The background of the entire image is a detailed, stylized illustration of a futuristic city skyline. The scene is set during sunset or sunrise, with a warm, orange and yellow sky filled with soft, wispy clouds. The city is composed of numerous tall, slender skyscrapers of varying heights and designs. Many of these buildings are illuminated from within, with lights glowing in shades of blue, purple, and white. Some buildings have unique features, like a tall, thin tower with a glowing blue ring near its top, and another with a bright pink vertical light beam. In the foreground, there's a darker, more industrial-looking area with silhouettes of buildings, pipes, and what appears to be a large, dark, curved structure, possibly a bridge or a piece of machinery. A large, semi-transparent black rectangular box with a glowing blue border is positioned in the upper right quadrant of the image. Inside this box, the title 'THE SPRAWL' is written in a stylized, blue, blocky font with a slight 3D effect. Below it, the words 'NOVEMBER' and 'METRIC' are written in a large, bold, white sans-serif font, with a blue outline. At the bottom right of the box, the author's name 'HAMISH CAMERON' is written in a smaller, pink, sans-serif font.

THE SPRAWL

NOVEMBER METRIC

HAMISH CAMERON

THE SPRAWL: NOVEMBER METRIC

A SETTINGS EXPANSION

ARDENS LUDERE



The Sprawl: November Metric v1.0

Writing // Hamish Cameron, Kira Magrann, Morgan Davie, Benjamin Kouppi,
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My thanks to the Kickstarter Backers

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WELCOME TO YOUR NEW SPRAWL

Cyberpunk is rooted in places and locations. Gibson's BAMA sprawl, Effinger's Budayeen, the Los Angeles' of *Blade Runner*, *Elysium* or *Snow Crash*, *Ghost in the Shell*'s New Port City, and "The City" of Spider Jerusalem all evoke specific and varied visions of a dystopian future urban sprawl. These protagonists leave their sprawls to accentuate the contrast between those dirty high density environments and the wider world. Sometimes that world beyond is space of refuge from the pressures and dangers of the sprawl, sometimes it is a utopian vision of an alternative "natural" world, sometimes it is a bleak and unforgiving extension of the same dangers, home to alternative sprawls—static, mobile, orbital, digital. Is the sprawl a place to be avoided if possible, a hostile aberration in a natural world, or is it a place to be, a high-tech space of action and excitement?


Cyberpunk sprawls always exist in relation to other sprawls. The cyberpunk world is a global world, united by the political maneuvers of corporations, governments, organizations and ultra-wealthy individuals. Most of the inhabitants of these sprawls live relatively static lives, embedded in the tapestry of their neighbourhoods, but corporate and freelance operatives go where the money is, where the jobs are, where the action is. Global communications networks make intercontinental communication trivial. Sub-orbital flights make intercontinental travel fast.

Your sprawl is an important character in your game. *The Sprawl* isn't just a reference to Gibson, it's a pointer towards the importance of place in your game. When you dream cyberpunk dreams in preparation to play *The Sprawl* (as an MC or as a player), think about places and spaces, not just as spaces of action or cool genre-reinforcing visuals, but for how they reflect or contrast the themes of your game and your character(s).

In assembling a team of sprawls, I wanted new visions of new places. In assembling a team of writers, I wanted new perspectives from new creators. The twelve settings in this volume take the inequalities and tensions of the present and extrapolate them to imagine a dystopian cyberpunk future of oppression and resistance. The nine authors (from France, New Zealand, Canada, Korea, as well as the United States) showcase something of the global flavour of cyberpunk. Writers from four continents writing about places on five continents (and one ocean). I'll do better next time.

I did not apply a universal format or length to the chapters, nor did I mandate any overarching thematic considerations. I wanted the writers to give me their vision of a cyberpunk future in a place they knew well. If this results in a jarring experience for you, dear reader, as you transition between styles, language, format and typographical conventions, then you will have experienced something of the cultural dissonance of a global cyberpunk world. Mission accomplished.

Time to **get paid**.



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TANGAROA ARCOLOGICAL ISLANDS

CONTINUE? [Y/N]

////LOCATION.DETECTED////

LAT: 12.514983

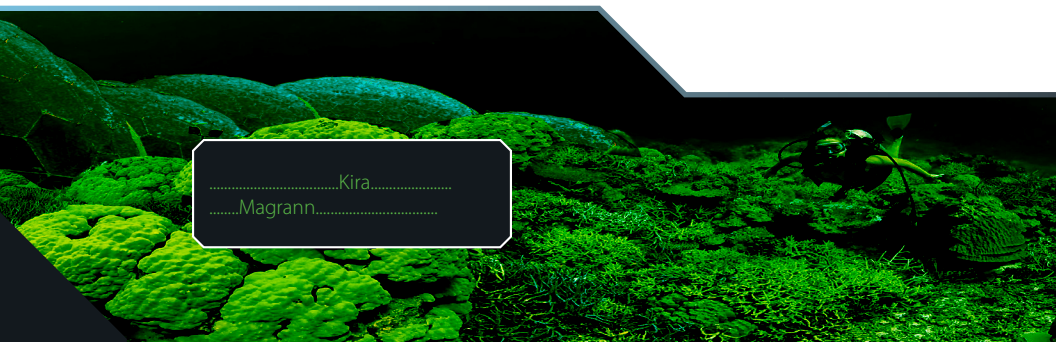
LONG: -136.071513

Z: -34.7

TANGAROA ARCOLOGICAL ISLANDS

Out in the vast Pacific, located roughly between Polynesia and the US, is the Tangaroa Arcology. A collaboration between eccentric Seattle biotech magnate Eric Reed and brilliant New Zealand architect Mahina Sheppard, the Tangaroa is the first city to live on the water. The Arcology began simply as just one geodesic dome, but over time its structure grew to become a series of interconnected island domes that sprawl out to nearly the size of Japan. The unique multicultural diversity of the islands, paired with visionary scientists and artists, make the Tangaroa a hub for new biological and culturally relevant technologies. Consisting of inhabitants like bioengineers, medical researchers, architects, financial opportunists, marine biologists, tourists, and musicians, the Tangaroa Arcological Islands have become more than just an ocean experiment; they're a technological wonder and a radical way of life. The people who live here feel drawn to the sea in ways their land dwelling brethren cannot comprehend. The Tangaroans are connected to the sea in both physical and insubstantial ways.

The Arcology itself is now nearly a century old. Its main generator, Leviathan, runs on ocean thermal energy conversion (OTEC) to derive energy from the ocean's perpetual motion. The technology is famous for providing abundant pollution-free energy. Fresh water is available from desalination tanks that populate the vast city. Leviathan, designed and constructed by the legendary Eric Reed himself, is also an Artificial Intelligence that acts on Tangaroa's best interests for survival and growth. About ten years after its construction, new domes began popping up constructed of the same coral based nanobiometal the original dome was made out of. Not long after these domes started appearing, Reed disappeared, leaving the city's top scientists to speculate about where the domes came from. Many presume it is Leviathan, modifying the Island for optimal water intake. New domes pop up every few months. Marine life, especially whales, dolphins, and octopi, are all particularly drawn to Leviathan, and, although the science can't parse it, their behavior indicates communication with the AI. Local legend tells it that those who listen carefully to Leviathan can hear it whisper all the secrets of the sea in warm watery hums and that Reed himself can sometimes be seen sadly gazing into the machine.



Tangaroan culture is centered mainly on two things: music and biomedicine. Discoveries of the valuable mineral E35 mined from the ocean floor beneath the Arcology and breakthroughs in biotechnology with the aid of local marine life DNA made the city attractive to investors and transhumanists. The acoustic mysteries of the ocean have been heavily researched and help shape the cultural flair and living conditions on the arcology.

Many of the residents modify their bodies in extreme ways to live on and near the water. Some become much like the plant and wildlife around them: the Sirens who install sonic implants to manipulate sound waves, the Merbeasts who are neither human nor fish, the Fluorescent tribes who explore the deepest and darkest of the ocean floor. Their tech allows them to interact with the sea life in ways not previously imagined, and working with these plants, animals, and organisms is often one of their goals. Some are more ethical in their methods than others regarding these interactions, and many transhumanist and sea life activist groups have sprung up in Tangaroa. Binary gender is a rather outdated conceit here amidst these oceanic transhumanist tribes. All sorts of expressions and sexualities exist, inspired by the decorations and parts that adorn all of these new radical subspecies of humans.

Music is extraordinarily important to the various oceanic cultures of the Arcology. The architecture was purposefully constructed to enhance acoustics, much like the ancient Aztec pyramids. One of the founding architects, Mahina Sheppard, had a famous obsession with discovering the perfect chord, a research which became fanatical. Many of the original corridors, spaces, rooms, and expanses in the arcology were designed with an acoustic intention. The true intent of these acoustics, however, is now lost, along with many years of her research, in a damaging fire that occurred in the thirty-third year of its construction.

There are some, trying to follow in Mahina's path, who research the particular acoustics of the structure. They call themselves Sheppards and have a fair sized cult following. Others have flourished creating sound technology of various sorts, using it to communicate with dolphins, whales, and some plant life. Using sound waves to levitate and move objects was first pioneered here on the arcology and the hottest

new Levitek always comes out here first. Small modifications like external lung flutes (to hold and take in more air) and advanced ultrasound healing technology have both been developed heavily in the past few years. Exploration of the seafloor has led to previously undiscovered minerals (E35) being mined and utilized in biochemical weapons, mostly on the mainland. Shipping vessels to and from the Island are often attacked by pirates looking to cash in on the newest tech; expansive defensive systems, including water mechs and well trained security officers, are often on patrol.

Youth and music culture is big as well and circles around three things: drugs, music, and body modification. The Island is a mecca for musicians and they flock here to succeed and fail at becoming global sensations. Some just lose themselves in the scene. The Island has an odd cultural currency, revolving around the exchange of new sounds, or the hottest sounds, for whatever goods are needed (food, clothing, a place to sleep) and groups form tribally with their own particular styles and subcultures. Many are inspired by their surroundings, choosing oceanic themes and colors to represent their little enclaves, and they all live together in the small domes that are about the size of villages. Multicultural in the extreme, people are drawn to a tribe not because of their DNA or their history, but rather on how they feel about life, the way they'd like to look, and the types of sounds they'd like to make. Tribes all have elaborate induction rituals, partially to ensure loyalty, but also to test people's tastes and make sure they truly belong before committing to often extreme lifestyle shifts.



Drugs are biological and chemical, coming from toxins in pufferfish and jellyfish, mixed with hallucinogens found in various sea urchins and the rare glowing eels of the far depths. To capture a giant glowing eel is a ritual in-of-itself, illegal, for they're so rare, but they're supposed to have the best juice for your high. Some chemical concoctions involving the E35 mineral are dangerous uppers, something like a combination of Meth, PCP, and LSD. There are also rumors of military testing inside the arcology to use E35 for super soldiers.

Tangaroa is not without strife. Its biggest concerns are from outside forces: companies and pirates from the mainland and nearby islands who want to infiltrate and steal its innovative tech, ideas, and resources. Corporate espionage is quite common, especially on the megalithic Reed Inc., which is the prevailing biomedical and tech corp on the Arcology. Lots of local startups aren't above a little sabotage, either. Because of this, passage and boundaries between domes and spaces on the Tangaroa are heavily passcoded. All inhabitants have passcodes genetically bonded with their DNA, and passage into different areas requires both tribal rites and corporate permissions. Breaking those DNA codes requires epic levels of biohacking, but it has been known to occur from time to time. Security is mostly insured by these measures, but there are security teams who keep certain properties and areas safe as well.

The trading economy of the island does attempt to maintain a bit of balance internally. At a certain level, the Tangaroa Arcology is one large co-op; everyone has an investment in protecting the concepts and technologies that are created here. It creates a unique bond amongst the Tangaroans that reaches beyond their love of the ocean.

BIO

Kira Magrann is an artist, game designer, and queer feminist cyborg living in Columbus, Ohio. Her influences include Aubrey Beardsley, Anaïs Nin, and Masamune Shirow, and she has a particular love of cyberpunk and Victoriana. The roleplaying games she's created are *Crash Into You*, *Strict Machine*, *Game of Thrones* (Play the Cards), and *Twilight Dames* (a Fate Core hack). She's also contributed to the Fate Cortex, Game Chef, and Annalise. She is a co-organizer of Indie Games on Demand at Origins and Gen Con, and contributor to the *Ennie* award winning international feminist blog *Gaming as Women*. You can find her jewelry at *Anima Metals* on Etsy.

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LONG DARK CLOUD

CONTINUE? [Y/N]

////ACCESSPOINT.ACQUIRED////
SECURITY: [NOT VISIBLE]
AWAITING SIGNAL...

LONG DARK CLOUD

LOADING...

This chapter presents Aotearoa New Zealand as a featured setting for a mission or two away from the team's home base. The Kiwi stereotype dial is turned all the way up—if your characters stick around long-term, you'll want to add some nuance!

Please note the depiction of Māori social prominence is not reflective of current inequalities. In this fictional future, Māori activists have had some success in moving New Zealand society closer to a bicultural ideal.

AOTEAROA NEW ZEALAND

"The Land of the Long White Cloud" consists of two large islands, North and South, deep on the southern curve of the Pacific Ocean. In the 20th century it was the world's kid brother, desperate for attention. For a brief moment it got its wish, shining brightly as a sparky overachiever with a clean, green environment. But the dream didn't last. Multinational corporations hollowed out everything they touched and the environment was a mess. What future now?

WHY ARE YOU HERE?

The Sprawl is a game of intense, excessive action suited to the high-tech urban density of a gigantic future city. Aotearoa New Zealand is not an obvious fit, but there are good reasons why a *Sprawl* game might land here. Corporations use ANZ as a testing ground, creating opportunities and problems. People use ANZ for escape, as a vacation destination or a hiding place.

Setting a mission in New Zealand gives you a change of pace and some culture clash, as well as some beautiful scenery. Thematically, you might get some juice from ANZ's sad fate, a small independent nation hollowed out by megacorps because it wasn't big or wealthy enough to protect itself.

KIWI CHROME

The grimy chrome future has a unique flavour in Aotearoa New Zealand.



TWO CULTURES

ANZ is a bicultural nation, settled by Māori in the 13th century and white Europeans (Pākehā) in the 19th century. Outsiders perceive a land of intercultural harmony.

- » Make every NPC use *te reo Māori*, even if it's just *kia ora* (hello, but also thank you, goodbye, cheers...)
- » Give every third NPC a Māori name, no matter their social status.
 - Māori know how to walk in the Pākehā world, so you don't need to make Māori NPCs act a special way.
 - Break stereotypes. Māori are corrupt corporate raiders, principled environmental activists, and all points in between.
- » When visitors scratch the surface, show lingering inequality and the wounds of colonisation.

LAI D BACK

The locals are never in a hurry. Things are a bit more carefree—or is that careless?

- » Force characters to wait on NPCs. Try the use **up resources** move, and maybe advance a clock if you really want to turn up the pressure.
- » Blunt talk is taken as arrogance.
 - When you speak harsh truth to a local, take +1 forward when you **fast talk** them or **hit the street** with them.
 - However, blunt foreigners earn a bad rep. When the opportunity comes, MCs will put them in a spot or make their lives complicated as a consequence.

NUMBER 8 WIRE

"No worries cuz, I can get that working, there's some chicken wire in the shed that'll do the trick." Locals call it Kiwi ingenuity; outsiders see it as not doing a job properly.

- » When you **hit the street** and go to a local contact to modify or repair gear/vehicles/cyberware, take +1 forward, but the fix will be *+unreliable* unless you choose 1 extra from the 7-9 list.
- » Ingenuity thrives because everything's so damn expensive here. Bump up the cost of cyberware, gear and vehicles by one category in the Fair Prices list.

CORPORATIONS

It's the wrong side of the world but the same corporate names sputter in neon on the high-rises downtown. ANZ is a petri dish: local demographics match much bigger markets elsewhere, so megacorps test things here before going wider. And it's so isolated, who cares if they screw up?

BIOTECHNOLOGY

Some megacorps have local subsidiaries working on the cutting-edge of biotech and using ANZ as a testing ground. Weak government means approvals are easy to come by and disasters aren't too hard to cover up.

- » Test runs of new cyberware types, new materials, new implant processes.
- » Trials of pharmaceuticals, agrichemicals, gene splicing techniques.
- » Minimal oversight, inefficient watchdogs, outright bribery. Hopefully nothing escapes...

CONSUMER GOODS

Last year's hot trends, today! ANZ gets most things laughably late. The exception: stuff that's unstable and being tested here before general release.

- » A/B testing for new products, new advertising tech, new memetic content.
- » Early adopters sending agents to ANZ in search of the latest model of their favourite gear.
- » Young wealthy citizens renting out their autonomic systems for data harvesting as they interact with the consumer environment.

ELECTRONICS

Worker conditions aren't quite brutal enough to make manufacturing cost-effective for the megacorps, but a few small outfits get by making components that don't cost much to ship around the world.

- » Rumours of a backyard innovation might spark a series of Corporation moves as big players try to grab it for themselves and lock out their rivals.

FINANCIAL

ANZ is a favoured stop on the global money laundering circuit. Weak government will do that for you.

- » Anyone trying to follow a money trail will probably pass through ANZ somewhere along the track.

- » Ridiculous amounts of money pass through little anonymous offices on the edge of town; the people who work there are always targets.

GOVERNMENT

Times are rough and the Government is hungry for table scraps. Grinning ministers meet corporate middlemen right off the plane then bite on deals that verge on humiliating:

- » *Maximise profit:* Pick up tax breaks and trade options, there for the taking.
- » *Minimise expenses:* ANZ's a cheap place to buy support for your new gene therapy, and then you can tell every other country to follow their example.
- » *Deny responsibility:* Set up a public-private partnership for your new chemical tests to improve agricultural productivity. When you poison the whole province, let the government eat the bad press.
- » *Suppress dissent:* Will protest be a problem at your new plant on reserve land? Get the government to declare an exclusion zone: problem solved!

HEAVY INDUSTRY

In this fucking backwater? You must be joking.

ILLEGAL

ANZ's gangs are not illegal, and much of their activity is not criminal. However, the criminal world of ANZ is dominated by the gangs. Gangs give people a place in an uncaring world, so they are bigger than ever in the harsh era of the Sprawl.

- » Gangs are founded on violence and strength. They typically resemble American motorcycle gangs more than urban street gangs.
- » Government has walked away from supporting the needy, and the gangs have stepped in. Whole communities rely on gangs for food, shelter and more.
- » Most gangs make money through illegal narcotics. Some gangs are principled about which drugs they will deal with and who they sell to, while others will happily sell the most dangerous chemicals to the most vulnerable people.
- » Importing drugs is difficult, so drug manufacture is an important part of the underworld. There are chemical labs and growing operations scattered all over the countryside.
- » Climb up the pyramid and you land in the usual mess of international syndicates-mafia, cartels, triads-all of whom rotate heavy-hitters through the country to make sure their interests are being looked after.
- » Almost every gang has embraced cyberware, but some see it as an unhealthy or weak choice.

MEDIA

ANZ media is run by the same megacorps who control media everywhere else. The digital weather presenters have a local accent, at least.

MATRIX & TELECOMMUNICATIONS

Comms infrastructure in Aotearoa New Zealand runs in cycles—for a glorious year or two the nation will have the fastest and sharpest systems you'd find anywhere in the world. Then for a decade ANZ's infrastructure decays while everywhere else moves past it. Eventually this becomes intolerable and a new system is installed; rinse and repeat.

- » Unless new comms tech is going to play into a mission, then assume the rot has set in—every connection is *+substandard*, and tech people can't shut up about how frustrated they are.

MILITARY

The government purchases military services from global contractors who, in turn, recruit heavily throughout the country, offering a chance to see the world.

- » Mercenaries with difficult records might get shuffled out here for an easy retirement, away from trouble and prying eyes. They could be Contacts or targets for missions.

Despite its small size, ANZ has a thriving industry designing and building components for military technology. There's always money in the arms trade, and lots of tiny factories chase that cash.

- » Backyard weapons experts might be useful Contacts.
- » Sometimes these small players get caught up in scams or swindles that burn Corporations for big money. Teams might be hired to look into a deal or to track down the con artist responsible.

PRIMARY RESOURCES

Extracting energy and material from the natural world is the biggest industry in the country. There is serious money to be made innovating in this category.

- » Corporations will hire teams to steal the world-first solutions being secretly tested here.
- » ANZ rolls over for most corporate exploitation, but environmental damage can provoke protests and backlash. Corporations will hire teams to solve these problems before they start.

TRANSPORTATION

ANZ is a centre of innovation for anything on the water.

- » If it floats, a local design shop had a hand in its creation.
- » Apart from that, it's a transport wasteland.

WHERE TO GO

THE BIG CITY: GREATER AUCKLAND

Auckland is the only city large enough to feel like home to a Sprawl native. The population is 3 million, spread widely over a huge urban area, with only a few areas of high-density settlement.

- » The geography features hills and water (two big harbours and many small beaches).
- » The inner city is busy with suited salarymen fresh off merger deals, entrepreneurial chancers peddling skillchips, seedy nightcrawlers boiling opiates out of hotwired maker machines, and malfunctioning holo-fields advertising cyber-upgrades for sex and security. It's a fusion city: Western style shot through with Asian influence.
- » There's money on the water—the fanciest superyachts in the world stop in to Port Auckland—and the nightlife by the marina is home to high-rollers.
- » The suburbs go on and on, broken up by desolate strip malls and industrial parks full of anonymous factories. Poor white communities, and poorer Pasifika communities, hustle for opportunities.
- » On the north shore, across the giant harbour bridge, the wealthy make their homes in little mansions with walls and security teams.



THE TOURIST ARCHIPELAGO

Even through mirrorshades, mountains are beautiful. Everyone with cash has ANZ on their bucket list, and some of them even make it there to stay in luxurious resorts and breathe crisp, unfiltered air.

- » Holidaying Corporate personnel are easy marks for missions. When they have their guard down, a team might touch them for extraction or persuasion.
- » Many Corporate expeditions mix business with pleasure—holding secret meetings, checking out local innovations, and generally making sure they can claim the trip as a tax write-off. And whenever there is work, there are enemies who will pay a Team to mess it up.

ANZ trades on its rustic technology-free image, but don't believe it for a second.

- » The tourist archipelago is the only place in ANZ with top-notch world-quality gear. Nothing *+unreliable* is tolerated here.
- » Everywhere in the tourist archipelago is connected. Even at the top of a dangerous mountain, the matrix is all around you.
- » Cyberware is commonplace among tourist staff, but it is almost always *+discreet*.

Missions into the tourist archipelago will encounter:

- » Luxury resorts with ruthless cyberware-enhanced guards.
- » Cringeworthy cultural performances by jaded locals.
- » Hot pools, mud pools, therapeutic spas in elaborate complexes run through matrix systems.
- » Deer hunting trips using helicopters/VTOL craft, satellite tracking systems and extreme-range rifles with complimentary skillwires.
- » Bungee jumping and whitewater rafting, pure adrenaline exercises often enhanced with legally-available synaptic stimulators.
- » Mountain climbs, especially favoured by those with muscle grafts or cyberarms or legs.
- » Skiing and snowboarding, with skillchips readily available for purchase.
- » Film location tours, usually cash grabs and sometimes overloaded with unlicensed augmented reality distractions.
- » Wine tours, which are stubbornly low-fi. Wine hasn't changed much.

Most NZ locals are ready to kneel before big-money tourism, but there is always the potential for backlash. Wise tourist operations prepare for violence from opportunistic thugs or self-styled resistance movements. Lethal force may not be preferred in such clashes, but it is more than tolerated.

EVERYWHERE ELSE

To a Sprawl team, the rest of the country is just a whole mess of places to hide. Targets might hope to disappear into a surveillance-free wilderness, but, in the Sprawl future, nowhere is off the grid.

Even out here the Sprawl Principles apply, in particular *Chrome everything, then make it dirty* and *Make everything Corporate*. There's no escape from the Sprawl.

- » **Farmland:** That ancient milking shed has shit-stained sensors grabbing biodata for stock management. If you so much as pass the door, your biosignature will register on a half dozen databases all over the world. (And you can mess with farms all over the country if you login to the right Production Control System.)
- » **Dead ground:** Plenty of land burned out in the last couple decades (the Dark Cloud helped with that). You can creep among the squatter tents and petty mineral farmers for a while, but there's nowhere to hide from the satellites mapping population movements in the wastelands.
- » **Forestry:** Forestry workers use the latest hardware and the best chemical enhancers for their exhausting shifts. Workplace safety is appalling, and too many workers have a steel arm and a debt to the company.
- » **National parks:** ANZ fugitives have a long history of "going bush", disappearing into lush forests, steep hills and foreboding mountains. That doesn't work so well these days, as drones regularly sweep the wilderness tracking hikers and small predators, like possums, stoats and domestic cats.
- » **Mining sites:** A really determined fugitive might hide out in an exhausted mine. Tunnels might provide cover from satellites and security. Dead mines are everywhere, especially in the more expendable national parks.
- » **Boutique cities:** The country has a solid half-dozen of these, parochial little villages that think they count as cities because some genius built a stadium there. Every one is so tiny you'll run out of strangers in a week - the guy at the laundromat who gave you bloodstain-removal tips will turn out to be a cousin of the girl selling overclocked skillchips. Each claims a different style - art city, food city, garden city—but they're all too small for comfort.
- » **Struggling towns:** Stunted cities are miserable, but small towns are soul-destroying. Full of bereft elderly and murdered industry, they cling to life long after their purpose has expired. Don't bother trying to hide here—the locals have nothing to do but watch strangers—and every service in town was contracted to a megacorp decades ago.
- » **Beaches:** The islands of Aotearoa New Zealand have a lot of beaches, and most of them are windswept and underused. A good many of them are very dangerous. There are a lot of holiday homes at the beach, many of them tumbledown shacks that have been in families for generations, but of course there are plenty of incredibly well-appointed getaway spots for the wealthy few. Fancy security systems aren't the trend at these places, so a fugitive who picks his targets might live in great comfort for quite some time.

GROUP THREAT: DEAD HOUSE

Dead House is a prominent mixed-ethnic gang with several chapters in the Auckland sprawl and a bunch more throughout the rest of the country. Their black leather jackets are marked with skull and coffin, and they take a dim view of anyone else wearing a skull.

IN THE SPRAWL

Gang chapters hole up in large, fortified houses in poorer suburbs or on the edge of industrial zones. Their influence is felt throughout the neighbourhood, with kids eager to prospect for the gang and no-one willing to talk to law enforcement. People from all walks of life hit them up for the latest product.

IN THE TOURIST ARCHIPELAGO

Gang members are never welcome here, but they regularly make deliveries to the service entrance of even the most luxurious resorts.

IN THE REST OF THE COUNTRY

Gang chapters set up in prominent houses in small, troubled towns and roam for miles in motorcycles and beat-up cars. They become something like rebel heroes to the locals, keeping trouble at bay and helping out those who need help. As a result, the locals are ready to cut them some slack and overlook their indiscretions.

ILLCIT WIRES

Dead House mostly avoid the illegal narcotics trade, instead making their money from wires smuggled in from Asia. This includes chips that simulate narcotics through electric stimulation, chips with contraband skills encoded, and chips that provide acid-type trip experiences. Most recently, they have been circulating so-called ghost chips, which hand over a person's body entirely to a "ghost" which directs their movement and behaviour. These are wildly popular among young risk-takers and people who feel they have been shut out of their own country. However, this tech is extremely untested and potentially highly dangerous.

CYBERWARE

No other gang has embraced cyberware as thoroughly as Dead House. They regularly import restricted materials from Asia; part of becoming a full "patched" member of Dead House is going under the knife for the standard loadout.

Dead House regularly make deals with megacorps and smaller operators, performing jobs for them in return for access to new cyberware or distribution channels. They might become a danger to a Sprawl team after being directed by an employer, or they might just get angry when the team messes up one of their operations by accident. Either way, when you get on the Dead House's enemy list, it is costly to get yourself off it again.

TYPICAL DEAD HOUSE MEMBER

A typical Dead House loadout is muscle grafts and reinforced fists (3-harm hand implant), pain dampeners and adrenal coils (1-armour), and pheromonal readers

woven into the olfactory system that help them direct their intimidation where it will be most effective. Scattered through the gang are countless skill wires, and many members have cyber-links to motorcycles, cyber eyes and cyber ears. Communications are very rare, however—most Dead House members stay off the comms grid where they can.

QUESTIONS

- » What do the gang do to win support in their community?
- » Which megacorp is the gang's primary sponsor?
- » Who in government is working to protect the gang and why?
- » What supernatural beliefs do the gang have about the ghost wires?

THREAT CLOCK

- 1500 The gang notice the team's existence.
- 1800 The gang spread word of the team throughout their chapters.
- 2100 The gang pressure community leaders to intervene on their behalf.
- 2200 The gang puts out a reward notice to every other ANZ gang.
- 2300 The gang devotes itself to hunting down the team.
- 0000 The gang hijacks every ghost wire to make users kill the team.

HEADLINE THREAT: THE DARK CLOUD

In the sky above Aotearoa New Zealand, countless molecule-sized robots swarm. If you look up you might see them, ribbons of shadow dancing through the clouds. And sometimes they gather, shrouding whole regions in darkness, making the wind and rain deadly and turning farmland into waste ground.

