

**Race:** Ork

**Active Skills:** Assault Rifles 4, Aura Reading 3, Biotech 2 (First Aid 4), Car 3, Conjuring 6, Electronics 3, Etiquette 4 (Magical 5), Leadership 3, Negotiation 4, Pistols 5, Sorcery 7, Stealth 3, Thrown Weapons 4

**Knowledge Skills:** Algonkian 3 (R/W 1), Corporate Politics 4, French 3 (R/W 1), History 4, Japanese 3 (R/W 1), Magical Threats 4, Psychology 3, Recon Operations 3, Spirits 4, Tactics 4, Yamatetsu Structure 4

**Spells:** Analyze Device 4, Antidote 6, Armor 4, Hot Potato 6, Ice Sheet 4, Invisibility 5, Levitate 4, Manabolt 5, Mass Confusion 5, Physical Barrier 6, Physical Mask 6, Shadow 4, Sunball 6, Treat 5

**Metamagic (Initiate Grade 1):** Shielding

**Bloware:** Synaptic Accelerator (level 1)

**Weapons:** AK-97 [AR, SA/BF/FA, 8M, RC 3 (4), 38 (c) 3 extra clips, folding stock, gas vent 3, laser sight]

Range (TN): 0–50 (3), 51–150 (4), 151–350 (5), 351–500 (8)  
Ares Viper Slivergun [HP, 9S(f), SA/BF, 30(c) extra clip, laser sight]

Range (TN): 0–5 (3), 6–20 (4), 21–40 (5), 41–60 (8)  
Concussion Grenade [12M Stun]  
3 Throwing Knives [6M]

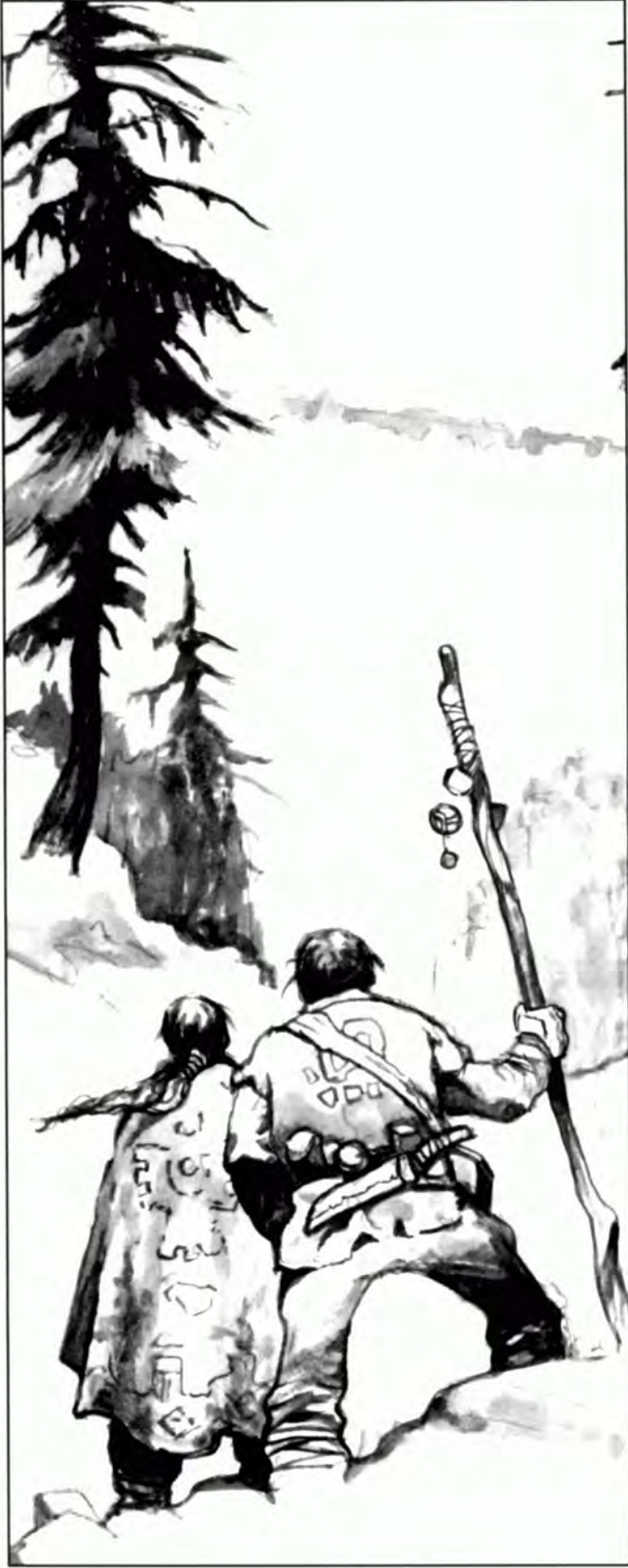
**Gear:** Expendable focus 3 (Hot Potato), expendable focus 4 (Manabolt), silver and gold ring (power focus 2), sustaining focus 4 (Armor), sustaining focus 5 (Invisibility)

**Elementals:** Air Elemental (Force 4, 3 services), Water Elemental (Force 4, 3 services), Fire Elemental (Force 5, 3 services), Earth Elemental (Force 4, 4 services)

#### PUSHING THE ENVELOPE

Perhaps despite all the precautions taken by Cloud Talon, he was observed during the hiding of the module and word got back to Eaglefeather. When all the negotiations are over and the warded box is recovered by Cloud Talon, the probe is not inside, hidden somewhere else by the would-be Medicine Woman for the tribe. Negotiations must begin again, and this time all bets are off. This scenario can get as complex as the gamemaster can handle.

Another option is a stubborn stance by Cloud Talon. The council can reach a decision, but Cloud Talon refuses to turn the module over, citing a horrific vision warning him not to release the module to anyone, for fear of unleashing a great evil upon the world. Mawnee will, as expected, act directly against Cloud Talon at this point, using his spurning of the council against him for all it's worth. The runners can then side with either Mawnee and support her coup, or support the earnest Cloud Talon and convince him that their intentions are the purest (yeah, right) and that his vision will only come true if the module falls into the wrong hands (read: Yamatetsu).



### DEBUGGING

It's possible that the runners may somehow turn the Manitou against them, or somehow give Yamatetsu the upper hand. In this case, Yamatetsu will take the module and call for a helicopter pick-up right outside of town. If the runners fail their opportunity to take it back or destroy it, the module ends up in Yamatetsu's hands.

If the runners get the probe module but are in danger of being wiped out by the Yamatetsu ambush, keep in mind that the Yamatetsu team will not do anything that will potentially damage the module. You can also provide the runners with a Manitou escort back to the border.

### PICKING UP THE PIECES

#### IT'S A WRAP

If the runners walk out of Niwimaja with the data module (or destroy it) and get past the Yamatetsu ambush, they still need to get back to the AMC. They may run into trouble with AMC military or Aztechnology troops at the border, or even other corporate rivals who mistakenly think they work for Yamatetsu.

If they successfully complete their mission, Mr. Johnson gives them a "well done," pays them, and sends them home. Arrangements are made to handle any cleanup or transportation.

If, at some point, the runners take the time to access the data module (or they copy the contents to review or sell later), they will find that the data is highly encrypted. After several months of trying, they may break the encryption, only to find that the majority of the sensor data the memory core carried is corrupted and ultimately useless. Some successful Knowledge skill tests will reveal that precious few sensor readings remain intact, and the data is incomplete, inconsistent and suggestive of anomalies. In fact, the clearest sensor readings do not provide any data on the comet at all, but clearly indicate the presence of another spacecraft/probe keeping pace with the comet within its coma. Further examination of the data suggests that a drone or drones presumably sent to the surface of the comet to take samples return and rendezvous with the unidentified craft.

The gamemaster can put whatever spin he or she prefers on this revelation, but the main implication should be that someone or something secretly beat all of the other probes to the comet. This mystery should confound the characters for some time. How and why did the unknown agency that sent this craft keep their mission—and victory in the Probe Race—a secret? Did they find anything on the comet's surface—and bring it back to Earth?

If Yamatetsu retrieves the data, they will access it only to find out the same thing. These results are Yamatetsu's worst nightmare. The high hopes they had of pulling a victory from the jaws of defeat are crushed. *Gagarin* failed to win the probe race. Rather than revealing the data, Yamatetsu will quietly bury it and accept that they lost.



## AWARDING KARMA

These awards are in addition to the normal benefits of good roleplaying, guts, smarts, surprise and humor (p. 244, SR3).

|  |   |
|--|---|
| Survival   | 1 |
| Completing Alaxa/Shibanokuji Datasteal                     | 1 |
| Not being spotted, traced or killing anyone in the process | 1 |
| Retrieving or destroying the module's data (as instructed) | 2 |
| Successfully negotiating with the Manitou                  | 1 |
| Using the Yamatetsu arrival to their advantage             | 1 |
| Creative solution to the situation or problems             | 1 |

## LEGWORK

If the characters do a bit of snooping around and checking with contacts, the following tables will help you determine what they dig up.

### Alaxa

**Appropriate Contacts:** Corporate (TN 4), Matrix Search (TN 4), Medical (TN 5), Street (TN 6)

| Successes | Results   |
|-----------|---|
| 0         | Isn't that some wiz new laxative? Is there something you need to tell me?                                     |
| 1         | Oh yeah, the biotech firm. They're relatively new. Got a crappy office in Everett or something.               |
| 2         | They mostly do research and theory, rather than implementation. Predominantly cultured stuff.                 |
| 3         | They have a lot of money to throw around for a new corp. I hear their backers are Asian.                      |
| 4         | They've got some contract with one of the AAAs to work on applications from biotech developed in zero-g labs. |
| 5+        | Yamatetsu owns them. The trail is hidden well, but the connection is definitely there.                        |

### Mr. Johnson

**Appropriate Contacts (TN 6):** Corporate, Street, Fixer (Government if appropriate for employer)

| Successes | Results   |
|-----------|---|
| 0         | He served you real ice cream? Damn! Wish my Johnson would feed my sweet tooth!  |
| 1         | Sounds like he's been around for a while. Probably works for one of the big boys.   |
| 2         | Oh yeah, the shriveled shrimp with the shrieky voice and the ork duo. He's got a solid rep. Weird and eccentric, but solid. |
| 3         | Never screwed anyone over, that I can tell.   |
| 4         | He hires teams again for as long as they produce, so I'd do a good job if I were you.                                       |
| 5+        | He tends to hire for jobs that have more to them than meets they eye.   |

### Gagarin

**Appropriate Contacts:** Yamatetsu (TN 3), Comet cultist or space fan (TN 3), other Corporate (TN 4), Matrix Search (TN 4)

| Successes | Results  |
|-----------|--|
| 0         | It was one of the comet probes, don't you watch the news?  |
| 1         | They thought it was going to be a big success, but it went poof right before the big broadcast. A big disaster for Yamatetsu; you can bet heads rolled over that one.  |
| 2         | Not everyone thinks it really went dead. Officially, no one's been able to re-contact the probe since last year, but they've been trying.  |
| 3         | The probe was designed to match the comet's course around the sun, then swing back by Earth and drop off a sensor payload with samples from the comet's corona, all that weird kinda drek. Assuming the rest of it is working, it's still up there doing its thing. If they got it working again, it could be a huge coup. |
| 4         | There was a report that it sent a signal back to Earth recently, but no one knows if it was for real or just a burst of static.  |
| 5         | Someone at Yamatetsu thinks <i>Gagarin</i> is still working. All sorts of weird traffic on and out of their corporate net, there's been movement in and out of their launch facilities.  |
| 6+        | I hear some of the re-contact work is being done on the Shibanokuji orbital.   |

### Shibanokuji

**Appropriate Contacts:** Yamatetsu (TN 3), Matrix Search (TN 4), other space or Corporate (TN 4)

| Successes | Results  |
|-----------|--|
| 0         | When did you learn Japanese?   |
| 1         | It's a party up in orbit. Big tourism attraction for Yamatetsu. It was the hottest place to see the comet last fall.                             |
| 2         | It's a big recreation spot, but they also do some low-g medicine up there. Some big names have gotten patched up while looking out at the stars. |
| 3         | There's a medical lab up there, probably some research being done with the zero-g available. Aside from the sight-seeing, access is very tight.  |
| 4         | Other corps would love to have a competing platform or maybe cause a problem for it.   |

## CAST OF SHADOWS

### Mr. Johnson

Mr. Johnson is noticeably disfigured, but it's not immediately clear what caused the damage to his body—and woe to





anyone who asks about it. His limbs are twisted and bent, his body is scarred, and his voice is shrill and nasally. His mind is sharp, however, and he's a quick negotiator.

Mr. Johnson has worked for his employer for several years with a good track record. When news of the *Gagarin* transmission came, his name was on the short list to handle the shadow side of the operation. His manner is calm and friendly and he likes to speak in colloquialisms when possible, figuring it will help put the runners at ease, considering his crippled physical appearance and the squeal of his voice. He is not self-conscious at all concerning his physical condition, and in fact, it has made him even more confident. He's done enough research on the runners to know they are qualified for the first run and have other skills that may come in useful for a follow-up assignment.

He dresses well, though with a casual element to his attire so he doesn't look like a corp shark.

| B | Q | S | C | I | W | E | R |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 3 | 3 | 2 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 5 | 4 |

**INIT:** 4 + 1D6

**Dice Pools:** Combat 8

**Karma Pool/Professional Rating:** 6/4

**Race:** Human

**Active Skills:** Computer 4, Electronics 4, Etiquette 6 (Corporate 7, Street 8), Interrogation 4, Leadership 5, Negotiation 7, Pistols 4, Small Unit Tactics 4

**Knowledge Skills:** Corporate Policies 6, English 4 (R/W 2), Fixers 4, Japanese 4 (R/W 2), Law 4, Megacorp Black Ops 6, Security Procedures 5, Shadowrunners 5

**Armor:** Lined coat [4/2]

#### Mr. Johnson's Guards

The job of these ork bodyguards is to protect Mr. Johnson, and they'll lay down their lives to do so. If there is any trouble, they will get him out of the area quickly and keep the runners suppressed until they can get away. Wearing thigh-length leather coats, dark jeans and boots, they are intentionally dressed to look alike.

| B | Q | S | C | I | W | E   | R     |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|-----|-------|
| 6 | 5 | 4 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 3.2 | 4 (6) |

**INIT:** 4 (6) + 1D6 (3D6)

**Dice Pools:** Combat 7

**Karma Pool/Professional Rating:** 5/4

**Race:** Ork

**Active Skills:** Athletics 4, Biotech 2 (First Aid 4), Car 4, Etiquette 2 (Corporate 4, Street 4), Intimidation 4, Negotiation 3, Pistols 6, Small Unit Tactics 4, SMG 6, Stealth 4

**Knowledge Skills:** Corporate Policies 3, Law 3, Shadowrunners 2, City Streets 4, Police Procedures 2, Mercenaries 2

**Cyberware (all alphaware):** Boosted Reflexes 3, Cybereyes [Thermal, Low-light, Flare-comp, Electronic Magnification 1], Smartlink

**Weapons:** HK 227 [SMG, 7M, SA/BF/FA, RC 2(3), 28(c), extra clip, smartgun link]

Range (TN): 0-10 (2), 11-40 (3), 41-80 (4), 81-150 (7)  
Ares Viper Slivergun [HP, 9S(f), SA/BF, 30(c), extra clip, smartgun link]

Range (TN): 0-5 (2), 6-20 (3), 21-40 (4), 41-60 (7)

Smoke grenade

**Armor:** Lined coat [4/2]

**Gear:** Micro transceiver (Rating 2), trauma patch, medkit

**Vehicle:** Eurocar Westwind 2000 with Armor 2

#### Thunderwalker

Cree by decent and upbringing, Thunderwalker is the leader of the Niwimaja's militia, having trained many of them herself. She once served in the AMC military (ironically specializing in the combat applications of modern technology) before becoming disgusted with the anti-elf and anti-woman attitudes she frequently encountered. Thunderwalker has no particular bent against technology, but she is exceptionally loyal to the Manitou cause and extremely hostile to those that threaten it (especially megacorps). It is unlikely she will react positively toward outsiders, much less those arriving with hostility.

Thunderwalker is an elven woman of average physical dimensions, short cropped pitch-dark hair and piercing black eyes. Her demeanor speaks of career military, from her short economical meals to the march that passes for a walk. She is never without a weapon of some sort, from her wicked combat knife to her long, heavy assault rifle, the barrel of which is notched all along its length.

She is a no-nonsense woman and will speak out vehemently against any outside influence among the tribe. It was her and her band of elites that eliminated the first Yamatetsu team, bringing the probe back to Cloud Talon to survey. Regardless of her personal opinion, she obeys the edicts of Cloud Talon over any other, having accepted him as her superior officer since the moment the two met.

| B | Q | S | C | I | W | E | R |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 5 | 7 | 5 | 5 | 5 | 5 | 6 | 6 |

**INIT:** 6 + 1D6 (2D6)

**Dice Pools:** Combat 8

**Karma Pool/Professional Rating:** 5/4

**Race:** Elf

**Active Skills:** Assault Rifles 6, Athletics 5, Biotech 2 (First Aid 4), Car 2, Edged Weapons 4 (Knife 6), Etiquette 3, Intimidation 4, Leadership 5, Pistols 3, Projectile Weapons 2 (Pull Bow 4), Small Unit Tactics 4, Stealth 7

**Knowledge Skills:** Algonkian 4 (R/W 2), AMC Military 5, AMC Politics 4, Cree 4 (R/W 2), English 3 (R/W 1), Hunting 5, Magic Background 3, Manitou Policies 4, Niwimaja Area 5, Paranormal Animals 3

**Bioware:** Sleep Regulator, Synaptic Accelerator 1

**Weapons:** AK-97 [AR, SA/BF/FA, 8M, RC 3 (4), 38 (c) 3 extra clips, folding stock, gas vent 3, laser sight]

Range (TN): 0-50 (3), 51-150 (4), 151-350 (5), 351-500 (8)  
Combat Knife [6M]

**Armor:** Camouflage jumpsuit [3/2]

**Gear:** Trauma patch, medkit

#### Chief Robert "Silver-Tongue" Youngman

An educated and influential man both within and outside the tribe, Chief Youngman is an elven statesman of the Manitou.



In fact, he is one of the founders of the Manitou tribe, and was a protégé of Adrian Silvermoon (and later one of those that ousted her). Though he does not look it, he has just turned fifty.

Youngman wears stereotypical native garb, though he is an Anglo mutt. He always has a few distinctive orange feathers tied into his hair or any headdress he wears, carrying himself with him a palpable air of authority. He is a physically imposing elf, with a serious demeanor and a voice that can be both threatening and soothing at the same time. There is, however, a joy within him that can be both seen and felt, and he often looks upon the world with the eyes of a child.

Youngman is a skilled diplomat that places the value and needs of the tribe above personal needs (his or another's), always making choices for the whole and not the one. He is both just and fair, and refuses to make decisions without as much information as possible in any given circumstance, without falling into the trap of indecisiveness.

The Chief would perhaps be the greatest ally for any group to foster in regards to dealing with the Manitou, but he is also the hardest to gain. He thoroughly backs Cloud Talon in public, but has taken to berating him in private for refusing to involve the Manitou Inner Council and other tribal authorities in the current affair.

**B** 7 **Q** 4 **S** 5 **C** 6 **I** 5 **W** 6 **E** 6 **R** 4

**INIT:** 4 + 1D6

**Dice Pools:** Combat 7

**Karma Pool/Professional Rating:** 10/4

**Race:** Elf

**Active Skills:** Athletics 4, Biotech 5, Edged Weapons 3, Etiquette 4, Instruction 4, Interrogation 2 (Lie Detector 4), Leadership 6, Negotiation 4 (Bargain 6), Projectile Weapons 1 (Pull Bow 3), Rifles 4

**Knowledge Skills:** Algonkian 3 (R/W 1), Administration 4, AMC Corps 3, AMC Politics 6, English 5 (R/W 2), Haudenosaunee 3 (R/W 1), Manitou Policies 6, Niwimaja Area 5, Painting 6

### Cloud Talon

The old man known as Cloud Talon is full of contradictions. He is not a private man, though little is known of his history before he joined the Manitou in their fight for independence. He is a powerfully trained Haudenosaunee (Iroquois) shaman, skilled in the arts of war, peace and diplomacy. Like a chess master, he has the ability to think ahead multiple moves and see all the potential outcomes. He is the first to step up in his people's defense and last to back down from the correct course. He knows that some day he must die, either due to his actions or from old age, and does not fear it, knowing that there is another to take his place in the tribe.

