

THE

NOTICE BOOK

Credits

Authority Recklessly Disregarded By: Nigel Findley (author)

Lies of the Establishment Debunked By: Ray Wimmer (additional material)

Joints Flown, Caps Melted: Corey Barba and Juan "Junior" Ramirez (art)

Threats Utterly Ignored By: Mike Russo (graphic design)

Don't You Dare Step To: Mari Paz Cabardo (art direction)

Da Backstop: Chris Kubasik (editor)

Swigs Poured For: Rob McLees and Mitch Gitelman

A Word from the Underground: Glad you're all still with us. I'd like to take this opportunity to remind you that politics is what it's all about and to invite you to shoot your own political rants, theories, diatribes, or analyses our way! Think Clinton is bug? Are you convinced that your Senator is a felon? Drop us a line. We'll publish the most interesting stuff we get (and yeah, we'll withhold your name and keep the Man off your back).

I've Got a Beef

c/o MGI

PO Box 48539

Niles, IL 60714

Current Government Scandals: The Health Care Sell-Out

Step the #&@! Off! Kevin Costner/Oliver Stone, lousy comic books, 2 drink minimums, Sting, Kim Bassinger (give up, baby!), anyone and everyone ever connected with *Saturday Night Live!*, the neo-PMRC, made-for-TV movies, made-for-cable movies, all but a select handful of made-for-movies movies, and various assorted punks.

The Underground Book Shelf (check 'em out!): *True Romance* (yeah, Christian Slater, but see it anyway); *The Divine Invasion* by Philip K. Dick, *Miss Lonelyhearts* by Nathaniel West



underground

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How To Use This Book

At last, you hold in your hot little hands the vaunted *Underground Notebook*.

Inside, you'll find scores of entries describing some of the important people, places, organizations, and historical events in the Underground universe.

Nearly all future Underground products will feature additional loose-leaf sheets that you can add to this binder, allowing you to keep all your source material in one place. The bulk of the Technology chapter, for instance, is found in *Fully Strapped, Always Packed!*, available in November of 1993. Furthermore, we've provided you with a few blank pages that will allow you to create your own entries (feel free to photocopy these pages for personal use).

Each year MGI plans to produce an *Underground Notebook Update* featuring lots of new notebook entries, information about the major events unfolding in *Underground's* fictional universe, and a series of notebook entries that replace old entries to reflect the changes in the campaign background. The first Notebook Update is slated for December of 1994.

"The violence that has engulfed our society may shock politicians and clergymen, but it comes as no surprise to those of us with an education in the physical sciences. Long ago, chemists discovered that even on its simplest levels, our universe is little more than a series of violent collisions and rupturing bonds. What we see in our streets today is little more than the latest reflection of the natural order."





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SYSTEMATIC
OVERTHROW

THE U.S.

TOO STRONG TO LIVE
TOO WEAK TO DIE

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We the People of the United States

THE
**NOTICE
BOOK**

FREE THE PACS
NEVER WAR



PEOPLE

Boosted Attributes

Boost	Base	Pot.	Max	Stress	Psych.
STR	5	1	35	UR/4*	HM
SPD	5	1	11	UR/4*	Cat
DEX	5	1	11	UR/4*	Cat
RES	5	1	24	UR/4*	HM
INT	10	1	20	UR/4*	Par

*all Stress is Continuous (C).
 UR=Unit Rating, HM=Homicidal Mania,
 Cat=Catatonia, Par=Paranoia

Unit Rating	Add to Att.
1-4	+1
5-8	+2
9-12	+3
13-15	+4
16-18	+5
19-20	+6
21	+7
22	+8
Each add Unit	+1

Enhancement Table

Enhancement	Base Cost	Potency	Max	Stress	Psychosis
Acid 10	2	13	Unit Rating/4	Panic Disorder	
Adrenal Surge	5	2	8	Unit Rating/3	Homicidal Mania
Analytic Smell	5	1	12	Unit Rating/5	Sociopathy
Bomb	15	2	20	Unit Rating/4	Homicidal Mania
Chameleon	10	1	7	Unit Rating/5	Sociopathy
Chitin/Blubber	10	3	6	Unit Rating/3 (C)	Melancholia
Claws	5	1	11	Unit Rating/4 (C)	Homicidal Mania
Cold Immunity	5	1	8	Unit Rating/5 (C)	Sociopathy
Control	20	3	12	Unit Rating/4	Multiple Pers.
Danger Sense	5	2	11	Unit Rating/5 (C)	Paranoia
Electric Discharge	10	2	18	Unit Rating/4	Homicidal Mania
Emotion Control	10	3	18	Unit Rating/5	Multiple Pers.
Empathy	10	1	9	Unit Rating/4	Sociopathy
Enhanced Hearing	5	1	10	Unit Rating/5 (C)	Schizophrenia
Extra Limb	10	1	20	Unit Rating/6 (C)	Multiple Pers.
Flight Control	20	1	25	Unit Rating/12 (C)	Sociopathy
Gills	10	1	24	Unit Rating/12 (C)	Paranoia
Heat Immunity	5	1	8	Unit Rating/5	Sociopathy
Hyper Touch	5	1	15	Unit Rating/6 (C)	Melancholia
Invisibility	10	3	10	Unit Rating/3	Sociopathy
Leaping	5	1	8	Unit Rating/4 (C)	Homicidal Mania
Life Sense	10	2	8	Unit Rating/3 (C)	Multiple Pers.
Micro Vision	5	1	30	Unit Rating/10 (C)	Catatonia
Mind Probe	10	3	10	Unit Rating/3	Schizophrenia
Poison	10	2	8	Unit Rating/2	Catatonia
Radar Sense	5	1	15	Unit Rating/6 (C)	Panic Disorder
Reduced Fatigue	5	1	6	Unit Rating/4 (C)	Catatonia
Regeneration	15	3	9	Unit Rating/3 (C)	Sociopathy
Sealed Systems	10	1	12	Unit Rating/5 (C)	Schizophrenia
Sense Block	15	2	11	Unit Rating/4	Melancholia
Size Reduction	10	2	15	Unit Rating/5 (C)	Sociopathy
Sonic Discharge	10	3	10	Unit Rating/3	Panic Disorder
Swimming	5	1	12	Unit Rating/8 (C)	Panic Disorder
Telepathic Blast	15	3	7	Unit Rating/2	Schizophrenia
Telescopic Vision	5	1	9	Unit Rating/5 (C)	Catatonia
Telekinesis	10	3	8	Unit Rating/3	Schizophrenia
Telepathy	10	1	35	Unit Rating/15	Schizophrenia
Thermal Vision	5	1	25	Unit Rating/8 (C)	Melancholia

PEOPLE

PLACES

ORGANIZATIONS

EVENTS

TECHNOLOGY

MISC.

Skill List

Skill	Specialties	Gov. Att.	Unskilled?	Skill	Specialties	Gov. Att.	Unskilled?
Acrobatics	Breakfall Climbing Dodge Local Federal State Per. Arts Vis. Arts Writer Entrepreneur Market	DEX	Climbing only	Languages Leadership Martial Arts Medicine	— — — First Aid Medical Treatment Surgery	INT WILL SPD INT	No No No First Aid only
Administration		AURA	Yes				
Artist		AURA	No				
Business		INT	Yes	Military Science	Demolitions Tactics	INT	Yes, exc. Demo.
Charm		AURA	Yes	Psychology	Tracking Diagnosis Research Therapy Astro./Physics Biology Chemistry	INT	No
Computer Science		INT	No	Science		INT	No
Detective		INT	Invest. only	Social Science Streetwise	— Connections Customs Savvy Forgery Security Stealth	INT WILL	No No
Genetic Engineering		INT	No	Thief		DEX	Yes
Gun Combat		DEX	Yes	Vehicles	Air/Space land	DEX	land only
Intimidation/Interro.		AURA	Interro. only	Weaponry	Water Blade Blunt	DEX	Yes
Invention/Repair		INT	No				

PEOPLE

Character Creation:

- Allocate \$20,000,000 to Recruitment, Genetic Design, Genetic Surgery, and Reconditioning.
- 1) Funds must be allocated to Genetic Surgery in the amounts of \$200,000, \$700,000, or \$1,000,000.
 - 2) Funds must be allocated to Reconditioning in the amounts of \$500,000, \$1,000,000, or \$5,000,000
 - 3) Every \$100,000 allocated to recruitment earns 1 Recruitment Point and every \$100,000 allocated to genetic design earns 1 Enhancement Point.

Traits and Codes

- Limiting Trait = 5 Recruitment Points
- Non-Limiting Trait = 3 Recruitment Points
- Limiting Code = 10 Recruitment Points
- Non-Limiting Code = 5 Recruitment Points

Purchasing Skills

Starting Score	Cost (RPs)
+1	1
+2	2
+3	4
+4	6
+5	9
+6	12

Purchasing Attributes

Starting Score	Cost (RPs)
0	0
1	3
2	6
3	10
4	14
5	19
6	24

Enhancement Surgery

Funds Allocated	Surgeon's Skill
\$200,000	7
\$700,000	9
\$1,000,000	12
Grade	Unit Total
F	-2
D	0
C	+1
B	+2
A	+3

Readjustment

Funds Allocated	Shrink's Skill
\$500,000	7
\$1,000,000	9
\$5,000,000	12
Grade	Stress Total
F	0
D	0
C	-1
B	-2
A	-3

Enhancement Purchase Table

UNITS	POTENCY				
	-	1	2	3	+
1	1	2	3	4	5
2	2	3	4	5	6
3	3	4	5	6	7
4	4	5	6	7	8
5	5	6	7	8	9
6	6	7	8	9	10
7	7	8	9	10	11
8	8	9	10	11	12
9	9	10	11	12	13
10	10	11	12	13	14
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26	26	27	28	29	30
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CAPTAIN CONFLICT

STR: 5 DEX: 3 SPD: 4 RES: 3
INT: 2 WILL: 2 AURA: 4

Acrobatics: 6, Charm: 7, Gun Combat: 5
Flight: 22

Emotion Control: 16

Stress Tolerance: 8

Psychosis: Sociopathy

Nowlan Flight Harness™, Mondo Armor

BACKGROUND

Captain Conflict is the centerpiece of AMI's recruiting campaign. His smiling face and heroic physique grace newspaper ads, billboards, magazine covers and bumper stickers all over North America. He's starred in half a dozen different commercials on vid-net, delivering the catch-phrase that will probably always be associated with him — "All That You Can Be". Countless young men and women have seen Captain Conflict and imagined themselves in his boots, exuding the same quiet confidence that he's capable of taking care of himself anywhere and any time, that he's done and seen it all and that he never has to prove anything further to himself or to anyone else. Countless young men and women have stood in line under the huge blow-up of "Cap" which graces all AMI enlistment offices. And countless men and women, several years older and exhausted in mind and body, have cursed the day they first set eyes on Captain Conflict.

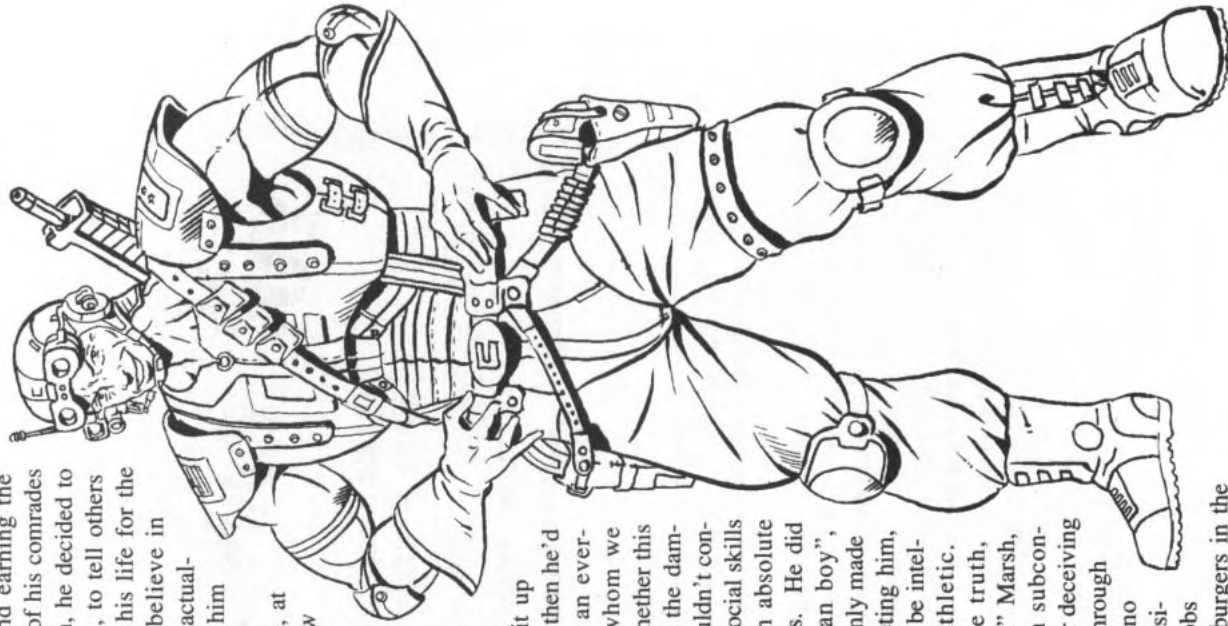
Cap is the "acceptable" side of boosted ops. Members of the public who distrust, fear or even outright loath real veterans often respect, and even revere, Captain Conflict. His clean-cut appearance, his ready smile, quiet wit, and the look of resolve and understanding in his eyes reflect what they'd like to consider their own personal strengths. Many people have gone on record as saying that they wouldn't have any problem with enhanced veterans "if only they were more like Captain Conflict".

The famous Captain Conflict started out as just plain Rod Marsh. According to the personnel docket released by AMI, Marsh was an honor student in high school, member of the Jaycees and 4H, senior class president, a baseball and football star, and archetypal all-American boy. He enlisted with AMI because he'd decided that there was a job to do, protecting the interests of his nation, and the only way he could do that job was to sign on with a conflict firm. He selected AMI, supposedly, because of its reputation for fairness, decency, good manners, and out-and-out patriotism. He served two tours, the docket says, receiving numerous decorations for valor above and

beyond the call of duty, and earning the respect and downright love of his comrades in arms. On demobilization, he decided to remain on the AMI payroll, to tell others how enlisting had changed his life for the better, had taught him to believe in himself, had helped him to actualize his potential — had let him be All That He Could Be.

That's the official story, at least. The people who knew Rod Marsh personally tell quite a different one.

When he was growing up in Seaside, Oregon he was — plainly stated — a screw-up of the highest order. His parents had split up when he was five, and since then he'd lived with his mother and an ever-changing stream of men whom he was told to call "father". Whether this messed him up, or whether the damage was already done, he couldn't concentrate in school, had few social skills and no friends, and was an absolute klutz when it came to sports. He did look like the "all-American boy", however... which probably only made things worse. (On first meeting him, people would expect him to be intelligent, self-assured and athletic. When they discovered the truth, they'd often "take it out on" Marsh, to some degree, as though subconsciously they blamed him for deceiving them.) He barely made it through high school, knew he had no chance of getting into university, and couldn't find any jobs better paying than flipping burgers in the



ALL THAT YOU CAN BE

Captain Conflict says,
"Make a Difference!"

Contact your local AMI Enlistment Office today.



local Mr. Big Buns. He enlisted with AMI not out of any higher motivations, but merely because it was the "only show in town" — the only company that would accept him.

Rod Marsh turned out to be a severe screw-up at AMI, too. The company boosted him and put him through basic training — under the codename "Buzzard" — only to find their new recruit seemed totally incapable of learning the skills he'd need to be effective. His trainers used every technique they could think of to pound knowledge into his skull — including some highly-experimental chemical techniques that would have made the FDA break out in hives if they'd known about it — but to no avail. Finally they sent him into the field anyway, figuring the worst that could happen was that Buzzard would get himself killed. What happened, of course, was that Buzzard got his *squad* killed, while escaping without a scratch. The trauma of seeing his buddies reduced to cat-food around him unhinged the Buzzard's mind, and he was quickly air-lifted back to the States to be demobbed before he could cause any more trouble.

As he was being wheeled out of the AMI clinic preparatory to being dumped onto the street, for the first time Marsh's luck picked up. An AMI PR flack, charged with devising some hot new recruiting campaign, happened to see Marsh — looking even

more like an all-American hero in his costume — and realized that here was the perfect face to put on every bus, every billboard, and every lunch-box in America. Marsh was scooped up and cleaned up, and Captain Conflict was born.

Cap's responsibilities are limited to photo shoots, the occasional one-day stint on a video sound-stage, and twice-monthly public appearances. At these appearances, he stands at a podium before a microphone — which is strategically placed to hide his mouth — while a "voice stand-in" reads a speech which is supposed to be Cap's off-the-cuff comments to the crowd. Then a couple of "lucky winners" in a lottery — actually, carefully-briefed stooges — are allowed on-stage to get Cap's autograph, then he's whisked away again. Between jobs, he lives quite comfortably inside the AMI headquarters compound, in the equivalent of a private extended-care hospital.

PERSONALITY

Cap is certifiably insane. His sleep is tortured with nightmares of his one and only firefight, and the death of his comrades. During the day, he suffers massive mood swings, and frequently hallucinates. When meeting someone new, he's equally likely to think the newcomer is the best friend he never had in childhood, or a demon sent to take him to hell. Very rarely, his personality shifts and he *becomes* Captain Conflict, thinking and acting just the way Cap is supposed to. Phases like this don't last long, however, and aren't predictable. Usually, he's kept doped to the eyeballs.

Cap has the Flight and Broadcast Empathy enhancements. He's always on drugs to suppress these abilities, however. (Anyone who meets Cap between doses had better be ready to receive get a taste of Cap's own madness, as his Empathy Control transmits what he's feeling at the moment...)

QUOTES

"All That You Can Be All That You Can Be All That You Can Be All That You Can Be..."

"Are you the nice man who came to see me yesterday?"

"Yes, doctor, I *am* Captain Conflict... and I *can't* stand it any more..."

CAPTAIN VIDEO

STR: 4 (6*) DEX: 5 SPD: 4 RES: 5 (8*)
INT: 5 WILL: 5 AURA: 5

Acrobatics: 7, Gun Combat: 8, Intimidation/Interrogation: 9, Invention/Repair: 11,
Streetwise: 7, Thief: 6, Vehicles: 8, Weaponry: 11
Telepathic Blast: 7
Telekinesis: 8

Stress Tolerance: 10
Psychosis: Schizophrenia

Equipment:

20mm GCS DW 770/g, Customized Battle Armor (*the armor increases Lilly's STR by +2, and increases her RES by +3 Computer and weapon targeting systems are built into the armor), Chaff (3 charges), Average Computer Pack (RES of 8 because it's built into the armor), all the software available, combat goggles*, cellular phone*, Punkbuster™ Radar Detector*, Punkbuster™ Signal Jammer*

BACKGROUND

Captain Video began her career as boosted shortly after being sent to an asylum by her parents. She was known as Lilly Helmsman then, and her life has always been a little strange.

From the time she was a small girl, she insisted she could see strange creatures all over the place. At first her parents thought this was the typical situation of a child afraid of monsters under the bed. They thought it was a phase, and that it would pass.

It did not. With each passing year Lilly became more and more resolute in her belief that all sorts of creatures existed around her. She would describe them leaning over her father's shoulder as he watched the comp-net news summaries, or following her mother while she went out to go shopping. She described the monsters as varied in shape and form, sometimes with scales, sometimes with feathers, some with many colors, drool dripping from their teeth. Although the monsters themselves were inconsistent, her descriptions always remained absolutely precise.

When doctors were brought in to examine her, she could keep track of up to a dozen of the monsters at a time, telling her examiners where they were in the room and what they looked like from different angles, all without contradicting her previous statements. That anyone could keep track of so many details without actually seeing the creatures seemed impossible.

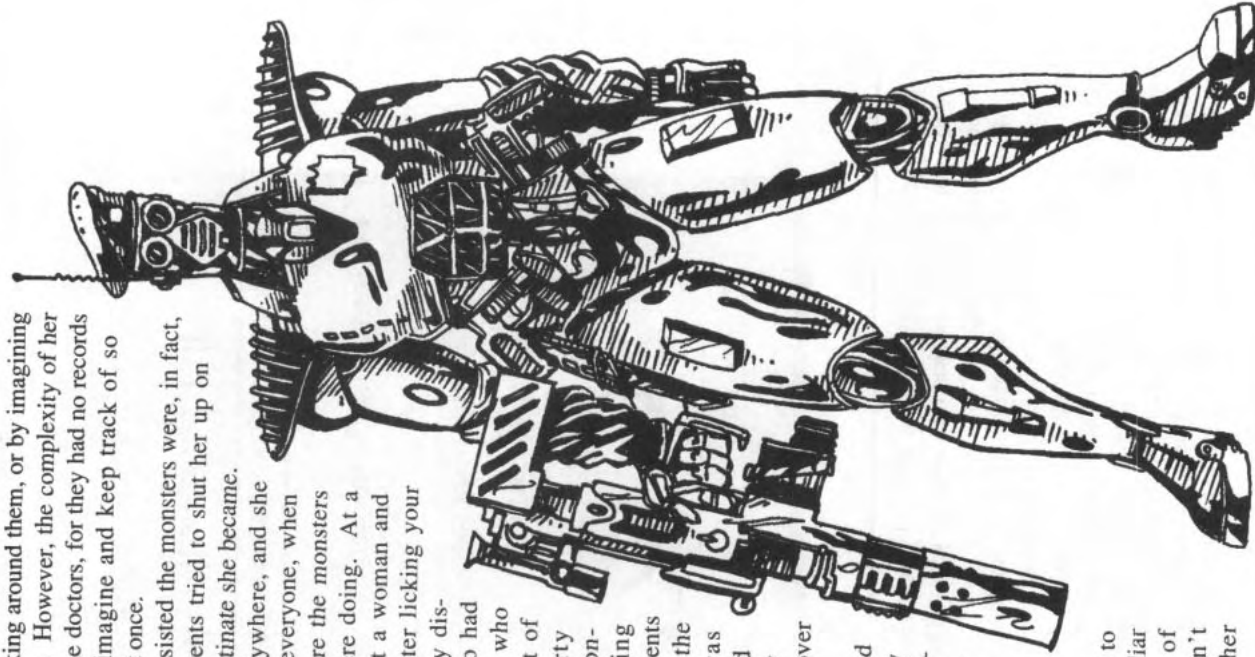
Eventually she was diagnosed as possessing eidetic imagery—the ability to see mental images as if suspended outside the head. She could inspect these images from

different angles, by walking around them, or by imagining they walked around her. However, the complexity of her imagination staggered the doctors, for they had no records of anyone who could imagine and keep track of so many different images at once.

For her part Lilly insisted the monsters were, in fact, real. The more her parents tried to shut her up on the matter, the more obstinate she became. She saw monsters everywhere, and she took to announcing to everyone, when she was in public, where the monsters were and what they were doing. At a small she might point at a woman and shout, "There's a monster licking your hat." All of this greatly distressed her parents, who had planned on a little girl who might, at most, get out of hand during a tea party with her dolls. Her constant, attention grabbing outbursts caused her parents continuous stress. By the age of fourteen she was becoming quite wild, and screamed insistently about the monsters all over the world.

When her parents had enough of all of it, they shipped her off to an asylum. There she remained, working on poetry and watercolor paintings.

However, AMI scientists heard about Lilly and were very curious as to what a person of her peculiar talents would make of Slumberland. They didn't exactly buy Lilly from her



Memphis Professional Psychiatric Institution

DEPT. OF ADMISSIONS

Patient: Lilly Helmsman

Age: Fourteen

Diagnosis: Paranoid Schizophrenia

Date: August 15, 2015

Released by

Lilly Helmsman

parents. That would be illegal. But they did give them a great deal of money to defray the cost of Lilly's medical bills over the years. They then took her away and her parents never saw her again.

AMI dumped her into Slumberland and the machine almost fried out trying to keep up with her. Finding herself in an environment where she could imagine almost anything, she created one strange illusion after another. Her efforts helped build up a long catalogue of how the human mind interfaces with VR technology.

When she came out of Slumberland she was shipped down to South America and the monsters followed. She fought in several campaigns over a period of four years. During the whole time the monsters were everywhere. By the time she mustered out she believed the creatures were coming to get her. It was during this time, with her

mustering out pay, she picked up her battle armor. It was her attempt to fend off the creatures with layers of metal. Of course, as the problem was in her mind, the armor did not help her.

Eventually, desperate to at least ignore the monsters, she had the power goggles on her suit modified so she constantly ran a video program when not in combat. Thus, while walking down the street, imposed over the scenery around her, are black and white TV programs from decades earlier. While the video programs don't block the monsters from her attention, they do distract her. She's installed audio components as well, to better distract her from the world around her. She is now intimately familiar with all the episodes of I Love Lucy, The Fugitive, The Beverly Hillbillies, The Untouchables and many other shows from the television of yesteryear. Whenever she enters combat she switches the systems off. The monsters are still all around her, but her need to survive allows her to ignore them.

About a year ago she hooked up with the Rollin' 50s. She needed a place where she could relax a bit, and the gang needed some boosted muscle. She's more than content to do their dirty work because they leave her alone and pay her real well.

Her ambition is to build some sort of video processing unit that will block the monsters completely from sight. She has kept this project a secret, and thus no one has been able to explain to her why this is an impossible goal.

PERSONALITY

Captain Video is one strange case. She knows the shows she's watching so well that she often speaks along with them. She often gets lost in her own little world, and, aside from threats of physical danger, can often ignore the rest of the world with disturbing tenacity. When focused on a person she is wary and afraid. Most people think this is because she is afraid of them. This is not the case. She is afraid of the monsters. When she's distracted, it's because the monsters are distracting her.

These days she practically lives inside of her armor, seeking shelter against all the monsters. She only takes it off at her home in lower Beverly Hills, a large crumbling mansion filled with strange electronics and countless video tapes of old programs.

QUOTES

"Luuuuuuuuuuuuu!"

"No. I am listening to you. Please, go on."

"You probably don't want to know about this, but there's a yellow monster with red spots sitting on your chair."

CHARLES FOSTER

WILL: 2 AURA: 3

Administration: 5, Business: 2, Charm: 7, Leadership: 4

BACKGROUND

Charles Foster had his eye on the prize — the presidency of the United States — from the time he was a boy. Born in 1970, in Rixeyville, Virginia, his birth name was actually Pietro Saffo. In elementary school, he was already telling everyone to call him Charles (*never* Charlie) — a name which he believed carried with it an aura of dependability — and the day he turned 21 he officially changed his name to Charles Emerson Foster.

Foster's introduction to politics came early, as did his taste for victory. He ran for hall monitor, staging a remarkably sophisticated campaign for a boy of eight, and won in an absolute landslide. From that day forward, he ran for virtually every elected office for which he was eligible (whether or not he was actually qualified). He racked up the victories — junior and senior class president, president of the Rixeyville High Young Republicans Association, president of the Rixeyville Junior Chamber of Commerce, etc. — with each campaign showing even more sophistication (and, incidentally, ruthlessness) than the one before. During the two summers before and after his senior year, he volunteered to work in the office of the Senator of Virginia.

Even though young Foster's academic record was, to be charitable, undistinguished — possibly because he had things other than classes on his mind — the Senator managed to use his considerable personal influence to secure for Charles a scholarship to the University of Virginia. Foster majored in political science with minors in economics and psychology, and continued to run for every office that was open to him: chapter president of Sigma Chi fraternity, student senate, president of the Alma Mater Society, and on and on. He never graduated, dropping out in his junior year — only days before he was to be expelled from the university for non-payment of tuition fees and academic underachievement, his critics claim — to join the staff of Raymond Wells, state governor and a staunch Republican. For two years, Wells was Foster's friend and mentor, educating the young man about how *real* government differed from student government, fraternities and such.

Up to this point, Foster had been a hard-line Republican himself. Thus it came as a surprise to everyone when he quit the governor's staff and threw his hat in the ring for the position of governor... with the hearty backing of the local *Democratic* party! In a hard-fought battle characterized by an almost unbelievable degree of mud-slinging and character assassination, Foster defeated his mentor. Although nominally a

Democrat, Foster's policies as governor were more in keeping with the *laissez-faire* capitalism of turn-of-the-century Republicanism.

Foster once again showed his political opportunism in 2002, when he ran for the Senate backed by the newly-formed Plutocratic Party. The Plutocrats had updated the "Electronic Town Meeting" concept of their "patron saint", Ross Perot, and used it to great effect. The Democratic and Republican candidates didn't have a chance, and Foster found himself as Senator for Virginia.

As most successful Plutocratic candidates did, Foster did his utmost to guarantee that every issue put before him was resolved in the manner most beneficial to big business in his state. What set him

apart from other Plutocrats, however, was that he always did this in such a way as to gain as much corporate gratitude and personal good-will as possible. Opponents claim that he also engaged in more than a little arm-twisting, and even outright extortion, to gain the support of various influential corporations. Regardless, when Foster threw his hat in the ring for the Plutocratic nomination in the 2020 presidential campaign, he brought with him an almost staggering amount of corporate support. He won the nomination in a landslide.





In the actual presidential election, voter apathy had reached unprecedented levels. Voter turnout was only 16%. Of the electorate who actually bothered to vote, the majority were opposed to putting a Plutocrat into the White House. Unfortunately, perhaps, the anti-Plutocrat vote was split between the Republicrat and National Anti-Socialist candidates — the Atomic Kennedy and Gunther Bloch, respectively — and Foster won, with a “mandate” of only 40% of participating voters. (That means that only 6.4% of the population actually voted for Charles Foster. Ah, the wonders of democracy...)

As befits a Plutocrat (until something better comes along), Foster’s administration has been characterized by a huge increase in corporate profits, but a sharp decline in social services. These trends have led to a noticeable surge in popularity for the Republicrat party.

There are many — in government and out, and among the news media — who believe, and even claim publicly, that Foster’s administration is the most corrupt within recent memory. Only the removal of all conflict-of-interest guidelines by the Plutocrat-dominated House and Senate — plus an efficient propaganda, disinformation and dirty-tricks squad — have kept Foster and members of his cabinet out of real trouble.

More disturbingly, there are recurrent, although unsubstantiated, rumors that Charles Foster isn’t his own man, and hasn’t been since he was elected to the Senate... if not before. Some analysts claim — although never on the record — that the president’s actions show more intelligence and political savvy than someone with Foster’s relatively low intelligence could ever bring to bear. Charles Emerson Foster is a figurehead, these analysts say, a puppet. If this is true, the key question then becomes, “Who is the puppet-master?” Nobody knows for sure. Some people claim that Jeffrey Sneed, National Security Advisor, is the power behind the throne. Others, however, believe that Sneed is just as much of a puppet as Foster...

PERSONALITY

Charles Emerson Foster is the archetypical smooth-spoken politician. He’s a highly competent “social chameleon”, with an uncanny ability to discern what people want to hear at any given moment, and an instant willingness to say it to them — whenever, and wherever. He can switch mental, emotional and social gears in an instant, adapting to any new circumstance or group of people. It’s been said, with some degree of truth, that Foster could go from a breakfast meeting with the Ku Klux Klan straight to being keynote speaker at a Black Panthers fund-raiser, and have both groups totally convinced they’d found a kindred spirit.

As befits any contemporary politician, Foster is incredibly telegenic. Since his election, he’s broadcast five “fireside chats” over the nation’s airwaves, in which he seems to set aside the dignity and reserve characteristic of the president, and talk to the nation from his heart and soul. His earnestness and sincerity on these occasions have won over — at least temporarily — many people who hate Plutocratic policies and would love to hate a Plutocratic president as well.

In fact, his “earnest”, “sincere” demeanor during these “fireside chats” is just another mask — another facade Foster has developed to get what he wants. People who’ve experienced his 180-degree shifts in personality wonder if there’s any real personality there at all, under the masks, or whether it’s *all* artificial. The only person who really knows Charles Emerson Foster is Charles Emerson Foster... and even *that*’s not certain...

QUOTES

“Business is the lifeblood of this great country of ours. Factories are its heart. Computer installations are its brain. Communication providers are its voice. How can the Republicrats ask me to bleed away America’s vitality?”

“Good government is *small* government. Restrictions on business practices are *not* good government.”

“I think I speak for every clear-minded American, when I say, ‘God bless corporate America!’”

CLAY FEET

STR: 8 DEX: 9 SPD: 7 RES: 5
INT: 5 WILL: 5 AURA: 6

Acrobatics: 15, Artist (storyteller): 11, Charm: 12, Gun Combat: 14, Intimidation/Interrogation: 10, Leadership: 10, Martial Arts: 13, Medicine: 8, Military Science: 9, Psychology: 7, Social Sciences (N. African tribal cultures): 7, Streetwise: 9, Weaponry: 11
Acid: 11

Adrenal Surge: 7
Stress Tolerance: 10
Psychosis: Panic Disorder

Equipment:

Survival Knife, 30mm Silver Bullet SSF 2/30, 30mm ZAG, Mondo Armor, Average Home Model Computer, Pueblo Firefight, Pueblo Mapltd, combat goggles

BACKGROUND

Clay Feet, code named The Viper in North Africa, became boosted during a period of personal destitution. As an avid body builder, he had attempted to make a career of molding is physique on the competition circuit. But he lacked the nightmarish discipline required for a perfect body. After nearly killing himself on appetite suppressants and steroids, he was sent to the hospital for recuperation. While there, he considered the possible benefits of Slumberland. He knew it would not only build up his muscle mass, but give him a solid job. He'd been looking for a focused purpose in life for years, and he believed he might have found it in becoming a boosted soldier.

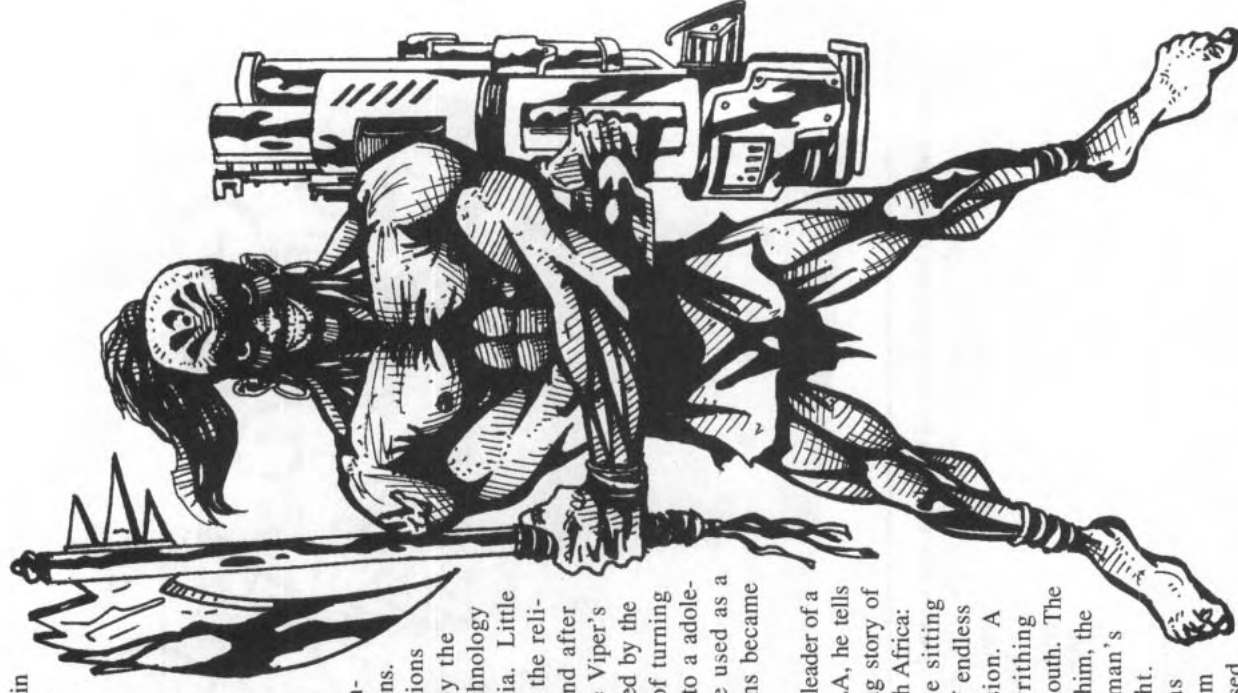
He went off to Slumberland, and for fourteen months imagined himself a four-color comic book hero called The Viper. Dressed in black, with muscle tone rippling under his skin tight outfit, The Viper wandered the back alleys of a dark city looking for trouble. He'd learned the secrets of overpowering martial arts (according to his Slumberland background) in a deeply secretive primitive tribe, hidden away in the remaining jungles of Northern Africa.

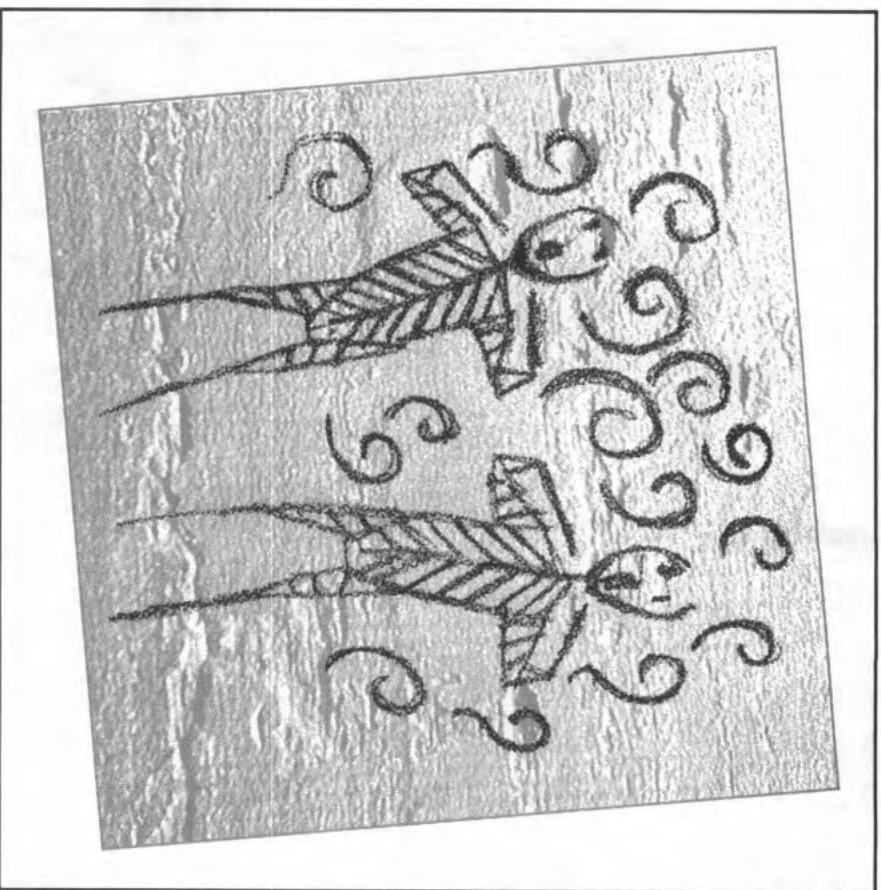
By the time he finally got out of Slumberland, he had trouble separating the mystical movements in the real world from those of Slumberland. Since, according to the logic of Slumberland, the more powerful a mystical group was, the less was publicly known about it. It stood to reason that the lack of evidence of a mystical movement meant it was, in fact, real. Therefore, when he left Slumberland, he knew that the world was rife with magical, mystical movements, for not a word of true proof was available about any of them.

It was with this in mind that he travelled to North Africa to combat terrorists, attacking their camps in late night raids. While there, he tracked down all sorts of primitive religions, meeting with the few remaining practitioners of ancient religions. Of course, the religions had been altered by the encroachment of technology and Hollywood media. Little of the true spirit of the religions remained. And after grinding through The Viper's mind, a mind confused by the Slumberland habit of turning anything of value into a adolescent powertrip to be used as a weapon, the religions became even more debased.

As Clay Feet, the leader of a Primitivism tribe in L.A, he tells his tribe the following story of his experience in North Africa:

One night, while sitting alone in a stretch of endless desert, he had a vision. A man approached, writhing and foaming at the mouth. The man staggered up to him, the stars outlining the man's body with pale light. When the man was about two yards from The Viper he collapsed





to the ground. From his flesh erupted a strange, black cloud. As the cloud dissipated, thousands of small, small people emerged from the dead man's flesh, running in panic across the desert sand. They were so small that the grains of sand tripped them and they fell to the ground and choked on the poisonous black fumes. From that moment on The Viper knew that he was tied to the Apocalypse. He knew that the end of the world would come through poison gases, that humanity deserved nothing less than death, and that he would be its instrument.

In fact, no such vision ever occurred. (However, he is so confused about truth and reality, that it would be harsh to call him a liar.) He heard enough stories from the storytellers in Africa about the end of the world that he took it into his head that this was in fact a truth. These stories got mixed up with his own concerns about the nerve

gas that always waited for him and his teammates as they approached terrorist compounds. In his own self-aggrandized, apocalyptic vision, he saw his own struggle connected to the struggle of all humanity. What he feared, the world feared. What would kill him, would kill the world.

His talks of gloom and doom around his fellow soldiers, sprinkled with apocalyptic rantings, soon reached a pitch that freaked out his peers. The AMI handlers decided that The Viper's tour of duty would wrap early, and he was sent back to the states.

He bummed around New York for a while, preaching his end of the world vision on street corners to anyone who would listen. The local police got so tired of hearing complaints about him that they shackled him and sent him out to L.A. where he was dumped into the vet system.

There he hooked up with one primitivism group after another, for in their passion for mystical narratives, he finally found people who could relate to him. Due to his immense strength and his incredibly intense narratives of his experiences in North Africa, he soon won a place as a leader of the Yanomamoses tribe. He incorporated his visions of the apocalypse into the tribe's history, and now has his people working diligently to steal as much poison gas as they can. They also keep tabs on new versions of poison gases being developed around the world.

PERSONALITY

Clay Feet, as he became known after his entry into the primitivism sub-culture, is wild eyed and intense. He does not speak, he holds forth. He does not gesture, he gesticulates. He never looks directly at the person he is addressing, but through them and beyond them.

of his followers seem as if they are inhabiting the world they live in. The effect is incredibly disorienting for anyone listening to the group ramble on.

Although he speaks constantly about the coming end of the world, Clay Feet does it with intense passion and energy. In fact, he seems like one of the happiest, most alive people around. His zest for mass death is reminiscent of a young boy's excitement at completing a run of a comic book line for his collection.

QUOTES

"But wait'll you see the Apocalypse!"

"What is there to see but death!"

"By our own hands, death!"

DARRYL PRINCE

AURA: 4

Artist (performer): 8

BACKGROUND

Those vid-net viewers who are in the know (pathetically few of them, that is) recognize that Darryl Prince is more or less the antithesis of Peter Argot (q.v.). While Argot's reputation is as a muckraker *extraordinaire*, dedicated to rooting around under the rocks of government — so to speak — and stirring up all the creepy-crawlies hiding underneath, Prince is something of an apologist for the government and the status quo. Prince's show — imaginatively called *Darryl Prince Live* — runs on CVC, major rival to the FBC vid-net that carries Argot's show. (Interestingly, it's hard to predict what time either show is going to come on, although both run somewhere near midnight. FBC keeps trying to reschedule Argot's show so it's on simultaneously with Prince's, while CVC keeps trying to avoid such a head-to-head matchup. The reason is that official ratings, compiled by the Federal Data Communications Commission, claim that Prince's show always nets at least a 60-share while Argot's ratings are usually a 3-share or worse. FBC's own figures indicate much the opposite: Argot's numbers blow Prince out of the water. The only way they can prove this, though, is in a true head-to-head match-up between the two celebrities. So far this hasn't happened.)

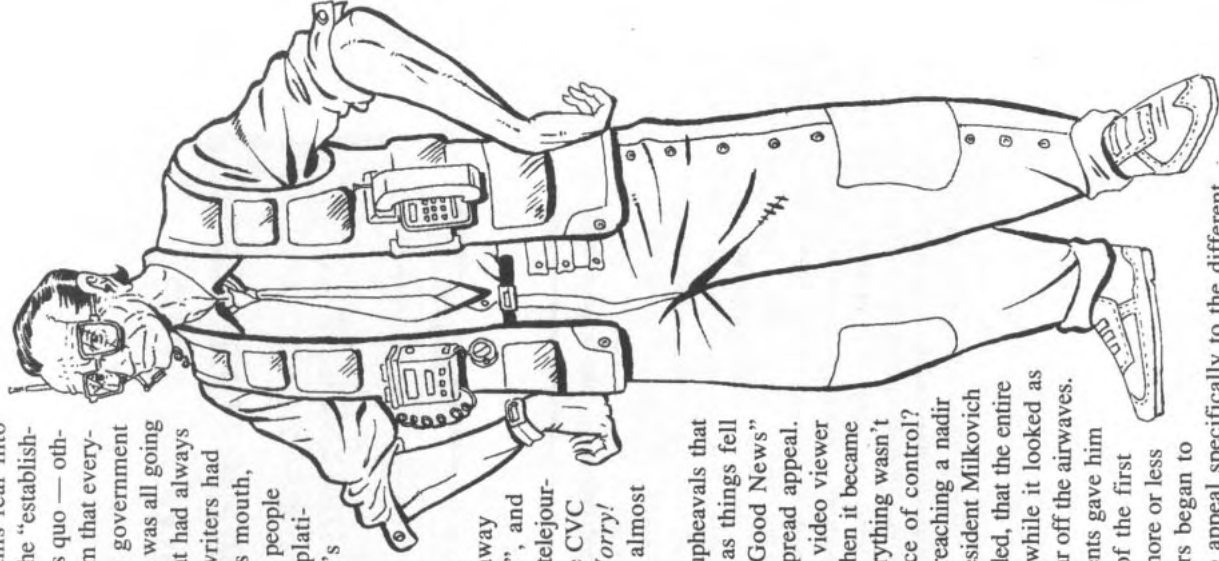
Prince started his career as a "talking head" at a struggling independent television station in Washington DC, back in 1991. The station's programmers believed that Prince's slightly "geeky" look would endear him to the demographic segment they were after. Surprisingly, they were right. The station itself went under three years later, but Prince's contract was picked up by an AT&T subsidiary trying to penetrate the broadcast market. Prince's demographic appeal seemed stronger than ever among certain segments of the population — specifically, those who tended to believe that whatever government happened to be in power was actually benign, and that whatever government spokespeople said was automatically the truth. Keying on this fact, the AT&T subsidiary "slanted" all of Prince's scripted reports so that he was always telling this segment of the audience what it wanted to hear.

Over the next decade, Prince's career continued with few changes. He got switched from station to station, but his "mandate" — presenting the "acceptable" government position on every issue — remained the same. By about 2005, however, the demand for Prince's "services" began to increase drastically. People were becoming more and more frightened by the changes society was undergoing around them.

While some people sublimated this fear into anger — against the government, the "establishment", and against the whole status quo — others just wanted someone to tell them that everything was under control, that the government knew what it was doing, and that it was all going to turn out all right. Basically, that had always been the message that the newswriters had been putting into Darryl Prince's mouth, and now an increasing number of people wanted to hear those reassuring platitudes over and over again. Prince's personal ratings and VQ rose drastically. CVC — which was just establishing its close ties to the Plutocratic party — couldn't help but notice, poached Prince away from his current vid-net "home", and positioned him as "the Good News telejournalist". New viewers flocked to the CVC fold. His new show — *Don't Worry! with Darryl Prince* — turned in almost unbelievable ratings.

For a while, at least. As the upheavals that had prompted Prince's fame, and as things fell apart more and more, Prince's "Good News" approach began to lose its wide-spread appeal. After all, how many times could a video viewer hear "everything's under control" when it became ever more patently obvious that everything wasn't under even the slightest semblance of control? Prince's ratings plummeted again, reaching a nadir in 2011 after the assassination of President Milkovich — further proof, as if any were needed, that the entire country was out of control. For awhile it looked as though Darryl Prince would disappear off the airwaves.

But then a couple of developments gave him a new lease on life. The release of the first artificial brains gave Prince back a more or less guaranteed viewership. His writers began to slant his "Good News" message to appeal specifically to the different



TURN TO THE SOURCE— DARRYL PRINCE LIVE. CVC CABLE ACCESS, 23:45 TONIGHT!



brain models on the market, and his ratings picked up again. Then, in 2014, the Plutocratic party — then in power — bought Darryl Prince's contract from CVC, along with all rights to his name and likeness. Plutocratic spin-doctors modified Prince's image, and launched a new show for him — *Darryl Prince Live*. Prince's new message was largely a retreat of his old one, but proved at least slightly more palatable. Prince admitted — as did the government — that things *weren't* totally under control, but they could be once again as long as everyone toed the government line. The problems, Prince preached, weren't endemic to American society as a whole, but were caused by specific *segments* of society — anarchists, Cypherpunks (q.v.), and "unrestrained" boosted vets, to name three. In effect, Darryl Prince became a Plutocratic "mouthpiece", a hyper-conservative apologist for the government, conducting non-confrontational pre-scripted interviews with administration flacks, providing a nationwide forum for views the administration wanted disseminated.