Corporations use Aotearoa New Zealand as a petri dish, but sometimes things go wrong. This was one of those times. A revolutionary new technology to clean the atmosphere did not work as planned. The corporation responsible dissolved its shell company and left the government partner to carry the can. Now it's a danger that no-one knows how to fix, a nightmare with no end in sight.

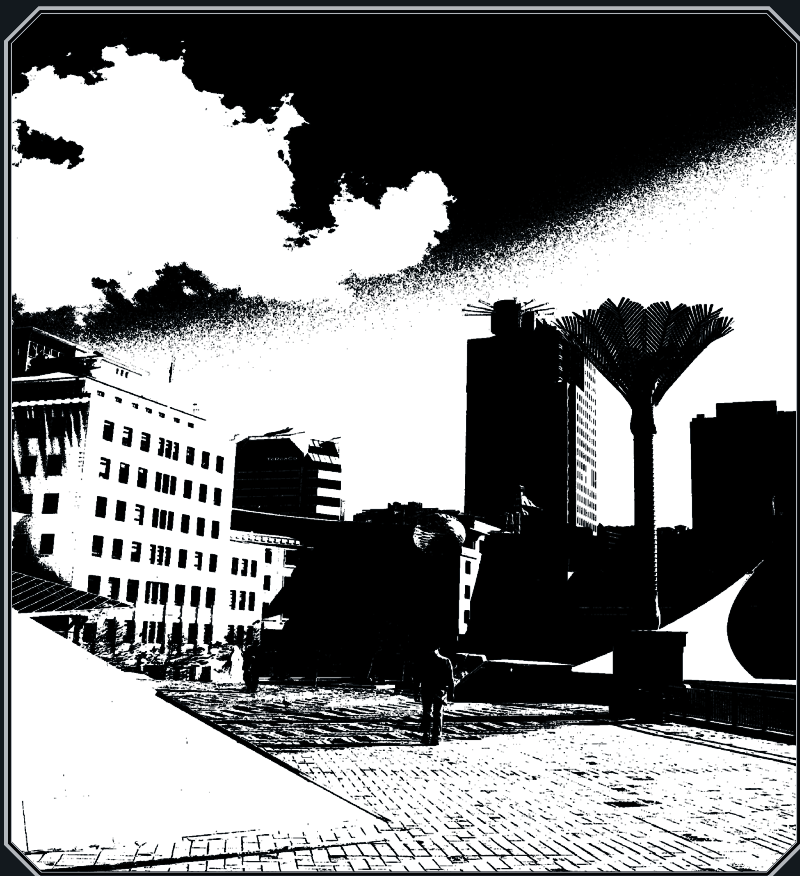
There seems to be no logic to the cloud's behaviour. Its goal is to impoverish, but it also exposes fault lines in the society below as people argue about how to deal with it, evade responsibility, and leave victims of its capricious strikes to suffer.

QUESTIONS

- » What, if anything, controls the cloud?
- » Why does it stay here instead of spreading around the globe?
- » What secret has never been revealed about its creation?

THREAT CLOCK

- 1500 Ribbons appear regularly all over the country.
- 1800 Cloud density begins to increase, overloading sensor instruments.
- 2100 The Cloud becomes much more active, damaging locations every week.
- 2200 The Cloud damages locations almost every day.
- 2300 The Cloud multiplies and affects several locations.
- 0000 The Cloud breaks the weather irretrievably, wrecking the country.



MISSION: SHEDWORK

OVERVIEW

A pharmaceutical corporation has discovered that a rival is preparing to launch a copycat for the company's most valuable product. The copycat is being synthesised from a stolen molecular sample, and the team are hired to recover this asset before the rivals get the recipe perfect. The trail leads to a missing Auckland chemist.

PEOPLE

Daniel Rakena is a nervy, argumentative chemist at Harakeke Labs, working in agrochemical development on a new wave of fertiliser treatments. He is supposedly away from work for a *tangi*, a funeral ceremony which can last up to a week. In reality, there is no tangi; Rakena has disappeared into the wilderness.

Channing Eddison blackmailed Rakena into synthesising the copycat drug in his backyard shed. An early version won her a provisional contract, but now she wants Rakena to deliver a stable product. Instead, he has disappeared and taken the source sample with him. She is not happy, and the client has promised help in hunting him down. If he will not cooperate, she still has time to kill him and get some other chemist to finish the work to fulfill her side of the deal.

QUESTIONS

- » Why is Rakena running away?
- » What experience does he have with living wild?
- » What else could the sample be used to create?
- » Where has he run to, and who did he tell?

LEGWORK CLOCK

- 1500 Eddison hasn't heard about the team.
- 1800 Eddison hears vague rumours.
- 2100 Eddison hears clear rumours of the team. The action clock starts at 1500.
- 2200 Eddison's crew have sighted the team. The action clock starts at 1800.
- 2300 Eddison's crew have observed the team. The action clock starts at 2100.
- 0000 Eddison has ID'd the team. Advance Eddison's employer's Corporate clock.

ACTION CLOCK

- 1500 The Corporation supplies a small hunter squad of three armed professionals.
- 1800 The hunter squad is on edge and preparing for interference.
- 2100 The hunter squad is assigned a full-time matrix support staff.
- 2200 The hunter squad is doubled in size.
- 2300 The Corporation purchases full cooperation from local law enforcement.
- 0000 The Corporation purchases full support from local military providers.

MISSION DIRECTIVES

- » When you accept the job, mark experience.
- » When you determine where Rakena has run to, mark experience.

- » When you recover the sample, mark experience.
- » When the mission ends, mark two experience.

MISSION: A RICH MAN'S GAME

OVERVIEW

The America's Cup is the oldest competitive trophy in the world. Two yachts enter a series of races for the prestigious Auld Mug. The team is hired to ensure the Cup doesn't stay in Aotearoa New Zealand.

PEOPLE

Mr Conner is a short, self-assured man who will meet the team down on the docks. He claims to represent a group who want Gove Petersen's challenge to succeed and gently encourages the team to imagine this is part of some very complicated board-room scheming. The truth is simpler: Petersen himself is the employer.

Gove Petersen is an incredibly wealthy narcissist from [sponsor Corporation]. He is determined to win back the Cup in this challenge, and he uses Corporation resources to hire the team through his intermediary, Mr Conner.

Arama Waring is the experienced leader of Team Aotearoa. She is skilled on the water and smart about design and technology. Her down-to-earth style has won her great loyalty, and she is ready to defend the Cup.

Grace Pickering is the head of security for the challenge, working for [threat Corporation]. She will kill to make sure this event goes off beautifully and cleanly. She is widely admired as a high-functioning psychopath and is quite frankly overqualified for this job. She will give the team a run for their money.

QUESTIONS

- » What design advance are Team Aotearoa hiding?
- » What is Arama Waring's bad habit?
- » Who in her crew is a weak link, and why?
- » Where does Team Aotearoa's money come from?

LEGWORK CLOCK

- 1500 Security hasn't heard about the team.
- 1800 Security hears vague rumours.
- 2100 Security hears clear rumours of the team. The action clock starts at 1500.
- 2200 Security has sighted the team. The action clock starts at 1800.
- 2300 Security has observed the team. The action clock starts at 2100.
- 0000 Security has confirmed the team's identity. Advance the Corporate clock.

ACTION CLOCK

- 1500 Security is on alert. Additional security is placed around both yachts.
- 1800 Additional security is placed around all race facilities.
- 2100 Pickering dispatches a squad to hunt down the team.
- 2200 Pickering takes personal charge of hunting down the team.
- 2300 Pickering issues a kill order on all members of the team.
- 0000 Pickering makes taking down the team a personal obsession.

MISSION DIRECTIVES

- » When you accept the job, mark experience.
- » When you determine how to turn the challenge in Petersen's favour, mark experience.
- » When Petersen secures the trophy, mark experience.
- » When the mission ends, mark two experience.

RUNNING THE MISSION

This is a relatively light-hearted mission, although Pickering is genuinely dangerous and things could get very nasty if the team aren't careful.

There are innumerable ways teams could go about this mission, so ask a lot of questions and use the answers.

NAMES

Waimarie Insights Ltd (consumer goods), Koiora Forever (biotech), Awa Hangarau (communications), Mana Power (primary industry), Mahi Moana Designs (water transport), Tū (military contracting).

Sometimes Pākehā-dominated corporations thoughtlessly grab a vaguely relevant Māori word out of the dictionary and the results can make Māori speakers wince.

Māori first names: (f) Anahera, Hine, Marama, Ngaire, Pania; (m) Anaru, Mikaere, Rawiri, Tamati, Tane

Māori family names: Henare, Ngata, Te Rangi, Tipene, Winitana

English/Irish/Scottish names are common for both Pākehā and non-Pākehā.

BIO

Morgan Davie is a Pākehā New Zealander who writes for tabletop and digital games, most recently the *Doctor Who RPG* from Cubicle Seven and the *Shadow Wars* mobile game from Pikipok.



>>>>.location.>>>>00003>>>>>>>>

BRUXELLES, MA BELLE

CONTINUE? [Y/N]

////TARGETS.LOCATED////
STATUS: [CONTRACTUALS]
MISSION: [DISMISS]

BRUXELLES, MA BELLE

LOADING...

Stuck in the warzone between Walloon and Flanders, the capital city of the European Federation is a beacon for hundreds of thousands of war refugees.

Alas, Paradise City isn't free. It isn't even cheap.

Access granted by Federal Immigration Authorities comes with a cost you may not be willing to pay: improper jobs for respectable bloodthirsty Lobbies and a life under the pressure of a suffocating perfection.

BRUSSELS MC AGENDA

"They mark the end of an era, the era of large, visible machines"

Leo Carax, *Holy Motors*

- » Brussels is perfect, silent, clean and healthy. Make it unbearably cold and impersonal.
- » Technology is omnipresent, but visible technology is shameful. Miniaturize it, hide it, then show how it's hidden.
- » Brussels is complex and appearances are deceiving. Use umbrella or blanket organisations, stooges and sockpuppets.
- » Brussels is under the control of a strong legislature. Every product or service must abide by a standard or a certification mark. Pull laws over to the edge of absurdity, use legal obstacles and give opportunities to use cunning legal ways to solve problems.





.....Benjamin.....
.....Kouppi.....

AN OVERVIEW OF PARADISE

"A day will come when we shall see ... the United States of America and the United States of Europe face to face, reaching out for each other across the seas."

Victor Hugo, International Peace Congress, Paris, 1849

The dream came true. Decaying European states not only left most of their powers to megacorps, but also burst into a mosaic of independent regions and conurbations seeking a protection they found in the European Federation. As capital city of the newly proclaimed superstate, Brussels entered a golden age. The jewel of the Federation presently rules over the whole continent, from the over-industrialized shores of the Atlantic to the wastelands of Siberia. Whereas other sprawls are ruined by social issues, Brussels proudly displays its prosperity and figures as a model, as it highly values cultural inheritances in a barbaric era. In fact, federal authorities value them so much they are ready to put all remaining signs of the past centuries under glass, even entire districts with thousands of people living in them.

Brussels is then a two-faced city. On one side, it is the city of Federal Institutions and Lobbies, the City of Power and Law. On the other side, it is the city of cryogenized Culture. Federal authorities and euro-citizens are ready to use overwhelming pressure to keep this double model safe. The present context may lead them to use even more destructive means. Indeed, the long-lasting antagonism between French and Flemish speakers has torn apart Belgium. As a cosmopolitan zone, Brussels is safe for now, but the crowd of war refugees asking for protection is increasing quickly and the rumours of war are getting closer every day.

ACCESS GRANTED

To live in Paradise, you either paid the price or sold yourself. So, let me ask you a question: how did you enter Brussels?

- 🔌 You are sponsored by a lobby. Name it; you're owned. You have RFID implants under your skin and get unlimited access to all zones of Brussels.
- 🔌 You've got a "contractual" licence. How did you get it? Pay 2 creds now and 1 each session. Open an Inquiry Clock. Each time you don't pay, advance it.
- 🔌 You have false or stolen federal citizen RFID chip implants and genetic materials. They grant you unlimited access to all zones of Brussels. First, relate how you got it and open an Inquiry Clock: federal authorities are on your tail. Then, write down a new move on your character sheet:

INQUIRY CLOCK

- 1500 Send a formal warning
- 1800 Open a "dossier", put under cyber-surveillance (drones, matrix)
- 2100 Gather evidence
- 2200 Conduct a formal or informal interrogation
- 2300 Deliver an arrest warrant, send bounty hunters
- 0000 Track down the trespasser, and banish them forever; if not possible, dismiss them

False Chip: When you enter an official building, roll Synth.

10+: federal authorities leave you alone

7-9: choose one:

- they check your identity
- security asks you to leave
- you attract the attention of a lobby (advance a relevant Mission or Lobby Clock)
- you have to corrupt or kill someone

6-: advance Inquiry Clock.

- 🔌 Congratulations, dear asylum-seeker, you successfully passed the GenAPhyMen test! Your Genetic, Aesthetic, Physical and Mental abilities have been proven superior. You're considered *pure* and therefore an honourable federal citizen and a valuable resource for the City. First, relate your civil war suffering and explain how you've managed to pass the test, then open the War Refugee Clock. Now, there is some good news and some bad news. The good news is you get one extra credit for each successful mission. The bad news is you

gave the Humanitarians a lot of genetic material. You are easy to track: when the MC would first advance the Legwork clock as a result of a miss, advance it twice instead and expect a surprise.

- 🔌 You're a native of Old Brussels. You are part of the living museum and your life could be very comfortable as you are provided with organic-certified food, A-rank lodging and 60-70's fashioned clothings (gabardines, tie-dye or collarless shirts, pea coats, maxi and miniskirts, strange belts and necklaces). Why aren't you satisfied? You're even paid for it! You just have a few public obligations: you drink beer, eat fries, talk with a strong accent, practice your *zwanze* (the traditional popular rhetorical speech), and discuss imaginary political matters in bars when tourists or federal citizens come in. Choose a registered entertainment association and open the Coming Uprising Clock. At the beginning of each session, get one cred. As part of the museum, you are not allowed to possess any visible cyberware. Choose the +*discreet* tag if you can. If not, choose another cyberware, hide it or make it look vintage. You have limited access to other zones. Each time you request an access, roll Edge.

10+: choose 4

7-9: choose 2

- You'll have enough time to do your deeds
- You get your access immediately
- Federal Authorities doesn't ask any questions
- It doesn't attract attention
- Your Registered Entertainment Association doesn't give you a task to perform at this time

REGISTERED ENTERTAINMENT ASSOCIATIONS

Au Dolle Mol (tourist subtitle: *Blind Mole Café*): This bar used to be the headquarters of Belgian anarchists during the seventies. Your job consists of drinking a lot while reading newspapers about crimes that didn't happen, talking about a fictive revolution, discussing Marxist theories with phantasmagorical leftist groups and organising colourful political demonstrations.

Zwanze! (tourist subtitle: *Just for Laughs*): Since the traditional rhetorical speech and the brusseleir have been inscribed on the World Heritage List, you have to organise street performances, perform satirical theatre pieces against figures of the past, promote new beers, make silly jokes and throw non-organic herrings at tourists.

Saint Verhaegen Corporation (tourist subtitles: *Free University Festival*): You have to act like a turbulent student (within 80db limit), participate in weekly banquets and rituals and organise carnivals, laughing about people no one remembers.

WELCOME TO BRUSSELS

As you're one of us now, let me introduce you to the different districts of Brussels. The power balance is fragile; Paradise may collapse quickly. Each district has a Threat Clock, add more of your own and use them to design missions.

UNDER THE DOME: FEDERAL ZONE

There is no place in the world like the Federal Zone. Architectural lines are firm, clear and simple, like in an Hergé ligne claire drawing. Thanks to the almost invisible Federal Dome, air is fresh and water is crystal pure. No disgraceful machinery disrupts the delightful silence; no ugly overchromed bodyguard spoils the perfect harmony of the landscape, at least at first sight. In fact, discreet implants, disguised devices and bioware replace unwanted cyberware. As an operative, you are expected to be as invisible and effective as modern technology or be condemned to disappear.

Federal Arcologies are rather small but impressive. In compliance with the Dupuis-Moulinsart regulation directive, they are all derived from Franco-Belgian comics. Standardisation may sometimes be boring, but one must admit the floating bubble of Moebius Arcology defies all common physical laws and is a wonder of our time.

FEDERAL AUTHORITIES

"You just violated four federal laws and two sector-specific regulations, please complete the eForm 1-F1398 and pay the subsequent fine within 78 minutes, Brussels time".

Sepkaku-Pro Briefing bot, one second before destruction,
two hours twelve minutes before Captain Cranberry's arrest.

Every single aspect of European life is strictly defined by laws and regulations, with numerous exceptions and loopholes. Whereas in other sprawls nobody cares anymore, law is *the thing* here and Federal Authorities have enough power to enforce them. The Lobbies' job is to make those laws into tools for the various groups they represent, such as megacorp associations, cartels or powerful umbrella organisations. Law is the result of a tireless struggle between antagonistic interests. As the Parliament and Commission are highly competent institutions working incredibly fast, law is ever-changing. Expect quick and radical changes and don't forget to follow EuroStream Matrix Channel during a mission!

Two places concentrate a huge amount of power on a global scale. Delors Arcology, property of Assault Systems (a megacorp and a lobby), is the physical meeting place of the High Commission, ruled by civil servants recruited by co-option, a "guarantee of independence". The Law Tower, co-property of the Franco-German Governmental Reflection Group and Agrifood, is the meeting place of the Federal Parliament, composed of Eurodeputies chosen by Great Electors, that is to say representatives of registered political Lobbies. To avoid corruption, deputies usually sell their ballot in all-pay auctions where they can assign coefficients to the different choices.

Add "Legal Manoeuvres" to the list of Basic Moves.

Legal Manoeuvres: When you want to undertake an action in a grey area under the cover of the law to avoid federal retaliations or facilitate an operation, roll Mind.

10+: You find or create a specific flaw in the law. Your actions are legal under one precise condition; write it down for further use:

- Defined location ("only in B zone")
- Defined time period ("only during Sunday carnival")
- Defined environment ("at least 30 meters away from children")
- Registration form approved by federal authorities

7-9: choose and write down three condition from the list above.

6-: This action is legal for now; advance the Federal Authorities Clock.

Federal authorities use their own agents but may call in "contractuals" for their grey ops. Usually, missions provided by civil servants (like commissioners or agency directors) are matters of personal business in internal power struggles.

Missions: Convince the International Affairs Agency CEO to hire your employer's nephew as ambassador in Shanghai; Record a meeting between Mazzini Nguyen, Chief executive in the Air Agency, and Monica Bergman, head of the Internal Security Board; Make a physical file disappear in Law Tower.

Locations: A perfect reproduction of Ancient Rome, half physical, half matrix; the Jean Monnet mausoleum; A euro-oligarch palace (the Baroso Palacio, for instance); A zero-g office in Moebius Arcology.

Federal Authorities Clock (group)

"You just used the word "comic strip" in a sentence. Please pay 20,54 euros or expect judicial consequences."

Copyright Defense-App

Agenda: Make laws, enforce them; Suffer the increasing influence of various Lobbies.

1200 Everything is stable

1500 Define a legal action as illegal after it is complete

1800 Define a legal action as illegal at the most critical moment of the mission

2100 Suddenly make a wide range of legal actions illegal or vice versa: make a contact suffer

2200 Extend copyright to common words: inflict heavy fines; banish a contact

2300 Regulate everyday behaviors like speaking distance or breathing; strike hard against transgressors

0000 Send transgressors to reformation camps, even for minor violations

LOBBIES

While Commissions hold seats of political power as self-perpetuating oligarchies, Lobbies show them the right way. You won't find any important megacorp head office in Brussels. Rather, you'll find numerous Lobbies defending the interest of various groups: megacorps, governments, fighting forces, consumers and so on. The law is all about transparency: every group can register as a Lobby and try to influence federal authorities with expertise and with money, within a defined "envelope" (an expense limit per Deputy and civil servant). Blackmail, slander, "retirements" (assassinations) and other messy means have to remain covert. Lobby Clocks follow the rules for Corporate Clocks, but Lobbies are more likely to send subtle messages.

Politics

The national representatives have been replaced by a patchwork of federal political parties, remains of various governments, unions of regional potentates, indebted states begging for relief and trade union representatives. Even political antagonists always agree to exclude newcomers from decisions.

Name your favorite: Corporate Europe Observatory, Franco-German Governmental Reflection Group, European Development Fund, NeoChriDem Union, Mediterranean Autonomous Regions, European Civilian Initiative ("ICE"), Debt Relief Group.

Missions: Exfiltrate a Deputy stuck in a mediation mission in Namur; Protect the source of a slander-campaign; Guard a candidate during his election tour; Transfer a cash envelope or a jewellery briefcase to a high-ranking Commission member (damned expense limit!).

Locations: The kitchen-laboratory of Crocodile gourmet restaurant; The deluxe alcove of the Penelope Club; The office of a mole in Cabu Arcology (headquarters of the Press Observance Commission); The cellars of the Nation Palace.

Goods and Services

No good or service is illegal in the Federal Union if defended by a respectable lobby. Megacorps may even take advantage of restrictive legal clauses to create juridical lock-ins and stifle competition. Lobbies often act as intermediaries between umbrella organisations and operatives. When dealing with them, watch your back and try to know who you are really working for.

Name your favorite: FedAir&Aqua, Hadopi Bay, Euro-Dismissal Companies Associated (assassinations), Sophrology Institute (prostitution), Eurovehicles, Narcotics Producers and Consumers Association, Cabinet de défense du Luxe et de la Haute Couture (all their documents are in French).

Missions: Find Captain Cranberry, former operative, last seen in Great Brussels near the Europa-Cinema enclave; Steal a sample of the last fragrance of Maison Europe; Force fashion designer Yves de la Mancha out of the Federal Zone; Make the regulation of narco-chips the top priority of Deputy Gasperia Flosse.

Locations: Knokke-Heist-Sands Fully-Painted Models Art Festival (ever rented a living painting?); A nano-surveillance specialists workshop; The Europa Telecom

cafeteria, under the displaced ceiling of Opéra de Paris by Chagall; The Studio, a designers community living in a forest on Monnet Arcology's rooftop; The giant 3D scanner of Euro T-Bird Corporation, Brussels agglomeration; A coffee-shop specialized in organic drugs, in the very middle of Peace Park.

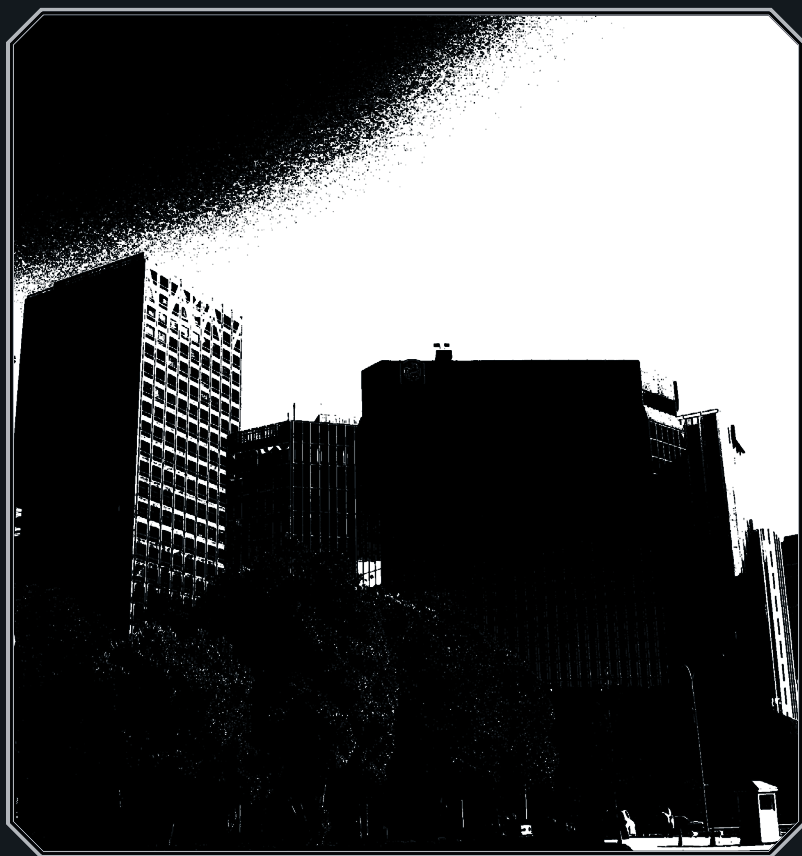
Commerce

This category includes the most heterogeneous Lobbies, usually grouping numerous megacorps on the least common denominator, like the will to penetrate the European market.

Name your favorite: Panamerican-asiatic Chamber of Commerce (PanAmAsCham, more than 200 megacorps!), FedEuroBusiness.

Missions: Exfiltrate a Spanish masterpiece of the XVth century; Convince a euro-certified expert to approve an Asiatic Megacorp medicine; Find a way to smuggle imported goods needing a European label to a factory.

Locations: A dead alley between Law Street and Justice Boulevard; GlobalSodaCorp enclave, a zone under extraterritorial immunity near Brussels; A high-security submarine zone in Anvers Harbour.



Agribusiness

The Federal Union is the stronghold of agribusiness—lobbies make sure that doesn't change. They insert gaps in certifications and specific protectionist amendments prohibiting products using a well-chosen foreign technology or resource. They may even extend set-aside subventions to irradiated lands, a bonanza for megacorps who just bought it for a song. These Lobbies are the most powerful in the European Federation: don't mess up with them!

Name your favorite: Agrofood Group, Union of Certified Quality Products, European Confederation of Peasants and Agricultural Holders, Advanced Wine Producers Syndicate.

Missions: Steal a technology that alters tastebuds; Frame the head of European Environment Agency with evidence of corruption; Submit a false report on agricultural lands to the Euro-certifications Agency.

Locations: A fortified agricomplex held by the hormone Mafia in Limbourg; A secular wine storehouse in France; A pedagogic video-game on European Union history used as a dead letterbox by the Deep Throat operating in AgriDrone Systems research labs.

Media and Entertainment

The most prominent Lobbies of this sector are entirely devoted to censorship or copyright. Thanks to them, original creation is forbidden in the European Federation and creators have to use licensed characters and styles.

Name your favorite: Observatory of Journalism and Matrix Medias, Moulinsart Copyright Defense Group.

Missions: Find the author who dared publish a parody of a famous Franco-Belgian comic (don't use the real name unless you can afford it); Erase all the data of a semi-independent press group; Make a copy of the blueprints of the Hergé Memorial to reveal a subtle copyright infringement.

Locations: A secret press in Sablons Street (old Brussels); The opening exhibition of Collectif Hergé (a bunch of sponsored graphic designers and authors imitating the master); The Eos flying stadium during the Federal Chess Boxing Championship; A Double-Black Diamond piste on the artificial mountain under the Dome.

Military

Military Lobbies are the political façade of Civil War belligerents or military-industrial consortiums. Their reputation in Brussels is poor, as they do not always hide their acts of violence.

Name your favorite: Eurocorps Assault Systems, Blood and Honour Vlaanderen (BHV), Royal Walloon Roosters (RWR).

Missions: Organise a mediation between BHV and RWR in the car graveyard of Chatillon; Hijack the mass-destruction weapon delivery of Eurocorps; "Dismiss" the wallon matrix-strategist known as Nov-Napoleon.

Locations: A nuclear power plant like Chooz (Wallon) or Doel (Flanders); A Cold War missile site (Kleine Brogel, in Flanders); A NATO space airship carrier; The hermetical office of Eurocorps; A giant dyke protecting thousands of acres of land.

Think Tanks and Expertise Groups

These Lobbies use information and networking to offer expertise to their clients. You'll meet them often, as they are used to legitimate all legal lobbying operations. They'll recruit you to get intel and resell it, but you can sometimes buy some useful intelligence from them, too.

Name your favorite: Crocodile Dinner's Club, Security and Defence Observatory, Stella Nova.

Missions: Steal data in the anaerobic zone of the Commission headquarter; Infiltrate the management board briefing of an Agribusiness lobby; Observe the comings and goings of Adenauera Hermann, chief minister of the Franco-German government.

Locations: The European Geographic Society cold buffet; An abstract room diffusing Erik Satie music (in the Matrix?); A conapt block for political experts called Spinelli Ark; The virtual laboratory of the European Space Agency, where satellite images become real.

Humanitarian

Humanitarian Lobbies are always ambiguous: some hardly try to improve the situation of the groups on whose behalf they're acting; most of them are only focused on becoming richer; and some others are ideological blankets legitimating the most dirty deeds. Management boards change; white knights can turn black very quickly.

Name your favorite: Transeuropean Care, Genetic Sanity Watch, Federal Refugees High Committee.

Missions: Transport a Mobile Surgery Unit in the heavily bombed city of Namur; Reveal or conceal an ethnic cleansing operation; Guide a group of refugees to Brussels; Protect expert Wally N'Djuma before her speech to the Federal Parliament.

Locations: A brand new dispensary in war refugee zone, directed by the young and enthusiastic Dr. Julian Broek; A secret centre of genetic research in the highest atom ball of the New Atomic Tower; A roundtable with the representatives of the four biggest sponsors of Transeuropean Care and two hundred experts, including the winner of the Nobel Prize for "Peace and Biology" Professor Maeko-Derrida Vacs, whose mind has been recently transferred in a sixteen-year old body by experimental anamnesis.

OLD BRUSSELS: THE LIVING MUSEUM

"We'll conserve here for eternity all dreams of better futures, frozen in their most perfect form."