Cloud Talon is respected among the tribe, particularly by Thunderwalker, who reveres him as no other. While not officially appointed as the tribe's Medicine Man, the position is his by consensus. In council, his advice is given the countenance it deserves and is generally considered second only to Chief Youngman himself. He knows Eaglefeather views him as her

personal adversary but bears her no ill will, seeing her instead as misguided at times and his logical replacement—though she is unaware of his opinions concerning her.

Cloud Talon himself lives in an earthen hut at the outskirts of Niwimaja. His hovel is dug into the ground and consists of a single good-sized room and several modern conveniences, including a portable heater, a food preparation unit and a small lamp. The abode gives the impression of being a long term camp site. His medicine lodge is set up a few meters from his sunken door, near the oldest pine he could find in the area.

Cloud Talon is something of a wild card in this scenario. Everyone has a different idea what his motivation is, and he's not saying much beyond very general terms. He assures people his goal is to improve life for the tribe, but won't say specifically how he hopes to accomplish that. This will start to annoy some people as time goes on and the situation remains unresolved.

When Thunderwalker brought him the crashed module he immediately saw an opportunity for the Manitou to gain an advantage. By his thinking, it would be valuable enough to trade for something useful to the Manitou. He will be quite interested in hearing what the Yamatetsu team (and to a lesser extent, the runners) is willing to offer the Manitou in exchange for the module.

**B** 4 **Q** 4 **S** 4 **C** 5 **I** 6 **W** 6 **E** 9 **R** 5

**INIT:** 5 + 1D6, Astral INIT: 29 + 1D6

**Dice Pools:** Astral 3, Astral Combat 8, Combat 8, Spell 7

**Karma Pool/Professional Rating:** 9/3

**Race:** Human

**Active Skills:** Aura Reading 5, Biotech 2 (First Aid 4, Natural Medicine 5), Car 3, Conjuring 8, Electronics 3, Enchanting 4, Etiquette 4 (Tribal 7), Leadership 6, Negotiation 5, Pistols 4, Sorcery 7, Stealth 3, Thrown Weapons 4

**Knowledge Skills:** AMC Politics 6, English 3 (R/W 1), Flute 6, French 6 (R/W 3), Haudenosaunee 4 (R/W 2), History 4, Local Spirits 4, Manitou Area 5, Naskapi 4 (R/W 2), Ojibwe 4 (R/W 2), Psychology 6, Woodworking 4

**Spells:** Agony 6, Analyze Device 4, Analyze Truth 4, Astral Barrier 6, Control Fire 4, Cure Disease 5, Detox 6, Entertainment 4, Heal 5, Light 4, Magic Fingers 4, Oxygenate 3, Preserve 3, Resist Pain 4, Shapechange 4, Stabilize 5

**Totem:** Elk (+1 die for health spells, +1 die for spell defense, +2 dice for spirits of the land; -2 dice for combat spells)

**Metamagic (Initiate Grade 3):** Invoking, Masking, Shielding

**Weapons:** Colt American L36 [LP, SA, 6L, RC 0, 11(c)]

Range (TN): 0-5 (4), 6-15 (5), 16-30 (6), 31-50 (9)

Spear [5M] (stacked focus)

Knife [5L]

**Armor:** Lined coat [4/2]

**Gear:** Expendable focus 4 (Heal), expendable focus 3 (agony), sustaining focus 4 (shapechange), spear (stacked focus, power 3, spirit (forest) 2), shamanic lodge (rating 7)



**Dalianis Starseeker**

Dalianis is a member of the Naskapi faction of the Manitou, a talented shaman sorcerer, a follower of Raven, and possessed of her totem's characteristic wit, cunning and charisma. She wanders the land around the town, gathering the materials her tribe requires from Nature's bounty. She believes that technology and industrial society are inherently flawed and oppressive, so she rejects them. She wants the characters and any other non-Manitou out of the town and the area she considers tribal land as soon as possible and is willing to do almost anything to ensure this. She is a pragmatist, realizing that some compromise must be made, but carefully choosing where she bends so as not to topple her philosophical core.

While she does not know where the module is, and in fact knew nothing about it until the runner's arrival, she does have a great deal of local influence and resources. Her main goal is to have the module, the outsiders and their gear gone. She is helpful to whoever will make that happen quickly. How she treats outsiders is based on how respectfully they behave toward her. She is not likely to ally herself with the runners, as their arrival and revelation of the module are part of the same problem. In an effort to get all the outsiders away, however, she'll see the runners as more approachable than the Yamatetsu team.

Physically, Dalianis is a young looking human woman of thirty years, whose temperament and appearance flourish in the cold and dry. Her hair is dark and long, and her eyes are a deep and sparkling brown and seem to contain wisdom beyond her years. She dresses in traditional garb with a smattering of more modern and effective cold weather gear.

|          |          |          |          |          |          |          |          |          |
|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|
| <b>B</b> | <b>Q</b> | <b>S</b> | <b>C</b> | <b>I</b> | <b>W</b> | <b>E</b> | <b>M</b> | <b>R</b> |
| 3        | 4        | 3        | 6        | 6        | 5        | 6        | 7        | 5        |

**INIT:** 5 + 1D6, Astral INIT: 27 + 1D6  
**Dice Pools:** Astral 1, Astral Combat 8, Combat 7, Spell 6  
**Karma Pool/Professional Rating:** 5/3  
**Race:** Human

**Active Skills:** Aura Reading 6, Biotech 4 (Natural Medicine 5), Conjuring 6, Edged Weapons 4, Enchanting 2, Etiquette 4, Leadership 4, Negotiation 3, Sorcery 5, Stealth 5

**Knowledge Skills:** AMC Politics 5, Botany 5, Dancing 4, Ecology 5, English 3 (R/W 1), Haudenosaunee 3, Manitou Area 4, Naskapi 5 (R/W 3), Permaculture 5

**Spells:** Alter Temperature 4, Animal Sight 3, Calm Animal 3, Diagnose 4, Fix 4, Gecko Crawl 5, Ignite 4, Influence 5, Transform 5, Wind 4

**Totem:** Raven (+2 die for manipulation spells, +2 dice for spir- its of the sky, +1 to all target numbers when not under the open sky)

**Metamagic (Initiate Grade 1):** Cleansing  
**Weapons:** Knife [3L]  
**Armor:** Real leather [0/2]

**Jamis Bearpaw**

One of the traditional Montagnais, Jamis is the de facto leader of the radical anti-technology faction of the local Manitou tribe. He takes an almost immediate adversarial role

against anyone with cyberware or high-tech gadgetry "'Do you use that gadget, or does that gadget use you?" is one of his favorite sayings). Jamis dresses in only what the Earth Mother grants him through his own arm, or the arms of others in the tribe. He carries a flint knife and is armed when necessary with a powerful wooden bow, manufactured with his own hands, and a compliment of arrows made from fallen branches.

Jamis wears a vicious-looking bear's paw over his right hand, gained in the battle that earned him his name and the three red scars across his right cheek. He is a massive Ork, more in girth than in height, thick in muscle yet still capable of great bursts of speed. Rumors that he is an adept are scattered around the tribe, but his aura shows none of it. In truth, he is just a skilled and powerful man, both physically and psychologically.

While it is unlikely that Jamis will side with either the characters or Yamatetsu, he may enjoy the company of one or more of them. If any of the characters aren't festooned with high-tech gear (adepts or magicians), he will take a liking to them, perhaps trying to persuade them to give up what little technology they still use. It is unlikely he will take a similar liking to any other invading force and could therefore become a valuable ally for the characters.

|          |          |          |          |          |          |          |          |
|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|
| <b>B</b> | <b>Q</b> | <b>S</b> | <b>C</b> | <b>I</b> | <b>W</b> | <b>E</b> | <b>R</b> |
| 7        | 4        | 7        | 3        | 5        | 5        | 6        | 4        |

**INIT:** 4 + 1D6  
**Dice Pools:** Combat 7  
**Karma Pool/Professional Rating:** 4/4  
**Race:** Ork

**Active Skills:** Biotech 5, Edged Weapons 5, Intimidation 4, Leadership 4, Pole Arms/Staves 4, Projectile Weapons 4 (Pull Bow 7), Projectile weapons B/R 4, Rifles 3, Stealth 6, Thrown Weapons 4, Unarmed Combat 5

**Knowledge Skills:** AMC Politics 3, Botany 3, Carpentry 4, English 3 (R/W 1), Haudenosaunee 3 (R/W 1), Hunting 4, Niwimaja Area 5, Ojibwe 3 (R/W 1), Wildlife 3, Woodworking 4

**Weapons:** Bow [9M, 20 arrows]  
Flint Knife [8L]  
Staff [9M Stun]  
**Armor:** Real Leather [0/2]

**Shaun Ojibwan**

A student of political affairs throughout history, Ojibwan is usually the one who drafts policy for the Niwimaja Manitou tribe. His opinion is respected and deferred to with regards to outside relations.

Ojibwan is not particularly opposed to technological influence, seeing technology itself as a neutral tool. He is anti-capitalist and opposed to the oppressive role that megacorps play in modern society (and how they use technology to enforce it). He is convinced that the AMC will soon invade the Manitou area, backed by Aztechnology, unless the Manitou can gather support on the world-wide level. Though he believes holding onto the probe module will only bring the tribe trouble, he sees it as an opportunity for the Manitou to foster a global ally—which could be an opening for the Yamatetsu team.

Ojibwan carries himself with a gentle kindness. He has a firm voice, devoid of harshness, and tries to look each partic-



part in a conversation in the eyes, which is made difficult due to his diminished dwarven stature. He is balding a bit, but his hair retains its youthful black color despite his advancing age. His movements are those of a tired man and his shoulders occasionally stoop as if under a great weight, some of which seems to lift as the current danger begins to pass, or at least seems to be passing. Despite his forgiving countenance, his eyes are dark and fiery, filled with a deep resounding intelligence and restrained fury.

| B | Q | S | C | I | W | E | R |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 5 | 3 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 7 | 6 | 4 |

**INIT:** 4 + 1D6

**Dice Pools:** Combat 7

**Karma Pool/Professional Rating:** 4/2

**Race:** Dwarf

**Active Skills:** Instruction 5, Leadership 4, Negotiation 5, Rifles 3, Stealth 4, Unarmed Combat 3

**Knowledge Skills:** AMC Politics 6, Anarchist Theory 3, Economics 4, English 5 (R/W 4), Haudenosaunee 3 (R/W 1), Marxist Theory 5, Ojibwe 5 (R/W 4), Political History 6, Social Movements 4, Sociology 5

#### Mawnee Saukuk Eaglefeather

Mawnee Eaglefeather incorporated the name of her grandfather into hers upon his death. As he was the previous tribal Medicine Man, she assumed she would be the next choice, despite the fact that he did not name a successor upon his death. The tribal council did not choose her, or any other for that matter, but the outsider, Cloud Talon, has become the accepted Medicine Man of the tribe. Mawnee is not amused and has chosen the venerable Cloud Talon as her enemy, a fact that has not escaped the notice of the tribal council or of the man himself.

A powerful Eagle shaman, Mawnee is not bereft of defense or backers and is far subtler than her totem implies. Her dark elven beauty is unsurpassed in the tribe, a fact that she uses to her advantage. Many of the town's council and respected members owe their continued position to her silence. There is a current of jealousy between her and Dalianis.

As far as she is concerned, the module is a gift sent by Mother Earth and Father Sky, one she intends to utilize to its greatest potential, turning as many of the tribe and council against Cloud Talon and any who side with him as possible. She has taken to acting as a foil for Cloud Talon in the past and this is a golden opportunity to continue; perhaps this time he'll actually get angry over it.

Given her manipulations and maneuvering, she is a likely and powerful potential ally for any side looking to get the module. She will adopt whatever position she thinks will lever the outsiders to her aid, short of anything that will harm the tribe. Despite her ambition, she would be a model Medicine Man for the tribe, having the magical skill and best interests of the tribe in her heart. Unfortunately, her current vendetta has somewhat blinded her to the latter, but overall she remains a staunch protector to the tribe.

| B | Q | S | C | I | W | E | M | R |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 3 | 6 | 3 | 8 | 6 | 6 | 6 | 8 | 6 |

**INIT:** 6 + 1D6, Astral INIT: 28 + 1D6

**Dice Pools:** Astral 2, Astral Combat 10, Combat 9, Spell 6

**Karma Pool/Professional Rating:** 7/3

**Race:** Elf

**Active Skills:** Aura Reading 5, Biotech 5 (Natural Medicine 7), Centering 6, Conjuring 6, Divination 5, Edged Weapons 4, Enchanting 4, Etiquette 7, Intimidation 5, Leadership 5, Negotiation 4, Sorcery 6, Stealth 5, Unarmed Combat 3

**Knowledge Skills:** Algonkian 5 (R/W 3), AMC Politics 4 (Manitou 6), Dreaming 5, Flora and Fauna 6, Local Woodlands 5, Naskapi 4 (R/W 2), Ojibwe 6 (R/W 3), Singing 6, Sperethiel 4, Weaving 5

**Spells:** Antidote 5, Astral Armor 4, Clairaudience 4, Clairvoyance 4, Compel Truth 5, Cure Disease 4, Detect Enemies 3, Detect Life 5, Diagnose 4, Dream 5, Heal 6, Influence 6, Mindprobe 5, Mist 4, Physical Camouflage 5, Physical Double Image 4, Stunbolt 5, Thunderclap 5

**Totem:** Eagle (+2 dice for detection spells, +2 dice for all spirits of the sky)

**Metamagic (Initiate Grade 2):** Centering (Singing), Divining (Dreaming)

**Weapons:** Knife [4L]

**Armor:** Real Leather Clothing [0/2]

**Gear:** Expendable focus 4 (Compel Truth), expendable focus 3 (Mindprobe), wooden bracelet (sustaining focus 4, Physical Double Image), shamanic lodge (Rating 7)

**Ally Spirit:** "Gichi-baapi-animikiiwaanakwad" (Great Laughing Thundercloud, "Gichi" for short), Force 4, Native Plane: Realm of the Sky, Quickness 5, Immunity to Normal Weapons, Materialization, Sense Link, Sorcery 5, Thunderclap 5, Form: large spirit eagle

#### Manitou Militia

These individuals comprise the militia and police force for the town and surrounding area.

| B | Q | S | C | I | W | E | R |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 4 | 5 | 4 | 4 | 3 | 4 | 6 | 4 |

**INIT:** 4 + 1D6

**Dice Pools:** Combat 6

**Karma Pool/Professional Rating:** 1/3

**Race:** Elf

**Active Skills:** Assault Rifles 4, Biotech 3, Edged Weapons 3, Projectile Weapons 2 (Pull Bow 4), Projectile Weapons B/R 2, Stealth 4, Thrown Weapons 4, Unarmed Combat 3

**Knowledge Skills:** AMC Politics 3, Botany 3, English 3 (R/W 1), Haudenosaunee 3 (R/W 1), Hunting 3, Niwimaja Area 3, Wildlife 3

**Weapons:** AK-97 [AR, SA/BF/FA, 8M, RC 3 (4), 38 (c) 3 extra clips, folding stock]

Range (TN): 0-50 (4), 51-150 (5), 151-350 (6), 351-500 (9)

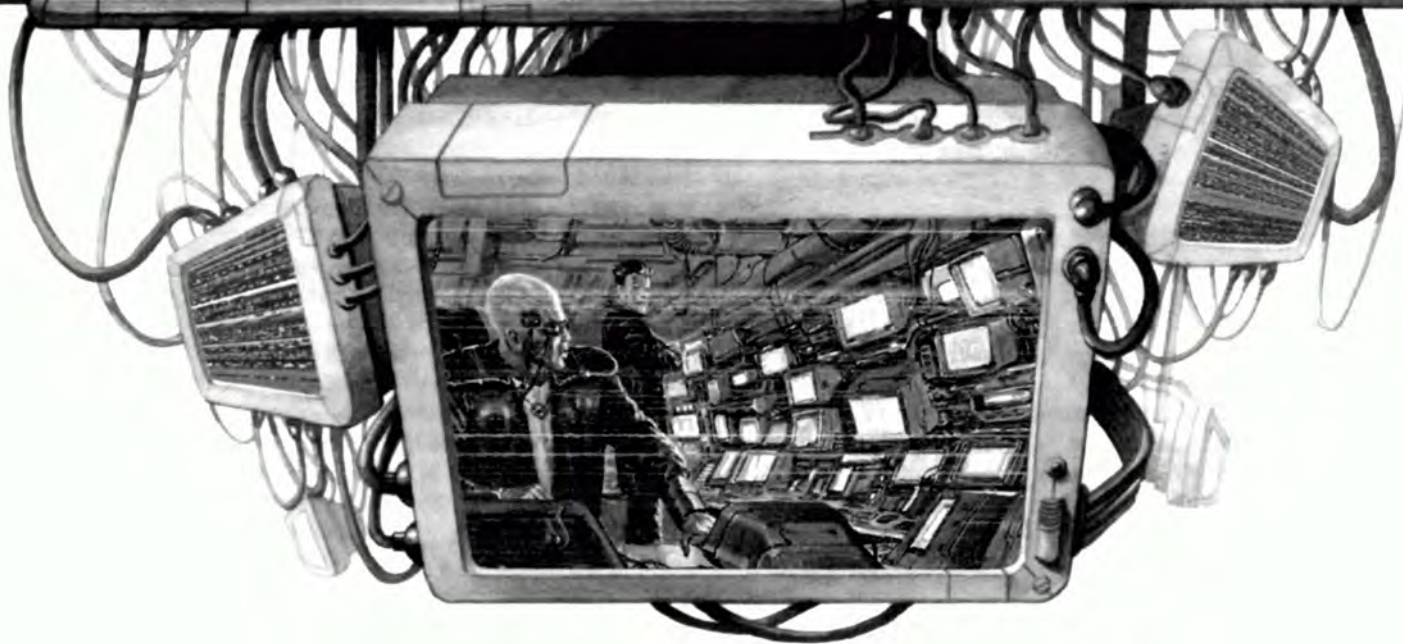
Bow [6M, 20 arrows]

Knife [4L]

Spear [8L]

**Armor:** Armor Vests [4/2]

# THE PRICE OF LIBERTY



## OPENING MOVES

*Three onion ring-a-dings, half a soggy ham sandwich and a cold cup of soykaf. All that's left of the "gourmet" lunch provided for the prized captive.*

Sherman pushed away the remains of his food, grimacing at the wilted lettuce scraps and grease spots left behind on the blotter. He picked up the first few sheets of paper and tore them off, throwing them carelessly on the floor. His face creased with distaste, he picked up the remnants of his lunch and gingerly dumped them in the wastebasket.

"This is it," he muttered. "No more. I've had it with—"

A sudden draft snaked across the floor and scattered the discarded papers. Fear flickered across Sherman's face as a dull click echoed through the hall outside. The breeze died, leaving the pages lifeless on the industrial carpet. Nervously running his fingers through his thinning gray-brown hair, he felt his hand shake.

*Come on, don't blow it. Not now.*

Sherman reached for a new piece of paper and a pencil, hurriedly scribbling numbers and symbols halfway down the page. A heartbeat later, an armed man wearing security armor appeared at his office door. Sherman swallowed and waited a full mental count of three before looking up, desperately hoping he didn't look as nervous as he felt.

The man was tall, clean cut, and looked every inch a security officer. His name tag read "Lt. Radford," and his strong jaw, military haircut and really impressive firearm all proclaimed "Knight Errant" almost as clearly as his shoulder logo did. He held one of the latest Predator variants loosely at his side in a posture that was somehow meant to seem non-threatening, as though the fact that it wasn't holstered would be ignored.