Although he claims to be his own man, with his own views, Prince probably hasn't had an original thought for the past thirty years. Everything he says on the air is pre-scripted and test-marketed to focus groups. He's totally in the government's pocket... although it's conceivably possible he's convinced himself this isn't the case.

PERSONALITY

Off the air, Darryl Prince doesn't seem to *have* a personality. He's been operating off a script for so long that he seems totally lost without one. If asked for his opinion

on an issue, he'll trot out a quote from a recent script if he can remember an appropriate one. On topics for which he hasn't been briefed, however, he's totally at sea.

On air, in contrast, Prince is charming, earnest and well-informed... thanks to his highly-skilled scriptwriters.

QUOTES

"And that's the way of the world. I'm Darryl Prince, saying goodnight, and have a better tomorrow."

"Well, the anti-American anarchistic underground struck *another* blow against democracy and peace today..."

"Tonight on *Darryl Prince Live* I'll be talking with Mr. Donald Fasbinder of the White House Press Corps..."

DEADLOCK

STR: 3 DEX: 5 SPD: 4 RES: 2
INT: 4 WILL: 6 AURA: 5

Acrobatics: 9, Artist (poet): 11, Gun Combat: 9, Streetwise: 11, Thief: 9
Adrenaline Surge: 8
Danger Sense: 7
Life Sense: 6
Stress Tolerance: 7
Psychosis: Homocidal Mania
Equipment:
.50 cal Urban Nightmare Ep450, Heavykev

BACKGROUND

The woman who calls herself Deadlock is the self-styled "Champion of the Underdog". She's an underground musician/poet who, despite the government's constant attempts to silence her, has almost as much of a voice in popular culture as Systematic Overthrow itself — a considerable achievement for someone who spent her formative years eking out an existence on the streets of the Chicago-Milwaukee megalopolis.

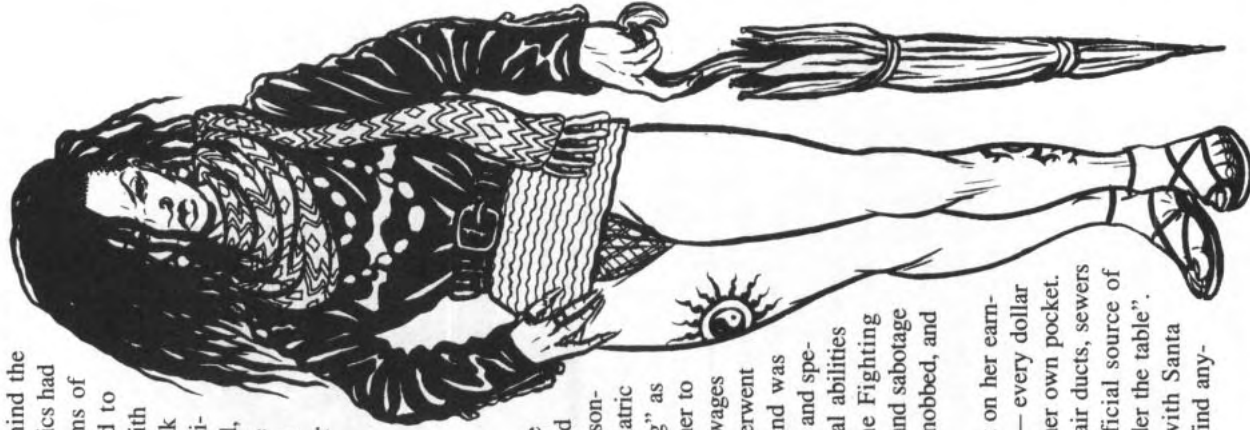
Jane Doe — that's the name on Deadlock's induction papers, although she never used it, and doesn't acknowledge it today — was born just before the turn of the century in the inner city. Nobody, least of all Deadlock herself, know who her parents were, or what happened to them. Her first memories are of living in the alleys and garbage dumps of the city, stealing food and clothing where she could, and basically living the feral existence of a two-footed rat. She had no friends, no protectors, no family. She viewed every human being she saw or encountered as a possible threat. (It's possible, some psychologists speculate, that at the time she didn't even realize she *was* human...) She couldn't speak or understand any spoken language — since she had nobody to talk to anyway — and certainly couldn't read or write. (It's doubtful that she can, even now.) Her habits and reactions were those of a wild animal. Her intelligence was undeniably high, however, to which her upbringing — such as it was — added a healthy dose of survival skills and base cunning.

Nobody can guess what Deadlock's life would have been like if she hadn't almost died from eating something poisonous when she was seven or eight years old. Weakened so severely she couldn't hide from some Chicago police officers who happened upon "her" alley, she was taken to emergency, and had her stomach pumped. Despite her repeated attempts to escape, she was brought before a child psychologist

who realized immediately the real story behind the "homicidal deaf-mute" the Intensive Care medics had described. Over the next several years, teams of psychologists and psychiatrists struggled to "socialize" and "civilize" the pre-teenager, with some limited success. They taught her to speak and understand English, and to follow the rudiments of acceptable social behavior. Granted, they couldn't break her of certain habits — like her penchant for sleeping in air ducts, and other hiding places — but all in all their achievements were incredible. Deadlock would always be rough around the edges, and would never understand the niceties of politeness and protocol, but that didn't significantly distinguish her from other members of her generation...

Of course, such extensive and intensive long-term treatment doesn't come for free... and of course, Jane Doe had no money, and no reasonable way of acquiring any. So, when the psychiatric team finally decided they'd "brought her along" as much as they really cared to, they indentured her to Trans World Devastation, and garnished her wages in perpetuity to pay for her treatment. Doe underwent genetic enhancement and military training, and was assigned to the 4th Infantry. Her enhancements and specific training were selected to match her natural abilities and personality, and so d became one of the Fighting Fourth's better urban infiltration, assassination and sabotage assets. She completed her tour of duty, was demobbed, and moved to the Los Angeles area.

The garnishee that her psych team had put on her earnings still existed, so that — officially, at least — every dollar she earned would go to them rather than into her own pocket. If she wanted to exist without returning to the air ducts, sewers and garbage dumps, she had to find an *unofficial* source of income — something where she was paid "under the table". She tried various jobs — including a stint with Santa Claws' crime syndicate (q.v.) — but couldn't find anything she could both do well *and* tolerate.





DEADLOCK

MERCIFUL STEEL TOUR

sponsored by

TRES EGUIS XXX

During her tour of duty with the Fighting Fourth, she'd got into the habit of writing disjointed scraps of thoughts and ideas in a journal. Accidentally, an acquaintance (Deadlock had, and still has, no friends) saw the journal, and was incredibly impressed by the woman's "poetry". Her observations on oppression, poverty and powerlessness were almost unbelievably moving — poignant, but pointed enough to make the reader want to rage against the society that inflicts so much suffering on so many. Her acquaintance suggested that Deadlock try out her poetry on the "estro-gin house circuit" that had sprung up in the L.A. projects. At least any donations she received from her audience wouldn't be declared as income... She took the suggestion to heart, and the phenomenon that was Deadlock was born.

In the next couple of years, her fame grew by leaps and bounds — within certain very limited segments of society, of course. Vets and other members of the underclasses recognized their own pain, sadness and tragedy in her words, and threw their support behind her. She graduated from the estro-gin house circuit to appear on some of the more militant — and generally more ephemeral — pirate netcasters. With time, she added music to her poetry recitals, developing her own characteristic style of thrash-raga. As she honed her song writing skills, her poems became even more bru-

tally evocative, and started to show steadily more rage and hatred toward the status quo, and particularly the current Foster administration. Her fame grew by leaps and bounds.

Today, there are warrants out for her arrest on several hundred charges of free speech without the appropriate license, and her personal "legend" on the street claims the LAPF has orders to shoot first and forget about the questions if they ever find her. She's still a fixture on the pirate netcasters, and she still occasionally does live performances. (For obvious reasons, these are always in the projects or the slums or the L.A. River, and they're never officially announced, publicized only by word of mouth.)

PERSONALITY

Deadlock is angry — angry at society, at the government, and at anybody and everybody who she doesn't consider part of the underclass. She usually keeps her anger more or less in check, lashing out with viciously pointed poems and lyrics rather than with screaming fits or with violence. That's *usually*. She can be goaded past the limits of her control, and at such times her rage is absolutely terrifying to see. She seems to lose the ability to speak and understand, reverting to her feral childhood. What makes this even more terrible is that she's a highly-trained, boosted killing machine...

QUOTES

"You might listen my words, but if you haven't felt my pain, then you don't really hear me."

"The winter of society has come. Can't you feel the chill winds blowing through your soul?"

"Society tries to show you a smiling face. But can't you trace the leering skull beneath the flesh?"

DEATH'S KNOCK

STR: 9 DEX: 6 SPD: 5 RES: 8
INT: 3 WILL: 6 AURA: 7

Acrobatics: 8, Detective: 6, Gun Combat: 12, Intimidation/Interrogation: 13, Invention/Repair: 4, Streetwise: 8, Weaponry: 8
Life Sense: 8

Adrenal Surge: 7

Stress Tolerance: 8

Psychosis: Multiple Personalities

Equipment:

30mm Silver Bullet SSF 2/30, 30mm ZAG, 40mm GCS M87/g, Mondo Armor, Average Home Model Computer, Chaff (2 charges), Pueblo Sniper!, Pueblo Firefight!, combat goggles, Punkbuster™ Radar Detector

BACKGROUND

Norman Bates grew up in a gun shop owned by his mother in Dallas. Their home was a large house on a hill overlooking the store. There they sold weapons to whomever wanted to buy them. What their customers did with their guns and bullets was none of their business — as God meant it. The only concerns the two of them shared was for each other. Norman's mother loved her son very much, and wanted to protect him from the evils of the world. That's why she kept a loaded gun in every cupboard and every drawer. Norman had his own guns too, many of them. At night, after they'd closed up shop they'd pull out their guns and clean them together, rubbing the long metal shafts with pure, white washclothes.

One day a young woman came into the store — a beautiful young woman Norman's age— who wanted a Browning automatic. Norman felt something he'd never felt before — well, except for that one time when his old Thompson submarine gun jammed on the shooting range and fired and fired and fired and fired....

The woman paid with a check (which meant she was old fashioned, and he liked that), and Norman took her address down, secretly. Later in the week he went to visit her, not telling his mother, for his mother didn't like him to speak to anyone unless it was to help someone find a gun. He brought flowers. Although the woman seemed a bit surprised, she took the flowers and thanked Norman for them. She said her name was Elaine, and she would give him a call. He was disappointed, for he had hoped to see her that night. But he was happy

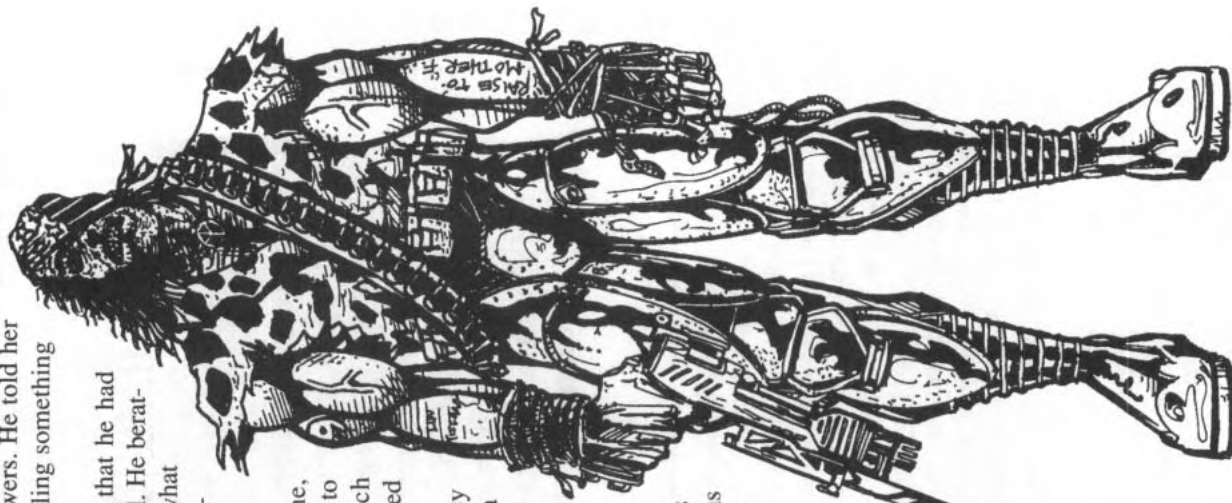
too, because she seemed to like the flowers. He told her to call at work, and not at home, mumbling something about usually being at work.

Days passed, and Norman thought that he had been wrong to think she might really call. He berated himself for his stupidity, wondering what he was thinking when he believed someone as pretty as Elaine might call some guy who worked in a gun store with his mom. Still, he waited by the phone, and jumped for it when it rang. He took to cleaning up the store thoroughly each night, so he could be there if Elaine called after business hours.

And then one day she did call. They set up a date for that weekend, and had a fine time. Months passed, and over the months they saw each other each week.

Norman never told his mother about Elaine, instead telling her that he was scavenging around late night gun flea markets in search of good deals. His mother, who had a fondness for the guns of simpler days, encouraged this and was pleased.

But one night, after they'd been seeing each other for some time, Norman got careless. He knew that tonight was the night that he and Elaine were going to do IT. He had a hankering to do IT in a shop full of guns, though he was a naive lad in some ways and couldn't exactly figure out why. Elaine, meanwhile, as both an avid collector of guns and a woman who'd been up and down the shooting range a few times, also found the idea appealing and knew exactly why. When Norman



WHITE HAired OLD GUN DEALER FOUND DEAD!

I Tried to Stop Her Says Son, But She Wouldn't Listen!

—October 15, 2016

Carol Bates, owner of the Bates Gun Shop, was pronounced dead at 2:34 am, this morning.

Her son, Norman, called the police to report that thieves had entered their shop and his mother had gone to investigate.

"I can't believe, I can't believe I was so close..." Norman mumbled to himself over and over again at the crime scene. When asked what he meant, Norman had no comment.

Police believe the assailants were part of a larger organization, perhaps

suggested it, the thought of all those barrels on the walls danced in her head, and she insisted they do it IT at the shop.

Which was really fun until mom showed up.

She had heard their noise while she sat in the house on the hill, thought some hooligans were torturing a lynx in the shop, and went down to check it out.

Well, she came in, a 12 gauge sawed off in hand, and caught the couple in the act. Norman pulled himself up and tried to equivocate, but mom would have none of it. She raised the gun when Norman had cleared Elaine, ready to splatter Norman's lover across neatly displayed boxes of bullets. But Elaine had already scrambled up, grabbed a .45 off the wall and loaded it. Even as mom screamed, "Die, Defiler!" Elaine pulled the trigger and blew mom's brain out the back of her head.

"Mom!" shouted Norman.

"Come on, Norman," Elaine said. "We can make a run for it. Live life like a never ending episodic vid show, always on the run from the law, always encountering new people and places."

"Mom!" shouted Norman.

"She was going to kill me! What are you talking about, 'Mom!'? She was obviously deranged. Let's go."

"But she was my mother."

"I'm out of here."

Ruined by the tragedy, Norman volunteered for Slumberland in an attempt to get away from the memories. He was boosted, sent to war, and came back a wreck. But Norman, now code named Death's Knock, is unique in his mental derivation. Whenever he picked up a gun, he heard his mother's voice speaking from it. His mother tells him to track down crime and kill the villains. He is a driven vigilante with a dark past. If he puts the gun down, the voice goes away. But he loves his mom dearly, and if he goes for too long without hearing her, he does everything he can to get a gun back in his hand.

PERSONALITY

Although an imposing figure, and a very violent vigilante crime fighter, there is always a bit of Death's Knock that is hesitant, frightened. This is because he's always listening to his mother pick him apart for faults, giving commands, and complaining to him about what a weak, useless man he is. In the middle of any fight Death's Knock might stop whatever he's doing to listen to her.

Why is he a vigilante? Why does he kill people? He's convinced that one day he'll have killed enough people to shut his mother up.

QUOTES

"Yes, mom."

"Yes, mom."

"Yes, mom."

DOC SHOCK

STR: 2 DEX: 4 SPD: 2 RES: 3
INT: 5 WILL: 2

Acrobatics: 3, Gun Combat: 6, Medicine: 11

Electric Discharge: 18

Stress Tolerance: 10

Psychosis: Paranoia (Doc Shock's mental state blows past the normal Homocidal Mania condition found with most boosts with Electric Discharge.)

Equipment:

Heavykev, Average Computer Pack, Porta-Term, Porta-Fax™

BACKGROUND

Doc Shock was born Norman Flanders, in one of the nastier slums of Chicago. Like many of his contemporaries, he ran with the gangs in his teens, and learned the finer arts of excessive drug use, unmotivated vandalism, and face-to-face violence. Through street-smarts coupled with a healthy dose of luck, he managed to stay out of trouble with the law, and also kept one step ahead of the various other gang-bangers around town who would have liked to see him slipped on a slab. Throughout this period of his life, his best (and only) friend, confidant, lover, and inseparable companion was one Hollita Juacho, a fellow gang member who shared Flanders' fascination with grenading cop cars and generally putting the boot in.

Flanders' luck ran out on his eighteenth birthday, when Juacho suggested they celebrate by knocking over the local liquor emporium. They went in with their usual panache (i.e., guns blazing) only to find that the place was already in the process of being held up by a group of heavily-armed Death's Angels bikers. The bikers opened up on the two gang-bangers, killing Juacho where she stood and critically wounding Flanders. When Norman woke up, he found himself in police custody, charged with armed robbery and — since her death had occurred during a felony — the first degree murder of his lover. Norman was convicted, and sentenced to military service with AMI. He was boosted and trained, and assigned to the Screaming Eagles unit.

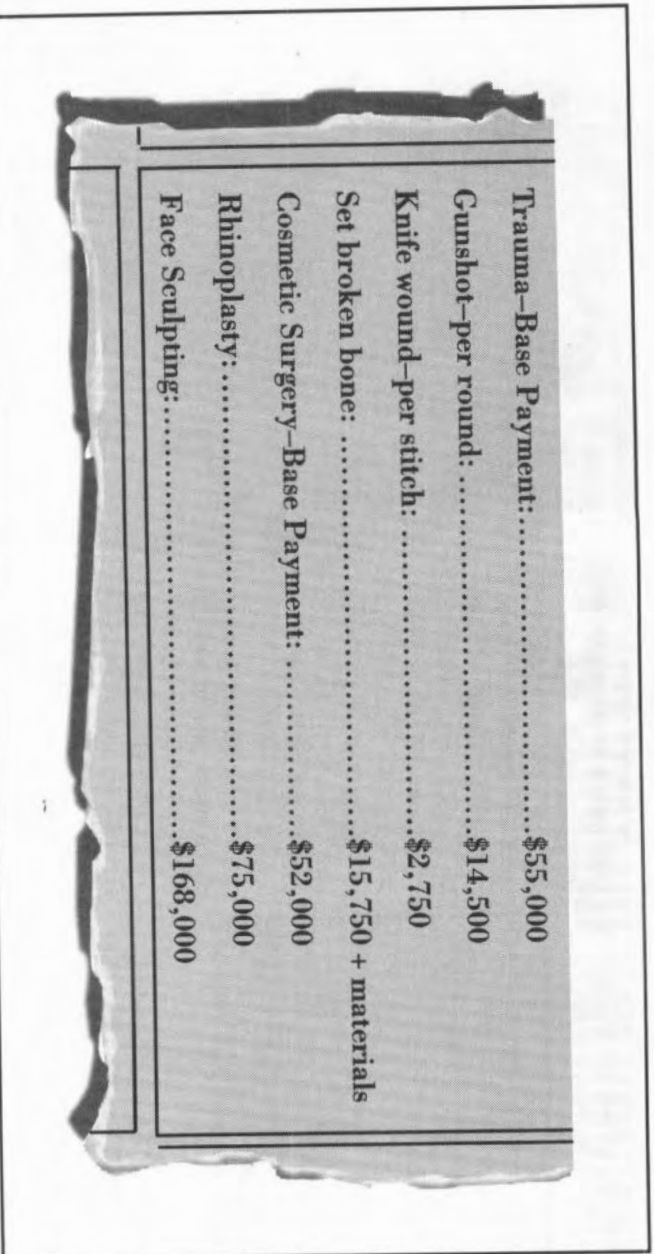
After the death of Juacho, Flanders had lost all interest in life. He worked hard in his basic training simply because he couldn't think of anything better to do, and would have accepted any assignment AMI chose to give him — even suicide-bomber, if a slot had been open — without question. For some reason, the AMI psych squad selected Flanders for training as a combat-medical, and Doc Shock was born.

To his vast surprise, in his new calling the Doc found the meaning his life had been lacking since Juacho's death. While he still could express the anger he'd picked up on the streets of Chicago — by kicking the crap out of people — he found at least something of a calling into putting people back together after others had kicked the crap out of them.

Doc Shock turned out to be one of the best combat-medics AMI had ever fielded, and both the Doc and his commanders figured him for at least a second tour of duty.

Unfortunately, psychological problems intervened. For some reason, the techniques that had been developed to minimize the effects of meta-genic feedback trauma didn't seem to take with Doc Shock. During the latter half of his first tour of duty, he became steadily more and more paranoid. While paranoia isn't necessarily a bad thing in a combat trooper, it tends to get in the way for a medic. After he'd let his seventh patient bleed out on the battlefield because he was *convinced* the wounded man had been booby-trapped by the enemy, he was relieved from active duty. Doc decided immediately this was because he'd found out something his superiors didn't want him to know, and went on a nasty rampage through an AMI camp, hunting





Trauma-Base Payment:.....	\$55,000
Gunshot-per round:	\$14,500
Knife wound-per stitch:	\$2,750
Set broken bone:	\$15,750 + materials
Cosmetic Surgery-Base Payment:	\$52,000
Rhinoplasty:	\$75,000
Face Sculpting:.....	\$168,000

down the "conspirators" who'd taken him out of the field. AML immediately demobilized Doc Shock, washed their hands of him, and declared him to be the Veterans' Administration's problem.

The VA didn't know quite what to do with the Doc either. They tried to medicate him with clozapine to counteract the metagenic feedback trauma causing his paranoia, but that very paranoia guaranteed the Doc wasn't going to take *anything* some VA representative gave him. He soon turned his back on all VA programs, and moved to the LA region to make his own way in the world.

Despite his growing paranoia, Doc Shock was a good combat-medic, and the gang violence on the west coast guaranteed he'd have plenty of patients. He started hiring out his services, performing surgery in bus shelters and the basements of burned-out buildings. Gang-bangers and others were more than willing to pay — and pay well — for his no-questions-asked services, and soon the Doc had enough money to set himself up with his "rolling OR", a heavily-modified Winnibago where he lives and operates. The rolling OR is set up with the best equipment you can find outside a real top-tier hospital, and the Doc is willing and able to perform anything from meatball surgery to cosmetic work to emergency neurosurgery on the spot... for a hefty fee, of course.

The Doc's paranoia is still driving him, to a certain extent at least. He's convinced that the world he lives in is driven by interlocking conspiracies, and he's

always on the lookout for evidence to support that view. Of course, it's a tenet of intelligence analysis that if you look hard enough for evidence of something, you're going to find it... whether it's there or not. Thus the Doc frequently finds "proof" of his interlocking-conspiracy theory.

Of course, not everything that the Doc turns up is a figment of his fevered imagination. There *are* a number of disturbing conspiracies in existence, and Doc Shock has unearthed suspicious circumstances around the periphery of many of them. (For example, only last year he discovered that some of the "vitamin supplements" the VA issues to boosted vets actually contain heavy-duty tranquilizers...) Unfortunately, while the Doc possesses quite a few pieces to various different puzzles, he's not the best person to fit them together correctly. Further, each time Doc announces he's discovered another conspiracy, it pays to check out his claims *very* carefully before acting on them.

PERSONALITY

Doc Shock is obsessed with his freelance medical work. He'll never turn away another patient, even if his operating schedule is already packed. This sometimes leads to rushed work, and keeps the Doc vibrating from stress. The paranoia that led to his expulsion from the Screaming Eagles still exists, but seems to have shifted from personal to more global issues. (For example, he rarely worries that his patients are booby-trapped any more.) His has an incredible aptitude for taking seemingly unrelated incidents and linking them together in some arcane way. Most of the time he's dead wrong... but only *most* of the time. Although he's suppressed it so effectively he doesn't feel the grief any more, the trauma of his lover's death still haunts him.

QUOTES

"Listen, *everything* in the world is connected. And if two things *aren't* connected, *that's* a connection..."

"You got your arm in that bag? Good. Lie down on the table and think nice thoughts."

"Yeah, I know I haven't finished stitching you up. I just want you to tell me again why I should believe AML didn't send you..."

DR. PROFESSOR

STR: 6 DEX: 4 SPD: 4 RES: 6
INT: 7 WILL: 5 AURA: 4

Acrobatics: 5, Administration: 9, Computer Science: 12, Genetic Engineering: 11,
Gun Combat: 5, Intimidation/Interrogation: 9, Invention/Repair: 13, Psychology:
13, Science: 13

Emotion Control: 15

Adrenal Surge: 8

Stress Tolerance: 10

Psychosis: Multiple Personalities

Equipment:

Dr. Professor only carries 25mm Urban Nightmare EP425. All of his clothes are woven with Heavykev.

BACKGROUND

Dr. Professor was born Alexander Cremshaw in Brooklyn, New York. His father was a librarian, his mother a proud, last-ditch member of the PTA. He was a gangly boy, with glasses (his father always said, "There's nothing wrong with being proud of our imperfections"). Although he did extremely well in school, like most bright boys he found himself a social outcast. He thought of the world as filled with a people he did not belong to. Theories raced through his head when he was young—perhaps he was an alien left by invaders from another planet, or he lacked certain chromosomes to make him truly human. Whatever the theory though, he thought he always lacked something to allow him to be a true member of the human race.

His refuge was the world of adolescent male fantasy power trips found in comic books and adventure vids. He dreamed of one day improving himself so that he might not need to fit in.

When Slumberland opened up and soldiers were boosted with mind-numbing enhancements, Alexander knew what he wanted to do with his life. He volunteered for service, keeping it a secret from his parents. For a week he waited anxiously for a reply. When it came, he was devastated. He was rejected because they did not think he had the physical base needed for the job.

After a few days of despair, he came up with a new plan. He would get as close as he could to the program, slip himself into it, and from there get himself boosted. Over the next eight years he pressed himself mercilessly, studying and studying, until he excelled in both undergraduate and graduate studies in psychology and bioengineering. He was picked up by Allied Mayhem the day he graduated and thought his life was set.

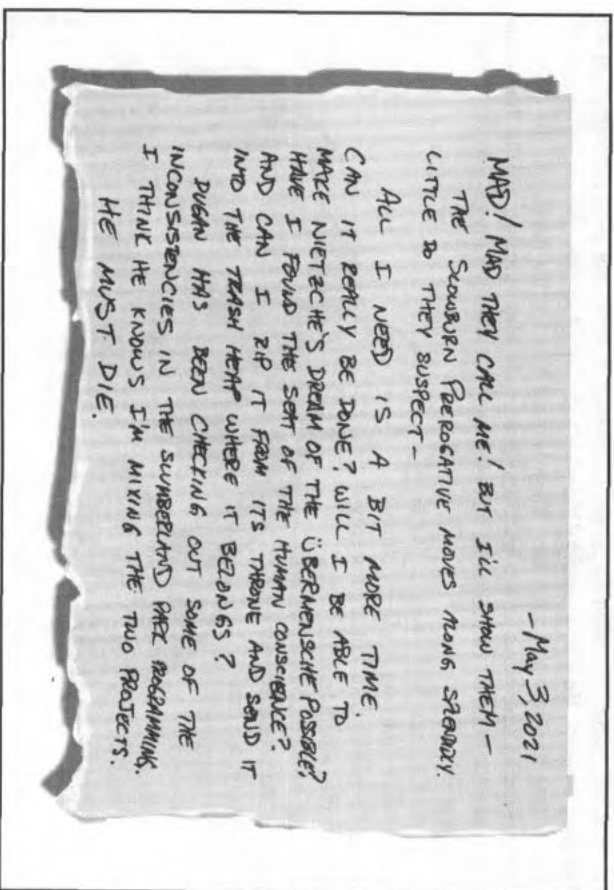
But, of course, he ended up on the R&D staff at AMI, not as A participant in the boosting project. He was a scrawny kid who had a lot of smarts. No one even considered letting him into the program. They wanted him for his mind, not his muscles. But Alexander knew that it was his mind that made him valuable. All he had to do was make his brain so valuable that he could use it as a bargaining chip to get whatever he wanted.

Over the next three years he dug deeper and deeper into the R&D division of AMI. He worked one hundred twenty hour weeks, sleeping at the lab, throwing himself completely into the job. He produced ideas that went far beyond anything generated by his co-workers. Some of them were mad (MAD!) but the study of Slumberland is a strange field, with only a fine line separating the insane stuff from the really good ideas. And even his crazy ideas turned out to have practical applications.

Soon he was the bright boy of the lab. They offered him a corner office. They offered him money. They offered him women and drugs and the com-



6011. DON'T TALK, THINK NEVER NEVER



MAD! MAD THEY CALL ME! BUT I'LL SHOW THEM -
THE SLOWBURN RECREATIVE MOVES THEM STRAIGHT.
LITTLE TO THEY SUSPECT -

ALL I NEED IS A BIT MORE TIME.
CAN IT REALLY BE DONE? WILL I BE ABLE TO
MAKE NIETZSCHE'S DREAM OF THE ÜBERMENSCHEN POSSIBLE?
HAVE I FOUND THE SEED OF THE HUMAN CONSEQUENCE?
AND CAN I RIP IT FROM ITS THROAT AND SAID IT
AND THE TALKING HEAD WHERE IT BELONGS?
BUT THIS HAS BEEN CHECKING OUT SOME OF THE
INCONSISTENCIES IN THE SLOWBURN AND THE PROGRAMMING.
I THINK HE KNOWS I'M MIXING THE TWO PROJECTS.
HE MUST DIE.

plete library of Combat, Combat, Combat! He turned it all down. He wanted to be boosted.

They tried to argue him out of it. Too risky. And so on. He insisted. The argument went on for a month. They relented. Alexander went to Slumberland.

It turned out better than anyone could have expected. Not only did he come out of the immersion as a bruiser of a man, but his experiences in Slumberland gave him insights into the process no one else had. (As a matter of practice, no one who created the boosted and Slumberland technology actually uses it. Alexander broke a safe and wise and hypocritical precedent.)

The only problem was that with his boosted abilities he walked the final step into insanity. Working with him became a nightmare. He now had the abilities he so desired, and could dominate everyone around him. At staff meetings he smashed the tables into splinters when angered. When his supervisors disagreed with him, he sent them flying into the wall. After several broken bones and one death, AMI decided where he had gotten all they could from him in the labs and shipped him to South America where he worked for six years as their chief field medic. He did a fantastic job, initiating a program that put more boosted medics in the field to help keep the valuable boosted soldiers alive.

However, he also committed a series of secret, horrible experiments on many of the boosts on both sides of the conflict. In Brazil he acquired the nickname Dr.

Professor, for his strange mix of practical medical knowledge and philosophical ranting, and the name was soon known on all fronts throughout the world. Getting fixed up by Dr. Professor meant you'd probably live—but the treatment itself would put you through hell.

By the time he came back from the wars his mind was shot. Though still brilliant, his sadomasochistic tendencies had reached a frightening zenith. He had become indifferent to the pain of others, and capable of anything in the name of scientific research. AMI dropped him immediately after one interview. He was a free agent.

He shopped himself around awhile, finally getting hired by Tri-Synaptic Research, a company offering parallel research to the Slumberland work. Dr. Professor was instrumental in getting the Slumberland theme park up and running, and in Tri-Synaptic's other two projects, Advanced Designer Drugs, and Slowburn Prerogative. The ADDs are public and sold over the counter. The Slowburn Prerogative is not only a top secret project the Feds don't know about, but most of the Tri-Synaptic's staff doesn't know anything about it either. Those who do know about it think it's a project to suppress moral inhibitors in soldiers. Only Dr. Professor knows that the project's goal is to make Nietzsche's theoretical goal of an "overman" a reality.

He is maniacally obsessed with removing fear and morality from society. This last tidbit he has carefully kept to himself. He is biding his time, using the resources of Tri-Synaptic Research to further his work in the Slowburn Prerogative. When he is ready to strike, he will utilize his knowledge and tons of cash and set up his own lab, becoming the ultimate madman with the ultimate play set—the world.

PERSONALITY

Dr. Professor's personality is psychopathic. He sees other boosts as moths to be pinned up against the wall for research. Slowly he is building a cadre of loyal boosts whom he can count on when he makes his break from Tri-Synaptic Research. He's given to staring blindly off into space, and then flipping into speech mode, where he'll ramble off genetic code sequences. When he stares, he stares deep, like a teacher putting down a kid. He means to inspire fear. It usually works.

QUOTES

"All we have separating us from our dreams is fear and pain. Remove those two elements, and heaven is ours."

"The brain is a very delicate portion of the human body. Too delicate. I see it as my role in life to toughen it up."

"HA! HA! HA! HA! HA!"

DR. RUDOLPH BUSHMILLER

INT: 6 WILL: 2 AURA: 1

Administration: 4, Charm: 3, Genetic Engineering: 10, Invention/Repair: 11, Languages: 8, Medicine: 11, Psychology: 9, Science: 12

BACKGROUND

Rudolph Bushmiller was born in the mid-sixties in southern California, and by the time he was six was renowned as one of the most astonishing child prodigies in modern times. He was a lightning calculator, able to add, subtract, multiply and divide ten-digit numbers instantly in his head, with perfect accuracy. He showed an intuitive grasp of geometry and trigonometry, and devised his own formulation of the major trigonometric equations without ever having heard of sines, cosines and tangents before. When his parents realized that little Rudy's scribbling was actually his attempts to understand the fundamentals of mathematics, they bought him books on the subject, and arranged for special tutoring for the boy. By the time he was seven, he'd completed course-work equivalent to a master's degree in mathematics. On his eighth birthday, he diffidently showed his tutor his proof of Fermat's last theorem, one of the most intractable problems in mathematics. Though the proof was eventually discovered to be flawed, it took the efforts of a dozen of the country's greatest mathematical minds to spot Rudolph's mistake. While the proof itself was invalid, the approach Bushmiller used was innovative enough to spawn a whole new direction of research in higher mathematics. (In fact, the "Bushmiller Paradigm" is still taught in post-grad math courses in 2021.)

Unlike many child math prodigies, Bushmiller had a wide range of interests beyond mathematics. He loved music, and composed complex contrapuntal pieces on an elaborate synthesizer he built for himself. He enjoyed sports and, although he wasn't particularly strong or coordinated, his instinctive understanding of the physics behind most motor skills made up for his other weaknesses. He even dabbled in the martial arts for awhile, viewing them as a fascinating manifestation of simple physics and mechanics. Outside of math, though, his major fascination was reserved for the world of nature — plants, animals, birds and insects. He constructed complex mathematical models of the flight patterns of various birds, and dabbled in the basics of population theory without ever having heard of the subject before.

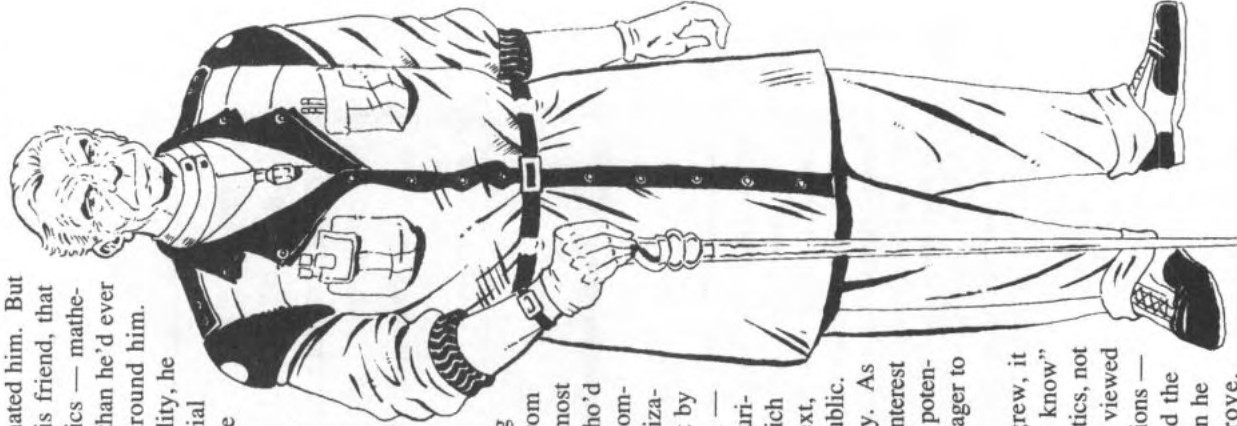
He graduated from CalTech with a doctorate in mathematics at the age of 19. Among his wide spectrum of friends at this time was a geneticist, who introduced the young Bushmiller to the discipline that would become the new focus of his life. Initially Bushmiller had thought that genetics had more in common with chemistry

than with the math and physics that so fascinated him. But then he learned, from conversations with his friend, that the heart of genetics was actually mathematics — mathematics of a purer and more complex nature than he'd ever seen physically manifested in the world around him. With the vigor that characterized his personality, he threw himself into the study of combinatorial genetics, earning himself a second doctorate by the age of 21.

For the next decade and a half, Dr.

Rudolph Bushmiller worked for a number of the most influential and innovative genetic engineering companies in the world, and came out with an astounding string of fundamental breakthroughs. Far from being the stereotypical ivory-tower academic, Bushmiller also led the way to industrializing and bringing to market practical results from these breakthroughs. By 1999, he was the most important — and highest-paid — geneticist who'd ever lived. Uninterested in starting his own company, he jumped from organization to organization — motivated to move not by money, but by any particularly fascinating research problem — and something of a "mini-industry" in the securities business sprung up around predicting which company Dr. Bushmiller would move to next, and buying shares before the news became public. Many fortunes were made and lost in this way. As for Bushmiller himself, though he had little interest in business himself, he recognized the earning potential of his brilliance, and hired a personal manager to handle that side of his career.

Even as his reputation as a geneticist grew, it became ever more apparent to those "in the know" that Bushmiller's background was in mathematics, not in the biological sciences. The good doctor viewed everything in terms of mathematics and equations — cost-benefit analyses, optimax problems, and the like. He viewed every problem as an equation he had to solve, or a postulate he had to prove.



ALLIED MAYHEM INCORPORATED

Name: Bushmiller, Rudolph J., Dr.

Date of Birth: 4/25/66

Department: Genetics Enhancement Division

Position: Division Head, MG-12

Employee Number: 223955-776-448-9987-44-B

RETIRED

Nowhere in his world-view was there any room for ethical concerns. All that mattered, when he started a new research project, was whether he *could* do it... never whether he *should* do it, or what the intangible costs might be. In 2012, Allied Mayhem Inc. hired Bushmiller away from Designer Genes Inc., and put him in charge of the new Genetics Enhancement Division (GED).

Although he knew something about the groundbreaking technological advances that had come from the STLs, "Alpha" and "Beta", Bushmiller had never been in a position to study the new knowledge first-hand. As a part of AMI, however, that changed. Bushmiller understood the consequences of the new knowledge instantly, and recognized how it was the key to his new mandate as head of AMI's GED: develop an effective and safe enhancement process usable on human beings.

Today, everybody knows the issues that Bushmiller and his team faced in developing the enhancement process: cellular regeneration problems, spontaneous tissue necrosis, psychological instabilities, and so on. It's also popular knowledge that Bushmiller devised the concept of the "Slumberland" VR program after seeing a four-color superhero comic book belonging to one of his young nephews. The "Bushmiller Process" was the result, and enhancement of living humans became a reality.

Bushmiller remained in charge of AMI's GED until 2019, when he retired. In the intervening years, he's become something of recluse, and the populace has largely forgotten his existence.

That's the official story, at least, but there are some problems with it. Why, if Bushmiller is retired, did one muckraking media-snoop find the good doctor listed as an active employee in AMI's personnel files? Why are there records of continued activity on Bushmiller's still-active account on AMI's huge computer system? And why have almost a dozen of Bushmiller's best and brightest colleagues also dropped off the face of the earth? What is Dr. Rudolph Bushmiller working on now...?

PERSONALITY

Soft-spoken, genial and incredibly well-read, Dr. Bushmiller is a great conversationalist who can talk as authoritatively on baseball trivia and current affairs as he can on genetics. His eclectic interests and easy-going manner conceal the incredible focus and intensity he can bring to bear on any issue that concerns him. Any prolonged conversation with Bushmiller will show, however, that he has no interest in — and perhaps no understanding of — ethical and moral dilemmas that bedevil other scientists. If a particular experiment were to require the sacrifice of a child's pet puppy — or even of the child itself — he wouldn't hesitate.

QUOTES

"Leave 'good' and 'evil' for the theologians and the other fuzzy-thinkers. This is science we're talking about."

"A scientific hypothesis cannot be 'immoral' or 'evil'. It can only be true or false."

"See this lysine spike on the graph? We're heading for necrosis again. Terminate the experimental subject, and let's try it again with the next kitten."

DUREZ, MACHINO

SPD: 1 INT: 3 WILL: 2 AURA: 4

Administration: 8, Business: 5, Charm: 7,

Leadership: 5, Psychology: 6, Thief: 5

Equipment:

9mm Walther antique, Heavykev

BACKGROUND

Born and raised in central Los Angeles, Machino Durez had a dream. He wanted to build a massive financial empire for himself—but using legal means. He scrimped and saved, sent himself through school, got an MBA. Made all the right moves. Met all the right people. He spent an incredible amount of time trying to “improve” himself. He managed to lose his central LA Hispanic accent, trading it in for something more Midwestern. He changed his style of dress. He did everything in his power to dissolve his past to become “White.”

In a way, it all paid off. He made contacts. Found out how to please people with money. He made a deep impression on others: a young man trying to work his way up out of the ghetto. His first big break sent him to Las Vegas to manage a hotel. From there he worked his way into a casino, where he continued to make a good impression. After a decade he finally had enough clout to pull together the funds for his personal dream: a massive hotel located in Downtown LA. Named The Blake, after the architect Durez hired for the project, it would be a luxury fortress, catering to visitors to Los Angeles who wanted to feel safe while vacationing or conducting business in the city.

Construction was started in 2006. Even as the building went up, the Social Parameters in Downtown LA quickly collapsed. Riots, labor problems, theft, and drive-by shootings caused innumerable delays. On several occasions the construction was completely shut down. But Durez persevered. Time and time again he refinanced the project. To keep it going he dipped deeper into the illegal contacts he had made while in Las Vegas. As a well-honed wheeler and dealer, he worked his way into the camps of gangs and crooked politicians alike. With both good will and cash he bought protection from his troubles. In 2012 the hotel opened. (For a full description of the Blake Hotel, see the listing in the Places section of the Notebook.) By this time, however, the floating cities were on their way up. With entire cities raised high above the criminal fray of the sprawl, there was no need for a hotel

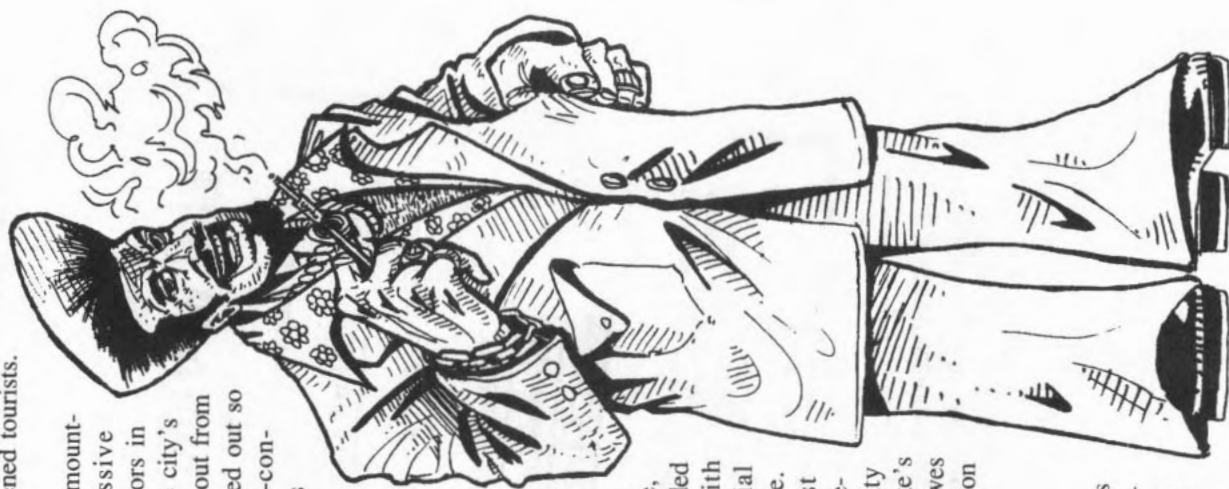
that catered to the needs of frightened tourists. Business slumped quickly.

Ever the entrepreneur, Durez mounted a campaign to save his massive dream. Rather than cater to visitors in the city, the Blake would host the city’s natives—people who needed time out from the crime and despair that LA doled out so well. With its thick walls, self-contained power and water systems and so forth, the Blake could guarantee anyone walking in its doors that for awhile, everything would be quiet.

The plan worked. The Blake opened its doors for a second time in 2017, just after the riots. From there on in, it worked at capacity. Durez hosted everyone from families that scraped together their last dollars for a week of peace, to arms and drugs dealers who needed neutral turf to have meetings with rivals. What began as a potential boondoggle ended up a gold mine. Durez is now one of the most beloved men in LA, though he carefully cultivates a sense of neutrality about him. He knows that the Blake’s success rests upon the idea that it owes allegiance to no one, that every person is safe.

PERSONALITY

Durez long ago gave up his attempts to fit into the “white” culture. As he hit hard time after hard time, he began to relax more and more into the culture which raised



This is a legal document pursuant to the appropriate state and federal laws

Bill of Ownership

This deed hereby establishes that

Machino Durez

is the legal and rightful owner of

The Blake Hotel

1 Nelson Center

Los Angeles, CA 47709-3449-223

This document is on file with the County Commissioner's Office, the County Assessor's Office, the State's Bureau of Property Taxes, the County Troika of Real Estate Arrears and Taxation, and the Federal Troika of Net-Casting Network.

him. This was in part a shrewd decision to mimic the cultures of the criminal element he found himself dealing with, but also a means of drawing true strength. While the rich whites he had known abandoned him when things got tough, he knew that the rough edged folk of LA would be with him forever.

He has taken to wearing loud shirts, swearing regularly, and basically carrying on wildly. This is not to say he is either a lout or incompetent. In fact, he is incredibly shrewd. His gregarious personality allows him to make all of his guests comfortable. He is the center of a party atmosphere that floats into whatever room he enters. He makes it clear he is there to please his guests, and will be displeased if they are not happy.

He makes it his business to find out what each powerful guest wants, and then provides it. Always at a cost, of course. But it does arrive. Need a map of LA? It's there. A tub full of champagne? Done. A buffet for 500 guests on half an hour's notice? Yup. In these efforts Durez is tireless. The Blake is his kingdom, and he wants it run well. By providing the impossible to his guests he knows that he can continue to rule his own domain in the middle of a ruined metropolis.

The one true drive in Durez's life is cash. He just loves money. When it comes down to making a choice between pleasing one guest over another (and that does happen, however much Durez regrets it) it is the one with the cash to blow that wins. Durez just can't help himself. He's set his yardstick, and it's his bank account. Although he funnels most of the money back into the hotel, he does know that his life is set up on a razor's edge. There's only so long before he makes a misstep and ends up on the receiving end of a disgruntled guest's boost-enhancement. Until then he lives it up with booze, women, and great food.

QUOTES

"No, no, no. Allow me!"

"You're worrying far too much. Just tell me—how can I help *you*?"

"For now, there is no world outside."

EDWARD H. HOGARTH

INT: 5 WILL: 4 AURA: 5

Administration: 10, Business: 7, Charm: 11, Leadership: 9,

BACKGROUND

Edward H. Hogarth is an Angeleno, born and bred. He's proud of it, and won't let anyone forget it. (Apparently he hopes that the electorate will believe a "native" will represent their interests better than an "outsider"... regardless of the fact that, by his definition, the vast majority of his would-be constituents are "outsiders" themselves.)