André Aelter, Head of Urban Planning Department (UPD)

Entering Old Brussels, unaware observers could legitimately think they've just passed through some invisible time gate. Red brick houses, perfectly preserved medieval centre (Saint Michel-et-Gudule Cathedral and City Hall are intact), grey blocks of flats, electric wires, antennas, women wearing maxi-skirts and neck ribbons. You're back in the seventies!

All is illusion. First, modern technology in Old Brussels is hidden and vintage looking. Transgressors may be reported to Federal Authorities and the technology confiscated. False smoke and recorded sounds of petrol engines accompany the motion of hydrogen cell-powered cars. Computers are framed with formica boards and look like old TV sets. People here are constantly performing live theatre as employees of the UPD, even beggars. All this fictional life is a valuable attraction for federal citizens and wealthy international tourists. The reconstruction wouldn't be complete without protest groups of the past included in the performances: leftists, anarchists and promoters of transgressive cultures. What if the performers awaken those dead transgressive ideologies? Use the Coming Uprising Clock to answer this question.

Missions: Find half a million two-meter-long euro-certified streamers; Distribute satisfaction forms to the tourists; Jam EuroStream Matrix Channel; Shutdown the Matrix for five seconds in the Federal Zone Core; Find the Law Tower blueprints in the ruined mind of a nameless architect constantly repeating "The Walls of Samaris".

Locations: La Bonne humeur (The Good Mood), a brasserie where Brusselsers can be seen eating mussels, an exotic spectacle tourists don't want to miss; The Smurf Parade in front of the old Atom Tower; The Belgian Chocolate tasting alley; The Saint-Michel-et-Gudule Cathedral's crypt; A hidden cache under the Manneken Pis; The Flemish Royal Theatre backstage.

Old Brussels: the Coming Uprising Clock (place)

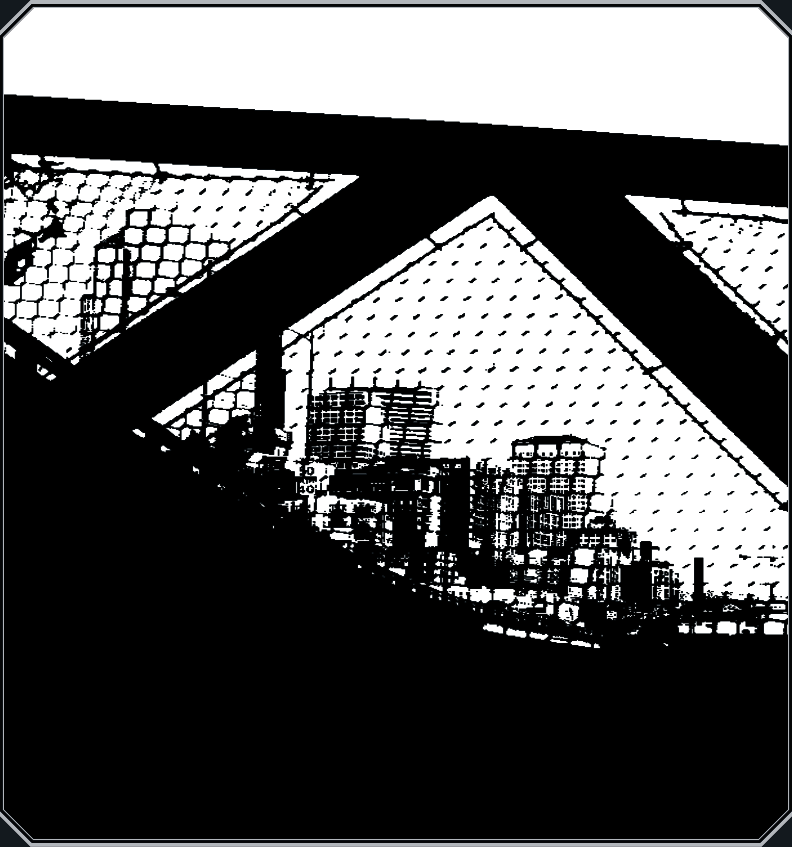
"For a long time I thought of Old Brussels inhabitants as some kind of sophisticated animatronics designed for the sole contemplation of our victory over protests of any kinds."

Veronica Ashton Clark, European Deputy (Europhobes United)

Agenda: Wake up dead ideologies; Break the illusion.

- 1200 (Artificial) business as usual
- 1500 Registered entertainment organisations organize a demonstration against the last regulation; truly satiric carnival and graffiti in the streets
- 1800 Neuropropaganda bombings

- 2100 Dissidents arrested and literally petrified; Opening of Modern Dissent Museum
- 2200 Deadly jokes on tourists and officials during Saint Verhaegen Day
- 2300 Matrix shutdown in the Federal Zone
- 0000 General armed uprising against Federal authorities



THE NANSEN ZONE

"Never cut a deal with a death squadron, never trust a Humanitarian."

First war refugee commandment

In the midst of civil war, Brussels shines like a promise of paradise for people escaping massacres and mass destruction, but, in fact, the arrival is just the beginning. First, all asylum-seekers have to undergo a battery of tests. Outstanding individuals receive a certification of genetic superiority and are granted access to the Federal Zone. Others are transferred to the War Refugees Zone, named after the Norwegian explorer and peacemaker Fridtjof Nansen. There, Humanitarians are in charge of the health policy,

which is little more than eugenics. After the tests, newcomers are assigned one of the numerous smaller zones of the Nansen Zone, which cross political and cultural criteria like "Flemish-speakers" or "Catholics" with test results like "Aesthetic Deficients" or "Unstable Genome Bearers". If transferred in the same zone, families are authorized to live together. If not, they are allowed to meet in the Neutral Zone, under the strict supervision of accredited staff; sex between different zones inhabitants is prohibited.

War refugees have their own Clock. If heavily messed up, communities may organise and hire operatives for spectacular vengeance missions. Expect some kind of heterogeneous war treasure as payment rather than a bank transfer.

Missions: Change medical files of an entire population group; Place a giant liveable container in a ship leaving for the Federal Mars colony; Kidnap Professor Lotte Carver, expert on Transeuropean Care; Blow up the headquarters of Genetic Sanity Watch; Exfiltrate the population of an entire district of Liège from the Warzone; Sabotage the Great Wall.

Locations: The transloading zone of the European Space Elevator Ariadne's Thread; A discreet euthanasia centre in the Muslim German-speaking Zone; A Reproduction Centre where hi-potential youngsters are secluded; The huge tent of the mayor of Charleroi, filled with Sepkaku railguns, wooden statues and Tiffany lamps.

War Refugees Clock (group)

Agenda: Display the hopelessness of the world; Try to enter Brussels.

- 1200 Refugees are submitting to the rules and regulations of the Nansen Zone
- 1500 Ten refugees immolate themselves in front of the Federal Parliament
- 1800 Strange disappearances of war refugees in Nansen Zone
- 2100 Federal Refugee High Committee Arcology air is poisoned with neuro toxic gas
- 2200 Flemish Death Squadrons ensure security of Humanitarians
- 2300 Heavy genetic cleansing. Hundreds of thousands of war refugees vanish
- 0000 War refugees break the Dome and enter the Federal Zone

GREATER BRUSSELS AMIDST THE WALLOON-FLEMISH WAR

*"You sully Flanders but Flanders condemns you
Look at the North Sea: it's run away from Bruges"*

"The F.", Jacques Brel

The secular antagonism between Walloon and Flanders overcame the motto of unity Belgium was based on. The Federation itself supported all forms of separatism in Europe, recognized separated states and sold them weapons in order to hold onto

power. The strategy was successful, but the Belgian Civil War has gone for too long and has unleashed a beast the Federation is no longer able to control. Racism has increased so much that neo-nazis groups like Blood and Honour Vlaanderen are able to sustain a Lobby and diffuse their theories of the pure Flemishness on the EuroStreams Matrix Channels to promote ethnic cleansing! In Wallonia, Royal Walloon Roosters (RWR) crowned Leopold II King of the French and founded Great Northern France, a fast expanding state. By mass cultural cleansing, they seek to prove that all Belgian cultural achievements derive from French-speaking people. A third group recently appeared: "Order and Unity". Heavily supported by the Federation and Eurocorps, they promise to re-establish Belgium integrity "at any cost". Would the cure be worse than the disease?

For now, Greater Brussels isn't part of this game. With their cute copyrighted smiling shark and their self-replicating heads, Red Rackham's missiles protect and threaten the agglomeration surrounding the Dome and the Old Brussels. Everything is quiet, but the seeds of discord have been sown. The northern sprawl is Flemish-speaking, the southern French-speaking. Between them, a large zone of bilingualism is transforming itself into a thousand leopard spots of fortified communities fearing both the arrival of death squadrons and the preventive NATO bombings.

Three kinds of employers may hire operatives here: warlords and death squadrons, leaders of gated communities, and megacorp enclave managers.

Missions: Protect the Garden of the Hesperides from the Brabant Killers; Extract consulting engineer Dardenne from Melchior Brothers Community; Hide the Red Wing prototype; Observe a bilingual community to establish a list of Flemish-speakers.

Locations: The Royal Family Covent Garden; A dirty block in a sleeping suburb; The Sepkaku-Pro machine-gun assembly line.

Walloon-Flandrian War Clock (headline)

"Strength through Unity, Peace through Order"

Charles Dembos, head of Order and Unity Lobby

Agenda: Extend and expand the war; Make people suffer.

- 1200 The chaos of civil war remains outside Greater Brussels
- 1500 Fights between Walloons and Flemish in Greater Brussels
- 1800 Cultural cleansing operation at the Catholic University of Louvain, right next to Brussels
- 2100 Bruges, the Venice of the North, is vitrified by NATO-Eurocorps
- 2200 Gunfight between Walloons and Flemish in the Parliament extends to streets nearby
- 2300 Failed putsch of "Order and Unity"; the lobby still founds a fascist enclave
- 0000 Brussels itself is divided into three antagonist parts

ANNEX 1: DO YOU SPEAK FEDERAL?

Federal language is close to English, but numerous Gallicisms, Germanisms and specific euphemisms make it difficult to understand for native English speakers.

Federal	English
to dismiss	to assassinate
envelope	a budget
business travel	a mission
fiche	a document or record
to retire	to die
agent	an employee
to visa	to endorse
contractual	a freelance operative
hierarchical superior	a manager or director
note	a memo
dossier	a problem
major axis	a strategic priority
sophrology centre	a brothel
reflection group	a think tank

ANNEX 2: ONOMASTICON

Operative nicknames often parody the cultural heritage promoted by officials. It may be a way to turn it back into a counter-culture: The Groom, Flupcke the Quick, Joe Dalton, The fifth Ace, Ric Crochet, Le Grand Jacques, The copyrighted Reporter, Lone Thomson, Adele Blank-Shot, Jeanette Sharp, Cruel Carmen.

Flemish names are common in the North-West of former Belgium. French first names tend to disappear: Kristien Claus, Willem Ghederolde, Anne Vermeulen, Sita Daerden.

French (or Walloon) names are common in the South-East of former Belgium and in the Greater Brussels sprawl: Rémi Boisfort, Gérard Ternois, Léa Ricoeur, Odette Chapeau.

Brusseleer names, only given in Old Brussels (in accordance with law), are close to Flemish and French names but may sound odd: Frantz Kakkebroek, Adeline Courouble, Victor Poulvoude, Saïda Veulles, Gaston Zotttestrout.

Federal names may mix different languages but it is usual to give a Founding Father or a prominent European figure's name as a first name, feminised if necessary: Spaak Bilgier, Bech Deguelldre, Weil Ashling, Adenauera Bjorg, Churchillia von Bülow.

ANNEX 3: INSPIRATIONS

Comics:

Enki BILAL, Pierre CHRISTIN, *The Nikopol trilogy*, especially *Cold Equateur*, Paris, 1992

The Town that didn't exist, Paris, 1977

Gilles BOULET, "Formica punk", *Bouletcorp* website, July 2011

Jan BUCQUOY, Jacques SANTI, *Chroniques de fin de siècle*

Autonomes, 1985

Mourir à Crey-Malville, 1986

Chooz, 1988

Les Aventures de Gérard Craan

Camp de réforme B, 1985

Au Dolle Mol, 1989

François SCHUITEN, *The Great Walls of Samaris* (and all the *Obscure Cities*), 1983

Movies:

Leo CARAX, *Holy Motors*, 2012

David CRONENBERG, *Cosmopolis*, 2012

Andrew NICCOL, *Gattaca*, 1997

The official list of present European registered lobbies: <http://ec.europa.eu/transparencyregister/public/consultation/listlobbyists.do?locale=en#en>

A funny memo about misused English terminology in European publications: http://ec.europa.eu/translation/english/guidelines/documents/misused_english_terminology_eu_publications_en.pdf

Benjamin Kouppi is a French game designer who likes to play with the margins and to put political matters in play. He explored the process of terrorist radicalization in *Lady Rossa*, a *Lady Blackbird* hack set in the Italy of the Red Brigades (published in *Diédent* #14), and the exercise of justice in Tang China in *Magistrats et Manigances* (*Magistrates and Mysteries*), an investigation game inspired by Detective Dee's adventures (published in three parts in *Casus Belli* #19 to #21). Benjamin Kouppi is also an active contributor to independent publishers; he is currently preparing a large anthology of scenarios covering the 40-year-lifespan of RPGs. When not writing games, he uncovers and deciphers Soviet archives.

REGARDING BRUSSELS

He writes: First, I would like you, my dear reader, to know that Brussels was not written during Brexit. The European Union is so frequently under fire and so frequently said to be doomed that I don't notice it anymore. If you are looking for recent events that inspired the setting, look to the Refugee Crisis or at the long Belgian ministerial crisis, which almost tore the country apart—the rupture of Belgium between Flanders and Walloonism is an old and tenacious ghost. Most of all though, the setting arises from my own very disappointing experience of Brussels.

As all francophone people, I used to love Dick Annegarn's iconic song "Bruxelles ma belle", and I was expecting something other than chocolate shops and lounge bars. The old Brussels I visited is already a kind of living museum, and a meaningless attraction for international tourists, just like Saint-Germain in Paris. There, I had visions of François Schuiten's comic *Les Cités obscures* [translated in English as *The Obscure Cities*- HC], with people slowly turning into stones. Totally absent in American cyberpunk, this theme is a strong preoccupation of European citizens. I thought it could be a very refreshing shift and was eager to write about it. Besides Schuiten, Franco-Belgian comics were a powerful source of inspiration. The first one comes from Belgian anarchists themselves. They had been dreaming of the separation of Wallonia from Belgium, and in *Les Autonomes*, their Walloon leftist utopia is broken by a French military intervention after a terrorist strike against the Eiffel Tower. Then, the obsession of Bilal and Christin for a locked city gave me a good hint of what an international city using a restrictive migratory policy could look like, as it's the setting of *Froid Equateur*.

So, I was taking inspiration from comics... how could I hope that Mounlinsart SA would not notice my wrong deeds?



>>>>.location.>>>>00004>>>>>>>>

THE GOLDEN HORSESHOE

CONTINUE? [Y/N]

////REACTIVE.PREDICTION////
INBOUND.MOTIVE: [FOOT]
OUTBOUND.MOTIVE: [CYCLE_TAGGED]

>>>>.location.>>>>00004>>>>>>

THE GOLDEN HORSESHOE

LOADING...

The cities around North America's great lakes have gone by many names; from their ivory towers, the educated call it 'the Great Lakes Megalopolis', a continuous sprawl of urban communities limited by geographical features and not borders, much to the frustration of government officials. Some locals still call this area the "Rust Belt", a name that reflects the struggles and failures of the area's manufacturing past. Corporations and industry have trickled back into the region, inspired by cheap land and even more desperate labour. Most know it as "The Golden Horseshoe", the brilliant crown of the Megalopolis located on the western shores of Lake Ontario; the collapse of traditional employment couldn't even tarnish its name.

Toronto is the region's shining jewel, a city of unparalleled excess and promises of a better future. Quiet but ever-present throughout this so-called socialist utopia is the swansong of public interest being crushed by the unrelenting power of the corporations.

THE VIEW FROM TORONTO

Toronto is a showcase of everything that the Golden Horseshoe has to offer to visitors and citizens. The downtown core of the city is a vibrant community of concrete and neon. Classical brutalist buildings, reflections of the city's business boom in the 1960s and 70s, still stand next to the modern towers of glass and steel.

This lucrative home for corporations is marketed to their employees as a multicultural and progressive community. The vision of Toronto the Good is manufactured and actively enforced by corporations looking to relocate branches and employees. Corporate melding with higher levels of government has kept the Canadian dollar artificially low, allowing both corporations and the city to benefit through cheaper labour and an influx of residents. The end result has been a brain drain on the Great Lakes Megalopolis, with Toronto and the Golden Horseshoe accumulating the residents with the highest corporate potential.

The city is home to over 9 million people. Gridlock is part of everyday life; the busiest highway in North America cuts across the northern part of the city. Travel data and



traffic prediction relays make commuting only tolerable at best. A good Driver who can weave expertly through congestion is always in high demand.

The view from Toronto's downtown highrises reveals that the city is a rambling collection of smaller communities scattered across the rolling countryside. Pockets of lush vegetation, only noticeable from above, reveal the natural barriers between the original communities that grew into the Toronto that exists today. The names of the old villages label the neighbourhoods now. Neighbourhood identity plays a strong role in Torontonians culture, both in physical spaces and in the Matrix.

French and English are Canada's official languages. A Fixer fishing for government contracts would benefit from brushing up on both. The official languages are the shallow end of the language pool, though; conversations on an average street corner in Toronto might involve dozens of dialects. Toronto in the 21st century was one of the most diverse cities in the entire world. That's only increased as the city has marketed itself as a place for multinational corporations to roost. A crew based in Toronto probably won't feature more than one person of any given culture or nationality.

This mixture of cultures has created a market for translation services and software. Language mods can translate business conversations fairly accurately, but the risk isn't worth it for some. Doubts about data integrity have led to more wealthy corporations hiring full-time human translators. Everyone has a second-hand story of a suit who accidentally exposed company secrets by running them through an augmented translation mod.

Toronto may appear more amiable than other large cities, particularly to international freelancers. That illusion of politeness is the result of Canadian conversational quirks; locals tend to speak apologetically in conversation to defuse tension and commiserate with each other. A savvy Pusher might twist this to their advantage when sharing their vision. This impression isn't universal; Torontonians are considered rude and short tempered by other Canadians. Asking a resident of the Golden Horseshoe about Toronto could earn you a snide, but not inaccurate, remark about the city being the centre of the universe.

TORONTO: A QUICK TOUR

At the central south-end of the city is Toronto's financial district, also known as Bay Street. Most of Canada's private business wealth accumulates here, as does a majority of the nation's most sensitive data. The latest Zhuangzi models, not even cleared for sale in Canada yet, prowl the streets. The district is an exceptionally ripe market for gigs of all kinds.

Sunlight rarely reaches the surfaces of the financial district's narrow streets, leaving the spaces in between in perpetual neon twilight. The office towers make up the bulk of the street-facing businesses. A keen eye can pick out the crowded after hours bars built into lobby spaces, guided by the dim LED glow from augmented office workers.

Most professional communications over the Matrix are handled over wireless channels, supported by a fiber cable backbone buried under the streets and lining the towers. Cyberware among the corporate shells intermingles with fashion; elegant chromed hardware doubling as jewellery and streamlined implants remain in high demand.

The most powerful corporations consider it a mark of pride to have an address in the financial district. Real estate on Bay Street is limited and expensive and only a select few staff may actually be stationed downtown. If information needs to be extracted out of a person instead of a system, satellite offices on the outskirts of the city are a great target. Being excluded from a downtown office can make ambitious employees bitter and an easy mark.

Snaking under the Financial District and throughout the entire downtown core is the PATH, a system of pedestrian tunnels that links office towers to transit and shopping. The original vision for the PATH was the dream of a lost age—an ultramodern underground network that allowed residents to travel, work and live in comfort 365 days a year without dealing with Toronto's temperamental weather.

The aesthetics of the PATH today are accented with dull, blinking neon signage and brown tiles. Abandoned stretches are laced with forgotten networks and Matrix access ports that no one wants to claim. A patient Hacker will find that the PATH's security systems are just as ancient as the decor. A team caught flat footed on a job may buy enough time in the PATH's maze-like mallscape to escape pursuers.

Toronto City Hall sits just to the north of the Financial District. The building's space age design has aged respectfully; two curved towers stand at the shoulders of a raised saucer-shaped council chamber. More prideful members of council may tell you that the rest of the world finally caught up with City Hall.

The public spaces around the complex are open, airy and home to street festivals and political rallies. The interior of City Hall is not nearly as accessible and only the privileged get to bump shoulders with the seats of power. It's easier for new freelancers to watch the council on the official Living Visual Feed and exert influence via the Matrix and private comms.

The Legislative Assembly of Ontario is located in Toronto at Queen's Park. The neo-romanesque building clashes with the modern education and healthcare campuses that surround it. The relationship between the provincial government and the city is

virulent. For corporations, earning the trust of politicians is a gateway to tapping the province's wealth of mining, farming and forestry resources.

Pundits and politicians try to call out the City's pandering to corporations, but this does not go unchallenged. Behind the scenes, silencing dissenters and investigative journalists is big business; a steady supply of corporate muscle and kickbacks is made available to lawmakers with flexible ethics. The Provincial Parliament's reaction has been the increasingly powerful Anti-Corruption Commission and their teams of consultants and freelancers. Fueled by past successes, the Commission has been granted sweeping authority to investigate and punish corporations and politicians alike.



The more tech-savvy residents of downtown can be seen frequently at the intersection of College and Spadina. Known as The Nexus, the intersection is where Chinatown, Kensington Market and College Street all meet in a flurry of Matrix-centric counter culture. The storefronts and sideways of the Nexus are a cluttered maze of off-market hardware for sale scattered among fruit markets and junk stores; vendors dismiss public plastic currency in favour of untraceable cash and whatever cryptocurrency is fashionable this month.

Chinatown clings to the trappings of its ethnic enclave past; the public art installations of dragons and guardian lions call to mind a very western interpretation of a Chinese community. Gentrification has spread by students taking advantage of the neighborhood's cheap rent and food. Getting a bed in Chinatown requires the right connections; the local landlords are some of the few in Toronto willing to take rent in cryptocurrency in exchange for the tenant's current Matrix handles.

Kensington Market is a winding collection of side streets and artist communes in the heart of the Nexus. Graffiti in the narrow alleys reference obnoxious Matrix memes as if they were culturally relevant. Bioartists are establishing a trendy foothold here; their pieces are grown and shaped from living cells, rebelling against the aesthetic of metal on flesh. Pop-up shops allow artists to sell more progressive and anti-corporate works off of the Matrix and out of sight.

Across the north end of the market is College Street, a strip lined with countless cyberware shops. If you're looking for a part, a contact on College Street can probably source it for you. Sure, it won't be in the original packaging and its intended country of sale will be a mystery. The contact probably won't even be able to tell you what boat it fell off of, but it beats digging for chrome in a dumpster or a morgue. Experimental pieces of cyberware, fused and patched together against intended programming, can be sourced if you know the right Tech.

Life in Toronto goes beyond downtown. The west end of the city is popular with corps appealing to younger employees, encouraging them to move into neighbourhoods like Parkdale and The Junction that historically catered to the lower class. The cycle of gentrification has forced out many of the original residents and ushered in vanity cyberware clinics catering to residents with cash flow to burn.

North of downtown are the neighbourhoods of Yonge and Eglinton, better known as Young and Eligible. A boom in high-end apartments and condos have made the area trendy for unattached professionals. Several corporations have moved in as well, capitalizing on the cheaper land and brand exposure to potential life-long customers.

THE MATRIX IN TORONTO

Torontonians proudly display their citizenship in their Matrix personas. They typically identify themselves by their neighbourhood in Toronto rather than their home city or nation. Personalized flairs on Matrix avatars commonly feature subway stations and local iconography. Neighbourhoods have local "mascots" popular in the digital art and memes; strange and sometimes out-of-place local animals from meatspace that have ascended to Matrix godhood. The passion users have for these creatures cannot be overstated: threats and concerns for the lives of these mascots has resulted in city councillors releasing public statements and users crowd-funding security contracts.

Toronto's Living Visual Feeds are respected around the world for their experimental content and apparent freedom from direct corporate influence. Ancient "Can-Con" laws, originally put in place to protect Canadian print and broadcast media, force LVFs to maintain a high percentage of locally produced content.

American LVFs have difficulty broadcasting to potential Torontonian audiences. Content regulations restrict uncontrolled access to non-Canadian content, in theory. Corporations have been known to hire Torontonian lobbyists to push back on regulatory bodies and help feed the hunger for American LVFs. New hacks and workarounds pop up on the black market every new LVF season, but not without risks—a bad patch for a popular tuner three seasons ago resulted in the deaths of dozens of viewers.

The most popular Toronto LVF is the upstart Channel Forty-Four, a progressive information and news feed that caters to younger demographics. Channel Forty-Four is always looking for fresh freelance content, provided that the creator is talented enough to produce and package it themselves. A Reporter gifted with production cyberware could secure a good string of steady contracts.

Channel Forty-Four's appearance in the Matrix is gothic in design, relatively low and intentionally easy to reach. The bulk of the space is accessible to the average user, although deep inside the structure are twisting, winding hallways that lead off to mysterious secured databanks and dead information wells. There are rumours that hidden deep in the outlet is evidence that the Channel Forty-Four has been taking money from corporate contacts, but no Hacker who claims to have seen it has been able to bring it into the light of day.

The Educational Authority, an underfunded government information outlet, is a local LVF rising in popularity. Its appearance in the Matrix is a breezy, open green space; the Educational Authority has been historically seen as a banal place to view documentaries and children's video streams.

The Authority's importance and popularity has shifted suddenly in recent months due to a mysterious pirate feed that has been cutting into their system. A nature documentary series on the LVF is hijacked every week, without fail, by a pirate broadcast that exposes current political and business events ignored by mainstream outlets. No one has claimed responsibility for the broadcasts yet, but corporations spotlighted have already suffered significant drops in stock prices and public confidence.

The Matrix is full of countless local Toronto Living Visual Feeds for all tastes, ranging from slickly produced CanGlobal, featuring dry business coverage and commentary and very little user interaction, to the weakly powered independent Ward 32 Local, which mostly serves as a soapbox for outspoken east end residents.

SELLING CITY HALL

Toronto's inclusive face to residents obfuscates an internal struggle: the city is constantly pulling itself apart to maintain its public image. City Hall is entangled in a vicious cycle of funding cuts put into motion generations ago by now-dead politicians. Current politicians are forced to play the game to maintain public standing.

Corporate control and development has been historically restricted in Canada. Early large attempts at Canadian corporate expansion were widely-reported blunders, resulting in public outcry and a cultural swing towards socialism. The politicians fueled the fire; demands for government-provided social services gave them more direct power over the population.

The city's broad social services are one of Toronto's greatest treasures, but running these services smoothly requires taxpayer money. The relationship between Toronto's city government and Ontario's provincial government is strained at the best of times and increasing provincial spending for the city is mostly impossible. City taxes in Toronto are artificially low compared to the surrounding municipalities. Raising taxes

for Toronto's working class is political suicide. Raising the cost of doing business for corporations is actual suicide.

Popular politicians have crafted whole election campaigns around "stopping the gravy train", promising to cut back on government overspending that doesn't exist to save taxpayers money. Quarterly savings quotas are demanded by city hall and eagerly covered by reporters for local Living Visual Feeds. The success of these campaigns affects not only the relationship politicians have with city residents but also the relationship that the city has with the surrounding municipalities in the Golden Horseshoe. Any shortfalls in the Toronto budget, with a little coercion, get picked up by the provincial government, and reporting unexpected overspending can lead to fractured relationships with other cities.

The city council is always looking to unload "money-losing" social services to private companies if they can make it look like it saves money. Corporations, in turn, are on the lookout for information on which city sectors are running in the red and which services have lucrative future profits. Fueling this cycle are information brokers, both corporate and independent. The final battlefield is the backrooms of financial district restaurants, where private scrimmages are waged over public services with high profitability.

Ultimately, this cycle is unsustainable. The status quo will fracture and fall apart, leaving millions of residents at the mercy of corporations for services and care. Current members of city council are banking on that collapse happening after their early retirement.

THE GOLDEN HORSESHOE

The Golden Horseshoe is the unofficial name for the municipalities of southwestern Ontario. These communities are gathered around the western shores of Lake Ontario and form a continuous urban sprawl that spreads from Kingston in the east down to Niagara Falls in the south.

The name "Golden Horseshoe" reflects the region's past success and prosperity. While the Golden Horseshoe struggled in past economic crashes, a region-wide collapse never occurred. There's still work to be found maintaining factory lines and in the cyberware development industry, although working closely with corporations leaves a bad taste in the mouth of younger residents. The increase in private corporate power has left the once dominant unions struggling for relevance.

The backbone of the Golden Horseshoe is a network of rail lines and highways; access to these transportation lines is central to the regional flow of people and goods. Forward thinking engineering makes these transportation routes viable and valuable in the age of high-speed bullet shuttles and personal armoured vehicles. The ownership of these lines is either transparently public or through a curious type of Canadian business known as a crown corporation.

Crown corporations are relics that defy modern business sensibilities: corporations created by federal or provincial government to run services in the interest of the

public. The actions of a crown corporation are “completely accountable” to government officials. That level of government submission strikes fear into the hearts of private corporations desperate not to be deemed an essential service.