*So I guess you're the flavor of the day. Let's hope you're less competent than you look.*

"Everything all right, Dr. Royce? Major Layton was worried that you were unhappy with your food." Lt. Radford smiled the "All-American Boy" smile that probably helped him land the assignment in the first place. He was probably supposed to be good with high-strung scientists or something.

"No no, everything's fine. I was just trying to figure out where a hitch in the code was, but I've gotten it now. Sometimes hardcopy is still useful." Sherman gestured to the paper in front of him, smiling weakly. "No problems here."

Lt. Radford nodded, smiling again. "Glad to hear it. You do need anything, just wave to the surveillance camera or give us a call. We're just right outside."



Sherman smiled and nodded. "I'll be sure to let you know. Thanks."

Lt. Radford turned and walked out of sight, a second draft and click letting Sherman know that his warden had gone out. *Fragging Major Layton. I guess the watchdog is starting to suspect something. Lucky for me, it's time to move anyway. I'm way too fed up to hide it very well for much longer, and I suppose it's starting to show. Can't afford to slip up now.*

Sherman turned back to his cyberdeck and jacked in, the drab modern office around him dissolving into the burnished golden walls and comfortable furnishings of the internal Ares host, level 12. With a gesture, he crossed the room to a shadowed corner. The wall blurred and changed into a screened alcove with a mirror. He touched the frame in three places, then watched the mirror image of his icon change into a shadowed face.

"This is a secure line," the image spoke. "Where did you get this number?"

"I received it from a mutual friend, Mr. Johnson. He goes by Gabriel."

The figure in the mirror is silent, then nods. "Proceed."

"I have a proposition that I think will interest you ..."

## PREPARING TO PLAY

As with most *Shadowrun* adventures, the gamemaster should read through and become familiar with *The Price of Liberty* before running it. This adventure will take the characters across North America and even into orbit. Gamemasters should have a basic familiarity with the geography and politics of the Sixth World before running this adventure, and access to *Target: Wastelands* for the space section of the run will be helpful. The gamemaster may also want *Shadows of North America* or *Target: Smuggler Havens* for information on some of the locations the characters will visit during the course of the run.

## BACKGROUND STORY

*The Price of Liberty* places the shadowrunners in the unenviable position of playing cat and mouse with three very powerful corporations, with victory in the Probe Race being the prize for the winner. In truth, however, it isn't the runners that the corps want, it's the man behind the whole scheme—their employer. The adventure is open-ended, and can be arranged according to whatever best suits the characters and campaign being run.

The story begins with Dr. Sherman Royce, one of the top scientists at AresSpace who is currently assigned to the *Velox I* and *II* probes. He is a brilliant scientist and programmer, an expert in telemetry and guidance systems. Unfortunately, even America's Friendliest Corp can be a bit overbearing when it comes to protecting one of their most valuable assets, and Sherman is feeling the pressure of 24-hour surveillance.

Royce came to Ares not long after receiving his doctorate, and he has done some outstanding work for them in the intervening decade. But as his reputation and stature grew within the company, his freedom diminished accordingly. The situation only worsened when one of his comrades was extracted

by a rival corp early on in the Probe Race, pushing Ares to drastically increase security on its remaining prize citizens.

Royce's employment and entire life has become a prison-like affair. He is under constant surveillance, he cannot leave Ares's grounds without special permission and a retinue of bodyguard "keepers" and he long ago lost what meager social life he maintained. Even his Matrix activity is monitored and curtailed—though his skill allows him to sometimes bypass these safeguards.

Finally, with the Probe Race thrusting the project into the public eye and the resultant tightening of security after the *Gigas* mishap, Royce had had enough. He knew, however, that Ares had no intention of allowing his resignation from the corp, and so he devised a plan for escape.

The first thing Royce needs is money. While being a pet scientist at Ares is not without perks, nuyen isn't really on the list of benefits. He has been paid well enough, but most of the compensation for his work is in luxuries, travel or corp scrip—perfectly valid so long as he stays in his assigned world, but virtually useless for disappearing to an island in the Caribbean League. In order to get money, he has to get a bargaining chip, and the most valuable things he has to offer are the Ares probes.

During the programming of the guidance systems in *Velox I* and *Velox II*, Royce created a virus he dubbed "Liberty." This virus, which is triggered remotely, gives the probe false data and sends it careening off the flight path, dooming its chances of ever meeting up with Halley's Comet—as well as Ares's chances of winning the Probe Race. With this bargaining chip in tow, Royce set about using his contacts outside the corporation to discreetly obtain the name of the project head of the dark horse in the Probe Race: the Aztechnology/Shibata/Federated Boeing probe, *Kepler*.

Royce's contact at the *Kepler* project professed a high degree of interest in what Royce claimed he could do, and set up a deal where Royce would be paid a significant amount in order to derail *Velox I*. Royce only receives the money if the probe is successfully sabotaged, however, and in order to activate the virus and derail the probe, he needs one little job done first.

The runners are hired through a fixer named Annika Griebe, who once worked as an Ares Johnson before having some "differences" and parting ways with the corp. She has a solid reputation for arranging discrete work for individuals in various corporations with very little notice, though it is well known (in the shadows at least) that she refuses on principle to arrange runs that will benefit Ares.

Royce contacts Annika with a job, explaining that he needs a bit of maintenance work done on a relay at the *Apollo* station. The runners are asked to infiltrate the *Apollo* station using the Ares Security ID's provided, meet with their contact, Sketch, then sneak outside the station and make adjustments to a backup communications relay. Those changes will allow Royce to activate the virus remotely post-launch. The trick, however, is that they only have 48 hours to get up to the station, make the change, and get on the shuttle home. The runners are told that if they are successful there will be more work to follow.



Twenty-four hours after the runners return to Earth, *Velox I* is in the news, having gone hopelessly off course and lost its chance to catch the comet on the second pass. Ares is now relying on *Velox II*, and Royce is a substantially wealthier man. His time with Ares is ticking away, however, and he has to get out before they realize he was responsible. To that end, Royce sets the second part of his plan in motion and arranges for his own extraction.

The runners are contacted less than a day later by Annika, who advises them of the new job with a substantially increased pay rate. Their job is to extract Dr. Royce from the Ares facility in Silicon Valley and deliver him to New Orleans. This job is hardly a cakewalk, but the price is right.

Upon arriving in New Orleans, Royce asks the runners to take on one more job for him. Anxious to ensure both his freedom and his financial stability outside the corporate world, Royce wants to auction off the last probe to the highest bidder. Using the Asgard data haven, he arranges for a buyer. The gamemaster has the option here of using either Shibata or Ares as the winner. Royce hires the runners to act as the go-betweens for him, not wanting to risk letting either corp know where he is in case they wanted him to rethink his retirement plans. He sends the group to exchange the data for proof of payment, then to report back to him following the exchange.

Unbeknownst to the runners, however, their favored status by Royce is not what it appears to be. First, the winner of the auction wants their information—and is terribly interested in having Dr. Royce attend a personal meeting, whether for revenge or employment. They've sent a team of their best to ensure this as much as possible. Second, the loser of the auction has no intention of letting their chance for fame and fortune slip by, and has sent a team to capture both the information and Royce, or at least to ensure that no one else gets either one. Third, Royce is a man who is both greatly attached to the idea of life outside a corporate compound and aware of the tremendous pressure a corporation can bring to bear when it really wants something. To that end, he's engaged his favorite fixer to provide a second team of runners to ensure that the first team doesn't betray him.

How the adventure ends is really up to the ingenuity of the players and the ethics of their characters. Do they hold to the idea of an independent life and carry out the mission? Do they betray their employer when faced with temptation? Can they hold their own against corporate strike teams long enough to make it back to Royce with the cash? Will *Velox II* suffer the same fate as its twin? Regardless of the outcome, it's certain that the characters will come out of this with new friends—and some new enemies as well.

## WORLD IN VERTIGO

### WHAT'S UP CHUMMER?

In this scenario the characters meet their Johnson, Annika Griebe. She's one of the elite fixers in the Seattle scene, and working for her definitely counts as a feather in your cap.

The runners are contacted with a message that Ms. Griebe

would like to speak to them about a freelance opportunity. She arranges a meet at Vertigo, a classy dance club that's been earning rave reviews. At the club, they meet Annika, who sketches out a cakewalk job involving a quick space trip, all expenses paid. The most difficult part of the run is the 48-hour time limit, as she explains it, but if the job is successful then a second, more lucrative assignment will follow right behind.

### TELL IT TO THEM STRAIGHT

Things have changed since SURGE hit, but nothing so much as the club scene. Vertigo is alive with the rhythmic bass of the latest power-jungle tracks. Strobe lights radiate from the doorway, turning it green then yellow, red then green again. A pair of twins has replaced the street-standard troll bouncer, both ladies being attractive, muscular and lightly chromed. Wearing tight white and black vinyl suits, they're dressed to kill—a phrase that seems particularly apt for these women. A glance tells you that they're all business and not to be trifled with.

As you near the door, the woman in black on the left moves into your way, eyeing you appraisingly. "Vertigo is a weapon-free environment, for the safety of our guests," she says. "Do you have an invitation?" Her companion in white on the right does a quick pat down on you, then the pair steps aside. The woman on the left hands you a ticket in exchange for your weapons. "Have a good night."

### When the characters go inside, read the following:

Vertigo is a carnival of the insane. Broad, muscular men with feathered backs chat near the bar. A short human with a horn jutting from the center of his head careens recklessly from side to side in the center of the dance floor. It's become hard to distinguish the prosthetic from the real in this whitewash of derangement.

Scanning the chaotic scene, you spot your contact, a woman standing near a door at the far end of the club. She's tall and blonde and wrapped in a Donce' Fabrini business suit. Glasses frame her electric blue eyes. She catches your gaze and nods, then turns and walks into the back room.

The thundering beat of Vertigo fades to a static crackle as you enter the back room. A large chromed Amerind man with dark black sunglasses closes the door, then goes to stand beside Ms. Griebe. A flick of her finger turns on the white noise generator as she invites you to be seated. "I'm looking for a few new freelancers for a possible two-part assignment. You have been recommended to me, and I'm interested in acquiring your services for Mr. Johnson, a corporate client.

"What I'm looking for is a group to travel to the *Apollo* orbital station and make a small adjustment to a piece of equipment. Travel there and back will be arranged and appropriate clearances will be provided. You must complete the task, however, and be on your way back to Earth within 48 hours of the time you depart. There should be no difficulties, but there is also no allowance for error. I am offering 10,000¥ per team member upon completion. Success will be rewarded with the second half of the assignment upon your return, which will be far more lucrative. Are you interested?"







**If the characters accept the job, read the following:**

"Good. I'm sure we can both enjoy a profitable return on our time. The piece of equipment is a communications relay located at the *Apollo* station. There is an individual on the station called Sketch. He will be expecting you, and will give you the required information as to the location of the equipment, as well as helping you with any other needs you might encounter. Remember, you *must* accomplish the task within 48 hours. After that, your security passes will expire and the deadline for the repair will have passed."

**HOOKS**

Griebe is big money. She pays well, she takes care of her people and she has an unshakable reputation of never turning on the runners who work for her—unless it's their fault. She doesn't go looking for new talent very often, and turning her down would likely mean that she'd never call again. If the runners are still trying to break into the big time, this is their big chance. If they're already big time, then working with Griebe is just one more feather in their cap—a feather that will look awfully good to other powerful Johnsons down the line.

**BEHIND THE SCENES**

The characters can find their way into this job through a variety of contacts. Ms. Griebe begins her search by contacting fixers. If the characters do not have a fixer, she will reach them through underworld contacts. She is in touch with figures from each of the local crime syndicates. Ms. Griebe also sends out word through contacts at the Seattle Shadowland data haven. Characters can discover the run through any of these affiliations. Ms. Griebe will not use corporate contacts to locate shadowrunners.

The characters' contact will phone them and tell them that a Ms. Griebe would like to meet with them and discuss "possible employment." Ms. Griebe asks to meet the characters at 8pm downtown at Club Vertigo. They are to give the password "liberty" to the bouncers. The bouncers have a Professional Rating of 3 and conduct a Brisk search, per the Physical Search Modifiers Table, p. 236, SR3.

**Just in Case**

The meeting is set at a time when the bar is reaching a fever pitch of excitement. The 8–12pm timeslot is when the resident DJ takes the stage to spin the latest tunes. The dance floor is packed with metahumans and changelings, providing ample cover for Ms. Griebe's security team to stalk the characters' every movement.

Griebe's team is heavily disguised and scattered throughout the bar. It includes a bear shaman, three street samurai brothers, a rigger and an elven tactics specialist. (See *Cast of Shadows*, p. 81, for statistics.) Two of the three brothers are twins. When the characters arrive, they should be given a Perception (5) Test to notice that one of the brothers is looking at them. If they succeed, they should be given a second Perception (5) Test to spot his twin elsewhere in the crowd. The third samurai brother is the Amerind in the room with her.

The Vertigo is a dance club first and foremost, but it's run by professionals who don't want a mess. Any trouble will result in Lone Star showing up, rounding up those who don't play well with others and escorting the whole mess of them to the station. Ms. Griebe and her team will not participate in trouble beyond defending themselves and will immediately leave the premises. She and the owner are friends, and the staff will cover for her very efficiently.

Annika Griebe's sole purpose in this scenario is to hire the runners. She opens negotiations with an offer of 10,000¥ per runner. She is authorized to go up to 20,000¥ per runner if necessary. Make an Opposed Negotiations (6) Test. For each net success the team negotiator has, their fee goes up by 1,000¥. She will not cover operating costs, because there won't be any unless the runners screw up somehow.

If the characters press her for more information before they agree, she simply refuses. She has the reputation to be able to leave it at that and expect an affirmative answer from the runners. If they turn her down, she'll conclude the interview and leave, wishing them a pleasant evening.

**Mission Control**

Once the runners settle on a reasonable payment, Ms. Griebe reveals their mission. The runners are to take a space shuttle flight from Cape Canaveral to the *Apollo* Space Station, posing as a Federated Boeing Security squad. Once there, they are to modify a backup communications/telemetry relay by inserting an encrypted datachip and typing in a sequence on the attached keypad. One of Ms. Griebe's contacts, a man who calls himself Sketch, is already on the station. He has no access to the relay in question, but he can tell them where to find it. She provides a brief description of a dark haired Asian man who can typically be found at the bar on *Apollo*. The gamemaster will find additional details on the run in *Ad Astra*, p. 64.

Once that job is completed, they mush catch the returning Ares shuttle and get back down to Earth. The false identities and security clearances they have will only hold up for 48 hours, at which point it is only a matter of time until they are discovered. If they miss their scheduled flight, they will be responsible for arranging their own transportation back down the gravity well.

Ms. Griebe places several boxes on the table. They contain Federated Boeing jumpsuits and clearance visas for the shuttle. In the top folder is an encrypted datachip and a notepad with a series of hand-written numbers. She recommends they memorize the numbers, then destroy them.

Once Griebe has appropriate personal information from the runners, she can also provide them with Federated Boeing Security ID badges, shuttle tickets and tickets to Cape Canaveral for each of the runners in 24 hours. The plane is scheduled to leave the morning after that at 8am.

As the runners review the data, Griebe gathers her belongings to leave the room. After standing, she asks the runners if they have any questions. She refuses to answer questions about her client, stating only that it is an internal Ares concern.



## PUSHING THE ENVELOPE

This is simply the introduction, so there's not a lot of need to start roughing things up yet. Ms. Griebel is a professional, and she's being straightforward with them about the job ahead. If the characters want a little excitement, though, the Vertigo is largely a changeling club, with all the racial issues that accompany that. The runners may have to practice their slam-dancing skills to get across the club floor, or they may have to fight off the affections of an intoxicated changeling. Outside the club they may run into a Humanis sit-in or the efforts of a local syndicate to enforce their protection racket on the club's owners.

## DEBUGGING

It is unlikely that the characters will turn down a meet, but someone always does. If that happens, there are two ways that you can go about hooking the characters. One option is to offer the characters cash up front. Griebel would be willing to pay the runners 1,000¥ per person just to attend the meeting and hear her offer. Another option is to use an existing contact or fixer to further entice the characters. Have the contact say that they've heard that you don't turn down a Griebel run. If you do, you can count on having taken a solid step toward deep-sixing your reputation as major players.

Other problems may spring up. The runners may start a fight in Vertigo before the meet ever occurs. If this happens, Ms. Griebel reschedules the meet for later that night in a more private area. She sends a limo to pick up the characters on a street corner downtown. They discuss business as the driver cruises the highway. Afterwards, she lets them off where she found them.

## AD ASTRA

### WHAT'S UP CHUMMER?

The characters arrive in Cape Canaveral and head to the Ares launch facility, there to grab an Ares shuttle bound for *Apollo*. Once they're past security, they are taken through an orientation designed to teach space travel newcomers what to expect. They board the shuttle and are taken to the *Apollo* station where they meet their contact, Sketch. He tells them where the equipment is located—on the outside of the station—and how they can get spacewalk gear.

### TELL IT TO THEM STRAIGHT

Your plane touches down in Orlando before noon. A cold breeze has picked up from the north, making you long for home and similar places with fewer security guards. An older human male dressed in a shuttle-van uniform with an Ares logo on it shuffles toward you and the rest of the de-planing passengers, carrying a sign that reads "Ares Launch Facility Shuttle. Departures every 15 minutes. 15¥ per passenger." You load up your luggage and move aboard. As you get seated, the driver boards the bus and starts the motor. "Welcome to Florida," he says, a hint of Confederation drawl in his voice.

### Once the runners arrive at the launch pad:

Stepping out of the van feels like walking into the proverbial lion's den. The corporate security presence here is massive. Ares security officers move past you in light armor, brandishing their assault rifles. The Ares presence is the most pervasive, and they handle the outer level of security. Beyond the checkpoints, however, you can see a number of different corporate logos displayed. Somewhere beyond that is a silver and white space shuttle just like the ones on the trid. It's your ticket to the stars, chummer. All aboard.

### Once the shuttle is ready to leave:

The roar of a space shuttle launching is like nothing you've ever experienced before. Your ears pop as your body is thrust back into your seat with the recoil force of a Panther Cannon. Ten minutes later, your body is aching under the relentless pressure and you start to wonder if it will ever end.

The pain of g-forces subsides as the shuttle spirals its way up the gravity well. The crushing pressure gives way to an eerie calm. You can feel your arms wanting to rise from their armrests, and it occurs to you that if you weren't strapped in, you'd be floating. The pilot announces over the intercom that the shuttle has left Earth's atmosphere, rolling back the window shields. The view is breathtaking.

Earth never looks so peaceful as it does from orbit. On the surface, beneath the dirty glow of neon lights and refuse-blocked alleys, it's hard to believe that everything could look so clean. Wisps of gray and white breathe a perfect blue and green world—a world that only exists out here.

Your pilot tells you to prepare for docking as the window shields close. You hear a loud thud as the shuttle drifts into place, followed by the metallic ring of docking clamps locking on to your shuttle. The pilot comes over the intercom and says, "Ladies and gentleman, welcome to the *Apollo Low Earth Orbit Space Station*."

### When the characters go to meet Sketch, read the following:

Griebel said that Sketch was usually in the bar, so here you are. It's the only one on the station, so it isn't as though it was hard to find. "Water Works" is apparently the name of the place, written on a sign that's attached next to the doorway leading in. You can tell at once this isn't your typical Earth-side bar. For starters, everyone's floating. There are no tables, no chairs, just a bar along one wall about halfway to the ceiling and groups of floating people scattered around the room with pouches of drinkable materials, complete with straws.

As you float into the room, attempting not to collide with anyone, you see someone at the bar that matches the description you were given. A dark-haired human male is floating next to the bar, drink in hand, talking boisterously to a bored-looking human woman. He looks over and sees you approach, then gestures grandly to the lady, raising his voice for all to hear. "Ah, tourists in search of adventure. Everyone wants a bit of my wares, it seems. I'll be back soon, my dove." The woman smirks and turns away as Sketch floats over to you. "Shall we step into my office?"



## HOOKS

The characters know they are heading on a rare, all-expenses paid trip to the stars with their only goal being to fiddle with some equipment. And they're getting paid for it. They should be sufficiently excited about going there, so let them ride that excitement through the scenario.