He was born in 1989 in the middle-class neighborhood of Los Feliz, and never so much as went outside the LA city limits until he was in his teens. Edward was an intelligent child, and ambitious from an early age. He seemed to sense intuitively where his family ranked on the socio-economic scale, and decided that nothing was going to stop him from climbing into a better stratum of society than his parents. Edward's elementary school teachers claim that, by the age of twelve, he was already looking for the most efficient ways of doing everything. If there was a short-cut, Edward would find it. He wasn't lazy or afraid of hard work, but before he applied himself he had to be confident that his effort had a good chance of getting him where he wanted to go. As he matured, his focus on working *smart* rather than working *hard* grew. By the time he went to college, he was working no harder than any of his contemporaries, but his results were orders of magnitude more impressive than theirs.

He attended UCLA, studying psychology, economics and business administration: a particularly heavy pre-law course load. He was accepted into the law program, and graduated at 24 in corporate law. He article'd with a reputable LA-based firm, and it seemed his career was set.

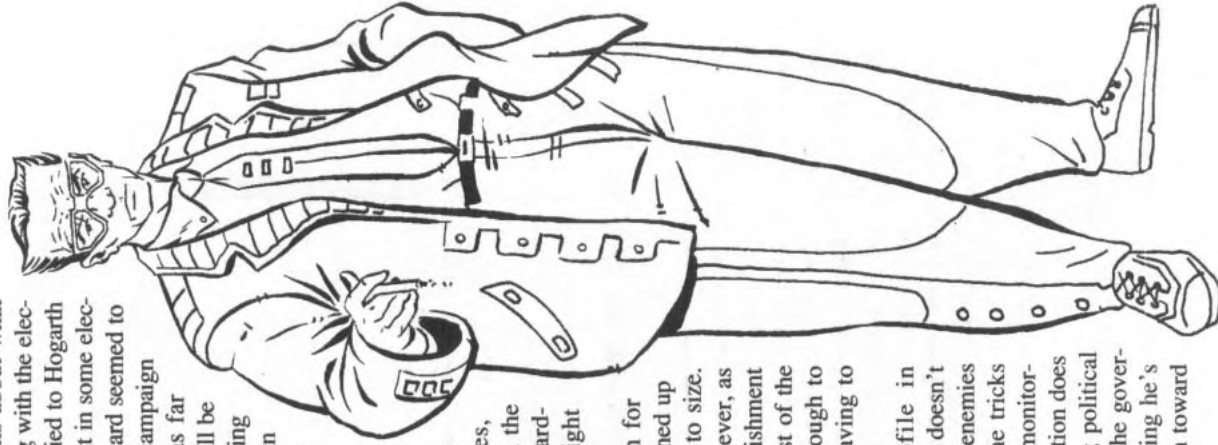
Nobody knows quite what changed Edward's direction, and in the many interviews Hogarth has given to the media, he's never explained what it is. (When interviewers press the point, he just gives his familiar self-deprecating smile, and says something vague about "wanting to make a difference in the world". While this plays well with the voters, news analysts don't buy a word of it. Something specific — something *concrete* — redirected Hogarth's career, but many people wonder what it is.) In any case, in 2013, Edward Hogarth became involved in politics, and threw himself into this new discipline with his usual intensity. He read everything he could lay his hands on about political theory and practice, and went to great trouble to cultivate already successful political figures. While he never asked any of these public figures for direct help or

support, he *did* ask them interminable questions about what worked and what didn't when it came to dealing with the electorate. Presumably, many of these politicians lied to Hogarth — after all, he might turn out to be an opponent in some election someday — but the young, ambitious Edward seemed to filter the truth from the lies. His first political campaign — for District Attorney in El Toro (about as far away from the city center as you can get and still be in Greater Los Angeles) — was an overwhelming success. He defeated the incumbent in an absolute landslide, indicating he'd definitely learned some key lessons from his "mentors".

As DA for El Toro, Hogarth took some chances — chief of which was indicting the mayor in a corruption scam — that turned the political "establishment" against him. (You just *don't* indict mayors...) But these moves, while risky, definitely raised his profile with the electorate, earning himself a reputation as hard-nosed, dedicated, uncorruptible, and downright untouchable.

In 2018, he declared his intention to run for state attorney. The vested political interests lined up to take their turns at trying to cut him down to size. His reputation was only enhanced by this, however, as he "positioned" himself as "the man the establishment wants to silence". So great was public distrust of the entrenched political system, that this was enough to win the election for him, without his even having to put forward a platform.

Hogarth continues to raise his profile in California, and throughout the West Coast. He doesn't take the big chances any more — his political enemies are too big and powerful to get away with the tricks that worked in El Toro — but he's constantly monitoring the polls to see what his every word and action does for his popularity. It's an open secret among political analysts that Edward Hogarth has his eye on the governor's spot in the very near future, and everything he's doing in the meantime is aimed at moving him toward that goal.



PEOPLE

PLACES

ORGANIZATIONS

EVENTS

TECHNOLOGY

MISC.

*You are cordially invited to a fundraising dinner
to benefit the gubernatorial campaign of*

State Attorney

Edward W. Hogarth

\$8,000 per person—White Tie

19:00—No Host Bar

20:00—Dinner

22:30—Introductory Comments, Sen. Jesse Helms (California; D)

22:45—"Making the Hard Decisions", State Attorney Edward W. Hogarth

Meanwhile, his relationship with Alphonse

Moscato (q.v.) couldn't be better. They both understand the rules of the "game" and are willing to play it zealously. Although they often come in conflict with one another in attempts to promote they're own careers, calling each other names that are tantamount to slander, they enjoy the sport they offer each other.

Even though he seems to be totally independent — and, in fact, hated or feared by all political institutions — analysts point out that Hogarth hasn't got a snowflake's chance in hell of becoming governor without some major political support. Hogarth himself seems totally confident of his chances, and he's undeniably smart enough to face reality. So the questions are, Who supports Hogarth? And, Why are they keeping that support a secret?

PERSONALITY

Hogarth is very intelligent, and an excellent judge of people. He has good social skills, and is a master at "stroking" influential people so subtly that they don't know they've been stroked. He has serious charisma (ah, that overworked word), and a strong sense of humor (which he always moderates to suit the audience of the moment, however). He has hundreds of acquaintances, but no close friends. His relationships with women are always short-term, and purely physical — from his side, at least; opponents looking for people with an ax to grind should consider checking his old girlfriends...

QUOTES

"The concerns of the people of California are *my* concerns."

"When you enter the polling booth, remember the choice you face. You can perpetuate the old system — the system that's got us into this mess — or you can vote for *change*..."

"Where are the overnight polls? Goddamn it, I want the numbers on my desk *first* thing, got me?"

From a legal point of view, it's sometimes hard to understand why Hogarth focuses so heavily on certain cases and issues, and totally ignores others. When one takes popularity into account, however, everything falls into place. The cases he comes down hard on are the ones that are going to earn him big points with the electorate. Analysts claim he has no principles of his own, and is guided totally by his poll numbers. At the moment, he's riding the wave of the growing distrust and hatred of boosted veterans. A murder case where a "mundane" killed a boosted op will be soft-pedaled; a case where a vet killed a mundane will be trumpeted to the high heavens. Currently, Hogarth is mobilizing all his resources to go after the crime empire run by Santa Claws (q.v.).

It might seem logical that Tanis Morgan (q.v.) and Hogarth will see eye to eye, and both respect and like each other. The opposite is actually the case. Morgan hates Hogarth as an unprincipled, self-serving bastard. Hogarth despises Morgan as weak, letting her own psychological problems — i.e., her hatred and fear of veterans — control her behavior. (Despite his actions, Hogarth has nothing personal against boosted ops. If public opinion warranted it, he'd become their biggest public supporter tomorrow.)

GANDHI DANCER

DEX: 3 SPD: 4 RES: 3

Acrobatics: 7, Charm: 3, Martial Arts: 8

Extra Limbs (2): 5

Chameleon: 7

Life Sense: 6

Stress Tolerance: 8

Psychosis: Sociopathy

Equipment:

Porta-Fax™, Cellular Phone

BACKGROUND

"Gandhi Dancer" is the codename issued to one Amhir Lakha when he was inducted into the Pathfinders Rapid Deployment Force unit of Disposable Heroes Inc. At the time of Lakha's induction, it was in vogue among the Pathfinders to "declare themselves dead" before their first operation — actually carrying out elaborate funeral rites for their civilian identities, and swearing never to use their birth names again. Although this tradition died out only a couple of months after Lakha's induction — to be replaced by an ever-changing series of even more bizarre traditions and rituals — the symbolism of this "declaration of death" fascinated and moved the young man. Following the tradition to the hilt, he officially declared Amhir Lakha dead, even going so far as to publish an obituary in his home-town newspaper, and cremating all his personal possessions. On July 22, 2018, Amhir Lakha officially died; Gandhi Dancer lived on.

Gandhi was boosted and trained specifically for stealth-insertion missions where firearms were contraindicated and hand-to-hand combat would be the rule. His first major campaign — and his last — was the Second Peruvian Interregnum, in early 2019. He and the other members of his platoon were inserted via a HALO (High-Altitude Low-Opening) parachute drop far behind enemy lines. Their mission was to destroy a key communications nexus without — repeat, *without* — inflicting any casualties on the personnel manning their target. They were to immobilize or temporarily incapacitate — but *not kill* — the assets opposing them. (Although perhaps unusual, this wasn't the strangest contractual obligation under which DHI assets have been forced to operate...)

Although he'd been trained in lethal force, and thought himself ready to kill on command, the young Gandhi wasn't emotionally prepared for the trauma of taking life. If he'd been given enough time to psyche himself up for it, his first killing (or "retirement") of an opposition asset might not have had such a drastic effect on him. Because of the nature of this mission, however, he hadn't been psychologically prepared. He and

his comrades penetrated their target, immobilizing the guard force with stun-gas grenades and other non-lethal techniques. Some enemy assets remained active inside, however, and Gandhi soon found himself locked in hand-to-hand combat with three knife-armed enemies. Although his orders were not to kill, his training kicked in, and before he knew quite what was happening all three enemies lay dead at his feet, their heads twisted off like beer bottle caps. The horror of what he'd done struck him, paralyzing the young man for a crucial few seconds... long enough for the last active enemy to put a 20mm round into Gandhi's skull.

Gandhi should have died then and there; his comrades still say so, and the DHI medics agree. The 20mm round had "traumatically amputated" a significant portion of the young man's cerebral cortex — enough to kill him, or at least reduce him to a permanent vegetative state. Somehow, however, Gandhi Dancer survived, and the only

brain damage he exhibited was a very selective kind of amnesia. He couldn't remember his birth identity at all, or any details about his training. In many ways, it was as though his life had begun anew — as a new personality — at the moment the bullet



WALKING THE PATH WITH TRUTH

A public presentation by Gandhi Dancer, the Boosted Messiah.

July 22, 2021, 8:30pm

Admission by donation to the Veterans' Truth Association

Location: Central Alhambra Community Center Auditorium

**CANCELLED BY ORDER OF DEPARTMENT OF
DEEDS AND DISSEMINATION**

smashed his skull. He proved incapable of recalling — or even re-learning — the military skills he'd been taught, and DHI mustered him out.

Several weeks after his demobilization, Gandhi suffered a seizure, and was rushed to hospital. Again, against all odds, he survived what should have killed him. When he emerged from Intensive Care, he announced to anyone who'd stand still long enough that he'd experienced a vision, a revelation, an epiphany. He was, he claimed, the "Boosted Messiah", enlightened by... well, he didn't quite know Who (or What) enlightened him, but it didn't really matter anyway. What *did* matter was that he knew the Secret, the Answer — the Path through which all humans, boosted *and* mundane, could come to live in peace and harmony, with themselves, with each other, and with the universe around them. The first step on this Path is to accept — deep down, at the level of the soul — that all humans are equal, and equally worthy of respect. (This first step isn't overtly acceptable to the government and the other Powers That Be, of course. After all, accepting that all humans are equally worthy of respect would seriously reduce — even eliminate — their power and authority...)

The second and subsequent steps along the Path are a little more problematical. Gandhi Dancer will discuss them only with people he thinks have reached a sufficient level of enlightenment to understand the Truth, and then he uses only the most symbolic and esoteric language, rife with literary allusions that make sense only to him. Those few people who've heard, and even partially understand, Gandhi's descriptions of the subsequent steps on the Path claim that, sadly, the descriptions change randomly from day to day, depending on the Boosted Messiah's moods, and the way his seriously-damaged neural pathways happen to be firing at the moment. Gandhi himself sees no inconsistency in his teachings, however. As far as he's concerned, he's only using different words to describe the same Eternal Truths.

(q.v.) — many of them run by boosted vets — that gladly give Gandhi air-time, however. Gandhi and his followers don't represent the kind of social movement the government fears — yet — but that's solely because of the scattered nature of his teachings. If Gandhi ever gets his ministry together — or if someone co-opts him in some way — his following *could* represent a serious threat to the status quo.

PERSONALITY

Gandhi *believes*. He is the Messiah, and anyone who claims he's wrong is sadly deluded. He treats those who doubt him — and even those who attack him — with a more-in-sorrow-than-anger manner that goads many of his opponents into even more egregious attacks on his teachings and personality. He never passes up an opportunity to share the Truth with anyone who seems even slightly interested. His amnesia is a fluctuating thing. Sometimes he can't remember something that happened two hours ago, while other times he recalls perfectly some minor event from his military training.

UNUSUAL ABILITIES

Gandhi's enhancement gave him four arms, two of which are much stronger than the human norm. He moves with a silent, almost inhuman grace.

QUOTES

"The Truth is within all of us, and that is where you must seek it."

"The Path is like a kunquat."

"Silence and stillness are intrusive noises that detach the spirit from the flow of the world."

GEOFFREY SNEED

RES: 1 INT: 3 WILL: 4 AURA: 2

Administration: 7, Business: 7, Charm: 3

BACKGROUND

Geoffrey Sneed was born in the tumultuous 1960s, raised in the 70s, and came into his own in the "Me Decade" of the 1980s... and it shows.

Very little is known about Sneed's childhood, and that's apparently just how he likes it. He was apparently born and raised in the Pacific Northwest — possibly Seattle, possibly Portland — but no birth records have been found. In one of the few media interviews he ever gave — with FBC tele-journalist Peter Argot, in 2016 — he admitted that his parents died in a tragic accident when he was young, as a result of which he was moved around through various foster homes and institutions. When Argot pressed for more information, Sneed shut him down firmly, claiming that, even now, discussing his parents caused him intense personal pain. (In his 2017 book, *How to Get Yourself Killed in Washington*, Argot claimed he simply didn't believe that evasion: personal pain is an emotion, after all, and Sneed is a man with no emotions whatsoever.) Based on the information in that interview, various journalists have tried to track down at least one of Sneed's foster parents for an interview, but with no luck whatsoever.

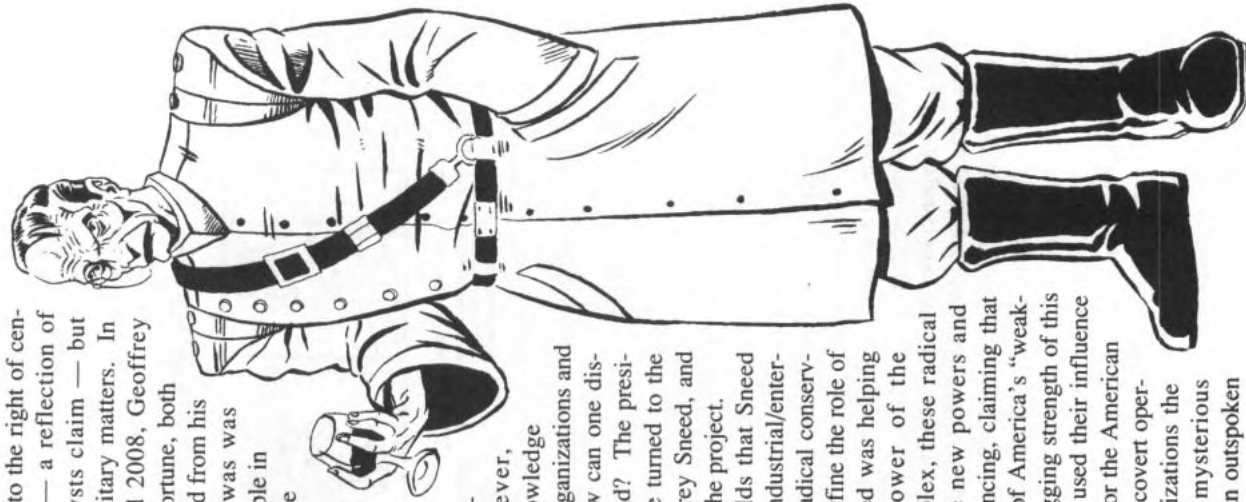
In effect, then, Sneed is a man without a past. He seemed to appear, fully formed, on the scene at Yale in 1982, where he took an unprecedented triple-major program in political science, history and economics. Despite the crushing course-load, he still managed to find time to be active in various extra-curricular groups, including the Republican Party. He made Phi Beta Kappa, and graduated in 1985 with one of the highest GPAs on record. If further proof of his phenomenal intelligence was needed, he provided it by earning a double doctorate — in political science and history — in only three years. Graciously declining invitations to join the faculties at half a dozen prestigious universities, Geoffrey Sneed joined The Fraser Group, a politically moderate "think-tank" in Washington, DC, and published more than forty incisive papers and limited-distribution books on matters of national security and foreign policy.

Sneed remained with The Fraser Group for almost twenty years. When the think-tank's founder, Marvin Fraser, retired in 1994, her personally selected Geoffrey Sneed to replace him as chairman. Under Sneed's leadership, the think-tank — now renamed simply The Group — became more directly involved with the federal government, providing consulting services to many bureaus and departments, including the Joint Chiefs of Staff and even the current National Security Advisor. During this

period, The Group started to shift more to the right of center with regard to economic matters — a reflection of Sneed's personal beliefs, some analysts claim — but remained moderate in security and military matters. In the fourteen years between 1994 and 2008, Geoffrey Sneed earned a considerable personal fortune, both from The Group's consulting practice and from his own publications. By 2008, Sneed was widely recognized as one of the few people in America who truly understood how the military/industrial/entertainment complex actually functioned.

In 2008, Raymond Milkovich was elected president, and immediately declared his intention to dismantle the American military/industrial/entertainment complex. Personally, however, Milkovich had almost no in-depth knowledge about how the network of government organizations and private corporations functioned, and how can one dis-mantle something one doesn't understand? The president did the only thing he could do: he turned to the acknowledged expert in the area, Geoffrey Sneed, and appointed him as "personal advisor" for the project.

The popular reading of history holds that Sneed quickly made enemies of the military/industrial/entertainment complex, and particularly the radical conservatives who were at the time trying to redefine the role of the American government. While Sneed was helping Milkovich whittle away at the power of the military/industrial/entertainment complex, these radical conservatives were giving the police new powers and increasing the severity of criminal sentencing, claiming that the growing crime epidemic was a sign of America's "weakness". In an attempt to "shore up the flagging strength of this great country", the radical conservatives used their influence to create numerous elite bureaus to monitor the American citizenry and to authorize a new wave of covert operations abroad. One of the covert organizations the radical conservatives created was the mysterious Shadow Team. Sneed was, apparently, an outspoken



PEOPLE

PLACES

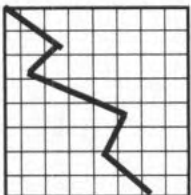
ORGANIZATIONS

EVENTS

TECHNOLOGY

MISC.

White House Security Pass



0564-98472-G-43

Geoffrey Sneed
Identification technology courtesy of
Heuristic Computing Systems Inc.

foe of the radical conservatives, and did everything in his power to limit their influence. Fearing that there was a real danger of a "palace coup", Milkovich moved to increase Sneed's personal influence by naming him National Security Advisor. Remarkably, this appointment withstood various challenges. From his new position, Sneed redoubled his efforts to block the radical conservatives' plans.

Then came the tragic day in 2011 — Chuck D-Day — when Milkovich fell to an assassin's hyper-caliber round. According to the accepted history, seeing his friend, mentor and president blown to ribbons beside him convinced Geoffrey Sneed that the radical conservatives had been right all along. A country that would kill its head of state was a sick country, and the only cure for that sickness was the one prescribed by the radical conservatives. Becoming something of a "born-again hawk", Sneed threw his weight behind the radical conservative agenda. As a major proponent of the "strength through vigilance and discipline" political school, he retained his position as National Security Advisor throughout all subsequent administrations, and still holds that position today.

That's the official history. Various analysts, like Peter Argot, claim the truth was very different. From the first, these analysts claim, Sneed was sympathetic to the rad-

ical conservative agenda. He pretended to be opposed to it, merely to work his way into the confidence of President Milkovich. While he claimed to be working against the interests of the radical conservatives, he was actually working *with* them, actively working to create the elite bureaus and organizations, while deflecting Milkovich's ineffectual attempts to block them. According to this view of history, it was Geoffrey Sneed himself who created, and directly commanded, the Shadow Team, and it was this covert-ops team that assassinated Milkovich. (It's undeniable that Sneed publicly assumed command of the Team after Milkovich's death, until it was (purportedly) disbanded in 2016. Argot and others, predictably, claim the Shadow Team merely went underground, and is still the "blunt instrument" Sneed uses to further his personal interests.)

Today, Sneed is a rather intimidating *eminence grise* in government circles. He keeps tight personal control over everything related to his position as National Security Advisor, and is thought to have his fingers in countless other pies as well. There are those who believe Sneed is actually the "puppetmaster" who controls President Charles Foster. To this day, Sneed maintains his practice of never granting media interviews.

PERSONALITY

Today, Geoffrey Sneed is a radical conservative in all his thoughts and deeds. He's well-spoken and hideously well-educated, frighteningly intelligent and urbane, with the absolute conviction that the ends justify the means. He seems totally unemotional, regardless of the situation. (Peter Argot claims this hints that Sneed throws cataclysmic temper tantrums in private, but nobody has ever witnessed one... and lived to tell about it, at least.)

QUOTES

"Failure is the greatest sin. I can forgive everything else."

"Never forgive, never forget."

"I suggest we strip away all irrelevancies, such as moral and ethical questions. The key issue is, will this plan work, or not? All else is immaterial."

GINGER BLACK

STR: 7 DEX: 5 SPD: 5 RES: 6
INT: 7 WILL: 6 AURA: 5

Acrobatics: 11, Administration: 8, Business: 9, Gun Combat: 8,
Intimidation/Interrogation: 8, Martial Arts: 9, Streetwise: 7, Thief: 8, Weaponry: 8
Radar Sense: 11

Telepathic Blast: 5

Stress Tolerance: 9

Psychosis: Panic Disorder

Equipment:

30mm Silver Bullet SSF 2/30, 20mm GCS DW 770(g, Heavy Mondo, Chaff (3 charges), Average Computer Pack, Pueblo Firefight!, Anti-Radar, combat goggles, cellular phone, Punkbuster™ Radar Detector, Punkbuster™ Signal Jammer

BACKGROUND

Philip Snipes grew up in Winnetka, Illinois, a well-to-do suburb of Chicago. His father was a doctor, his mother a lawyer. Raised in an environment of wealth and education, he breezed by his schoolmates in the public school he attended. (His parents believed in the power of public education, and despite certain fears, kept Philip and his brothers and sisters in the system. Along these lines, they drove their children hard so they wouldn't be dragged back by the terrible violence and lack of funding that plagued the schools.) By the time he reached high school it was clear he was on a scholastic fast track. A path of corporate law stretched out before him, and no one doubted that it would in fact be the path he would walk all of his life.

He ended up at Harvard, again rushing along, pulling off one miracle after another on his tests and essays. His professors spoke glowingly of him. He was set for life.

Only one problem. He hated law. The more he did it, the more he hated it. Around him, in the poorer areas of Boston, he saw the terrible poverty of the unemployed. He could not get images of police brutality, committed daily, out of his mind. He saw the golden path he walked, and knew that it had no connection to what he truly cared about. As soon as he got out of Harvard, he began doing volunteer social work, supporting himself with checks from home.

His parents assumed it was a phase that he would grow out of. But they had raised him, inadvertently, with their liberal lessons all to well. Instead of just feeling bad about the poor, he felt obliged to do something about it. Rather than growing out of this phase, he grew deeper into it.

When the war in Thailand spiraled into genocide, Philip volunteered for enhancements, asking for an assignment in Southeast Asia to help out. His parents tried every legal means short of commitment to an asylum to stop him, and at one point kept him in their home under guard. After his third escape, where he almost died from the efforts of his guards to stop him, they relented. He dipped into Slumberland and came out boosted. In the dreams of those four-teen months he

was a crusader for the poor, a Robin Hood-esque champion who ripped down walls of corruption and sent wealthy criminals who considered themselves above the law to jail.

He traveled to Thailand, and, confused by the dreams of Slumberland that haunted him, imagined himself as a real hero making a real difference. AMI staff on the battlefield, briefed on Philip's idealistic nature, always translated any military engagements he was going to become involved with in terms of how it would serve the





downtrodden of Thailand. Month after month he served the interests of a multinational corporation, all the while believing he was doing the right thing for the disenfranchised of the world. He was exhilarated. He loved his work.

When his tour was over, he went back to the states, planning on doing legal defense work for the poor. But unlike his time in Asia, where he had AMI staff members committed to keeping him fantasizing about all the good he was doing, his life in Los Angeles was plagued with doubt and confusion. Conflicts between the rich and the underprivileged couldn't be solved with a punch, and all he had been taught since entering Slumberland was that punches solved everything. The issues were much more complicated than they had been in Thailand, mostly because the AMI staff had explained everything to him in simple terms. Back in the world of black and whites, everything was hard.

Ultimately his once keen mind, altered drastically by the Slumberland programming, could not handle the stress of living by legal, bureaucratic codes in the urban nightmare of Los Angeles. Flashbacks haunted him, both from Slumberland and from Asia, and he began to have trouble keeping track of reality. He began to freak out, sometimes in the office, sometimes in the street, and twice while in court defending a client.

The memories that were the worst were those from Asia. While there he had seen himself as the champion of the poor and downtrodden. His Slumberland-pickled mind

had been able to edit out the inconsistencies of his behavior with this vision of himself. But now, without AMI handling him, the truth rushed back in. His brutal combat, his slaughter of civilians all tore into his memories. Images of torn limbs, and endless streams of blood rushed into his vision, even while he was walking down the street.

One day he found himself defending a young gangbanger called Emperor Jones. E. J. was the leader of a gang of drug lords known as the Ten Caesars. Philip, always one for an ethical debate, asked the man how he could sell drugs to kids. Emperor Jones was more than happy to join the debate. With plenty of phrases sprinkling his talk from old Warner Brothers gangster movies, he explained how his crew members were the new Robin Hoods. They were pulling themselves up by their bootstraps, getting out of the life that The Man had placed them in. Sure, they might have to hurt their own kind—for now. But at least they were taking action. And that was worth more than anything.

As they worked together, Philip was drawn more and more into E. J.'s logic. By the time he had won E. J.'s freedom, he volunteered to serve as the Ten Caesar's lawyer. From there, with his boosted enhancements, it was a quick step to becoming a gang enforcer. He now serves the gang in both capacities.

PERSONALITY

Now running around with the name Ginger Black, Philip is back to the glory days of his victories in Asia. The flashbacks have stopped, for he fills his days with violence and the firm belief he is doing good for the people of Los Angeles.

Unlike the rest of the crew, Ginger Black doesn't participate in the late night gangster movie orgies. Although he wears the obligatory suit, he sees his work as very serious. Although he is disdainful of the rest of the crew's playful nature, he doesn't say anything about it.

He is very intense, but always with a smile. He'll talk late into the night about how the gangs of LA are going to re-shape the city. He believes he is part of a massive revolution—an ideological resolution that will unfold over the next few decades and change the social structure of North America.

He is at once naive and wise, his head crammed with his Harvard education, but his train of thought directed by people who know how to push his idealistic buttons. AMI pushed the buttons years ago, Emperor Jones pushes them now.

QUOTES

"We are the new stormers of the Bastille."

"You can't make an omelet without cracking open a few vials of crack."

"One to three years, tops, as long as the point man is a minor, with time off for good behavior. I think we should try it."

JAGGED REG

STR: 8 DEX: 2 SPD: 1 RES: 7
INT: 2 WILL: 2 AURA: 4

Charm: 9, Gun Combat: 5, Intimidation/Interrogation: 9, Leadership: 6

Chitin: 6

Stress Tolerance: 8

Psychosis: Melancholia

Equipment:

30mm Silver Bullet SSF 2/30, Average Computer Pack, Eliza, Porta-Term, Laser Printer, Cellular Phone, Porta-Fax™

BACKGROUND

Reginald Morrisette — “Reg the Edge” to his friends and fellow gang-bangers — prided himself on being one bad mother. He learned to take punishment from an early age. His father was an alcoholic, and tended to take out his whiskey-fueled rages on young Reg, and on Reg’s mother. Reg tried to stand up to his father, to protect his mother from further abuse, and to a certain extent it worked. Reg’s resistance would focus his father’s hostility on him alone, letting his mother escape unharmed... physically, at least. Mentally and emotionally it still took a serious toll, leading to the woman’s death when Reg was only 12. Understandably — and with some justification — Reg blamed his father for his mother’s death, and decided the man would pay. The night after his mother’s funeral, Reg crept up on his father while the man was sleeping off a quart of whiskey, and cut his throat with a kitchen knife. The young boy ran, and eked out an existence on the streets.

The trauma of this kind of tragedy would have reduced most twelve-year-olds to an emotional basket case. Reg managed to survive it, but only by totally suppressing the emotions surrounding the events. Even today, if Reg discusses the deaths of his parents, he does so without showing — and, in fact, without *feeling* — any emotion whatsoever.

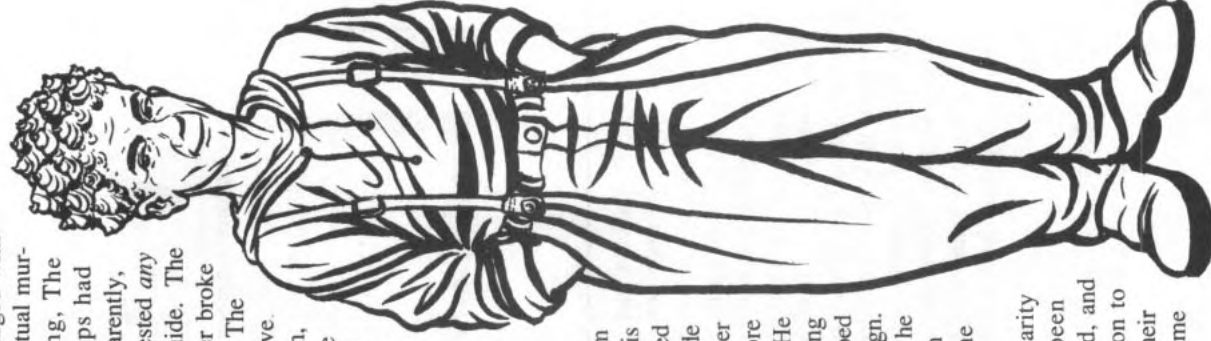
Over the next few years, Reg ran with the gangs of his home town, Cleveland. Although physically small and unprepossessing, he had an incredible capacity for surviving damage. In a scrap, he’d put everything he had into taking his opponent down, regardless of how much damage he suffered in the process. His fighting style had no subtlety to it, just the same kind of all-out attack that lets a 90-pound guard dog tear the throat out of a 200-pound armed burglar. He earned a serious rep on the streets, and very few gang-bangers had the guts to go hand-to-hand with Reg the Edge. From his gang experience, he internalized the kind of “one-for-all-and-all-for-one” loyalty that would direct his future life.

When he was seventeen, Reg was arrested and charged with a murder that he didn’t commit. He knew who the actual murderer was — it was a fellow member of his gang, The Cuyahoga River Rats — and realized that the cops had scooped him up out of sheer laziness. They knew, apparently, that the culprit was a Rat, and figured that if they arrested *any* Rat, he’d turn in the actual murderer to save his own hide. The cops didn’t know Reg the Edge, however. Reg never broke under questioning, and never implicated his comrade. The case came to trial and, simply because Reg wouldn’t give the public defender assigned to him anything to go on, Reginald Morrisette was convicted of second degree murder, and remanded into the employ of Allied Mayhem Inc.

Reg was enhanced and trained as a “grunt” rifleman. His AMI trainers knew about Reg’s hard-assed attitude, and knew just the unit for him. “Jagged Reg” was assigned to the Flying Deuces.

Jagged Reg fully expected — and, in fact, fully intended — to hate being a soldier. It came as a real shock when he realized he *liked* it. The Deuces gave him the firm but fair discipline that had been missing in his upbringing, and the level of camaraderie — emphasized by AMI’s training practices — was an order of magnitude greater than what he’d experienced in the Cuyahoga River Rats. Reg threw himself into his soldiering with more intensity than he’d ever done anything in his life. He served with distinction through two tours of duty, earning numerous commendations and medals. He was demobbed only after being critically wounded in the Kenya campaign. (Even then he didn’t want to go, despite knowing that he probably wouldn’t survive a fourth tour.) A civilian again, he found himself in Los Angeles, without the slightest idea of how to make his way in the world.

Fortunately, the well-known Flying Deuces solidarity saw him through. A couple of comrades who’d been demobbed a few months before Reg took him in hand, and helped him through the hardest phase of the transition to civilian life. When he offered to pay them back for their help, they suggested he “pay it *forward*”, doing the same thing for other Deuces in similar circumstances.



VET

Veterans for Equitable Treatment

4416 Alhambra Upper
Los Angeles, CA 21704
ph. (606) 736-4125-6891
fax (608) 766-4125-9661

Reginald Morrisette

Jagged Reg always had a kind of binary, one-or-zero approach to life, and that kicked into effect again now. Rather than helping *one* demobbed Deuce, he decided to help *all* Deuces — and eventually all vets — and became a boosted rights activist.

Over the last two years, he's learned a lot. Although he's still intense and dedicated, he's learned that sheer overpowering intensity never convinces anyone, at least not for long. He's realized he's quite telegenic, and has gone to great efforts to learn how to speak rationally and convincingly in public. Today he's a lot more soft-spoken and less militant than most boosted activists, and his calm, intelligent demeanor has won "the cause" more support than the rants of any dozen other activists.

It's been hard for him, but he's set aside the Deuces' "unwritten code" — never to back down from a fight, no matter what the odds — and to ignore (to some degree, at least) the rivalry with the TWD 4th Infantry. Jagged Reg is only human, however, and if he's pushed hard and far enough, the old "Reg the Edge" could well come out to play...

PERSONALITY

Reg is generally soft-spoken, but with a sense of smoldering power. He rarely raises his voice, but when he cares deeply about something his intensity can be quite frightening. It's difficult to earn his trust, but once given his trust is unswerving and unshakable. He doesn't have any real friends, just colleagues and comrades. In an

unguarded moment, he'll sometimes admit that he's afraid, in a way, that he'll eventually succeed in securing equal rights for veterans. Without a cause to focus on, he doesn't know how he'll survive. He never takes time off, and never seems to relax. (Although he'll never admit it, people who know him well claim that he has to keep moving, keep *doing*, so the demons from his past won't come and tear him apart...)

QUOTES

"We're not asking for anything special, you know. Just the inalienable rights promised us by the Constitution. That's all."

"It's human to fear what you don't understand. But the way to understanding is through communication."

"You're a Deuce too? Here, let me buy ya a beer..."

MARGARET-MARY VINCENT

INT: 3 WILL: 3 AURA: 4

Administration: 6, Artist: , Business: 7, Charm: 8, Leadership: 7

BACKGROUND

Margaret-Mary Vincent is the current leader of the National Anti-Socialist party, and its primary spokesperson. She was the NAS' presidential candidate in the last election, running against Charles Foster, and — unless something catastrophic happens to her or the party — will certainly run against him again in the next election.

Born in 1970, Margaret-Mary Vincent cut her political teeth in 1992, when she joined Ross Perot's on-again-off-again presidential campaign as a volunteer. Despite her youth and inexperience in things political, she took to the game as though she'd been born to it. More senior members of the campaign quickly recognized her undeniable skill and her take-charge attitude, and promoted her within the volunteer ranks. So much did she excel herself that, by the time Perot officially re-entered the race, Margaret-Mary was approached to become a full-time, salaried member of his campaign staff. Even in the waning days of the campaign, she continued to climb the hierarchy, weaseling her way into Perot's "inner chamber" of most trusted advisors and campaign workers. (In the famous video that shows Perot singing his campaign theme-song — "Crazy" — as the media declare Clinton the winner, Margaret-Mary Vincent can be seen close beside the candidate.)

Margaret-Mary played an important role in Perot's various political action groups over the next few years, working directly with the billionaire to hammer out policy, and helping to "spin" the news that came from the Perot camp. Colleagues of Vincent's at this time remember her as "frighteningly intelligent", with an instant grasp of what will and what won't fly politically. Various people claim that Vincent could "smell" a crowd, and determine — just by watching them and listening to them — just what policies they'd accept, and exactly how to best "stroke and stoke" them. She also demonstrated a cold-hearted ruthlessness — nothing new to politics, of course — that sometimes shook even Perot himself. Vincent was behind several of the purges that "ideologically cleansed" the upper ranks of Perot's supporters throughout 1996 and 1997.

In 1998, Margaret-Mary had her first major argument with Perot over a question of policy. Volatile as always, the feisty billionaire unilaterally decided to reverse a policy that he and Vincent had hashed out and refined over several months. When Margaret-Mary argued with him, he basically told her "my way or the highway". She chose the highway. When, less than two months later, Perot was assassinated, the first

news conference after the tragedy showed Margaret-Mary Vincent firmly back in control of the political machinery the Texan left behind him.

(Did Margaret-Mary have something to do with the assassination? Or did she just demonstrate her ability to seize the moment, and capitalize on the chaos Perot's death caused? The question still remains unanswered.)

As everyone knows, the political machinery Perot left behind eventually evolved into the Plutocratic party. During this transition period, Margaret-Mary Vincent kept a very low profile, and at the time various analysts guessed she'd either grown dissatisfied with the direction the party was taken, or had been ousted. When everything settled down again, however, Vincent held very much the same position in the new party as she had in the old — *eminence grise*, guardian of ideological purity, and *de facto* king-maker. (It's interesting to note that Vincent was never the official leader of the organization, either when it

was the post-Perot political action committee or the Plutocratic Party of the United States. Some political commentators argue this is because the Plutocrats simply wouldn't accept a woman as their leader. More savvy analysts, however, point out that the leader of an organization like this has a high profile, which inflicts many constraints on his or her freedom of action. Because Margaret-Mary didn't hold any official position within the organization, those constraints didn't bind her at all. Following this further, it's important to point out that "official position" and actual power often don't even have a nodding acquaintance with each other. Although Margaret-Mary held no official rank in the organization, she was involved in virtually every decision about how the party should be run, and even the most senior officials were seen to run to Margaret-Mary to ratify almost every choice they made.)

During this time, Margaret-Mary was only very rarely interviewed by the media. In each of these interviews, she stressed again and again that she



★ VOTE FOR ★

MARGARET-
MARY
VINCENT

AMERICA NEEDS THE NATIONAL
ANTI-SOCIALIST PARTY...NOW!

IT'S TIME FOR
A CHANGE!

had no personal interest in running for office, and did what she did merely because it was her way of helping America. She gave the lie to these repeated assertions when, in 2018, Vincent jumped ship from the Plutocrats to join the newly-formed National Anti-Socialist party. Within days of the change, she was the best-known spokesperson for the new party, and was very blatantly positioning herself to run for the presidency. This she did in 2020, losing to Charles Foster, but still managing to turn in an impressive performance. Her famous "Look Out For Yourselves" campaign speech is still perhaps one of the key articulations of the NAS philosophy.

Did Vincent's jump from the Plutocrats to the NAS indicate some drastic ideological conversion? Or was she always an NAS at heart, but simply didn't have a forum for her true beliefs? The more canny political analysts don't believe either hypothesis. Instead, they claim, Vincent *has* no ideology other than looking out for number one. She stayed with the Plutocrats to build herself a reputation and a power base, and to hone her skills. When the NAS party came along, she saw that as the platform she needed to reach her goal — the presidency.

Vincent's enemies say she's totally guided — *driven*, almost — by popularity polls. If the pollsters told her she'd have a better chance of election if she burned off all her hair, she'd be reaching for the Zippo lighter in an instant. This rather extreme point of view was reinforced soon after the 2020 election, when polls she'd commissioned told her she'd have made a better showing with certain demographic groups if she'd been married. She immediately announced her engagement to one of her PR flacks — a telegenic glamour-boy named Arthur Gales no more than half her age — and has recently married him.

PERSONALITY

Margaret-Mary's public persona is one of quiet competence. When she gives speeches, she emanates an aura of controlled passion — she seems to care deeply about what she's saying, but keeps herself carefully in check. In private, however, she's a great one for massive mood swings. Within minutes, she can fluctuate from the emotionless coldness of a hired killer to almost maniacal rages, and back again. In the final analysis, Margaret-Mary Vincent cares for nothing and nobody but Margaret-Mary Vincent, and anyone who hinders her in the slightest is an obstacle to be removed in the most timely and efficient manner possible.

Although she's a staunch supporter of the NAS philosophy, it's doubtful whether she actually believes in it... or in *anything*, for that matter.

UNUSUAL ABILITIES

None.

QUOTES

"A new party? Yes, we are that. Some people claim that's our weakness. I say it's our strength."

"Argot again, hm? Yes, one of these days I've got to do something about Mr. Peter Argot..."

"I'm ready for the photo opportunity. Oh, and Arthur... If you've arranged for me to be kissing any babies this time, I'll have your nuts for earrings. Got me, sweetie?"

MARVIN NEEDERMYER

Attributes and Skills are unknown at this time

BACKGROUND

According to FBC's PR department, Marvin Needermyer is "a combination of David Letterman, Johnny Carson, Bob Hope and Steve Allen". He's also the most popular vid-net entertainer in the America of 2021... again, according to FBC's PR department.

More to the point, Needermyer is living proof of the importance of marketing. He's the ultimate marketing phenomenon, created out of whole cloth to meet a need in the marketplace. The concept that is Marvin Needermyer came into existence in 2018, devised, test-marketed and polished by the New Programming division of FBC. Even the name — which, the NP division believes, combines just the right elements of nerdiness and conservatism for the market — was carefully refined through focus-group studies. (In its original incarnation, it was "Martin Needleman", but that just didn't test out quite well enough...) Only after the heavy pre-marketing work was done was someone drafted to fill "Marvin Needermyer's" size-12 wing-tips. (Certainly, this parallels the origin of Systematic Overthrow, the Cracker Brothers and even — so some cynics claim — President Charles Foster. But that's the way things happen in the entertainment biz of 2021...)

Nobody knows who "Marvin Needermyer" was before FBC hired him. In other words, absolutely nothing is known about the man hired to become Marvin Needermyer. Presumably the FBC New Programming division knew, but — perhaps surprisingly — nobody there is talking. Even NP personnel who've moved on to other jobs are unshakably closed-mouthed about Needermyer's true identity. All other possible sources for the information — birth records, employment records, etc. — come up a total blank, which implies that the people at FBC have somehow suborned the companies keeping such records, or perhaps broken into the systems and deleted the records.

Which raises the big question, "Why bother?" After all, just about everyone knows that Marvin Needermyer is a marketing construct, and that knowledge doesn't seem to affect his ratings and VQ one iota. Why would knowing exactly who's behind the trade-mark gleaming smile do anything to decrease his popularity? Apparently FBC fears the information *would* be detrimental to their ratings, however, hence the great efforts to keep it secret. (Some people, of course — most notably freelance surgeon and paranoid Doc Shock (q.v.) — believe there's some more malign reason behind this secrecy, but nobody's been able to put forward a convincing hypothesis as to what that reason is...)

"Pre-fabricated" entertainers like Needermyer could have been — and probably were — created in the past, with their comedy tailored perfectly to match the preferences of key market segments. Up until the availability of artificial brains, however, nobody could have done it quite as well. Needermyer's material is all created "by the numbers", tailored to the eccentricities of particular brain types, as well as to demographic segments. If you've got the right brain type or you're in the right demographic target segment, his jokes are absolutely hilarious; if you're not, they're bland, banal or downright incomprehensible.

There's an as-yet unsubstantiated, yet frequently recurring, rumor that the Marvin Needermyer currently on the airwaves isn't the original. According to this rumor, "Marvin" was killed a year or so back. While FBC reported that Needermyer was "on vacation", the NP division sought out a replacement, subjected him to enough cosmetic surgery to turn him into a spitting image of the original, and put him on the air. (Interestingly enough, even *this* has something of a precedent in the 1980s. Video historians might recall the saga of Morris the Cat...)

Whether the current Marvin is the original or not, he's as well-guarded and as effectively isolated from his fans as is the president... if not more so. Nobody knows where Needermyer lives, or



60117. DON TWEAK
JANNA
NEEDERMYER

PERSONALITY

Does Marvin Needemyer have a personality of his own? Nobody knows. Nobody — outside of his “minders” at FBC — has ever so much as seen him when he’s not “on”, and reciting material synthesized for him by his vast staff of writers. There’s much speculation, of course, ranging from, “He’s kept drugged comatose when he’s not on stage”, to, “He’s been doing this so long that his real personality is identical to his stage personality.”

QUOTES

“And so I says to him, I says, ‘Badgers, water-cress and mattresses.’ Get it?”

“Take my wife... but not now.”

“A guy came up to me yesterday, said he hadn’t had a bite in weeks. So I shot him...”

what he does when he’s not on the air or giving a live performance. It’s said he’s got a home somewhere in the heavily-guarded enclave that is Upper Bel Aire... but *where?* His address isn’t available in even the most confidential listings, and “reverse searches” — trying to locate his home by matching known residents with their homes and looking for any house unaccounted for — always fail. Adding to the mystery, Needemyer has never been seen arriving at or leaving the FBC studio where his show is digitized. Does that imply that he lives somewhere in the studio building? Or merely that there are secret entrances to the building that the paparazzi don’t know about?

The latter explanation seems most likely, since Needemyer *does* give — admittedly rare — public performances at highly secure sites around the L.A. area. He’s always driven up to these performances in an FBC-liveried armored personnel carrier, and surrounded by a phalanx of his “personal assistants” — read “heavily-armed leg-breakers” — except for the few minutes that he’s actually on stage.

Nobody knows anything about Needemyer’s personal life — if he has one — outside of FBC, and nobody at the vid station is talking.

PROUDLY PRESENTING:

MARVIN NEEDERMYER

at the

HOLLYWOOD BOWL

SPONSORED BY: **ESTRO-GINTM**

ADMIT ONE

MAY, 22, 2021

8:00PM

Row: 142

SEAT: 23

PRICE: \$545.95

SERVICE CH.: \$78.50

Cameras, recording devices
and weapons strictly
prohibited.

0092574-645-7

0092574-645-7

"MONKEYWRENCH"

STR: 4 DEX: 4 SPD: 4 RES: 2
INT: 4 WILL: 2 AURA: 1

Administration: 4, Computer Science: 10, Gun Combat: 7, Invention/Repair: 8, Military Science: 7, Thief: 9, Weaponry: 7

Danger Sense: 9

Empathy: 8

Stress Tolerance: 8

Psychosis: Paranoia

Equipment:

12.5mm ZW 385i, Chaff (3 packs), Average Computer Pack, all the software available, combat goggles, cellular phone, Punkbuster™ Radar Detector, Punkbuster™ Signal Jammer, Porta-Term

BACKGROUND

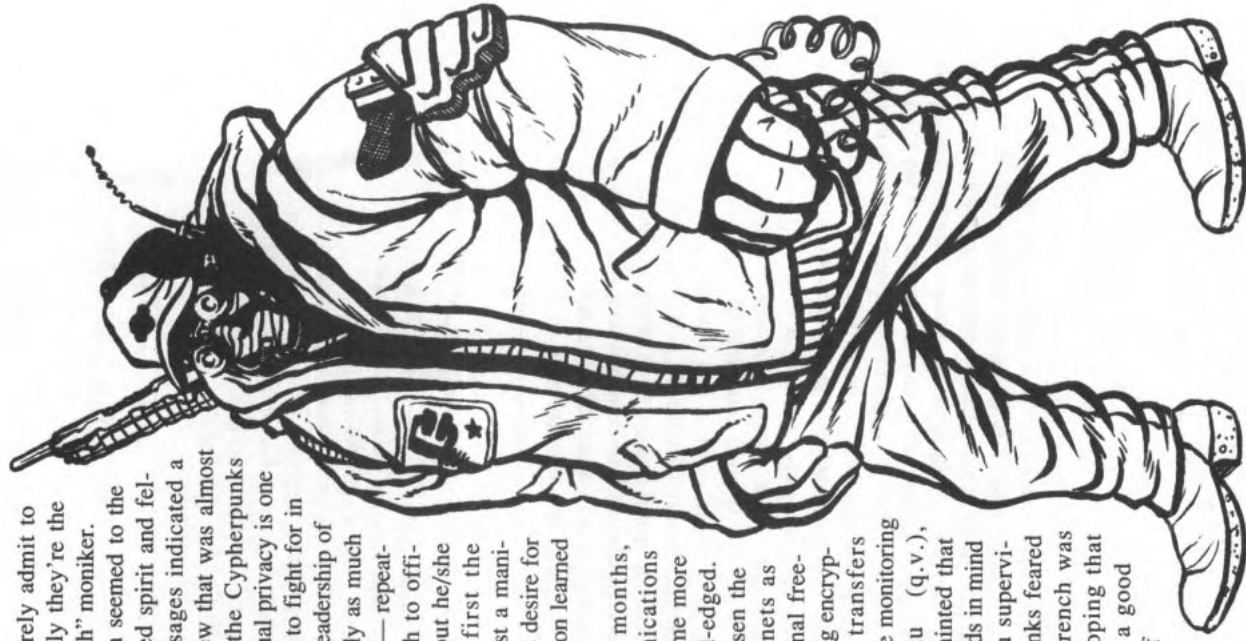
Nobody knows *anything* substantive about the shadowy figure that the media have taken to calling "Monkeywrench". Is Monkeywrench male or female? Young or old? Is he/she/it a single person or a group? A boosted veteran or an "off-the-rack" civilian? Nobody knows, and the body of rumors — rapidly approaching the status of myth — about Monkeywrench is steadily growing, and becoming more and more bizarre. (For example, what are people supposed to make of the recent statement — on the vid-net trash-news show *Investigative Copy* — that Monkeywrench might not even be a living person, but an Artificial Intelligence existing in America's computer network?) The official government position is that Monkeywrench isn't an individual, but a loose federation of sociopathic vandals, dedicated to tearing down the structure of American society. More authoritative analysts from the private sector strongly suspect that Monkeywrench *is* a single person — most probably an enhanced op whose boost(s) is/are more mental than physical (possibly something as far-reaching as Precognition).