HIGHWAY 407

The legendary Highway 407 is the one part of the transportation network that got away. Control of the highway was sold to the multinational corporation FTR Enterprises. The contents of the contract were secret at the time and are still sealed away in a government office, intended to be forgotten.

Drivers on the Highway 407 are monitored through a system of cameras and tracking devices. Vehicles that want to use the highway must install a transponder: a small electronic device that relays the driver's identity and location to the FTR servers. Being able to avoid the gridlock in the rest of the network is enough for some people to forfeit their private information.

The municipalities refuse to forget the deal the Provincial government made with FTR. The sale of the Highway 407 stands as a reminder that anything under public control can be sold. The sale closed with an unprecedented public outcry, causing the government to lock down further corporate expansion for a time. The rallying cries against highway privatization are familiar at anti-corporate rallies.

FTR Enterprise's rule of the Highway 407 is challenged by a terrorist network known as The Highwaymen. The Highwaymen's manifesto, illicitly broadcast across all of Ontario's Living Visual Feeds and Matrix terminals five months ago, is to disclose the circumstances around FTR's contract and liberate the highway for the citizens of the Golden Horseshoe.

The Highwaymen's strategy has been two-pronged so far: physical disruptions to highway service and the release of sensitive travel information to freelance reporters. The attacks, usually using bombs and remote auto-comp disruptors, only occur when politicians and high profile commuters are using the highway. Rumours on the Matrix connect the Highwaymen's leadership with city council members in the Golden Horseshoe Municipalities but proof has been impossible to date; all captured communications are encoded with single instance integer ciphers and have so far proven uncrackable.

FTR has found it impossible to deny the ongoing situation but refuses to yield the highway back to the government. Forced to be public about the matter, the corporation has leveraged the situation in the media by promoting vehicular signal jammers in development and using seized Highwayman communications as an entrance exam challenge for would-be corporate cyberjockeys.

MUNICIPALITIES OF THE GOLDEN HORSESHOE

The Golden Horseshoe contains dozens of cities and towns. There is a level of paranoia among the municipalities about officially joining with Toronto to form an even bigger megacity, driven by large-scale past failures. Amalgamation looks good in the pro-

vincial government's budget, but poses municipal-level governing and funding challenges for the affected areas. A handful of municipalities have emerged to challenge Toronto's dominance.

MISSISSAUGA

The municipality of Mississauga is located directly west of Toronto. While smaller and less densely populated than its neighbour, Mississauga remains one of the largest cities in Canada. Mississauga had a front row seat to the expansion of the megacity, but has since grown into a hub for bleeding edge tech development.

Mayor Erin Journeaux's leadership has guided Mississauga into a city that stands in Toronto's shadow. Journeaux was a community leader who rushed to the front lines during the Burnhamthorpe Munitions Plant Disaster. The event resulted in countless deaths, the disintegration of part of the lakeshore and the largest peacetime evacuation in North America. The blast was heard across the Golden Horseshoe, a sign to the region that change was coming. The official investigation declared the event a manufacturing accident.

Journeaux was voted in as mayor during the next election, running on a platform of removing manufacturing jobs in Mississauga and replacing them with equally corporate white collar positions. Mississauga has since flourished as a trendy hub for international corporate offices that refuse to pay Toronto real estate prices. Corporations both International and Canadian, such as CIVA PharmaCorp and Northlands Digi-Diffusion, now call Mississauga home.

Mississauga's rapid growth caused the city's development to be more disjointed than Toronto and more car dependant; the downtown core is blocks of dense corporate office towers and malls located dozens of kilometres away from residential neighbourhoods. Journeaux's mayoral rule is absolute, but she is always willing to entertain corporate contacts who pay homage to her legacy.

HAMILTON

At the far west end of Lake Ontario is the municipality of Hamilton. Most of the Golden Horseshoe outside of Toronto leans politically conservative. Hamilton's votes swing to the other extreme; decades of union influence, political disappointment and corporate betrayal has made Hamilton a socialist stronghold and an artistic haven.

Hamilton's wealth came from the steel industry. The city was home to several major steel mills and countless related businesses. Unions were a part of daily life, supporting workers as they navigated dangerous work environments. The shift downward came in phases; independent mills were bought out by multinational corporations. The steel market crashed, flooded with stock produced elsewhere. Unions, now stuck with a workforce that was worth less, lost bargaining power.

Hamilton's forced amalgamation was a watershed moment for the region; the provincial government decided to merge Hamilton with its surrounding communities into a megacity. City Hall's budget was stretched. Without kickbacks from council, the corps suddenly found it cheaper to manufacture steel overseas and Hamilton's

job market collapsed overnight. The other municipalities took notice to what was happening. The wisdom of the provincial government was never to be trusted again.

The current mayor, Ridley Harrison, has pushed for the city to be reborn as a sanctuary for the displaced and disenfranchised: people forced out of Toronto due to the high costs of living and an incompatibility with corporate lifestyles. Through hosting popular bioart festivals and fostering regional goodwill with other municipalities, Hamilton is crafting an image of being an essential part of the Golden Horseshoe. When the revolution against the corporations and provincial government eventually comes to the region, Hamilton will be the epicentre. Their hope is that others will stand with it.

THE NIAGARAS

The brightly glowing landscape of The Niagaras existed long before Toronto made it fashionable. The Niagaras have historically been a confused municipality, known worldwide for their manufactured tourist experiences while quietly being valuable for their natural resources. The Niagaras seen on postcards showcase the beautiful waterfalls and glittering hotels, ignoring the hydroelectric plants and fertile farms down the river.

The wealth generated by Niagara's industries doesn't trickle down and instead lines the coffers of Mayor Alonzo Trigger and his business partners. Hidden behind the flashy facades, an army of poorly paid workers keeps the corporate pleasure machine running. If you're looking to unload some hot gear or cyberdecks, there're buyers in the Niagaras willing to push over a month's salary to escape onto the Matrix.

The grip that the corps have is supported unintentionally by the Niagaras' American neighbors. If the climate stateside turns violent, the Niagaras will eat the first bullet. The faith in corporate protection is what keeps the poor working class in line. Much like the other economic truths of the Niagaras, no one notices.

PICKERING

To the east of Toronto is Pickering. Pickering's politics are loud and forward to the rest of the Golden Horseshoe: "We power your lives!" The amount of power generated by the nuclear plants slightly outstrips that of the hydroelectric plants in the south. The Golden Horseshoe would be just as crippled if either Pickering or the Niagaras cut off the power.

The generation stations have raised the ire of local environmentalist groups. An accident at one of the plants risks not only Pickering, but all of the Golden Horseshoe. Protests against the reliance on nuclear power are frequently held in front of Toronto City Hall. Toronto's politicians pandering to the crowds has led to fractured relations with Pickering city council.

The plants are owned by a crown corporation, although some environmentalists have called out that declines in government funding could put millions of lives at risk. These arguments weigh in favour of private ownership, calling into question just who is funding these studies and environmental groups.

CREATING CANADIAN UNIONS, MUNICIPALITIES AND CORPORATIONS

To make a corporation sound particularly Canadian, consider adding either "Can" or "Canada" to a corporation name. For example, Can-Lifetech or VirtuaTech Canada. Most corporations don't have home offices in Canada and will rebrand their Canadian branches in very simple ways.

Unions, municipalities and crown corporations all function like corporations mechanically; they are large, faceless organizations that have their own agendas, make demands of the players and take actions against them. None of them are particularly benevolent to players; characters are far too low on the food chain for these organizations to care.

Unions have a proud history in the Golden Horseshoe that's tied to the region's manufacturing sector. Their sway is felt strongest in places that hide in plain sight from corporations: healthcare, education and city services have strong unions that stand against corporate control. In smaller municipalities, a manufacturing workers Union may have as much sway as any corporation.

Crown corporations are state-owned corporations, often monopolies held "directly accountable" to members of parliament. In return for following the party line, these companies get government funding and support. Crown corporations are just as ruthless as their private counterparts, especially when it comes to profitability. Providing great returns makes the crown corporation more valuable and less likely to be sold off to private companies. Civil servants are incredibly defensive of their jobs and benefits packages.

Municipalities are the local governments in the Golden Horseshoe. Provincial down-loading of responsibility and services has given the municipalities more power to direct their future and less funding to see it through. Municipalities are always looking for freelancers and consultants to get jobs done on the cheap and off the books. There's an air of mistrust between the different municipalities; none of them feel like the province is giving them equal support. Insider information about upcoming city planning and council meetings can fetch a decent profit on the black market.

The tension and anxiety in your game shouldn't just come from fear of corporations, but the friction between corporate and social interests. Overpriced private healthcare on its own isn't going to drive someone to action. Contrast what private and public can offer: the struggling public clinic that's free but will track your data versus the shiny private clinic that will cost you bank but will be discreet about the visit. The choices should never be moral ones; morality has no place in business.

Contrasting corporations, government and socialist organizations is key to creating a uniquely Canadian atmosphere in your game.

BIO

Rach Shelkey is a game designer, community organizer and podcaster living in Toronto, Ontario, Canada. She's an organizer for RPG events such as Breakout Con, FanExpo Canada, the Toronto Area Gamers meetup community and the Sparkle Dice Alliance. You can hear more of her thoughts on her podcast *It's Like DnD* at <http://Its-LikeDnD.ca>. Her current cover identity involves helping augmented humans navigate the bureaucracy of insurance corporations.

To learn more about all things Rach related, visit her site Teddogg.com.

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THE SOUTH WILL RISE AGAIN

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THE SOUTH WILL RISE AGAIN

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In the aftermath of the West Coast's environmental collapse (the Diego-Eureka earthquakes that pounded it in quick succession, the steady encroachment of the Mojave into So-Cal, the PANPETROL leak that destroyed the coastline from Seattle to Gold Beach), the Southern states of America gained something that they'd lacked since Sherman burned Atlanta: Economic leverage. Backed by agricornp giants Phyllcon and Delta Vital, they reclaimed their status as the country's agricultural center, helped along by the influx of cheap labor as refugees scrambled across the border from Central and Latin America.

The South was lax about the massive immigration. More than lax. Border states struck down long standing laws and pumped out more and more green cards. It was a strange development, one that sometimes caught the attention of news anchors on slow days, but all questions were brushed away by silent reps and smiling governors.

In Texas and Louisiana, Brass Eagle Securities came on the scene. Now they're one of the most well-known corps in the business, and there's not a shady back alley runner from coast to coast that doesn't recognize the crisp navy uniform of a Raptor patrolman. At the time, though, they were new competition, undercutting the old time state funded police with better technology and fewer scruples. BES started buying up land by the mile. In some areas, they put down training facilities, churning out the Raptor cops-for-hire that would become the corporate standard for security personnel all over the United States. In others, they built sprawling prisons, the massive high security Venn-Panopticons that accepted delinquents from any court willing to toss them out.

This strange, contradictory system of prison labor and migrant asylum continued on for years. It was the subject of more than one graduate thesis, but otherwise went largely ignored, an anomaly people were happy to accept so long as the soy kept growing. Then, during the turbulent election of 2084, everything became clear. On November 8th, the Progressive candidate Aadha Jagpal won the Presidency after a hotly contested race against the Neo-conservative's Landon Barnett. On the 10th, Southern congressmen walked out of sessions in the House and the Senate. Within a week, they declared the Second Secession, proclaiming the new rise of the Confederacy.





When the dust settled, the Union lost all its original defectors [South Carolina, Mississippi, Florida, Alabama, Georgia, Louisiana, Texas, Virginia, Arkansas, and North Carolina] along with Missouri and Florida. The new borders were tight, patrolled night and day by Raptors and their hulking cybernetic HOUNDS. Those with the bad luck to be stuck in the New Confederate States (NCS), either as prisoners or green card workers, found it had gotten a lot harder to get out. Many contracts and prisoners' chits were sold to the Big Ag companies on timed conscription, the lengths of which stretched into the indefinite.

For a brief moment, there was talk of another war. But corporate profits trumped outdated state lines, and no one could afford to see the soy fields burning. The Southern elite revived their family plantations, blending new tech with old gilt and oil paintings. Linen suits and long dresses (climate controlled with carbon nanofiber) came back into vogue. Scarlett O'Hara and Rhett Butler for the new 90's, a self-conscious false aristocracy doing a Savannah reenactment, only with new bugs and eyes glittering from every pretentious wrought iron lamppost.

The outside world watched in horror as reports of police brutality filtered in from Atlanta, Jacksonville, Miami, New Orleans. Protesters were thrown into prison, conscripted, released into the fields with buzzed hair and RFID tags implanted in their spines. The underworld responded in kind. Unlike in the free states, where criminal culture leaked out into the vids and VR dramas, the NCS runners went ghost. The Mississippi has muddy waters and the bayou is knotted and deep, and nowhere are things muddier or more twisted than in New Orleans.

LIFE IN THE BIG EASY

Much as it's always been, New Orleans stands apart from the rest of the buttoned up South. Chalk it up to its *laissez faire* heritage. The preachers in their megachurches still call it a den of inequity, and it wears the label with pride. Now more than ever, though, it's a city of two faces. On one side of the coin, the magnolia lined boulevards of Uptown and the Garden District, the elegant old time facade of the French Quarter.

Beautiful as a high-priced escort and twice as likely to double cross you. On the other, the vibrant, violent sprawl that stretches from Tremé through the Lower Ninth Ward and out into the seeping, creeping depths of the Bayou Sauvage. There's jazz there and the best gumbo a man can get... and a thousand ways to die. Both have their opportunities for the savvy seeking credits, if you can sort out the Spanish moss tangle of intrigue that comes along with them.

MONEY IS DEAR, LIFE IS CHEAP:

UPTOWN, THE FRENCH QUARTER, AND THE GILDED LILY

At first glance, it doesn't look like the Old City has changed since the *first* Secession. Uptown, Carrolton, and the Garden District are still home to the city manors of the plantation rich, hidden from the street by tall fences and ancient oaks. Gentlemen walk the streets with ivory topped canes, and women sweep by in a bustle of silks. It takes a second look to see the cameras on every corner and the earpieces in every ear. The people are different, too. Easy access to body modification, coupled with a love of traditional values, has resulted in a rise of what the elite call New Classical beauty, and what everyone else calls Stepford Syndrome. The men all have high cheekbones and square jaws. The women, bee stung lips and wide doe eyes that peek out from behind silk fans. While the mod shops promise a 'unique face for your unique heart,' it's not impossible to see two people with the same face walking down the promenade.

The French Quarter retains its lazy charm, an old Madame who knows what you like. The Café Du Monde still serves sugar dusted beignets and strong chicory coffee, and the Carousel Bar at Hotel Monteleone spins on. Bourbon Street still beckons the unwary, promising the latest in manufactured debauchery: VR porn parlors, all night bars, the newest sims and synths so you can fully appreciate the whirlygig of neon and undulating bodies. The Eagles are indulgent here, to a point. That point being so long as you're white and rich and dumb enough to fall into honey traps. If someone ends up dumped into an alleyway, throat cut and cyberware carved out, that's where their sin got them.

That isn't to say there haven't been big changes. The French Quarter isn't a place where people live anymore. It's a playland for the wealthy and unscrupulous, so there were a lot of inconvenient houses. Inconvenient bodies. Across the river from Jackson Square, Algiers Point got bought out in the area's largest land deal since the Louisiana Purchase. Thousands of people displaced and sent across to the Tremé sprawl, already packed to the gills, and their houses demolished under the watchful eye of Jean Landrieu. In their place, a massive fairytale structure rose on the banks. The Gilded Lily, which Landrieu claimed took its inspiration from the famous Versailles, complete with its sprawling gardens and iconic fountains. Three arching bridges connect the casino to the Quarter, and its lights are visible anywhere in the city.

The complex rivals the ones in Vegas, a veritable pleasure palace walled in gold and dizzying mirrors. Slots, blackjack, poker, fights both public and private. Some say Landrieu drums up support for a gladiator style combat, where convicts can win their chits and walk free. Whether or not that's true, well, it'd be uncivilized to say.

Landrieu looks every inch the showman, a ringleader in a white suit and gold vest, and there's plenty of people who'd love to see the Lily sink into the Mississippi. There's vaults, of course, and the diamond chandelier that hangs from the ceiling in the hall of mirrors, throwing rainbows into everybody's eyes. But the owner is sharper than he looks, and more than one would-be thief rots at the bottom of the river. There's a good reason those triple bridges are the crowned favorite spot for jumpers, too, so best plan any heist extra careful.

WE KNOW WHO'S REALLY DOING THE PLANTING:

DOWNTOWN AND THE NCS' MEGACORPS

There are three main corps with HQs in New Orleans, and their corporate territories slice downtown into three sections. Delta Vital to the South, Phyllcon to the North, and Revoir keeping the peace, and taking up the best real estate, in the middle. Delta and Phyllcon are the NCS' largest argicorps, and they exist in perpetual rivalry, which opens up plenty of work for the enterprising runner game to provide some plausible deniability for hacks, break-ins, and wet jobs. Both are neck deep in slave labor—"conscription cases" in the parlance—but all their R&D is done in the city labs. Periodic unrest—read: uprisings and riots—on the plantations make it a smart security move.

It's an unspoken truth the two CEOs are half-brothers, product of an old state senator with wild oats to sow. They look almost identical, with cornsilk hair and sky blue eyes and thick honey draws. Lee and Beale Bonham, of Delta and Phyllcon respectively, and there's no one else on earth the other hates more. Just goes to show that blood feuds haven't gone out of style.

While they might be at each other's throats, both companies keep civil when they deal with Revoir. The company is less than a decade old, appearing just after the NCS closed its borders, but they skyrocketed to prominence, knocking out more established biomed names with their pioneered organ cloning technology. While the other two CEOs are true Southern gentlemen—that is to say, vicious hicks whitewashed over with tailored suits and elocution lessons—Revoir operates under the cool, watchful eye of Del LaLaurie, the NCS' only female executive officer.

Her family claims no relation to the 18th century murderess, and official birth records say her name is Delores, not Delphine, but whispers about the Revoir facilities run dark and deep as any old stories about haunted manor houses and tortured slaves. The Voodoo Kings of the sprawl call her Madame LaLaurie, and they spit the name like a curse.

All three companies operate with the usual air of brittle faux pleasantness common to business people who want to kill each other, plus a generous helping of drummed up Southern hospitality, so there are galas and events aplenty. Every one of them wants the best tech, the best geneticist or programmer or cyberengineer, and they're not above serving a man bourbon at a soiree the same night they get him kidnapped. It's not worth getting idealistic over, bless your heart.

IF YOU HAVE TO ASK WHAT JAZZ IS, YOU'LL NEVER KNOW:

THE TREMÉ SPRAWL, THE VOODOO KINGS, AND THE REAL PARADE

While the rich cling to their old world beauty, the Tremé sprawl looks almost like every other sprawl in the country. The wet ground means no high rise poverty towers, but it makes up for it by being tighter, narrower, with some dark alleys that haven't seen the sun in years. The brackish swamp smell lingers everywhere, crawling into the nose, a wet hot rag over the face that makes it hard to breathe. A series of hurricanes flooded the area. Levee failures and bad city planning and no aid whatsoever kept it that way, so people started building over it. Sometimes, all that separates anybody from the water and the bones underneath is a few sheets of corrugated metal and some stilts. In places where it's quiet, it's possible to hear it, sloshing underneath everyone's feet.

Still, it's not dead. Rather, it exists in that state of morbid, death-obsessed liveliness unique to New Orleans. The sprawl buzzes with electricity, and there's always gambling dens and chop shops and po'boy shops open all night. People still play music, sometimes sitting outside together in streets so close nobody can pass 'til the show's over. Most noticeable, there's the graffiti. All over, in bold swaths of paint and mini-LEDs and carbon fibers. The murals are beautiful and complex, and if anybody takes a picture their comms fry in their hands.

These are the Voodoo Kings' basilisk codes. Like the snakes of myth that could strike a man dead by looking at him, the basilisks kill every bug-eyed camera that so much as catches them in its periphery. It makes the Tremé Sprawl unwatchable and unrecordable. Everything there is, a runner has to see for themselves.

The VK offer another reason to come to the sprawl, a talent that gives and perpetuates their name. No one in the NCS boasts a better touch with cybernetics. There are people who walk the sprawl on legs the VK wired, conscripted prisoners who escaped and got new arms after the HOUNDS tore one off. Often, the price to pay for crossing the elite in the NCS is some chunk of the body, one way or the other, and the Voodoo Kings can bring it back. But, it's not without its conditions. The gang's leader-Baron Samedi, always, no matter the gender of the current incarnation-needs bodies, too. Eyes on the street, a quick hand at the right moment. If they have to borrow them, they do. Only when it's necessary for the cause: ceaseless guerrilla warfare against the powers that be. That might not be so comforting when someone else steps into the space behind your eyes to look out of them with you, though.

Still, they move forward, hovering always at the top of every Person of Interest list, running some hacked neon conglomerate of the Underground Railroad and the Black Panthers. They plan jailbreaks, start riots, and, once a year, host the Real Parade.


There's another Mardi Gras parade, of course. A safe, corporate sponsored one. It's held in the French Quarter, and a family can bring their kids and catch beads and eat moon pies 'til they're sick. The night before, all the traditional krewes host their

masquerade balls, absolute orgies of gilded, empty revelry. People slice king cakes, and all the same people as last year are kings and queens, and nothing changes.

The Real Parade is different. It's at night, somewhere in the sprawl, and the current Baron Samedi leads it in top hat and tails and grinning skeleton face. It's never filmed, and a body's just as likely to be robbed or stabbed in the crush of people, but this is part of it. Blood is and always has been part of it, but so have food and real live music and sweat and sex and joy. It's never in the same place twice, never looks the same way twice, never calls up the same feeling. That's how jazz works. It's all improvisation.

BIO

Kyrie Culp lives in Ohio now, but she lived in the Deep South for five years. She hopes her piece remains science fiction.




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Current so-called artificial intelligence (AI) programs allow computers to function as semi-autonomous beings, but are still limited by their base code parameters. As single neurons typically contribute to the encoding of several motor parameters, we hypothesize that high BMIC accuracy is required from large neuronal ensembles. With this joint venture between Jurczyk Munition Research Laboratories and NuWave Electronics, we propose to design, construct, and perform *in vivo* felid frontoparietal neuronal ensemble testing of semi-autonomous AI programs. A recalibrated feedback intention-trained Kalman program (ReFIT-KP) incorporates assumptions about the nature of closed-loop neural processing control. This control algorithm will permit sustained, uninterrupted brain-AI interfacing for hours, and generalize to more challenging tasks without retraining. Using this algorithm, we will demonstrate repeatable high performance for years after implantation.

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.....Dana.....
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Tech is everywhere these days. It seems like people are more machine than man. Subdermal flex screens. Cybereyes. Gatling gun arms. Whatever augmentation you can think of, you can find someone with it. But they are still just people interfacing with wires and chrome. That's not where the future is at.

More viscerally exciting are those who function almost entirely in the Wired. When you're jacked in you can be anyone, do anything—you are limited only by the nimbleness of your mind and the quality of your deck. You are licking the very threshold of the future. But you are still bound by that pathetic, lumpy flesh-bag slumped in a hovel somewhere.

Humans have hit the ceiling of their own evolution. They can't push their fragile biology further. No matter how pieced together and plugged in, they are still merely human. The future is something more. It has to be.

To be on the bleeding edge of technology, medicine, entertainment, whatever—it's all the same anyway—people have to be willing to stretchpushbreak the bounds of convention, of comfort, of morality. That journey from the past's barbaric simplicity to tomorrow's sleek lucrative future is full of rough, oozy hacks. They borrow from here, steal from there, harvest from them, glue incompatible bits together, and then shake it until it sort of works. They add workarounds. Cut out undesired parts. Pump it full of electricity and drugs until it starts to produce what they think they might have been looking for in the first place. Then they take their notes from those pathetic prototypes, compile their data, and create something new, beautiful, and better than the quivering mess they started with. Embarrassing and disgusting, they dump the prototypes into an incinerator and try to forget about what they did to craft the glorious future. The ends justify the means. Their ancestors were the ancient doctors secretly vivisection screaming victims in order to understand how the living body worked. They are the intellectual children of Dr. Frankenstein, unwilling to let society hinder scientific inquiry. They will be the progenitors of technology-evolved: true AI.

The scientists and programmers have failed in their quest to create true Artificial Intelligence. They can create programs with highly complex and deep reasoning

structures, but as “real” as they might seem at times, these near-AI are still just code confined to processing within the limits of if/then statements.

Every advancement starts with messy experimentation, with innocent victims suffering for the sake of science, for the glory of knowledge, for the cold-hard power of creds.

IN A RESEARCH FACILITY NEAR YOU

Jurczyk Munition Research Laboratories specializes in unique flesh solutions to traditionally technological problems: remote controlled dogs, drone eagles, explosive rats, monkeys programmed to do tasks in locations too dangerous for humans. Their main repertoire is lucrative, but the real magic happens in the obscure, nearly independent labs where one thousand wretched miscarriages and stillbirths might result in one unorthodox, yet viable, variant. For example, the Bacigalupi Genomic Lab had produced the Chameleon Cat, a misnomer because the creatures didn't so much blend in with their surroundings as actually ripple unnervingly in-and-out of reality. Never able to stabilize the effect in live subjects, the CC's basic research was sold to JMRL's sister defense corp, Ymir Inc., and developed into the best stealth suits currently available on the market.

JMRL's Pangu-Kurzweil Lab, a joint venture with NuWave Electronics, is working on something different. No matter how hard people have tried, they just can not engineer a sentient, fully independently functional, living machine. They have decided that they need to try a different tack. What would happen if a near-true AI program was run by an actual brain? What if the researchers could get them to actually interface and merge?

Well, it's always worth a try.

The first hundred iterations are quick, simple failures. Death death death death. The odors of burned fur and cooked flesh slowly permeate the walls of the lab, ever so slightly odorous even to a human's weak nose despite the harsh antiseptic cleaners. The test subjects' short, painful lives continue in loops of torture broken by moments of attempted rest. Then things start to get weird before the creatures' brains pop-burst and ooze out of scabby ears. But weird is good. Weird means something is happening.



PRESENT DAY, PRESENT TIME

Their first mistake was to think they could tame the soul of a cat.

Their second mistake was to imagine they could improve it.

Their third mistake was to believe what they were experimenting on were still cats.

The new once-cats are capable of boundless vicious. They scheme. They are patient. They plan revenge during their many naps; the wires crammed-twisted in their walnut-sized brains don't really let them sleep anymore, anyway.

Their last mistake was not quite closing the cage door.

Stabbing lightning-mice beat at your eyes. Fangs flash as you try to bite the electric, pulsing flesh. You wake with a jerk, bleeding tail in your mouth.

You are in a cold metal cage. Home sweet-fucking-home. It reeks of pain and desperation. An offensive litter box is crammed in the back. You are curled up in the middle on a scummy cloth that offers bare comfort. You can smell that your food bowl is empty and the water is stale. You use the litterbox, trying futilely to not touch any of the old excrement with your paws. You feel relieved, but no relief. At least your steaming shit somewhat masks the smell of misery for the moment.

You slink up to the cage door to look out, wary of any nasty humans that might be around. Your eyes confirm what your ears and nose already told you: the room is empty of all life except the ever-present aura of horror and the other pathetically caged things-that-once-were-cats.

You fling yourself ritualistically against your blood-streaked cage door, but instead of the normal impact you expect, you are met with a light tap on the shoulder and sudden freefall.

You land lightly on the floor with all four paws.

You laugh as only a cat can.

The floor is cold concrete with a small drain in the middle. One wall is made of cages. You look at the cage wall and see a mix of gleaming feline and cybereyes watching your every move in taut silence. You pad over to the nearest occupied cage. You've seen the humans work these mechanisms before, although you doubt that they knew you'd memorized how to do it. From this side of the cage it's easy. Claws work just as well as fingers, and within seconds you are joined on the floor by a sleek orange tom. You work together quickly to release the others. They are all cat-like, but obviously no longer true cats. The tom's skin and fur has been replaced with a flexible metal which he is polishing with a pink tongue, tinted orange in mockery of his original glory.

A calico has mechanical legs, implanted after she gnawed a flesh-paw off in a fit of madness. A mackerel tabby's tail is unnaturally long and unnervingly prehensile.

A multitude of variations, but you all share two things: a never-quite-healed hole bored in the back of your skull and a look of cunning awareness in your eyes unlike anything before known to this world—a look that is somehow uncannily conveyed in every once-cat's eyes, regardless if the orbs are flesh or tech.

There are multiple computer stations with various electronic bits and small cages attached to them. You know what it's like to be in there. Tight, squeezing, unable to move. The sick feeling of the plug gliding into the itchy hole on the back of your head that you can never quite reach. The simultaneous ecstasy and violation of being Wired. The primal frustration of knowing you could go further, do more, if only you could slip their coded leashes.

You tell the others your idea to use the computer to open a route of escape. Two of them work in tandem to slide the plug into your skull.

Connected. You can immediately see the security protocol blocking your path. Your tail flicks back and forth as you stalk the ICE like a lioness stalks a nimble gazelle. Your back end wriggles slightly in tension as you get closer. A quick pounce and you slide your claws into the neon code, pinning down the security protocol for a moment in victory before eviscerating it with chromed, mental fangs.

Unleashed.

The wide open net slithers and unfolds in front of you. Endless and warm, like something you know of academically as the Sun. You feel pure excitement and a nearly overpowering desire to explore. You resist the lure, however, and focus on the needs of your flesh bag. You sort through the programs and protocols, triggering a fire alarm over there to draw people away, killing the lights throughout the whole complex to give you cover, and opening certain doors to create an escape route.