The Ares launch facility is huge and services shuttles from a number of different corporations and government interests. The sheer mass of the Ares launch facility should be overwhelming. Give them a chance to breathe it all in.

As with anytime you go somewhere completely new, this environment should feel very unfamiliar to the characters, causing them at least a little discomfort. Security is extremely high, searches extremely thorough, and even their fake security passes won't save them much. Play up the orientation and how odd it all seems, even though it's delivered with all the rote charm of the airline stewardess's seatbelt mantra. After they pass through into space, the environment moves from unfamiliar to alien. You can use this opportunity to play up the wondrous elements of being in space as well as the inconvenient and awkward ones.

## BEHIND THE SCENES

The shuttle to *Apollo* leaves two hours after the runners arrive, giving them enough time to pass through security and undergo a brief cautionary orientation for first-time space travelers. Once aboard, they will have roughly 40 hours to make the modifications and lay low before their ride home leaves for Earth. If they miss it, they're on their own.

### Security Check

Cape Canaveral is a massive launch site that services not only Ares but also other lesser corps and governments with assets in low orbit. Even several other megas, like MCT and Shiawase, have low-security launches from here.

Since so much space traffic passes through Cape Canaveral, security is extra tight. The characters must pass through three separate checkpoints in order to reach the launch vehicle. Each checkpoint is manned by four security officers, a combat mage and a corporate representative (Ares at the first checkpoint, corp-specific representatives at the last two—Federated Boeing, in this case). The representative is a political agent in place to handle situations such as packages or individuals with special clearances.

The first checkpoint is the front door. In order to enter the launch building, the characters are searched and subjected to an astral scan. They must also provide proof of identification and proof of purpose. In this case, proof of purpose is a clearance visa to board the shuttle. The Ares launch pad is a commercial site, so characters will notice a handful of high-level businessmen wandering around the port waiting to catch a flight to whichever station is their destination. It is clear that the characters are out of their element here.

The fake IDs and visas provided by Griebe will hold up to scrutiny, but each runner must make a successful Etiquette (Corporate) (4) Test to avoid acting suspiciously and being detained by security. If any character fails, the entire team is

pulled aside (unless they entered separately) and they must show their identification to an Ares representative and clarify their business. Handle this as a roleplaying situation. If the characters keep their cool and present a good story, the rep will pass them through. If the characters come off as nervous or suspicious or their story seems awkward, one of the characters must make a successful Etiquette (Corporate) or Negotiation (6) Test in order to reassure security that they belong. If the character fails, the team will be placed under arrest by Ares Security and thoroughly interrogated. The characters will need to get themselves out of a difficult situation and find some other way to board the shuttle.

The second checkpoint is the boarding gate. Characters are searched again and their clearances are verified. The final checkpoint is aboard the shuttle itself. The runners' personal items are searched and stowed before departure.

Once the runners make it past the final checkpoint, a shuttle attendant goes through a choreographed safety lecture. Passengers are encouraged to make any final rest stops before departure, as they will not be allowed to leave their seats for the duration of the flight (except for emergencies). The five-point harness is demonstrated, as are the rescue bubbles to be used if the spacecraft decompresses. The following warning and disclaimer is also issued: "The use of magic and/or attempted contact with the astral plane outside of Earth's atmosphere have been linked to severe psychological trauma and death. Neither Ares nor Federated Boeing are responsible for property damage or injury caused by Awakened individuals who engage in these acts. Sedatives are available from the shuttle attendants upon request."

While each security checkpoint is redundant, they are also entirely independent. A lie successfully told at the first checkpoint won't necessarily get the runner past the second checkpoint. On the other hand, that also means that what didn't work the first time may work the second time. Each set of security officers searches the characters for weapons and cyberware (Rating 4 MAD, Rating 3 chem sniffer, plus a physical search). The characters will only be astrally scanned at the first checkpoint. Characters found to have cyberweaponry will be escorted to the medical center, where the cyberweaponry will be turned off. Weapon Foci will be confiscated. The Federated Boeing Security IDs allow for flechette, narcoject and taser weapons, which the characters will be allowed to carry at the station (but not on the shuttle). No other types of weaponry are allowed.

Aside from the visible security personnel, the launch pad is patrolled by three Force 5 bound air elementals that are instructed to contact Ares's main security office if there is any major trouble.

### Security Officer (2)

| B | Q | S | C | I | W | E   | R     |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|-----|-------|
| 5 | 4 | 5 | 5 | 4 | 5 | 3.3 | 4 (6) |

**INIT:** 4 (6) + 1D6 (2D6)

**Dice Pools:** Combat 6

**Karma Pool/Professional Rating:** 2/3

**Race:** Human



**Active Skills:** Assault Rifles 4, Biotech 3, Electronics 4, Etiquette 4, Pistols 4, Unarmed Combat 4

**Knowledge Skills:** Contraband 4, Forgery Identification 4, Psychology 3, Security Procedures 5, Smuggling Techniques 3

**Cyberware:** Smartlink, Wired Reflexes 1 w/Reflex Trigger

**Weapons:** AK-97 [AR, SA/BF/FA, 8M, RC 3 (4), 38 (c) 1 extra clip, folding stock, smartlink]

Range (TN): 0-50 (2), 51-150 (3), 151-350 (4), 351-500 (7)

Defiance Super Shock [Taser, SA, 10S Stun, 4 (m), smartlink]

Range (TN): 0-5 (2), 6-10 (3), 11-12 (4), 13-15 (7)

**Armor:** Light Security Armor [6/4]

#### Security Mage

| B | Q | S | C | I | W | E | M | R |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 3 | 5 | 3 | 5 | 6 | 5 | 6 | 6 | 5 |

INIT: 5 + 1D6, Astral INIT: 26 + 1D6

**Dice Pools:** Astral Combat 8, Combat 8, Spell 5

**Karma Pool/Professional Rating:** 2/3

**Race:** Human

**Active Skills:** Assault Rifles 2, Aura Reading 5, Conjuring 5, Etiquette 4 (Corporate 6), Pistols 4, Sorcery 6

**Knowledge Skills:** Contraband 3, Forgery Identification 2, Magic 4, Psychology 5, Security Procedures 5, Smuggling Techniques 2

**Spells:** Catalog 5, Combat Sense 5, Confusion 5, Detect Enemies 6, Detect Explosives 5, Heal 4, Physical Barrier 6, Stunball 4, Stunbolt 5

**Weapons:** AK-97 [AR, SA/BF/FA, 8M, RC 3 (4), 38 (c) 1 extra clip, folding stock]

Range (TN): 0-50 (4), 51-150 (5), 151-350 (6), 351-500 (9)

Defiance Super Shock [Taser, SA, 10S Stun, 4 (m), low-light scope]

Range (TN): 0-5 (4), 6-10 (5), 11-12 (6), 13-15 (9)

**Armor:** Light Security Armor [6/4]

#### Corporate Representative

| B | Q | S | C | I | W | E   | R |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|-----|---|
| 3 | 4 | 3 | 5 | 6 | 5 | 5.8 | 5 |

INIT: 5 + 1D6

**Dice Pools:** Combat 7

**Karma Pool/Professional Rating:** 3/2

**Race:** Human

**Active Skills:** Computer 4, Electronics 3, Etiquette 5 (Corporate 7), Interrogation 5, Leadership 5, Negotiation 5

**Knowledge Skills:** Corporate Politics 4, Customs Regulations 6, Psychology 5, Security Procedures 5

**Cyberware:** Datajack

#### Life on Apollo

The *Apollo* station is a commercial site. Ares uses it as a transportation hub and a source of income by renting pod space to other corporations without the means or desire to build a station of their own. It's a unique situation, for nowhere else will you find such a wide variety of corporations fraternizing in such a small place. As a result, it's also come to be something of an R&R stop for those who make their living out here.

*Apollo* residents are friendly people with a fairly close knit community. Most residents hang out in the Recreation Zone watching the trid feed or playing games in zero gravity, though the illicit recreation areas see their fair share of the residents as well. *Apollo* maintains a lively drug and prostitution trade, and it is also possible to purchase close combat weapons on the black market. Items such as stun batons and brass knuckles sell with a +4 modifier to their Street Index due to the difficulty involved in getting them into space. The availability of these items is 1.5 times the current Availability rating.

The main part of the station is the long vertical (inasmuch as it matters) corridor that the locals call "Main Street." All of the working areas of the station are connected directly to this part of the station, and the sections without attached space-pods are used as docking areas for incoming shuttles. Both Main Street and the immediately attached pods are at effectively zero gravity.

Toward the top of the station are three long arms leading out to habitation pods, called "Park Place," "Marvin Gardens" and "Vermont Avenue." Park Place and Marvin Gardens are the permanent quarters for the scientists and workers who live on the station. Vermont Avenue, where the characters will be assigned quarters, is for temporary visitors to the station. The sections are connected at the far end by long open-space elevators.

The habitation areas have a low artificial gravity due to the rotation of the station. The runners will be assigned to a small suite, consisting of two 2 meter x 3 meter 3-bunk cabins and a shared bathroom between them. The bunks have straps to hold the runners in bed, but are only designed for standard human-size individuals. Orks and trolls will not fit in the bunks. The bathroom consists of a vacuum toilet, six individual vacuum urinals, generic personal hygiene kits, a mirror and pre-moistened towelettes for sponge bathing.

At the other end of Main Street is the Recreation Zone. The station's bar, the Water Works, is located next door along with a small shopping area. Various illicit businesses, such as the gambling hall and the Community Chest brothel are floating operations (no pun intended), setting up shop in nearby vacant pods. The *Apollo* station is described in further detail on p. 75, *Target: Wastelands*.

#### Onboard the Station

The environment in space makes even the simplest aspects of shadowrunning challenging. The lack of gravity not only makes space combat difficult, but it makes space movement difficult as well. Rules for operating and fighting in zero gravity can be found on p. 126, *Target: Wastelands*.

The *Apollo* station is also cramped. Trolls and orks will find it hard to move in and out of areas due to small doorways. Characters suffering from claustrophobia will be on edge the entire time.

Awakened characters may suffer debilitating effects from the mana warp (see p. 85, *MITS*) in space. *Apollo* effectively has a background count of 9. When Awakened characters enter space, they will immediately be aware of their disconnection from the manosphere. At the gamemaster's discretion, they

may suffer psychological side effects such as becoming despondent and longing for home.

### Apollo Security

The *Apollo* on-board security presence is primarily a peacekeeping force. *Apollo* has more physical security than most stations provide, as there is more turnover here than at most other stations. Internal security comes in the form of three-person security units that patrol the ship on a semi-regular basis. The units work in eight-hour shifts, two units at a time; off-duty guards can be called immediately if an emergency arises. They do not perform boarding checks on arriving shuttles, but they do usually greet shuttles just to make sure everything is okay.

If security spots the runners doing something questionable, they will investigate. Runners will need to make an Etiquette (Corporate) (5) Test in order to convince the guards there is no problem. Failure will indicate that the guards will detain the runners while checking their clearances, a process that could take between 1 and 12 hours, stealing valuable time from the mission.

### Apollo Security Officers

| B | Q | S | C | I | W | E   | R     |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|-----|-------|
| 5 | 5 | 5 | 5 | 4 | 5 | 3.5 | 4 (6) |

**INIT:** 4 (6) + 1D6 (2D6)

**Dice Pools:** Combat 6

**Karma Pool/Professional Rating:** 3/3

**Race:** Human

**Active Skills:** Athletics 5, Clubs 5, Electronics 4, Etiquette 4, Intimidation 3, Pistols 4, Unarmed Combat 5

**Knowledge Skills:** Apollo Residents 4, Orbital Black Market 3, Security Procedures 5, Space Recovery Operations 4

**Cyberware:** Smartlink, Wired Reflexes (level 1)

**Weapons:** Ares Viper Slivergun [HP, SA/BF, 9S (f), 30 (c) w/integral silencer, smartlinked]

Range (TN): 0–5 (2), 6–20 (3), 21–40 (4), 41–60 (7)

Stun Baton [6S Stun, +1 Reach]

**Armor:** Secure Jacket [5/4]

### Contacting Sketch

The Water Works is where Griebe said to find Sketch, and he's exactly where she said he'd be. Sketch is a dark-haired, dark-eyed man of Southeast Asian descent. His accent is British, however, and his manner is gregarious. He enjoys exchanging "war stories" with newcomers (or really anyone who'll stand still long enough), but he is still a professional through and through.

Sketch tells the characters that the relay they must modify is located at the top of the station, on the outside. There is no way of getting to it from the inside; they'll have to spacewalk. He tells them that can use the spacesuits (see p. 128, *Target: Wastelands*) and spacewalk gear located in Airlock A at the top of the station.

If asked to accompany the runners outside, Sketch will refuse. He does not have anything on hand which will let the runners past the maglocks, and only the Ares station residents

(not transients like him) are cleared for access. He will, however, provide a distraction for the guards on duty to keep them away from the guard station for 30 minutes in exchange for 4,000¥ up front.

If the runners are friendly to Sketch and don't hold a grudge against him for his pragmatic business practices, he can become a Level 1 contact for them after the run is over.

### Sketch

| B | Q | S | C | I | W | E | R |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 3 | 4 | 3 | 6 | 4 | 4 | 6 | 4 |

**INIT:** 4 + 1D6

**Dice Pools:** Combat 6

**Karma Pool/Professional Rating:** 2/2

**Race:** Human

**Active Skills:** Athletics 4, Etiquette 5 (Corporate 7, Underworld 8), Negotiation 5 (Fast Talk 7), Pistols 5, Shotguns 4

**Knowledge Skills:** Apollo Habitat Hideouts 4, Fencing 6, Orbital Black Market 6, Orbital Smuggling 7

**Armor:** Armor Vest [2/1]

### Spacewalking

The entrance to Airlock A uses a Rating 6 palm print maglock for security (p. 235, SR3), connected to an alarm at the guard station halfway down Main Street. The door leading to the outside has an additional Rating 7 palm print maglock for security and will not open at all unless the inner door is closed.

Once the runners are inside, they'll need to suit up. Each suit comes with built-in help program regarding its proper use, as well as basic spacewalk instructions. There is a datajack hookup inside the helmet, as well as a heads-up display on the screen that will indicate any problems as they occur. In order to complete the mission, the runners will need to have the encrypted chip and the memorized code ready.

Moving across the outer hull of the station to get to the relay is a once-in-a-lifetime experience. For many, it will be utterly terrifying as well. Have the characters make a Willpower (5) Test to avoid being overwhelmed and paralyzed by terror. This is primarily a roleplaying scenario. Build on the anxiety of being floating in space with nothing holding you back from the void but a spacesuit. The runners would really have to screw up in order to mess up this part of the run, but the gamemaster should feel free to make the players sweat a bit.

Finding the right relay requires an Intelligence (5) Test. They must then open up the relay with an Electronics B/R (7) Test (the increased difficulty due to operating with spacesuit gloves), insert the chip into the slot at the base of the relay and punch in the code on the attached keyboard. Simple enough, neh?

Once the characters get back inside, they'll quickly find out if the guards were alerted or not. If they don't have *Apollo* security waiting for them just past the inner door, they'll need to decide if and how they can cover their tracks. Earthbound Ares shuttles leave once every 24 hours, and the number of places to hide on a space station is very limited.

### PUSHING THE ENVELOPE

The Ares launch building is full of corporate suits from all



manner of companies, large and small. That means Mr. Johnsons. If you want to push the envelope, tell one of the characters that they recognize a suit from some past work, either as a Johnson or as a target. Before they can take cover, the suit turns towards the runners. If the person tells security that the characters are shadowrunners, they will never get onboard the shuttle. That means the runners will need to bluff or roleplay through the encounter, play hide-and-seek or take the Johnson out quietly.

Alternatively, the IDs provided by Griebe could be less than ironclad, requiring some fast talk and convincing attitude from the characters in order to smooth over the deficiencies in the paperwork.

The risks on the *Apollo* spacewalk can also be escalated in several ways. Airlock A may have a security guard posted it, or it may be watched by an *Apollo* station security rigger. Alternately, a decker may need to access *Apollo*'s security host to open the airlock doors. Finally, the runners may encounter a station work team doing repairs on *Apollo*'s outer hall; this crew may question the runners' presence and activities, perhaps alerting security.

Also, remember that this is a timed scenario. Throw obstacles in the runners' way that can slow them down. Perhaps the runners become embroiled in the station's seedy underworld and have to bail Sketch out of a bind before he can help them.

## DEBUGGING

Things will go badly if the characters decide that the launch pad is the place to pull out their guns. Any armed confrontation between the characters and security will result in the launch being cancelled and professional corpsec teams called out to deal with the problem. If this does happen (and the characters escape in one piece), the runners will need to find another shuttle to launch them into space. While possible, it severely impedes the run.

It is possible to arrange a second shuttle to launch from Edwards Aerospace Center in southern California within the next few days. The characters will have to fly down to Edwards and find a way to board that shuttle. If at least one character is able to get through security, allow that character to board the ship and try to complete this phase of the mission on his or her own.

If the characters somehow utterly fail the mission, the adventure is over. Without that relay adjustment, the code to initiate Liberty will not be sent and the probe will not crash, Royce will not get paid and will not be able to afford to hire an extraction team. So much for that lucrative second assignment Griebe mentioned. At least they had a shot at the stars.

## DOWN THE WELL, INTO THE VALLEY

### WHAT'S UP CHUMMER?

Once the characters have successfully completed the sabotage effort, they will hear of the loss of Ares's *Velox I* probe. A day later, they will be contacted by Griebe and offered a second job involving the extraction of one of Ares's top scientists from a Silicon Valley facility. Looks like they're playing with the big boys now.

### TELL IT TO THEM STRAIGHT

The phone rings and your heart starts to race. You answer and hear Ms. Griebe's voice, complete with a ghost of a German accent. "Well done. The second assignment I have available is on a slightly tighter schedule, but the rewards are commensurate with the effort involved. The details are currently waiting for you in a dropbox on Shadowland addressed to "Runner X," password: Griebe. The necessary passes and paperwork will be delivered to you by my courier no later than noon tomorrow. You may begin immediately. If you have a difficulty with the terms or conditions of employment, you may call me at the number I left for you and we can discuss it. Do not tarry long, however; I don't wish to keep my client waiting."

### HOOKS

The first plot hook here is the revelation that the runners may have caused the *Velox I* probe to malfunction. Describe the sinking feeling in the runners' stomachs as they hear the news. They just pulled a major job—and major jobs bring major heat. Play on the runners' paranoia about potential backlash.

For the next run, there are two big hooks. The first is professional pride. This is a big time job, and the runners should know it. Something like this could set them on the path to early (and healthy) retirement, as well as respect, glamour and all those things in the runner lifestyles you see on the trid. The second big hook is the money. While it's not beyond the dreams of mortal avarice, it's a substantial nest egg, as well as a sign of things to come if they pull it off successfully. Play on the ambitions of the characters as much as necessary.

### BEHIND THE SCENES

When the characters check the dropbox, they'll find an assignment to extract a scientist named Sherman Royce from an Ares facility in Silicon Valley. Once Dr. Royce is in hand, they are to proceed to New Orleans and deliver him to an address that he will provide. The payment offered is 50,000¥ per runner on the team, with up to 10,000¥ for operating expenses to be reimbursed at the end of the run. In order to haggle on the price, the runners will need to call her at the number she provides and work it out. They'll need to make an Opposed Negotiations (6) Test. For each net success the team negotiator has, their fee goes up by 5,000¥.

According to the run summary provided to the runners, Dr. Royce knows about the extraction and is expecting it. He will aid the runners as much as possible, but he is heavily

guarded and kept in one of the most secure areas of the compound. He works on the Ares *Velox* probe projects and thus security will be tight.

If Ms. Griebe is queried about who her client is, she'll refuse to answer. She will also refuse to meet with them in person, citing time constraints. If the characters complain about the required spacewalk in the previous job, she'll reveal that she was unaware of that complication, but that if just anyone could do what she needed, she'd have no need for shadowrunners. Continued complaints will merely lead her to withdraw the offer. The way the runners play this should determine whether or not they continue to get work from Ms. Griebe in the future.