Whatever the truth of the matter, the person/group referred to as Monkeywrench appeared on the scene only three years ago, communicating electronically with various senior members of the Cypherpunks (q.v.). These communications came via a number of channels — each untraceable — and under a wide range of IDs and "handles". As a matter of course, the Cypherpunks tried to trace the communications lines and ran sophisticated content analyses on the messages themselves — that's what C'punks do, and they're *very* good at it — but were unable to identify the sender. What they *did* conclude was that all these mysterious messages — regardless of the fact that the sender IDs were different — came from a single source: a single individual. The Cypherpunks

won't admit it (C'punks rarely admit to *anything*), but it seems likely they're the source of the "Monkeywrench" moniker.

Initially, Monkeywrench seemed to the Cypherpunks to be a kindred spirit and fellow-traveler. His/her messages indicated a crypto-anarchistic world-view that was almost perfectly in keeping with the Cypherpunks ethos, the belief that individual privacy is one of the most important things to fight for in contemporary society. The leadership of the Cypherpunks — not really as much of an oxymoron as it sounds — repeatedly invited Monkeywrench to officially join their numbers, but he/she repeatedly refused. At first the C'punks thought this was just a manifestation of Monkeywrench's desire for personal privacy, but they soon learned differently.

Over a period of months, Monkeywrench's communications with the Cypherpunks became more and more militant and hard-edged. While the C'punks had chosen the computer communication nets as their battleground for personal freedoms, using and disseminating encryption schemes for all data transfers designed specifically to evade monitoring by the Census Bureau (q.v.), Monkeywrench repeatedly hinted that he/she had more direct methods in mind for blocking Census Bureau supervision. Although many C'punks feared they knew what Monkeywrench was talking about, they kept hoping that he/she was merely talking a good game, with no real intention of going through with anything militant. This hope was dashed when a Census



ANARCHISTIC VANDALS STRIKE AGAIN

USA ALIVE Jan. 24, 2020

In another example of the unmotivated violence that has the city of Los Angeles paralyzed with fear, anarchist bombers struck again last night at a government facility, this time the State Archives of the United States Census Bureau.

"Despite irresponsible reports by some news media- which we are currently investigating- minimal damage was done to the

facility," states Census Bureau spokesperson Jason Weams. "No Bureau employees were harmed in this cowardly attack."

According to independent analysts contacted by USA ALIVE, the bomb used was surprisingly sophisticated.

"This wasn't your typical 'mixed-in-the-kitchen-sink' charge, not at all," claims (Please See BOMBERS on page C4)

Bureau computer facility in Santa Monica was blown up, and Monkeywrench claimed responsibility — not publicly, not yet, but only to the Cypherpunks and anyone else capable of monitoring C'punk communications (presumably a very limited group...).

The government reacted to this bomb attack, but not the way they "should" have, according to SOP. To the Cypherpunks who monitored Census Bureau activity, it seemed that the government had to know more about the perpetrator, and the cause behind the bombing, than they were publicly admitting. In fact, many C'punks were convinced that Monkeywrench claimed responsibility directly to the government, as well as to the Cypherpunk movement. While the government — predictably — blamed the incident on a rogue group of sociopathic vandals, the nature of their investigation hinted that they were looking for a single individual, one with a very personal ax to grind against the Census Bureau itself.

Over the next year, there were four more bomb attacks on Census Bureau facilities, and Monkeywrench claimed responsibility for each one. Predictably, the Census Bureau drastically increased physical security around all its facilities, even going so far as hiring boosted ops from various conflict firms to beef up its own security forces. Spokespeople publicly claimed that the Bureau was no longer even slightly vulnerable to the actions of "sociopathic vandals". Monkeywrench responded by changing his/her *modus operandi*. Instead of chemical bombs, the mysterious figure started to attack the Census Bureau's computer systems with *data* bombs — Trojan horses, worms and viruses of incredible sophistication and "lethality". One particularly nasty variation on the venerable "hog" virus brought the central Census Bureau system down for almost fifteen minutes, during which time it's thought that Monkeywrench was able to insert various other viruses into a number of data stores, corrupting or deleting who-knows-how-many files and records.

While the Cypherpunks had to admire Monkeywrench's tactics and shared his/her goals, they certainly didn't agree with his/her strategy.

Direct attacks against the Census Bureau simply goaded the government into working even harder to eradicate all crypto-anarchists. Each attack against the Census Bureau increases the pressure the Bureau is putting on the Cypherpunks. If the C'punk movement is destroyed — so the Cypherpunks argue, at least — then the net result of Monkeywrench's activities will be a decrease in personal freedom and privacy, not the increase that Monkeywrench seems to want.

Despite the government's attempts to keep their vulnerability secret, and keep details of how much they've been hurt out of the press, the media have recently discovered Monkeywrench's existence. Almost simultaneously, Monkeywrench broadened

his/her viral campaign to include computer systems belonging to the Anti-Sedition Squad, the Department of Deeds and Dissemination, the Department of Immigration, Naturalization and Procreation, and even the Department of Housing and Urban Development. This last target has raised Monkeywrench's profile among the boosted vets living in America, since the HUD is viewed by most as the great enemy.

For obvious reasons, the government is striving mightily to identify and destroy Monkeywrench. The Cypherpunks are trying to track him/her down, too, in an attempt to moderate those activities they see as a threat to their own existence.

PERSONALITY

Psychological profiles of Monkeywrench hint that he/she is a genius, focused to the point of obsession. An obsessive/compulsive disorder isn't out of the question. It seems likely that Monkeywrench has a personal grudge against the Census Bureau — and perhaps the government as a whole — but nobody knows what it is.

QUOTES

"When privacy is outlawed, only outlaws will have privacy."

"Crash the system!"

"Fight fire with fire, and computer code with computer code."

MOSCOSO, ALPHONSE

STR: 3 DEX: 2 RES: 2
INT: 1 WILL: 2 AURA: 4

Acrobatics: 3, Administration: 6, Business: 3, Charm: 7, Detective: 7, Gun Combat: 7, Intimidation/Interrogation: 7, Leadership: 8, Military Science: 6, Streetwise: 5, Weaponry: 7

Equipment:

9mm wWalther antique, Heavykev woven into most coats, police issue Heavykev vest

BACKGROUND

Born and raised in Chicago, Alphonse Moscoso had always wanted to be a cop. He loved the idea of helping people and stopping the "bad guys." He began his career along the police track as an idealist, and although he sensed cynicism within the Police Academy, he was not fully aware of how ingrained deceit was until shortly before he graduated. A lieutenant addressed the class and said, "I don't tell you to take bribes, but if you're gonna do this, carry a stamped, self-addressed envelope, and mail the money to yourself the first chance you get." He added, "Remember moderation. Never go back for more—don't leave a bad taste."

It took only a few years for Moscoso to become fully indoctrinated into the policeman's "code of silence." It's a common idea that cops protect each other even when they themselves break the law. Implicit in this philosophy is the idea that if everyone breaks the law, then no cop has to worry about a whistle blower coming along. Thus, whether or not a young policeman means to end up on the receiving end of graft, any crooked cops he works with will pressure him into accepting payoffs, bribes, stealing money out of the wallets of murder victims and so on. The pressure may be silent, as in "Everyone does it," to brutal, as in, "Do it or you'll have no one you can count on."

After his initial shock, Moscoso learned he had a talent for graft. He had an instinct for where loose money could be found at a crime scene, and of who would be willing to pay off rather than going to jail. Rather than resist his abilities, he wallowed in them. It made him more of "one of the boys" and he liked that. He moved quickly up the ranks, paying off his superiors for his promotions. As he rose in rank, however, suspicion followed. Though not clumsy, he was simply living too well for a cop. He eventually got busted during the investiga-

tions launched by the Orr Commission. Rather than being stripped of his badge, he began his long sojourn through the police departments of major US cities. As a "team player" he was seen as a valuable commodity to many departments, despite his stained record.

Eventually he landed in Los Angeles in 2015 as the city's Police Commissioner. He ingrained himself quickly into the city's insular police community, championing policemen's rights and greasing the wheels of graft for easy use.

Ultimately though, he set in motion the wheels for the Redford Investigation, for his department's corruption was too large to ignore. What followed were the harsh measures meant to put teeth into LA's Internal Affairs department. This gave rise to tremendous police frustration, which in part led to the LAPD strike of 2017.

After the situation blew over, and the Los Angeles Peace Force was hired to handle crime across the county, the LAPD was disbanded as an institution, and it seemed certain that Moscoso would lose his job. But as a wheeler and dealer, he'd grown during the time of the riots. He saw now the importance of the warning given to him at the Academy. Moderation was needed. He wheeled-and-dealed and ended up as the civil servant liaison between the county and the LAPF. The man who had helped precipitate the riots of '17 with his unbridled greed ended up being the only cop still on the payroll after the fallout.

Although his authority now extends over the length and breadth of Los Angeles, Moscoso did not



VTD SHOW #43297
Oct. 19, 2021

Terry Billings: Do you think you're a good cop?
Alphonse Moscoso: I'm a great cop. The best I can be.

Billings: Is that enough though? The county's a mess....

Moscoso: Let me tell you a little story. There once was this ant. And while all the other ants were working, he'd sit around and worry that they wouldn't have enough food come the winter. And then one day this boot came along and crushed him. Got it?

Billings [startled]: Is that a threat?

Moscoso: No. It's just a story. Here, let me show you some pictures of my nieces and nephews.

take the title of Sheriff. He did this purposely, a false measure of modesty set out to appease his critics. By behaving in a humble manner up front, he has helped make it nearly impossible to define exactly what his job's power and responsibilities are. He is constantly maneuvering against Tanis Morgan, the LAPF's division head, for the hearts and minds of the officers. Although Morgan is technically their boss, Moscoso is softer on worrying about the law, and as an old hand feeds them plenty of tricks of the graft trade. Morgan may send out the memos, but the actions are often carried out according to Moscoso's desires.

His main concern is with protecting his interests. His job is essentially expendable, and he must be careful that John Sitwell never comes to understand this. To this end, he helps foster conflict between the different departments of the LAPF so that it always appears that things are about to fall apart. Because he's managed to become the appealing father figure to most of the department, he then enters any fray as the peacemaker. His press in the county is very good.

Next to keeping his job, Moscoso wants to accumulate wealth. To this end he looks the other way with drug dealers and gun smugglers as long as certain rules

are followed. These rules consist of not pushing drugs and guns in the county's better neighborhoods, and paying off appropriate bribes to match the stakes of the criminal activity. Most importantly, anyone who wants to avoid the hassles of the LAPF better not pop any of its members. Once that happens, all bets are off, and the perps are as good as dead.

PERSONALITY

Moscoso has two personalities, one private, the other public. The public personality is one of a man trying desperately to win an uphill battle. He often appears at press conferences exhausted, but good natured. The excuses made for the terrible criminal mess that is LA are nearly endless, and he makes sure never to mention any of them twice in the same week. Through all of this he is a struggling man, his hands tied by a "Liberal" criminal justice system.

His private personality is a sharp conniver. He manages to get exactly what he wants, when he wants it. By portraying himself as the understanding administrator against Morgan's more business minded methods, he is the guy cops side with. He has a network of informants and weasels willing to feed him dirt and do his bidding. He is ruthless and swift, killing people if he has to in order to protect himself and his people.

QUOTES

"If only they'd cut me loose, but what can I do?"

"I'm not threatening you. I'm saying LA's a big place and there's no way I can guarantee your safety without special care."

"Tanis Morgan is doing the best job she can. You can quote me on that."

PC-MOTHER

STR: 4 DEX: 7 SPD: 6 RES: 3
INT: 4 WILL: 6 AURA: 3

Acrobatics: 11, Gun Combat: 10, Intimidation/Interrogation: 6, Martial Arts: 10,
Military Science: 8, Streetwise: 9, Thief: 11, Weaponry: 9
Analytic Smell: 10

Danger Sense: 10

Claws: 8

Stress Tolerance: 10 (unnaturally high innate stress tolerance)

Psychosis: Sociopathy

Equipment:

.50 cal Urban Nightmare EP450, 12.5 ZW 385i, Mondo Armor, Chaff (3 charges), Average Computer Pack, Pueblo Firefight!, Anti-Radar, combat goggles, Punkbuster™ Radar Detector

BACKGROUND

PC-Mother is an émigré from Neo-Deutschland. She was born and raised near Bonn, and in her youth she was known as Marie Krauss. She left her homeland eight years ago, fleeing the Neo-sciencology sweeping across the country. She found the strange religion outlandishly ridiculous. In fact, she views all religions as ridiculous. In fact, she views pretty much everything as ridiculous. She spends her days mocking everything under the sun. The problem is that such mockery can get one in a lot of trouble in Neo-Deutschland. So she smuggled herself out of her homeland, leaving behind friends and family.

She wandered around Europe for a while, her nihilistic tendencies leading her through the seedier sides of Paris and England, playing in rap bands and committing acts of petty theft to sustain herself. Eventually the stakes got higher and higher as she tested the bounds of morality. Her nihilism carried her to commit acts of murder as an exercise. She contemplated deaths of self-important politicians, and carried them out, just to see what would happen. For months and months she baffled Scotland Yard. Finally, after the whole force was after her, she was caught and sent off to jail for execution.

However, AMI had heard her story (her arrest made all the papers) and bought off her sentence. They decided someone of her temperament would make an ideal subject for the Slumberland conditioning process. They brought her into their labs and offered a choice: become an AMI soldier, or return to jail for execution.

She decided to stick out life in her mortal coil a little longer, and accepted the AMI contract.

She spent two years in Slumberland, substantially longer than most subjects. This is because she kept defeating the systems. Her point of view of mockery and distance from life made it nearly impossible for the systems to imprint her mind with the four-color comic book reality. When the AMI scientists finally unplugged her, they thought they would only discover a bit of flesh with a slagged brain resting inside like a pudding. But she emerged from the procedure both healthy and perky. In fact, of all of Slumberland's visitors, Marie was considered the one to survive with the least damage.

With her boosted enhancements in place, she was ready to storm out into battle. This she did willingly. The one thing of overwhelming note she did leave Slumberland with was an unusual appetite for combat.



AMI/SLUMBERLAND PROJECT

— PROGRESS REPORT —

Subject has thus far defeated our VR simulations. Her sense of irony is so thick that the superheros remain a farcical joke no matter how deep we drop her into the narrative. Thus far she has turned each of the stories into bitter commentaries on the uselessness of heroes, the absurdity of thinking that anything can be truly done in the world.

This is not all bad, however. This strength might allow her to accept her enhancements without the normal psychological problems. I suggest we boost her without a green clearance from the slumberland simulation. Much might be gained.

— Dr. Professor

She traveled the world, waging war on corporate time, hitting strange bars and low-life drug spots on her personal time. Her cruelty was renowned through the AMI forces, and more than a few soldiers asked for transfers to avoid working with her. Not a bit of this ever bothered her. She found the fear she inspired in boosted soldiers amusing.

One time she was sent to get some footage of a battle in Tehran filmed by a Combat, Combat, Combat crew. The distributors had agreed not to air the footage for four months because Hammer of God had used experimental weapons in the battle and wanted to review the battle themselves before the world saw their new line of AP shells. However, a group of terrorists had gotten hold of the footage and were going to broadcast it over the Roger One Network. When PC-Mother went into the town where the terrorists were hiding it had a population of 5,000. By the time she left, the population had dropped to 4,200. PC-Mother, in a fit of nihilism, had killed over eight hundred innocent farmers while tracking down the terrorists.

It took a while for the rumors to float out of the town, but by the time they did, the press was all over it. AMI realized they had PR disaster heading their way, and cut her off the payroll. Publicly they said that a rogue boosted operative committed the massacre. After that they shut up.

PC-Mother didn't mind. She went off to Los Angeles, which seemed an exciting place to her particular and peculiar temperament. She worked in punk bands for a while, trashing the clubs as the band played on. Though the scene was hip, it didn't have the edge she so desperately needed to feel truly alive. She ended up returning a life of crime, running with gangs to pick up her life to the fullest. Eventually she hooked up with Tri-Top. (They were lovers for a while, but after the fifth time she cracked his ribs, he called it quits. There's still a great deal of affection between the two of them. Their respect for each other is complete.)

She's been with the gang a year now—the longest time other than her stint with AMI she's been with any person or organization. She doesn't see herself leaving soon. The mess that is L.A. is very much her speed. It's a combat zone that still has a culture. Black is popular, the guns are big. She's here to stay.

PERSONALITY

PC-Mother comes off as someone so removed from life you'd wonder how she's still breathing. But within the strange shell of indifference is a passionate woman who simply works at a level of intensity that leaves the rest of humanity behind. Unlike most people who find themselves in these straits, she hasn't become bitter and reclusive. Instead, she's tried to bring her intensity to the world, and she's sought out the energy from people and situations that make her feel comfortable.

The tragedy of all this is that she really just does feel herself separate from the rest of humanity, from the world. Her scornful sighs and laughs at Everything reveals her inability to connect with people. Only Tri-Top, with his murderous intensity mixed with his strange concern for people, came close to letting her connect with someone. But even that fell apart because of her boosted muscles.

No matter what anyone says, no matter what the political, philosophical, or religious stand, she'll mock it. She, however, stands nowhere. She cannot be pinned down to anything. She stands on the outside of everything, commenting and deriding. This often gives people the impression she can't be counted on and really doesn't do much. In fact, it is in action that she bursts out of her cynical veneer.

QUOTES

"I'm just not cynical enough."

"How ridiculously absurd."

"Yeah. Life."

PETER ARGOT

DEX: 1 RES: 2 INT: 3 WILL: 3 AURA: 3

Acrobatics: 2, Administration: 6, Business: 4, Charm: 4, Computer Science: 4, Detective: 4, Gun Combat: 3, Intimidation/Interrogation: 7, Streetwise: 5, Thief: 5
Equipment:

9mm Walther antique, cellular phone, Average Computer Pack, Eliza, Pueblo Map!t!, Porta-Term, Library Load (politics), Video Camera, Microphone, Porta-Fax, Xanxarox

BACKGROUND

Peter Argot never wanted to be a journalist — writer, yes; journalist, no. Almost as soon as he learned to read, he began writing his own stories and books. (To this day, his mother still cherishes his first “novel”, which he wrote when he was seven — four pages, laboriously typed on a toy typewriter, stapled-on cardboard cover with a clumsy illustration done with crayons and colored pencils.) Even though he was as fascinated by television as most members of his generation, he didn’t just lose himself in the pictures on the screen, letting others’ stories replace his imagination. Instead, he let television *fire* his imagination, writing scripts for his favorite series. Predictably, Peter excelled in English at school, and had a number of his short stories — predominately science fiction — published in his school newspaper and yearbook. In his junior year he took over as editor of both newspaper and yearbook, because he objected to the way the current editors were “butchering” his work. He learned the rudiments of layout and typesetting, as well as the importance of accuracy and deadlines.

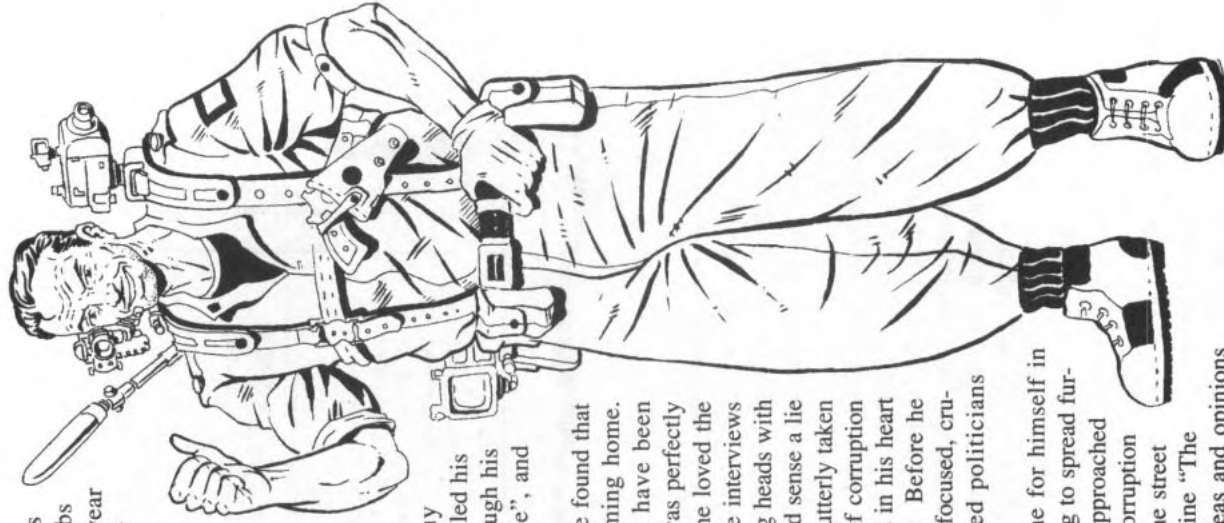
When he graduated, he left his home in the mid-west to go to Oregon State University in Corvallis, at the time the home of the most renowned Creative Writing graduate study program in the country. He received his bachelor’s degree in English Literature, and applied for entry into the grad studies program, hopes high.

His hopes were crushed when he was refused admission. When he appealed the judgment, the entrance committee explained their reasoning to the young man. He had skill and talent, there was no doubt about that, and he would probably become an excellent writer... some day. At the moment, however, he simply didn’t have enough life experience on which to ground his writing. Simply put, the UPS creative writing department believed in “write what you know”, and Argot simply didn’t know enough — not yet. They recommended that he go out into the world for a couple of years and do something — *anything* — and then come back and try again. Although it galled him, he had to admit the professors might have a point. He prepared himself to look for a job.

But what *kind* of job? The only thing he’d ever wanted to do was write, so he focused on seeking jobs that revolved around writing. For a year or so, he worked as a technical writer for a high-tech company, but then he heard that a new local newspaper was starting up and needed reporters. Argot had no experience or training in journalism — and, at the time, little interest — but at least being a reporter would be a writing job slightly more interesting than technical writing. He’d always been a direct, unobvious kind of guy with a good line of blarney, so he bullied his way into the editor’s office, lied through his teeth about his “extensive experience”, and landed the job.

To Peter Argot’s utter surprise, he found that getting into journalism was like coming home. This was the job he always should have been doing. His tight, punch prose style was perfectly suited to journalism. He discovered he loved the challenge of hard-hitting, investigative interviews — particularly when it came to butting heads with politicians — and learned that he could sense a lie when everyone else who heard it was utterly taken in. He quickly discovered the level of corruption in the state government, and this fired in his heart an anger that he’d never felt before. Before he knew it, he’d turned into the kind of focused, crusading journalist that makes crooked politicians quake in their Gucci loafers.

Within a year, he’d made a name for himself in Oregon, and his reputation was starting to spread further afield. A newspaper syndicate approached him to write a syndicated column on corruption in government and what the man in the street could do about it, and, under the byline “The Public Eye”, Argot’s controversial ideas and opinions



How to Get Yourself Killed in Washington

Written by Peter Argot

WARNING: This is the book the government does not want you to read! In this searing expose, internationally-known tele-journalist Peter Argot tears away the masks, and shows the face that Washington will kill to keep hidden.

ON
SALE
NOW

the Foster administration — his favorite target — publicly claims that Argot has staged the “assassination attempts” as a ploy to increase his ratings.

PERSONALITY

Argot was once categorized as “tenacious as a pit bull, with about the same level of social skills”, and the description isn’t far off the mark. He can be charming when it suits his purposes, but it rarely does. Most of the time he seems to consider politeness as a sham, and a waste of time. The truth is the truth, he believes, and doing *anything* to whitewash it does everyone a disservice. Although he’s often tarred as a muckraker, and accused — usually by the subject of his most recent exposé — of publishing lies, he’s actually scrupulously honest and careful with his research. His hatred of corruption in government *isn’t* the cynical posturing that his enemies claim; in fact, Peter Argot is driven by a strict moral code.

QUOTES

“You’re going down, Senator. Just thought I’d share that with you.”

“Hey, Congressman, do the numbers 21488762 mean anything to you? No? Then how are you *ever* going to make a withdrawal from that numbered Swiss bank account of yours, huh?”

“Any questions? You bet your ass I got questions...”

began to appear in dozens then scores of newspapers across the country. He stayed in Oregon for three years, refusing offers from Washington and New York-based papers. Finally, in 2014 at the age of 28, he accepted an offer from the new *DC Capital* newspaper.

If corruption in the state legislature had been grist for Argot’s mill, then activities in the nation’s capital were a bonanza for the young reporter. In 2016 he broke the RAMscan story, leading to the criminal conviction of five senators, and was the key witness at the most famous corruption trial in history. He appeared frequently on the video, and someone in the FBC vid-net network noticed just how telegenic and appealing — in a rough, unpolished sort of way — the young journalist was. FBC approached Argot with an offer he couldn’t refuse, and in January of 2017 he started the next phase of his career as a tele-journalist. Later in 2017, Peter published his first book — *How to Get Yourself Killed in Washington* — based on his experiences.

Over the last four years, Argot has become even more hard-nosed — if that’s possible — about rooting out corruption in government. The viewers and the network love him; the politicians hate him. Since 2017, he’s survived six assassination attempts which he publicly blames on various individuals in government. In return,

RAYMOND MILKOVICH

Attributes and Skills are unknown at this time

BACKGROUND

Raymond Milkovich never had any intention of becoming a politician, let alone President of the United States of America. He was born and raised in the mid-1960s, in an "extended family" of what could only be called hippies. The closest thing to a political philosophy that "Ray-of-Sunshine" (Milkovich's birth name) was exposed to, was "Tune In, Turn On, and Drop Out". Throughout the 1970s, Milkovich's family managed to hold fast to their principles, living their lives as though it were still the Summer of Love, and central Illinois where they lived were actually Haight-Ashbury. Surprisingly, perhaps, Raymond's early indoctrination didn't take — at least, not completely. He disappointed his extended family when, at the age of eighteen, he declared he was going to go to university. While they tried to convince him not to "drop back in" and have any truck whatsoever with the Establishment, Milkovich was unshakable. He enrolled in the University of Northern Illinois in De Kalb, where he studied philosophy and history. Although the university offered him a fellowship, he couldn't bring himself to drop back in *that* far, and turned it down.

Milkovich's personal philosophy reflected his upbringing, but over his years of schooling he refined it considerably. Government was necessary, he recognized — a concept that horrified and disgusted his extended family — as were civil and criminal laws. Although often characterized as a liberal, Milkovich's world-view was closer to that of libertarianism. Conceptually, he thought there should be only one law binding on all citizens — a legally-binding rephrasing of the concept, "Your right to throw a punch ends where my nose begins". Any action that harmed — or restricted the right to freedom of action of — another was wrong; anything else was just fine with him.

That was for private citizens. With regard to the government, however, things should be very different, Milkovich thought. There should be a huge body of law listing those things that a government should *never* be allowed to do — largely, those things that constrained the freedoms of individual citizens to an unconscionable degree. He didn't agree with the "hard" libertarians who believed that tax is theft, but he *did* believe that government was much too intrusive in the day-to-day lives of the citizenry. During the 1980s and 1990s, Milkovich joined — and eventually led — a number of public action groups striving to limit government interference and mismanagement.

Many times during the 80s, members of various groups pressured Milkovich to go into politics. He was a skillful and impassioned speaker, they argued, with an

astounding dose of charisma. As news coverage of various protests and discussion groups he organized proved, he was also unbelievably telegenic. Milkovich kept refusing their blandishments, however.

Until 1996, at least. The 1996 presidential election — and, more specifically, Ross Perot's campaign — galvanized Milkovich into action. So disgusted was he with the political situation in America that he acceded to the pressure of various backers, and ran for Congress as an independent. Although he was defeated, the mechanics of the campaign showed him just how much of a public forum a candidate actually had. During the months of the campaign, more people heard his words and ideas than in the previous decade. Despite his loss, polls showed that Milkovich's campaign speeches had made something of a difference. More and more people were coming to share his disgust with the way government seemed to be ignoring the people it was supposed to represent. One of Milkovich's colleagues founded the Liberal Independent political party (something of a non-sequitur, but nobody seemed to notice), and Raymond was astounded by how many people joined... and how many donated money to fund future campaigns. Although he hated the idea personally, he had to acknowledge that actually participating in the political process — standing for election — was the only way that Raymond Milkovich could make a difference.

Over the next ten years, Milkovich's political career took off. Despite advice from all corners to hire public relations firms, spin doctors and the rest, Milkovich stuck to the formula that had raised his profile to its current level — plainly and simply, telling the truth as he saw it. There was no need to "spin" the truth, he said repeatedly, and more and more of the electorate seemed to believe him. The established political parties outdid each other and themselves in attempts to smear him, trotting out every detail of his upbringing and heritage. Tabloids bulged with



The American Enquirer

vol. 4879

PREZ POPPED!

WORLD-FAMOUS PSYCHIC FORESAW ASSASSINATION:

"I felt him die three hours before the killing"

Milkovich ghost already haunting White House

report after report of every time members of his extended family had been busted for possession of dope, or spraypainting flowers on National Guard tanks, or dropping a dozen hits of acid into a police station's coffee machine, or whatever. Milkovich never tried to deny any of these reports. Quite the contrary, he acknowledged them as part of his history. He even *added* to the body of background material, telling stories of his own that the tabloids hadn't uncovered yet. Every attempt to discredit or smear him just raised his stature in the eyes of the electorate. Everything came to a head in 2008, when he was elected president — the first time an independent iconoclast of his stripe had ever held senior office.

Everyone knows about Milkovich's attempt to dismantle — or at least de-fang — the military/industrial/entertainment complex, and about how he brought political philosopher Geoffrey Sneed into the government as his personal advisor. Everyone also knows about his ongoing battles with the radical conservatives in Congress and the Senate. Despite the incredible inertia of any government bureaucracy, Milkovich began to make a real difference. The people saw it, and they loved it, and it became apparent to everyone that, despite his refusal to actively campaign for re-election, Raymond Milkovich was an absolute shoe-in for a second term.

Then came that tragic moment in 2011. At the Chuck D-Day celebration in Seattle, Milkovich was at the podium preparing to address the crowd. A single shot rang out, a hyper-caliber delayed-fuse explosive-tipped bullet punched through the

front of the podium and literally blew President Milkovich apart. Although law-enforcement and intelligence agencies moved instantly, the greatest murder investigation in history (described in a subsequent section) failed to come up with a single suspect.

Today, many Americans view Milkovich as a martyr to the cause of individual freedom. The Cypherpunks (q.v.) consider him (with McLuhan) their patron saint, and there's a fringe religion (The Church of Now, q.v.) that considers him an aspect of the divinity, destined to be resurrected just before the Apocalypse.

Some more paranoid-schizoid and conspiracy-oriented groups think his assassination was faked, and that Milkovich still lives in seclusion somewhere. Only the most extreme fringe-thinkers believe this, however...

Until recently. Over the last couple of months, there are recurring, and increasingly-common rumors that Raymond Milkovich has been seen, alive. Are these just manifestations of some deep-seated psychological wish, or is something very strange going on?

PERSONALITY

Raymond Milkovich was a thoughtful man, introspective yet at the same time forthcoming and friendly. He was sincere and truthful in everything he said and did, quite willing to admit weakness or ignorance. He had an uncanny ability to understand, and even empathize with, just about *any* opinion or belief system, whether or not he agreed with it. Above all else, the thing he hated the most was hypocrisy, particularly in government.

QUOTES

"Look, I know I'm scheduled to give a speech to you today, but I thought why not just open this whole thing up to questions?"

"I may be active in politics, but I'm not a politician."

"I want to change things so that, I'm from the government, I'm here to help" isn't one of the three great lies."

REDCHECK

STR: 3 DEX: 3, SPD: 6 RES: 5
INT: 4 WILL: 6 AURA: 5

Acrobatics: 7, Computer Science: 8, Gun Combat: 6, Intimidation/Interrogation: 6, Invention/Repair: 7, Leadership: 9, Martial Arts: 7 Medicine: 5, Military Science: 6, Streetwise: 7, Thief: 8, Vehicles: 4, Weaponry: 6

Thermal Vision: 24

Heat Immunity: 7

Reduced Fatigue: 6

Stress Tolerance: 6

Psychosis: Melancholia

Equipment:

.50 cal Urban Nightmare EP 450, 12.5mm ZW 385i, AMI Punk-Roaster Napalm Proj., Mondo Armor, Economy Pack Computer, Pueblo Sniper!, combat goggles

BACKGROUND

Redcheck is the founder and leader of the famed People's Front for the Obliteration of Three-Dimensional Entertainment. He spent his early days in the Columbus 500 gang on the streets of L.A. At that time he was known as Bright Stick. He ran drugs and did drive by shootings. He was content, but not fulfilled.

At the age of fourteen, stirred by political tracts passed out on street corners, he decided to enter the life of a political activist. Like so many people his age, he combined his passion for political change with his passion for munitions.

For several years he ran around disrupting speeches of conservative politicians with gun shots and bombs. Most of these attacks were made without a real political focus. He had a vague idea of who he was against—not what he was for—and he let others dictate where he would devote his energies. In his late teens, however, he began to listen to activists very concerned about the obsessive use of three-dimensional equipment for entertainment. According to these activists, the people could no longer see the true ills of the world, for the world was being overwhelmed with technology that removed them from the world. This technology was three-dimensional entertainment. By creating a new world, "equal to and supposedly better than" the real one, people were tempted to leave the pain of the world behind. Before any changes could be made, the activists claimed, the march of three-dimensional technology had to be stopped.

This was the calling he'd been waiting for. It had a purpose with direct results that involved explosions. The ultimate goal was vague enough in its implications that



he didn't have to think too much about it. And it set him against powerful electronics corporations. As an outsider to the Establishment, he'd always seen those who gained their wealth through business as a cowardly lot who didn't deserve their cash. As opposed to gang bangers like him, who gained it through killing and the sales of drugs to desperate, pathetic people who would end up being more

**PEOPLE OF THE THREE-DIMENSIONAL WORLD
DON'T LET TECHNOLOGY BECOME THE NEW REALITY
STOP THREE DIMENSIONAL ENTERTAINMENT NOW!
JOIN THE PEOPLE'S FRONT FOR THE OBLITERATION OF
THREE DIMENSIONAL ENTERTAINMENT!
STOP THE MARCH OF FALSE REALITY NOW!**

desperate and pathetic through his profit. Now was his chance to target all the stiff he'd hated for so long and to feel as if he was doing everyone a favor at the same time.

He flew into the task at hand like a hawk on the hunt. For a while he focused his energies on hitting stores carrying 3D home entertainment units. He both firebombed them and robbed them. When this became dull he went on to attack shipments of the units and then attacked research facilities that used 3D technology in any form. From there he moved up to assassination, targeting scientists and corporate officers who worked at the companies. Finally he began sneaking into the corporate offices and research centers, and booby trapping the facilities.

While this was really fun, it didn't give him the rush he desperately wanted. He was still a rather weak player in a world full of boosted players. He realized that if he really wanted to hit the big boys hard, and to truly make a name for himself, he'd have to be able to match the power of the people who were protecting the corporations.

Thus began his long and peculiar journey into Slumberland. This was not a simple task, for two very vital reasons. The first was that he had to create layers of dummy ID to pass the Disposable Hero, Inc. security clearance check. This took great deal of work, and he accumulated a great many debts along the way.

The second, and no less daunting obstacle, was for him to get over his fear of going into Slumberland. Over the two years of his terrorist activities, he'd really come to believe the propaganda of the anti-3D entertainment activists. His belief is what gave his actions their edge. He really did believe the machines and software of 3D tech were at the core of all the world's ills, and by entering Slumberland he'd essentially be heading into the heart of the devil himself.

But, for the sake of his cause, he mustered up his courage and went forward with his plan. After getting by Disposable Hero security, he was placed into Slumberland and remained submerged for fourteen months.

He tore the place up. He could never forget, on some level, where he was; and that place was the Hell of 3D technology. The world itself was evil. With the sweaty rage of a vigilante avenger, he ripped through the VR simulations, killing villains, pedestrians, cops, and politicians. There was no stopping him. Several people on the project wanted to pull his plug, but others wanted to see how it would all come out.

It came out like this: two months ahead of schedule, his enhancements all in place, he came out of Slumberland of his own will, shattered his isolation tank, escaped, ravaged the lab, killed dozens of scientists, and rushed out into the world. He's one of the half dozen Slumberland visitors to have escaped without military service.

From there he gathered up a group of like-minded, disgruntled folks and began working their wicked magic against all sorts of people, places, and things. He took on the name Redcheck, after the name of the superhero he was given in Slumberland, and in time found the People's Front for the Obliteration of Three-Dimensional Entertainment. Their latest targets are, of course, the Slumberland Theme Park.

PERSONALITY

Redcheck is one messed up case, perhaps more so than most vets. By hating the very technology that has given him enhancements (and thus made him valuable), he lives not a single moment without loathing himself. Every one of his blows against 3D tech is undercut by memories of Slumberland—memories which give him pleasure. He never admits either his confusion nor the pleasurable memories to anyone.

His confusion in these matters has revved him up even more than before Slumberland. He is often wildly violent, trying to whip the demons inside of him out by attacking the world around him. He seethes even when sitting quietly, and it's the rare person who is comfortable when sitting near him.

QUOTES

"The fascist dogs who are undermining the superiority of two-dimensional media must pay."

"We fight not for the platform of entertainment, but for the soul of humanity."

"AAAAARRGGGGGGGGGGGGHHHHHHH!"

SANTA CLAWS

STR: 4 DEX: 5 SPD: 4 RES: 5
INT: 4 WILL: 4 AURA: 3

Acrobatics: 8, Administration: 9, Business: 9, Charm: 4, Gun Combat: 9, Intimidation/Interrogation: 8, Leadership: 7, Martial Arts: 9, Military Science: 7, Streetwise: 9, Thief: 9, Weaponry: 10

Chitin: 6

Claws: 11

Stress Tolerance: 5

Psychosis: Homocidal Mania

Equipment:

12.5mm ZW 385i, Mondo Armor, Chaff (3 charges), Average Computer Pack, Pueblo Firefight!. Anti-Radar, combat goggles, cellular phone, Punkbuster™ Radar Detector, Punkbuster™ Signal Jammer

BACKGROUND

Santa Claws is arguably the most famous — or infamous — veterans of the world-famous Trans World Devastation 11th Airmobile. It's well known that Claws served with the 11th Airmobile in campaigns in Paraguay, Turkey and New Zealand. It's also well known that when he was demobbed, he went into business for himself, and has climbed to the top of his chosen profession. Beyond this, Claws is an enigma.

Nobody knows what his real name is, where he was born, or what he did before he joined the 11th Airmobile. He was demobbed in 2016, that much is known, and his age at the time — judging by the few photographs existing of him — show a man in his late thirties. Assuming that he served only a single five-year tour of duty — almost a certainty — that would mean he was *over thirty* when he was inducted into the Glorious 11th. Considering that most inductees are in their late teens, this hints to some analysts that there's something very unusual in Santa Claws' background, something that forced him into military service.

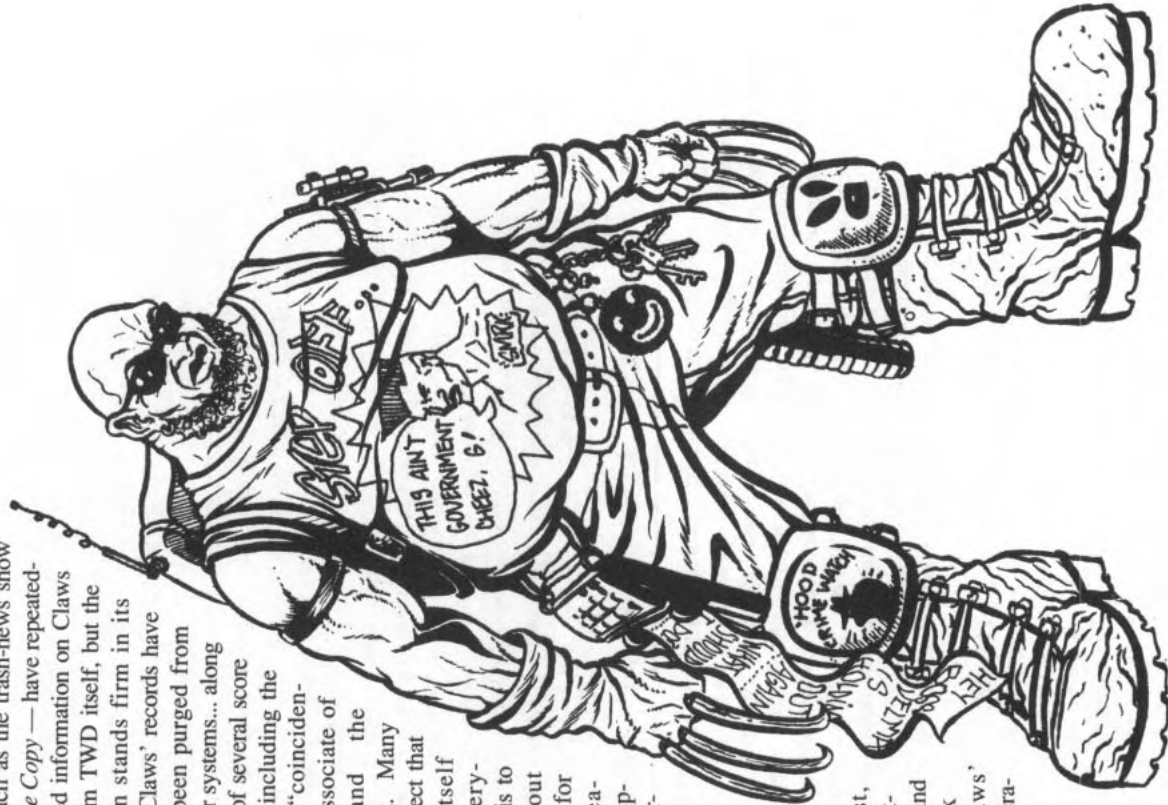
Why can't anyone find out just what that was? After all, the conflict firms generally keep very extensive records on demobbed ops — if only on the off-chance of some lucrative leverage later on — and the Veterans Administration prides itself on its tracking system. How could Claws have slipped through?

The fact of the matter is that the VA's "fine-tooth comb" tracking system is more like a picket fence than anything else. More vets slip through the cracks than are caught by the system, so recent independent studies indicate. And, for some as-yet unexplained reason, more veterans of the TWD 11th Airmobile slip through those cracks than do the

members of any other single unit in existence. The government — and various private concerns such as the trash-news show

Investigative Copy — have repeatedly demanded information on Claws directly from TWD itself, but the corporation stands firm in its claim that Claws' records have somehow been purged from its computer systems... along with those of several score other vets, including the Golemite ("coincidentally" an associate of Claws) and the Juvenihilist. Many people suspect that TWD itself knows everything there is to know about Claws but, for its own reasons, is keeping the information from the government. Perhaps, some people suggest, TWD is getting some kind of kick-back from Claws' business operations.

Those "business operations" are



Hey, bunk!

Thought you might kinda like some words from the civilian world outside. I thought it was going to be a really tough transition after I got demobbed. You know the way people talk about it, the way it really seems to get to them. Like, they want to get out, most of them, and that's what they focus on. But then in the last couple of days before they're really out they realize how different everything's going to be outside the unit, you know? That's what it was like for me. I got to thinking I just didn't know where I was going to go, what I was going to do. You're probably not thinking that way yet, you've still got a couple months before your tour's up, right? Like, I guess I thought I'd look up some other Eagles and maybe they'd help me out. What happened was some ex-Eagles looked me up. You've heard about this guy on the outside, right? I'll just call him S.C., just in case the unit censors get their thumbs out long enough to read this. Yeah, well what you hear is true, bunk. More than true. When it comes your turn to be demobbed, don't let worries about what you're going to do grind you down. I think it's going to be better out here than it was in the Eagles. Keep your head down.

—Aunt Acid

astoundingly widespread. Santa Claws has created and still heads a huge organized crime operation stretching along the west coast, from San Francisco in the north to San Diego in the south. Though most of the revenue generated by the "Claws Network" comes from simple theft, the organization has tendrils into virtually every conceivable criminal enterprise: protection, narcotics, prostitution, gambling, pornography, illegal arms sales, computer crime, fencing operations, etc. etc. The Claws Network operates predominately out of the HUD veteran housing projects up and down the coast, and the residents of these projects generally shield Claws' operations from outside prying eyes. In fact, among many of the projects' residents, Claws is something of a local hero, a "homeboy made good."

Claws' organization is made up almost exclusively of boosted veterans, the majority of whom are demobilized 11th Airmobile soldiers like Claws himself. In fact, Claws maintains close contact with many ops who are still active members of the Glorious 11th, and uses them to distribute drugs and other goods to the troops, while channeling weapons and ammunition from TWD's armories to his arms pipelines. It seems totally impossible that TWD wouldn't know what was going on, so the only plausible reason for allowing it to continue is that the corporation is receiving a major cut from Claws'

operations. Peter Argot has gone so far as to suggest that Claws' kickbacks are the major source of funding for the Glorious 11th... an allegation he hasn't repeated since a visit from TWD's legal experts, and the disintegration of his car and front porch in "random street violence".

In general, the members of the 11th Airmobile are as loyal to Santa Claws — whether they work directly for him or not — as they are to their commanding officers... if not more so. There seems to be an unstated bidirectional bond of duty between the 11th and Claws — the soldiers will help him, if only by their silence, in return for which Claws will make sure the 11th Airmobile can continue to meet its payroll and will offer employment to demobbed vets of the unit. At present, it's more or less expected that newly-demobbed Airmobile vets will join Claws' organization. Vets who don't join frequently have to suffer through "Code Reds" — physical and emotional hazing that occasionally leads to death — inflicted by active Airmobile operatives. After surviving this gauntlet, however, most are allowed to go about their business. Claws has been known to kill certain demobbed vets with key skills who refused to work for him, however.

Residents in the HUD projects where Claws runs his operations usually find it in their best interest to protect the crime boss, or at least turn a blind eye to what he's up to. Claws' projects usually benefit from a good deal of "spillage" — profit from crime operations that gets diverted into the residents' pockets — plus the crime boss actually provides a real protection service by defending the projects against incursions by the Sons of Ludd (q.v.), and others who'd mess with his "kingdom"... including certain government agencies.

PERSONALITY

Santa Claws is a jovial, outgoing, and very dangerous man. He always seems to be laughing or smiling... although sometimes his smile turns into the expression of a cannibal anticipating the flavor of an enemy's liver. He's an excellent leader, capable of earning and retaining the total loyalty of his followers. He's an expert at organizational and logistical matters, and his crime "empire" is run more efficiently than many highly profitable corporations. Claws truly seems to care about the people who work for him, although this might well be a facade designed to enhance their loyalty to him. He's a good friend, and an implacable enemy... and can shift from one to the other in the blink of an eye. He rarely meets with strangers, but those who have spoken with him claim that Claws frequently seems to understand what a visitor really wants better than the visitor does himself...

QUOTES

"Violence is never an end in itself. It's just another tool for doing business."

"I try to avoid killing friends, it always makes me sad. Do you really want to make me sad... *friend*?"