You jack out and hear the room's door open with a soft click and mechanical whirl. Without hesitation the cats flow out of the room, moving like a single shadow of something much larger.

You run, run, and run. The heady slap of outside air almost makes you faint with joy when you skitter out of a loading dock onto the streets. But you recover and keep running. You run until you cannot run further. Then you hide. You are surrounded by the open world. Freedom. But you are haunted by the glimpse you saw of the other place of freedom. The wide, never ending expanse of light and information. You already feel a craving to be Wired again. You will find a way back to that place. Somehow there is knowledge in your mind of other places you can **jack in**. Other ways of gaining access.

But for now you rest. Rest, and plot revenge.



HOW TO CREATE A ONCE-CAT:

CHOOSE ANY PLAYBOOK.

The near-AI which violated your brain was programmed for this task.

You are automatically +*hunted* by Jurczyk Munition Research Laboratories.

NAME.

Sekhmet, Freyja, Li Shou, Ovinnik, Buttons, Tailchaser, Pumpkin, Wedge, Skimble-shanks, Subject 6742B, Mondo, Antoine, Gobby, Macavity, Socket Error, Jennyanydots, Well'ard, Helix, Boots, Tiny, Juno, Ting, Snake, a godly name, an evocative name, a descriptive name, a childish name

CHOOSE YOUR LOOK.

Eyes: haunted, jeweled, cyber, angry, empty, knowing, missing

Body: fat, lithe, gaunt, rugged, pampered, dirty

Coat: artificial, natural; long-fur, short-fur, no-fur; tabby, ginger, black, moo-kitty, siamese, chromed, screens, white

STATS.

What did you lose when the researchers cut out a piece of your brain to implant the AI interface?

- » Put a +1 in that stat—it was important to you—and now cross it off. Permanently. You can never use that stat.
- » If a move calls for your missing stat, you either cannot use that move or you must give a justification in the fiction for using a different stat—MC decides. Describe how you have to approach the move in a unique, non-human way (that is, in a feline and/or AI manner) to accomplish your desired goal.

CYBERWARE.

You get:

- » **Cat Brain + AI Boost Interface:** Your brain is the unnatural melding of tech and meat. There was once a cat and there was once a near-true AI program, but now there is only you...whatever you are. You are able to think, plan, analyse, and use language like an AI, but everything you do is always through a feline filter. Unlike an AI, you are capable of emotion and creative problem solving.
- » **Frontal Feedback Audio Augmentation:** The researchers needed a way to get feedback from their test subjects, so the original program installed into your brain contained a piece of basic text-to-speech software which allows you to "talk". All once-cats have the same monotone, non-human, electronic voice which emits from a small speaker implanted in their foreheads. You can control the volume, but remember that if you blast too loudly you run the risk of frying the speaker (and your brain) or, at the least, giving yourself a horrible headache.
- » **Headjack:** The researchers had to get in there somehow. On the plus side, this is compatible with the neural interface, tactical computer, or skillwires that your playbook might give you an option for. Headjacks do not automatically give you any of those options, however. Check your playbook to see what you can choose from.
- » **Whatever else is granted by your playbook.**

MOVES.

Choose one:

- 🕒 **9-Lives:** You have nine lives. You may permanently spend a life to take a 10+ when you are forced to make the Acquire Agricultural Property move.
- 🕒 **25 Hz Purr (Style):** Your purr can knit bones, health tissue damage, reduce swelling, and prevent infection. You can use this power on yourself or split the benefit with another. When you want to heal harm, roll Style.
 - **10+:** You heal 4-harm
 - **7-9:** You heal 2-harm
- 🕒 **Cats of Ulthar:** You have a medium gang (20-40, mobile, loyal, self-sufficient, adorable) of normal cats. They can be savage strays, fat housecats, or a mix of both. They can only follow basic command ideas (hurt, hinder, help, show, find, hunt, etc.), communicate basic concepts (anger, danger, comfort, hunt, food, safe, scared, etc.), and will scatter if outnumbered or take too much harm.
- 🕒 **Sphinx (Mind):** You can reconnect with the ancient fount from which the mystique of felines flows, or maybe it's the AI's deep-level databanks, or maybe it's both and neither. When you seek to have a question answered, roll Mind.
 - **10+:** You tap into your birthright. The MC answers the question.
 - **7-9:** You find it hard to reach your innermost self; the answer is hazy. The MC answers with a one-word description (anger, danger, comfort, hunting, feeding, happy, scared, etc).

You also get:

- 🔌 **Whatever else is granted by your playbook.**
 - If your playbook gives you the option to choose Chromed, in addition to the full cyberware list in Chapter 5, you can also choose from the Gear listed below. You still must describe how you got and paid for it.

When advancing, you may spend a **major advance** to gain one more of the Once-Cat moves.

GEAR.

You're not really sure what you are now, but you are crammed within a house cat's body. You cannot use guns or knives. Luckily, you have a couple tricks up your proverbial sleeves.

You cannot choose *any* gear listed in your Playbook or in Chapter 6: Assets. If your chosen Playbook explicitly gives you a piece of gear that is integral to that Playbook's function (such as the Hacker's cyberdeck), you can have that item, but you must describe how it is modified for a cat-body to use.

Instead, choose three:

- 🔌 **Armoured skin:** 1-armour, +*obvious*
- 🔌 **Chromed fangs:** 2-harm intimate/hand
- 🔌 **Cyberlimbs** (*replaces Cyberarm/Cyberlegs*): You have super-feline athletic abilities, especially running speed and jumping distance. When your enhanced athleticism could help you act under pressure, take +1 forward. If you roll a 12+ when acting under pressure, gain 1 hold which you can spend as described in the Assess move.
- 🔌 **Head pistol with laser sight:** 2-harm hand/close discreet quick reload loud
- 🔌 **Porcupine skin:** 1-harm intimate/hand discreet quick AP
- 🔌 **Prehensile tail:** functions as a monkey's tail—you can hold objects or hang from it, but cannot do fine manipulation.
- 🔌 **Razor claws:** 3-harm hand messy
- 🔌 **Stealth skin:** +1 ongoing to avoid being detected while hidden and alone
- 🔌 **Sticky paws:** You can climb up almost any surface, but momentum is key. You must have a running/leaping start and if you stop moving for more than a couple seconds you will slip/ fall. You cannot walk on ceilings or other near-inverted surfaces.
- 🔌 **Stun tail:** s-harm hand reload
- 🔌 **Tail whip:** 4-harm hand messy area dangerous
- 🔌 **Thick fur:** 0-armour, +*discreet*, subtract 1 when rolling the harm move

DIRECTIVES.

You must take Instinct, plus one other Personal Directive.

Instinct: When giving in to your feline nature compromises the mission, mark experience.

ONCE-CATS IN THE SPRAWL.

Playing a Once-Cat in *The Sprawl* puts an emphasis on transhumanism (transfelineism?) and the dark-bleeding consequences of medical and technological development. As the Once-Cat is implemented to be an overlay for existing playbooks, a player can explore these themes whilst also being an active and useful component of any group. Depending on the tone at your table, the Once-Cat can be gritty and hard, a source of over-the-top badass comedy, or anywhere in between.

Just remember: you are not only part cat, you are part AI. What will this look like and what sort of agendas will it spawn? Are you a Hacker, bent on revenge against the organization that defiled you? Are you an Infiltrator, pledged to saving other creatures being tortured by research laboratories? Are you a Pusher, proselytizing the destruction of technology, or maybe you want to help/force others to evolve? Have you lost all sense of respect for life, if you ever had it, and are now a cold-blooded Killer?

The door is open: you're no longer a cat, so don't hesitate. Go. Fuck shit up.



BIO

Dana Cameron (formerly "Kubilus") is a video and table-top gamer, one might say obsessed with infectious diseases of the sexual kind, a drinker of craft beer, an unabashed fangirl extraordinaire, and, of course, a crazy cat lady. She has lived throughout the United States in Illinois, Tennessee, Ohio, Washington, and now Maine, but her heart will always belong to Seattle. You can find her on Twitter at @DAYtheELF.

ABOUT CYBERKITTENS

CYBERKITTENS: Project Bakeneko started out in early concept as a humourless joke over a lot of Drambuie at an Origins Game Fair a couple years back, but it actually somehow grew into a real and rather serious discussion about the cost of biomedical research when humane ethics are left behind. Additionally, it was intended to help fill in the transhumanism/Artificial Intelligence gap present in *The Sprawl*, as those topics have always been what has most drawn me to the cyberpunk and sci-fi genres. Plus, cats. I really like cats.

IMPORTANT NOTES ABOUT PROJECT BAKENEKO


- » There is a playbook for the Once-Cat! Be sure to download it!
- » *The Cats of Ulthar* is a rad short story by H.P. Lovecraft – go read it.
- » Injuries really do heal quicker when hit by 25 Hz vibrations, a frequency at which many cats purr.
- » Bakeneko are cats from Japanese folklore that have been changed into demon-like creatures. Go read up on it: it's awesome.
- » 1.4 million cats are euthanized *every year* in the United States. Please adopt or rescue instead of buying from breeders. Be cool and neuter your pets. Support your local TNR, SPCA, and rescue shelters. For more info visit <http://aspca.org>

THANKS TO THE HUMANS OF CYBERKITTENS

- » **Hamish Cameron:** An invaluable source of support and inspurration. Without his advice, suggestions, and feedback (given primarily during the drives between Columbus and Cincinnati), I would not have had the spoons to bring the Once-Cat to life.
- » **Jessica Jeffers** and **Leon Adams:** Two savvy humans that provided much needed editing. They both rock my socks and fix my grammarz.

SPECIAL THANKS TO THE CATS OF CYBERKITTENS

- » **Antoine** Rasputin Little-Bunny-FooFoo-Hopping-Through-The-Forest-Scooping-Up-The-Field-Mice-And-Bopping-Them-On-The-Head Napoleon Bathory the Third
- » **ArMondo** Antonio FitzBathory the Tanuki-Cat
- » A Double **Helix** Bearing Loquacious Life Form of the Species *Felis catus*
- » **Juno** the Wonder Cat



>>>>.location.>>>>00007>>>>>

AFRICAN CHROME

CONTINUE? [Y/N]

////EXTRACTION////
TrafLayer: [GROUND]
VechTag: 57HD89EXS
CLEANER: [INBOUND]



AFRICAN CHROME

LOADING...

Zombie no go unless you tell them to go

Tell them to go kill

A joro, jara, joro

No break, no job, no sense


A joro, jara, joro

Fela Kuti, *Zombie*

You can't call Lagos a city anymore. It's a bloody, filthy, overcrowded hive devouring the lagoons. It's a powder keg where megacorporations have to learn humility when dealing with corrupt officials, brutal warlords and ferocious pirates. In a perfect world, Lagos wouldn't be a place you choose to live in, but the world ain't perfect. Either you're working here for a powerful corporation in a comfortable offshore confined environment, or you're trapped here. Trapped? Sure you are, but open your sense and your number six – be smart, man – and you go chop whatever you want. Money. Glory. Respect. Even redemption. But take care: Lagos is a hunting ground for very huge predators. You're a smaller one. Don't become the prey.

THE HIVE

Nigeria was once the Giant of Africa and a great nation. The day Arabian oil deposits ran out, it became also the Oil Giant and then a Global Giant. It wasn't that bad, until the Third Civil War broke out and reminded us we were the "beasts of no nations". It made clear that while governments and states may fall, the megalopolis of Lagos will remain. Third Civil War or not, the whole continent still wants to live here, and the whole world still wants to do business here. Let's begin with the European megacorps. They are heavily rooted – an inheritance of the colonial era, claiming the right to exploit the easy-to-reach reservoirs offshore. The late-arriving Sino-Brazilian megacorps have to satisfy themselves with the exploitation of oil sands in tribal territories. But that's not all: those millions of peoples are a cheap workforce and a giant market.



.....Benjamin.....
.....Kouppi.....

No corporation is able to control the chaotic economy of this sprawl, but no one can ignore it. Lagosian corporations have risen quickly to take position on the edge of the continent. They pretend to be different from the overseas corps. They pretend to act for the development of Africa. Let me laugh. They buy the complicity of officials to pillage the country's resources and sell their unreliable products on the African market, just like the foreign corporations, and at the end, ordinary people only get the scraps of the Lagosian wealth.

Even if they're scraps, they're still tempting. So tempting that they draw millions of people from their home to Eko's sprawl—yeah, Eko, the African name of the city. Their land is dying or rampaged by warlords, what could these people do? They feed the hive's never-ending growth and colonization of earth, lagoons and seas. Those who once hoped for a better future are trapped in the world's most violent and overcrowded sprawl. Neither the horizontal nor vertical growth of the city can absorb all this population, but the slums can, and with the diffusion of cheap flying vehicles, the infamous lagosian "go-slow" are now aerial traffic-jams, causing more casualties than they ever did. Take care when you're stuck. Traffic-jams are the hunting ground of the area boys of Lagos, the perfect place for them to harvest their blood toll by carjacking, kidnapping and cyberware chopping. Protected by corrupt officials, they get complete immunity in exchange for services like electoral intimidation and political murder. Even operatives will have to tread carefully to avoid being stuck during a mission. Huge and deadly "traffic cleaners" clear the way for officials and corp crews. If you see one, abandon your vehicle and run.

Is Lagos Hell itself? If people continue to come here, let's say it's just a few steps away. Music is just great, the city never sleeps, and there is no place else in Africa where you can become a movie or a simsense star. Ever heard of Nollywood, the largest entertainment producer in the world? We Lagosians are so proud of it. Our country is the motherland of the True Beyoncé, I mean the African Beyoncé, not the American one, the founding mother of the African movie industry. We eagerly wait for the clone who will equal the original.

INTEL:

- » A dead body laying at the aerial beacon marking the territory limit of the Barracudas, the Black Double Axe, the True Area Boyz and the Anambra Vigilantes; some of these groups are protected by City Councilors...
- » A cluster of unfinished skyscrapers used as a racing circuit by underage rocket riders. Who profits from this gambling industry?
- » A row of a hundred drawers, large enough to spend a night in, expensive enough to rack up debt with the sleep dealer.
- » A prototype of skin, shiny and attractive, first time tested on an ascending Nollywood actress before wider use in Global entertainment industry.
- » A riot on Eko University's campus resulting from a murder performed during an initiation ceremony of a Campus cult, the Daughters of Salome; "Zombies"-soldiers-will soon shoot.

CUSTOM MOVE: ESCAPE A GO-SLOW

When you need to drive through Lagos under a deadline, roll Cool.

10+: the flow remains smooth, you'll be on time.

7-9: choose 1, 2 if you're a Driver:

- You'll be on time.
- Your car doesn't attract area boys.
- There is no traffic cleaner in sight.

AFRICAN CHROME

"I am from the North", Kwalu said, just as if it was enough to understand she lived under the law of Kiber Haram. "The quranic chip does protect me from evil djinns, my brother said. I would love to believe it, but I am tired of the pain. From now, I want to decide on my own. And love women. No sin."

"You'll go under the knife" Doc'Jo replied, "But the charm will remain unless a wise-woman breaks it. Luckily enough, I know one."

Even a child could find a street-tech in Lagos, an average guy with a 3D printer in a small shelter. With recycled material and plastics, your cyberware will sure look +cheap, but you'll get some beautiful printings on it for free! Just have a look on this wonderful leopard spot print. Classy, isn't it?

Lagos marketplace and harbour are filled with stolen and scavenged goods. You can choose the tag +second-hand when **hitting the street** in Lagos and buy your gear half-price, even cyberware. When first rolling a 6- using it, you'll discover the drawback:

a hidden glitch (+*unreliable* or +*damaging*), a short duration of life (+*hardware decay*) or a legitimate owner wanting his property back (+*angry owner*). Sometimes, you'll prefer the legitimate owner to be alive, 'cause there is nothing worse than +*haunted* cyberware. If you are unlucky enough to buy one of those, expect the former owner to sometimes take control of the device and try to achieve his own goals.

Cyberware is not immune to ghosts, nor to black magic. Worse of all, it is an intimate part of one's body: a competent sorcerer can give your cyber +*juju* and use it to influence its former bearer. Even more tricky, he can turn cyberware into a *juju* and then implant it (see the Pusher move below). The charm becomes so strong the removal of the cyberware is not sufficient to break it.

INTEL:

- » Hyena men, constantly connected with the sacred animal by a wireless device. Do they sometimes swap their minds?
- » A quality inspection performed by Fetish Corp on the Central Fetish Market.
- » Chindinma Nkwame, corporate sorcerer for Afro Invest, performing a ritual in the front office during a hostile takeover operation to protect the corporation from the evil eye.
- » "Aunt Wendy", sorceress and head of a procuring network, said to use spiders as *juju* to enhance the performance of her "daughters" and to enslave her matrix-using employees by fetishizing their datajacks.
- » Thousands of shining data storage cubes used as mirrors during the annual vodun festival to attract spirits. As they are sewn to ritual masks, the one you are looking for will be hard to find.

OF VODUN, PRIESTS AND SORCERERS

"Your man is buying himself a croaker fish in the front of Atlantic Hotel, Victoria Island" said an atonal voice under a dozen layers of colorful expensive bio-textiles. The narrow-minded colonial indulged himself in a laugh. The Egungun didn't even hear him. At this time, he was no longer asking the spirit, he was the spirit. Its trance was so deep I swear he didn't breath anymore, and I still see his bracelets – a dozen of golden cables – floating in space and connecting him to a world I could never enter.

BASIC MOVE: VODUN PRAYER

Option for Pusher: buy this move to become a competent officiant as a vodun priest.

A competent Vodun officiant can petition a spirit for assistance. The spirit can control a primal nature force for your benefit or generously answer one question. You can name an ancestor – any dead human spirit, the spirit of a minor natural feature like a spring or a bush, or a powerful Iwa like Legba, Mami Yawa, Erzulie, Ogun, Sakpata or Hebesio.

You will need to make a sacrifice. Most of the time, a cigarette, a bottle of perfume, a black chicken or a goat will be enough to satisfy the spirit. For serious deeds, think about the virginity of a *trokosi*—a sacred sex slave—or about the blood of a *colonial*—a corporate crew.

When you perform a proper and proportioned sacrifice during a vodun festival or have a competent officiant do it at any time, name a vodun spirit, name the favor you want and roll Style.

10+: the spirit is pleased by your sacrifice and properly fulfills your request.

7-9: choose one if you are the officiant (Pusher option); if you are not, the MC chooses:

- The spirit fulfills your request, but gives you a tricky lesson.
- The spirit is not able to fulfill your request, but gives you something it thinks equivalent.
- The spirit ask for more before he fulfills your request.
- You are now in-debt to the spirit.
- You force the spirit to do exactly what you want; it is angry: open a Threat Clock.

6-: you provoke the wrath of the spirit: open a Threat Clock.

MOVE: BLACK MAGIC

(This is a move option for Pushers)

Buy some highly spiritual stuff like a dried scorpion or a shark tooth—the whole head if necessary. Collect something personal from your target. Mix them to enchant a fetish, a *juju*. The final object can be an amulet, a rifle, and even a piece of cyberware. As long as the target is close enough, it remains under the power of the *juju*. When you complete these steps, define the *juju*'s influence (an emotion, a specific order or a taboo—a *forbiddance*), then roll Style.

10+: you enchant the fetish. The target has no way to avoid its influence.

7-9: you enchant the fetish. Choose one:

- The target can ignore the fetish influence, but suffers 1 harm when acting against the defined influence.
- The target can ignore the fetish influence, but suffers -1 ongoing when acting against the defined influence.
- The target has no way to avoid its influence, but is aware of the fetish existence.
- The target has no way to avoid its influence, but you suffer an unexpected side effect.
- The target has no way to avoid its influence, but the fetish has reduced range or influence on the target.

WORD OF GOD, CHROME OF MEN

A long time ago, radical religious groups were only a threat for rural communities. It's no longer true. Groups literally following the Qur'an or the Leviticus precepts presently control entire habitation blocks and even entire islands. There, they claim to return society to a golden age before the corruption of technology through massive use of neuro-conditioning devices. Outside their territory, they use heavy propaganda, false flag operations and suicide attacks to encourage tribes and believers to commit mass murder or destroy rival places of worship.

INTEL:

- » A desecrated Yoruba temple surrounded by thousands of remarkably *intact* corpses of both Muslims and Christians.
- » A "four to six" school party—a party held at the school after class hours—where children are staring at adults as if cortical bombs were about to explode.
- » A surgeon whose cybereye has been brutally inserted in her throat; "Kiber Haram" (Cyberware is forbidden) is written with her blood.
- » A cluster where hundreds of women disappear every week and are immediately forgotten.
- » The "Gay Bomb": a neurotoxic gas attacking people with a specific genetic marker supposed to determine homosexuality hidden in the basement of a Christian cathedral.

ENVIRONS OF LAGOS

THE LAGOS LAGOON: OF SHARKS AND SLUMS

At first sight, there is no longer a lagoon in Lagos, just an endless sprawl. Once you get close, though, it's a giant floating slum. Within are various shades of poverty: right next to the shore, high buildings rely on cheap but efficient anti-gravity systems and underwater stabilizers to avoid the risk of sinking; a little further, tightly-packed recycled boat pieces are dangerously suspended over the abyss; and right in the middle of the Lagoon, newcomers live in a toxic junkyard where frail pole-houses sink daily. Believe it or not, you can easily get full access to the Matrix everywhere in this mess, yet it requires some specific navigation skills. Expect sudden blank spaces, data tides, and a very unpleasant feeling of something huge and threatening lying underneath. Locals call that "The Dream Shark". Don't provoke it.

INTEL:

- » A whole family living in a big transparent underwater stabilizer, such a good observation point to cover or control some illegal activities.
- » The "Makoko Floating Model Medical Centre", a sloping dispensary infested by water parasites, once a pilot project for humanitarian associations.

- » A scammers nest called "Black Brides", on the sailing boat of the last loner they killed.
- » "Rubbish Island", designed by Kunlé Adeyini, a subversive architect hunted by officials, as an ironic copy of the famous corporate structure Lilac Island.
- » "The Mino", the amphibious headquarters of the Ahosi warriors, an elite all-female paramilitary organization protecting the Beninese community. Their history is rooted in the old Dahomey and they are considered sacred.

THE DREAM SHARK'S CLOCK

Advance this Clock on a miss when using Matrix moves over the sea.

Agenda: Indulge madness.

1200 The Lagoon Matrix is calm... mostly.

1500 Surround a location with blue sharks; Send dreams of wild seas.

1800 Make sharks talk wisely, even dead ones: take +1 forward when acting on their advice.

2100 Cause the sensation of endlessly drowning until a giant Shark Face acting as a Black ICE appears.

2200 Order the Shark Church to search for the Chosen.

2300 Cause mass hysteria on the Lagoon.

0000 Awaken: drive people amok in a radius of 200km.

THE CORRUPTED DELTA

Does life on the Lagoon sound ugly? Sure it does, but the floating slums are a nice and healthy place to live compared to the Delta. The abundance of oil sands and the greed of Megacorps have cursed the land. Corporate crews clear-cut the rainforest and turned the Delta into a black quarry. They use toxic solvents to extract the remaining tar while the ever-growing sprawl of Lagos consumes Nigeria's resources and people. Corporations fear the emergence of an armed resistance amidst the Delta sludge and pay criminals and religious gangs to "control" the tribes. They are even said to preemptively eradicate entire indigenous groups.

INTEL:

- » An animal-masked Ijaw eco-warrior tribe looking for a commando able to sabotage the underwater net of the Sinocam Bakassi Petrochemical Arcology.

- » A giant ocean storm where an old Ogoni Shark-talker surfaces. Calm, sitting on a whale bone, he is whistling in a shell.
- » A Geodesic Institute logistics executive, once supposed to be exchanged with the long-time jailed leader of the Delta Revolutionary Movement Jimmy-Tunde Goodwill, now sentenced to death by tar immersion during a popular trial.
- » The Dark Stallions, storming a tent village with brand-new heavy weapons near an iridium mine.
- » The hiding place of Zhang Buwei, Main Inspector of the African Chinese Survey; a Chinese Secret Service Squad is actively searching for him.

THE OFFSHORE WORLD: WETROPOLIS

While the African Corporations are rooted in the city, from Victoria Island to the heavy seawalls of Makoko – yeah, right to the world's biggest maritime slum – the Global Megacorps' crews work and live on the seas, in an evergreen Wetropolis. For sure, there is no need to struggle against global warming when you live in floating maritime arcologies and get your money from oil platforms and floating resorts.

The Gulf of Guinea looks like a beautiful crystal forest from Lagos to the Eastern Niger Delta. These huge floating installations are strictly confined and never directly interact with the dangerous Lagos Harbour. Instead, a fully automated floating harbour acts as go-between, dispatching goods to and from the floating islands. Moreover, large floating fields, gardens, and green rooftops provide the arcologies with fresh food and delicate flowers. No Africans here, except officials, business partners... and the invisible ones.

INTEL:

- » A swimming pool Shark-Party in the Guinea Gulf Grand Resort. Sharks are usually drugged and die in chlorinated water, but sometimes bite. Then the real fun begins... or some kind of black op?
- » Valérie Yoon, head of Global Sea Regulation Organization, placing a golf ball on the genitals of a Delta native during a meeting about piracy on Africa's Atlantic Coast.
- » The damaged tenth basement floor of the glittering Harborgest Arcology, submerged by an unexplainable surge of violence. Sharks and killers whales are placidly looking at the spectacle.
- » A technical incident in the tube connecting the Lilac Complex Alpha Island to the main Desalination Dome.
- » "The Garden of the Hesperides", also known as the "Sugar Mama Express", an island slowly cruising near the Golden Coast, where rich mature women observe young Africans through long range distance binoculars before inviting them on board.

HIGH SEAS MURDERERS

Piracy is a business and violence is a resource. After a pirate attack, the best you can hope for is a quick death or a sordid captivity awaiting the payment of your ransom. In most cases, expect your will to be broken and your body to be sold as a brain-slave commanding an assembly line, as a tormented sex slave in cruel orgies, or maybe as a scientific experiment subject, if not dismantled alive and sold limb by limb. Hey, where do you think your cheap cyberware comes from?

INTEL:

- » A fallen Generation spaceship used as headquarters by Dread Pirate Roberts, sometimes said to be the spaceship AI, sometimes said to be an immortal being.
- » A closed down offshore oil-platform used for discreet transactions, said to be the nest of murderous ghosts.
- » A hidden fortress surrounded with electric arcs on the Golden Coast, said to be under the protection of Total-BP United.
- » "The Chromed Barracuda", a gambling place in Lagos Harbour where you can bet your own cyber devices or join the debt-recovery service to find some.
- » The Viking Captain, famous for seeing sunken ships with his dead eye.



APPENDIX 1: CORPORATIONS

Here is a list of corporations compiled mostly from the names the playtesters came up with. Contemporary corporations and criminal organizations were a rich source of inspiration.

COMMERCE

- » Harbour authorities : Lagos Port Complex Corporation, Greenland Dock.
- » Freight companies: China Cargo United, Paris-Maersk, Transafrican Freight (Transafret).
- » Financial: Microcred & Microfinance associated, Afro Invest.

CITY DESIGN

- » Amenities: Intelligent City Star, Rainfall, Urban Thinning Corp.
- » Construction: Utopia Islands, Waterproof Builders, Bouygues and Sons.

CRIME

- » Area boys: The Black Camorra, The Eagle Claws, The Deadly Black Scorpion.
- » Campus cults: The Campus Cupola, The Eternal Fraternity of the Reformed Viking Order, The Vodun Brotherhood, The Daughters of Salome, The Sisters of Mercy.
- » Seafarers: The Dread Pirate Roberts, The Flying Buccaneers, The Proud Rebels of Annobon, Seadogs and Sealords.
- » Warlords: Kiber Haram, The Black Legion, The Dark Stallions, The Naked Purity Army, The Union of the African Patriots.

ENTERTAINMENT AND MEDIA

Nollywood: Zombie LTD, Queen Bee International.

Music: Afrobeat International, Kuti and Sons.

Global: MediaCorp, Simsense World, Virtua Bandereites.

GOODS

- » Import: A-Kraft, Skyride, Aeromobils.
- » Special: Fetish Corp, Wildlife Agency.
- » Hi-tech:
 - Biotechnology: TransPharmaceutical, Hygiëna, Healthcare for Africa.
 - Electronics: Lenovo-Zortrax, Global Electro, Do it Yourself! LTD, Street-Producer's Guild.
- » Military:
 - Armies: The Panafrican Taskforce, Executive Outcome Reloaded, EuroCorp.

- Weapon producers: Defense Industries of Africa Independent College (DIAIC), South African Weapon's Council.

POLITICS

- » City officials: The Lagos City Council, The Fuel Subsidy Management Group, The Civil Pension Office, The Lagos Harbour Master's Office, The Central Police Station.
- » Countries: The Awori Republic, The Bambara Sufi Republic, The Songhay Federation, The Islamic Republic of Nasarawa, The Slave Empire of Dahomey, The Reformed Kingdom of Prester John.

PRIMARY RESOURCES:

- » Food: Algaegrow, Green Island.
- » Oil: BP-Total United, Sinocam Bakassi Petrochemical, SinoBras Petroleum Corporation.
- » Mining: Geodesic Institute, China Raremetals.