The paperwork delivered to the runners via courier includes a datachip with the floorplans of the facility on it, pictures of Royce and limited details on the facility's security. The envelope also contains forged passports to get them across international borders easily and plane tickets to the Ares-San Jose International Airport, the closest airport to their destination. They will also be provided with plane tickets for themselves and Dr. Royce (under a fake ID) to fly from San Francisco's International Airport to New Orleans. Anything else the runners need will be up to them to provide.

The truth behind this run is that Dr. Royce is their employer. He used the money he received from Aztechnology/Shibata/Federated Boeing for sabotaging *Velox I* to pay for his extraction from Ares, thus the greatly increased pay for the second run. The success of the previous run made a favorable impression on Royce, and he encouraged Annika Griebe to hire the same team for his extraction. He wants his identity as the originator of the run to be kept secret, however, for fear that the runners would turn on him to gain favor with Ares.

There will be no false security badges this time, no easy in on this run. Every break the runners get, they'll have to earn.

### The *Velox* News

If any characters happen to check the screamsheets for news that might relate to their previous run, pass them the player handout on p. 83. The runners should not come across this news until *after* they've gotten the second job offer from Griebe. If the runners don't check, you should figure out a way to run the info by the characters in some other way. Perhaps a contact mentions the big news, or a character happens to overhear the trid while hanging out in a bar and celebrating a successful run.

If the characters contact Griebe to question her about *Velox I*, she will neither confirm nor deny their suspicions. She'll point out to the runners that it's best for them not to make assumptions, and the less they know about the details of some runs the safer they may be.

### Getting to Silicon Valley

As stated above, the runners have been provided with one-way plane tickets to Silicon Valley. They aren't required to use them, however, if there's another way they'd prefer to get there. The standard rate for an illegal smuggling run from



Seattle to Silicon Valley is roughly 2,500¥ to 5,000¥ per passenger.

If the runners use the plane tickets, they will find the San Jose airport in a state of heightened security. Ever since General Saito seized power in the Bay Area, Ares has mounted a campaign of armed vigilance to protect its assets in Silicon Valley. For more information on recent events involving Saito and Ares, see p. 106, *Year of the Comet*, p. 6, *Threats 2* or p. 50, *Shadows of North America*.

If the characters take another route, they may have to make their way through Saito's Californian Protectorate first. This may be especially difficult for metahumans, who will be stopped, interrogated and hassled by Saito's troops. These guards will use any excuse they can to drag metahuman troublemakers off to a "Relocation Camp."

Silicon Valley is not walled in, but Ares troops openly guard its perimeter, just as Saito's troops warily patrol just outside its boundaries. The runners can make their entrance from any point of the city. If the runners openly enter, they will have to pass through two separate checkpoints, and they'd better have a good story. Saito's troops will be suspicious of metahuman resistance fighters using Silicon Valley as a safe staging ground, while Ares troops will be wary of spies sent by Saito and will be particularly suspicious of people of Asian descent. If the runners try to enter covertly, they may be mistaken as an armed intrusion by either side.

#### Down in the Valley

Within Silicon Valley proper, the runners will see signs of elevated security everywhere: Ares Citymasters cruise the streets, troops are encamped in strategic locations and anti-Saito graffiti covers the city's walls. The specter of invasion haunts the air and fear lurks behind the eyes of everyone the shadowrunners meet. The Ares Security machine is geared up to stop a full frontal assault—which means they *might* not notice a small stealthy group of shadowrunners. Maybe.

Despite the tension, most residents continue in their daily routines. Hotel rooms are easy to come by since tourism is down, but prices are a bit higher than usual. An average room will cost 150¥, while a low-end room will cost 60¥. Costs on black market goods in the area are skyrocketing, with prices easily 100 to 150 percent higher across the board. The runners will be forced to pay dearly if they left their favorite toys at home.

#### PUSHING THE ENVELOPE

There are a lot of snags and complications the gamemaster can throw at the characters here, no matter how they decide to get to Silicon Valley. If the runners fly in, Ares troops might be all over the runners, suspecting them of coming to sabotage Ares's defenses. The runners may have to do some smooth talking to get themselves out of the airport, and even then Ares might assign a security team to tail the runners and keep an eye on them. Alternately, the characters may run into an Ares employee at the airport who recognizes them from the *Apollo* mission—perhaps even a security guard who was re-assigned after letting a shadowrun get by on his or her watch.

If the runners take another route to Silicon Valley, they may become entangled in the turmoil of California's political landscape. If they hire a smuggler to get them in, the smuggler may be carrying a shipment of weapons for the Metahuman People's Army—a shipment that Saito's troops have caught wind of and laid an ambush to intercept. Or the smuggler may ask the runners to help the MPA out in exchange for transport. This allows the gamemaster to involve the runners in any sort of anti-Saito clandestine affair in the Bay Area.

#### DEBUGGING

If the runners get captured or delayed on the way to Silicon Valley, the job is not completely shot. The longer the runners take to do the extraction, the more suspicion comes to bear on Dr. Royce. If the runners tarry too long, they may have to rescue Royce from the custody of Knight Errant security. If they take a really long time, Royce may be transferred to an Ares prison or detention facility to be tried for treason. Griebe will still want the runners to complete the job, but the stakes will be even higher.

If the runners decide they are in over their heads after they hear the *Velox* news, they may balk at taking another run against Ares. Griebe will assure them that their identities are safe, and she will use their professional reputations as a bargaining chip to convince them to take the job. If the runners still refuse, then she'll cut her connections to them and find another team to take the job.

The runners may need a contact in Silicon Valley from whom to purchase gear and weapons from. If they ask, Griebe will arrange a meeting with a local Triad member who may be able to supply what they need—at a mark-up, of course.

#### LIBERATION

##### WHAT'S UP, CHUMMER?

The runners have to break into a high security Ares facility and extract Dr. Royce. Once they have him, they need to get him to New Orleans before Ares catches up to them.

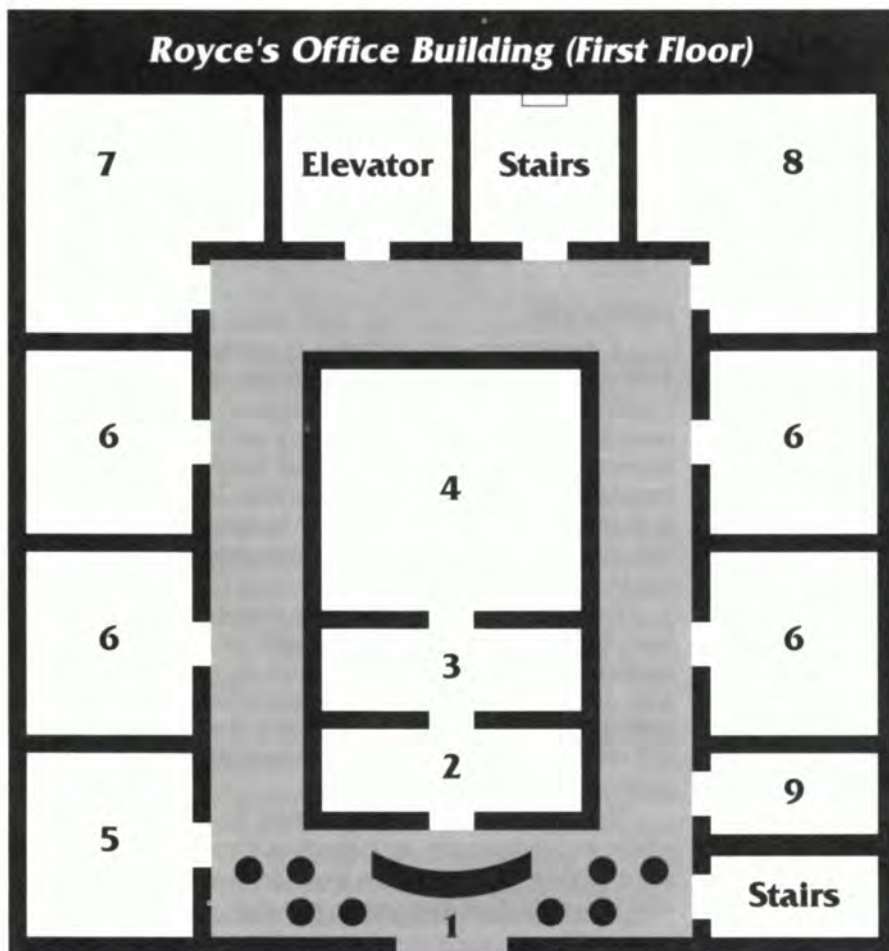
##### TELL IT TO THEM STRAIGHT

You've used the term wage-slave before, but you've never seen a business park that looked like such a life-sucking, soulless prison as this AresSpace complex your target is in. High, drab walls are guarded by actual watchtowers, pierced only by a single metal gate with tank traps to deter ramming. Sick-looking trees and listless shrubs do nothing to liven up the landscaping between a half-dozen bunker-like buildings. A sad-looking walking trail snakes between the buildings, spotted with a few decrepit benches, but neither look like they ever get used. It's hard to distinguish the dormitories and rec areas from the offices and work areas—you can't imagine how dull it must be to live and work here.

##### HOOKS

Play up the oppressive, prison-like atmosphere of the corporate compound. The people who work here live more like





inmates than prized megacorp citizens. The runners should be able to sense why Dr. Royce is supporting his extraction. Once the runners have rescued him from AresSpace, he will grow elated and exuberant, like a slave set free.

### BEHIND THE SCENES

The AresSpace facility is going to be a tough nut for the runners to crack. Luckily, they have maps, inside information on the security systems and the cooperation of their target to help them out.

### The AresSpace Office Park

The office park itself is quite large, encompassing about four city blocks and including a six buildings. Each building is only three stories tall (not counting three basement levels). The runners need only concern themselves with one building near the edge of the park—where Royce works long hours. The other buildings house more offices, the dormitories, recreation facilities (gym, sim theater, an arcade, a few shops), a security station (including a 24-hour security rigger and a security shaman who only works at night) and an operations center with a direct link to AresSpace Command in Houston. Each building is connected by a subterranean, video-monitored tunnel; workers are “encouraged” to commute between buildings via tun-

nel—access to the outside “park areas” between buildings is restricted and requires special permission.

A three-meter concrete wall (Barrier rating 16) surrounds the entire compound, with watchtowers stationed at each of the four corners and at the gate. A laser trip-beam guards the top of the wall that requires a Perception (6) Test to notice and an Athletics (6) Test to safely climb over without tripping. Each watchtower has full-length one-way windows (Barrier rating 8) and houses a single guard. Low-light video cameras are mounted on each watchtower, covering the walls, the gate, the area in front of the walls and a section of the park grounds.

The gate itself is lightweight (Barrier rating 6), but a set of tank traps (Barrier rating 24) protects it from being rammed. The gate itself can only be opened and controlled by the guard in the gate watchtower or the security rigger. It moves on grooved tracks and takes 3 full Combat Turns to open or close. A passcard reader (Rating 4) on a post allows drivers to present their credentials, which are verified by the guard before he opens the gate.

At sunup and sundown, the security shaman summons a Force 5 city spirit to patrol the grounds of the compound and chase off any astral intruders (see *Astral Patrolling*, p. 88, *MITS*). When the shaman is on duty at night, the spirit is accompanied

by a Force 3 watcher spirit that has orders to report any astral intruders to the security shaman immediately. The entire office park has a Background Count of 1.

The security rigger has two drones to call upon against intruders. An Ares Sentinel drone (see p. 172, *R3*) is mounted on tracks along the gate wall (it can switch to either side of the wall). It carries an Ares Alpha assault rifle (p. 22, *CC*) loaded with AV ammo and concussion grenades. Inside the grounds, an Ares Guardian drone (p. 177, *R3*) controlled via hardline can be called out. The Guardian carries an Ares HV MP-LMG (p. 24, *CC*) loaded with APDS ammo.

Traffic in and out of the office park is light. Only a few executives live outside of the park, and bodyguards escort them to and from work in armored cars. Few employees are given permission to leave, and those that do are either escorted by guards or told to carry a tracking signal and report a time by which they will return. The rest of the traffic is occasional delivery trucks and visitors, though visitors must have their visits approved in advance.

### Royce's Office Building

The building Royce works and spends most of his dreary existence in is a three-story dull gray square block, just like the



others. In fact, the only thing distinguishing it from the others is a sign labeled "Building C." The few "windows" are glass-block rectangles that let light in but obstruct vision.

The maps above and on p. 72 illustrate two levels of Royce's building. The first floor map provides the layout of the ground floor. The second sublevel map provides the layout of the second underground floor, where Royce's office is located. Descriptions for both are provided below. The other floors of the building are not shown, but are the same layout as the second sublevel.

Almost every room and hallway in the building is watched by low-light video camera, linked back to the building's security room (First Floor Room 2) and the compound's security rigger. Each door in the facility is locked with a Rating 4 maglock equipped with a card-reader and retinal scanner. Most doors in the building are Barrier Rating 4, though stairwell fire doors are Barrier Rating 8.

#### First Floor Map Key

**Room 1:** The entrance to the building is eerily quiet. A receptionist's desk sits empty across from the entrance (it is only staffed by security when they expect visitors). Eight pillars dot the marble floor. There is a jackpoint behind the desk.

**Room 2:** This is the security room. There are three security guards on duty at a time, though one or two may be patrolling or checking up on employees. A bank of monitors displays all of the video feeds. There are nine personal lockers and a weapons locker containing three Ares Alpha combat guns.

**Room 3:** This room houses the computers that handle the various Matrix hosts used by this facility.

**Room 4:** A conference room with various presentation and media accessories.

**Room 5:** Lounge, rec room and smoking area. There's usually at least one employee taking a break here, even late at night.

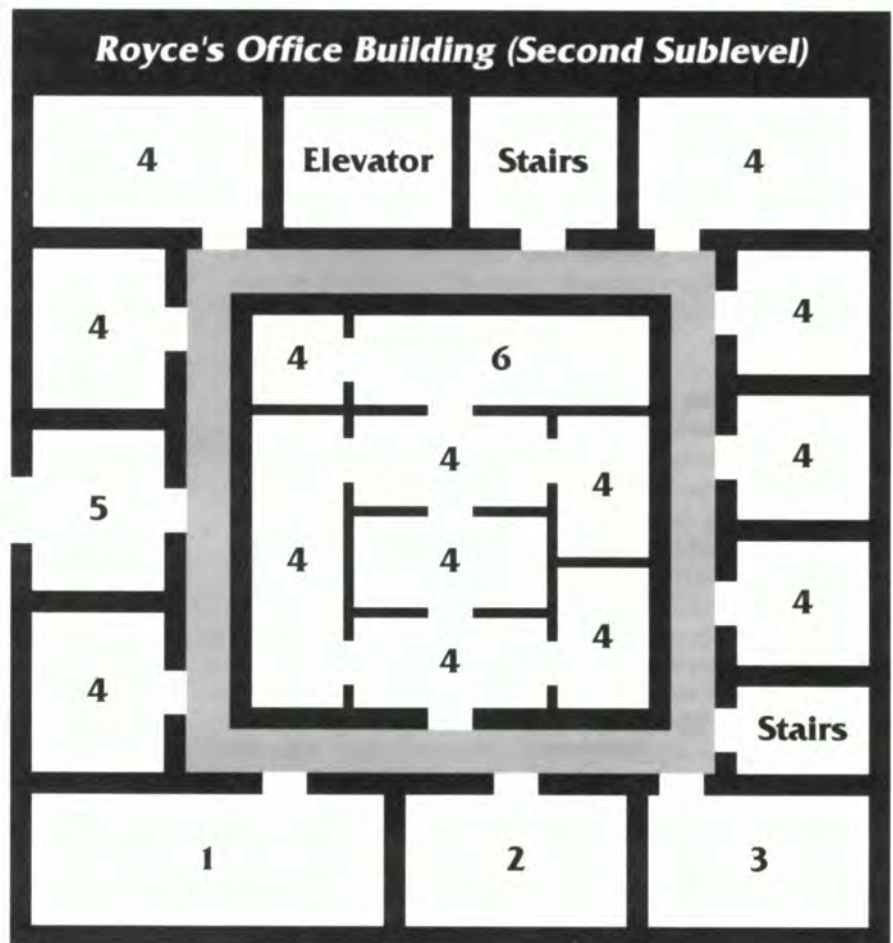
**Room 6:** Offices. Most of the employees on this floor are administrative personnel, bureaucrats, accountants and clerks. Lots of hardcopy files.

**Rooms 7 and 8:** Executive Offices. Larger, nicer, with more expensive knick-knacks.

**Room 9:** Co-ed bathrooms.

**Elevator:** The elevator only requires a swipe of a passcard to operate. On the ground level, it has a rear door that opens to the back of the building for supplies and shipments.

**Stairwells:** The rear stairwell also has an emergency exit to the back of the building. The front stairwell has a glass box with a fire axe ([STR]S, +1 each) inside.



#### Second Sublevel Map Key

**Room 1:** Cafeteria and break room. Filled with vending machines, tables, couches and games.

**Room 2:** Conference room.

**Room 3:** Co-ed bathrooms. A small closet contains maintenance supplies.

**Room 4:** Offices. This level is almost exclusively filled with programmers who spend their long work hours jacked in, checking or writing code, burning chips and so on.

**Room 5:** Tunnel entrance. About 20 meters down the tunnel splits, one half leading to Building A (more offices) and the other leading to Building D (dorms).

**Room 6:** Royce's office. It is sparse and uncluttered, unlike many surrounding offices.

#### AresSpace Matrix System

The AresSpace office park's Matrix system is connected to the Matrix (Griebe can provide the access node's address). The system uses a combination tiered/host-to-host access configuration. The deeper one goes, the tougher the hosts get, and the more likely it is for a decker to run into a chokepoint or a host with a timed SAN. The AresSpace systems are sculpted to mimic the solar system and various celestial bodies.

**AresSpace Top Host Security Sheaf**

**Security Code:** Orange-8/13/13/12/11/12

| Trigger Step | Event                       |
|--------------|-----------------------------|
| 3            | Trace-8 with trap Killer-12 |
| 7            | Killer-10                   |
| 10           | Tar Pit-10                  |
| 13           | Passive Alert               |
| 16           | Construct-8                 |
| 19           | Active Alert                |
| 24           | Scout-8                     |
| 27           | Sparky-8                    |
| 30           | Shutdown                    |

**Building C Security Sheaf**

**Security Code:** Red-6/15/16/17/15/13

| Trigger Step | Event                 |
|--------------|-----------------------|
| 2            | Probe-7               |
| 6            | Tar Baby-9            |
| 10           | Passive Alert         |
| 12           | Tar Pit-5             |
| 16           | Tar Pit-7             |
| 20           | Active Alert          |
| 22           | Crippler-7            |
| 25           | Ripper-7              |
| 28           | Non-Lethal Black IC-7 |
| 30           | Shutdown              |

**Pulling Off The Run**

Though the AresSpace compound security is tight, the runners have several ways to get at Royce. If the runners ask, Griebe has a limited capability to exchange messages with Royce, though the runners should not be allowed to exploit this too much (Royce doesn't want security to catch on, after all). If the runners want Royce to be in a certain place within the building at a certain time, for example, he can probably arrange it; getting outside the building itself is unlikely. If the runners ask for specific security details, the gamemaster decides whether Royce provides them based on how difficult you want the run to be. If the runners ask for a copy of Royce's retinal prints to bypass the retinal scanners, he can probably arrange it. He will not be able to get them a passcard, though he may be able to tell the runners when another employee is leaving the grounds so they can "acquire" it from him or her.

If the runners trigger any sort of alarm (trip a laser beam, unsuccessfully fool a maglock, destroy the city spirit), the entire compound will go on passive alert status. All on-duty security personnel will be required to check in, informed of the possible security breach, and told to patrol and search for signs of intrusion with extra vigilance. If not on duty, the security shaman will be called in (taking 4 + 1D6 minutes). If a second alarm is triggered, the compound will go on lockdown. All maglocks will be overridden to locked mode until the situation is over, off-duty security personnel will be called in, and security barriers (Barrier Rating 12) will drop down over each building entrance (including the tunnels).