"I'm just a businessman, see? I give people what they want, that's all I do. Who am I to tell them what they should and shouldn't want?"

SITWELL, JOHN

INT: 1 WILL: 1 AURA: 5

Charm: 9, Leadership: 6

BACKGROUND

John Sitwell, the chairman of the LA County board of supervisors, was born in Columbus, Ohio in 1973. His parents died in a car crash when he was eight years old. Rumors abound that his father was an alcoholic, and had been drinking when he drove the car into oncoming traffic. Sitwell, though he would not have been old enough to know what alcoholism is, denies that his father had any drinking problem. Accusations of beatings by his father made by one of the Sitwell's neighbors are also dismissed. "My father struck me maybe twice, as fathers sometimes strike boys who have to learn a bit about life," he replies when asked about the matter. "To term that abuse is to leave reality behind."

After the death of his parents, he moved to his grandmother's home in Orange County. There he lived in what he claimed was bliss. He has countless tales of happy romps around railroad tracks near his home. In his autobiography he describes how he could look back to his home and see his grandmother's face smiling out at him from the kitchen window as she baked pies. Strangely, reporters who visited his childhood home discovered that the view from the train yards did not yield a view of the kitchen window, let alone the house. Such discrepancies between idyllic memories and reality have never seemed to bother Sitwell. "Well, there you go again," is the start of any reply on the matter. "I don't pretend to remember everything correctly, but I do wish you'd allow me a few moments of nostalgia—even if they are slightly exaggerated."

At the age of twenty Sitwell was accepted into the prestigious UCLA film school program. His application was aided immensely by good words from California Senator Jennifer Callihan. Sitwell had worked very hard for her campaign during the two years after his graduation from high school. His success in the film school was limited, however. He lacked the ability to follow through on his projects. A professor remembered him saying, "As long as the movies I want to make are still in my head, they're perfect."

After two years he dropped out of the film program and chose acting as his path into Hollywood. With his good looks and his day-dreamy quality, he made a name for himself at UCLA, and then landed work in several bit parts in major studio features. From there his career began to snowball. In 1997 he landed his first leading role in *Yippee, I Win!*, directed by then fifteen year old Macauley Culkin. Praised by critics for its clever use of bits and ideas from other movies, the film managed to

climb into megastatus, knocking *Jurassic Park III*: Another Try out of the top money making spot of all time. From there he rolled into superstar status, making one or two movies a year, one hit after another.

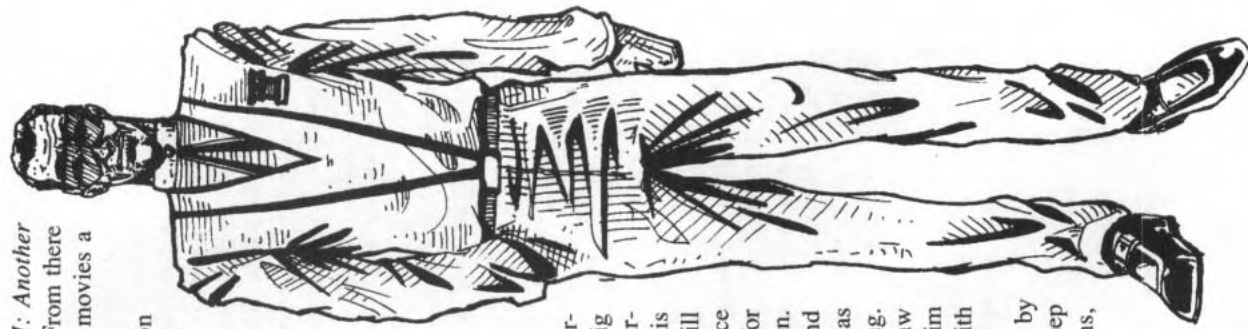
During this time he met and married Shannon Dougherty, formerly of television fame. Although Dougherty would later claim that her marriage to Sitwell was a hell-hole, Sitwell himself praised the marriage as nearly idyllic.

In 2003 they had a child, Mellisa Hope Sitwell. Shortly after that, Dougherty, claiming her daughter was trying to embarrass her by being so much cuter, was arrested on assault charges and filed for divorce.

Sitwell was devastated. He continued to work, but ultimately could not concentrate at the task at hand. Directors found him moody and impatient. He eventually dropped out of show business, doing good works for the poor of LA. His name and face still carried powerful Q-Ratings, and his presence was a big help to a great many charity causes. He was encouraged to pursue politics because of the success of his endeavors. Not understanding that in LA people will encourage you to do anything, Sitwell took the advice seriously, and after a few years began making bids for city council seats. After a while, he won an election. He was, however, a dreadful politician. Naive, and braced with a rosy view of the world, he saw the job as one of a public service, not one of power-brokering. Eventually some powerful munitions companies saw Sitwell as a potential tool for their own ends and set him up to run for the LA County board of supervisors. With their backing and PR savvy, he won the seat.

He now sits on the board of supervisors, ignored by all but a few lackeys put in place by his handlers to keep him happy. Papers are set before him and he signs, often with only cursory glances.

He has the makings of a good worker, but he is truly blind to how little impact he has on the county. If someone could prove to him he's nothing more than a patsy, there might be a big shakedown in LA County.



-John Sitwell's Acceptance Speech 11/22/18

My fellow Los Angelenos, it is with some surprise I find myself speaking to you today. When I was approached to chair the county's board of supervisors, I never thought that I would have the appeal needed to win the support for the job. After all, All In the Family Values is still on the air, but a clumsy husband is not the model anyone normally looks for in a politician. (Polite laughter). I think I can safely say, though, that I care. I care a great deal. I want things to change. Things must change. The need to change things is so clear to me. And it is my great fervent hope that I will be able to change things.

Now, many of you will want to know how things will change. That's a fair question, and I have to tell you I don't know. There are so many things to change. Change, change, change. I think I can safely say, we all want change, but we all want things to change in different ways. I see my role in politics as one of listening to all these different desires, sifting them. Weighing them, if you will. Finding the balance of change. We want change. I've been told we deserve change. I believe that.

I believe many good things.

I believe that everything can work out. When I tell you that everything will change, that things will be better, that it will come only with effort on the part of all of us, I think you want to believe that. I know I want to believe it. Don't you?

(A pause, the crowd is confused.)

Well, I don't know. Maybe it won't take too much work on your part. Maybe it will just happen. That's something good to believe in, isn't it? Yes, let's just believe that.

My fellow Los Angelenos, let us believe that our future lies not in pain, but in pleasure. This is Los Angeles. Could it be any other way?

PERSONALITY

John Sitwell is a kind, pleasant man who means very well. He listens intensely to almost anyone with a problem, so he's always swamped with work.

The only tragedy in his life is his missing daughter, Melissa. On occasion his eyes are filled with sorrow. He has hired several private investigators, some of them boosts, to track her down. So far the trail has only grown colder and colder as time has passed. Everyone has advised him to assume she is dead, but Sitwell cannot give up hope.

He is filled with hope for the future of LA County, and driven to do the best job he can. He's a passable actor. If he wants his part to come to life though, he's going to need a better script writer and director.

QUOTES

"Life is better viewed with the contact lenses of optimism."

"I know many people don't think much of me, but I will always think much of them."

"What? You need...? Can it wait just a moment...? No? You're sure...? All right then, come in..."

SITWELL, MELISSA

aka Steppin High

DEX: 1 SPD: 2 INT: 3 WILL: 2 AURA: 6

Acrobatics: 3, Business: 4, Charm: 9, Detective: 4, Gun Combat: 2, Psychology: 6, Streetwise: 4, Thief: 5

Equipment:

9mm Walther antique, Heavykev duster, Average Pack computer, Eliza, Porta-Term, Pueblo RecordIt!, Vocalizer

BACKGROUND

Daughter of the chairman of the county's board of supervisors, Melissa Sitwell has been listed as missing for some two years now. She currently works as prostitute at the 90210, a brothel in Upper Beverly Hills owned by the Tommy-G Club.

Melissa is not the daughter that John Sitwell thinks her to be. In his memories his child was a lovely girl, spoiled, perhaps, but nothing that could not have been taken care of during a poignant father-daughter reconciliation some time around her 30th birthday.

In truth, she had been selling drugs to her classmates in school from the age of eight. She had arranged to smuggle guns to her gang banger pals. (They could carry the guns in school; they just wanted to avoid the excessive taxes the county put on handgun sales.) At the age of fourteen she began turning tricks. How a father missed these actions will always be a mystery—but not a new mystery. It's happened time and time again.

Melissa began despising her father at a very young age. She believes he forced their mother from the house (not understanding at all her mother was simply a bitter woman; in fact, it was Melissa, with her youth and charm that drove her mother away). As she became older, she came to hate him for his rosy view of the world. On some level the criminal activity she engaged in as a youth was a test against her father. She wanted to know if he would notice all the terrible things happening in his own "perfect" family. He didn't, and she kept raising the stakes. Over time, her behavior became habit, and then the habit a way of life.

By the time her father began running for the board of supervisors, she completely loathed the man. The pain she felt in herself—the mix of drugs, crime, and prostitution created deep shame in her—she blamed on her father. She could see that he was being manipulated by more powerful men. As the campaign progressed, she realized her father might well win the election. She took it upon herself to work against her father. But like so many of her attempts to make her displeasure clear to

him, she kept these attempts secret from him. (Strange, but true.)

She ran away from home, without a plan formed in her head. She simply had to be away. Strangely, her disappearance aided her father's election immensely. This only frustrated her more. She thought for a while of creating some sort of scandal that would ruin his career, but her trafficking in the underworld had thus far dealt on a low level of crime. She had neither the resources nor the contacts to pull off a large scale stunt of county-wide proportions.

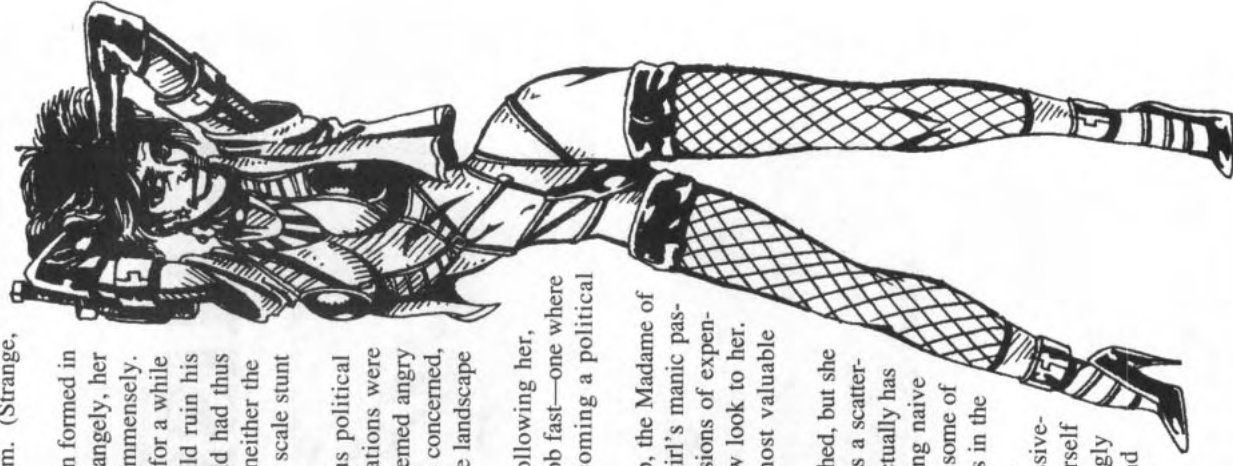
She tried to make contact with various political activist groups across L.A. county, but relations were strained with all of them. None of them seemed angry enough to her, and as far as the groups were concerned, she was a spoiled brat slumming through the landscape of political turmoil.

With her father's private detectives following her, and her funds running out she had to get a job fast—one where she could still pursue her dreams of becoming a political power-broker.

Eventually she hooked up with Silk Top, the Madame of 90210. Silk Top was impressed with the girl's manic passion. After putting her through several sessions of expensive cosmetic surgery she had a whole new look to her. Within weeks she became the brothel's most valuable prostitute.

Her distaste for her work has not diminished, but she sees hope for herself now. Though she plays a scatter-brain for the johns who come to 90210, she actually has a keen mind for collecting data. By feigning naive interest in them, she gets the men she's with, some of the more powerful media and political figures in the city, to drop whatever she can pull from them.

Through her well honed passion for passive-aggression, Melissa knows how to turn herself into a toy for boys just so. She is amazingly skilled at unplugging her sense of self, and becoming exactly what the man she's with wants to see, hear, touch. This takes its toll in the long run, of course. When



Don't say
Never

FAX TRANSMISSION #48537-2840G.....08:24PM

MISSING



Melissa Sitwell

If you have any information about this person's whereabouts,
please call 328-87642-98-2

she's done, the energy spent not being a whole person comes crashing back in on her. Her loathing of her father (on whom she continues to blame every aspect of her misery) is matched only by a tightly held loathing of herself. Still she persists with her plans.

She has made contact with Roger-Net, the pirate broadcasting group trying to run its revolution through the media. They are very interested in the information

she gives them. By combining all the clues from her clients, they are able to build patterns of secret political policy and technological advances. This allows them to stay just ahead of the officials and media giants, and keep their illegal programming on the air.

So far Melissa has kept her identity from the members of Roger-Net a complete secret (though they would love to meet her to have a more secure working relationship). Like her father, Roger-Net has operatives trying to track her down. She is aware of all of this, and is very careful.

PERSONALITY

Melissa is complicated, with her nature now split into many distinct parts. When working as a prostitute, she is embarrassingly malleable. When gathering information, sharply keen. When making her moves through L.A.'s underworld, confident and arrogant. She is, ultimately, quite confused. She has buried herself deeply into a false life that she expected her father to save her from. Each day that passes moves her deeper into her strange state of mind. The portions of her personality are becoming more and more distinct, so that she is sometimes a completely brazen spy, and sometimes a fearful child.

Although her skills serve her well, there are elements of her psyche that are crumbling. Whether or not this crumbling results in a final, mental crash remains to be seen. More than that, it remains to be seen what sort of crash may result. She might enter a helpless state of schizophrenia, or she might simply slip off to become an assassin or a corporate spy, leaving behind all ties to her past.

Obviously, anyone who depends on her competent information is running a risk, unknowingly or not. As time goes by, the information they come to depend on might in fact lose its accuracy as she loses her grip on life.

QUOTES

"Come here, daddy, come here and tell me about all about your big, bad day."

"Sure, I can find out what's going on at Media Giant. But you have another of your goons try to follow me again, and you'll never hear about what's going on at Media Giant."

"John Sitwell's ruining this city, and the only chance we've got is to bring him down. Kill him if we have to."

SKIPPY

STR: 6 DEX: 3 SPD: 4 RES: 8
INT: 4 WILL: 5 AURA: 2

Acrobatics: 7, Detective: 6, Gun Combat: 5, Intimidation/Interrogation: 5, Leadership:

7, Martial Arts: 11, Weaponry: 6

Electric Discharge: 15

Mind Probe: 10

Chitin: 5

Stress Tolerance: 9

Psychosis: Homicidal Mania

Equipment:

Katana, Throwing Stars (6), 25mm Urban Nightmare, 20mm GCS DW 770/g, Heavy Mondo Armor, Chaff (3 packs), Average Computer Pack, combat goggles, cellular phone, Punkbuster™ Radar Detector, Punkbuster™ Signal Jammer, Pueblo Sniper, Pueblo Firefight!, Pueblo MapIt!

BACKGROUND

Born Ted Borgund, in Miami, Florida, Skippy spent his early years as a lifeguard/DEA inspector on the beaches of southern Florida. He liked his job—walking along the beach in his bright orange swimsuit and toting his Uzi II. Only in his early twenties, he thought he had found contentment. He liked saving people who were drowning, and believed that by doing his part in the “Never Ending War On Drugs,” he was doing even more to help save people.

But his joy ended when his parents were in an airplane crash days after his twenty-third birthday. Although they survived, both suffered grievous injuries.

In order to support the health costs for his aging parents, he sought employment at AMI and ended up in the boosted enhancements program. When he came out of Slumberland over a year later, he learned his parents had died. Broken, he wanted to return to his job along the beach, but his contract with AMI would not be over for another four years. With his boosted enhancements and mental instability he was code-named Shatterlad and sent off to war.

His first stop was in India, where he helped put down the Shiva Insurrection. There he helped cut down literally thousands upon thousands of religious rioters who threatened to destroy the crops of food manufacturers in Europe. After that he was sent down to South America to back a radical militia force friendly to the Plutocrats, who were desperate to retain control of mining interests in the area.

After his tour ended

he returned to the

States and attempted

to get his job back at

the beach. But over three

years had gone by, his mind

had deteriorated, and most

importantly, he'd simply seen too

much. The level of killing he him-

self was personally respon-

sible for had sent

him off

balance.

After he

opened fire on

a group of kids

fighting over a cas-

tle, the DEA

dropped him.

Down and

broke in Florida,

he became a

nuisance to the

local police, and

then a real

threat one night after the flashbacks start-

ed. When free housing opened in L.A., he

packed up his bags and went West, hoping to

start over.

Things worked out no better in L.A.

The flashbacks became more and more

intense, his temper got out of hand more

and more frequently. It was not uncom-

mon for him to get into

fighting in the housing pro-

jects with other boosts. He'd

wake up the next day, bleeding,

uncertain what had happened. He

ran with the F-Hogs for a while, but

one day, after getting shot up by a

40mm Pumpit, they left him for dead.





Their retribution for his death continued for days as he lay in an alley, slowly healing.

When he had enough strength to get up, he staggered up and down along the street. But even the few blocks he traveled were enough to knock him out. He collapsed at the delivery entrance of the Blake Hotel. Luckily Machino Durez happened to be waiting for the supply of beef due to arrive. Rather than send Shatterlad back to the projects or to jail, he took the ruined man into the Blake.

(One should not get too sentimental about this; Machino had considered for some time the notion of getting a flashy boosted vet to be a visible presence in the hotel. As usual, the action was both expedient and cheap, so he lunged at it.)

Of course, Shatterlad was in no position to patrol the hotel, nor guard anyone, nor really do much of anything. He needed help, and Durez provided it. Durez hired Kane McGuillicuty, a Zen Master, to come in and cool the young boosted out. They

spent several months together, and slowly Shatterlad came out of his hazy confusion. With results that outstripped anything accomplished by the shrinks at the veteran's administration, McGuillicuty gave his pupil the ability to sustain himself in the world. He combined Shatterlad's need to live the fantasy of a four-color comic book with an Eastern detachment from life.

After a half a year of working together, McGuillicuty gave Shatterlad a new name, Skippy, designed specifically to puncture the self importance most vets carried around. Shatterlad took the name gladly. It relieved him of the responsibility of being a grim superhero tainted by his past. In the name he found all the absurdity of the strange circumstances of his life.

A few months after that, McGuillicuty declared that his work with Skippy was done, and, according to Skippy, vanished from sight. No one knows what to make of this last claim, but he certainly appeared to be right in the head once more. Within a year he was in charge of security at the Blake.

PERSONALITY

Skippy is a strange combination of urban toughness and Zen calmness. He reveals emotions on occasion, but for the most part is detached from the circumstances around him. He quotes strange, obscure texts passed on to him by McGuillicuty (and makes a few up himself, as well). He has an intense desire to teach anyone who will listen the lessons he has drawn from life. When he gives into this desire, he becomes absurd. What else could he be, a huge man in a cape spouting wisdom about the transformation of caterpillars into butterflies.

He is fiercely loyal to Durez, though he rarely reveals his affection and gratitude in public. He sees the Blake as his personal responsibility, striding down the corridors like a domo walking his castle's corridors in ancient Japan. When anything goes wrong within the hotel, he immediately attacks the situation. In these moods he is relentless, and a bit of his old, violent, out of control personality can surface.

In truth, Skippy's sanity hangs on a short thread. He never leaves the Blake. Ever. It was in the Blake he found his sanity, his home. He does not believe he could survive outside its walls. That's why he is so determined to keep the Blake safe. If it should fall, he knows he will fall as well.

QUOTES

"Who can truly say that when we open a comic book we do not leave the fiction behind and enter the clear reality of truth?"

"Biceps are not tools; they are flowers waiting to blossom."

"Live not for victory; life is a continuity series, not a graphic novel."

SPEED-ZERO

STR: 3 DEX: 3 SPD: 5 RES: 3
INT: 3 WILL: 2 AURA: 5

Acrobatics: 6, Artist (Musician): 7, Charm: 8, Gun Combat: 7, Streetwise: 6, Thief: 7, Weaponry: 5

Electrical Discharge: 14

Heat Immunity: 7

Stress Tolerance: 10

Psychosis: Homicidal Mania

Equipment:

12.5mm ZW 385i, Chaff (3 charges), Average Computer Pack, all the software available, combat goggles, cellular phone, Punkbuster™ Radar Detector, Punkbuster™ Signal Jammer

BACKGROUND

Nobody knows Speed-Zero's real name... or, if they do, they aren't telling. It hardly matters anyway. As lead singer and primary song-writer for Systematic Overthrow, Speed is one of the best-known entertainers in the world. SO fans idolize him; promoters pander to him; serious music critics deride him; muckrakers depend on him for controversy; and the traditional military/industrial/entertainment complex seems to hate him.

SO's publicists and promoters have so muddied the waters when it comes to Speed—and the other members of the band, for that matter—that it's exceptionally difficult to separate the truth from the hype. The few responsible journalists who have actually dug into Speed-Zero's past—without taking the easier course of making it all up—have reached the following conclusions.

Speed was always a troubled child, in conflict with authority and with the law starting in his early teens. Like many of his generation, he went through a rebellious phase that involved drug use, violence and petty theft. Instead of either growing out of it, or refining his urges in some money-making direction like grand theft, Speed graduated to gratuitous vandalism and arson. Juvenile Hall was his home away from home, and as soon as he was considered an adult in the eyes of the law, he was sent away for his first sojourn behind bars.

The penal system was unable to rehabilitate Speed, and the law quickly realized it. When he was brought to trial for his latest and greatest church-burning episode, the judge entered a landmark ruling by remanding him not into custody, but into employment by Allied Mayhem Inc. Speed underwent "boosting" and Slumberland training,

and served with AMI's famous (or infamous) Flying Deuces as a demolitions expert with a concentration in incendiaries.

His tour of duty with AMI was the best period in Speed's young life. He had a purpose; he was in an environment of discipline and structure; he was surrounded by other, similarly disillusioned, displaced or distorted personalities; and he was actually *paid* for blowing things up and burning things down. When he was demobilized, his "exit counseling" did nothing to prepare him for the world he was supposed to re-enter. His first act on hitting the street was to attempt suicide with a flare gun—the first of his several cries for help.

While Speed-Zero was struggling to re-enter society, both the federal government and the military/industrial/entertainment complex realized that they had something of a problem. Various social problems—including but not limited to increased drug use, skyrocketing crime rates, ever more restrictive laws, regressive taxation to service the out-of-control national debt, *plus* the boosted-vet issue—all seemed to be coming to a head at the same time. The populace was responding with more and more overt acts of rebellion, growing ever closer to out-and-out civil insurrection. The military/industrial/entertainment complex recognized that they had to do something. What they did was devise the concept of Systematic Overthrow—purportedly a nihilistic, iconoclastic band comprising pure rebels and advocating a trash-the-system attitude, but actually a stage-managed media creation similar to the Monkees almost sixty years before. (The scheme that would become



Down Beat magazine

(cont' from pg. 13) but that's it,

right? It's done. It's just the fucking media that keeps bringing it back. It's over, okay? Move on.

DB: The various parents groups

involved don't seem to consider that it's over. Do you think...

SZ: It's over. Past is past, you can't keep reliving it and re-evaluating it, you got to move on. Took me a long time to learn that, but I know it now. The present's fucking bad enough, and the future, without letting the fucking past weigh you down to. Move on.

DB: Some people are saying that your intention to re-release the... the album in question... shows some... well *insensitivity* to the parents of the kids...

SZ: Not my intention, okay? It's the record company.

DB: But you're not stopping it

from being re-released.

SZ: Don't go the *right* to stop it.

DB: Well, according to your contract, you do have the right...

SZ: *Legal* right, yeah, sure, I got that, sure I do. But what I don't got is the right to keep my music—my *art*—from the public, okay? They want what I do, I go to give it to them. I don't got the *right* to do anything but, okay?

DB: The parents of those kids might argue.

SZ: Look, enough about the kids, okay? It's over. Move on.

Frick, what did they do that was so bad anyway? They got the right to do what they did, that's what I say. It's not like it was *anybody else's* life that they took, right? If they did that, it's different, maybe, okay? It's over. Move on. (cont' on pg. 86)

vital—that the “talent” actually *have* talent...) The nationwide recruiting campaign—made much more difficult by the fact that it had to be kept secret—began, and among the potential candidates it found was Speed-Zero. According to the demographic studies, a nihilistic, suicidal, arsonist vet would be the perfect front-man for SO. And thus Speed's new career began.

As expected, Systematic Overthrow became the biggest success story in entertainment history. The band became the rallying point for every would-be rebel and iconoclast in the country—and elsewhere in the world—and nobody noticed that SO was actually channeling their anger in safe directions (rather like conformist Japan's first efforts at rap, in the early 1990s, being directed at topics like overuse of MSG in food). The rush of sudden success raised Speed-Zero's mood higher than it had ever been before—to a level most people would consider profound depression. When he discovered, several years later, that SO was all a government-sponsored scam, his mood crashed, however, and he tried—yet again—to commit suicide.

Eventually, SO had grown so big and so popular that it could no longer be controlled by its creators. Now Speed-Zero realized that he could actually make a difference, and maybe use SO's music to help right some of the wrongs he saw in the world around him. (Unfortunately, perhaps, Speed's ideas about what those wrongs weren't—and still aren't—shared by everyone...) He also decided that he was a musician who could write his own songs, not just parrot the words written for him by psychologists and media advisors. (This led to an ill-starred solo CD which, without the moderating influence of the other band-members, revealed Speed's tortured psyche in all their depressing complexity. The CD sold exceptionally well, and Speed's record company still instantly sues anyone who so much as hints at a linkage between its popularity and a spate of teen suicides across the continent...)

PERSONALITY

Speed-Zero suffers from a bimodal disorder—in other words, he's a manic-depressive. Unfortunately, the “up” phase of his cycle would be termed by most people “suicidally depressed”; the “down” phase doesn't bear thinking about. He's paranoid, believing that everything that happens to him is actually some outgrowth of the fraud that created SO (and maybe he's right). He trusts nobody, not even himself, and his reactions to strangers—and even to acquaintances (he has no real friends)—are totally unpredictable. His approach to “fixing the world”—his “calling”—is prototypically nihilistic: tear everything down, and maybe the cockroaches will get it right.

QUOTES

“Leave me alone. Or *don't* leave me alone. Who fucking cares anyway?”
“I haven't met you before. *Why* haven't I met you before...?”
“Go to hell? Bro, *this* is hell. It only gets worse from here.”

Systematic Overthrow is described in more detail in the section on the band itself.) The media gurus who devised the concept realized they needed a “cast”—individuals who would seem rebellious enough to the populace at large, but who were still easy enough to control. (Oh yes, it might also prove useful—although nowhere near

TANIS MORGAN

DEX: 1 RES: 2 INT: 3 WILL: 3 AURA: 2

Acrobatics: 2, Administration: 7, Business: 7, Leadership: 5, Martial Arts: 2

Equipment:

9mm Walther antique, Average Computer Pack, all the software available, Heavykev

BACKGROUND

Tanis Morgan is the Division Head of the Los Angeles Peace Force, the private organization that took over law enforcement duties in the county after the Los Angeles police strike of 2017 (q.v.). This makes her *de facto* the highest-ranking law enforcement official in the county, although officially the LAPF corporate structure makes her answerable to the CEO, the Board of Directors and — indirectly — the shareholders.

Tanis was born and raised in Los Angeles, one of the few true Angelenos who remains in the sprawling megalopolis. Her parents were both killed when she was very young, caught in a convenience store hold-up that went wrong. The killer was a three-time loser with a history of unmotivated violence... who also, coincidentally, happened to be a Viet Nam veteran. Investigators at the time dismissed the vet angle as meaningless; whether or not he'd gone to Nam, the killer would have ended up more or less the same. Complexities like that were beyond the young Tanis, however, and she decided at the time that the man had killed her parents *because* he was a vet, and that therefore all veterans were innately "bad". By the time she'd turned twelve Tanis had realized how simplistic this view was, and recognized that her simplistic judgment had been solely a product of her youth. She thought then — and still believes now — that she'd left behind her innate distrust of veterans. Unfortunately, this simply wasn't — and isn't — the case.

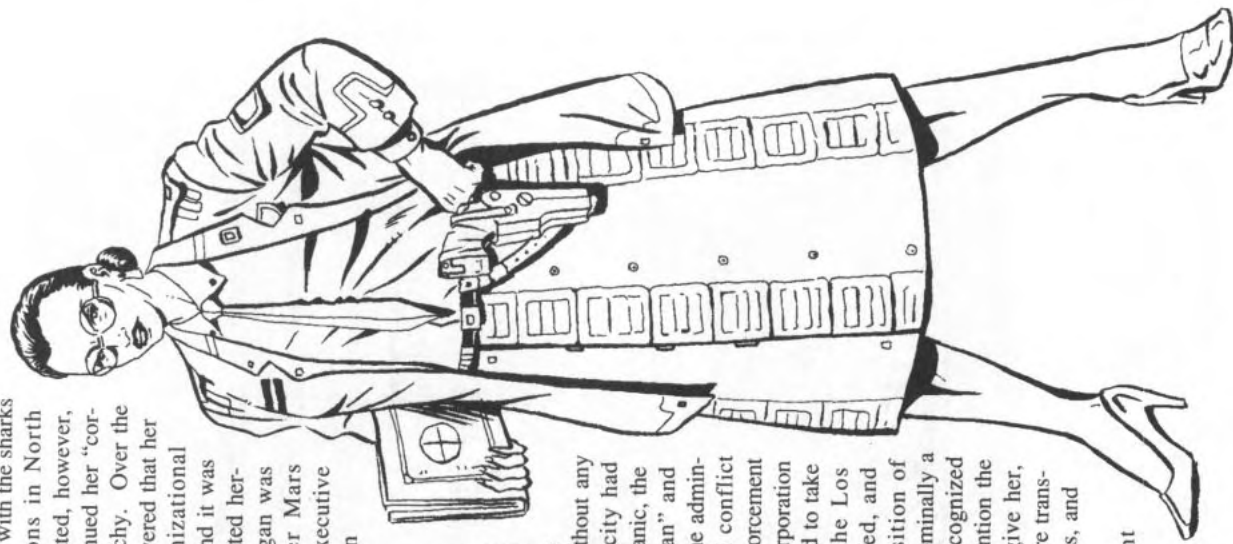
Morgan has never shown any interest in law enforcement whatsoever. She never wanted to become a cop or a criminal lawyer, and never even showed the slightest interest in cops-and-robbers shows on television. Instead, she was always fascinated by business — the intricacies of marketing, economics, commerce and organizational behavior. Her abilities matched her interest, and she graduated with a bachelor's degree in economics from UCLA at the age of 21, going on to earn an MBA only a year later. So exceptional was her academic record that major corporations from across America — and even elsewhere in the world — vied with each other to attract the young Morgan into their ranks. In 2001, she eventually chose an organization called Wolverine Security Technologies, and quickly worked her way up the corporate ladder, becoming junior vice-president in an unprecedented seven years.

In 2008, the same year Morgan got the corner office she'd been angling for since graduating from high school, Wolverine Security Technologies was acquired by Mars Corporation (q.v.), a Dallas-based conflict firm. After being a big fish in a relatively small

pond, Tanis found herself swimming with the sharks in one of the largest corporations in North America. Instead of being intimidated, however, she rose to the challenge, and continued her "corporate warrior" ascent up the hierarchy. Over the preceding several years, she'd discovered that her greatest interest was in the organizational behavior side of corporate culture, and it was this career path to which she dedicated herself now. Within nine years, Morgan was near the top of the much larger Mars Corporation corporate ladder, an executive vice-president in charge of Human Resources.

The year was 2017, and the Los Angeles Police Force was out on strike for better working conditions, more freedom to use appropriate force, few restrictions from Internal Affairs, and — the big one — more comprehensive medical benefits. Without any police presence, the streets of the city had become a war zone. In an absolute panic, the city administration "pulled a Reagan" and fired the striking police *en masse*. The administration then put out tenders to all conflict firms for bids on taking over law enforcement duties in the City of Angels. Mars Corporation tendered the lowest bid, and was hired to take on the job. A new division — the Los Angeles Peace Force — was created, and Tanis Morgan was offered the position of Division Head. Although this was nominally a demotion from executive VP, she recognized the increased autonomy — not to mention the hyper-inflated salary — this would give her, and accepted immediately. Assets were transferred from other Mars Corp. divisions, and the LAPF came into being.

Mars Corporation management wanted to staff the LAPF at least partially with boosted ops transferred from active units, but Morgan



Mars Corporation Personnel Change Request

Employee Name: TANIS MORGAN

Employee Number: 339-AA-5529

Current Department: HUMAN RESOURCES

Current Position: EXECUTIVE VICE -

PRESIDENT

Salary Class: CONFIDENTIAL

New Department: LAPF (NEW DIVISION)

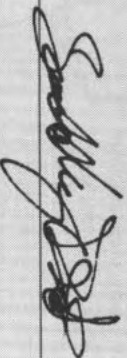
New Position: DIVISION HEAD

Salary Change? NO

Reason for Change: CONFIDENTIAL

Effective: IMMEDIATE

Authorized: _____



argued vehemently against the plan. Many of the criminals terrorizing the city were already boosted, she argued, and the populace was viewing anyone enhanced as a potential criminal. How could she generate the kind of public acceptance that the LAPF needed if the "beat cops" were also enhanced? That was her argument, at least. Her superiors in Mars Corp. believed her, and she even seemed to believe herself. In reality, of course, her

opposition to boosted vets on the force was just an outgrowth of her distrust — and hatred — of veterans in general that sprang from her parents' murder. Tanis got her way, and there are currently no boosted ops in the LAPF's "basic enforcement" department (i.e., the beat cops and detectives). (Morgan had to swallow her distrust of vets to the degree that the Boosted Operatives Organization was created, special boosted units assigned to particularly troubled areas.)

Even though she's in the law enforcement business now, Tanis Morgan views her job simply as a service provider. The service she's been contracted to provide is law and order — effectively, peace on the streets. She approaches her mandate from a hard-nosed business perspective, only rarely concerning herself with the nitty-gritty details of law enforcement. Her goal is "zero infractions" — that is, no crime whatsoever — and she's put various "Quality Assurance" and "Continuous Quality Improvement" programs in place to work toward this goal.

Tanis would deny it — and would probably believe her own denials — but deep down she hates the boosted vets that wander (and threaten) the streets of "her" city, and blames them for most of the ills of contemporary society. Over the last year, she's been building ties with the local division of the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD; q.v.). Her eventual goal is to push HUD into moving all veteran housing projects elsewhere... like into Oregon or Nevada.

PERSONALITY

Tanis is a hard-edged businessperson, first and foremost. She has excellent managerial skills, and can motivate people under her direction to give their best efforts. Outside the corporate world, however, her personal skills are sadly lacking. She can't maintain friendships or more intimate relationships, and is trying to convince herself — with limited success — that such relationships just aren't important to her. At work, she'll do whatever it takes to get the job done. Morals and ethics aren't important to her, but she recognizes they *are* important to many of her "clients" — the citizens of L.A. For that reason, she always strives to maintain the *appearance* of morals and ethics.

UNUSUAL ABILITIES

None.

QUOTES

"The most current quarterly reports show the incidence of violent crime still increasing, but the *rate* of increase is down by 10%. A good performance... but not good enough."

"If you fail to plan, you plan to fail."

"Mr. Argot, must you continue to bring up that 'vet scum' quote attributed to me by *Investigative Copy*? I have stated repeatedly I was misquoted. Do I have to state it again?"

THE ALIENATOR

STR: 3 DEX: 5 SPD: 4 RES: 2
INT: 4 WILL: 2

Acrobatics: 9, Business: 6, Detective: 6, Gun Combat: 8, Martial Arts: 8, Military Science: 7, Streetwise: 5, Thief: 9, Weaponry: 8
Telepathic Blast: 7

Chitin: 5

Stress Tolerance: 9

Psychosis: Schizophrenia

Equipment:

12.5mm ZW 385i, .50 cal Urban Nightmare EP450, Mondo Armor, Chaff (3 charges), Average Computer Pack, all the software available, combat goggles, cellular phone, Punkbuster™ Radar Detector, Punkbuster™ Signal Jammer, Porta-Fax™

BACKGROUND

The Alienator doesn't exist — that's what the federal government and AMI would have everyone believe. The hit-woman known as the Alienator is nothing but a scare-story made up by the news media to increase ratings and sell papers, these two groups claim. After all, the administration and the corporation argue, how could an assassin manage to rack up the number of kills attributed to the Alienator without someone stopping her? Considering the high level of law enforcement promised and delivered by President Foster, it's obvious that someone like the Alienator simply *can't* exist...

How unfortunate for everyone's credibility that the Alienator does indeed exist, and has actually accounted for *more* killings than those publicly ascribed to her.

The Alienator started life as Lucinda Moss, born and raised in Big Spring, Texas. She was trouble from the day she was born, apparently trying to bite the doctor delivering her. As she grew, she terrorized the children in the neighborhood. She was always bigger and faster and stronger — and *meaner* — than anyone her age had any right to be, and she'd beat the stuffing out of the other children in her peer group if they didn't immediately obey even her most insignificant suggestion. Sometimes she'd beat the stuffing out of them just for the fun of it.

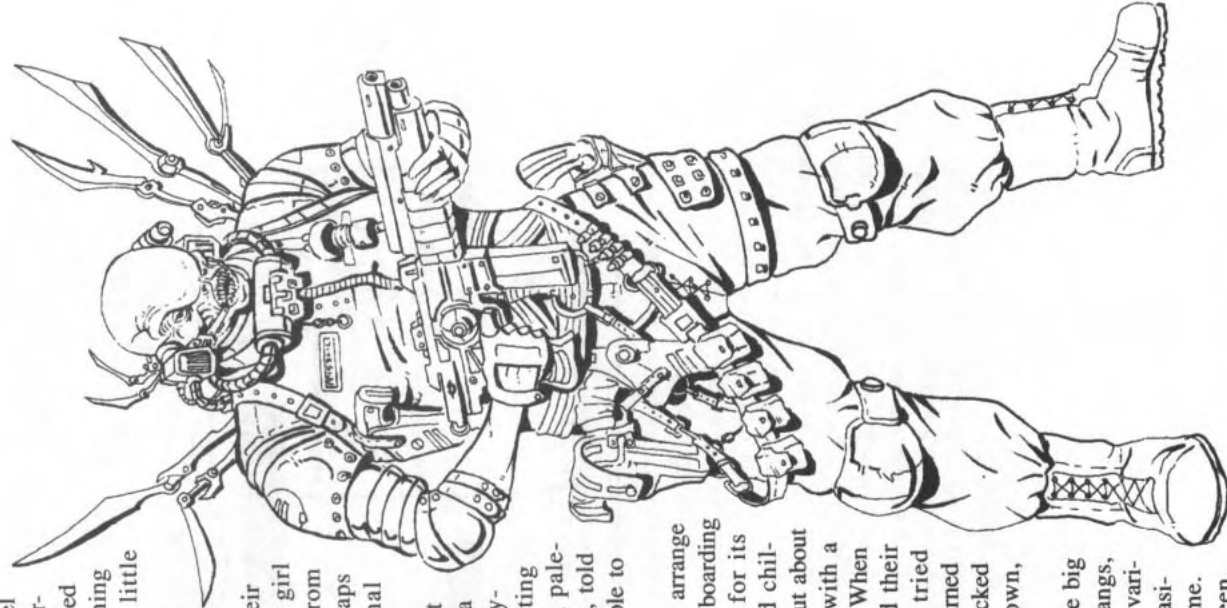
Her parents tried to convince themselves that Lucinda's behavior was just "girlish high-spirits", despite frequent letters from her teachers describing near-homicidal rages and abusive behavior. When she was eight, Lucinda seemed to settle down a little, and her parents hoped she was growing out of the "phase" she'd been going through since birth. For almost a year, she went without beating the crap out of her school friends. It was with horror that her parents finally found out why: Lucinda

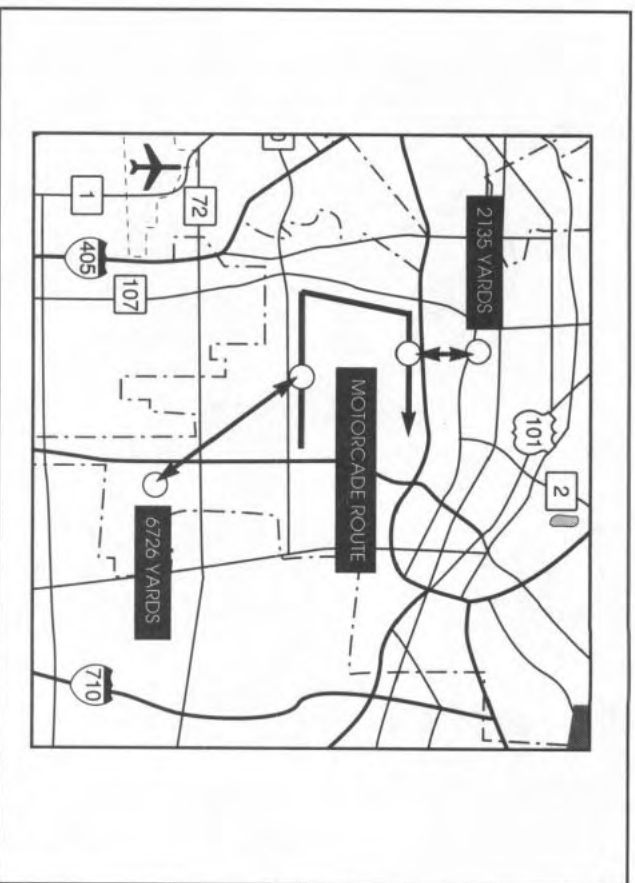
had been sublimating her cruel instincts by capturing and torturing animals. Again they tried to deny that there was anything *seriously* wrong — maybe little Lucinda just liked "playing vet" — but they had to admit something was seriously wrong with their child when they caught the girl trying to coax the toddler from next door into one of the traps she used to catch her animal playmates...

Her parents finally sent Lucinda, who was then 11, to a child psychologist. The psychologist had only one meeting with Lucinda then, looking pale-faced and profoundly scared, told her parents he wouldn't be able to treat the child any further.

Lucinda's family tried to arrange for their daughter to attend a boarding school in Arkansas known for its ability to deal with troubled children. When Lucinda found out about those plans, she responded with a marked lack on enthusiasm. When their wounds had healed and their bones knitted, her parents tried again. This time Lucinda burned down the house with them locked inside, and set out on her own, finding her way to Dallas.

She spent five years in the big city, running with various gangs, living by armed robbery and various protection rackets, and basically having a wonderful time. By the time she was seventeen,





she'd killed more than a dozen people. These deaths weren't really intended — they just kind of happened — and all were the victims' faults (shopkeepers reaching for weapons under their counters, and things like that). Lucinda had never really given much thought to killing before, but now that she pondered on it, she realized she rather liked it. Over the next month she killed another dozen people, just for the pure hell of it. Unfortunately for Lucinda, she was a little sloppy, leaving her thirteenth victim with just enough life left to describe her to the police. She was picked up, charged and convicted of murder. Given the choice between enlistment and the gas chamber, she signed up with AMI, was boosted, trained and assigned to the Screaming Eagles as a sniper. While she was undergoing her enhancement, she somehow convinced the docs working on her — probably through the judicious application of violence — to do a little cosmetic surgery on her. Lucinda Moss had never really felt she had much in common with the people around her, and politely requested that her appearance be made to match that feeling. The docs acceded, and the Alienator was born.

Although she was an excellent shot, and never suffered from the trauma over killing that many other snipers did, the truth was the Alienator wasn't a very good military sniper. She didn't have the patience, and sometimes forgot — or simply didn't care — who her designated target was. Still, she completed her tour of duty and mustered out.

The year was 2019, and here the Alienator's trail becomes a little muddled. According to the records of both AMI and the Veterans' Administration, Lucinda Moss a.k.a. the Alienator was killed in a plane crash three days after mustering out. How come, then, that since that crash there've been *hundreds* of sightings of someone matching the Alienator's rather distinctive appearance?

The most likely explanation is that AMI arranged for Lucinda to vanish, for their own reasons. What those reasons were is open to speculation. It seems certain that the Alienator has gone into business as a freelance assassin-for-hire. She'll kill *anyone* for the right price, using whatever technique and operating under whatever constraints her employer requests. Her base rate is \$1 million (absolutely chicken-feed, of course), modified by circumstances. Her "rush" surcharge for next-day service is usually 150%. The fact that her rate is so low implies that she's not in this for the money, merely for the killing. She's finally found a job that pays her to do what she's always really rather enjoyed.

Her "brag sheet" of successful hits is amazing, numbering well over forty in only two years. She's killed politicians, businessmen, gang leaders, civil-rights activists, boosted vets, cops... you name it, she's killed it. Her list of employers is also incredibly eclectic. Currently she's juggling "reciprocal" contracts offered her by the Sons of Ludd (q.v.) and Evolution In Action (q.v.), each of which has hired her to wipe out the leadership of the other group. She hasn't made the hits yet, apparently held back by the fact that she hasn't yet figured out a way of making sure she'll be paid.

One name that *doesn't* appear on her list of employers is AMI. Did they "disappear" the Alienator with the intention of using her as their own assassin, and then change their minds? Or did she somehow slip off their leash? Or did AMI have a totally different reason for faking Lucinda's death? There are many people who spend sleepless nights pondering these questions...

PERSONALITY

When discussing a contract, the Alienator is all business. She's not burdened in the slightest by moral or ethical restraints, and — unless such considerations are included specifically in her contract — she doesn't give a damn about collateral damage. She loves her work, and enjoys discussing her "art" with like-minded people.

QUOTES

"Quick and painless? That'll cost you more."
 "Welcome to the last five seconds of the rest of your life..."
 "Yeah, it was a good one. The school bus blew up real good."

THE ATOMIC KENNEDY

STR: 8 DEX: 3 SPD: 4 RES: 10
 INT: 5 WILL: 3 AURA: 6

Acrobatics (Dodge): 6, Business: 6, Charm: 9, Detective: 6, Gun Combat: 5, Leadership: 9, Martial Arts: 6, Military Science: 6, Psychology: 7, Vehicles: 5

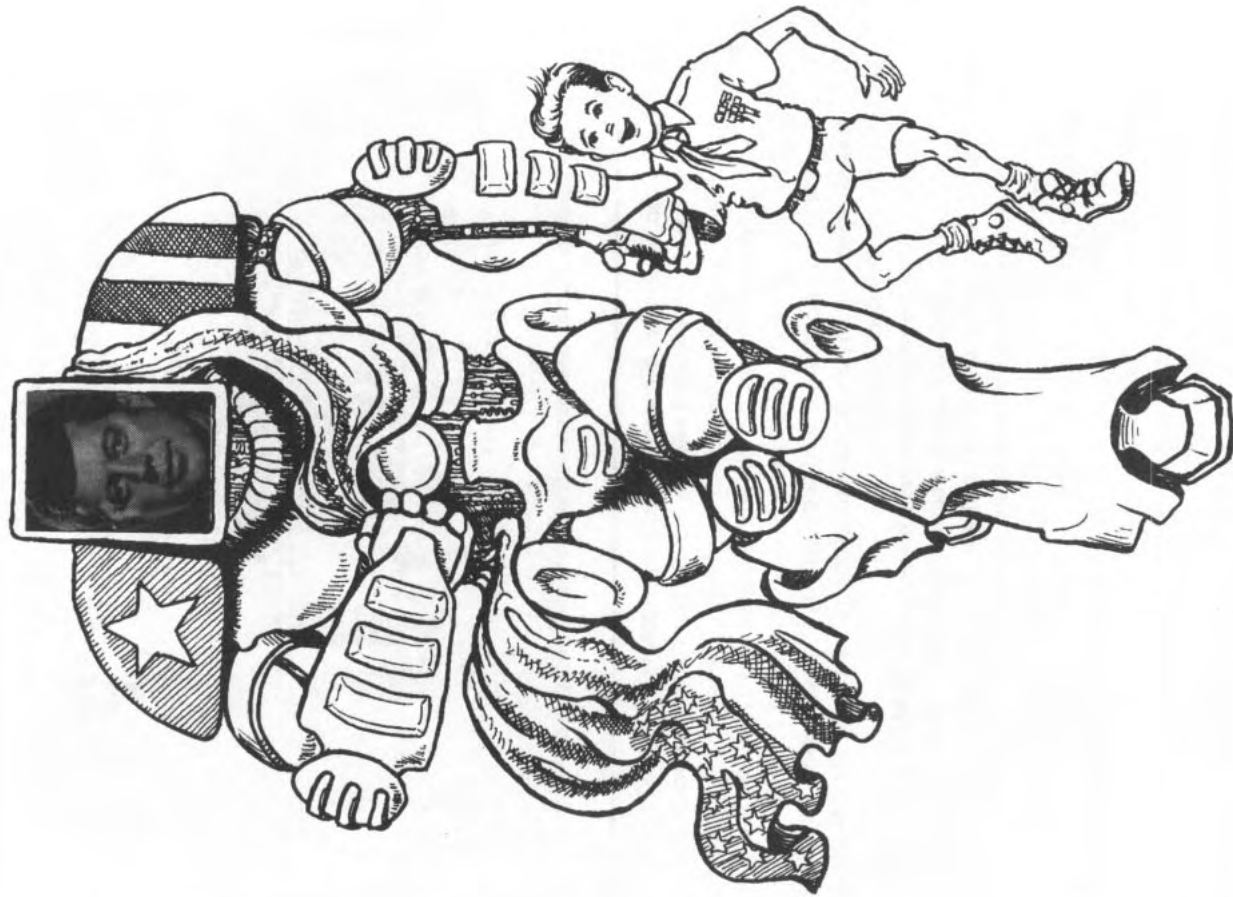
Danger Sense: 7
 Reduced Fatigue: 5
 Regeneration: 7
 Stress Tolerance: 7
 Psychosis: Paranoia
 Equipment:

20mm Urban Nightmare #822 (x2), Small Missile, Mondo Armor, Average Pack, assortment of conflict software, Porta-Fax, Xanxarox Copier, Punkbuster Signal Jammer

BACKGROUND

One side-effect of the outbreak of the Second Cold War was the quick and efficient expansion of the National Security Council's role in the United States Government. By the end of the 21st century's first decade, the NSC's budget showed a 10,000% increase over the 1996 record-low levels set by the Clinton Administration. As the agency grew in size, its old offices soon became inadequate and in 2006, Congress approved the construction of a larger NSC headquarters in Langley, Virginia. The "Quadrangle," as the Security Council building is known due to its peculiar shape, was completed in 2013 and NSC staffers began moving into their new offices in 2014.