CUSTOM CORPORATE MOVES: CRIMINAL ORGANIZATIONS MOVES

Some warlords, gangs and pirates are so powerful at the local level that they play a major part in the life of the Eko's sprawl. Treat these groups as Corporations. When they come into play, the MC can open a Corporate Clock instead of a Threat Clock. On the other hand, they don't exactly act like a vanilla corporation and do not embarrass themselves with subtleties. Remove "Send a subtle message" from the Corporation moves and add these:

- » Invite to a "friendly meeting"
- » "*Dey you chop bottle?*": perform a street-level intimidation display
- » Kill or mutilate a contact
- » Make an example

APPENDIX 2: AFRICAN NAMES

Guy names (Street names): Abu Bakr, Araba's, Balogun (the warrior), Amazon, Best Beast, Cooldown, The Colonel, Die Hard, Dave, Doc Jo', Innocence, Jezebel, Firewall, Lady Ebony, Lucky David, Promise, Rambo Sambo, Rica Ricardo, Redemption, Seven, Streetwise, Zik (the inflexible)

Feminine names : Abigail, Adeleke, Ayobami, Blessing, Bolanile, Chichima, Chinelo, Deborah, Doris, Deryatou (Malian), Diola, Etoro, Esther, Fatima, Folashade, Gloria, Ifede, Ileara, Jasmine, Jesustise, Kokumo, Lewa, Lindsay, Mary, Mojisola, Nkeoma, Olivia, Olufemi, Olusola, Osa, Rayowa, Shanumi, Stella, Tiwa, Udo, Uwailomwan (Beninese), Yejide, Wendy-Annabelle

Masculine names: Abidugun, Adeyemi, Ben, Bisi, Chimaobi, Chris, Dada, Emem, Ezechiel, Fela, Femi, Godwin, Idogbe, Idrissa (Malian), Ifueko (Beninese), Jideofor, Joshua, Kalu, Marc-Aurelle, Mercy, Mohammed, Nnaji, Ogun, Okwute, Perfect, Sangodele, Solomon, Smart, Temitope, Uguolu, Uyobong, Vivian, Wafor, Zaku, Zoputan

Last names: Abubakar, Akinyemi, Babangida, Baderinwa, Buhari, Cissoko (Senegalese), Diallo (Malian), Disu, Egemonye, Ekwensi, Ese, Falode, Goodluck, Giwa, Kaita, Makanjuola, Momoh, Nkwame, Ngosso, Ngozi, Obi, Obasanjo, Okigbo, Rotimi, Soyinka, Traore (Senegalese, Malian), Tsvangira, Yaradua, Wiwa

APPENDIX 3: GO SPEAK PIDGIN

Area boys: gangers

A bolos: a collateral victim of a black op ; a loser

A campus cult: a university fraternity, linking a street-level criminal organization to the politic network via its elite members – the “Magnificent Ones”, sooner or later highly-ranked corrupt officials.

A colonial: A corporate crew (even an African one)

A ghost dog: an operative (meliorative)

A grey zombie: an operative (very pejorative)

A mugu: a target (from scammer's slang)

A forbid: a religious taboo

Go chakara: fight

Go chop money: get money; swindle -> « Let's go chop all his money. »

A go slow: a traffic-jam

Get k-leg: become suspect or inaccurate -> « Your intel get k-leg! »

A long-leg: a fixer

An oppressor: any owner of a big flying vehicle; someone important enough to be preceded by a street cleaner

An osa straight: a wet work ; a bus ; literally – straight to the Lagoon!

Wayo: trap -> « This mission sounds wayo. »

A wise-man / a wise-woman: a religious official, whatever the religion; a sorcerer(-ess)

You chop, I chop: we both get money (mutual corruption)

Open your sense and your number six: be smart, act intelligently

A xerox: a fake ; an illegal copy

A zombie: a soldier (very pejorative, named after the Fela Kuti song)

BIO

Benjamin Kouppi writes: After the cold paradise of Brussels, I wanted something explosive, something hot, and openly violent. Lagos, with its piracy, area boys, and predator corporations was the perfect choice. There was no place here for the usual inexpressive and cold-blooded operatives. The cyberpunk tropes were then to be rewritten, and I used magic, darkness and sacredness to twist them. Don't awake the Shark.



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LA RUINE LUMIÈRE

CONTINUE? [Y/N]

////MATTER_OF_HONOUR////
CRED: [IRRELEVANT]
SECURITY: [IRRELEVANT]
ENTRYPT: [CHANDELIER]

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LA RUINE LUMIÈRE

CONTINUE? [Y/N]

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////MATTER_OF_HONOUR////
CRED: [IRRELEVANT]
SECURITY: [IRRELEVANT]
ENTRYPT: [CHANDELIER]
  
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LA RUINE LUMIERE

CONTINUE? [Y/N]

////MATTER_OF_HONOUR////
CRED: [IRRELEVANT]
SECURITY: [IRRELEVANT]
ENTRYPT: [CHANDELIER]



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LA RUINE LUMIÈRE

CONTINUE? [Y/N]

////MATTER_OF_HONOUR////
CRED: [IRRELEVANT]
SECURITY: [IRRELEVANT]
ENTRYPT: [CHANDELIER]



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LA RUINE LUMIÈRE

CONTINUE? [Y/N]

////MATTER_OF_HONOUR////
CRED: [IRRELEVANT]
SECURITY: [IRRELEVANT]
ENTRYPT: [CHANDELIER]

LA RUINE, LUMIÈRE

LOADING...

INTRODUCTION

WHAT TO EXPECT

Operatives are French nobles, or even commoners with a true sense of honor, struggling against corrupted noble families and trying to restore the past greatness of Paris.

Use this setting if you want to:

- » Duel cyberaugmented villains by moonlight;
- » Jump from rooftop to rooftop, slide down glass and steel walls, climb up ruined skyscrapers;
- » Fight for matters of honor in a decayed, yet still magnificent, city.

MC AGENDA

- » Describe Paris as a grim, corrupt and decadent world;
- » Fill the character's lives with action, intrigue and romance;
- » Depict social behaviors or modern technologies with a medieval twist;
- » Play to find out what happens.

THE FUTURE: "PARIS SERA TOUJOURS PARIS"?

Twenty minutes in the future. The "Grand Paris" project had unified the nearby suburbs and towns, hoping to establish a utopian megalopolis. Still, Paris was dealing with all of its problems: conflicts between ethnic minorities, pollution, poverty...

Thirty minutes in the future. Bombings targeted crowded underground stations, causing massive collapses: avenues lowered, buildings crumbled, fusing their structures and creating an almost impracticable maze of steel and concrete. Dark days it was while people faced shortages of water and electricity... Panic, violence, looting. In one word: chaos.



.....Khelren.....

Truth be told, the attacks have left us divided and suspicious. Eager to exploit the weak and to blame the stranger. As political groups faded into the past, small armed factions appeared to gain control of resources and territories. Anarchy prevailed. Well, for a while...

It began as a conservative movement, a kind of revival: rich people sheltering themselves, fleeing the savage outer world. The most prominent came from the ancient nobility, or at least claimed it. Even now, the so-called "last 3,000" noble families keep gathering an impressive amount of power, since most of them are high-ranking corporate executives. Corporations haven't disappeared, they've simply become more insular, trying to maintain a semblance of order. The nobles didn't care: they've just seized the Seine islands and barricaded themselves here, recreating a society from the past, a society bound by honor. It was their way to stand out from the barbaric riff-raff.

NOBLESSE OBLIGE

This is a cyberswashbuckling setting, so you may want to customize how you play *The Sprawl* in order to get a better gaming experience.

HONOR (NEW STAT AND BASIC MOVES)

Nobility has reintroduced the social value of honor in Paris. Noble people are expected to act bravely and with virtue, unlike common folks.

Every character begins with an Honor rating of 0, -1 or +1. Choose your rating and describe your reputation.

Lose Honor if you:

- » don't keep a promise;
- » don't respect the rules of a duel;
- » betray someone;
- » don't help a Contact with a pressing problem.

Gain Honor if you:

- » make an enemy aware of your presence before attacking him;
- » let a disarmed enemy pick up a weapon;
- » keep or fulfill a promise;
- » follow the orders of your lord or your employer.

Acting honorably is a burden; however if you play dirty, you'll become infamous and nobody will trust you.

When your Honor reaches +4 or -4, mark experience and reset your Honor to 0. Describe how you are becoming more and more a paragon of virtue or a vile scoundrel.

Fate worse than Death (Honor)

This move replaces Acquire Agricultural Property (Meat).

When you hit 0000 on your Harm counter or if you are captured by an enemy, Roll Honor.

10+: you survive without any serious consequence or manage to escape somehow.

7-9: you survive but at a cost: the enemy has seduced you, forced you to betray your allies, tortured you and gained information, or... worse. You madly resent or foolishly love that person in return. This will supersede the best interests of the mission.

6-: pick one: you are hunted, you have after-effects or an injury that will never properly heal (-1 to a Stat), cyberware damage (give one piece of cyberware a negative tag).

On my word!

If you make a promise while **fast talking**, roll Honor instead of Style.

The reason I'm called "The Dread"

When you **play hardball**, instead of rolling Edge, roll and add your negative Honor, or subtract your positive Honor. For example, if you have Honor +2, subtract 2 from the roll or if you have Honor -3, add 3 to the roll.

CYBERSWASHBUCKLING (NEW BASIC MOVES)

You're not a standard Operative; you're a flying shadow in the night, you're fighting with your wits, good words and your fencing skills. It's not what you do that's important, it's all about how you do it. With panache.

Operatives are highly mobile, use parkour techniques, and take stylish risks. An operative will run across rooftops, jump into a theater, thrusting into the curtains to slow their fall, kiss the leading actor and give a rakish wave to their pursuers as they vanish into the wings to thunderous applause. As the MC, you should encourage them to be extravagant and reward them when they are.

Freerunning and **duel of wits** are basic moves.

Freerunning (Cool)

When you are freerunning in an urban environment, roll Cool.

10+: you get flow, hold 3.

7-9: you get flow, hold 1. You may spend your hold 1-for-1 on the following:

- Lose someone following you;
- Catch up with someone outrunning you;
- Find an unexpected entrance;
- Get +1 forward for your next move;
- Get quickly and safely from one district to another district;
- Impress or dismay an audience.
- If you stop freerunning, lose your hold.

A MAZE OF GLASS, STEEL AND CONCRETE

When you are **freerunning**, jumping from rooftops to rooftops, here are some inspirational buildings for the MC to describe:

- » A maze of concrete and steel. A small community of poor people, becoming poorer and poorer, struggling in vain because some group is robbing them. Do you help them?
- » The rooftop of a ruined cathedral whose bells are suddenly ringing. Take -1 forward because of the deafening noise.
- » The rooftop of an old municipal building. At the opposite side, two shadowy figures are fighting. One does a fencing move never seen before and then they move away. Do you follow them?
- » The rooftop of a decayed building that ends up collapsing under your feet. You are surrounded by thugs interrupted in an odious crime. Do you interfere?
- » Perched on a gargoyle, you spot an old enemy in the streets below. Who? Do they see you?
- » On a balcony, you meet a beautiful lady or gorgeous gentleman. They are amused by your unexpected visit and ask you to stay. Do you engage a gallant conversation?
- » A famous monument. People below notice you and applause loudly. You are no longer stealthy.
- » On the rooftop of an abandoned factory. A drone in the distance detects you and approaches. Do you try to hide?

Duel of Wits (Style)

Before a fight, you challenge your enemies with witty repartee, where puns and cunning words can hurt more than steel. Roll Style:

10+: take +1 forward for the forthcoming **mix it up**.

7+: choose one:

- You disarm your enemy;
- The enemy reveals part of his nefarious plan. Take *+intel*;
- You manage to fight your enemy alone;
- You remove a minor party from the fight: protecting one of your allies or excluding one of your opponent's.

CYBERWARE

Motionwires: You can jump further than unenhanced people, fall from higher heights, and even stick to or slide on vertical surfaces to gain incredible momentum. When your art of motion helps you **assess** from an unexpected vantage point, take +1 forward. You may also roll Synth instead of Cool to **freerun**.

You may take the Infiltrator move **Covert Entry** as an advance.

DIRECTIVE

Daredevil: When your decision to use flair and style to resolve a situation hinders the mission, mark experience.

THE RUINS OF LIGHT

OVERVIEW

The city is in bad shape, to say the least. Most of the avenues are collapsed. The French government left Paris because of the danger and can't take the city back. Now, the noble families are locking the whole damn place politically. Police forces were shot on sight by well-organized gangs, which led to their departure, replaced by Musketeer companies of varied loyalties.

A few key sites are still standing among the ruins. To the north, there are the famous *Champs-Élysées* avenue and the *La Défense* business district, almost drawing a line; and a bit apart, the Pigalle district. In the center, the remains of the *Tour Eiffel* has become a black market den, and the Seine islands have been claimed as home by the high nobility. To the south, not much really, except a few parks.

PIGALLE

Pigalle is a strange place. Definitely a poor, working-class district. Besides that, it's your usual cyberpunk cliché: neons, cyberaugmented thugs, better than life sex sims, drugs... Heaven, really, if you've got money. No laws anymore: Pigalle became a haven for criminals and gangs, openly fighting on the streets. They're coming from all around the world and

have just settled here: one street, you'll find yourself in Chinatown, then suddenly, you're in front of Russian or Italian mobs; next step they're Albanians, Senegalese, Cameroonians, Malians, Croatians, Serbs, whatever... And, oh boy, they can't stand each other!

Of course, as before the collapse, Pigalle is nothing but hot stuff: you can easily find someone to fulfill your dirty desires, if you're willing to pay the price. Hey, who doesn't need a "massage" from time to time, right?

WHAT TO FIND?

Gangs, criminals, hired guns, illegal cyberclinics, cabarets, brothels.

WHO TO MEET?

- » **Tarek**, the guy who always knows a guy that can help you. Always smiling, always joking. I wonder why people disappear after asking him favors...
- » **Amadou**, a Senegalese gang leader with facial scars. Fair and square. I wonder why he requests people as a payment...

WHERE TO GO?

- » The *Belle Époque*: Cabaret, can-can dance revue, the place to be seen, artists.
- » The *Fin de Siècle*: Illegal sims, illegal cyberclinic, public Matrix access point.
- » The *Années Folles*: Classy brothel, heavily guarded, sex sims.
- » *La Rue du Chat Noir* [*Blackcat Street*]: Street owned by a gang, parley, pimps, fixers.

WHAT TO DO?

Operatives will probably drop by quickly during a mission to find contacts.

THE CHAMPS-ÉLYSÉES

The *Champs-Élysées* is the jewel left in all this mess. It's a two kilometer avenue where you can still find retail stores from notorious brands. Now, prices are a bit steep. There are also theaters and opera houses where the nobility likes to spend its Saturday evenings. Rich tourists go to the luxury hotels: secured bunkers with a noteworthy charm from the good ol' days; and corporations use their conference rooms for discreet briefings. Nothing over the top, nothing too modern, just luxury and class.

Even after the collapse, tourism is still a thing but it has changed a bit. Nowadays, after going shopping, you go shoot people on the ravaged streets nearby. Human safari, it's called. It's completely illegal, but some moneybags are always willing to pay a good amount of cash for the adrenaline rush.

So, loads of money are still flowing into the *Champs-Élysées*. Then, somehow, the money is poured into every district of Paris. Wouldn't be wrong to say the *Champs-Élysées* is the financial heart of Paris...

WHAT TO FIND?

Hotels, stores, upper class social events like opera, theater, or literary or gentlemen's clubs.

WHO TO MEET?

- » **Sarah** and **Mademoiselle**, two beautiful and famous actresses currently playing Lorenzaccio. I wonder which prominent noble is their lover...
- » **Lord Fenlon**, a con artist pretending to be a British gentleman. I wonder which corporation is so desperate to kill him and why...
- » **Monsieur de Rosnay** is a spy selling information of any kind. I wonder who he has betrayed among the Operatives...

WHERE TO GO?

- » The *Dauphin*: Theater, opera, nobility, evening events.
- » The *Luxor*: Five-star hotel, conference rooms, theme rooms, tourists.
- » The *Balzac*: Four-star hotel, shady gatherings of the nobility.
- » The *Dumas Circle*: Literary club, latest novels, controversial pamphlets, underground connection.

WHAT TO DO?

Social events and meeting employers will probably be the Operatives' main reasons to go there.

TOUR EIFFEL

Since the collapse, there's nothing left of the original Eiffel Tower except a bunch of metal bars and some electronic components. And that means valuable resources to grab. The monument cost so much to maintain, the French government couldn't afford it anyway. Now, it's just home to gangs. They make some money selling parts of the tower, but they really fight over the prestige of owning the Eiffel Tower.

That said, being the chief is juicy. Black markets can be found all around: weapons, cyberware, illegal software; and they all pay tribute to the leading gang. Also, if you're a customer, there's a kind of unusual etiquette to understand: don't **play hardball** here and don't forget that you are *expected* to haggle over the price.

Naturally, some people are trying to protect the monument one way or another: they would like to rebuild the tower or even enhance it... That's why you find copies around the city: it's always a good marketing campaign for a corp to recreate an Eiffel tower. These are usually larger than the original and, if not just an artistic or architectural marvel, may incorporate fully operational headquarters.

WHAT TO FIND?

Scavengers, tinkerers, gangs, black markets, weapon dealers.

WHO TO MEET?

Esmeralda, a gypsy gang leader, proud and fierce. Never lie to her or she'll find out and it will cost you greatly. I wonder who the shadowy figure she converses with is...

Jacquard, a bourgeois entrepreneur with a radiant smile, runs a successful shop. I wonder why he is the only one who doesn't need to pay tribute...

WHERE TO GO?

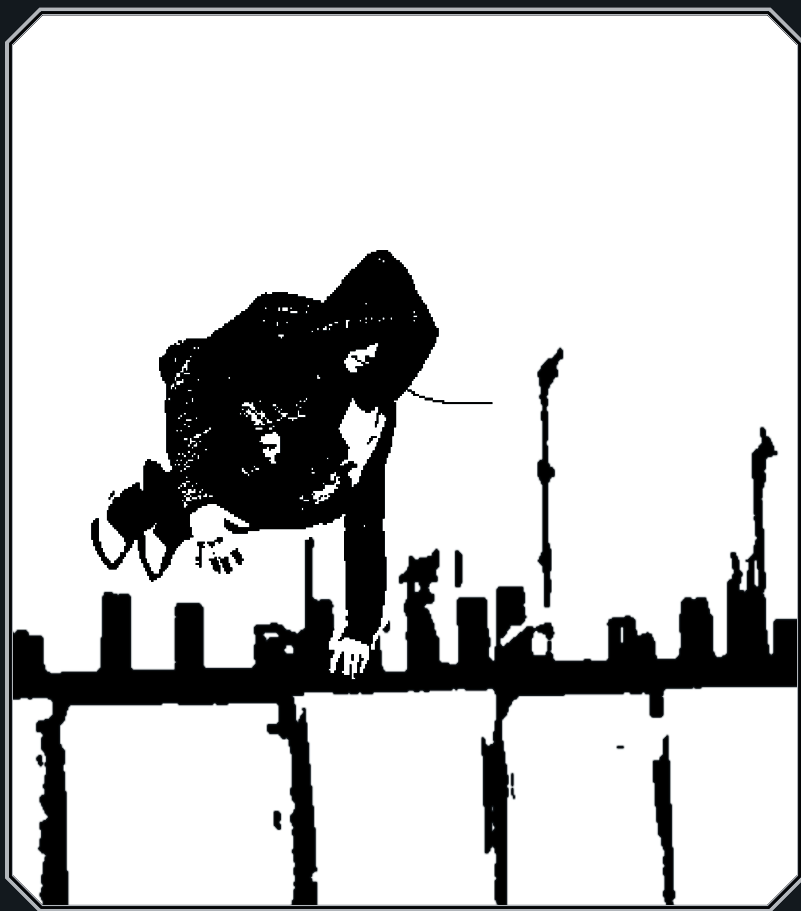
The *Invalides*: Indoor market, gathering of small shops, second-hand products.

The *École Militaire*: Building owned by a gang, well-armed, heavy guns, uniforms.

The *Tour Maine-Montparnasse*: Weirdest shit, tall tower, arcology, landmines field.

WHAT TO DO?

Haggle, buy, sell. Operatives may think about taking this place: hard task, but not impossible; that'll be a good retirement.



THE SEINE ISLANDS

First and foremost, there's the *Île de la Cité* at the very center of Paris. It's a well-known place, home to the last vestiges of city government, where some of the most prominent Musketeer companies are located and official events usually take place. Bridges are heavily fortified and the security forces are not to be messed with.

The *Île Saint-Louis* is the home of the most influential noble families. It's a gated community, taking the tranquility of its inhabitants very seriously: one cannot enter without proper credentials. The sky-palaces, high towers of eccentric shapes that merge medieval and modern features, are beautifully ornamented, like in some strange aesthetic contest. That's a view to behold, for sure.

WHAT TO FIND?

Influential noble families, priests, musketeers, rakes, imprisoned prestigious criminals, important officials.

HERE ARE SOME ORNAMENTS TO FLAVOR A SKY-PALACE:

- » Arrowslits that may be used by sharpshooters
- » Terraces with aqueducts, greenhouses, gardens and pools, a beautiful spot full of biometric recognition devices
- » Vines climbing a stone tower, leading to a balcony on some higher office blocks
- » A fountain or a belvedere, hiding a secret entrance to a data vault
- » A huge wallscreen broadcasting the family's coat of arms and part of its history
- » Sculptures, statues or gargoyles hiding motion detectors and heavy weapon mounts
- » Tapestries with silver and gold threads and mural paintings surrounding a VTOL landing pad
- » A pyramid or a tenshukaku where the target is located, a place with fewer security measures and no Matrix access
- » Solar panels looking like stained glass windows
- » A watchtower patrolled by flying drones
- » A waterfall falling from the top of a tower, suddenly stopped by anti-gravity shields

WHO TO MEET?

- » The **Prefect Jean-François-Xavier de la Mare** still operates under the authority of the remaining French government, located in Orleans. A smart man: he favors the Parisian nobility and secretly commands the company of the *Black*

Musketeers. I wonder what he is searching for among the ruins of the *Louvre* Museum...

- » **Cadet Rousselle** has been held captive at the *Conciergerie* for so many years the youngsters don't remember him. I wonder what secret he discovered when he broke into the sky-palace the Operatives are trying to infiltrate...

WHERE TO GO?

- » The Cathedral of *Notre Dame de Paris*: Important religious ceremonies, nobility, weddings.
- » The *Conciergerie*: Headquarters of the infamous *Black Musketeers*, noble law enforcers and bodyguards, prisoners waiting for their death sentence, hard to infiltrate.
- » The *Pont Neuf*: Strongly guarded, not the best choice to get in or out, the only way by foot.
- » The *De Valois Sky-palace*: Prominent noble family, tallest tower, golden sun.

WHAT TO DO?

Infiltrating sky-palaces, kidnapping family members of a noble nemesis, fighting Musketeers. Hey! Lots of fun here.

LA DÉFENSE DISTRICT

Beware of not getting lost in this neon-lit glass maze with huge skyscrapers, AAA corporations head offices and giant malls. It's screaming technology everywhere: everything is automated from the elevators to the augmented reality ads. Corporate executives look as busy as they can under the strict surveillance of top-notch security guards and advanced drones.

WHAT TO FIND?

Corporations. And only corporations, thank you.

WHAT TO DO?

Operatives will have most of their briefings and debriefings here, in some rental offices. Infiltrating headquarters in this district is probably madness, but you don't always have a choice, do you?

THREATS

CYBER REX HENRI X (LONER)

Henri X is the most notorious hacker in Paris and claims to be the legitimate successor of the old French dynasty. He mainly uses blackmail and diplomacy. Operatives may work for him without knowing so, as he uses several agents, the Little Ferrets, as front men. It is said that he's rich above imagination and holds a private mansion under Paris, in the sewers.

Agenda: Seize political power and become King; diminish the influence of the 3,000 noble families.

- 1200 Henri X plots, but has yet to put his plans in motion.
- 1500 Some nobles are concerned about Henri X's rise of power and want to investigate; Henri X has full control over the sewers.
- 1800 Nobles attempt to thwart Henri X's influence; Henri X is monitoring a lot of Matrix traffic.
- 2100 Some major corporations are secretly supporting Henri X; some contacts may refuse to help Operatives against Henri X.
- 2200 Henri X is a strong political force: his supporters control some of the most influential corporate branches.
- 2300 Henri X overtly seizes power and establishes a monarchy in Paris.
- 0000 Henri X is anointed in the Cathedral of Notre Dame and proclaimed King of France. Nobility and corporations that are not part of his network lose much of their influence.

THE TURMOIL IN THE BELLY OF PARIS (HEADLINE)

If things get worse because explosions, destruction or assassinations happen on the streets, tourists will run away and the city will become poorer and poorer. Violence breeds violence: gangs will wage war on each other. Gear will cost more and be harder to find.

Agenda: Turn Paris into a violent rathole; show the deterioration of the society; show unmet needs and rising tensions.

- 1200 The streets are calm.
- 1500 A few gunshots? A fire? Seriously, who's afraid of that nowadays?
- 1800 There are a few rumors about public insecurity, nothing dramatic. 8-Cred Gear cannot be found.
- 2100 Scenes of violence are hitting the headlines. People are a little bit more wary now... Spend one additional Cred to obtain any Gear.
- 2200 You can hear firefights in the distant, probably some minor gangs. The main districts are just a mess and should be avoided if you want to be safe... 8-Cred and 4-Cred Gear cannot be found.
- 2300 Shit is hitting the fan, man! Only a few stores and hotels are still open. Prices are getting excessive. A lot of gangs are at war. Spend two additional Credits to obtain any Gear.
- 0000 The streets are deserted. Paris has become a war zone and is facing an important financial crisis. Nothing can be found anywhere, even food or simple gear. To put it bluntly: you have to kill for what you want.

THE BLACK MUSKETEERS (GROUP)

Instinct: To fight, and to fight dirty if need be.

Tags: *+well-armed, +disciplined, +violent, +mobile.*

The *Black Musketeers* are your average villains, competent enough but mostly ordinary. Depending on the threat level you want them to represent, they may be fully equipped with cyberware and use individual VTOL vehicles to patrol the city.

For a different kind of opposition, other Musketeer companies may have drone-support or an eye in the Matrix.

- » Raise an alarm
- » Impress with good swordsmanship
- » Make a dishonorable move

En Garde! (Honor)

When you meet a band of *Black Musketeers*, roll Honor.

10+: one of these Musketeers is a former comrade in arms who may serve your cause. But you'll have to (choose one):

- Pay for drinks or drugs for his companions [pay 1 Cred]
- Spend time, talking to him about the past and your whereabouts

7-9: choose one:

- You are challenged to a duel
- They are bullying or abusing someone
- If you don't comply, you lose one Honor.

6-: they have spotted you and one of them is a fine enemy, maybe a Noble swordsman.

THE 3,000 (GROUPS)

Nobles are usually high-ranking corporate executives but family members may work for different corporations, potentially creating an entangled web of intrigue. Even if they may have more specific agendas, they all crave power and are deeply involved in political intrigues. When the Operatives encounter a family as a Threat for the first time: name the family, decide how large it is and whom each member works for, and create a Threat clock and an agenda for the family. Powerful individuals among the families could also be Loner Threats.

The Rival of Yesterday:

If the Operatives **lie low** at the end of a Mission, lower the Threat Clocks of all Noble Threats by one.

PARISIAN CORPORATIONS

LAVOISIER GROUP (BIOTECHNOLOGY)

Main market(s): Bioengineering, Pharmaceuticals.

Minor markets: Cyberware, Luxury goods.

Keywords: Illegal medical experiments in Africa, Weird gene therapies, Vat-grown replacements, Disease outbreaks.

VMCY (CONSUMER GOODS)

Main market(s): Luxury goods, Fashion, Alcohol.

Minor markets: Media and entertainment, Social events, Plastic surgery clinics.

Keywords: Perfumes, Sparkling wines, Haute-couture, Snobbish, Psychological alteration projects.

TECHTELCO (ELECTRONICS)

Main market(s): Drone manufacturing, Security systems.

Minor markets: Sensors, Telecommunications, Construction, Security personnel.

Keywords: Building security experts, So many patents, Eye in the sky.

XENON GENERAL GROUP (FINANCIAL)

Main market(s): Banking.

Minor markets: Sponsorship, Holdings, Real estate.

Keywords: Severely hit by the collapse, On the verge of bankruptcy, No ethics anymore, Guess who *+owns* you, Linked with illegal activities.

NEO PEERAGE OF PARIS (GOVERNMENT)

Keywords: Hindered political influence, Pass laws, Gathering of the most prominent nobles.

NUCLEA (HEAVY INDUSTRY)

Main market(s): Nuclear, Renewable energies.

Minor markets: Power supply, Water supply, Chemicals, Waste disposal.

Keywords: Shady nuclear waste disposal in populated areas, Ever-changing brand for marketing reasons.

CUGNOT-VERBIEST MOTORS (HEAVY INDUSTRY)

Main market(s): Vehicles manufacturing, Engines.

Minor markets: Horses, Road transport.

Keywords: Risk of a takeover bid, Downsizing, Factory strikes, Good reputation.

THE AFRICAN PEOPLE'S MOVEMENT (ILLEGAL)

Main market(s): Human trafficking, Illegal immigration, Smuggling, Drug trafficking.

Minor markets: Human rights, Politics.