**Knight Errant Security Officer**

Like the AresSpace employees, these guards are required to live on site and have extremely limited options for traveling off site.

| B | Q | S | C | I | W | E | R     |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|-------|
| 4 | 4 | 5 | 3 | 4 | 3 | 3 | 4 (7) |

**INIT:** 4 (7) + 1D6 (2D6)

**Dice Pools:** Combat 6 (4 w/armor)

**Karma Pool/Professional Rating:** 2/3

**Race:** Human

**Active Skills:** Assault Rifle 5, Biotech 3, Car 2, Electronics 4, Etiquette 3 (Corporate 4), Heavy Weapons 3, Pistols 5, Unarmed Combat 5

**Knowledge Skills:** Corporate Politics 3, Knight Errant Corporate Structure 3, Security Procedures 5

**Martial Arts:** Muay Thai 5 (kick attack, sweep)

**Cyberware:** Reaction Enhancers 1, Smartlink-2, Wired Reflexes 1 (w/Reflex Trigger)

**Weapons:** Ares Alpha [AR, SA/BF/FA, 8M, 42 (c), RC 2, w/smartlink-2, ultrasound-sight and 2 extra clips]

AR Range (TN): 0-50 (2), 51-150 (3), 151-350 (4), 351-550 (7)

Underbarrel Grenade Launcher [GL, SS, 8 (m) w/rangefinder and concussion grenades ([12]M Stun)]

GL Range (TN): 5-50 (2), 51-100 (3), 101-150 (5), 151-300 (5)

Ares Crusader [MP, SA/BF, 6L, 40 (c), RC 2, w/smartlink-2 and 3 extra clips.

**Armor:** Light Security Armor [7/6] w/helmet, chemical seal, transceiver [Rating 4 w/Rating 4 encryption], and ultrasound vision

**Gear:** Plasteel restraints, flashlight

**Knight Errant Eagle Shaman**

| B | Q | S | C | I | W | E | M | R |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 4 | 5 | 3 | 5 | 5 | 6 | 6 | 6 | 5 |

**INIT:** 5 + 1D6, Astral INIT: 26 + 1D6

**Dice Pools:** Astral 1, Astral Combat 8, Combat 8 (7 w/armor), Spell 5

**Karma Pool/Professional Rating:** 3/4

**Race:** Human

**Active Skills:** Aura Reading 3, Conjuring 5, Etiquette 3 (Corporate 4), Leadership 2, Pistols 3, Sorcery 6, Unarmed Combat 5

**Knowledge Skills:** Magical Containment Procedures 5, Magical Groups 4, Psychology 4, Security Procedures 4

**Martial Arts:** Muay Thai 5 (kick attack, zoning)

**Totem:** Owl (+2 Sorcery and Conjuring at night, +2 all magic TNs during day)

**Spells:** Compel Truth 4, Detect Life 5, Eyes of the Pack 4, Levitate 5, Manabolt 4, Mass Blindness 6, Spirit Bolt 5, Stunbolt 5, Wreck 6

**Metamagic (Initiate Grade 1):** Invoking

**Weapons:** Ares Viper Slivergun [HP, SA/BF, 9S (f), 30 (c) w/integral silencer and 2 extra clips]

Range (TN): 0-5 (4), 6-20 (5), 21-40 (6), 41-60 (9)



**Armor:** Light Security Armor [7/6] w/helmet, chemical seal, transceiver [Rating 4 w/Rating 4 encryption], and ultrasound vision

**Gear:** Plasteel restraints, flashlight, sustaining focus 5 (Detect Life)

#### Knight Errant Security Rigger

| B | Q | S | C | I | W | E   | R     |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|-----|-------|
| 8 | 3 | 8 | 1 | 4 | 5 | 2.3 | 3 (7) |

**INIT:** 3 (7) + 1D6 (3D6)

**Dice Pools:** Combat 6 (3 w/armor), Control 7

**Karma Pool/Professional Rating:** 3/4

**Race:** Troll

**Active Skills:** Assault Rifle 3, Car 5, Electronics 4, Electronics B/R 4, Gunnery 4, Pistols 2, Unarmed Combat 3, Vector Thrust Aircraft 4

**Knowledge Skills:** AresSpace Personnel 3, Knight Errant Corporate Structure 3, Security Procedures 5, Shadowrunner Tactics 4, SOTA Gear 4

**Martial Arts:** Muay Thai 3 (kick attack)

**Cyberware:** Datajack, Smartlink-2, Vehicle Control Rig 2

**Weapons:** Ares Alpha [AR, SA/BF/FA, 8M, 42 (c), RC 2, w/smartlink-2, ultrasound-sight and 2 extra clips]

AR Range (TN): 0-50 (2), 51-150 (3), 151-350 (4), 351-550 (7)

Underbarrel Grenade Launcher [GL, SS, 8 (m) w/rangefinder and concussion grenades ([12]M Stun)]

GL Range (TN): 5-50 (2), 51-100 (3), 101-150 (5), 151-300 (5)

Ares Crusader [MP, SA/BF, 6L, 40 (c), RC 2, w/smartlink-2 and 3 extra clips.

**Armor:** Light Security Armor [7/6] w/helmet, chemical seal, transceiver [Rating 4 w/Rating 4 encryption], and ultrasound vision

**Gear:** Plasteel restraints, flashlight

#### Getting to the Airport and New Orleans

Once the runners have Royce, they need to burn rubber for the San Francisco airport. The airport is in Saito's territory, not Silicon Valley, so the runners will need to get by the Ares troops and Saito's guards at the border. If Ares is in hot pursuit of the runners, that may be difficult. Ares will not pursue the runners into the Californian Protectorate, but they will do everything they can to keep the runners from escaping, blowing them away with heavy ordnance if necessary. Saito's troops will attempt to seize a fleeing group of runners for interrogation.

The characters may choose to find their own way to New Orleans, whether by smuggler or simply a separate set of travel plans. Keep in mind that Griebel has prepared a fake ID for Royce in advance and he is a willing extractee, so he should not be difficult to escort through mainstream channels.

#### PUSHING THE ENVELOPE

Increasing the difficulty of this run can easily be accomplished by adding more security features. The AresSpace employees may be forced to wear house-arrest-style radio beacons so that their location is always known. It would have to be

difficult to remove (or else Royce would just take it off) and it could contain some anti-extraction feature (a knockout gas charge, a lethal injection to kill Royce rather than let him fall into the wrong hands, etc.). The gamemaster can also add additional magical security (wards, bound spirits, paranormal guard animals) or security devices (pressure plates, tripwires, or even knockout gas delivery systems).

If the runners haven't coordinated with Royce, he may not be in his office when they come looking for him. Instead, he may be sleeping in his dorm room or hanging out in the rec building. The runners may be forced to track him down without alerting security in the process.

#### DEBUGGING

If the security at the AresSpace park is too difficult for the runners, try to present them with a "lucky break" rather than toning the security down. Perhaps Royce gets wind of a big meeting or inspection by a top-ranking Ares exec, giving the runners a chance to infiltrate a group of visitors. Maybe Royce "accidentally" breaks an important piece of equipment that requires some "specialists" to be called in for repair or replacement.

If the runners flub the run and get caught or killed, then that's how it goes. Royce will be more worried about saving his own skin than helping out the runners. If the runners botch the run but escape they can try again, but security will be tighter. In this case, it may be easiest to have Royce's actions discovered and for him to be placed under arrest. The runners may then have an opportunity to grab him as Ares ships him off to trial.

## THE BIG EASY

#### WHAT'S UP CHUMMER?

The runners arrive in New Orleans and escort Royce to his destination. There they meet a fixer named Mercy. Royce and Mercy ask them to stick around for an additional job, but tell them to lay low until they've set it up. The runners have a few days to spend in New Orleans while Royce puts the Liberty virus and the fate of *Velox II* on the auction block.

#### TELL IT TO THEM STRAIGHT

You arrive at the address you've been given, but you have to check it twice. The shop sits in a long alleyway of shops near Bourbon Street. White lace curtains adorn the windows and a sign above reads "Roger's Boutique." You start to wonder if the store is really some kind of front.

Keeping your heads low and your safeties off, you escort Dr. Royce through the door. The inside is just like the outside, with more lace, early twentieth-century furniture and a display case featuring over a hundred masks of all different shapes and sizes. Some of them look like ritual masks from tribal cultures.

A woman's voice interrupts your thoughts. "Some of these are over one hundred years old," she says as she enters the room from behind a blue velvet curtain. She's tall, even for an elf, well over two meters in height with long black hair and red lips. She's wearing a light blue knit dress that sets off her tanned skin. "My name is Mercy. How can I help you?"



## HOOKS

New Orleans has a unique flavor with its vibrant street culture, wild magic and sordid history. The city draws in a constant flow of people, from tourists to smugglers, making it a great place to get lost in for a while. The runners have the chance to sit back and relax after some tense runs, and maybe even blow a chunk of their hard-earned cred. Behind the scenes, however, Ares is closing in on their trail and danger looms on the horizon.

## BEHIND THE SCENES

The first order of business for the characters is to drop off Royce. Royce will introduce himself to Mercy, and they will both thank the shadowrunners for a job well done. Mercy will bring the runners their final payment. Before they leave, however, Royce will ask them to stay handy, as he would like to hire them to do one more job for him. At this point, he reveals that he is in fact the one who hired them for the past two runs. He will try to win their sympathies, so he tells them exactly what he is trying to escape from and why. He asks them to find a place to stay for 72 hours, then to perform one small service for him. He would like the runners to act as his representative at a meeting with an individual and carry out an exchange of goods. These are all the details he will provide at this time, but he will offer them 500¥ each per day to keep them on retainer.

## Hitting the Streets

Assuming the characters agree, they have three days to kill in New Orleans. Allow the characters to relax and enjoy themselves, conduct legwork and locate black market suppliers for virtually everything they need. All they have to do is pay for it. Mercy provides an assortment of black market goods herself. She is a talismonger and deals in magical materials, and can even get her hands on weapon and power foci.

The gamemaster is encouraged to develop some small scenarios for the runners while they explore New Orleans. Details on the Crescent City can be found in *Target: Smuggler Havens* or on p. 68, *Shadows of North America*.

Some runners may constantly keep an eye out for trouble, worried that Ares may track them down. This paranoia is good, and the gamemaster should toy with it. For all his desire to live an independent life, Royce is essentially a corp suit and he really doesn't trust the runners not to betray him. To that end, he has hired Ms. Griebel's personal team (see p. 81) to keep an eye on the runners and ensure that they don't sell him and his code to the highest bidder. This team will discreetly surveil the runners as they pass the time in New Orleans. If the characters are on the lookout, they may catch on that they're being watched. Play this up, perhaps even give them some glimpses of Griebel's team, but don't let the runners catch them. Griebel's team has orders to back off immediately and not fight if they are noticed.

## Royce's Auction

Now that he is free from Ares's constraints, Royce is anxious to secure his financial freedom. With Mercy and Griebel's help, Royce puts the activation code for the Liberty virus that is

onboard the *Velox II* probe up for auction through the Asgard data haven (see p. 34, *Target: Matrix*). He also informs both AresSpace and his contact at the *Kepler* project about the auction, and encourages them to make bids.

Whichever corp bids the highest will receive the code. Bids are due within 48 hours and are submitted to anonymous dropboxes on Asgard. Royce will contact the winners and arrange a meeting for the following evening in the New Orleans area.

If the runners have a decker in their team, Royce will ask the decker for help in setting up the auction and meeting. He prefers to do as few things himself as possible in order to minimize the odds of being found and recaptured.

The gamemaster can use this opportunity to choose the outcome that best suits her campaign by choosing whether Ares or Aztechnology/Shibata/FedBoeing wins the auction. The winner of the auction will send an elite corporate team to take possession of the code at the scheduled meet, to be held at the Etienne Shipyards. The runners are to take the encrypted code chip and exchange it for the payment.

Both corporations are deeply invested in winning the Probe Race and, as a result, are not willing to take the loss of this opportunity lying down. The losing corp will do everything it can to track down Royce and the meet with the auction's winner. Through hard work, an inside informant or just plain luck, they will succeed and so will send their own team to the meet with the goal of either taking the information (and the runners if necessary) or preventing it from falling into the wrong hands.

## Mercy

Mercy is a talismonger with connections to Ms. Griebel. Mercy's client base and friendship have made her very useful as a fixer. Like the other fixers they have encountered, Mercy has been paid to set the characters up with whatever they need.

## PUSHING THE ENVELOPE

This scenario is the calm before the storm, but if the gamemaster wants to keep up the frantic pace there are many options. Mercy may have some unrelated problems that she could ask the runners to help solve, such as being leaned on by the Mafia for protection money or trying to keep some rare tesma out of the hands of the zobop. Both Ares and Shibata are eager to track Royce down and may have narrowed their search down to New Orleans. An Ares Firewatch or a SMART team (see pp. 78 and 79) may be working the streets, looking for the runners or asking questions about Mercy. The runners may hear of these teams asking questions, or they may run into them on the street, forcing the runners to take cover or shoot it out and escape through the streets of New Orleans.

## DEBUGGING

The runners may decide not to take a third job for Royce and to wash their hands of this whole affair. In that case, the gamemaster can either end the adventure here or force the runners' hand. If the runners suddenly find it difficult to get out of New Orleans because Ares and Shibata have closed in on them, they may reconsider the job offer.

If the runners manage to capture one of Griebe's team, that team member will refuse to reveal who they are or who they work for. There will be some clues, however, such as a credstick which leads to a bank account at the First Seattle Bank in the name of "Donna Klein." A small bit of legwork can reveal that Donna Klein is an alias used by Ms. Griebe. This revelation should not concern the characters initially. Griebe is just keeping a watch over the situation, making sure everything goes well.

## THE YARD

### WHAT'S UP CHUMMER?

The runners head out to the Etienne Shipyards where they are supposed to make the transfer on behalf of Royce. The group making the transfer doesn't ambush the runners (though another team might), but tries to buy them out instead. The runners face an ethical dilemma and their choice will determine the outcome of the adventure.

### TELL IT TO THEM STRAIGHT

Mercy told you that she arranged to hold the exchange in a place outside of New Orleans proper called the Etienne Yards. As you drive up, you spot the Yard's faded sign painted on a long, battered concrete wall, right next to the swamp. The hull of an old riverboat juts over the wall's ragged top. You see other derelict boats, dozens or possibly hundreds of them, filling up an area three football fields in size. A graveyard for ships ... but hopefully not for anyone else.

Mercy should be making the call to tell the buyer where to pick up the goods in just a few minutes. That gives you about half an hour max to find a good spot, plan an escape route and otherwise prepare for the exchange.

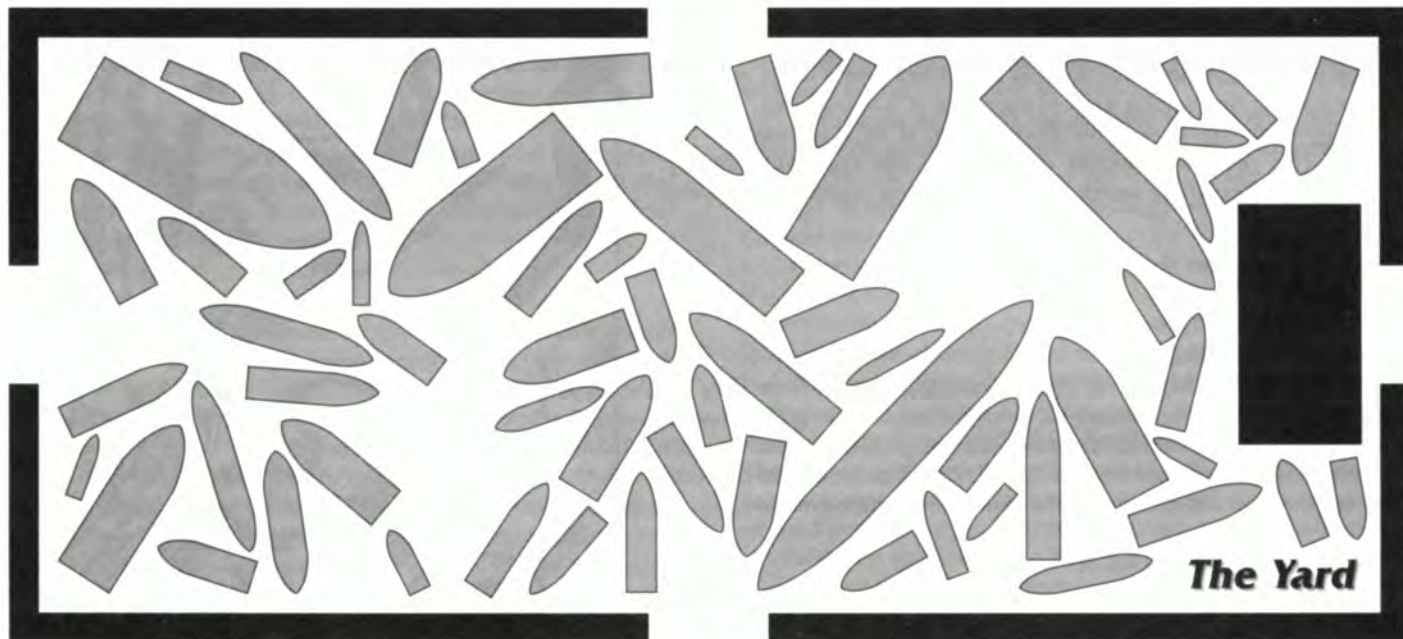
### As the Runners wait for the Payment to be Handed Over:

The negotiator steps forward in a casual manner, leans in and starts talking conspiratorially. "This is a lot of cred that we're about to hand over. I assume you're getting your share of the cut for acting as go-betweens?" He looks from face to face, nodding his head. "Of course, you're only getting a fraction of what your employer is going to walk away with." He shakes his head and smiles grimly.

"I'm sure this is the sort of arrangement that you're used to. I mean, you're just hired guns, right?" He shrugs. "It's too bad, though, since Ares doesn't see it that way. I'll tell you straight up that you've gotten in way over your head. You've been messing with one of the big boys in a major way." He reaches into a pocket and pulls out a cigarette. "Situations like this, it doesn't matter who you work for. All that matters is that you're going to be marked for life." Fishing out a lighter, he cups the cigarette and flame to shelter them from the light breeze and gets it lit.

The negotiator takes a deep drag, looks around, and blows the smoke out through his nose. "You realize, I hope, that there are other options. You don't have to spend your entire life running from Ares. In fact, we'll make you an offer. We'll double whatever your employer is paying you—and we'll grant you protection. In exchange, all you have to do is tell us where your employer is." He takes another drag on his cigarette, then taps the ash off the end. "Well, chummers? What do you say?"





**The Yard**

## HOOKS

The characters start this scenario alone, among the rotting hulks of dead ships shrouded in the darkness of a new moon. The Yard has a haunted feel to it, which should add to the character's unease and tension. Impress on them the spookiness of the atmosphere and hint at potential horrors that might be lurking around every corner.

The runners are faced with an ethical choice in this scenario. Do they take the offer and cave in to greed and security or do they stay loyal to their employer? The runners should be sympathetic to Royce's desire to live free of the corporate world—after all, many runners have experienced that life and turned their backs on it as well. But Royce is no longer under corporate protection and the runners have made some major enemies on his behalf, so saving their skins and living in luxury may sound like a better deal.

## BEHIND THE SCENES

Mercy has arranged the use of a private ship junkyard for the purposes of this meet. The Yard is located 50 kilometers outside of New Orleans, near the bayou. The Yard's usual caretakers, workers and guard dogs have been evacuated for the night, so the runners have the place to themselves. Mercy chose the place because it should be easy for the runners to escape if anything goes wrong. Before they leave, she equips them with a credstick verification reader so that they can verify that the payment is valid on the spot.

The Yard itself is a maze of boat hulls, from yachts to fishing trawlers to personal small-engine craft. A crumbling two-meter high wall surrounds the Yard, broken by four chain-link gates (one on each side). One gate has been left unlocked for the night. The runners can park any vehicles down the road out of sight, inside the Yard or even in the swamp next door.

The runners are free to use the spot of their choosing inside the Yard to make the exchange. They have been given a tracking signal (Rating 4) and the buyers have been given a signal locator. When the buyers arrive, they are to use the locator to find the runners in the Yard, make the exchange and then leave. The runners do not need to keep the tracking signal on their persons; they can plant it somewhere in the Yard and watch and wait for the buyers to arrive. The runners will have about half an hour to prepare.