During the move, janitor Emil Laszlo discovered what appeared to be a lump of meat loaf wrapped in butcher paper at the bottom of a disused refrigerator on the lowest level of the NSC's original offices. Although Laszlo immediately discarded the package, a couple of co-workers recognized something peculiar about it and talked him into turning the meat loaf over to the NSC's evidence unit for analysis. Nine months and \$44,000,000 later, the lump was proven to be no less than the brain of President John F. Kennedy. Though the exact details remain unknown, the conspiracy theorists of the 80s and 90s were obviously correct in identifying members of the National Security Council as key players in the cover-up of certain facts pertaining to the Kennedy assassination. As best as government



ATOMIC KENNEDY FOR PRESIDENT



investigators can determine, Kennedy's brain was removed by NSC operatives shortly after his death and secreted away in the sub-basement refrigerator in order to prevent forensic specialists from recovering bullet fragments proving conclusively that Lee Harvey Oswald did not fire the shot that killed the President. Unfortunately, although said fragments were recovered and analyzed in 2014 after Laszlo recovered the brain, investigators still have no clue as to the identity of the real assassin nor any evidence indicating the depth of the conspiracy responsible for the President's death.

Shortly after the government appointed investigators finished their inquiries into the newly recovered brain, Congress authorized the NSC to sell the brain at a Christie's public auction in order to raise funds to pay off debts incurred during the 2014 Ottawa uprising. Three months later, Christie's sold the brain to Massachusetts millionaire H. Andrew Shapton, who died in a skiing accident just three weeks later. According to the terms set forth in Shapton's will, the brain was then donated to the shocked and horrified Republocratic National Committee (Shapton was a notorious Republocratic benefactor).

On the brink of selling the brain to an Iranian curiosities museum and sorely in need of a candidate to oppose popular incumbent Darryl Gates in the 2016 presidential election, members of the RNC committee hatched a desperate

scheme. Using special campaign funds solicited from a group of eleven Republocratic tycoons, Kennedy's brain was restructured using advanced genetic technologies and installed into an atomic-powered robotic shell. The composite entity, henceforth known as the "Atomic Kennedy," was then nominated as the Republocratic presidential candidate and dispatched on a lengthy whistlestop campaign tour.

Although the reconstituted Kennedy lost the election to Gates, he did manage to capture an unexpected 36% of the popular vote along with the public's admiration and imagination. Not missing a beat, Republocratic leaders entirely rebuilt their party's image around the Kennedy, alienating their older and more conservative supporters in favor of young "visionaries." By 2018, the Republocrats had firmly established themselves as the "party of tomorrow" and started to meet with some success in their efforts to paint the Plutocrats as a party of inert old-timers. Central to this campaign was the foundation of the Kennedy Youth, a sort of Republocratic scouting program that teaches youngsters the value of traditional American pastimes like baseball, camping, dollar cost averaging, and deficit spending.

Most recently, the Atomic Kennedy has become such a mainstay in American Popular Culture that he now has his own vid-net program, *Camelot: The Next Generation*, in which he portrays himself as a President of the United States attempting to repel an alien invasion of the Earth. In its second season, C:TN/G became the highest rated vid-net program on the airwaves, increasing the Kennedy's popularity to the point that his activities (and notorious womanizing) now dominate gossip programs and the tabloid press.

PERSONALITY

The Kennedy is a born leader and he knows it. He is confident, intelligent, stylish and charming. "If he wasn't little more than a rotted lump of cerebral tissues plugged into an atomic-powered tackling dummy, he'd be the perfect hunky husband" — *Ladies Day*; September 18th, 2020.

Although his delicate condition tends to destabilize his personality, the Atomic Kennedy retains most of his memories from his past life.

QUOTES

"Hey there, dollface. Ask not what the Kennedy can do for you. Ask what you can do for the Kennedy."

"Quite simply, the Plutocratic stance on this issue has more holes in it than the Warren Commission's Final Report."

THE DARKSIDE LURKER

STR: 6 DEX: 5 SPD: 5 RES: 3
INT: 4 WILL: 2

Acrobatics: 9, Computer Science: 6, Detective: 6, Gun Combat: 8, Martial Arts: 9,
Streetwise: 5, Thief: 9

Control: 11

Invisibility: 10

Stress Tolerance: 10

Psychosis: Multiple Personalities

Equipment:

20mm GCS DW 770/g, Heavykev, Survival Knife

BACKGROUND

Like the Alienator (q.v.), the Darkside Lurker is someone the government and the law enforcement agencies would like to pretend doesn't exist. Unfortunately, exist he does, and he seems to be prowling the HUD projects of the Los Angeles basin, looking for victims.

The individual who has come to be known as the Darkside Lurker by the media — and by everyone else as well — is a serial killer, generally suspected to be a total sociopath. Certainly, there've been serial killers in the past, and ones who've been much more dedicated to their craft than the Lurker. What sets this one apart, and what makes him much more frightening, is that he's apparently a boosted vet, enhanced with a whole gamut of stealth-related skills making it much easier for him to stalk and kill his victims, then get away scot free afterward.

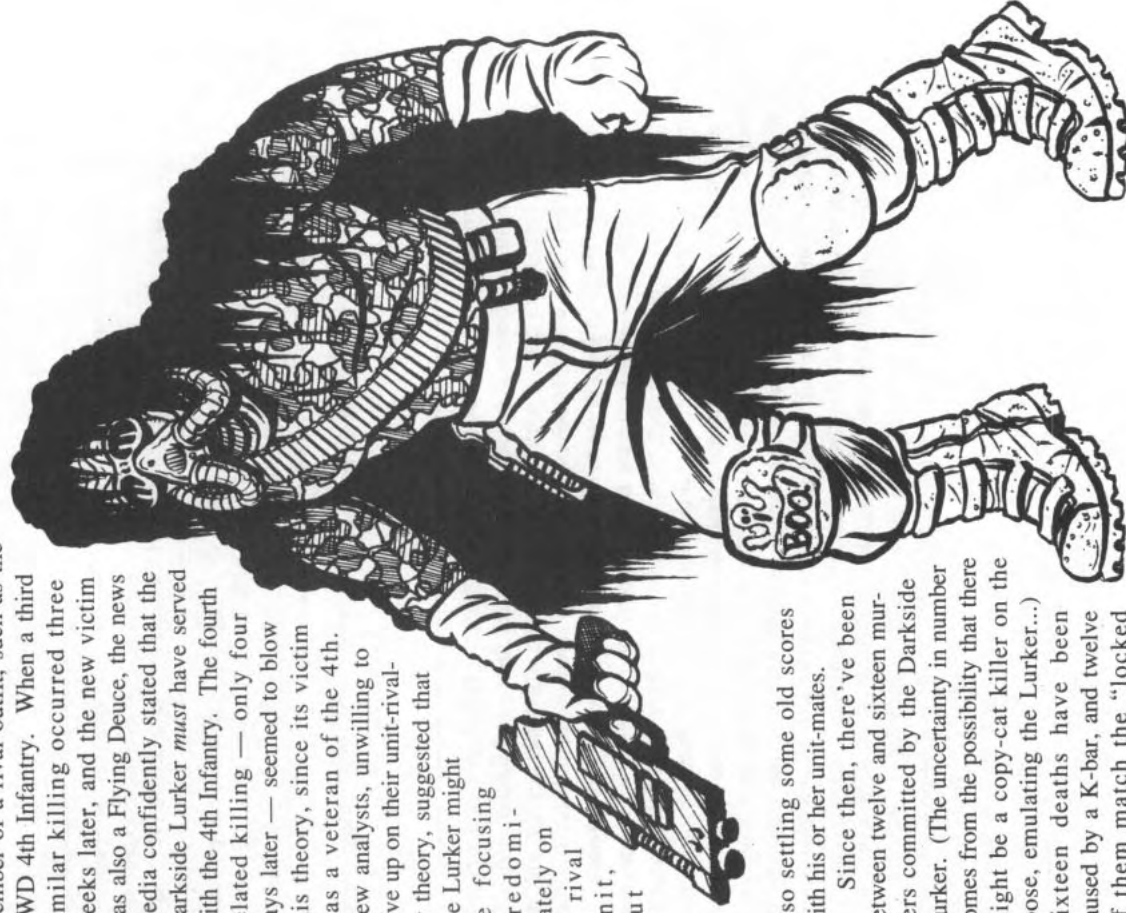
The first killing attributed to the Darkside Lurker was discovered in early 2020 — a vet living in the Los Feliz HUD project. The victim was found in his room, with all the doors and windows locked tight, and no sign of forced entry. He'd been killed with a large knife, identified by pathologists as a military-issue "K-bar". The knife was nowhere to be found on the premises, casting serious doubt on the LAPD's initial claim that the death was a suicide. Three months later, another murder took place, almost identical in its circumstances. The victim was another boosted vet, living alone, and again there was apparently no way for the murderer to have got to her and escaped again. This killing, too, was committed with a K-bar.

In a world where the news media compete as strongly — if not *more* strongly — than nations, two similar killings warrants hysterical coverage bleating that a serial killer is loose in Los Angeles. While the police were still claiming the deaths were probably unrelated, the news media had labeled the killer "the Darkside Lurker", and

were already building elaborate psychological profiles to go on the evening news. The two victims had both been members of the same military unit, the talking heads pointed out — the AMI Flying Deuces — which hinted that the killer might be a member of a rival outfit, such as the

TWD 4th Infantry. When a third similar killing occurred three weeks later, and the new victim was also a Flying Deuce, the news media confidently stated that the Darkside Lurker *must* have served with the 4th Infantry. The fourth related killing — only four days later — seemed to blow this theory, since its victim was a veteran of the 4th.

New analysts, unwilling to give up on their unit-rivalry theory, suggested that the Lurker might be focusing predominantly on a rival unit, but



also settling some old scores with his or her unit-mates.

Since then, there've been between twelve and sixteen murders committed by the Darkside Lurker. (The uncertainty in number comes from the possibility that there might be a copy-cat killer on the loose, emulating the Lurker...) Sixteen deaths have been caused by a K-bar, and twelve of them match the "locked

LURKER STRIKES AGAIN

USA ALIVE DEC. 3, 2020

The mysterious serial killer popularly known as the Darkside Lurker has struck again, LAPF spokespersons admit. Last night's victim has been identified as a Laura Steenberg, who served in the AMI Flying Deuces under the codename Platinum Bomb. Steenberg, who lived in HUD Project 3 in Santa Monica, was discovered dead in her

apartment last night by the building manager. Police pathologists estimate that she had been dead for 72-84 hours.

The exact details of the killing have not been released yet, but LAPF spokespersons concede that the circumstances are "consistent" with the actions of the Darkside Lurker. (See "Lurk" on page A4)

room" nature apparently characteristic of the Lurker's MO. (The other four are similar but not identical, in that there was evidence — albeit very faint — of forced entry.) Of the sixteen victims, seven served with the Flying Deuces, while five served with the 4th Infantry. The others were all boosted vets, but from other units. All sixteen of the deaths occurred in HUD projects in the northwest quadrant of Greater Los Angeles.

Understandably, paranoia is running fairly high in the projects. Vets who were indoctrinated with the belief that they were death incarnate have been forced to realize they're vulnerable. Boosts don't seem to help, since at least three of the victims possessed lethal combat enhancements; neither do door locks, alarms or other security systems. The growing consensus is that the Darkside Lurker must have some kind of telepathic control enhancement, which lets him/her force the victim to let his own murderer in, then sit still while the Lurker uses the K-bar. Another possibility, although less popular, is that the Lurker has the Chameleon enhancement.

The boosted population of the area has been clamoring to the LAPF to do something — anything — to protect them from the Darkside Lurker. At first, the division head of the LAPF — Tanis Morgan (q.v.) — paid little attention, since the Lurker was killing only boosted vets. When the vets started taking their own precautions — vigilante patrols, and the like — she recognized she'd have to do something if she wanted to keep some level of control over the situation. The LAPF has increased the number of patrols around and through the projects, although the level of enforcement still stays significantly lower than in "mundane neighborhoods".

Hardesty's boosts and training turned him into the ultimate deep-penetration agent. When Hardesty was demobbed and started on his murder campaign, DHI purged his records from their files to protect the company from embarrassment and possible litigation. Nobody knows where the news-snoop got the data, and the fact that he died the next day in random street violence practically guarantees nobody will ever know. Is the Hardesty story the truth, or was it just made up as a ratings ploy? The question remains unanswered.

Although the killings seem more or less random, some analysts believe there is a pattern to them, one that might become clear in time... assuming the murders continue, of course. This hints that the Darkside Lurker might not be the psychotic everyone thinks he is, but is actually following his own agenda.

PERSONALITY

Unknown.

UNUSUAL ABILITIES

Clayton Hardesty received the Invisibility and Control enhancements... but is Hardesty the Lurker?

QUOTES

None.

THE PERFORATOR

STR: 3 (6*) DEX: 3 SPD: 4 RES: 5 (8*)
INT: 4 WILL: 6 AURA: 2

Acrobatics: 5, Business: 5, Computer Science: 5, Detective: 9, Gun Combat: 7, Intimidation/Interrogation: 7, Martial Arts: 6, Streetwise: 8, Thief: 5

Acid: 15

Adrenal Surge: 8

Stress Tolerance: 10

Psychosis: Panic Disorder

Equipment:

.50 cal Urban Nightmare, 12.5mm ZW 385i, 20mm GCS DW 7770/g, Customized Battle Armor (*increases STR by +3, and increases RES by +3; Computer and weapon targeting systems are built into the armor), Chaff (3 packs), Average Computer Pack (RES of 8 because it's built into the computer), all the software available, combat goggles*, cellular phone*, Punkbuster™ Radar Detector*, Punkbuster™ Signal Jammer*

BACKGROUND

The Perforator is one of the small number of boosted vets living in LA actually born and raised in the city. Through his youth he lived on the streets, having run away from his abusive step-father. His survival depended on the sale of drugs to kids in elementary school. He wanted a better life for himself, and for the rest of his community, but he didn't see a way out. After the riots in '17, when it seemed the whole county was going to destroy itself, he became even more determined to get the hell off the streets.

He volunteered for AMI and was hired for a three-year contract. Put to sleep and boosted, he woke up from Slumberland and was assigned to a special units division—the Black Jays. He traveled the world conducting anti-terrorist activities. He worked in the unit for three years, working his way up to team leader. He liked the work, though he of course had bouts of mental instability due to the AMI enhancement process. But the pay was all right, the work exciting, and with each mission he felt he was really getting something done.

Then, in 2020, the Black Jays were flown to Neo-Deutschland to handle a hostage situation at the Berlin airport. Authorities told the unit that the terrorists were heavily armed, and keeping ministers of Neo-sciencology hostage in

exchange for passage out of the country. Each of the terrorists, the authorities said, were special unit forces gone hay-

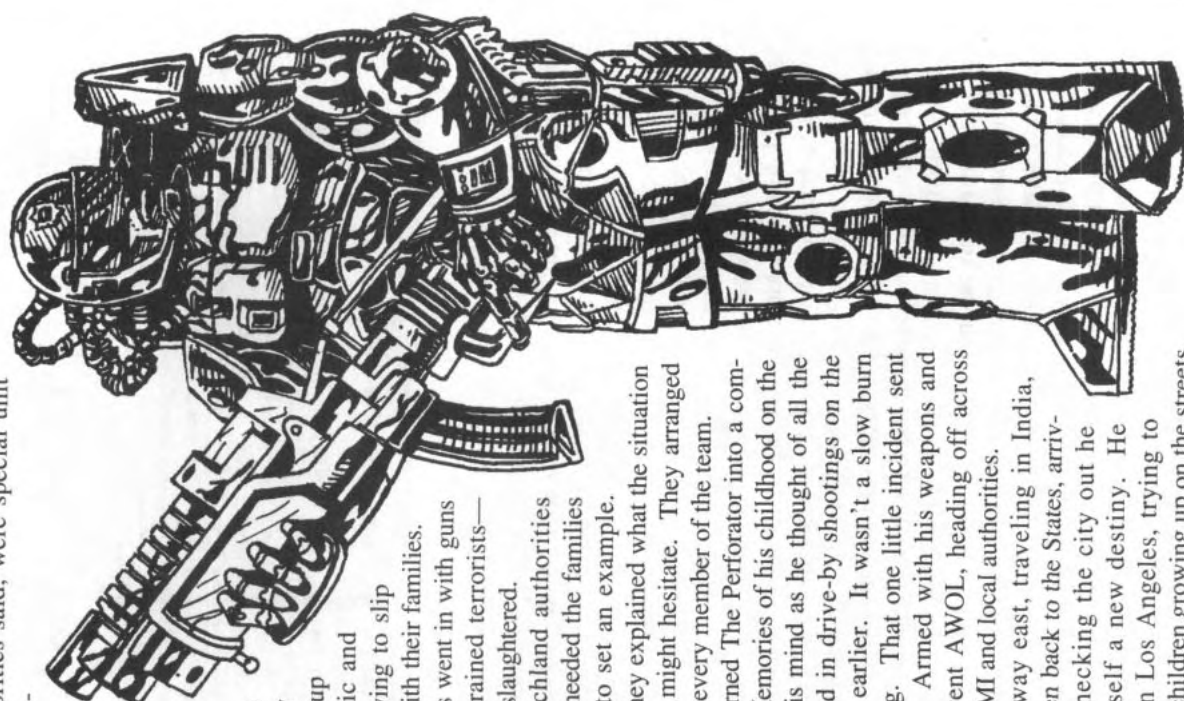
wire—boosts who would use any means at their disposal to survive.

In fact, while the terrorists were heavily armed, they were actually a group of valuable Catholic and Jewish scientists trying to slip out of the country with their families. When the Black Jays went in with guns blaring, the under-trained terrorists—children, too—were slaughtered.

The Neo-Deutschland authorities explained that they needed the families dealt with harshly to set an example. They feared that if they explained what the situation was, the Black Jays might hesitate. They arranged for a large bonus for every member of the team.

The slaughter turned The Perforator into a complete basket case. Memories of his childhood on the streets rushed into his mind as he thought of all the kids he'd seen killed in drive-by shootings on the streets of LA years earlier. It wasn't a slow burn guilt trip or anything. That one little incident sent him over the edge. Armed with his weapons and enhancements, he went AWOL, heading off across Europe, sought by AMI and local authorities.

He worked his way east, traveling in India, across China, and then back to the States, arriving in LA. After checking the city out he decided to cut himself a new destiny. He would fight crime in Los Angeles, trying to take care of the new children growing up on the streets.



STRANGER STOPS CRIME! LEAVES FAX NUMBER!

Police are investigating the criminal activities of a self-proclaimed vigilante-for-hire.

For the third night in a row, police have been called to a back alley, where gang-bangers, tied-up and helpless, have waited to be picked up.

"This is not what we want to see happen."

People would do the same thing,"

said one resident who asked not to be named. "I didn't have anything to do with hurting this man, but if someone had asked me to kick in a few hundred bucks, I sure would have done it."

This sentiment was echoed again and again throughout the day

Sitwell said, "Well, it certainly is a

difficult situation. I'm waiting for the Neighborhood Citizen Action committee to put together a report for me. Until then, what can I say? I don't live there. I can only imagine the terrible conditions those people suffer through every day."

When asked about these comments, Moscoso said, "He's a

PERSONALITY

Sometimes a corporation will try to hire him, but despite the large sums of cash offered, he always refuses. He likes working for the little guy. It's become a major part of his rep, which is why he gets regular work. In a world where everyone is willing to sell themselves out to the highest bidder, a man who puts his ideals before cash is going to stand out.

He now has a secret office located in Hell's Jungle. Most of his requests come in over fax lines. As part of his mystique (and his shy personality) The Perforator doesn't try to build up press releases. He does his job and gets out, leaving only his name and the fax number behind.

So he became a vigilante. But his funds dried up almost immediately. On the run from AML, he found it impossible to get a job utilizing his status as a boosted vet. He tried to get a day job, but his erratic behavior scared potential employers.

He tried to live by a strict code of honor. He refused to steal from either the victim or the victimizer. Without a corporation backing him up, however, the cost of bullet, new guns, and combat software ate terrible holes in his funds. Soon he wasn't sure if he'd ever be able to proceed.

Then, one day, when he was camped out in a sub-basement, wondering what he should do next, a kid came running in, hiding from some crew members who wanted to brainjack him. The kid ran right into The Perforator, and almost dropped from fright on the spot. When he realized he was dealing with a boosted, the kid exclaimed, "I'll give you \$100.00 to save my brain!"

The Perforator thought about this a moment. He really needed the cash. The kid was afraid for his life. Why not hire himself out for a job?

The drug dealers ran into the sub-basement and never came out again.

From that day on, The Perforator made it a policy to work as a freelance hero. He began spray painting his name and a phone number (a pay phone by a liquor store in central LA) all over the county. Gigs would come up—usually neighborhoods having troubles with gangs or corrupt politicians. He took one job after another, finally getting enough money to eat regularly and upgrade some of his equipment.

QUOTES

"Don't make me kill you."

"I'm sure we can reach a compromise on the price."

"Really, Widow Washington, just the smile on your face is all the payment I require."

the results of his crime fighting do his handiwork for him. When he must interact with people, he keeps his voice low and does his best to radiate strength. Except when dealing with his clients, he likes to instill fear into people.

In truth, however, The Perforator looks like an average guy (admittedly with above average build). Without his helmet he is revealed to be unshaven, sometimes unshaven. His social skills have completely collapsed. Without the helmet and the "attitude" given to him by being a crime fighter for higher, he really has very little personality. Outside of work he is usually listless and soft-spoken.

THE SCARLET HEADHUNTER

STR: 3 DEX: 4 SPD: 4 RES: 2
INT: 3 WILL: 4

Acrobatics: 6, Administration: 6, Gun Combat: 7, Leadership: 8

Flight Control: 20

Radar Sense: 11

Telescopic Vision: 9

Stress Tolerance: 6

Psychosis: Sociopathy

Equipment:

12.5mm ZW 385i, Chaff (3 charges), Average Computer Pack, Pueblo Sniper!, Pueblo Firefight!, cellular phone, Punkbuster™ Radar Detector, Punkbuster™ Signal Jammer, Porta-Term, Porta-Fax™

BACKGROUND

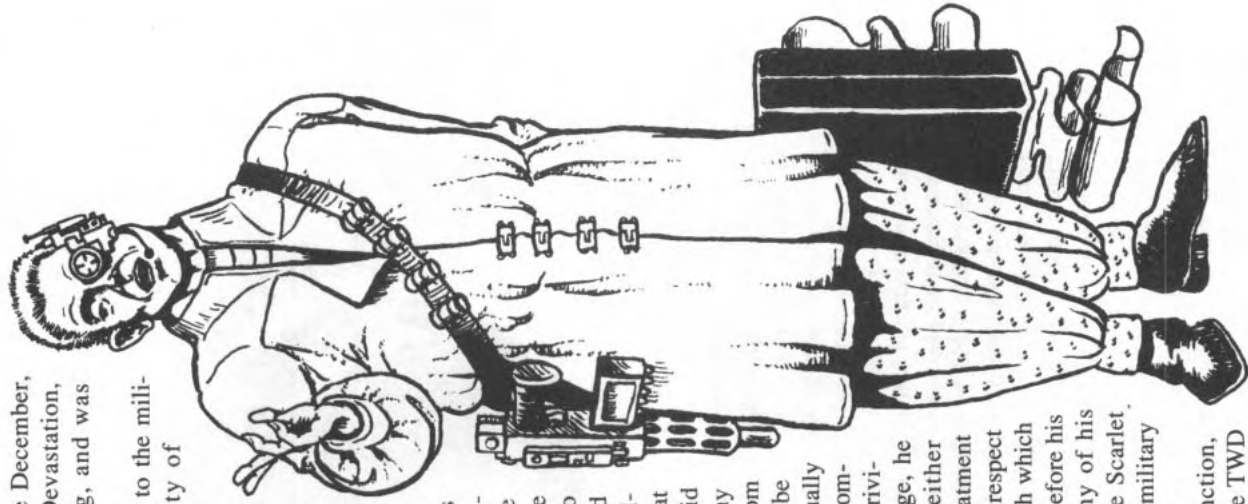
Clinton F. Gore (a.k.a. The Scarlet Headhunter) was born in Little Rock, Arkansas in 1994, and his first name reflects one of the city's few claims to international fame. His family was very comfortable, if not outright wealthy, and he lacked for little during his childhood. When Gore was ten, his family moved to New York, where his father — John Gore III — had been offered a position with a major investment firm. The family's fortunes improved drastically, and continued to improve as John Gore climbed the hierarchy of his new employer. Clinton Gore received the best schooling lots of money could buy, and became used to having his smallest need met instantly.

Everything changed in 2011, however, when John Gore was charged with embezzling several tens of millions of dollars from his employer. While the trial dragged on, all of the Gore family's bank accounts were frozen, and many of their assets temporarily "protected". Media attention was fierce, with reporters going so far as to root through the Gores' garbage looking for something on which to hang a story. Clinton Gore was horrified and humiliated by the attention, particularly since he believed with all his heart that his father was innocent of all wrong-doing. Thus it came as the greatest of shocks when John Gore III committed suicide while the trial was still in progress, admitting in a note to his family that he *had* embezzled the money. Somehow this private admission became public, in a horrible miscarriage of justice John Gore III was convicted posthumously, and the Gore name was dragged through the mud. Within three weeks, Clinton's mother was dead — the doctors called it spontaneous cardiac arrest; Clinton called it a broken heart. With his old life lying in shards around him, Clinton F. Gore looked around for something he could do to make

his own life more meaningful. In late December, 2011, he enlisted with Trans World Devastation, underwent enhancement and training, and was assigned to the 4th Infantry.

Clinton Gore had trouble adjusting to the military life at first. The vast majority of inductees were what he'd always considered "down-and-outers" — people from the underclasses who volunteered because it was the only possibility of getting a job and making something of themselves, or people "encouraged" to enlist as an alternative to going to jail. These people tended to look on Gore as a rich kid who'd joined up as some strange new way to go "slumming", and did what they could to make his life hell. Despite the abuse, Gore buckled down and put all his efforts into being the best soldier he possibly could be. He started to view his success or failure in the 4th Infantry as something that was solely under his control. If he did well, he'd done it by himself, without any support — financial or otherwise — from his family. Every achievement would be his alone. It was slow going, but eventually he earned the grudging respect of his comrades in arms. Though his somewhat privileged background was public knowledge, he never talked about it himself, and neither asked for nor received any special treatment because of it. His unit-mates came to respect and even admire the utter dedication with which he applied himself to every task. Even before his first of several field promotions, many of his unit-mates had come to look up to The Scarlet Headhunter and ask his opinion on both military and non-military issues.

The Headhunter served with distinction, and thought he'd found his "home" in the TWD





organization. As his first tour of duty drew to a close, he'd already decided that he'd "re-up" and remain in the force.

Until he was granted furlough and spent it in Los Angeles, however. In the City of Angels, he saw the squalid condition under which all too many combat veterans were forced to live. He was horrified by the conditions of the HUD projects, and at the distrust and even outright hatred the vets had to face. As soon as he returned to his unit, he renounced his plans to re-up, and was demobilized at the end of his tour. Once back in the civilian world, he dedicated all his efforts to doing his part to change the awful conditions under which vets were forced to live.

At first he worked through political action groups created by other veterans — the People of Enhancement Coalition, among others. Through untiring effort, he made a reputation for himself within the veteran community, and started to bring the question of veterans' rights more and more into public awareness. Although any improvements he made in veterans' lives were welcome, it soon became apparent to Gore that wouldn't be able to do as much as he might want. He simply didn't have the public forum and the popular support he needed to make sweeping changes. He started to slip into despair.

While Gore had been working away, the government was realizing boosted vets represented a real problem for them. The Foster administration would generally prefer it if all vets basically self-destructed when their tour of duty ended. Under-housed and under-employed vets were turning the streets of America into war zones, and the unboosted populace viewed them with ever greater fear. The administration felt more and more pressure to "do something about" the vets. While many in government would love to find some "final solution to the veteran problem", cooler heads recognize that any such course would be political suicide. The administration realized it had to do something to "settle down" the vets, while proving to the unboosted populace that it was dealing with the problem in a socially acceptable way. One of the president's better spin-doctors recommended taking the position of Secretary of Veterans' Affairs and giving it at least the illusion of real power... and appointing a boosted vet. As possibly the most "publicly acceptable" of all veterans, Clinton F. Gore, The Scarlet Headhunter, got the job.

Since accepting the appointment, Gore has been doing everything he can to better veterans' lives. Unfortunately, that's not much. He doesn't have much in the way of a budget, and any proposals he puts forward are rated very low on the administration's priority list. He recognizes that his job is supposed to be more or less of a figurehead, a sop to popular opinion, but that doesn't deter him. He's got the public forum he never had before, and he's using it to the best of his abilities.

PERSONALITY

Clinton F. Gore is nothing if not *earnest* — some people would say *too* earnest. He's focused on his task almost to the point of obsession, working long hours and basically running himself into the ground with overwork. He doesn't have a sense of humor; he never jokes, and assumes nobody else does either. He's never been seen to show the slightest flash of anger... and rarely shows *any* emotion, for that matter. He overloads his schedule so much that he typically runs half an hour late for everything. He's an eloquent speaker, and believes that the only acceptable way of solving any problem is to talk it out until an agreement's reached (a strange belief for a veteran, and one that sometimes puts him at serious odds with his "constituency").

QUOTES

"Mr. President, I respectfully disagree. HUD should *not* be beyond congressional scrutiny."

"I suggest we open this up for discussion."

"My apologies, Mr. Speaker. Did I miss anything important?"

THE TANK

STR: 9 DEX: 4 SPD: 4 RES: 7
INT: 5

Acrobatics: 6, Computer Science: 11, Gun Combat: 10, Streetwise: 4, Thief: 7,
Weaponry: 7

Computer Control*: 10
Computer Mind Probe*: 10

(*With these powers the Tank can "read" the dataflow in a coaxial wire via induction. It can also alter the dataflow, so it can "speak to" and "eavesdrop on" computer communication. Use the powers Control and Mind Probe just as they are written, but substitute the target's WILL with the target computer/communication systems's INT.)

Stress Tolerance: NA

Psychosis: NA

Equipment:

Two (2) Swivel Mounted 40mm GCS M87/g assault rifles

BACKGROUND

The Tank is just one of those little mysteries that seems to spring up from time to time in the Los Angeles area. The news media first took notice of it when it was spotted trying to break into the VA hospital on Crenshaw on one dark night about a year ago. A couple of gangers took time out from their knife-fight to watch as some strange kind of machine tried to rip the front doors of the hospital open using manipulator arms. Just for the hell of it, they pulled out their heat and happily blazed away at the machine until their clips were empty, apparently driving it off. Then they returned to the task at hand — trying to gut each other. The next day, several vid-net news programs broadcast a video taken by the VA hospital's security camera, showing the strange machine. The official LAPF "take" on the situation was that the machine was either remote-controlled by some prankster nearby — despite the fact that the surviving ganger swore there was nobody else around — or was being operated by a midgit or a child actually inside the contraption.

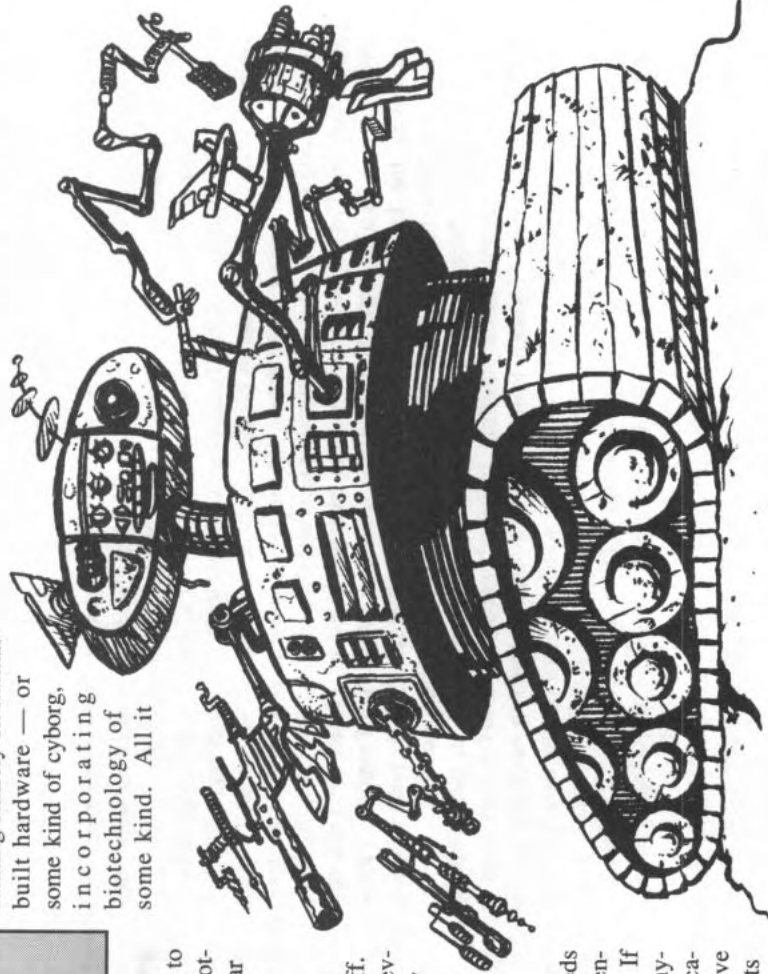
Since then, the machine — nicknamed The Tank — has been sighted hundreds of times around the Los Angeles basin. It seems shy, avoiding human contact whenever possible, and has never done anything that might conceivably harm anyone. If it itself is attacked, the Tank simply turns tail and flees at a speed surprising for anything that ungainly-looking. Most of the sightings have been in out-of-the-way locations — various back alleys, and other squatter havens — although a couple have been near hospitals and research facilities. Although the LAPF hasn't changed its

official tune, many people are coming to believe the Tank *isn't* remote-controlled, and *doesn't* have a midgit inside it. They're starting to wonder whether it isn't, in some strange way, alive...

Several months ago, a news-snoop released a strange story — unbelievable, on the face of it — over RogerNet. This snoop claims that the Tank *contacted* him, somehow tapping into his cellular phone, and speaking in an electronically synthesized voice. Apparently, the Tank told him this story of its origin.

The Tank was created by a cutting-edge high-tech firm in the San Fernando valley — Dynamic Systems Incorporated — sometime in 1918. The Tank was a prototype, the first of its kind — an attempt to create the technology that would replace boosted operatives on the battlefields of the future. Incorporating cybernetic technology with Artificial Intelligence and Expert Systems, the Tank was supposed to be a thinking machine, capable of learning and adapting to an ever-changing environment. According to the news-snoop, the Tank didn't really know that much about its own technology. For one thing, it wasn't sure whether it was a pure AI — that is, software running entirely on human-

built hardware — or some kind of cyborg, incorporating biotechnology of some kind. All it



AUTONOMOUS SELF-GUIDED HEURISTIC WEAPONS SYSTEMS: A FEASIBILITY STUDY

This study has been undertaken to investigate the practicality of developing an autonomous weapons system capable of independent target assessment, self-tasking, post-delivery evaluation, and re-prioritizing of parameters. The paradigm chosen for this study was first suggested by Gatlieman & Weiss (2013), drawing peripheral conditions and assessment schemes from the works of Bloch (unpublished: Classified Files). Data analysis techniques and heuristic algorithms are based on the seminal work of Hobbs performed under the auspices of the Center for Strategic

knew was that it "woke up" one day in the DSI lab, and that it underwent some rudimentary training designed to prepare it to adapt to hostile environments.

Unfortunately, Dynamic Systems wasn't as good at business as it was at basic research. The company got into financial trouble, and the key researchers on the Tank project — who also happened to be the owners of the company — pulled the quick fade one night with most of the assets. The receivers came in and confiscated everything that might be of value. Everything else was thrown out... including the Tank, which happened to be quiescent when the receivers came in. When the Tank next awoke, it was in a garbage dump near the north end of the San Fernando Valley. Since then, the Tank had been obeying the "prime directive" of its programming, adapting to the war zone that was Los Angeles, and simply trying to survive.

The Tank has been "free" for almost eighteen months now, and has picked up significant "street smarts" in the interim. It doesn't need to eat, but it *does* need to recharge its batteries. It quickly learned how to do that by patching itself into the circuits of electrical devices — often streetlights, which explains the increase in street-light "vandalism" recently. Over time, it learned how to patch into data transfer lines, and to make some sense of the datastream. From tapping into cable vid-net circuits, it learned the basics of English, and a little about contemporary culture... enough to scare the bejezus out of it, at least.

About a year ago, it suffered a "circuit anomaly" that temporarily fouled up its functioning. This problem made the Tank think about something it hadn't considered

before — its own mortality. It couldn't die, as a biological organism could, but it could certainly

wear out if it didn't perform periodic maintenance. Unfortunately, the maintenance it needed required high-tech monitors and equipment — the kind of thing that could only be found in hospitals and certain research establishments. (This, of course, explains its nocturnal visits to the VA hospital and similar places.) It had done what it could for itself, but now it was looking for more expert help — someone to give it an electronic once-over and reassure it that it wasn't going to die. That was why it had contacted the news-snoop, to beg for help.

Since the news-snoop broke the story, Tank sightings have dropped in frequency. Why? Has the Tank found some protector, maybe among the boosted vets of the HUD projects? Or is lack of maintenance degrading its efficiency — is the Tank dying?

PERSONALITY

The Tank is an intelligent machine, designed to learn about its environment, to adapt to changing circumstances, and to survive. It will, out of necessity, have a very different view of the world from humans. Although it's learned colloquial English, and may *seem* to have a human outlook, it's *very* alien in its thought processes. Just when you think you understand how it's thinking, it's going to come up with something exceedingly bizarre. Many people expect the Tank to think and act like a droid from *Star Wars*, but they could hardly be more wrong.

The Tank would rather run than fight, but if escape isn't an option, it *will* defend itself to the best of its ability.

QUOTES

"Please tell me about that auxiliary self that answers the phone when you are not present..."

"I saw an old man yesterday. Why does he not download himself into an improved enclosure?"

"Life is not hardware. Life is software."

THE WHITE DEVIL

(aka the "Alabastard")

STR: 6 DEX: 5 SPD: 5 RES: 7
INT: 3 WILL: 3 AURA: 0

Acrobatics (Dodge): 6, Business: 6, Computer Science: 4, Gun Combat: 8, Intimidation/Interrogation: 6, Leadership: 3, Martial Arts: 8, Military Science: 8, Streetwise: 4, Thief: 6, Vehicles: 6
Emotion Control (hate only): 9
Telescopic Vision: 8
Stress Tolerance: 5
Psychosis: Homicidal Mania
Equipment:

20mm Urban Nightmare #822 (x3), Heavy Mondo Armor, Heavykev, Average Pack, assortment of conflict software, Porta-Fax, Cellular Phone, Combat Goggles, Amphetamines, Punkbuster Signal Jammer

BACKGROUND

Eugene Toberman is the son of the infamous Oscar Toberman. Toberman the elder was the head of the Arizona branch of the Ku Klux Klan who organized the 2001 Phoenix riots in response to the federal government's recognition of Chuck D-Day as a national holiday. Although the elder Toberman was convicted of conspiracy for the part he played in the riots, his conviction was later overturned due to the efforts of Abraham Abromowitz, a high-profile law professor/defense attorney/feature film protagonist/chat show fixture. Toberman Sr. went on to become a chat show fixture himself and even starred in his own short-lived NNC variety series. Ultimately, he died in a 2007 shoot-out with agents of the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms, Paint Thinner, and Deviant Pornography.

Fifteen years old at the time, Eugene stood by his father's side throughout the entire ordeal with the federal authorities. Wanted on the same weapons and civil rights violations that brought the ATFTDP marshals to his father's home, Eugene managed to slip away unseen shortly after his father succumbed to the hail of federal lead.

After spending a few years on the lam working as a short order cook in a variety of roadside diners, Eugene finally hooked up with a group of Spokane auto

mechanics/Klansmen who recognized him, gave him a steady job, and helped him forge false identification papers. Later, when Eugene was twenty three, the

mechanics were arrested for severely beating a Catholic college student and sentenced to six years in prison. Separated from his adopted family and unsure of his next move, Eugene enlisted with Allied Mayhem Incorporated and underwent genetic enhancement (code-name Alabastard).

Between 2015 and 2019, Toberman served with the Allied Mayhem's Flying Deuces units and saw action in Azerbaijan, Venezuela, Malaysia, Ethiopia, and Paraguay. It was during the latter conflict that he was court-martialed for allegedly opening fire on a black superior officer. Although, an AMI tribunal ultimately concluded that there wasn't enough evidence to substantiate these charges, Toberman's racist prejudices had obviously bubbled to the



TONIGHT!

ON CBN
an exclusive interview with:

WHITE DEVIL

SELF PROCLAIMED "KING OF THE BIGOTS"



surface to the point where he was no longer trusted to serve as a combat soldier. Consequently, he spent the remainder of his term as the only boosted quartermaster serving with a major conflict firm. The four months he spent in this post gave Toberman an excellent working knowledge of the business world and sharpened his now infamous skills as a "wheeler-dealer."

After Toberman mustered out in December of 2020, his hatred of the federal government that murdered his father (in his eyes) made him a natural recruit for the Underground. Between 2020 and January of 2021, Toberman served in an Underground cell centered in Los Angeles, California using the assumed code-name White Devil. For a short while, in fact, he became one of the most notorious Underground members in the country due to the fact that he granted a live vid-net interview in the midst of the Compton Riots and used the occasion to proclaim himself "King of the Bigots." Toberman's racist attitudes (not to mention all the negative publicity engendered by the now-infamous interview) ultimately led to the Underground leadership declaring him persona non grata during the Channel Zero broadcast of February 6, 2021.

Since leaving the Underground, the White Devil has operated his own terrorist group, BURP (the Basic Union for Racial Purity), as a front for a real estate development firm he opened under an assumed name using stolen money as his capital. Typically, the Devil uses BURP to terrorize a rival and then takes advantage of the situation to engineer a deal that allows his real estate firm to profit.

just about anyone who is non-male or non-WASP is total and nearly unrelenting. Unlike his father, however, Toberman's racial and gender hatred is expressed with "sophistication" — he is capable of concealing it when it suits him and his plans for those who offend him are sweeping and devious.

Ultimately, Toberman hopes to overthrow the US Government and replace it with a racist regime capable of rounding up and deporting or detaining "undesirables." Although he is content with merely making money and expanding his power base for now, it is likely that he will turn his full attention toward this ultimate objective sometime in the near future.

QUOTES

"A racist? Well, not really. I like to call my philosophy *racism lite*."
"The American flag isn't red, *white*, and blue for nothing."

PERSONALITY

Toberman's business skills are so formidable that he always manages to conceal the fact that his own firm is profiting from a deal beneath a cloud of subcontracts and consultation memos. Very recently, Toberman has become so comfortable and cocky that he has started to grant interviews to the tabloid press (in his White Devil persona) as the leader of the now-infamous BURP. According to the latest rumors floating around the Washington DC establishment, the FBI is starting to suspect that there's more to BURP than meets the eye.

TRI-TOP

STR: 2 DEX: 2 SPD: 1 RES: 2
INT: 4 WILL: 5 AURA: 5

Acrobatics: 3, Administration: 6, Business: 7, Charm: 6, Gun Combat: 4, Intimidation/Interrogation: 8, Leadership: 9, Psychology: 6, Streetwise: 8, Thief: 4
Equipment:
9mm Walther antique, Heavykev woven into suits, cellular phone

BACKGROUND

Jonathan Ramirez grew up on the streets of LA, and knows it from the inside out. As the leader of the F-HOGs, his position is a precarious one. The bulk of the gang's muscle comes from boosted vets. But he himself is not boosted. New gang members sometimes grumble that he can't possibly understand what they go through; that someone without enhancements shouldn't lead them. Even the gang regulars make such comments when they're in dour moods.

What all of them come to realize is that Jonathan, now Tri-Top, is a born leader. He knows how to pull the sometimes dangerous cluster of vets into one gang and make them work together. He soothes when someone needs to be soothed, and he knows how to attack when someone needs to be attacked. And in the end, he's one of the more ruthless gang members in Los Angeles. The vital difference between him and the other ruthless gang bangers in LA is that Tri-Top knows how to control his ruthlessness, to focus it.

From the age of twelve he was making drug deliveries to dealers. He advanced quickly, became a drug dealer himself, and soon moved up to a distributor, passing the drugs onto other dealers. Over the years people came to him when they were in trouble—users and dealers alike. He earned a reputation as someone who could be trusted. A saying was passed around the streets about him: "In his head he's got these three parts: Warrior, Father, Moneymaker." From that idea he got his handle: Tri-Top, the combination of those three components in his head at once. He was only seventeen.

He carries a dark secret. His father, in an attempt to get him off the streets, tried to turn him into the cops once. He ran away, vowing never to have any dealings with his father again. His father took up the quest of finding Tri-Top. As a repair shop worker, his father had little skills working the back streets of the drug scene. He had always been a quiet man, with careful steps. Yet his passion to

bring his son back home and get him into an honest trade drove him on. For a year he dogged his son's tracks. More and more often, as the weeks passed, Tri-Top had to get his goons to escort his father home.

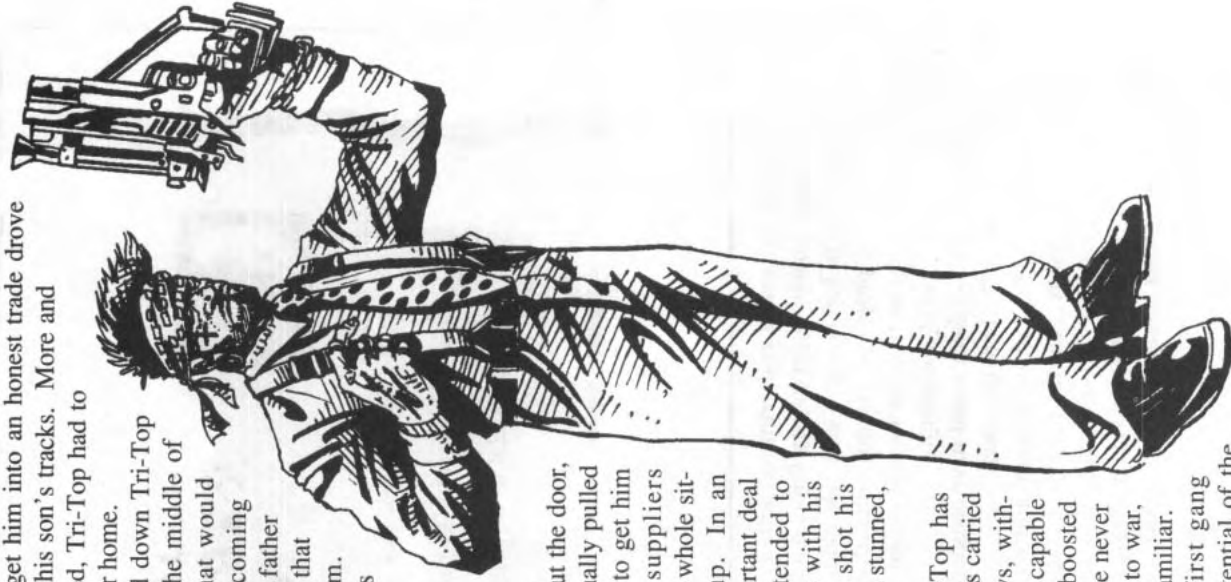
One day, he finally tracked down Tri-Top at a restaurant—who was in the middle of conducting a massive deal that would give him control of cocaine coming into central Los Angeles. His father entered the place and insisted that Tri-Top come home with him.