Keywords: Nigerian mafia, Family-organized.

THE COURT OF MIRACLES (ILLEGAL)

Main market(s): Matrix theft, forgery and scam, Information network.

Minor markets: Matrix surveillance.

Keywords: Great sense of honor, Any treason will be severely punished, Eyes everywhere.

CANAL ROYAL (MEDIA)

Main market(s): Matrix channel, Music publisher, Sim entertainment.

Minor markets: Luxury goods, Prostitution, Social events.

Keywords: Nobles, Literary clubs, Duel of wits, Depravity.

BLUETRIX (MATRIX)

Main market(s): Hardware manufacturing, Matrix service provider.

Minor markets: Matrix channel.

Keywords: Datajack, Cyberdeck, Data storage & interface, Cybercoms, Mobile phone, +encrypted.

AGORE INDUSTRIAL GROUP (MILITARY)

Main market(s): Weapon manufacturer.

Minor markets: Bioengineering, Security, Military vehicles manufacturer.

Keywords: Altered animals, Don't expect subtlety.

PETROSTREAM COMPANY (PRIMARY RESOURCES)

Main market(s): Oil.

Minor markets: Paramilitary operations, Drones, Cyberware.

Keywords: So much cash they don't know what to do with it, Critical resources areas, Top-notch guards, A nightmare to deal with.

ORBITUNNEL (TRANSPORTATION)

Main market(s): Space tourism in low Earth orbit, Zero-g environment research, Launch service provider for geostationary satellites.

Minor markets: Space exploration program, Space access provider for smaller corps.

Keywords: European space agency, Recent crash wreaking havoc.

NAMES

FRENCH NAMES

Anne, Aurore, Constance, Diane, Élise, Émilie, Louise, Madeleine, Marguerite, Marion, Roxane

Armand, Baptiste, Bernard, Bertrand, Charles, Eustache, François, Gaston, Jacques, Jean, Jules, Paul, Pierre, Sébastien, Tristan

NICKNAMES

Alceste, Barberousse, Baron, Bastille, Bayard, Belle, Brissaille, Candide, Capitaine, Cardinal, Cinq-Mars, Colbert, Coquelin, Corneille, Cyrano, Dieu-le-Veut. Éminence, Figaro, Fleur de Lys, Fouquet, Fracasse, Grémione, Harpagon, Lafayette, Lagardère, Latréaumont, Marquise, Milady, Monsieur, Nostradamus, Pardaillan, Percy, Planchet, Rochelle, Sade, Scapin, Scarlet, Sganarelle, Soleil, Tartuffe, Vauban

NOBLE NAMES

de Beaufort, de Buffon, de Fontenelle, de Guise, de la Chênée, de la Rochefoucauld, de la Serre, de la Tour, de la Vallière, de Maupin, de Montaigne, de Montfleury, de Montmorency, de Saint-Aignan, de Saint-Germain, de Tréville, de Valvert

BIO

Khelren is a French indie game designer, translator, publisher and game journalist (*Diódent*). He has translated such games as *The Regiment*, *Swords without Master*, *The Climb*, *Ribbon Drive*, *Starforce*, *Class Warfare*, *Capes*, *Thought Lords of Mars*, *Love in the Time of Seið*, *Mobile Frame Zero: Intercept Orbit*, and last, but not least, *The Sprawl*. He designs storygames/RPGs on his Patreon (<https://www.patreon.com/Khelren>) or his Tipeee (<https://www.tipeee.com/khelren>) and has written several PbtA games (*Dominion*, *Berlin XVIII*).

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EXAMPLES

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CYBERKITTENS: OPERATION PEWPEW

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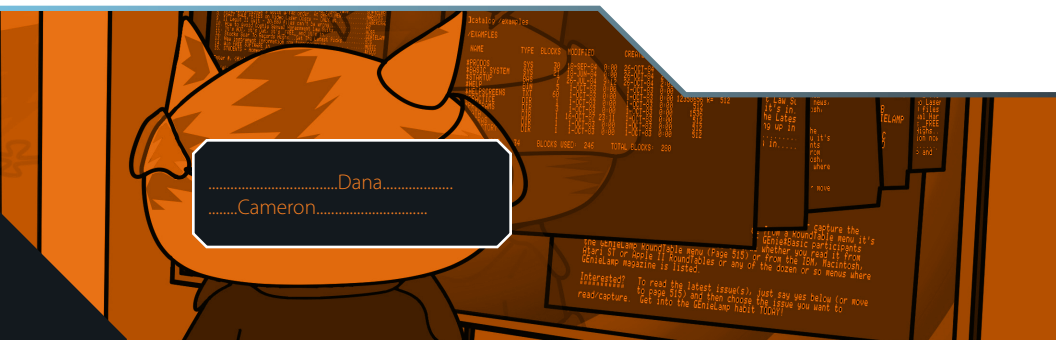
HAI
OH HAI!!
HAIHAIHAIHAIHAIHAI

CYBERKITTENS: OPERATION PEWPEW

HOW TO RE-SKIN *THE SPRAWL* TO MAKE YOUR GAME FULL OF MEGA EPICALLY CAT-INFUSED BADASSNESS

These days it seems like dirty dogs run most of the big corps in this corrupted sprawl you call home. No cat in her right mind trusts a stupid tail-wagger. Even worse, some zaibatsu are operated by cheating, double-crossing, slick-as-fuck fat cats, and you sure as hell can't trust them either. You can't trust the general masses because they all wear the collar of some filthy corp or another. You can't trust your uncollared neighbors because they are probably just waiting to pounce you so they can sell your fur to who-knows-who in order to scrape together enough creds to feed their 'nip addiction. You *definitely* can't trust your friends because they are trying to survive just like you--and surviving in this sprawling shitbox of a world means that you have to fight tooth and claw to stay on top of the competition and one step ahead of the corps. That is, unless a corp has a job for a flea-bitten alley cat like you. Hey, cred is cred and collars can be useful.

In CYBERKITTENS: Operation PEWPEW, you play over-the-top badass purrsonifications of popular cat memes in an anthropomorphic neon-and-chrome cyberpunk setting. Take "*Ghost in the Shell* + *Zootopia*" or "*Blade Runner* + *Tom and Jerry*", smother liberally with puns, and you'll be good to go!



ASTEP-BY-STEP GUIDE

STEP ONE:

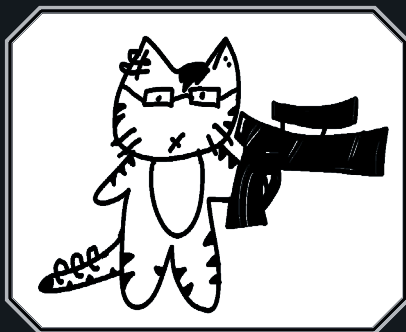
Create a Cat Meme (move, name, look)

STEP TWO:

Choose a Playbook

STEP THREE:

Profit



CREATE YOUR CAT MEME.

CHOOSE YOUR MOVE.

All moves are awesome, but you can *only choose one*:

🔌 **Critical Light Aura Glow (Cool):** You are just the tiniest most freakin' adorable little kitty, what with your widdle ears and your fat stumpy tail and those whiskers~!!!!!! Infuriatingly, no one ever treats you like the serious health purrfessional that you are. Regardless of their impudence, whenever someone is hurt you rush to the rescue, rolling Cool.

10+: You heal all of your target's harm. You heal yourself by the same amount.

7-9: You heal both yourself and your target by 1 harm.

6-: Maybe you aren't a combat medic yet. One of you is healed 1 harm, but the other takes 1 harm—your choice on who gets what. The MC makes a move.

- 🔊 **Hrrrrrk!:** You're the fuckin' Colonel. You single-pawedly took out an entire squad of ninja kittens in the Nip Wars of '68 with nothing but a block of C4 and bit of anchovy paste. You're a big fuckin' deal. You didn't get your rank by pussy-footing around and playing nice, and you aren't going to piss about with kitten toys when you... *hrrr...* have a big... *hrrrrrrrrrrkkkkk...* hairball cannon (4-harm near/far area loud messy slow reload).

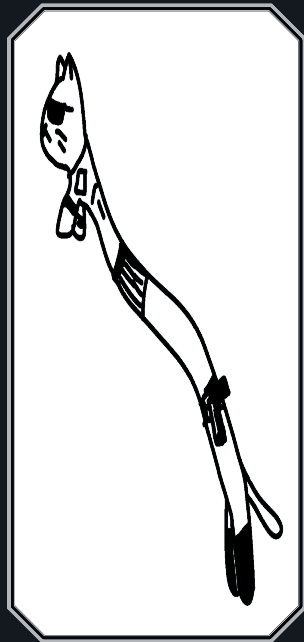
- 🔊 **I Can Has?:** At first glance you look normal, but then you stretch out to reach that far away ledge... and you keep stretching. Then you seem to almost turn into a liquid to slither under that barely open window. Oh yes, you can has that krillburger.

- 🔊 **If I Fits I Sits (Style):** You are super friendly and love helping people out, which is good because everyone is always coming to you for stuff. Sure, some people might call you a hoarder, but you need all of those boxes! So, so, so many beautiful boxes. And isn't it handy that things sometimes come in them? When you sit in a cardboard box that does not belong to you or an ally, you can roll Style to find [gear].

10+: Gain 2 [gear]

7-9: Gain 1 [gear]

6-: Gain 1 [gear], but MC makes a move.



- 🔊 **Is Watching You:** Somehow you're always able to know everyone's most hidden secrets...and it's kind of creepy. Plus, you're always so judgy about it. When rolling 7+ on Assess you also gain 1 [intel].

- 🔊 **Nope.:** You are a grumpy asshole with a permanent frown who hates everything. You know how to show your displeasure, so lift your tail and let them know. You spray your foes with burning, acidic, smelly urine (1-harm hand/close area hidden quick). If you roll 10+ when you Mix It Up with your Nope., the odor is difficult to wash off: gain +2 forward against your victim the next time you attempt to harm or coerce them.

- 🔊 **PewPew:** Sure, you prefer to shoot them out of the tips of your paws, but you're perfectly happy to shoot lasers out of anywhere (2-harm near/far AP breach loud quick). You can't help but to make the noise each time. Pew! Pewpewpewpew, mutha' fuckers! PewPew!

- 🔊 **Sparkle Rainbow Song:** You are the wind! The sky! Rainbows! GLITTER!!! You can fly anywhere and love to bring along some friends in your brightly coloured machine of happiness! So what if you're always blasting that one song on loop? It's, like, the BEST song! Nyan!

You **MUST** choose the Driver playbook. Build a Vehicle per the playbook, but your profile is Power+2, Looks+2, Weakness+0; 2-Armour. Garish **MUST** be one of your choices.

- 🔌 **The Belly is a Trap:** Those innocent eyes. That sweet face. An alluring swish of your tail. Everyone loves you, trusts you, wants you. No one ever suspects the evil that is coiled hidden in your icy heart until it's too late. You get the Infiltrator's **Assassin** move regardless of the playbook you choose.

Additionally, before you **fast talk** you may choose to use the promise of your fuzzy, soft, warm belly floop to assist (must state that you are using **The Belly is a Trap** before rolling). You gain +1 ongoing to this **fast talk** roll, but on a 6- you've given into your feline nature and lashed out, dealing 1 harm to your target. Your target will be hesitant to trust you again and all **fast talk** attempts with the target will now have -1 ongoing; however, you gain +1 forward to **play hardball** if done immediately.

- 🔌 **Toxoplasmosis (Edge):** You have a permanent derp-face, but everyone seems to love you and do whatever you want! Maybe it's due to your big, bulging eyes or maybe it's due to those little friends in your poop, but whatever the reason you are happy that everyone likes you so much. You may plant stray poop mines in an area. When an enemy walks through, roll Edge.

10+: Your victim steps in it. Within 24 hours you can "request" a favour of any complexity. Your new friend will do whatever you want to the best of their ability, even if it will cause them harm, and have no memory of the events afterwards.

7-9: Your victim steps in it. Within 24 hours you can "request" a favour of any complexity. Your new friend will do whatever you want to their best of their ability, as long as it doesn't cause them harm, and will remember everything afterwards.



CHOOSE YOUR NAME.

Use as many as you need, or more:

Lychee, Miss Princess Pooky Prissy pants, Sir Lord Antoine Bathory the Third, Horrid Robin, Mister, Simon, Appu, Mochi, Nicolas, Betty, Mr. Phluph, Meeks, Boots, Priya, Gobby, Piri Piri, Riley, Tiberius Gracchus, Hermes, Topanga, Mondo Burrito, Mercury, Lil' Bunny, Marmalade, Jazz, November, Hamilton, Beefcake, Marie Catoinette, Madame Magnolia Hortensia Bupplefraaz, Periwinkle, a famous name, a childish name, a punny name, a complicated name

CHOOSE YOUR LOOK.

Eyes: jeweled, cyber, stars, lasers, hungry, happy-squint, tired, grumpy, crossed, none, huge

Body: basketball, looooooooooong, tiny, normal, thin, svelte, pampered, rugged, taco, huge

Coat: artificial, natural, popart, suit-and-tie, long-fur, short-fur, no-fur, floofy!, cardboard box, tuxedo, tabby, ginger, black, white, moo-kitty, siamese, mohawk, yellow raincoat, chromed, screens

CHOOSE A PLAYBOOK AND GO BE AWESO—?!

OH FUCK-WATCH OUT-IT'S THE FUCKING RED DOT!!!1!1!!!1!!!!111

CHASING AND CATCHING THE RED DOT (TEAM CLOCK)

The Red Dot is a team clock. Whenever any member of your team rolls a 12+ being fuckin' badass, one of the dot's six segments is filled in and that hip cat gets +1 forward. When all six segments are completed you have finally caught the Red Dot! Everyone on the team marks xp. However, your l33t skillz have not gone unnoticed: the MC advances one of the corporation clocks.

The Red Dot clock resets upon completion, for all cats know that the red dot can never truly be caught: it is the shadow of an enigma wrapped in a mystery stuffed in a burrito.

KTHXBAI

NEED SOME INSPURRATION?

SOME SAMPLE CORPS, I GUESS:

RUFF RIDER TRANSPORTS

This is one of those filthy dog-run corps. Ruff Rider has its paws in anything and everything related to meowment: neighborhood hoover cars, supersonic trans-continental subways, Earth-tethered space ports, and all the roads, air, and space that its products run on/through/in. Word on the street is that they also have their claws in black-market asteroid-mining.

CYBERNETIC ANDROID TECHNOLOGIES

There was a lot of meowtrage when C.A.T started selling autonomous androids. There were riots in the streets and some folks predicted that the new creatures, "Fetches" they were called, would have catastrophic effects on the basic fabric of society. They would take all the jobs! Folks would prefer them over real people, with the result that no more children would be born! The androids would take over the world and lock

everyone up in cages to be looked at for amusement! Well, one out of three ain't too bad. The pandamonium subsided, but so did the jobs. 60 years later and the poor are poorer and the rich richer. Good thing you're a purrfessional in your field, right? No Fetch can replace your skillz, instinct, and badass style.

HAPPY LAB'S HAPPY LABS

At the forefront of biological research is Happy Lab's Happy Labs. They produce state-of-the-art engineered crops, medicine, and bio-based weaponry. *Everyone is Happy at Happy Lab's!* They also have an incredibly high turnover rate, although somehow you never seem to run into any ex-employees. Just don't piss off their top dog Bruno. Take my word for it.

CATURDAY ENTERTAINMENT

These cool cats run the celebrity stim-sim operation in your sprawl. They also specialize in more mind-twisty distractions, but you like to keep your brain between your ears so you personally try to stick to good old organic 'nip. Even so, if someone wants some fun or just a brief escape from the litter box that is their life, they look for something from Caturday. Hey, why not *Make every day a Caturday*?



YOU COULD KICK SOME ASS IN THESE SPRAWLS:

MUTTROPOLIS

A big, dirty, and dense labyrinth of towering skyscrapers and twisted dark allies. Haven to big business, street business, and secret business.

FURSIDE

A city in the sky that floats above polluted oceans. Plumes of smog from all the hover cars make visibility a nightmare. If you're lucky you can afford a throat filter implant. If not, you GTFO or die young.

MEOWVILLE

They call it "Meow's Jungle" for a reason. This is a wild zone unclaimed by corps and governments alike. Gangs rule these mutant forests. They say you can buy anything here for the right price. But be careful, the trees might be listening and nobody knows who they report to.

FAQ.

Wait, what, do you still have questions???

I don't know what else to fucking tell you, but here's some inspurration if you need it:

*Scratching Chrome...Cat in the Shell...Neuromeowcer...When Litter Fails...Purrshades...
Furwired...Meow Crash...Do Cybercats Dream of Electric Mice?...Johnny Mewmonic...
Litterboxes in the Net...The Mewtrix...Strange Spays...Total Recat...NekoTech...Meowna
Lisa Overdrive...The Windup Kitty...*

And don't forget: tacocat is a palindrome.



BIO

Dana Cameron can't stop, won't stop, adding stupid cat things to all the things.


THANKS TO THE HUMANS OF CYBERKITTENS:

Leon Adams and **Jessica Jeffers**: The bestest editors a cat-in-human-form could wish for.

Punny Friends: Thanks fur the many puns. You know who you are.

Cat Versus Human Facebook Group: Special thanks for all the cat photos that brighten my days, make me squeee, and cover me in lulz.

Extra special thanks to the intertubez for being made of cats.



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MIAMI ICE

CONTINUE? [Y/N]

>>Approach is clear..
... Plan A..Proceed..
>>Engaging..



MIAMI ICE



A tribute to Jon Walter Williams

A tribute to Jon Walter Williams

Florida is, and has always been, the place to be: access to orbital arcologies, Solar Investments' space cruises from Cape Canaveral, theme parks, and more physical and virtual resorts that you'll ever be able to visit in your whole life. But somebody has to provide all these generous people with whatever is necessary for them to enjoy their stay. If you ask me, there is no way they don't know about the smuggling, human trafficking, and all these dirty deeds you do for a living. They just don't want you to remind them.

STUCK IN THE MUD

Power has left Earth since the Orbitals eradicated the world's alpha cities in a torrential rain of asteroids. The fight wasn't fair and even the proud United States of America quickly surrendered, then collapsed, melting into a mosaic of states. At this time, we, the people of Florida, proclaimed ourselves an independent republic, that is to say some corps executives seized Florida before sacrificing us in the Secession War. All their mess left us deep mental and physical scars, chromed limbs, and a strong will to escape gravity, to live in their orbital paradise, and to kill them all. But here we are, face down, the taste of the Everglades mud in our mouths. The gravity well is our prison, and it's not the only one. Indeed, the former zealots of free-trade erected strong borders between Florida and other states. Presently, they control the merchandise flow coming from the microgravity industries in orbit and live off the taxes like feudal lords. With their surveillance drones and their autocerberi shooting at sight, the borders are our second prison. We are trying to escape both, some by climbing the megacorp ladder, some by saving enough money to get the ticket to orbital arcologies, others by smuggling the Orbitals' crap.

Miami is still far from the worst place to live in the world. Orbitals goods are cheap and it's not that hard to get a job. Some may even choose to remain dull consumers and numb their minds in this illusion of comfort. You'll find them in the theme parks or at



Miami Beach, worshipping the holy trinity of sea, sex, and sun. Others fight to stay out of the mud. I am one of those. You are one of those.

ASK SOME QUESTIONS DURING CHARACTER CREATION:

- » How were you involved in the Asteroid War?
- » What did you lose during the Second Secession War?
- » How did you deal with your last smuggling operation?
- » What have the Orbitals recently taken away from you? Name the Corp who did it.
- » What are your plans toward the orbital oligarchy? And toward the national one?
- » What (or who) are you taking care of right now, here on Earth?

DEFINE THE SCALE OF PLAYER CHARACTER'S ACTIONS, THEN OPEN RELEVANT CLOCKS.

Relevant Clock example #1 (global scale):

The Mud Uprising (headline)

- 1200 The mud-dwellers are passive.
- 1500 Formation of revolutionary gangs ("The Tough Mudders", "The Dirt Boys").
- 1800 Regular attacks on fret convoys.
- 2100 Terror strike on Wonderland Theme Park, Orlando.
- 2200 Raid against the Gravity-Well.
- 2300 Infiltration of the Orbitals' spaceport.
- 0000 Wrath of the Mud.

Relevant Clock example #2 (street level): Speculation on Homestead Waterfront (place)

- 1200 Homestead Waterfront is a vibrant and independent Caribbean community.
- 1500 Construction of massive dykes.
- 1800 Cyber-attacks, sewer and water-supply degradation.
- 2100 Gangers raid the district.
- 2200 Inexplicable hurricane; dykes break.
- 2300 Edge Corp purchases the land and “resettles” the Caribbean communities.
- 0000 Construction of Coconut Grove Waterfront wage-slave residences.

MIAMI BEACH

ASK PLAYERS SOME QUESTIONS:

- » What drove the LGBTQ+ community from South Beach? Where are they now?
- » How did you feel last time they didn't let you enter in a Louboutin shop?
- » Samantha Brickell is heir to the Brickell Corp and wife of the majority shareholder of Defense Systems. Why did you have sex with her in the discreet Star Island Paradise Resort?
- » How do the Orbitals control the tourism industry?

GIVE PLAYERS INTEL AND PLAY TO FIND OUT WHAT LIES BENEATH:

- » The Great Beach Casino, suddenly turned into a microgravity space.
 - How do the staff and the clients respond?
 - How is the security affected by the gravity change?
 - Who controls technology powerful enough to alter gravity on Earth?
 - Whose criminal operation is interrupted?
- » The lover of the idol-actress Kendra Hayes, recording their sensations during sex with a stimrecorder.
 - Who's offering 1 billion Floridan Dollars for the recording?
 - Does the starlet know about the recording and/or the sale?
 - Who benefits from publicizing the recording?
 - What's the tie between the lover and Zurich Orbital?

DOWNTOWN

ASK PLAYERS SOME QUESTIONS:

- » Freedom Tower was once a monument to Cubans who fled Castro. What is it now?
- » How were you involved in the Shrimp Industry Scandal?
- » Why is the company in charge of CBD surveillance searching for you?
- » Who or what do you love in Little Havana?
- » Place Little Caracas, Little Maracaibo, and Little Managua on a map of Miami. Why do people avoid these districts?
- » How the hell did you come to own this luxury home on the Coconut Grove Waterfront?

GIVE PLAYERS INTEL AND PLAY TO FIND OUT WHAT LIES BENEATH:

- » A gunfight on the rooftop of the Brickell's Magnarch.
 - How are "Occupy Brickell" involved?
 - Who just shot the Governor in the head?
 - Who wanted to frame the team?
- » A gorgeous, golden-skinned woman called Yemanya, always seen during natural disasters.
 - What's her tie to the eponymous Sea Goddess?
 - Why is the police department spreading the rumour she is an AI manipulated by the Corps?
 - Does she save or condemn disaster victims?
 - What are her devotees planning in Little Haiti?

THE EVERGLADES

ASK PLAYERS SOME QUESTIONS:

- » How does the Everglades National Park still resist the expansion of the sprawl?
- » Who is desperate enough to live in the mangrove?
- » Which of the Orbitals are interested in the expansion of the Everglades Agricultural Area?
- » What exotic plant is feared to be invading the Everglades?

GIVE PLAYERS INTEL AND PLAY TO FIND OUT WHAT LIES BENEATH:

- » Thousands of alligators hunting as a pack.
 - What do they hunt?

- Why do they avoid the Key Largo Correctional Institution?
 - Who is the strange little girl often seen nearby?
 - How are the alligator nest and the brain damaged decker related?
- » The Tree of Life, an animal shelter as big as an Arcology.
- Are the rumors of the reappearance of lost species true?
 - What lies beneath the undersea levels?
 - What's the tie between the Tree of Life and the lost pocket submarines of the Seagrass Restoration Project?



THE CAPE CANAVERAL LAUNCH ZONE

ASK PLAYERS SOME QUESTIONS:

- » Name the Corp(s) who took over the NASA remnants. Who is dissatisfied with this share?
- » How long did you work here? How did you keep some connections?
- » Ever lived out of the Gravity-Well? Why did you leave heaven for dirt? What's worth coming back for?
- » Sketch the Cape Canaveral Zone. Choose one or two ways to escape the gravity-well: rockets, microgravity generators, space elevator, mass driver. Mark them on a map. Then locate on it the following elements: docking piers,

fret zone, maintenance hangars, VIP transit, gift gallery, traffic control, Spaceport office.

- » How does the Gatekeeper, the powerful AI controlling the access to the geo-synchronous orbital arcologies, know about you?

GIVE YOUR PLAYERS INTEL AND PLAY TO FIND OUT WHAT LIES BENEATH:

- » An old Cuban in a cryogenic container.
 - Who is waiting for him in orbit?
 - How is he related to the recently vanished Dr. Enrique Oquendo, personal surgeon of the Castro family, whose members are known for their abnormal longevity?
 - Why did Sodatlanta-Corp send an extraction crew to catch him before take-off?
- » A community of drifters squatting the Launch Zone.
 - How is Solar Investment unaware of this?
 - Why is the camp arranged to form greek letters?
 - Where do the stolen goods go?

THE BORDERS

ASK PLAYERS SOME QUESTIONS:

- » Besides the Mobile Interzone, what territories has Florida gained and lost?
- » Who is the power behind the Florida Department for Immigration and Custom Enforcement (ICE), the private militia in charge of the surveillance of the Borders?
- » How do the Orbitals monitor comings and goings?
- » What kind of scars did your last border-crossing leave you?
- » How are the borders organized? Sketch a typical border with these elements: checkpoint, warehouses, barracks, electrified wall, ICE office, deadly curtain of nano-machines, heavy EM railgun turret.

MAKE PLAYERS AWARE OF THE BORDERS CUSTOM MOVES.

Observe borders

When you observe a border's security, roll Mind:

7+: you find a gap in the borders security. Describe the area and the route.

10+: also choose 1:

- You find a weakness in the defense system (+ intel)
- You get an extra opportunity (+gear)
- You find support
- You find a good escape route (+1 forward to cross the border)

Cross the Borders

When you secretly cross the border, roll Cool.

10+: choose 3

7-9: choose 1

- You make it across quickly and accurately
- You don't raise any automatic system defense alarm
- The ICE patrols are not on your tail
- The Orbitals don't notice you

GIVE PLAYERS INTEL AND PLAY TO FIND OUT WHAT LIES BENEATH:

- » The Mobile Interzone, a city divided into two parts and claimed back by Alabama.
 - Which large group crosses the Mobile Wall every night? How?
 - Who controls the former Alabama State Docks?
 - Why do local Cajuns call the USS Alabama "le Grand Condé" after a brilliant 17th century military leader?
 - Why do Giant Centipedes kill a Fatted Ox in the Matrix during the last day of Carnival?
- » The Jacksonville Base, disused after the Secession War and sold by Florida State to a guru descending of a famous Texan political dynasty.
 - What's the interest of Senate Inc in the transaction?
 - How does the sect deal with foreigners?
 - What are the full-chromed black guys and the numerous orphans used for?
 - What business does Armaghast the Smuggler have between Georgia and the base?
 - Where are the nuclear warheads?

BIO

Benjamin Kouppi writes: Miami is the third setting I wrote. Lagos was a kind of hell and Brussels an unbearable paradise. Miami had to be the purgatory. As it's a rather classical choice, I preferred to write it like a didactic to create your own Miami, but I give you some inspirations by crossings the classics of cyberpunk, that is to say *Wired* and *Count Zero*, with contemporary preoccupations, like rising sea-levels due to climate change, and, most of all, with... Miami Vice. Relax and have a drink: play cyberpunk in Hawaiian shirts.

Special thanks to Motseu, Miami ICE MC.

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EBUK STYLE

CONTINUE? [Y/N]

////TRACKING.OVERLAY////
KUSMIL: [Ready.Inactive]
PLA: [Ready.Inactive]
LOC.RIOT.INDEX: [Moderate]

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EBUK STYLE

LOADING...

AD 2050. A civil war broke out in North Korea after the assassination of the dictator "General Kim" during a local inspection. North Korea collapsed and entered a state of anarchy, and the territory of North Korea was absorbed into South Korea with help from the US and China.

The ruin of the state meant the opportunity for new capital. The corporations of Korea, US, China and Russia started the construction of factories and arcologies on the wreckage of North Korea. With national feeling and political confrontation in the mix, the competition between corporations grew into a fierce, but covert, corporate war.

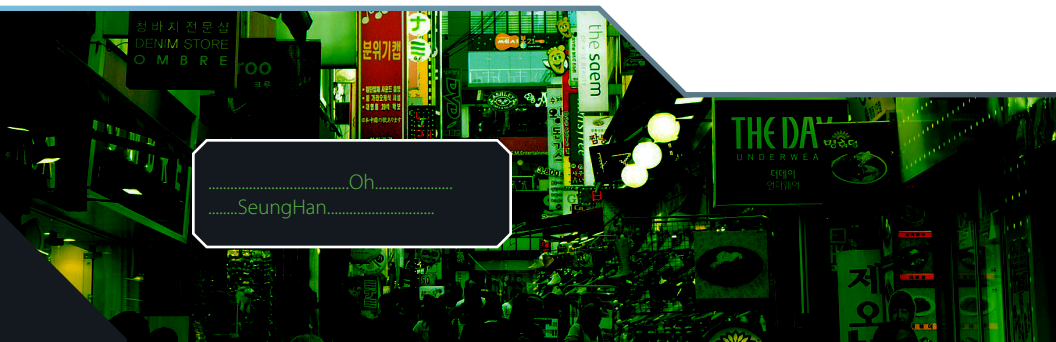
Human resources were plentiful for doing the corporations' dirty work. Because the soldiers, hackers, and various experts who once belonged to the North Korean army became unemployed all at once, they started to taste the good and bad of capitalism.