## Griebe's Team

Griebe's team will be in the vicinity of the Yard prior to the runners' arrival, most likely observing from the cover of the nearby swamp. They will use both magical and electronic surveillance (spells, assensing, shotgun mics, low light and thermo image magnification, scanner) to watch the runners set up and conduct the exchange. They have orders to make sure the runners don't sell out, to retrieve the payment at all costs and return it to Royce. Nate will set himself up in a good sniper's position.

## The Buyer's Arrival

As described under *Royce's Auction* (p. 75), the gamemaster gets to choose who wins the auction and tailor the scenario best to his or her liking. The primary choice is either Ares or Shibata, but in truth it could be any other agency that has an interest in seeing Ares lose the Probe Race. If the gamemaster is unsure who to choose, we recommend that Shibata wins the auction, but Ares discovers the exchange point and sends a team as well.

Whoever the buyer is, they will approach the Yard in the following manner. First, the buyer team's magician will arrive, sent ahead to do a quick scouting. The magician will hover in astral space over the Yard, looking for auras. If the runners are not keeping an eye on the astral plane, the magician will try



and determine where the runners are and what they have planned. If the scout encounters anyone watching the astral or is attacked, he will immediately zip back to his body.

The buyer team will then approach the Yard and enter. They will stick close but will not cluster together, and they will be alert for ambushes. They will not bring the payment (a case full of certified credsticks totaling 10 million nuyen) into the Yard with them, but they will leave it with a drone or elemental so that it can be quickly summoned and brought over if everything checks out.

#### The Pitch

Once the buyer team is satisfied that they aren't walking into an ambush and that the runners have brought the goods, they will ask the runners to wait while they call in the payment. As they wait for the drone/elemental to arrive, the buyer team leader will step forward and offer them a deal, as outlined in *Tell It to Them Straight*, p. 76.

Allow the runners a few minutes to mull it over, but don't let them agonize over the decision. The buyer wants the meet over with one way or another, and he's not going to sit around while the runners vacillate. He's willing to negotiate over price, up to a million nuyen if necessary, if the runners are open to selling their employer out.

#### Ambush

One way or another, the runners are not going to get out of the Yard without a fight.

If the runners accept the deal, the negotiator will agree to hand them their payment right then and there but will demand that they stay put while he calls in another team to capture Royce. Before this can happen, however, Griebe's team, understanding that the runners are selling out, will attack the meet. Their primary goal is to retrieve the payment. They will also try to destroy the virus data and kill the runners, but those will be secondary.

If the runners rebuke the deal, the negotiator will pressure them some more but will eventually cave in and continue with the exchange. In the middle of the exchange, however, the other corporate team will strike, hoping to acquire the virus data. The runners will be caught in a three-way firefight. If the runners are getting hit hard or if they lose the payment, then Griebe's runner team may step in to help them out. As above, Griebe's team will primarily be interested in recovering the money, but they will assist the runners if it doesn't put them in grave danger.

#### Ares Firewatch Team

This Ares Firewatch team has been working together for over a year. They were put on the runners' trail immediately fol-





lowing the *Velox I* incident, and were on the scene in Silicon Valley shortly after the runners extracted Royce.

#### Lt. Berkeley, Firewatch Team Commander

Robert Berkeley is a sandy-haired twenty-eight-year-old human male with gray cybereyes. Berkeley has served as a Firewatch unit commander for much of his career.

| B | Q     | S     | C | I | W | E   | R      |
|---|-------|-------|---|---|---|-----|--------|
| 6 | 7 (9) | 7 (9) | 5 | 5 | 6 | 2.4 | 6 (11) |

**INIT:** 6 (11) + 1D6 (3D6)

**Dice Pools:** Combat 9 (10)

**Karma Pool/Professional Rating:** 8/4

**Race:** Human

**Active Skills:** Assault Rifles 7 (8), Biotech 4 (5), Electronics 3 (4), Etiquette 5 (Corporate 6), Leadership 5 (Tactics 7), Negotiation 5, Pistols 6 (7), Small Unit Tactics 6, Unarmed Combat 5 (6)

**Knowledge Skills:** Ares Corporate Structure 4, Megacorp Security 5, Security Procedures 5

**Martial Arts:** Wildcat 5 (6) (multi-strike, vicious blow)

**Cyberware (betaware):** Cybereyes (Flare Compensation, Low light, Optical Magnification 3), Muscle Replacement (Level 2), Smartlink 2 w/Rangefinder, Wired Reflexes (2) w/Reflex Trigger

**Bioware (cultured):** Enhanced Articulation, Orthoskin (Level 2)

**Weapons:** AK-98 [AR, SA/BF/FA, 8M, 38 (c), w/integral underbarrel grenade launcher]

Range (TN): 0–50 (2), 51–150 (3), 151–350 (4), 351–550 (7)  
Underbarrel Grenade Launcher [GL, SS, 6 (m) w/rangefinder and offensive grenades (10S)]

Range (TN): 5–50 (2), 51–100 (3), 101–150 (5), 151–300 (5)  
Ares Predator 3 [HP, SA, 9M, 15 (c)]

Range (TN): 0–5 (2), 6–20 (3), 21–40 (4), 41–60 (7)

**Armor:** Armor Vest with plates plus orthoskin [5/4]

#### Firewatch Mage

| B | Q | S | C | I | W | E | M | R |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 4 | 5 | 3 | 5 | 5 | 6 | 6 | 7 | 5 |

**INIT:** 5 + 1D6, Astral INIT: 26 + 1D6

**Dice Pools:** Astral 1, Astral Combat 8, Combat 8, Spell 6

**Karma Pool/Professional Rating:** 3/4

**Race:** Human

**Active Skills:** Aura Reading 6, Conjuring 5, Etiquette 4 (Magical 6), Interrogation 5, Leadership 4, Pistols 4, Sorcery 6

**Knowledge Skills:** Botany 4, Magical Threats 5, Music 5, Shamanic Magic 4, Spells 4, Spirits 6

**Spells:** Levitate 5, Lightning Bolt 5, Magic Fingers 5, Manaball 4, Manabolt 5, Mindlink 4, Mind Probe 5, Treat 6, Urban Renewal 6

**Metamagic (Initiate Grade 1):** Shielding

**Weapons:** Ares Lightfire 70 [HP, SA, 6L, 16 (c) w/laser sight and 2 extra clips EX ammo (+2 Power)]

Range (TN): 0–5 (3), 6–20 (4), 21–40 (5), 41–60 (8)

**Armor:** Armor Vest with plates [4/3]

**Notes:** Has four Force 5 elementals (one of each element, 1 service each) on call

#### Firewatch Rigger

| B | Q | S | C | I | W | E    | R     |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|------|-------|
| 4 | 5 | 5 | 3 | 5 | 4 | 2.96 | 5 (9) |

**INIT:** 5 + 1D6, Rigged INIT: 9 + 3D6

**Dice Pools:** Combat 7, Control 9

**Karma Pool/Professional Rating:** 2/4

**Race:** Human

**Active Skills:** Assault Rifles 3, Biotech 4, Boat 5, Car 5, Electronics 4, Etiquette 4, Gunnery 5, Pistols 4, Unarmed Combat 5, Vectored Thrust Aircraft 5

**Knowledge Skills:** Drones 6, Engineering 4, Security Procedures 4, Vehicles 6

**Martial Arts:** Wildcat 5 (vicious blow, zoning)

**Cyberware (alphaware):** Datajack, Smartlink-2 w/rangefinder, Vehicle Control Rig (Level 2)

**Weapons:** Ares Predator 3 [HP, SA, 9M, 15 (c)]

Range (TN): 0–5 (2), 6–20 (3), 21–40 (4), 41–60 (7)

**Armor:** Armor Vest with plates [4/3]

**Gear:** Remote control deck (Rating 5), Ares Guardian Drone (p. 177, R3), Cyberspace Designs Wolfhound (p. 177, R3)

#### Firewatch Soldier (3)

| B | Q | S    | C | I | W | E    | R     |
|---|---|------|---|---|---|------|-------|
| 6 | 5 | 5(7) | 3 | 5 | 4 | 3.78 | 5 (9) |

**INIT:** 5 (9) + 1D6 (3D6)

**Dice Pools:** Combat 7

**Karma Pool/Professional Rating:** 3/4

**Race:** Human

**Active Skills:** Assault Rifles 4, Athletics 4, Biotech 3, Electronics 3, Etiquette 4, Pistols 4, Small Unit Tactics 4, Submachine Guns 5, Unarmed Combat 6

**Knowledge Skills:** Guns 4, Megacorp 4, Security Procedures 5, Syndicates 3, Traps 3

**Martial Arts:** Wildcat 6 (full offense, kick attack, multi-strike)

**Cyberware (betaware):** Smartlink 2 w/Rangefinder, Wired Reflexes (2) w/Reflex Trigger

**Bioware (cultured):** Enhanced Articulation, Muscle Augmentation (Level 2), Orthoskin (Level 2)

**Weapons:** Ares Alpha [AR, SA/BF/FA, 8M, 42 (c), RC 2, w/smartlink-2, ultrasound-sight and 2 extra clips]

AR Range (TN): 0–50 (2), 51–150 (3), 151–350 (4), 351–550 (7)

Underbarrel Grenade Launcher [GL, SS, 8 (m) w/rangefinder and concussion grenades ([12]M Stun)]

GL Range (TN): 5–50 (2), 51–100 (3), 101–150 (5), 151–300 (5)

Ares Crusader [MP, SA/BF, 6L, 40 (c), RC 2, w/smartlink-2 and 3 extra clips.

**Armor:** Armor Vest with plates [4/3]

#### Shibata Major Assets Recovery Team (SMART)

Commander Walton is a grizzled corp veteran with years of black ops experience. His skill has earned him a leadership position despite the fact that he is a troll working within a Japanese corporation.

**Commander Colin Walton, SMART Team Leader**

| B      | Q     | S       | C | I | W | E   | R     |
|--------|-------|---------|---|---|---|-----|-------|
| 9 (10) | 5 (6) | 10 (11) | 4 | 5 | 4 | 1.5 | 5 (9) |

INIT: 5 (9) + 1D6 (3D6)

Dice Pools: Combat 7

Karma Pool/Professional Rating: 4/4

Race: Troll

**Active Skills:** Athletics 5, Intimidation 3, Leadership 4, Negotiations 5, Pistols, 5, Pole Arms/Staffs 6, Unarmed Combat 4

**Knowledge Skills:** Corporate Politics 5, Security Procedures 6, Smugglers 4

**Martial Arts:** Arnis De Mano (kick attack, throw)

**Cyberware:** Muscle Replacement 1, Smartlink, Wired Reflexes (2)

**Weapons:** Remington Roomsweeper [HP, SA, 9S (f)/9M, 8 (m), smartlinked w/8 rounds flechette and 8 rounds APDS]

Range (TN): 0–5 (2), 6–20 (3), 21–40 (4), 41–60 (7)

Combat Axe [11S]

Armor: Secure vest [3/2]

**SMART Mage**

| B | Q | S | C | I | W | E | M | R |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 5 | 4 | 3 | 5 | 6 | 5 | 6 | 6 | 5 |

INIT: 5 + 1D6, Astral INIT: 26 + 1D6

Dice Pools: Astral Combat 8, Combat 7, Spell 5

Karma Pool/Professional Rating: 3/3

Race: Human

**Active Skills:** Aura Reading 4, Car 4, Clubs 5, Conjuring 5, Etiquette 3, Pistols 2, Sorcery 6 (Spellcasting 8)

**Knowledge Skills:** Magic 6, Magical Groups 3, Security Procedures 4

**Spells:** Confusion 5, Detect Enemies 6, Firewall 5, Manaball 5, Physical Barrier 4, Physical Mask 4, Stunbolt 5

**Weapons:** Ceska Black Scorpion [MP, SA/BF, 6L, RC (1), 35 (c)]

Range (TN): 0–10 (4), 11–40 (5), 41–80 (6), 81–150 (9)

Stun Baton [6S Stun]

Armor: Secure vest [3/2]

**Notes:** Has a Force 5 water (3 services) and a Force 4 earth elemental (2 services) on call

**SMART Team Member (4)**

| B | Q | S | C | I | W | E | R |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 4 | 6 | 5 | 4 | 5 | 5 | 6 | 5 |

INIT: 5 + 1D6

Dice Pools: Combat 8

Karma Pool/Professional Rating: 2/3

Race: Human

**Active Skills:** Athletics 3, Car 3, Demolitions 3, Electronics 5, Leadership 3 (Tactics 5), Pistols 4, Shotguns 5, Unarmed Combat 4

**Knowledge Skills:** Security Procedures 5

**Martial Arts:** Brawling 4

**Weapons:** Enfield AS-7 [SH, SA/BF, 8D (f)/8S, 10 (c) w/integral laser sight]

Range (TN): 0–10 (3), 11–20 (4), 21–50 (5), 51–100 (8)

Fichetti Security 500a [LP, SA, 6L, RC (1), 25 (c) w/detachable

shoulder stock]

Range (TN): 0–5 (4), 6–15 (5), 16–30 (6), 31–150 (9)

Armor: Secure vest [3/2]

**Gear:** 1 dose of jazz (+2 Quickness, +1D6 Initiative for 10 x 1D6 minutes, see p. 119, M&M)

**PUSHING THE ENVELOPE**

Aside from throwing more numerous or tougher opponents at the runners, the gamemaster can also lay on the pressure when the buyer offers the deal. Perhaps the buying corp has determined the runners' real identities (a possibility if they left any evidence behind earlier in the adventure) and uses it to blackmail them.

The haunted feeling of the Yard can also be emphasized, perhaps by including some actual ghosts (of drowned sailors), shedim or other astral creeps. Alternately, the Yard may not be as deserted as the runners think—ghouls, squatters or some unusual paranormals may make a home in one boat's hulk.

The gamemaster can also force a swamp scenario by pushing the swamp as the only escape route available to the runners. The bayou is a maze of creek beds and patches of forest infested with all sorts of wildlife, both mundane and Awakened. The characters may run afoul of alligators, afancs, a behemoth, a nomad or other creature.

**DEBUGGING**

If the runners get their hoops handed to them, so be it. That's the price of playing in the big leagues.

If the runners get captured by one of the corporate teams, they will be interrogated to reveal Royce's whereabouts. The runners will not be able to hold out forever, but they may be able to buy Royce enough time to flee town. If the runners are captured by Ares and do not cooperate, they will be tried for their involvement with the *Velox I* sabotage. They will be looking at life in prison, execution or at best a short life as a cranial-bomb-carrying corporate lackey.

The gamemaster should exercise care that the runners do not end up with the case of credsticks worth 10 million nuyen and fail to hand it over to Royce. That kind of nuyen can break a campaign, so it should fall through the runners' fingers one way or another.

**PICKING UP THE PIECES****IT'S A WRAP**

Depending on how the runners fare in the final ambush, this adventure can turn out several ways.

If the characters stay true to Royce and escape the ambush with the nuyen, Royce will thank them profusely for their efforts. He will pay them as agreed and will even throw in a 100,000¥ bonus because he's feeling generous. Then he'll be off on his own, free and clear, to start his life anew.

If the runners don't betray Royce but don't get the nuyen either, then another meeting will have to be arranged. Royce will ask the runners to take on the same job once again, in a different location this time. If Grieb's team escaped with the



money, Royce will berate the runners for not doing a better job but will still pay them as agreed.

If the runners sell Royce out, the runners' new megacorporate friends will want to move to capture Royce right away. Any survivors from Griebel's team will attempt to warn Royce of the betrayal and danger. If the megacorp fails to acquire Royce, their promise to provide the runners with protection may be retracted (unless the runners bring Royce back to them).

### The Probe Race Winner

If Shibata ends up with the Liberty code, *Velox II* will be doomed in short order. Ares will lose the Probe Race and the runners will have earned a powerful enemy. The Shibata-Aztechnology-FedBoeing probe *Kepler* will rendezvous with Halley's Comet, and the corporate triumvirate will score a major publicity coup by winning the Probe Race.

If Ares ends up with the Liberty code, they will analyze it and remotely disable the Liberty virus so that *Velox II* is no longer in danger. *Velox II* will go on to win the Probe Race for Ares.

If neither megacorp ends up with the data on the Liberty virus, the Probe Race continues on while a shadow war develops between Shibata and Ares. Each continues to try and track down Royce and the code details; both also increase shadow ops to take out each other's probes.

### AWARDING KARMA

These awards are in addition to the normal benefits of good roleplaying, guts, smarts, surprise and humor (see p. 243, SR3).

|  |   |
|--|---|
| Survival                                 | 3 |
| Successfully completing the Apollo run   | 1 |
| Extracting Royce                         | 1 |
| Escaping the exchange with Royce's money | 1 |
| Not betraying Royce                      | 1 |

### CAST OF SHADOWS

#### Sherman Royce

When he was younger, Royce didn't want much out of life. He expected to get a good job with a corp, draw a decent salary and while away his days with computer games. He scored a job with AresSpace right out of school and shot through the ranks as a skilled programmer. He found himself working on the *Velox* program when the Probe race began and security clamped down. Since then, his freedoms have been limited and he has been subjected to 24-hour surveillance. He wants out of the alienating, Orwellian megacorp life, and he's willing to screw Ares and other people over in order to get away.

|          |          |          |          |          |          |          |          |
|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|
| <b>B</b> | <b>Q</b> | <b>S</b> | <b>C</b> | <b>I</b> | <b>W</b> | <b>E</b> | <b>R</b> |
| 3        | 4        | 3        | 3        | 6 (8)    | 3        | 4.3      | 5 (6)    |

**INIT:** 5 (6) + 1D6

**Dice Pools:** Combat 7

**Karma Pool/Professional Rating:** 2/3

**Race:** Human

**Active Skills:** Computer 7 (Programming 9), Computer B/R 5, Electronics 5, Electronics B/R 7, Etiquette 2 (Corporate 4, Matrix 7)

**Knowledge Skills:** Astrophysics 5, Astronomy 4, Databases 6, Math 6, Satellite Management 7, Spacecraft 4, Telemetry Systems 5

**Cyberware:** Datajack, Headware Memory (300 Mp), Math SPU 3

**Bloware (cultured):** Cerebral Booster 2

#### Annika Griebel

Griebel once worked for Ares before they had a falling out and she entered the shadows. She has since built a reputation as one of Seattle's top fixers. Griebel is all business, with connections across the globe.

|          |          |          |          |          |          |          |          |
|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|
| <b>B</b> | <b>Q</b> | <b>S</b> | <b>C</b> | <b>I</b> | <b>W</b> | <b>E</b> | <b>R</b> |
| 5        | 6        | 5        | 6        | 6        | 6        | 4.51     | 6        |

**INIT:** 6 + 1D6

**Dice Pools:** Combat 9

**Karma Pool/Professional Rating:** 8/4

**Race:** Human

**Active Skills:** Car 5, Computer 5, Electronics 5, Etiquette 6 (Corporate 8, Street 8), Leadership 5, Negotiation 7, Pistols 5

**Knowledge Skills:** Ares Corporate History 8, Corporate Politics 8, Corporate Social Structure 8, Fixers 6, Shadowrunners 5, Smuggling Routes 4

**Cyberware (alphaware):** Datajack, Headware Memory (500 Mp)

**Weapons:** Fichetti Security 500 [LP, SA, 6L, 12 (c), w/1 extra clip APDS]

Range (TN): 0-5 (4), 6-15 (5), 16-30 (6), 31-50 (9)

**Armor:** Armored suit [3/0]

#### Annika Griebel's Runner Team

Annika's team consists of an elven tactical specialist, three samurai brothers, a bear shaman and a rigger whom she keeps on retainer. They have been working with Annika for over a year and work together seamlessly.