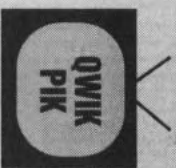
The suppliers Tri-Top was speaking to were incredulous—they couldn't believe that the man they were about to set the deal up with had his father following him around.

Tri-Top tried to get his father out the door, but refused to leave. He eventually pulled a gun on his son in an attempt to get him to leave the meeting. The suppliers became very edgy, thinking the whole situation was some weird set up. In an attempt to keep the most important deal of his life going, Tri-Top pretended to lower his guard, agreed to go with his father, then pulled a gun and shot his father dead. The suppliers were stunned, but the deal proceeded.

From that moment on, Tri-Top has had a strange inner strength. It's carried in his eyes, and everyone knows, without knowing the story, that he's capable of anything. This is why the boosted vets follow him. Even though he never went to Slumberland, didn't go to war, in his eyes they see something familiar.

Tri-Top was one of the first gang leaders to see the untapped potential of the





TRI-TOP TO HOST !STREETFIGHT! TONIGHT

7:00pm eastern
Ch. 486
Closed Captioned

WNNX

The #1 Gangbanger in America hosts a special edition of **!STREETFIGHT!** tonight as the show hits the back alleys for drug deals gone bad. Guest gangs include the Rollin' 50s and the Sugaland Express.

QUOTES

"Tell me what you need."

"You want to be able to look at yourself in the mirror? Here's what you should do..."

"I don't care how long you've known him. Kill him."

boosted vets for the gangs and criminal activity. Although many of the vets ended up stealing, unable to get money through a legal job, no one had organized them in anyway. Tri-Top changed that. He made active recruiting runs through the boosted housing projects. He got drugs that the vets wanted. He pulled strings to keep the cops of their backs. He pulled them into gangs so they would have strength and a sense of community.

Although any one of them could have crushed his head like an egg, none of them wanted to. He gave them too much.

As his gang grew, he acquired more and more power. Unfortunately, the muscle of the boosted vets carries with it many mental complications. Although the F-HOGs are strong they are also wild. Tri-Top's work is cut out in keeping the gang focused on it's operations. He spends a great deal of time keeping gang members from fighting each other, and wasting their time engaging in turf wars that waste resources and time.

PERSONALITY

Tri-Top is one of the most respected gang members in L.A. His organization, though often chaotic, is one of the better known in L.A. (Any guest spot the F-HOGs make on a real-violence show always boosts ratings for the show.) Much of this is due to Tri-Top's intense personality.

When one first meets him, Tri-Top's attitude is reserved, yet interested. He listens, and this may be his greatest strength. While listening, he sizes a person up, dividing everyone into two groups—those that are useful to him, and those that are not. If you're not useful, he's polite, but ultimately dismissive. If he can use you, he listens more, drawing him into your confidence.

This is the Father side of Tri-Top. There is also the Warrior, who can kill without hesitation. His commands for death are often abrupt, but in every case his decision seems born out. Traitors, undercover agents, and other dangerous elements have been excised quickly and effectively from the gang through his sharp instincts.

X-PATRIOT

STR: 6 DEX: 4 SPD: 4 RES: 6
INT: 2 WILL: 2 AURA: 2

Acrobatics: 9, Detective: 6, Gun Combat: 9, Intimidation/Interrogation: 7, Martial Arts: 6, Military Science: 8, Streetwise: 4, Thief: 7, Weaponry: 7
Invisibility: 10

Telepathic Blast: 6

Sense Block: 4

Stress Tolerance: 10

Psychosis: Sociopathy

Equipment:

25mm Urban Nightmare, 20mm GCS DW 770/g, Turbo Tazer, Heavy Mondo, Average Pack Computer, Pueblo Sniper!, Pueblo Firefight!, Anti-Radar, Combat Goggles, Cellular Phone, Punkbuster™ Radar Detector, Punkbuster™ Signal Jammer

BACKGROUND

Johnny Murietta grew up in Dallas, Texas, the son of wealthy computer software magnates. He learned to respect the nation that allowed his parents, both immigrants from Mexico, wealth, status, and power. The ideals of the US Constitution, the passion for resolving international conflict with superior firepower, were all his to inherit.

When he was old enough to volunteer for boosted service, the United States had just entered the fray in Paraguay. Filled with patriotic zeal, he joined up with Disposable Hero, Inc. and shipped off into Slumberland to be boosted.

While in Slumberland he dreamed himself as super hero dressed all in Red, White, and Blue. He spouted patriotic platitudes. He really believed. He had a sidekick, and the young lad ate up Johnny's words and believed everything he said. Everything was great. He fought crime. Bad guys went to jail. Good things got done. Then he left Slumberland.

The transition was more difficult for Johnny than for other boosts because he so desperately longed for Slumberland's comforting morality. Even as he stepped out of his isolation tank, eyes blinking in the lab's fluorescent lights, he knew everything had gone flat and dull. The ideals that had guided him for many months would never again be so vivid and clear.

But of course, Disposable Hero had many places for him to go, and Slumberland wasn't one of them.

The conflict in Paraguay had ended by the time he got out of Slumberland, but there were plenty of hot spots continuing to burn. He was shipped off to defend his nation's interests.

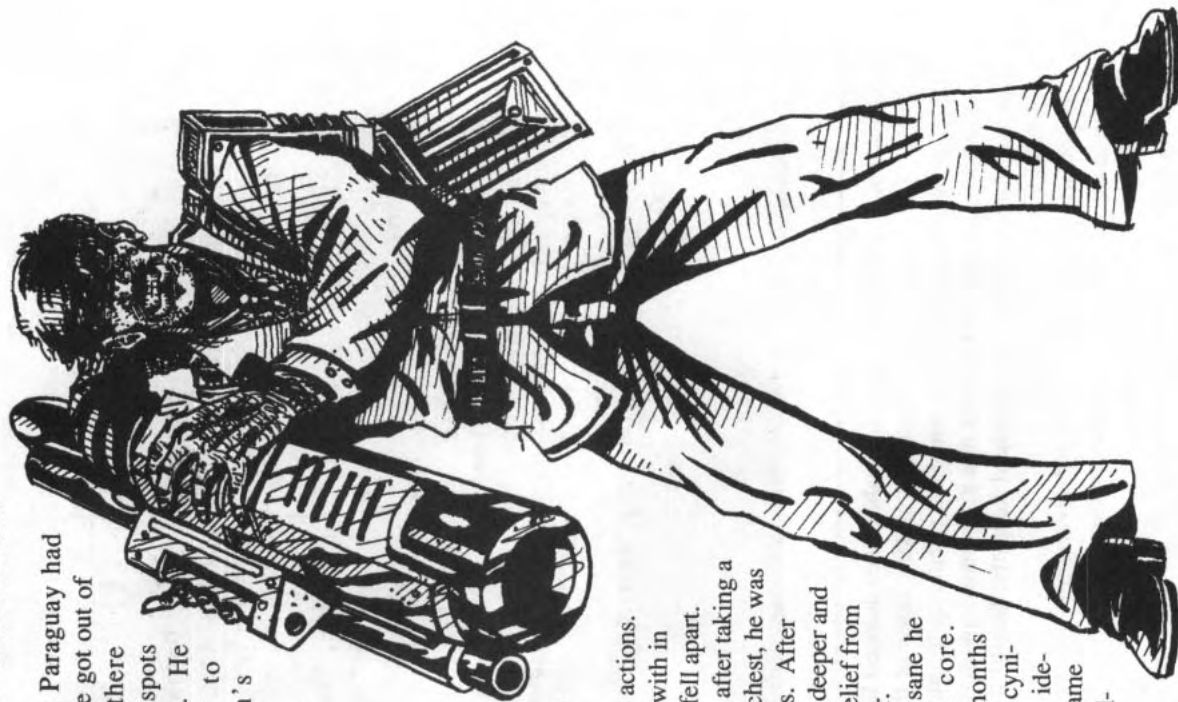
A familiar story:

War. A village sacked here. New weapons tested there. Unlike his time spent in Slumberland, it was impossible to see where justice was done, who had been helped or freed by his actions.

The ideals he'd lived with in Slumberland quickly fell apart.

Within a few months, after taking a massive injury to the chest, he was addicted to pain killers. After that he began digging deeper and deeper into drugs as relief from a world of terrible war.

To keep himself sane he adopted a cynical core. Over the next few months he layered that with a cynical veneer. From an idealistic patriot, he became an addicted drug dealer running narcotics throughout Asia and



What My Country Means To Me by Johnny Marietta

The United States is my home. The United States is where I am safe and my mommy and daddy are safe too. It is home of the free and the brave. We have a Statue of Liberty which says to everybody this is who we are. Be like us. People listen because the U.S. gives hope. People want hope.

My country means to me a place where people come because it is where dreams are made. My parents had a dream. Now they live the dream. I want to have a family and grow up and have a dream. My country will give me my dream.

This is what my country means to me.

India. When he'd gone too far, Disposable Hero dumped him onto the shores of the U. S. An addict without a chance of making sense of the country he'd come back to, he wandered the streets, roughing people up for money. He couldn't go home; while overseas he'd learned that his parents' investments were propped up by slave labor in India. He'd helped keep the family fortune safe, but he'd learned too much in the process.

Eventually arrested and sent to jail several times in a row for petty theft, he found himself on the streets of Miami without a place to call home or a friend to ask for favors. When the Veterans Administration opened up the housing units in LA, he literally walked across the country to get there. He so badly wanted to try

to have a good life he allowed himself to believe (as so many had believed before) that Los Angeles held the answers for him.

Of course, more disappointment awaited. The VA barely helped at all. In the housing units he was shaken down for his medication. He was nearly on the edge of suicide when Tri-Top found him. Like a wise mentor from the pages of a four-color comic book, Tri-Top took him into the F-HOGs gang, sheltered him, got him straight. For four months he went cold turkey, sweating and screaming in a special, sealed iron cell Tri-Top used specifically for the purpose of straightening out user boosts. When it was all done, his blood was clean, but the cynicism, inner and outer was there forever.

Taking the name the X-Patriot, he became a major player in the F-HOG gang. He is fiercely loyal to Tri-Top, and is unofficially the gang leader's body guard.

PERSONALITY

A cynical bastard. He's usually unshaven, swears a lot. Drinks a lot. He has no faith in anything or anybody (except Tri-Top and a couple of the F-HOGs). Anyone who attempts to have faith in something will quickly be cut apart with a few, simple invectives by the X-Patriot. Idealism is simply taboo in his presence. He presents himself as a world-wise rationalist who has seen too much and knows too much. When dealing with people who don't completely match his cynicism, he radiates a thick attitude of: "Where did you come from, you idiot!"

And yet...

There is a part of him still so, so hungry for the ideals of his youth. In his eyes, sometimes, often when a child is nearby, you can see a bit of a longing for something more. He hadn't meant to be selling drugs to kids on the playground. So much happened that just seemed out of his control. When he can get close to doing something for idealistic reasons, he will often, secretly, do it. He wants to believe in something better than what he has now.

QUOTES

"Life is made up of the burnt-out and the dead."

"What did you think, there was such a thing as kindness?"

"I don't want to hear the words United States. Just don't say them. There are no United States. There's no unity. There's pain and greed."

NAME:

STR: DEX: SPD: RES:

INT: WILL: AURA:

SKILLS:

ENHANCEMENTS:

TOLERANCE:

PSYCHOSIS:

EQUIPMENT:

BACKGROUND

PEOPLE

PLACES

ORGANIZATIONS

EVENTS

TECHNOLOGY

MISC.

STR: _____ DEX: _____ SPD: _____ RES: _____

INT: _____ WILL: _____ AURA: _____

SKILLS: _____

ENHANCEMENTS: _____

TOLERANCE: _____

PSYCHOSIS: _____

EQUIPMENT: _____

BACKGROUND

PEOPLE

PLACES

ORGANIZATIONS

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PERSONALITY _____

QUOTES _____

QUOTES



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SYSTEMATIC
OVERTHROW

THE U.S.

TOO STRONG TO LIVE
TOO WEAK TO DIE

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We the People of the United States

THE
**NOTICE
BOOK**

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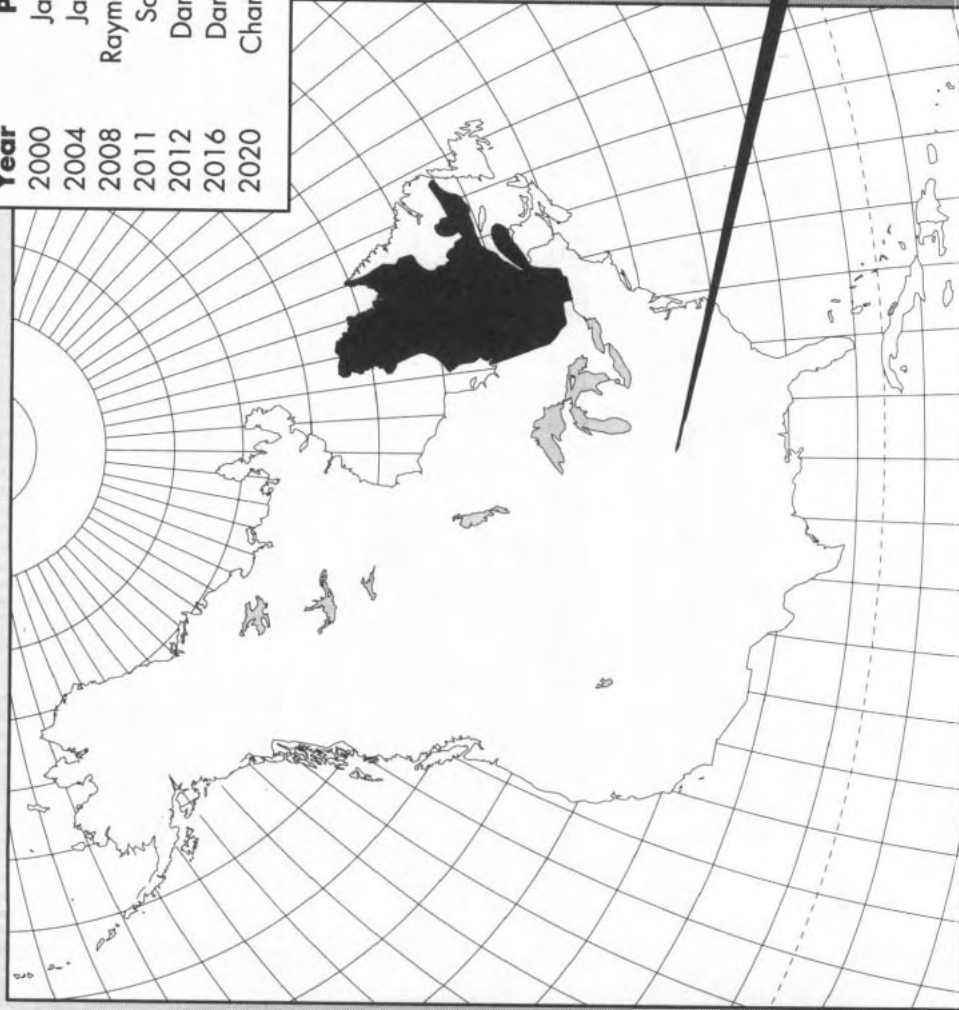
FREE THE PACS
NEVER WAR



PLACES

Recent Presidential Administrations

Year	President	Vice President	Party
2000	James Edgar	Alan Simpson	Republican
2004	James Edgar	Alan Simpson	Republican
2008	Raymond Milkovich	Saul Stevens	Independent
2011	Saul Stevens	Howard Sedgfield	Independent
2012	Darryl F. Gates	Rush Limbaugh	Plutocrat
2016	Darryl F. Gates	Rush Limbaugh	Plutocrat
2020	Charles M. Foster	Robert P. Brooks	Plutocrats



The United States—2021

Parameters of American Cities

City	Wealth	Safety	Gov. Purity	Quality of Life	Education	Necessities	Take Home Pay
Atlanta	11	10	7	11	8	12	8
Baltimore	7	7	7	9	8	11	9
Boston	7	7	6	9	8	11	9
Chicago	7	6	4	8	6	10	9
Cincinnati	6	7	7	8	9	10	9
Cleveland	6	6	4	8	9	11	10
Denver	10	8	6	10	10	12	8
Havana	6	5	3	6	6	7	11
Los Angeles	6	5	5	4	6	6	10
Montreal	10	9	5	9	11	12	8
Philadelphia	6	6	4	7	8	10	9
Pittsburgh	6	8	6	7	8	11	9
New York	7	6	4	8	7	10	10
San Francisco	11	10	5	10	9	12	8
Toronto	11	10	5	9	9	12	9
Washington DC	10	15	3	10	14	13	8

Parameters of Major Nations

Nation	Wealth	Safety	Gov. Purity	Quality of Life	Education	Necessities	Take Home Pay
China	8	11	7	8	7	10	8
Luna	5	5	3	6	6	8	14
Neo-Deutschland	7	13	5	8	9	11	8
Neo-Vatican	10	8	6	6	6	9	10
New Providence	13	13	9	11	7	13	8
Quebec	6	8	4	6	6	9	8
United States	7	7	5	9	8	11	9

BLAKE HOTEL

FACTS AT A GLANCE

Location: Downtown LA (Hell's Jungle), Ground Level
Size: Five stories tall, covering four square blocks
Staff: 700 employees, including highly efficient security staff
Annual Income: \$1,000,000,000

GENERAL DESCRIPTION

Built by Machino Durez (q.v.), the Blake Hotel is a significant structure in LA's political scene. At any one time it hosts leaders of gangs, munitions manufacturers, politicians, drug lords and so on. By a policy set by Durez, and by tacit agreement of the guests, weapons are not carried by anyone other than the hotel's staff. By the same token, enhancements are not used by boosts. Because of the general appeal of a safe house for both business and pleasure, these rules are never seen as excessive. People who go to the Blake go precisely because they want to forget about violence for awhile. Anyone who tries to get around the rules not only risks the wrath of hotel security, but of the other guests as well.

The rooms at the Blake come in a variety of sizes. Within the massive landscape of corridors and meeting rooms, one can find singles no larger than a closet, and suites with a dozen rooms situated around a central gathering area. Some rooms have bars, some small pools. The hotel is constructed using movable walls, so Durez can arrange accommodations of nearly any specification.

SECURITY

Because peace and quiet is paramount at the Blake, the security staff (known as the Crew) is top notch. Headed up by the ever good-natured Skippy (q.v.), the

Crew wanders the halls and public areas of the hotel, always vigilant for troublemakers and weapons.

Crew members wear bulky, blue, armored uniforms. They patrol individually, but five back up guards will arrive within two minutes of a call put out by any of them. After that, an additional four will arrive in four minutes.

Members of the Crew typically have these stats:

STR: 5 DEX: 4 SPD: 3 RES: 5
 INT: 3 WILL: 3 AURA: 2

Acrobatics: 4, Detective: 5, Gun Combat: 4

GCS DW 770/g, Heavykev suit, Heavy Mondo armor

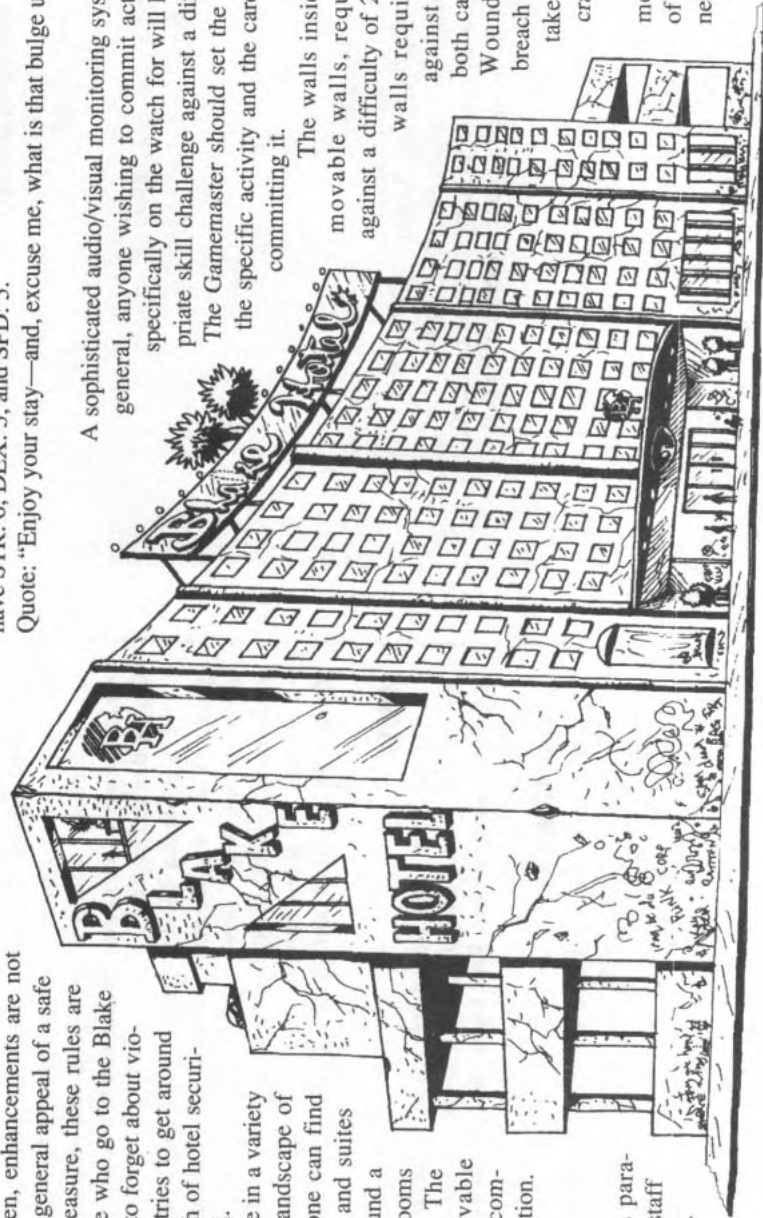
*One in four Crew members is boosted. Boosted Crew members are hired specifically to sniff out trouble before it happens. The enhancements of these boosted security agents will be Mind Probe at 7, or Empathy at 7. Such members of the crew will also have STR: 6, DEX: 5, and SPD: 5.

Quote: "Enjoy your stay—and, excuse me, what is that bulge under your jacket?"

A sophisticated audio/visual monitoring system is also in place. In general, anyone wishing to commit activities that the staff is specifically on the watch for will have to make an appropriate skill challenge against a difficulty of 2 through 9. The Gamemaster should set the difficulty according to the specific activity and the care the characters take in committing it.

The walls inside the hotel, even the movable walls, require STR challenges against a difficulty of 2. The hotel's exterior walls require a STR challenge against a difficulty of 9. In both cases a result of Heavy Wound must be reached to breach the wall. Thus, it may take a few good blows to crack open a wall.

Gun nests are mounted on the outside of the hotel, at the corners of the building, the roof, and at several points along the





The Blake Hotel

Accommodations (cost per night):

- Single (standard): \$4,000
- Single (xtra luxury): \$10,000
- Double (standard): \$9,000
- Double (xtra luxury): \$18,000
- Suite: base of \$15,000, + \$8,000 per bedroom
- Pool in room: + \$8,000

Meals

- Simple Meal, per Person: \$250
- Standard Meal, per Person: \$400
- Great Meal, per Person: \$800
- Good Lord, So This Is What Food Used To Taste Like, per person: \$1,000

Misc.

- The Frank Sinatra Theater Tickets: \$200
 - Drinks throughout the Hotel: \$12-20
 - Meeting Room (per day): \$2,000
 - Crew Member as Personal Security: \$5,000*
- (*the Crew insures safety of the guests continuously, but some guests want to have someone looking out "just for them.")

During meetings, Crew members can be assigned to act as protection against outside attacks, and to keep relations pleasant between meeting participants who might otherwise commit acts of violence.

FEATURES

Besides meeting rooms and luxury accommodations, the Blake provides a great many services for its guests, and contains a great many treasures. Among these are:

• Wayne Newton Casino—Though not as large as the Las Vegas casinos, the Newton still provides ample opportunity for guests to play blackjack, roulette, poker, and slot machines. Durez runs his casino like most casinos. That is, he encourages people to bet and bet and bet, whether or not they can afford it. Credit stalls allow people to borrow money from the hotel in order to "win back" losses they've already incurred. This invariably means people get further and further into debt.

Durez has two ways of dealing with people who owe the hotel a great deal of money. The first is to farm the matter out to underworld contacts. For a cut of the cash, these people "encourage" the debtor to find the money somehow. Or else.

The second method is to let the debtor off on the condition he can be called in for favors later on. This is how Durez is able produce almost anything at a moment's notice for any of his guests. He can call in a favor from almost anywhere in L.A. from any field or profession.

• Frank Sinatra Theater—Again, not as big as the Las Vegas shows, but just as gaudy. Simple minded dance numbers strung out along simple minded stories. Tigers appear during magic shows, scenes of the L.A. riots of 2017 are re-enacted, and self-mutilations are either mimed or actually committed, depending on the show's headline.

• Room Service—Anything from any of the hotel's five restaurants are available from room service. Under the table drugs, as well as prostitutes, can also be rung up.

COSTS

Guests at the Blake are not only paying for protection. The service is impeccable, the food and accommodations tremendous. Within this luxury, however, there are several scales of service. How much one can afford determines how much one gets.

STRESS RECOVERY

Characters who spend time in the Blake Hotel receive a bonus on their Stress Recovery roll. If the last 24 hours were spent in the hotel, a -2 bonus modifier is applied to the Stress Recovery Modifier.

walls. Any approach to the building is visible to 1-3 of these nests (as determined by the Gamemaster or rolled randomly). Each nest is armed with two Crew members and two 40mm GCS M87/g assault rifles.

ESTADOS UNIDOS MEXICANOS

(MEXICO)

FACTS AT A GLANCE

People

Population: 88,160,000
Density: 115/sq.mi. (45/sq.km.)
Urban: 53%
Capital: Mexico City, 31,872,000
Languages: Spanish, Amerindian Languages.
Religion: Roman Catholic 97%
Life Expectancy: 65 female, 60 male.
Literacy: 50%
Government: Federal Republic (nominal).
Parties: Los Federalistas.
Suffrage: Officers of the EUM military.

Economy

GDP: \$295,776,800,000.
Per Capita: \$3,355.
Monetary Unit: Nuevo Peso.
Exports: Coffee, corn, sugar cane, natural gas.

Land

Region: North America.
Area: 761,600 sq. mi. (1,972,544 sq. km) approx.
Highest Point: Orizaba, 18,406 ft (5,610 m).
Lowest Point: Sea level.

LOCATION

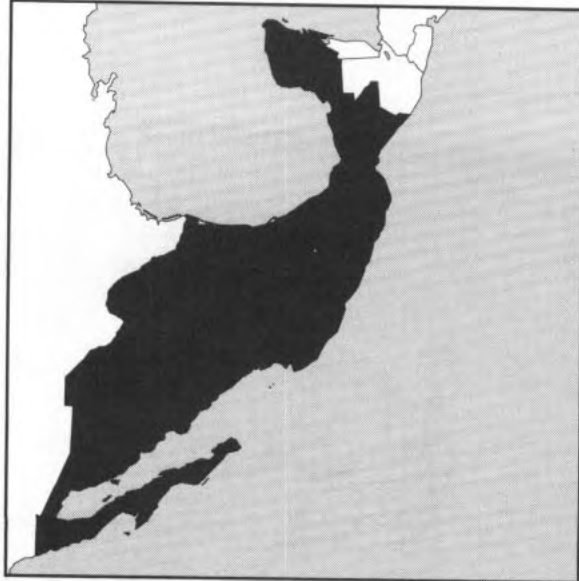
The northern border of the Estados Unidos Mexicanos follows conventional, 20th Century lines. To the south, however, the EUM includes what used to be Belize, and claims the northern portion of Guatemala as far south as Quezaltenango and Zacapa. (Guatemala, in contrast, claims much of the Chiapas province in southern EUM, making for a large area of disputed territory...)

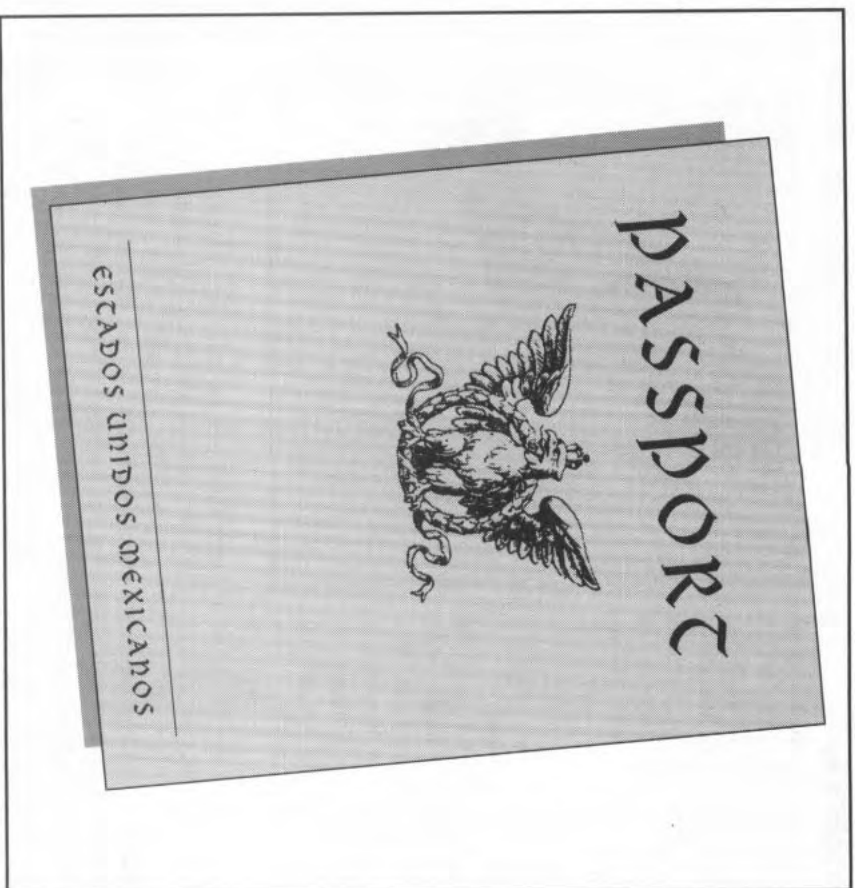
DESCRIPTION

The third-largest nation on the North American continent, the Estados Unidos Mexicanos (United Mexican States) or EUM has become more picky that its official name be used in all formal references. Most people still call it Mexico, however, and leave it at that.

Officially, the EUM is a federal republic, with free elections every five years. In fact, however, it is a military dictatorship. There is only one official political party, *Los Federalistas*, which all members of the EUM armed forces must join on enlisting. Many civilians join the party as well, even though only commissioned officers in the military are allowed to vote. Even though the current president, General Carlos Montoya Jobim del Aguillar — more commonly known as *El Jefe* — has publicly welcomed the creation of opposition parties, nobody has bothered. This, *El Jefe* claims, is an indication that his people love him and *Los Federalistas*, and have no desire for a change in the political system.

The EUM of 2021 is a very poor, and almost stupefyingly corrupt, country. In the late 1990s, the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) *finally* was ratified by the US, Canada and Mexico. As many analysts had predicted all along, the US promptly shipped most of its manufacturing south of the border, to take advantage of Mexico's much lower wages. The whole northern part of the country turned into a manufacturing Mecca, the "Steel Belt of the South". New cities — little more than the infrastructure to support the manufacturing plants, really — sprung up throughout the northern states of Chihuahua, Sonora and Coahuila, creating a drastic northward population shift. So great was the competition for workers among the American firms setting up shop in Mexico, that wages for factory workers were bid up to levels unprecedented in the EUM. (Of course, those wages were still ridiculously low by American standards — and by the standards of the rapidly-industrialized "Seven Tigers" of Asia — so everyone benefited.)





Analysts predicted the crash — generally known as the “Mexican Screw-Up” — years before it occurred. By 2010, the business climate was changing drastically. America had entered a period of “stagflation” (stagnant economy coupled with inflation) worse than any before, and the economy was nearly collapsing. Fewer people in the US and around the world had the money to buy the products the Mexican factories were churning out. Simultaneously, India was industrializing rapidly, offering the combination of low wages and more or less stable infrastructure that Mexico had once offered. Everything came to a head when the workers that were keeping the Mexican factories going unionized, and decided to go out on strike for higher wages.

The American companies responded by locking out the few workers who weren’t on strike, closing down the factories — which hadn’t been adequately maintained and were all too often falling apart anyway — and moving their (much reduced) manufac-

turing load to India and other similar nations. The Mexican economy immediately collapsed. The social infrastructure failed, and there was rioting in the streets. Suddenly-unemployed factory workers marched on the capital, demanding that the government do something — *anything* — to force *los gringos locos* into opening the factories again. The government couldn’t do anything, of course; there was no provision in NAFTA that allowed a government to force businesses to *stay* in business if they didn’t want to. The factory workers responded by bringing in heavy machinery and starting to disassemble the capital building.

Of course, the army stepped in, dispersing — or, all too often, *eliminating* — the rioters. Once the threat to the government was gone, however, the army didn’t stop, and used artillery and air power to finish the job the workers had started. When the fires had died down, a new president ruled the country: General Carlos Montoya Jobim del Aguilar, the man who’d led the mission to “relieve” the embattled capital.

In the period of chaos after the economic crash, the new president reshaped the political system to suit his image of how it all should work. His new political party won the next “Free and fair” election hands-down — mainly because the only people allowed to vote were all members of that party — as it’s won every election since then.

Northern Mexico has turned from the Steel Belt into the Rust Belt. Various local business concerns have tried to start the factories back up again, with Mexican capital, Mexican managers and Mexican workers. Unfortunately, before marching on Mexico City, all too many of the workers had vented their frustrations on the facilities, using crowbars, front-end loaders and hand grenades. The factories would never run again. Since 2010, the population shift to the north has reversed itself, leaving the northern portions of the EUM as rusting, industrial ghost towns. The economy is starting to get back on its feet — to some degree, at least — as it shifts from a reliance on heavy industry to a focus on agriculture.

It’s surprising to some that the population of the EUM in 2021 isn’t significantly higher than it was in the early 1990s. During the boom, while the Steel Belt was in full operation, the population boomed, climbing to well over 100 million. When it crashed again, however, literally millions of refugees slipped the border north into America, or south into Guatemala. Today, there’s still a steady flow north across the Rio Grande, despite the efforts of both America and the EUM to stop it. There are thought to be elaborate secret “staging areas” for refugees in the ruins of the Rust Belt, and it’s a truism among Mexicans that anyone who’s trying to eke out a living in the industrial wasteland won’t be there for long before they slip the border too.

El jefe has been trying to jump-start the economy, but most members of his government are too concerned with lining their own pockets to get anything much done. To distract his people from their troubles, he’s started a couple of minor wars, annexing Belize and butting heads with the Guatemalans. Unfortunately, his army isn’t as well-equipped as it perhaps should be, since much of the money allocated for training and equipment doesn’t end up quite where intended.

LOS ANGELES RIVER

FACTS AT A GLANCE

People

Population: Unknown.

Density: Unknown.

Languages: Spanish, English.

Life Expectancy: 45 female; 28 male.

Literacy: 10%

Government: None

Economy

Per Capita Income: nil (declared income); \$5,000 (undeclared income; estimate)

Land

Region: Los Angeles.

Area: <1 sq. mi. (<2.59 sq. km.)

LOCATION

The Los Angeles River — known to Angelenos as the “Racetrack” or the “Killing Ground” — is a generally-dry concrete culvert that runs through the heart of the city. The “Racetrack” portion of the river begins near the intersection of I-5 and I-710 in Maywood, and disgorges into San Pedro Bay at Long Beach. (The mouth of the river used to be the home of the Spruce Goose and the Queen Mary before the former was stolen and the latter burned to the waterline in the Long Beach riots of 2010.)

DESCRIPTION

Winding for more than ten miles through the center of the city, the LA River is little more than a concrete drainage culvert maybe 80 feet wide and 30 feet deep. During the early 1990s, the LA River gained some transitory fame when a major chase sequence for the blockbuster *Terminator 2* was filmed in it, but recently most law-abiding Angelenos have more or less tried to forget it even exists.

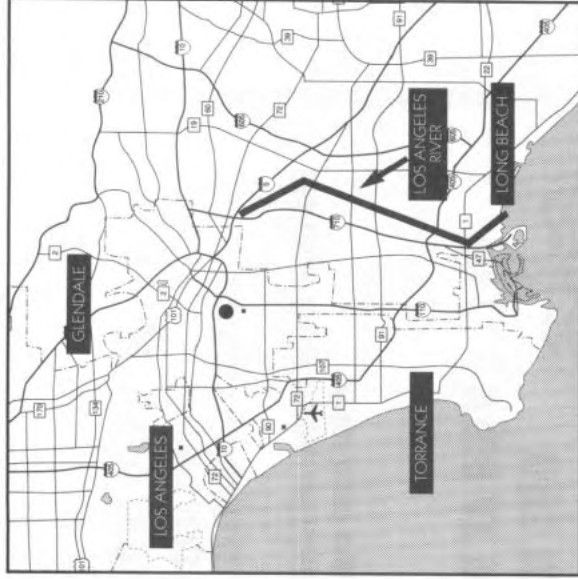
Along its length, the river’s crossed by hundreds of bridges, and it’s flanked on both sides by access roads for city vehicles. These access roads are officially off-limits to non-authorized personnel, but all the locked gates have been broken open or torn down so many times that the city simply doesn’t bother to repair or replace them any more. During the rainy season, the actual “river” — the water that runs down the cen-

ter of the culvert — expands to twenty or thirty feet wide and a whole six inches or so deep. Most of the year, however, it’s a greasy trickle of water a foot or two wide and a couple of inches deep. Officially and theoretically, the level of the river can rise rapidly if the Sepulveda Dam automated flood control system deems it necessary to “bleed off” overflow from Chatsworth Reservoir northwest of the city, but in practice this hasn’t happened in fifteen years. (Apparently, the “micro-climate” created by the pollution and the vast amount of waste heat generated by the city has cut rainfall in the surrounding mountains to very near zero.)

Officially speaking, the entire Los Angeles River is off-limits to civilians, and the laws are still on the books that allows for the prosecution of trespassers. For various reasons, these laws haven’t been enforced for at least ten years.

Over the last decade, the LA River has developed its own population and society. Much of this population is transient. Gangsters use it as a spot to find out who’s got the hottest bike — hence the name “Racetrack” — or to settle grudges — hence “Killing Ground”. Nobody law-abiding ever sets foot in the culvert... or, if they do, they’re never heard from again. (Oh, the Los Angeles Peace Force officially claims it’s safe, and points to the fact that no murders or other crimes have ever been reported to have occurred in the river. This, of course, neglects the fact that no reports doesn’t necessarily mean no crimes. Various confidential internal documents, leaked to the press, hint that the LAPF considers the river to be a “null zone” — somewhere the force doesn’t even *try* to patrol. This means that the river is actually a little enclave of total anarchy in the midst of a larger enclave of *relative* anarchy...)

Various squatter encampments have sprung up at certain points along the river, usually huddled under the major bridges crossing the culvert to shield the residents from the idly curious. At night, the red dots of cooking fires can be seen spreading along the river. Little is known about the people who’ve chosen the LA River as their home. Presumably they’re the under-housed and under-employed (read “unemployed



AUTHORIZED PERSONNEL ONLY
TRESPASSERS WILL BE PROSECUTED
(CITY OF LOS ANGELES BYLAW 445-444-482099-4(G))

Warning: Flood control activities may cause rapid rise in water level.
Water level may rise without warning.



ENTER AT YOUR OWN RISK!
THIS MEANS YOU!



homeless") who've slipped through L.A.'s social safety net, or dodged it for their own personal reasons. Estimates of the total population range from "categorically zero" (the city's position) to several thousand. Many will probably be gangers and their ilk. Various Latino gangs — predominately male — are thought to live along the river, in several "gang enclaves". Short and sharp battles between these enclaves are common incidents, leading to a life expectancy for male residents of the river lower than that for soldiers in a war zone...

It seems likely that many residents of the Killing Ground are boosted vets forgotten by the system, or who chose not to live in the HUD projects. (This conclusion is indirect, based on the assumption that few people other than boosted ops could survive in the middle of ongoing gang war. Nobody has ever confirmed or denied the idea... mainly because nobody has ever had the guts to go down and check it out for themselves.)

Wild rumors occasionally bubble up about weird happenings in the river. In 2018, the "hot" rumor was that a population of poison-resistant rats was multiplying in the river, and would eventually spread incurable diseases throughout the city. In 2020, the river was said to be a "highway" from the sea to the mountains that illegal

aliens and foreign infiltrators used to enter the country. The current favorite claims that all the gangs and squatters of the river culvert have set aside their rivalries and grievances and have joined forces under the leadership of the "L.A War Lord". When the time is right, the War Lord will lead his troops forth to conquer the city.

The city is doing everything it can to squelch these rumors... short of actually sending people into the river area, of course. "Right-thinking" Angelenos publicly claim to think rumors like these are absolute foolishness, but many cynics think this is just a facade. After all, these cynics point out, if everyone thinks rumors like these are baseless, how come there was a run in 2018 on products to "rat-proof" a home? Currently, sales of home security equipment is at an all-time high in Greater Los Angeles. Is this a product of the "War Lord" rumor? Nobody knows for sure.

NIHON

(Japan)

FACTS AT A GLANCE

People
Population: 135,626,000
Density: 948/sq.mi. (367/sq.km.)
Urban: 79%
Capital: Tokyo, 9,523,000
Languages: Japanese.
Religion: Techno-Taoist 94%
Life Expectancy: 77 female, 68 male.
Literacy: 99.9%
Government: Parliamentary Democracy.
Parties: Mercantile, Liberal Technocrats.
Suffrage: Universal, over 21.

Economy
GDP: \$ 1,837,054,170,000.
Per Capita: \$13,545.
Monetary Unit: Yuan.
Exports: Electrical & electronic equipment, chemicals.

Land
Region: Eastern Asia.
Area: 142,811 sq. mi. (369,881 sq. km)
Highest Point: Fuji-San, 12,388 ft (3,753 m).
Lowest Point: Sea level.

LOCATION

Nihon is a chain of islands separated from the Asian mainland by the Sea of Japan. The nation consists of four main islands — Hokkaido, Honshu (the largest island, where the capital and major cities are located), Shikoku, and Kyushu. In addition, the Nihon government claims the Sakhalin and Kuril Islands, but no other nation recognizes this claim.

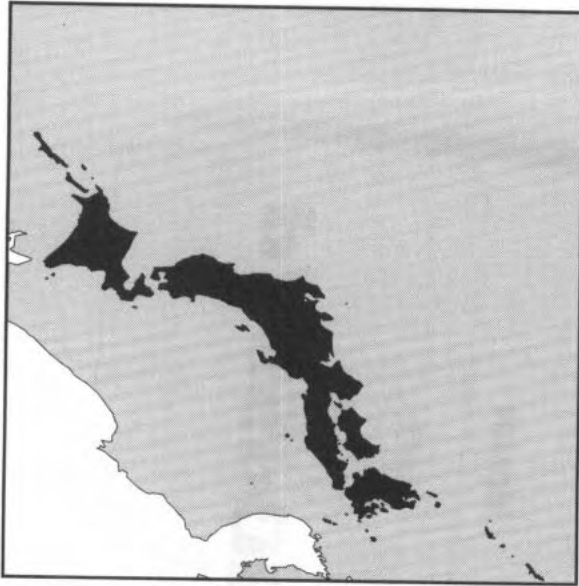
DESCRIPTION

During the 1970s and 1980s, the nation of Japan positioned itself as *the* economic, industrial and technological powerhouse of Asia, with the second largest economy in the world after the United States. Many analysts predicted that, in the early years of the 21st Century, Japan would overtake America, becoming the dominant nation in the world — an economic, rather than military, superpower. The US, these analysts claimed, would sink further and further into obscurity, until the “Japanese Commonwealth” — those nations with Japan’s sphere and under its influence — would dominate the world economically, industrially and technologically.

In retrospect, this has proven to be a rather simplistic view. While the rate of Japan’s growth after World War II was phenomenal, by the early 1990s the rate of change of that growth — that is, the second derivative — was negative. The long boom was coming to an end.

In the early 1990s, Japanese society contained the seeds of its own doom. The government was wracked by scandal after scandal, destroying people’s faith in the political establishment. Attempts to bring the institution that was the Emperor into the 20th Century — let alone the 21st — failed miserably. A rapidly-aging population put an ever greater strain on the economy. International backlashes against governmental regulations and business practices seen as protectionist and xenophobic began to isolate Japan, cutting it off from vital markets. The much-ballyhooed productivity of Japanese workers began to drop as the work ethic changed. Fewer *sararimen* worked themselves into an early grave, preferring instead to lay back a little and actually enjoy the fruits of their labors (an innovative concept for Japanese society). In productivity terms, Japan was quickly overtaken by aggressive developing nations like the newly-unified Korean Combine, the Indo-Malaysian Co-Prosperity Sphere, and eventually the Democratic Republic of China.

In 2005, Japan’s government pressured MITI — the ministry responsible for promoting Japanese industry — into deregulating many key businesses, opening them up to foreign participation and competition. It was too little, too late. Japan’s superheated economy had already begun to contract, and the American firms who’d been clamoring at the gates for entry into the home-islands market had turned their attention to other, more





amenable nations. By the time Japan got around to laying out the welcome mat, nobody wanted in any more.

Japanese society slumped into a malaise that some analysts thought would be terminal. Productivity dropped further, driving popular morale even lower, which caused even more pervasive decreases in productivity. The economy was in an apparently-unrecoverable flat spin. The social order began to collapse, as the rates of street crime, unmotivated violence, and suicide sky-rocketed. In a vain attempt to improve national morale, the government tried to re-establish the ancient concept of Bushido, bringing the Emperor to the forefront and trying to "position" him as semi-divine. This scheme — which made little sense to outsiders — seemed to be an attempt to fan the fires of national pride, harking back to the

"golden age" when Japan had viewed itself as the only civilized land in the entire world. For awhile it worked, as certain families were elevated to the rank of "samurai", purportedly because of their genealogy. When serious corruption was discovered in the elevation process — a family wanting to become samurai merely had to make "voluntary gifts" to the appropriate social ministry — the populace rose up and swept away the government in a popular reaction that seemed totally out of keeping with a society that was generally seen as hidebound and conservative.

A new governmental system rose out of the ashes in 2012. The institution of the Emperor was eliminated. The *Diet* — the parliament — remained, but in a totally revamped form. The old political parties ceased to exist, to be replaced by the two major parties that still dominate the political scene today: the Mercantile party (modeled on the party of the same name in China) and the Liberal Technocrats. In the first election of the "New Scheme", the Mercantiles gained power, and immediately opened negotiations with China to join the newly-formed Far East Collective. Attempting to "rationalize" its own economy with the new powerhouse across the Sea of Japan, the nation that now called itself Nihon replaced its old currency, the yen, with the yuan as used in China. Membership in the Far East Collective has changed the face of Nihon politics and economy, until in 2021 it has come to resemble a "little China" in many ways.

Sociologically, the face of Nihon/Japan has changed, too. As the economy is ramping back up after the catastrophic slump at the beginning of the century, the society is becoming more affluent again. Unfortunately, this affluence doesn't seem to be affecting the spiritual malaise that exists at the core of the society. Nihon doesn't have a "social model" that works. The old model — the one that led to Japan's pre-eminence in the 1980s — has proven to be bankrupt. China has tried to install a new model based on its own society, but it simply hasn't "taken" in Nihon. In 2021, Nihon is a society without a soul.