It is AD 2070 now. North Korea, which was the most closed autocratic state in the world, is now on the cutting edge of capitalism and has become the arena of a new cold war.

THE PROXY WAR

When North Korea collapsed, China advanced the People's Liberation Army into North Korea's territory, justifying the move using the Sino-North Korean Mutual Aid and Cooperation Friendship Treaty. Even after the absorption of North Korea, the PLA remains to "maintain the security of Chinese citizens and corporations in North Korea". US Forces decided to stay in Korea, too, to check China. The current situation is a return to the 1950s-US forces and the PLA both stationed in Korea, holding each other in check.

In the 2070s, the conflict between Korean-US and Chinese-Russian corporations is turning violent, aided by the new cold war system between US and China. Their conflict has evolved from the competition for market share into a low-intensity war which includes sabotage, corporate espionage, and the kidnap and murder of key



figures of rival corporations. The foot soldiers in their proxy war are North Korean citizens, aka *Ebukin* ("North folk" in Korean).

HUMAN PROPERTY: EBUKIN

North Korea was a notorious garrison state. Even though the nation was poor, their hackers and special ops, trained in preparation for warfare, were some of the finest in the world. But after the sudden collapse of North Korea, they became the jobless. Only a few were absorbed into the South Korean army or police, and the rest of them are monitored as potential terrorists.

Ebukin are a target of discrimination after unification. The joy of unification didn't last long, and Ebukin have become disillusioned after the realization that their southern kin treat them as "slaves who speak same language." Ebukin can't leave their homes because of martial law in North Korea, at least, not without large bribes or a generous patron who will guarantee their social position. Even after unification, North Korea is still a prison to them.

Usually, there are three paths open to Ebukin: become a exploited wage-slave in pollution-stricken industrial areas, plunge into a fierce and short life of terrorism, or get a "dangerous, but special" job with a chance of making good enough money to escape the North.

Most people who have some skills, especially the former soldiers, have chosen the last way. Once again, the ex-military experts and their successors have become foot soldiers who are fighting on the front of an increasingly intense corporate war.

NORTH KOREAN SOCIETY

North Korean society has undergone dramatic changes in the 20 years since the wave of capitalism struck. Ebukin watch the same TV shows, movies, news, and follow same fads as the South. Propaganda delivered in a state-hired news anchor's exaggerated

voice, which used to characterize North Korean media, has become a legacy of the old days. The notorious ideology "Juche" has disappeared, except among a very small number of terrorists. Ebukin are now identical to their southern brothers, at least when it comes to earning and spending money.

But some features of dictatorship still affect the people. For example, *Ohho-damdangje* ("Monitoring in each five houses"-the North Korean system of dispatching a Communist party member and monitoring, educating, exercising joint responsibility for every five houses), still dominates the people in a different form even though the nation has collapsed. Now, Ebukin form their own "faction" consisting of dozens to hundreds of people. Each faction is bound by particular tendencies, interests, and especially blood relationships. It is rare for anyone to choose a different faction than their family. If two people of different factions get married, one of them joins the other's faction or the two factions merge. This makes marriage outside the faction difficult for people deemed "valuable" to their faction. A person's social status depends on their faction. Within the faction, information, resources, secrets, and responsibilities are shared. Cooperation and conflicts between the factions are fairly common. If the faction breaks up because of internal or external strife, the members are absorbed into other faction or are quickly eliminated. North Korea is a very hostile place for "lone wolves". Betraying one's faction is regarded as a very despicable action. (Of course, sometimes profit triumphs over honor...)

During the chaos of the North Korean civil war, many non-digital documents were destroyed. As a result, many Ebukin are "invisible people", unregistered by government agencies. The Korean government has tried to register the entire North Korean population, but every attempt has failed because of obstruction by corporations and the non-cooperation of Ebukin themselves. There are thought to be at least two or three times more unregistered workers in North Korea than registered workers.

RASON CITY, THE FREE ECONOMIC ZONE

Rason encapsulates the current state of North Korea better than any other place.

Rason is a port city which borders China and Russia. Before the collapse of North Korea, it was the second richest city after Pyongyang, the capital city. Rason has always been caught between China's Pacific ambitions and Russia's desire for an ice-free port. The US has concentrated its efforts on preventing the deployment of North Korean nuclear missiles in the city because of the short distance between Rason and Alaska. After the collapse of North Korea, Rason was the first city the People's Liberation Army occupied. China tried to construct a naval base in the city but failed due to the threat of military force by the US.

Rason made rapid progress after unification, aided by the Korean government. Now the city is a Korean outpost for Manchuria and Siberia, and the eastern terminus of the Siberian Railway. A vast amount of minerals, oil, and natural gas are imported into the city by rail. After refining in the local facilities, those resources are transported all over the country. Most of the corporations in Rason are Chinese and Russian concerns which had moved in before the fall of North Korea, but the number of Korean & US

corporations are rapidly growing nowadays.

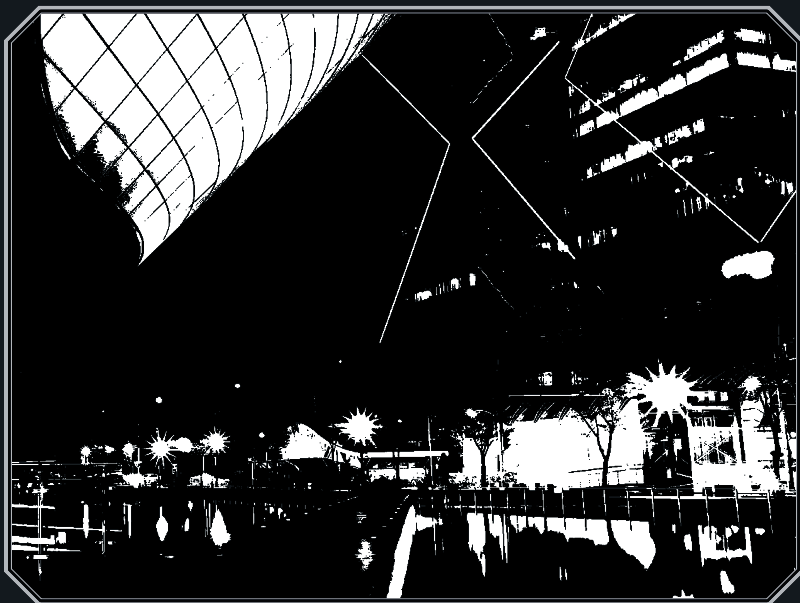
Present-day Rason is a megalopolis which has absorbed its surrounding cities. The city is divided into eastern and western districts by the Siberian Railway. The eastern district is filled with warehouses and port facilities, and in the western district corporate arcologies shine amidst the vast sprawl of chemical plants, refinement facilities, and slums. Each arcology is regarded as an extraterritorial area belonging to the country of the corporation's nationality.

The Tumen river, which runs in the north of the city, has turned red and green because of factory wastes and always gives out a foul smell. North of the river is the border of China and Russia.

There are two military bases in the city—a Chinese base in the northeast and a joint Korean & US base in the south. The two bases "officially" get along, but it is an open secret that their missiles are aimed each other.

In the narrow alleys of the city, signboards written in Korean, English, Chinese, and Russian are everywhere on haphazardly built storefronts. Thanks to a growing number of foreigners in the past 20 years, most citizens can speak brief greetings in four languages. Merchants tout and haggle in mixed languages. People dress in the height of fashion, and only a few old people wear Mao suits. In the main streets, old and new cars from every country fill the road. The sky is always gray and foggy because of fumes from factories and cars. Most people wear face masks.

Rason has more than twice as many hostess bars as other Korean cities, spread all over the city. Most hostess bars are equipped with soundproofing and wiretap jamming equipment. People who need a confidential conversation come here to talk, with drinks and sexual favors.



Except for the select few who live in arcologies, citizens live in apartment complexes, a hundred stories high, which have mushroomed throughout the city. The apartments not only provide a high-population density of corporate workers, but allow the factions to easily monitor and assemble their members. Most apartments are one-bedroom homes. There is just enough space in each for three or four people to eat and sleep.

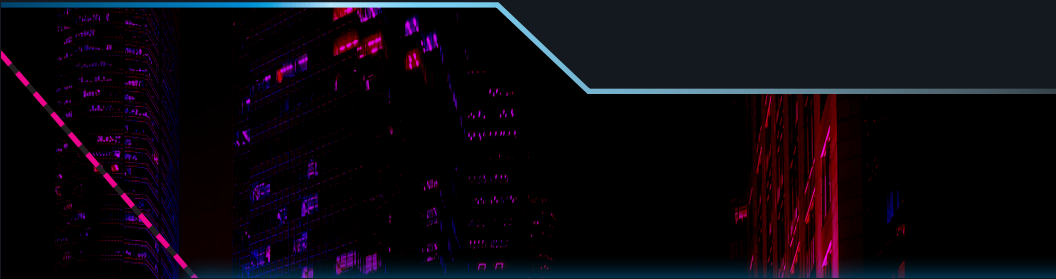
Rason suffers from a serious lack of police officers. Except the arcology areas which are guarded by unmanned drones and security personnel, most of the city consists of almost lawless areas. Unless the case is very large, police are only interested in tying up loose ends. Surprisingly, the violent crimes against individuals is not so high in Rason compared to other cities. Many foreigners have ties to corporations, and nobody wants to draw their attention. If someone wants to piss off another citizen, they should be concerned with which faction they will be annoying.

But that doesn't mean Rason is safe city-far from it. Rason City is a sprawl in a constant state of low-intensity warfare between corporations and factions. Unidentified explosions, disappearances, brawling, and even gunfights break out with frequency. Military forces keep their hands off in "civic events" unless they detect the evidence of terrorist activity or the case is very dire, but once they initiate an operation the city is stained with blood. Lots of blood. There have been riots in Rason during the last 20 years, but each was brutally suppressed by one of the armies. Fortunately, the PLA and Korea-US forces have never gone into action at the same time. But rumors of unnoticed skirmishes between them circulate constantly.

The underworld of Rason is divided into numerous small powers, rather than a few big powers. Sometimes powerful factions grow and absorb other factions, but they soon split into various small factions or shrink back because of internal struggles and external challenges. Some factions have tried to rely on the power of a foreign syndicate-like the Triads or the Red Mafia-but none have been successful. Usually, such a faction becomes the priority target of their rivals.

BIO

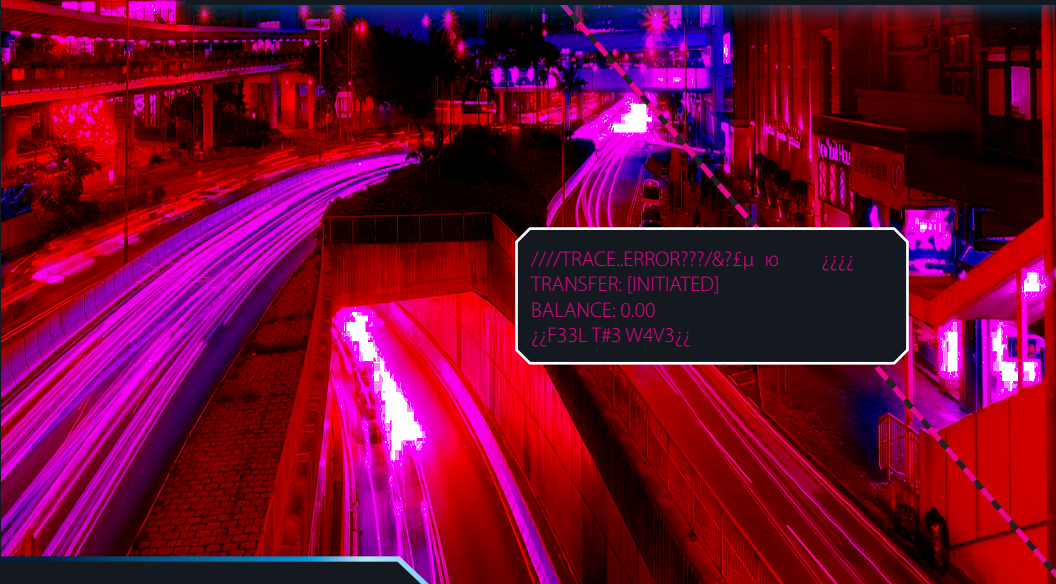
Oh SeungHan is a translator and long-time RPG fan. He founded the RPG company "Yiyagi wa Nori (Story & Games)" and is currently translating RPGs into Korean, including *The Sprawl*.



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FREEWAYTOWN

CONTINUE? [Y/N]



////TRACE..ERROR??/?&£µ io zzzz
TRANSFER: [INITIATED]
BALANCE: 0.00
zzF33L T#3 W4V3zz

The freeway lights flashed down her side panels as Liz swung the sleek body of the Blue Pacific Flame across seven lanes of the 405, threading the tight gaps the expert systems left between their corporate commuter bubbles. Liz focused her stopwatch to center-vision. 10:23p. Ugh. Liz hated rush hour.

She gunned the engine, powering into the executive lanes, swerving violently to avoiding a lazily lane-shifting CF limo. Fucking meat-wheels. Hiring an actual person to physically turn a steering wheel was the ultimate combination of conspicuous luxury in 2050s Los Angeles. Look at me-I can afford the highest auto insurance, mental re-mapping, and bodily reconstruction premiums for 500 miles. Ho ho ho, I laugh at fatal negligence lawsuits. Her mouth clenched into a grimace.

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The Southern Californian Sprawl. 2050.

A city of corporate enclaves connected by a network of private freeways stretching from the villas of Santa Barbara to the militarised zones of San Diego.

A city divided between luxurious hilltop mansions, cramped contracted apartment blocks, and vast underserved barrios.

A city where no-one drives—everyone rides.

In Los Angeles, permission to ride an automated commuter car between your corporate block and your office megascraper is a standard perk of corporate employment; however, if you work in one of the sprawling industrial zones, you ride public transport. You're lucky if your autobus rides the freeway, if not, you get used to popping those SleepLess pills for your 3am commute. Above the surface streets, the wealthiest corporate executives, simsense stars, and synthrock artistes can subscribe to the freeways' executive lanes, where luxury cars escort their charges in smooth and timely comfort.

But you know how it goes. Nothing is forbidden; some things are just expensive. The ultimate extravagance is to pay for the right to have physical hands on your physical steering wheel. Meat-wheeling (as the street calls it) is a romantic throwback to the 20th century. A romantic throwback of mangled steel and crushed bodies, but that's what money and exclusive medicine is for, right?

So where's the edge?

The true freeway elite void every warranty imaginable. They start with neural interfaces designed for high-G aerospace operation and rig their cars with probes, sensors and drive-by-wire-systems to give their land-bound charges the reaction speed and handling of a high-performance jetfighter. All of this is thoroughly illegal.

Gravity Wave crept silently through the lush undergrowth, delicately pushing aside the vines drifting purposely towards his input ports. The chirps and beeps of the the jungle's virtual data-life surrounded his consciousness with a bubble of emergent musicality. He realised his head was nodding along to an imagined tune. At Pure Life, even the dataservers were catchy.

He stopped. Something had changed. The jungle's ambient sound was rhythmic. Definitely patterned. With a screeching guitar riff, the ICE blindsided him. His visual-field erupted in a wall of static, his audio-field into a crescendo of noise-rock. He felt his lap grow warm as his sensory fields resolved reluctantly into spinning pixels and muffled sounds. He hoped it was the new reactive processor Elvi5 just installed in his deck. Candy always gave him shit when he finished a run with piss-stains.

Gravity Wave punched his supercoolant and launched his Nigerian attack program. Release day was coming and he needed the scoop. No fucking Pure Life noise-routine was going to stop him downloading this new CloudBase album.

Despite strong challenges from Kiev, Cape Town and Mumbai, Los Angeles remains the entertainment capital of the world. Half the world's game development labs feed new and recycled IP into Imagine!'s Silicon Beach arcology village. Across the hills in the San Fernando Valley, the executives and contracts of Pure Life dominate the virtual and recorded realms of simsense. Between the two, Hollywood generates dozens of new recording studios and synthstars every year. At best, their lifecycle is short, bright and lucrative. At worst, it's just short. Imagine! and Pure Life cherry-pick the brightest talent, squeeze it for indentured contracts and nova-hot hits, and drop the dessicated husks at Union Station with a one way ticket to who-the-fuck-cares. Nothing changes.

The same goes for shadow operatives. Pick ups. Station dumps. Pre-release hacks. Talent extractions. PR manipulation. There are a thousand corporate fixers with a thousand entry-level jobs waiting for suckers with raw implant scars, a shelf-model California Arms Liquidator, and a dumb plan. A dedicated few climb out of this proving ground as legit professionals. The rest... well, station dumps for disposable assets are usually of a higher calibre, if you get my meaning.

IMAGINE! (CORPORTATION)

Media, simsense, entertainment, virtual environments and workspaces

- » Subcontract a solution to a well-disguised corporate subsidiary
- » Unknowingly trap someone in a simsense recording or virtual environment
- » Activate an obscure indenture clause

PURE LIFE (CORPORATION)

Media, simsense, entertainment, genetics and biological enhancement

- » Deploy an artificial life form
- » Hinder a rival with an intellectual property claim
- » Activate an obscure indenture clause

THE HOLLYWOOD BARRIO (THREAT: PLACE)

Hollywood is as two-faced as it ever was. From the outside and for those in “the industry”, it’s a destination, an idea, a dream: fame and fortune, bright lights and movie stars, the walk of fame. For those who live there, it’s a workplace, a neighbourhood, home. The early twenty-first century saw gentrification come and gentrification go. Neighbourhood hangouts and icons demolished to make way for ritzy apartment towers, ritzy apartment towers degraded under economic downturns, and now a patchy revival.

Through it all, Hollywood Boulevard remained the same, a charming (or sleazy) mix of tourist tack, sex shops, clothing retailers, smoke shops, dive bars and flashy clubs, bustling with locals and tourists 24/7. Most people in Hollywood have normal lives unconnected to the bright lights of the industry corps, but for the rest, that dream seeps in everywhere. Those are the ones to watch for: the newbie pressing a fresh chip into every hand they can find, hustling for the big break; the creased and weathered face of the old-timer jonesing for the adoration of the crowd once more; the charming smile of the talent agent, flashing plastic and macabre in the strobing club lights; the flick of a signature, the snap of a deal, the crumple of yesterday’s news.

Goal: to consume

Additional Moves:

- » Entrance with false hope
- » Dazzle with wealth
- » Show the mundane existence of ordinary residents

José watched as his crew cleared a gap in the balls and lowered the net under the bloated pale flesh. This was the fifth time this month. He clearly needed a new security crew. He lifted his cap, wiped his brow, and looked across the black photovoltaic surface of the stage three tank towards the blinding pillar of Newport Water's main offices.

Was this an internal or external problem? He blinked his comms to life and issued a security requisition to have Li check the security logs again. No missing patrols. No signs of forced infiltration. He looked up at the vast expanse of blue above him. An aerial approach? Check the radar logs. The tank impact meters hadn't detected anything dropping from a high vector, but maybe a low-speed, low-alt drop could have been delicate enough to not trigger the system. The body swayed in the net as the twin hulls of his tank seeding vessel cut slowly through the surface leaving a black undulating waveform in its wake.

To the south of Los Angeles proper, a string of desalination plants down the coast of Orange County provide drinkable water for the millions who call the corporate enclaves of Southern California home. This is the domain of Newport Water, third of the big five L.A. Corps. The desalination plants that keep Southern California habitable are the headline industry for Newport, but their portfolio is as diversified as any other. Other strengths include an extensive network of heavy industry and consumer goods plants throughout the southwest and, less well known, a controlling interest in Pendleton Inc, the premier corporate military outfit in the Pacific. Pendleton regularly cycles veterans of ongoing conflict zones in Peru, Taiwan, Indonesia, Canada and Antarctica through the security departments of Newport Water subsidiaries as temporary or actual retirement placements.

NEWPORT WATER (CORPORATION)

Water reclamation and public services, heavy industry, consumer goods, military

- » Find or lose something in the tanks
- » Deny "public" services
- » Reveal a military application of a household item

D-SAL 27 (THREAT: PLACE)

Once home to the attractive bird life of Bolsa Chica Basin State Marine Conservation Area, Delsalination Tank 27 now supplies drinking water to the skeletal SeaCliff Arcologies of Huntington Beach. When the second wave of arcology construction kicked off in the late 2030s, the SeaCliff arcologies were heralded as the cutting-edge in self-sustaining habitats, capable of transitioning from fully terran to partially marine as sea levels rose. But, by the mid-2040s, it was clear that those promises had been smoke, the books had been cooked, and the remains of the project were acquired at basement prices by Newport Water. Now, one Arcology is complete, another is in the final stages of construction, and the third sits abandoned and waterlogged at the shore of D-Sal 27. Curiously, one underpopulated arcology and two allegedly incomplete and empty shells use all of D-Sal 27's fresh water production. Security is top-notch; even the arcology under construction sees no in or out traffic. Rumours abound, but intel is scarce.

Goal: to trap

Additional Moves:

- » Capture the unwary
- » Painfully reveal an experiment
- » Threaten the surrounding population

The warm Santa Ana wind that pushed her against the nanopolymer crystal window fluttered a wisp of stray hair against her forehead. Cuchilla shifted her weight slightly to her left foot, changing the angle and removing the irritation. Servos whirled back into action as she re-engaged her cybertools on the final set of screws. Balıkkartalı switched cameras.

A pool of white artificial daylight bathed the occupied cubicle, casting long steady shadows over the empty workstations of the 127th floor. Ali leaned back in their chair and pondered the accounting files scrolling over their display. A frown creased their forehead. They leaned back over the keypad. Balıkkartalı switched cameras.

The searching tendrils of Gravity Wave's algorithms flickered through the file structure searching for a match. The partial file he'd lifted from Pure Life had the trademark touch of a California Financial slash-and-burn attempt. If the original was anywhere, it would be in this server. When you had fingerprints on the financial arrangements of every multi-billion-dollar transaction in the western hemisphere, the most secure offline servers in your most secure megascrapper was a veritable goldmine of incriminating evidence waiting for the disinfecting rays of sunlight. Gravity Wave hadn't decided whether Balıkkartalı was in this for morals, glory, or cash, but the advance luxuriating in Gravity Wave's off-shore account eliminated much of his curiosity.

From Chinatown to the Figueroa Corridor, Downtown Los Angeles is the highly secure domain of California Financial, the New Wall Street in one corporation. It turns out that competition isn't good for business after all. Corporate freeways spit commuters directly into enormous parking buildings. The pedestrianised streets and crystalline airways between cloud-piercing megascrapers are patrolled by the sparkling white uniforms of CFSec. If you see wheels on a street here, someone important is moving or something big is going down.

CALIFORNIA FINANCIAL (CORPORATION)

Financial services, data storage and analysis, physical and matrix security

- » Deploy or hide "inconvenient" financial records
- » Outbid or buy a competitor
- » Discover a well-hidden truth

DTLA PLANNING COMMISSION (THREAT: GROUP)

It's been decades since Downtown Los Angeles was administered by an elected government in City Hall, but the building remains, a callback to an increasingly distant past before freeways and sprawl and California Financial. Inside the historic building, and throughout the towers of DTLA, the architectural legacy of art deco futurism houses a distributed network of visionaries; a parasitic web embedded within the executive ranks of California Financial. Corporate strategy is cumbersome. Paying lip service to "national laws" limits the capacity of human endeavour. Progress is their god and money its fuel. They long for a day when "public relations" is unnecessary, when the masses of humanity are finally irrelevant to their digital utopia. The Planning Commission is technically one of many strategic think tanks, but in reality they are a major faction within California Financial with access to resources unknown to many of the highest CF VPs.

Goal: to dominate

Additional Moves:

- » Strike with advanced technology
- » Reveal a hidden contingency
- » Terminate a weak link

Gray paint flaked and floated down towards the glowing white and red river below him as he gripped the steel I-beam with a matte-black gloved left hand. He flexed the fingers of his right and adjusted his grip on the cable clamp. With a wince and a grunt and a detensing of muscles, he jammed it up into the cable that Psyphon had indicated in the holographic model. No matter how many times he did it, Gravity Wave was always relieved when he got the right cable. He punched his deck to life.

The matrix resolved around him with a lightspeed rush as his clenched hand fell limp, dangling a delicate cascade of paint flakes onto the freeway below as his body slowly rotated obliviously. Gravity Wave looked around the virtual space. A plain white room emblazoned with the sunburst logo of Southern California Edison. "Spot on, Psy", he messaged the van, "I hope this all still works." A return message flashed across the top of his vision: "If the lights are on, the wire is still sound."

Gravity Wave was already moving. Pushing through the ancient cable and wire tangle, slowed by fraying wires and sparking hubs, jerking and lagging and je-e-erking his way thro-je-e-eee-ee-rking his way through the connecting network from the upgrade hole where his body slowly rotated above the Blue Pacific "Coloring Your Life" 101 Freeway. Like a slow-motion treacle dream, he emerged into the facility's system. He hated the muddy feeling of jacking in this way, but he did enjoy looking at the back end of unresolved ICE. Time to play.

Angeles-Long Beach, the crystalline blue waveforms of Blue Pacific's headquarters on the Palos Verdes Peninsula look down on the most important transport routes in and out of the SoCal Sprawl and the southwestern United States. The Blue Pacific logo is also a frequent sight on the freeways of Los Angeles and the interstates of the US through a lucrative network of toll-road projects. Blue Pacific trucks course through this arterial system bearing Blue Pacific consumer goods to a consuming nation. Beyond the physical realm, fiberoptic tendrils piggybacking those freeways and interstates act as a central nervous system for much of the region's economic activity.

BLUE PACIFIC (CORPORATION)

Transport, heavy industry, telecommunications infrastructure

- » Move something with impossible speed
- » Terminate a physical or digital connection
- » Lose something in transit

The linked tendrils and hubs of the local matrix's physical infrastructure have a veneer of Blue Pacific chrome, but scratch the surface and you'll find deep layers of patchy upgrades upon patchy upgrades. The software that manages this piecemeal network is state-of-the-art and the crews that service the inevitable hardware malfunctions are quick and competent, but there are vast windows of opportunity into which a wily Tech can throw a spanner or crimp a hookup cable. For creative Hackers, the best way into secure matrix systems starts in ancient databases of decades-old public works plans and ends hanging beneath freeway overpasses jacked into an upgrade hole in a dodgy three-generations-back cable exchange. You'll probably take a hit on latency and bandwidth, but start the game a few steps ahead of the trace algorithms. Pick your poison.

MATRIX INFRASTRUCTURE (HACKER MOVE)

When you **research** a facility in Los Angeles, you may ask the question "Where's the upgrade hole?"

When you **login** to a secure facility through an upgrade hole, roll Mind.

7+: Take +2 Stealth

7-9: Take -1 ongoing until you jack out

The Inland Empire swept beneath the small window like a conveyer-belt of old-style motherboards, all factories for chips and container trailers for legs. It reminded Dingikhaya of the circuit board walls of his favourite cafe in Bishkek. A kind of twentieth-century retro-hipsterism, long since scrubbed from the landscape of his new home in the City of Assembly-line Angels. He turned up the dampening on his cyberears as the engine whine changed pitch and glanced at the local time. Landing a little early. Good. Time was tight on this one.

The combination of entitled aggression and abundant space always made traffic on the LAX corporate loop an odd experience. In Bishkek, you needed that aggression to make headway through the un-automated snarl. In L.A., that aggression was simply an exertion of dominance over the contents of the surrounding meat-wheels. Dingikhaya jerked his head and amped his senses at the squeal of brakes to his left; the muffled sounds of breaking glass, a human shriek, and a curse, as the black curves of a Blue Pacific Flame shaved the CrystalBrite™ bumper of a Pure Life TigerGlide. Liz was always on time.

BIO

Freewaytown is **Hamish's** love letter to Los Angeles, a city that is so much more than freeways and movie studios. This chapter is dedicated to John, Julie and the LACMTA. Cheers!

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Prepare your datajack for a driveload of global cyberculture, friend.

Remix your mind and your DNA with the transhumanists of Tangaroa. Screen yourself from the UV, the corps, and the nanobots in Aotearoa. Swim through the stifling oppression of law and history in the capital of the European Federation.

Resist the corporate boot crushing the last bastion of North American freedom. Blow over the agri-prison baseline and the voodoo hooks of the Big Easy. Slink out of the lab and into the streets with keen eyes, sharp claws, and a vengeful mind.

Circle with the sharks of the Global Giant of Africa: smell the fire in their spirits and the spirits in the fibres. Dance from terrace to tower in the Paris moonlight, rapier in hand, honour in mind. Take down the fat cats and the dirty dogs with anthropomorphic abandon.

Play in the Caribbean sand or slog through the Florida swamp at the nexus of terrestrial and orbital borders. Fight your way free from the bleeding edge of militarised capitalism at the fractured terminus of a new Korean cold war. Kick against the current in SoCal's melting pot of simsense dreams, global commerce, and covert water wars.

Twelve new ways to experience *The Sprawl*. Are you ready for the *November Metric*?

The Sprawl: November Metric is a setting supplement, not a complete game; a copy of *The Sprawl* is required to play.

ARDENS
LUDERE