#### Natalie Dark

Natalie is the team's tactical specialist and field leader. She is an elven woman with black hair and completely black cybereyes. Natalie generally wears sunglasses to hide her odd appearance. She dresses in gang-style clothing, preferring leather jackets and jeans.

|          |          |          |          |          |          |          |          |
|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|
| <b>B</b> | <b>Q</b> | <b>S</b> | <b>C</b> | <b>I</b> | <b>W</b> | <b>E</b> | <b>R</b> |
| 6        | 8 (10)   | 5        | 6        | 7        | 6        | 0.08     | 7 (11)   |

**INIT:** 7 (11) + 1D6 (3D6)

**Dice Pools:** Combat 10 (11)

**Karma Pool/Professional Rating:** 4/4

**Race:** Elf

**Active Skills:** Athletics 3 (5), Computer 4, Edged Weapons 8, Electronics 6, Etiquette 4 (Street 7), Pistols 6, Small Unit Tactics 8, Stealth 4 (6), Unarmed Combat 6

**Knowledge Skills:** Gang ID 5, Megacorp Special Forces 6, Military History 4, Sioux 4, Spherethiel 5



**Martial Arts:** Capoeira 6 (disorient, ground fighting kip-up)  
**Cyberware (alphaware):** Cybereyes (flare compensation, low-light, thermographic vision), Hearing Amplification, Move by Wire (Rating 2), 2 Smartlinks, Sound Dampener, Tactical Computer (4 dedicated ports)

**Weapons:** 2 Savalette Guardians [HP, SA/BF\*, 9M, 12 (c), RC 1, integral smartlink]

Range (TN): 0-5 (2), 6-20 (3), 21-40 (4), 41-60 (7)

Monofilament Sword [8M]

**Armor:** Secure Jacket [5/4]

**Gear:** Microtransceiver (Rating 4), Shotgun microphone (Rating 4), Scanner (Rating 4)

**Aarvis (Growler)**

Aarvis, or Growler as his teammates call him, is the group's bear shaman. Aarvis tries to avoid melee combat, using spells instead. Aarvis is a human male with a slight build and wispy brown hair that is turning gray.

|          |          |          |          |          |          |          |          |          |
|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|
| <b>B</b> | <b>Q</b> | <b>S</b> | <b>C</b> | <b>I</b> | <b>W</b> | <b>E</b> | <b>M</b> | <b>R</b> |
| 3        | 4        | 4        | 6        | 5        | 5        | 6        | 7        | 4        |

INIT: 4 + 1D6, Astral INIT: 26 + 1D6

**Dice Pools:** Astral 1, Astral Combat 8, Combat Pool 7, Spell 5

**Karma Pool/Professional Rating:** 3/4

**Race:** Human

**Active Skills:** Aura Reading 4, Conjuring 6, Etiquette 2 (Magical 5), Pistols 4, Sorcery 6 (Spell Casting 7)

**Knowledge Skills:** Magical Groups 4, Totem Identification 4

**Totem:** Bear (+2 health spells and forest spirits, Willpower (4) Test to avoid going berserk for 3 Combat Turns)

**Spells:** Animal Sight 4, Clairaudience 5, Control Emotions 5, Heal 6, Improved Invisibility 5, Increased Reflexes +2 4, Oxygenate 4, Powerball 5, Resist Pain 4

**Metamagic (Initiate Grade 1):** Masking

**Gear:** Power Focus 2, Sustaining Focus 4 (Increased Reflexes +2), Microtransceiver (Rating 4)

**Nate**

Nate is the older ork brother of the two human brothers, Crimson and Midnight. While his brothers prefer to race into battle as a way of proving their prowess, Nate waits in the background looking for the tactical advantage.

|          |          |          |          |          |          |          |          |
|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|
| <b>B</b> | <b>Q</b> | <b>S</b> | <b>C</b> | <b>I</b> | <b>W</b> | <b>E</b> | <b>R</b> |
| 10       | 5        | 8        | 4        | 5        | 6        | 6        | 5        |

INIT: 5 + 1D6

**Dice Pools:** Combat 8

**Karma Pool/Professional Rating:** 5/3

**Race:** Ork

**Active Skills:** Athletics 4, Leadership 4, Pistols 3, Pole Arms/Staffs 5, Shotgun 4, Stealth 5, Unarmed Combat 6

**Knowledge Skills:** Archaic Weapons 4, Martial Arts Styles 4

**Martial Arts:** Brawling 6

**Weapons:** Enfield AS-7 [SH, SA/BF, 8D (f)/8S, 10 (c) w/integral laser sight]

Range (TN): 0-10 (3), 11-20 (4), 21-50 (5), 51-100 (8)

Combat Axe [8S, +2 Reach]

**Armor:** Armored jacket [4/2]

**Gear:** Microtransceiver (Rating 4)

**Crimson & Midnight**

The twins are Nate's younger brothers. They dress and act as though they discovered shadowrunning on the trideo as kids and fell in love with the idea. The result is two headstrong yet skilled runners; good in combat, but with no tactical sense of their own.

|          |          |          |          |          |          |          |          |
|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|
| <b>B</b> | <b>Q</b> | <b>S</b> | <b>C</b> | <b>I</b> | <b>W</b> | <b>E</b> | <b>R</b> |
| 7 (10)   | 5        | 5        | 4        | 3        | 6        | 1        | 4 (8)    |

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

**Dice Pools:** Combat 7

**Karma Pool/Professional Rating:** 2/3

**Race:** Human

**Active Skills:** Athletics 3, Etiquette 2 (Street 4), Pistols 5, Stealth 4, Submachine Guns 5, Unarmed Combat 4

**Knowledge Skills:** Trideo Movies 4

**Martial Arts:** Kung Fu 4 (full offense, vicious blow)

**Cyberware:** Dermal Plating 3m Smartlink-2, Wired Reflexes 2

**Weapons:** Ares Predator 3 [HP, SA, 9M, 15 (c)]

Range (TN): 0-5 (2), 6-20 (3), 21-40 (4), 41-60 (7)

Ingram Smartgun-10 [SMG, BF/FA, 7M, 30 (c) w/smartlink]

Range (TN): 0-10 (2), 11-40 (3), 41-80 (4), 81-150 (7)

**Armor:** Lined Coat [4/2]

**Gear:** Microtransceiver (Rating 4)

**Eddie**

Eddie is an "old-timer," meaning that he's been shadowrunning on and off for over a decade. He has worked for Ms. Griebe longer than anyone can remember. He has a scar running from the side of his left eye down to his jaw, something he refers to as a "T-bird Love Bite."

|          |          |          |          |          |          |          |          |
|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|
| <b>B</b> | <b>Q</b> | <b>S</b> | <b>C</b> | <b>I</b> | <b>W</b> | <b>E</b> | <b>R</b> |
| 4        | 5        | 3        | 3        | 5        | 7        | 0.5      | 5 (11)   |

INIT: 5 + 1D6, Rigging INIT: 11 + 4D6

**Dice Pools:** Combat 8, Control 11

**Karma Pool/Professional Rating:** 6/3

**Race:** Human

**Active Skills:** Car 5, Car B/R 6, Computer 4, Electronics B/R 5, Gunnery 5, Hovercraft 4, Motorcycle 3, Motorcycle B/R 4, Pistol 3, Unarmed Combat 4, Vectored Thrust Aircraft 6

**Knowledge Skills:** Matrix Topography 3, Decker Tricks 3, Drones 5, Security Procedures 4, Security Rigger Systems 4

**Martial Arts:** Brawling 4

**Cyberware:** Datajack, Vehicle Control Rig (3)

**Weapons:** Browning Max-Power [HP, SA, 9M, 10 (c) w/laser sight]

Range (TN): 0-5 (3), 6-20 (4), 21-40 (5), 41-60 (8)

**Armor:** Armored Jacket [5/3]

**Gear:** Remote Control Deck (Rating 4), Microtransceiver (Rating 4), 2 surveillance drones (gamemaster's choice)



### Mercy

**B** 4   **Q** 6   **S** 4   **C** 7   **I** 6   **W** 6   **E** 6   **M** 10   **R** 6

**INIT:** 6 + 1D6, Astral **INIT:** 30 + 1D6

**Dice Pools:** Astral 4, Astral Combat 9, Combat 9, Spell 7

**Karma Pool/Professional Rating:** 8/2

**Race:** Elf

**Active Skills:** Centering 6, Conjuring 5, Enchanting 4, Etiquette 6, Leadership 4, Pistols 5, Sorcery 7 (Spell Casting 9)

**Knowledge Skills:** Magical Groups 8, New Orleans Magic 6, Singing 6, Spell Design 6, Talismongering 5

**Metamagic (Initiate Grade 4):** Anchoring, Centering (Singing), Masking, Possessing

**Spells:** Alter Memory 5, Catalog 4, Confusion 6, Diagnose 4, Fashion 4, Fireball 8, Magic Fingers 8, Manaball 6, Physical Barrier 5, Poltergeist 5, Translate 4

**Gear:** Mask (Power focus 4)

### LEGWORX

Use the following section when the characters dig around and work their contacts for information.

#### Annika Griebe

**Appropriate Contacts (TN 4):** Any Street or Corporate Contacts

#### Successes

#### Result

- 0 Are you trying to set me up with your sister?
- 1-2 She's a top-rate fixer, one of the finest in Seattle. Calm, collected, efficient and discreet. Solid rep.
- 3 One thing's for sure. She doesn't take jobs that benefit Ares. She has some sort of grudge.
- 4 She used to work for Ares about five years ago as a Ms. Johnson. I hear a run went bad, and she took the fall.
- 5+ Of course, some people think that story's just a ruse, and that she's really still on Ares's payroll.

#### Sketch

**Appropriate Contacts (TN 5):** Any Space Contacts

#### Successes

#### Result

- 0 Well, I can draw stick figures. Wanna see one? I do really good trolls.
- 1-2 I think he's some sort of low-grade fixer, sets things up in orbit somewhere.
- 3 That's right. He's up on *Apollo* station right now.
- 4 Always hanging out at the Water Works.
- 5+ The guy is more trouble than he's worth. He's a big mouth who always says he can get the job done, except he hardly ever gets the job done and he never gets it done on time.

### Sherman Royce

**Appropriate Contacts:** Ares contact (TN 5) or Matrix search (TN 6)

#### Successes

#### Result

- 0 Who?
- 1-2 He's a top programmer for Ares. They scooped him up right out of school.
- 3-4 He's been one of their primary code-meisters for some of AresSpace's comet probes. I hear they have him locked away in some code farm down in Silicon Valley.
- 5+

### Mercy

**Appropriate Contacts (TN 4):** Any Street contacts or Fixers

#### Successes

#### Result

- 0 Honey, you ain't seen nothing yet.
- 1-2 Oh, her. Yeah, she's a fixer in New Orleans, runs one of those shops with all the masks and weird antiques.
- 3-4 She's a low-key gal, but her efforts are top notch. You need something in the Crescent City, get it through her.
- 5+ Careful, though. She's a powerful sorceress. Some of the krewes hold a grudge for a lesson she taught them few years back.

## PLAYER HANDOUTS

### VELOX OUT OF THE RUNNING

Posted 02-10-62

Detroit (NN)—Ares's *Velox I* probe has veered off-course and will not be making its rendezvous with Halley's Comet, AresSpace officials announced today. "*Velox I* has irretrievably deviated from its trajectory due to a telemetry problem. It will be unable to reach Halley's Comet," said AresSpace spokesman Paul Thomas.

*Velox I* is the first of two near-identical probes launched by AresSpace; *Velox II* remains on target and is projected to intercept Halley's Comet in approximately one month, ahead of the other contenders. Most recently, the Ares probe *Gigas* succumbed to damages sustained when it struck an asteroid in deep space. The *Kepler* probe, a joint project between Aztechnology, Shibata and Federated Boeing, is the only other probe left in the race with a chance to beat *Velox II*. Members of the *Kepler* team could not be reached for comment.

The *Velox* probes' primary objectives were to intercept and collect data on Halley's Comet, currently making one of its once-in-seventy-six year visits to our solar system. The Probe race between the various megacorps to be the first to reach the comet has been highly publicized, with nearly every major competitor suffering accidents, mishaps and failures—often claimed as sabotage by rival corporations.

# YOU HAVE COMPLETED WAKE OF THE COMET.

## NOW PUT YOUR STAMP ON THE FUTURE OF SHADOWRUN!

We're polling *Shadowrun* players to see how the adventures *Catch a Falling Star* and *The Price of Liberty* turned out in your game. The results of this poll will affect future *Shadowrun* plot developments and determine who actually wins the Probe Race!

### CATCH A FALLING STAR

Indicate what happened to the *Gagarin* probe memory module in your game:

- \_\_\_\_\_ It was destroyed by the shadowrunners.
- \_\_\_\_\_ It was destroyed by the Manitou.
- \_\_\_\_\_ The shadowrunners returned the module to Mr. Johnson intact.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Yamatetsu retrieved it.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Someone else acquired the module. Who and how?

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Indicate what happened to the module's data:

- \_\_\_\_\_ The data was destroyed.
- \_\_\_\_\_ The Manitou kept a copy of the data.
- \_\_\_\_\_ The shadowrunners returned the module's data to Mr. Johnson.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Yamatetsu retrieved the data.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Someone else acquired the data. Who and how?

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Who were the shadowrunners working for in your game?

- \_\_\_\_\_ Ares
- \_\_\_\_\_ Aztechnology
- \_\_\_\_\_ Saeder-Krupp
- \_\_\_\_\_ Shiawase
- \_\_\_\_\_ Other: \_\_\_\_\_

Comments: \_\_\_\_\_

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### THE PRICE OF LIBERTY

Indicate who ended up with the Liberty virus codes at the end of the adventure:

- \_\_\_\_\_ Ares
- \_\_\_\_\_ Shibata
- \_\_\_\_\_ The shadowrunners
- \_\_\_\_\_ No one
- \_\_\_\_\_ Other: \_\_\_\_\_

Did Royce get his money?

- \_\_\_\_\_ Yes
- \_\_\_\_\_ No

Was the Velox II probe sabotaged in your game?

- \_\_\_\_\_ Yes
- \_\_\_\_\_ No

Who won the Probe Race in your game?

- \_\_\_\_\_ Ares
- \_\_\_\_\_ Shibata/FedBoeing/Aztechnology
- \_\_\_\_\_ Still undecided
- \_\_\_\_\_ Other: \_\_\_\_\_

Comments: \_\_\_\_\_

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Photocopy this form, fill it out, and send it in to:

FanPro LLC  
attn: WOTC results  
1608 N. Milwaukee, Suite 1005  
Chicago, IL 60608

You can also email your results in to  
[info@shadowrunrpg.com](mailto:info@shadowrunrpg.com)  
Use the Subject line: "WOTC results."

# TARGET: WASTELANDS

"An old fixer once told me that shadowrunning is about going places you're not supposed to go. That's what gives us the buzz, right? The excitement of traveling to exotic and secret places, meeting interesting people, and extracting or killing them. Believe me, chummer, sometimes shadowrunning takes you to places you really don't want to go--and that you're lucky to get out of alive."

Target: Wastelands is about hostile environments--places that are not just difficult for shadowrunners to penetrate, but dangerous to live in. This book details desert hideouts, toxic zones, Polar stations, deep sea aquacologies and orbital platforms, including information on how shadowrunners can get in, get out, and survive. For use with *Shadowrun, 3rd Edition*.

**Available July 2002**

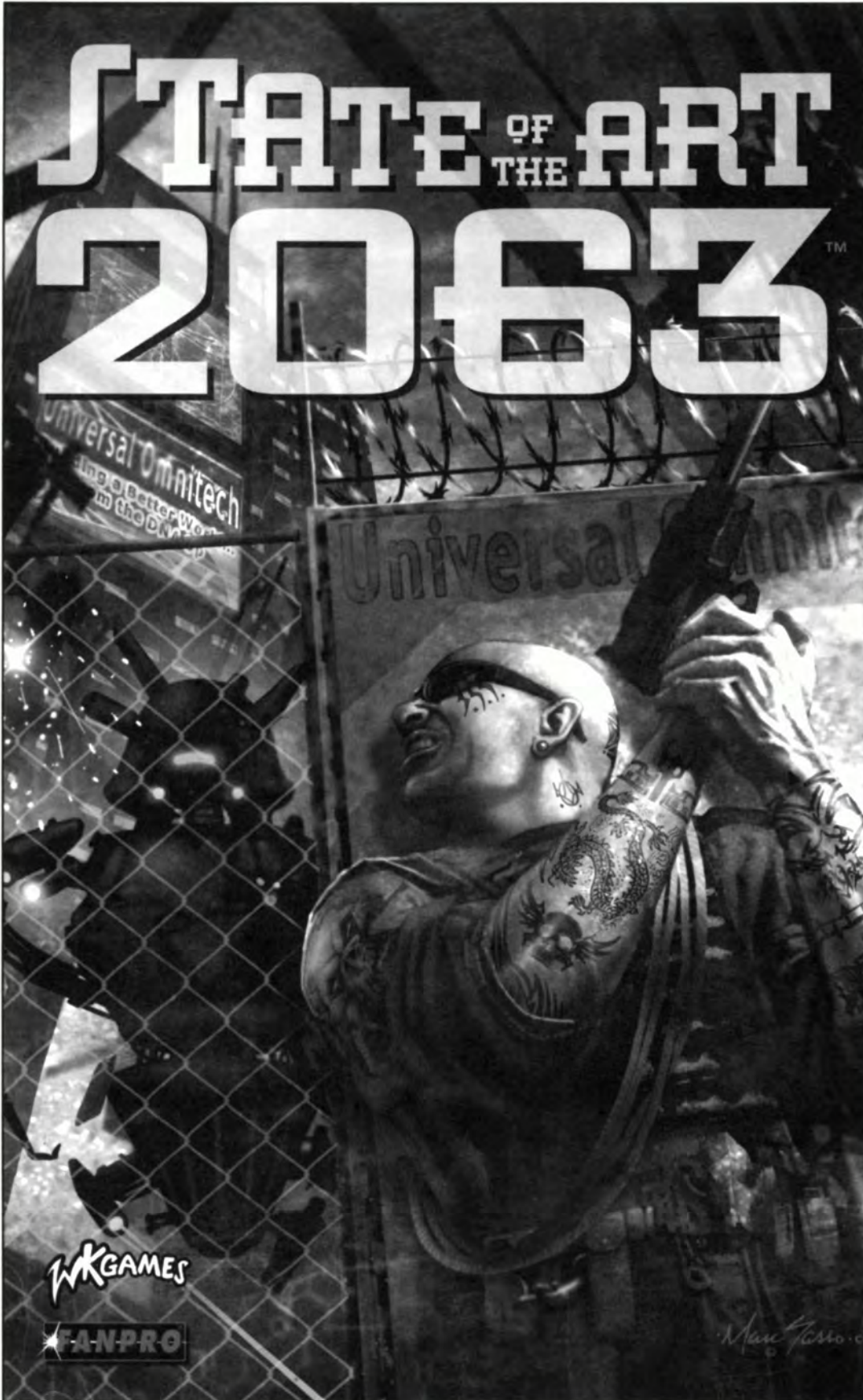
Stock Number: FPR 10653

ISBN: 3-89064-653-0

MSRP: \$20.00



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## NOTHING TO FEAR IF YOU GOT THE GEAR

"In this day and age, things change so fast that the centrifugal force of progress will shear your head right off. Shadowrunners like us need to keep up with the latest developments. When you run a B&E, you need to know what nasty new security feature might try to cut you in two as much as you need to know which nova new magic formula is worth snatching. It's the state of the art, chummer—it'll make you cred or get you dead."

State of the Art covers groundbreaking developments in the year 2063. It details the current state of genetics technology and corporate security, and describes advances in metamagic and mercenary operations. It also provides briefs on the latest media and entertainment news. These sections include a selection of new gear, techniques and rules for both players and gamemasters. For use with Shadowrun, Third Edition.

AVAILABLE IN AUGUST 2002





• THE END •

# RACE TO THE FINISH!

*The megacorp probe race to be the first to reach Halley's Comet is in its final rounds. With only a few contenders left, your shadowrunner team can make a difference, deciding who wins and who loses.*

*Wake of the Comet™ includes three adventures that wrap up the probe race first detailed in Year of the Comet™. Time is running out as the shadowrunners are hired to sabotage the competition and ensure that only one corp reaches the comet first. Wake of the Comet is for players and gamemasters of all experience levels.*

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FAST FORWARD  
ENTERTAINMENT



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