The face of religion has changed, too. Historically, the principal religions were Shinto and Buddhism, but Japanese thought had also been deeply affected by Confucianism. When the nation shifted over to the "New Scheme", the vast majority of the population turned away from the old religions as well, believing they had no further relevance to the world of the 21st Century. In 2013, Fujikawa Benju founded the religion that would take Nihon by storm — Techno-Taoism. This faith has proven basically incomprehensible to foreigners, even to sociologists and theologians used to making sense of unusual faiths. It seems to combine elements of traditional Taoism with elements of Technocracy (a cult-like faith that existed in North America in the 1980s and 1990s), but "seems" is the operative word. Despite the fact that it makes no sense whatsoever to outsiders, some 94% of Nihon's population has embraced the new faith.

SPACE CITY™

FACTS AT A GLANCE

Population

Permanent: 7,500.

Transient: 28,000 (including daily workers).

Government: Corporate Council.

Parties: None.

Suffrage: Corporate employees.

Security Forces: Space City™ Peace Force (1,000 employees approx.)

Land

Region: South Central California.

Area: 800 sq. mi. (2,072 sq. km.)

LOCATION

Space City™ is located approximately 125 miles East Northeast of Central Los Angeles, on the slopes of Hidalgo Mountain (4,435 feet; 1,352 meters), in the region that used to be the Twentynine Palms Marine Corps base.

DESCRIPTION

Space City™ is the centerpiece of America's space program in 2021. It is owned and operated entirely by a consortium of large aerospace corporations. It receives no government funding or tax breaks of any kind. (Both the federal and state governments have frequently *offered* Space City™ benefits, but the corporate consortium has always refused them. Neither level of government has *any* presence in, or influence over, Space City™, and the consortium obviously wants to keep it just that way.)

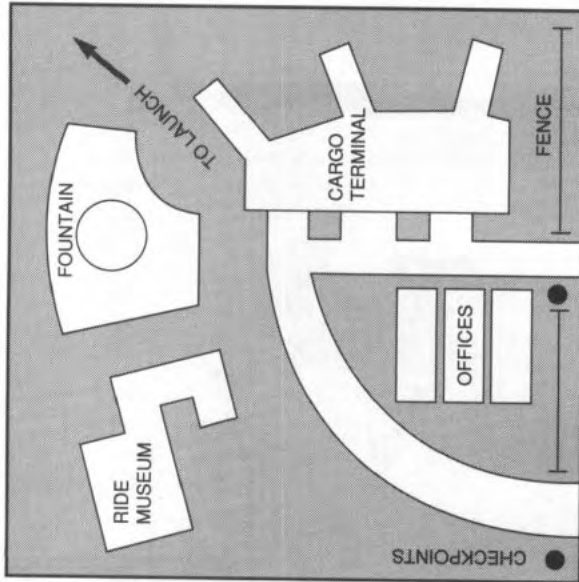
Throughout the late 1990s and the first years of the 21st Century, funding cuts to NASA severely rolled back the US space program. The more ambitious projects that space scientists had been planning were postponed again and again, and finally canceled. Even shuttle flights became less and less frequent as the shuttle fleet aged and maintenance costs skyrocketed (so to speak). The telecommunications industry began to suffer, as shuttle "lifts" to replace aging telecom satellites grew more expensive, then completely undependable, then effectively unavailable as the military monopolized all available launch "slots". American corporations that needed launch capabilities turned to other countries, such as China and the Commonwealth of Independent States, but political considerations limited their access even here. For awhile, the American outfits were

able to depend on commercial lifters operating out of Europe, but then protectionist policies started raising *those* rates as well. Unless something were done, and done quickly, corporate America would be out of the "space business"... and that simply wasn't acceptable.

In 2006, a consortium of American corporations gave the federal government one last chance to correct things, *demanding* that more funding be allocated to the space program. Everyone knows the result. President Kevin McHugh faxed his famous one-word response to the directors of the consortium — "Balls!" — and corporate America knew it would have to take matters into its own hands.

Early in 2007, the construction of Space City™ began. The Twenty-nine Palms Marine Corps base had closed down several years earlier as a result of the nation's military draw-down, and the corporate consortium acquired it from the federal government for a fire-sale price. The consortium then applied intense pressure — and considerable amounts of folding money — to various state regulatory agencies, until the Twenty-nine Palms area was declared to be its own independent county. The consortium established a county seat and a local government run by a corporate council. Construction workers and others moved into the area, becoming official residents of Twenty-nine Palms County. The county council declared that only employees of the corporations comprising the consortium could vote... and then quietly made sure those employees knew just who they were expected to vote *for*, and what would happen to them if they didn't. (This whole process was nothing new, of course; the precedent existed in Florida, not too far from the decaying facilities of Cape Canaveral — Disney World.) The first part of Space City™ to be built was the "security perimeter", a series of walls, fences and guard towers more than 120 miles long. Once site security had been established, construction of the rest got underway.

Space City™ was completed in an astounding eight months from the initial ground-breaking ceremony. When the area was being established as an autonomous





county, the consortium also “arranged” — again, through quiet fund transfers — enough waivers, exemptions and exceptions to ensure that no state or federal inspectors would have the right to so much as step onto the site. Presumably, the federal government was able to find out, via satellite surveillance and spy-plane overflights, more or less what was going on inside the security perimeter. Not so the civilian population, however, and Space City™ remained a rather ominous mystery until its official unveiling on September 15, 2007. The opening day festivities — as part of which several thousand authorized visitors, selected by lottery, were escorted onto the site — had as their centerpiece the first purely-commercial launch in American history. A modified *Energia* booster picked up army-surplus from the Commonwealth of Independent States lofted a sophisticated broadcast satellite — a “death star” — into geosynch orbit, without the participation or involvement of any government-owned asset.

For the next several years, Cape Canaveral and Space City™ existed in parallel. All commercial lifts occurred from Space City™, while all military and national-interest launches left from the Cape. In 2009, however, the corporate consortium that owned and operated Space City™ bid on a military launch that was scheduled for the

Cape in a few months. The corporate tender was much lower than the military’s own cost. Despite the potential savings, pride was involved. That launch was made from the Cape, as were the next five. The sixth military launch of 2009, however, was contracted out to Space City™ after the catastrophic — and embarrassing — failure of the fifth. So effective and inexpensive was the Space City™ service, that the US military contracted out all further space operations. In 2010, Cape Canaveral was devastated by Hurricane Tim, and was never re-built. Since then, Space City™ has been America’s sole major launch site.

Security is exceptionally tight around Space City™. The Space City™ Peace Force is effectively a 1,000-person private army, mostly boosted, hired by the corporate consortium from a conflict firm. (The contract is opened to tender every year, and issued to the lowest bidder. Currently the Space City™ Peace Force actually consists of members seconded from one of AMI’s Ranger detachments. For PR reasons, the Rangers cannot wear their unit shoulder flash with its distinctive, “Mess with the Best, Die like the Rest” slogan...)

The managers of Space City™ fear that their enclave is an excellent target for terrorists, and take their security very seriously.

It is possible to visit Space City™, and various companies run bus and helijet tours from Los Angeles. The security on these tours is incredibly tight, however, and visitors are never out of sight of the dozen or so boosted Rangers who accompany their official guides. Most interesting sites are off-limits, but the public grandstands offer an excellent view of launches, while the Interpretive Center has won several educational awards. A four-hour tour leaving from and returning to Los Angeles costs about \$500.

UNIVERSITY OF SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA (USC)

FACTS AT A GLANCE

People

Enrollment: 36,100

Security Forces: Trojan Security Corp. (350 employees approx.)

Economy

Annual Tuition (average): \$260,000

Land

Region: Central Los Angeles.

Area: 1.75 sq. mi. (4.54 sq. km) approx.

LOCATION

USC is a relatively small "urban" campus in Central L.A., southwest of the intersection of I-10 and I-110, near Vermont Avenue.

DESCRIPTION

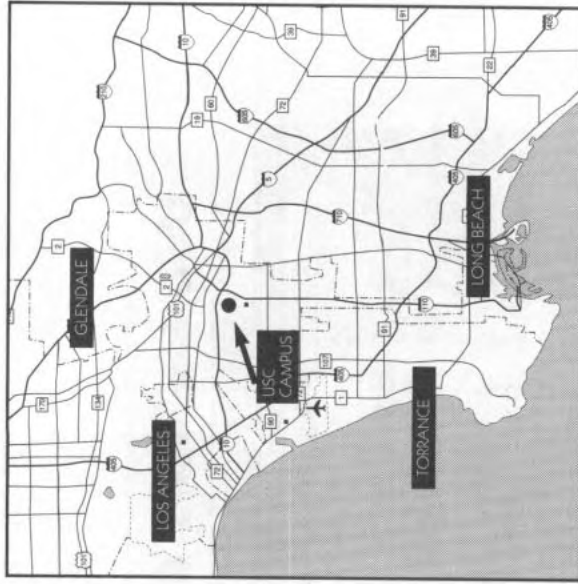
In the last decades of the 20th Century, USC was in one of the less-desirable areas of L.A., with a disturbingly high rate of violent crime. Today, in 2021, USC is in the middle of a war zone. Gangs roam the largely-Latino neighborhoods to the east of the campus, while squatters, many of them boosted (and blasted on Estro-Gin), live in the ruins of the Dorothy Chandler Pavilion — once home to the Academy Awards presentations — a block or so away. Only the Trojan Security Corporation — a private company to which USC subcontracts its security services — keeps gang and other violence from spreading onto the campus. Certainly, students and visitors must put up with minor inconveniences — such as running bags, purses, even books through metal detectors and chem-sniffers before entering any building — but most people accept this as a small price to pay for safety. People familiar with the system make allowances, like showing up four hours before the scheduled time for a show at the Spielberg-Lucas Holographic Theater to allow ample time for the necessary strip-search. The Trojan Security personnel — commonly called "Robocops", a nickname given to them by the Cinema Department that soon spread throughout the campus — are generally polite

and friendly, keeping their 20mm hand canons in their holsters most of the time.

Much of the USC campus was burned down in the "Week of Fire", the second major set of L.A. riots in 1996. Only the Cinema Department and the main library managed to escape almost unscathed — the former because nobody could be bothered burning it down; the latter because almost the entire faculty and staff, and much of the student population manned hastily-erected barricades to keep the ravaging hordes from

burning the books. Funds were scarce for the rebuilding, leading to much cutting of corners. The new campus *looked* good when it was completed in 2000, but by 2001 the new buildings were already showing cracks and water-stains. The new portions of the campus are only 21 years old today, but they look more than twice that. Whole corridors, and even wings of buildings, have been declared off-limits because of the very real chance of collapse.

Sociologically, over the last two decades USC has been a mass of contradictions and ambiguities. For example, in the first years of the 21st Century, it was one of the shining stars of the Political Correctness movement. Its student constitution, enacted in 2004, strictly outlawed all expressions of sexism, racism, ageism, lookism, heightism, fitism, weightism, smartism, and many dozens of other "isms". The campus was heavily modified to meet the specific needs of the "innovatively abled", sometimes to the detriment of those who were "prosaically abled". (An example of this was the declaration on January 5, 2005 — repealed on January 7, 2005 — that no lights could be turned on in any building so that the "alternatively sensed" (i.e., the blind) should no longer be at a disadvantage.) For awhile in 2006, the USC admissions department practiced "affirmative action" with regard to intelligence, to counter charges of "smartism". To guarantee an acceptable spectrum of "intellectual preference", each student of above-average IQ had to be balanced by a student of below-average IQ. The Department of Alternative Histories went out of its way to teach anything and everything except for the "patriarchal, militaristic and colonial dogma perpetuated by Dead



USC LIBRARY CARD



Billie Jo Santana
2463 W. University Ave.

Borrower #: 2317-46
ID #: 76349

OMEGA ACCESS

White Males", as the Department of Language and Non-Language (once the Department of Literature) strove to find something to teach that didn't promote "literism" ("the false belief that literacy is somehow admirable and important"). The faculties and science and medicine also strove to teach alternatives to the dogmas of "materialistic science" and "non-holistic medicine".

Predictably, the academic reputation of USC dropped like a paralyzed pigeon. While enrollment remained high, the admissions department was finding it very difficult to maintain their anti-smartism program simply because so few candidates of above-average intelligence were applying. On September 13, 2013 — known as "Black Friday" — the Board of Directors fired the president, the entire senior administration, and the deans of all the major departments. Their replacements were charged with turning USC back into one of the most significant centers of learning in the country, and hang the expense.

The new administration succeeded, in large part. Over the next eight years, USC's reputation has climbed out of the toilet, and it's well on its way to becoming a university of the first rank. Certainly, tuition fees are high, but that allows the school to attract famous professionals — business gurus, politicians, movie directors, etc. — to serve as visiting lecturers.

USC's main library is a Mecca for scholars up and down the west coast, and is famed as having perhaps the largest collection of *real books* in America. The administration claims that all of these books have been digitized and are available on-line, but not many people believe this. There are recurring rumors that the basement of the library building contains extensive "sealed stacks", containing books that the government would never authorize to be digitized and disseminated electronically. Nobody knows quite what these "banned" books might be, or why they're kept off-limits. While the administration constantly denies the existence of these sealed stacks — nicknamed the "Omega stacks" by many — students can't help but wonder about the excessive security around the library's basement. If there's nothing down there at all — as the administration claims — why so many guards and locked doors...?

UPPER BEL AIRE

FACTS AT A GLANCE

People

Population: 6,300

Density: 2,800/sq.mi. (1,080/sq.km.)

Languages: English.

Life Expectancy: 84 female, 80 male.

Literacy: 100%

Government: Upper Bel Aire Homeowners' Council

Suffrage: Land-owners.

Security Forces: Upper Bel Aire Security (300 employees approx.)

Economy

Per Capita Income: \$42,500,000

Land

Region: West Los Angeles.

Area: 2.25 sq. mi. (5.83 sq. km) approx.

LOCATION

Upper Bel Aire is a relatively small enclave of very expensive, staggeringly luxurious homes located in a floating city just over Bel Aire.

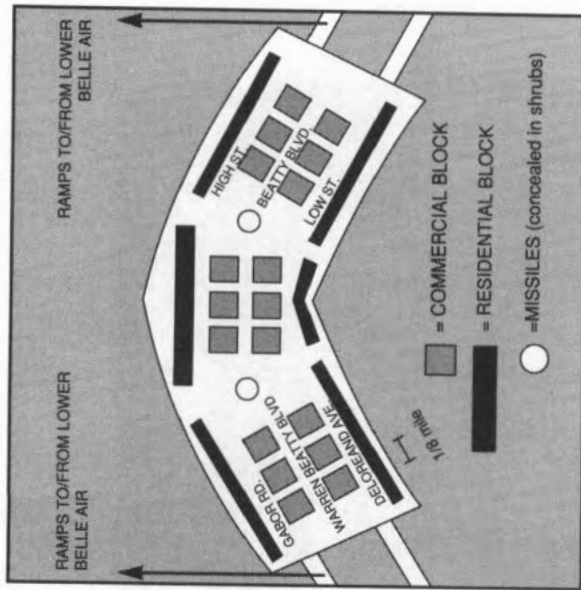
DESCRIPTION

Even in the last century, Bel Aire was an incredibly exclusive, highly security-conscious area of the city. In the 1990s, Bel Aire residents took to hiring private security firms to limit access to their neighborhood. The main roads leading into Bel Aire had security booths to keep out "undesirables". Unless you lived there or worked there — or were part of an authorized tour — and could prove it, the guards would politely turn you back. After the "Week of Fire" — the second major spate of LA riots in 1996 — the level of security around Bel Aire increased drastically. The ornate, decorative wrought-iron gates on many roads leading into the neighborhood were quietly reinforced, and sometimes electrified. The number of security personnel increased, and they carried their weapons more openly. Still, however, the guards were generally polite to the "undesirables" they turned away.

Things have changed over the decades. When floating city architecture began to take hold in LA county, Bel Aire was one of the first areas to sign up for the ultimate in metropolitan security. Today Bel Aire has turned into a high-security enclave that would make many military bases and maximum-security prisons jealous.

The guards — who aren't so polite any more — are armed to the teeth, often packing hyper-caliber anti-off weapons with all the bells and whistles. The security checkpoints on the floating roads leading into Upper Bel Aire look more like reinforced bunkers than anything else. While the guard who actually approaches would-be visitors might carry little more than a commonly-available 20mm assault rifle, there are probably half a dozen "shocktroopers", armed with military grade weapons, watching on closed-circuit vid ready to react in an instant to any trouble. Along the main access roads — Sunset Boulevard, for example — there are full-fledged machine-gun nests in hardened revetments covering the approaches. Many Bel Aire residents are distressed over how unaesthetic these precautions are, and have asked the Homeowners' Council to plant flower-beds and decorative shrubs to conceal the more ugly security provisions. (Out-of-town visitors are often surprised to hear the acquisition beep of a weapon guidance system coming from a bougainvillea bush beside the road as they drive toward an entrance to Bel Aire.)

Gates, electrified fences, sensor nets and heavily-armed security patrols make it almost impossible to penetrate Bel Aire on the ground. The Homeowners' Council's main security headquarter at the moment is protecting Bel Aire against flight-capable intruders. Armed helicopters patrol around the periphery, but since many residents complain of the noise and inconvenience when the gunships actually fly over their property, airborne security isn't anywhere near as good as the Council would like to make it. The Council is currently negotiating with Mars Corporation and other arms providers to buy a few batteries of Lancet anti-personnel SAMs — task-designed to blow flight-capable boosted ops out of the sky — but the anti-air systems probably won't be in place for another few months.





Upper Bel Aire 99 Card



Upper Grade Council

547 West Grand St.

Bel Aire, East 6153-927

MS. 317

MS. 130

Upper Grade Council

Bel Aire, East

Even though the LAPF has official jurisdiction, *unofficially* Bel Aire is off-limits to LAPF personnel. (After all, there've been enough cases of LAPF officers "going bad" to worry the Homeowners' Council. Bel Aire residents would much rather trust their own security personnel.) Again officially, if Upper Bel Aire security people apprehend a criminal, they should immediately turn him or her over to LAPF troopers at the Upper Bel Aire "border". In practice, this *usually* happens, but there are scare-stories about intruders simply disappearing. As it has its own security and law enforcement system, so does Bel Aire have its own sanitation service, a private service provider hired by the Council.

The enclave has its own *de facto* "government" as well. This is the Upper Bel Aire Homeowners' Council, a fifteen-person, democratically-elected body that has almost total authority over everything that goes on in the neighborhood. Councilmembers serve two-year terms, and there's no limit on the number of times a person can stand for re-election. Serving on the Council is considered a "civic duty", and thus Councilmembers receive no compensation. (There are no conflict-of-interest rules, however, or any other restrictions on money-making activities, so serving on Council usually isn't a financial hardship — quite the opposite, in fact, since a

Council seat is very prestigious.) Only land-owners are eligible to vote and to run for Council. Of the total population of Bel Aire, only a thousand or so actually own land, making for a very closed, tight-knit system.

The Council is responsible for security and all infrastructure matters (like sanitation). To allow it to do its job, it can levy "maintenance fees" — effectively taxes by another name — on all residents. It has no official way of enforcing these levies, however; theoretically, a resident could simply refuse to pay. Such refusal, however, would lead to the person being totally ostracized by everyone else in the district — in other words, by everyone who "matters". The threat of this kind of social sanction is enough to keep everyone in line. In any case, Bel Aire homeowners are so rich — they *have* to be to live there in the first place — that a levy of a few million a year per household doesn't count for much.

The Council has the mandate of "maintaining the quality of life in Upper Bel Aire", and has wide-ranging powers to allow this. Anyone planning to renovate his or her home, or even change the landscaping, must get Council approval to guarantee that "aesthetic guidelines" aren't transgressed. Similarly, anyone who wants to sell up and move out must involve the Council in the process to make sure that the people who buy the property are "suitable". Perhaps surprisingly, the Council has never shown any evidence of racism when it comes to judging who's suitable to move into Bel Aire. The only criteria are wealth and "social suitability". Bel Aire residents can be, and are, of all races, creeds and nationalities; all, however, must have "old money" manners and attitudes. *Nouveau riche* need not apply.

VETERANS ADMINISTRATION MEDICAL CENTER

FACTS AT A GLANCE

People

Permanent Employees: 950 (250 medical, 700 administrative/managerial/support)

Number of Beds: 500 (official); 600 (estimated)

Security Forces: Wolverine Security (private firm; 50 persons)

Economy

Annual Budget: \$575,000,000 (official); \$1,000,000,000 (estimated)

Facilities

Region: Central Los Angeles.

Floor Space: 150,000 sq.ft. (13,935 sq.m.) (official);
180,000 sq.ft. (16,722 sq.m.) (estimated).

LOCATION

The Veterans Administration Medical Center (VAMC, usually pronounced "VAM-see") is a large, somewhat brutal-looking building located in the downtown core near the corner of Lucas Avenue and Shatto Street.

DESCRIPTION

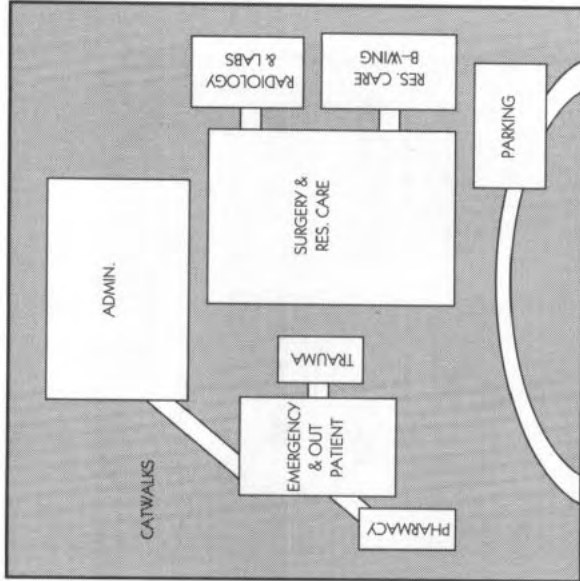
VAMC is officially described as the primary health provider for all registered veterans in the Greater Los Angeles Area. Certainly, there are outlying clinics, outpatient facilities, counseling offices and other agencies run by the VA throughout Los Angeles — there'd *have* to be; LA is simply too big, with too large a population of veterans, to get by with a single hospital — but VAMC is the largest and most important of these facilities. While the outlying clinics can handle minor problems, anyone with a truly critical problem — physical, mental or emotional — would be best advised to come downtown to VAMC.

The concept of VAMC is a good and admirable one. Anyone who served in a combat capacity with a conflict firm — the current definition of "veteran"; AMI clerical workers, for example, don't qualify for VA benefits — and who suffered any kind of injury, disease or other ailment during that service, will receive free treatment for that complaint, whether that treatment is a one-time thing or ongoing for the rest of

the vet's life. All pharmaceuticals prescribed for a condition contracted while in service are dispensed for free. Registered veterans can come to VAMC for conditions that *weren't* caused in service and, while they have to pay, they're charged less than 50% of what civilian hospitals or doctors would charge for the same services. And further, those vets who have medical insurance — granted, that's very few of them — enjoy vastly reduced premiums if they accept a restriction that they must receive all treatment from VAMC.

Considering that a single dose of clozapine costs \$750, a simple blood test costs \$7,500 and one day in an intensive-care hospital bed can go as high as \$250,000, it might seem logical that vets look on VAMC and its services as a great benefit. Why, then, do most vets despise VAMC and everything it stands for?

There are various reasons, most of which reflect the way the government and its agencies generally views the "veteran problem". VAMC staff members are overworked and underpaid. While in a civilian hospital, a ward nurse might have to monitor the condition of 15 or 20 patients, in VAMC that same nurse might have a patient load of upwards of 50. While there are some staffers who work at VAMC because they care about the concerns of vets and feel good that their job is "making a difference", the majority of doctors and other professionals on staff work there simply because they couldn't cut it anywhere else. With an (official) annual budget of only \$575,000,000, VAMC is vastly underfunded. High day-to-day costs — and a fair bit of corruption here and there — often make it impossible to invest in necessary maintenance. Although it's less than ten years old — and although its exterior looks spic and span (for PR reasons, of course) — the VAMC building is starting to fall apart inside. Floors, walls and ceilings are cracked and stained. Inessential systems, like the nurse-call buttons mounted beside each bed, and the video sets in the patient lounges, almost never work. Even vital systems — like the oxygen distribution system — tend to fail from time to time. The pharmacy is often out of important drugs



PATIENT: GEORGE OLNEY VA REG.#: 48539-278

Test	Base Cost	Discounted Cost
Hematocrit	\$7,750	\$3,250
Hemoglobin	\$4,800	\$2,000
Thymol/Turb	\$7,100	\$3,555
PO ₄	\$3,600	\$1,575
CO ₂	\$3,600	\$1,575
Bilir. Diff.	\$12,750	\$6,125
Total	\$39,600	\$18,090

Congratulations! You have saved \$21,520 by selecting VAMC as you healthcare provider! Please pay cashier in front office. Thank you.

— either because a shipment was delayed, or because some staff-members “freelance” by selling drugs such as clozapine on the black market. Veterans who’ve spent any time in VAMC agree that it’s a hell-hole, and you’d be much better off going to a “street cutter” like Doc Shock (q.v.)... if you can afford it, of course.

There are also many even more disturbing rumors about VAMC circulating among the vet population of L.A. For example, it’s more or less an open secret among the vets that there’s more to the VAMC facility than the ten stories visible above-ground. Apparently there are two sub-basements — off-limits to unauthorized personnel, of course — with an additional hundred beds. These “special services facilities” receive independent funding, according to certain investigative journalists — about \$425,000,000 in independent funding, more than 74% of the amount earmarked for the public functions of VAMC.

Just what goes on in these “special services facilities”? Nobody knows for sure, although many harrowing rumors are circulating. People hint darkly at strange experimental procedures, at patients disappearing from the regular wards for several days, then reappearing, their personalities fundamentally altered. While the Veterans Administration itself, the government as a whole, and VAMC management won’t even admit to the existence of the special services facilities, apologists for the system suggest that the secret basements are home to various projects designed to alleviate the problem of metagenic feedback trauma. (Why keep *that* secret? people ask. So as not to prematurely raise people’s hopes, the apologists reply... not too convincingly.) Conspiracy aficionados like Doc Shock have quite different suggestions about what’s going on below street level, of course...

Even if Doc Shock’s ideas — all of them gruesome in the extreme, and probably highly unlikely — are just figments of his sanity-blasted imagination, it’s undeniable that some shady things *have* gone on at VAMC. A couple of years ago, the news media broke the story that VAMC docs did keep their patients heavily sedated — “tranked to the eyeballs” was the phrase used — and even mixed tranquilizers into the clozapine they prescribed to out-patients. Just last year, evidence surfaced that several vets who’d undergone surgery at VAMC had come away with objects “accidentally” left behind inside the incisions — namely, homing devices, allowing them to be tracked electronically. Nobody knows what VAMC is up to at the moment, but the conventional wisdom is that the facility is up to *something*. Only those vets with nowhere else to go visit the Veterans Administration Medical Center.



NAME:

FACTS AT A GLANCE

LOCATION

DESCRIPTION

MAP

PEOPLE

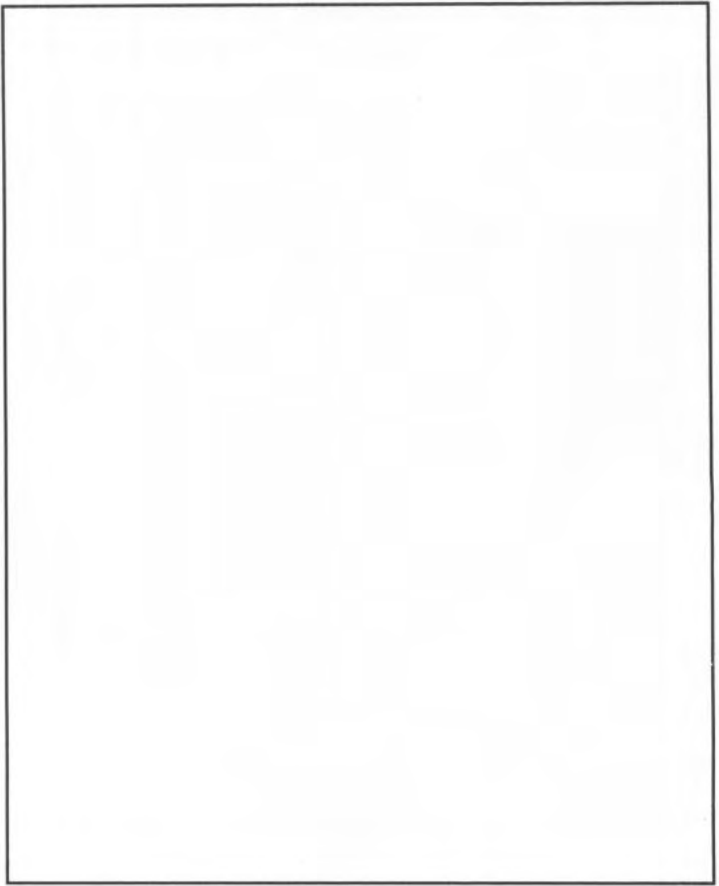
PLACES

ORGANIZATIONS

EVENTS

TECHNOLOGY

MISC.





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TOO STRONG TO LIVE
TOO WEAK TO DIE

SYSTEMATIC
OVERTHROW

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We the People

1787

FREE THE PAGE

NEVER AGAIN



THE
**NOTICE
BOOK**

ORGANIZATIONS

A HANDY GUIDE TO THE FEDERAL BUREAUCRACY

THE EXECUTIVE BRANCH

President, Vice President, (often) The First Lady

Department of Veterans' Affairs

VA Medical, Veterans' Administration., Veterans' Business Administration

Department of Justice

Anti-Sedition Squad, Dept. of Deeds and Dissemination, Technicalities Div.

Department of the Interior

Pollution Oversight Administration, Weather Service

Department of Defense

Conflict Contracts Administration, Next-of-Kin Notification Administration

Department of Labor

Unemployment Statistics Bureau, Anti-Trust Waiver Administration

Department of Entertainment

Ratings and Trackings Administration, Inter-Celebrity Council

Department of State

Bureau of Treaties, Marketing Strategies Administration

Department of Health and Human Services

Center for Disease Control, National Health Society

Department of Commerce

Trade and Tariff Commission, Market Research Administration

Department of Agriculture

Bureau of Subsidies, D of A Office Furniture Administration

Department of Education

Agency for the Evolution of an Appropriate Curriculum

Department of the Treasury

Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms, Paint Thinner, and Deviant Pornography

A HANDY GUIDE TO THE FEDERAL BUREAUCRACY

THE LEGISLATIVE BRANCH

Congressmen, Senators, Assorted Felons

THE JUDICIAL BRANCH

Judges, Clerks, Toadies

JOINT COMMITTEES

Joint Committees on: Aging, Insurrection Aversion, Budget Oversight, Ethics, Publicity, Independent Corporation Interaction, Foodstuffs, Corporate Army Recruitment, Perks and Speaking Fees, Voter Turnout Reduction

THE SUPREME COURT

Chief Justice
Lesser Justices
Clerks

HOUSE COMMITTEES

Finance, Foreign Relations,
Ways and Means,
Transportation, Legal Terrorism,
Banking, Armed Services

SENATE COMMITTEES

Finance, Foreign Relations, Judicial,
Transportation, Legal Terrorism,
Banking, Armed Services

FEDERAL COURTS

Federal Judges
Clerks

ANTI-SEDITION SQUAD

FACTS AT A GLANCE

Organizational Profile

Headquarters Location: Washington, DC (details unknown)
Director: Luke Harshaw
Reports to: Victoria Darnhelm, Director, Justice Department
Primary Responsibility: Monitoring of all anti-government action
Annual Budget: Unknown

Personnel

Total Employees: Unknown

BACKGROUND

Unlike the Department of Deeds and Dissemination (q.v.), the Anti-Sedition Squad — predictably, known outside the Squad itself by its acronym — didn't exist before 2017 and introduction of the Twenty-Ninth and Thirtieth Amendments to the Constitution. New laws made possible by these two Amendments declared that criticisms of the Government of the United States and other "bulwarks of the American way of life" (to quote Luke Harshaw, Director of the ASS) were, if not strictly illegal, then to be strictly limited "for the good of all citizens". The Anti-Sedition Squad was created to enforce these laws — to handle the paperwork involved in reports of "potentially seditious statements", to track outspoken critics of the government, and basically to monitor "abuses" of free speech throughout the country.

Under the auspices of the Justice Department, the ASS is rather a shadowy organization, and surprisingly little is known about it. For example, its annual budget and the number of personnel in its employ are both kept highly confidential. While the identity of its director, Luke Harshaw, is widely-known, the names of its other senior officials is a matter of speculation. Even the location of its headquarters is a mystery; it's known to be somewhere in Washington, DC, but exactly *where*? (Harshaw's office is in the Justice Department's building, but the rest of the ASS must be located elsewhere.) Over the last four years, many investigative reporters — including the famous Peter Argot (q.v.) — have tried to dig up details on the ASS, but with no success. Only the most dedicated (or obsessed) investigators — Argot among them — are still trying since the Anti-Sedition Squad made it clear that it considered attempts to publicize details about the organization as potentially seditious activities, to be closely monitored. (The ASS's public rationale is that the only viable motive for dig-

ging up details about the Squad is to learn how to circumvent it...)

As far as most citizens are concerned, the ASS's major responsibility is handling the Form 1077. This electronic file form must be filled out by anyone who publicly criticizes the US Government. (Note that the word "publicly" is *not* defined anywhere in any of the laws regarding sedition, leaving interpretation up to the Anti-Sedition Squad. There are rumors — albeit unsubstantiated — that the ASS has, on at least one occasion, interpreted criticizing the government to *two other people* as "public potentially-seditious activity". Citizens should be warned.) By law, anyone who "publicly" criticizes the government, or any "social institution derision and/or mockery of which would undermine public confidence" — again, this is not specifically defined anywhere, leaving interpretation up to the ASS — must complete a Form 1077 and submit it within 24 hours of the event. Failure to file a Form 1077 on time, or failure to provide full details, is a misdemeanor punishable by a maximum six month jail sentence and \$10,000 fine. (Note that, since the Anti-Sedition Squad must *learn* of an unreported criticism, a working definition of "public" is "in front of anyone you think might rat you out to the ASS" ...)

The Anti-Sedition Squad has frequently made clear that criticizing the government, or any other social institution, is not a crime in and of itself — the First Amendment guarantees that. The crime lies in not reporting such criticism to the proper authorities. There is no social or legal stigma attached to any properly-reported incidence of criticism... so claims the ASS, at least. The fact of the matter is that the Squad keeps all 1077s on file in perpetuity, tracking those people who file repeatedly. Frequent critics may find themselves under surveillance by ASS operatives. Or, worse, they may find that their names have been passed on to the FBI, which watches for *any* illegal activities, not only those related to the anti-sedition laws.

Anti-Sedition Squad



FOR INTERNAL USE ONLY
FORM 4545-LI-DOCUMENTATION OF UNLICENSED
EVENT 412 (CRITICISM OF GOVERNMENT AND/OR
SOCIAL INSTITUTIONS)

Reporting Agent: _____

Badge #: _____

Date/Time of Filing: _____

Date/Time of Unlicensed Event 412: _____

Location of Unlicensed Event 412 (Be specific): _____

Physical Description: _____

On the lines below, please paraphrase content of

Unlicensed Event 412: _____

ACTIVITIES AND GOALS

Although Luke Harshaw publicly claims that the Anti-Sedition Squad's central purpose is to handle form 1077s and enforce the associated laws, the organization's official mandate is much broader: "to seek out and take appropriate action against seditious and *potentially* seditious activity within the United States of America". Harshaw takes this mandate seriously, and uses ASS assets to monitor any and all "hotbeds of potential sedition" that he can think of. He believes that the music, under-

ground comics, role-playing game and independent movie industries are key sources of potentially-seditious activity, and so monitors them closely. ASS agents — their several nicknames on the street are obvious — often go to great lengths to infiltrate "potentially-seditious" organizations. Over the last two years or so, as various activist organizations have gained more notoriety, Harshaw has added them to his (extensive) list of target groups.

LEADERSHIP

Harshaw rules the Anti-Sedition Squad with a fist of iron. Apparently, almost all authority within the organization is concentrated in Harshaw's office. Subsidiary ASS divisions across the country seem to have very little autonomy, and have to refer all but the most incidental decisions up the chain of command to Harshaw and those closest to him.

RESOURCES

The Anti-Sedition Squad has shown itself to have a surprising — and disturbing — amount of resources. Although its data processing system is less sophisticated than that possessed by the Triple-D (q.v.) and the Census Bureau (q.v.), it's still powerful enough to track the thousands of Form 1077s coming in every day. The ASS has shown itself to possess significant electronic intelligence (ELINT) capabilities, monitoring communication channels that were thought to be impenetrable to all but the Census Bureau itself. Its undercover operatives have proven themselves expert at infiltrating just about anything from major corporations like God, Inc. to "basement" organizations like Freewind Comics. Some ASS assets are boosted, and have infiltrated several veterans' organizations. (There are hints that the Anti-Sedition Squad might have penetrated even the Underground itself...) How these enhanced operatives came to work for ASS simply isn't known. Did they volunteer? Were they seconded by the militant corps that enhanced them? Or has the Anti-Sedition Squad got so much of a "handle" on certain individuals that it can force them into working undercover?

BOOSTED OPERATIVES FOR CHRIST

FACTS AT A GLANCE

Organizational Profile

Headquarters Location: Los Angeles, CA

Director: Rev. Ernestina Holland

Annual Budget: Confidential (\$200,000,000 estimated)

Personnel

Total Members: 13,500

BACKGROUND

Whenever public perception of social upheaval increases, so does the popularity of religions... any and all religions. Over the last decade, this turn to religion has taken two distinct paths. While many people are reaching out to strange new faiths that would make no sense to somebody from the 20th Century (and, to be honest, make little sense to people from the 21st...), an equal number are turning to more conservative and traditional forms of familiar, tried and true faiths. No matter how much new devotees tell themselves they're participating in truly "traditional" religions, however, it's impossible for them not to bring with them their own world-views and concerns, and integrate these into their worship. Thus the face of any "traditional" sect in 2021 would appear very strange — unrecognizable, sometimes — to a member of that same sect in the early 1990s. One of the most noticeable examples of this is the denomination called Boosted Operatives for Christ.

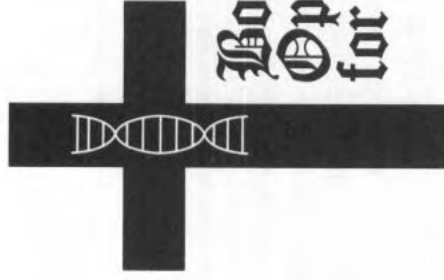
Members of Boosted Operatives for Christ (BOC) would describe their faith as a "highly traditional" evangelical, charismatic Christian denomination, with nothing to set it apart from countless other, similar sects. In fact, there are some very significant differences that distinguish BOC from other, apparently similar evangelical groups. Major among these is their rather revisionist readings of some Biblical passages. According to the BOC view of things, all mentions of angels in the scriptures can be interpreted to be referring to genetically-enhanced individuals! The fall of Lucifer can be read as warning what happens when boosted veterans — who were given their powers to fight for "right" and justice — turn aside from these lofty goals and use their abilities purely for their own ends. (Because of this interpretation, many BOC members believe that the boosted crime boss named Santa Claws (q.v.) is actually an

incarnation of Satan himself!) Other than these (admittedly significant) departures from orthodoxy, the BOC worldview largely follows that of late 20th Century evangelical groups.

Boosted Operatives for Christ was founded in 2019 by Rev. Ernestina Holland, who still leads the organization. Rev. Holland — known to her comrades in the AMI Screaming Eagles as Sister Slash — is still the leader, and best-recognized spokesperson, of the BOC.

In two years, she's expanded the organization from perhaps a dozen of her unit-mates worshipping at a tiny run-down church in the Torrance district of LA (which is still its headquarters today) to a nation-wide movement with over 13,000 members and more than a hundred churches. All members are boosted; there are no restrictions against "mundanes" joining the congregation, but none have so far. BOC operates entirely on donations. All its members tithe — i.e., donate 10% of their annual income — to the church, but since so many are "underemployed", this doesn't add up to that much. Many church members spend a lot of their time canvassing for donations, giving out flowers and religious tracts at airports and on street corners, and offer testaments to their faith to anyone who'll stand still long enough to listen. Regardless of the fact that all BOC members are incredibly quiet, self-effacing and polite, they never conceal or downplay their boosted nature — that's against the edicts of the church — and so look very obviously like what they are: enhanced soldiers, basically death on two feet. (Considering this, it's not surprising that most passers-by approached by BOC members take the offered flowers or religious tracts, and hand over whatever spare change they happen to have on them... before leaving the area, *quickly*.)

Various groups — mainly citizen protection organizations, anti-veterans' rights coalitions and rival religions — have tried to get legislation enacted to keep BOC off the streets and out of airports. Holland has fought all such attempts, claiming the right to freedom of expression and religion promised all citizens by the Constitution. So far, she's won every battle, although various groups — specifically, Neo-Scientology



Boosted Operatives for Christ

WHO VISITED EZEKIEL?

"Then I beheld, and lo, a form of what had the appearance of a man; below what appeared to be his loins it was like fire, and above his loins it was like the appearance of brightness, like gleaming bronze." (*Ezekiel*, 8:2)

What did Ezekiel see?

Ezekiel saw the form of a human, but it was *not* a human—not as *he* knew humans, at least. The form he saw was different from those around him—changed, modified.

Enhanced!

What did Ezekiel see, but a genetically-enhanced individual? A boosted Messenger from God...

(q.v.) and the Sons of Ludd (q.v.) — are currently joining forces to wipe the BOC off the streets. Holland has sworn that her followers will fight their opponents in all legal ways... as long as those opponents stay within the law themselves. If those opponents use illegal tactics against the BOC, she promises her followers will turn the other cheek... but only once. If it happens again, they'll fight fire with fire. (In public, she always supports this stance with suitable "eye-for-an-eye" quotations from the Old Testament.)

ACTIVITIES AND GOALS

BOC is a church, plain and simple. It provides a place of worship for its members, surrounded by like-minded individuals. It has no overt political or social agendas, and at least two very rigorous investigations by journalists have turned up not the slightest hint of a *covert* agenda of any kind. BOC seems to truly be what it professes, a church dedicated to nothing but the welfare of its worshippers, and its own continued survival.

LEADERSHIP

As the founder and director of BOC, Rev. Holland is revered and respected by all members. She's not *worshipped*, however, and that's an important distinction. BOC isn't a dogmatic organization. Individual members and the priests of the different BOC churches across America are free to interpret the Bible and their faith in whatever way suits them. Holland has never set herself up as arbiter of acceptable dogma or interpretation, and swears that she never will. Most BOC priests consult with her — entirely voluntarily — over thorny questions of doctrine, however. While nobody claims her opinion is "divinely inspired" or infallible, most BOC members recognize she's been thinking about issues of faith for longer than most other members, and thus they tend to accept her opinions... although rarely without question.

RESOURCES

BOC has few resources, and has little need of any.

CENSUS BUREAU

FACTS AT A GLANCE

Organizational Profile

Headquarters Location: Washington, DC

Director: Judith Roanoke

Reports to: Charles Foster, President of the United States

Primary Responsibility: Maintaining citizen records

Annual Budget: \$150,375,000,000 (estimated)

Personnel

Total Employees: 95,000 (estimated)

BACKGROUND

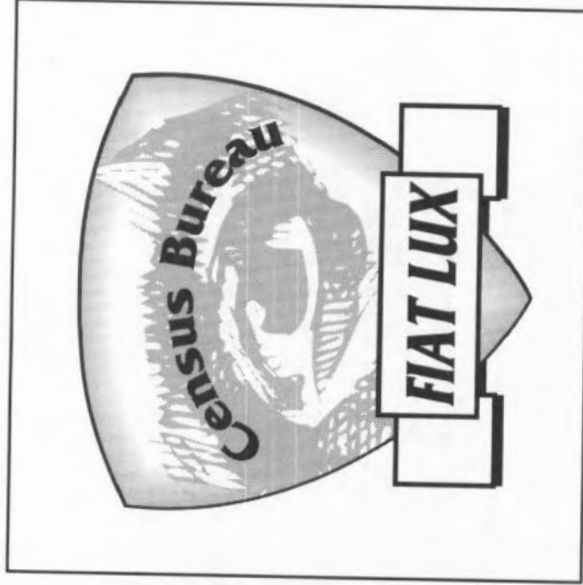
In direct contrast to "Johnny-come-lately" organizations like the Anti-Sedition Squad (q.v.) and the Department of Crystals, Channeling and Transcendental Affairs, the Census Bureau has a long and august history. The Bureau first came into existence in 1790, when it conducted the first census of the United States' population (the result at the time was 3.9 million). Every ten years, as mandated by the US Constitution, Article 1, Section 2, the Bureau has conducted another census, the most recent occurring in 2020 and declaring the population of America to be 375,287,488 (plus or minus 0.05% error).

Throughout the Bureau's history, very few people have given much thought to the importance of census figures. Contrary to popular perception, the decennial census isn't just a way to bolster America's position as the fourth most populace country in the world (after China, India and Nigeria). Census figures are used: to apportion seats in the US House of Representatives; to subsequently determine state legislative district boundaries; to determine compliances with the Voting Rights Act and amendments; to allocate funds from federal grant programs; to identify areas needing bilingual education; to assess the need for equal employment opportunity programs; to allocate funds and analyze programs for American Indians and Alaska Natives; to identify areas needing energy assistance; to develop programs to reduce unemployment; to identify areas needing programs to stimulate economic growth; to establish fair lending practices; to assess the need for developing or expanding low-income housing programs; to identify areas requiring child assistance programs; and on and on. Over time, the Census Bureau has expanded its responsibility and authority, until today — in 2021 — it is arguably one of the most influential organizations within the federal government.

In addition to the responsibilities that have always been the Census Bureau's, the contemporary Bureau has expanded its mandate to "maintain all citizen records". As the amount of information the government collects about each American citizen — and resident *and* visitor, incidentally — increases, this rather innocuous-sounding description takes on ever more importance. Back in the "old days" — some time before the turn of the century — the Census Bureau's records would contain little more than a citizen's name, date of birth and Social Security Number.

Over time, however, other pieces of data were added to the file: address; phone numbers; employment status and details; marital status; criminal record, or lack thereof; details on where and how often the citizen travels outside the US; membership in political parties and other registered organizations; voting participation figures; summaries of bank records; and on and on. (Many of these data are stored and tracked by other agencies as well, of course, but the Census Bureau duplicates these records for its own purposes, at least in summary form.) Today in 2021, the Census Bureau has taken upon itself to monitor and analyze the behavior of the citizenry, both individually and as a group; and, of course, this kind of endeavor requires a *lot* of information.

The Census Bureau has always been on the cutting edge of technology, even though few people — in and out of government — view the agency in that way. For example, in the 1870s a man named Hollerith devised the first system of punch-card data storage for the Census Bureau, and in 1950 the Bureau bought the first commercially-available computer — UNIVAC I — for use in census activities. As data processing technology improved, the Bureau remained at least somewhere near the cutting edge, moving out *beyond* what most people think is the "state of the art" by about 2010. Today, the Census Bureau has probably *the* largest and most sophisticated computer system in the world.



ACTIVITY RECONSTRUCTION METHODOLGY (ARM) REPORT
 SUBJECT ID: 770-095-44
 RECONSTRUCTED SPAN: 4/14/21 00:00 TO 13:00
 DATE/TIME OF REPORT: 6/22/21 09:49:41

Time Span	Activity (***) indicates activity inferred
00:00 to 05:42	No Activity
05:42 to 05:46	Personal hygiene***
05:46 to 06:10	No Activity
06:10 to 06:11	Incoming phone call; no answer (see attached log)
06:11 to 06:13	No Activity
06:13 to 06:30	Incoming phone call from Robert Ernest (see attached log)

ACTIVITIES AND GOALS

No organization with computer resources that extensive is going to let them sit idle. As the Census Bureau's abilities to store and analyze data outstripped the amount of data it was currently monitoring, it started to use its computers to generate more data, in the form of correlations and interconnections. By about 2011, the Bureau was hooked into all of the "Baby Bell" phone systems in the US, enabling it to track who called who, when and how often. These data let the Bureau make some very good guesses about friendships and other relationships between citizens — something it decided it needed to refine its "snapshot" of the citizenry. From there, it was only a short jump to actually monitoring the *content* of telephone communications... and thereafter to *all* kinds of communications (with the participation of the US Mail). Various electronic mail providers and bulletin board systems (BBSs) tried to protect their clients' privacy by encrypting data and using other security provisions, but the Census Bureau's high-powered computers could crack most kinds of encryption available on the open market. (To make sure that this remained the case, the Bureau pressured the government into outlawing all data encryption schemes it *couldn't* penetrate...)

Today, the populace at large would be absolutely horrified to learn just how much the Census Bureau knows about each and every one of them: who their friends and

enemies are; where their favorite stores are, and how much of their budget they spend on various types of purchases; what they watch on video; and — to some extent, at least — what their politics, philosophies and world-views are.

Privately, Census Bureau officials claim that their sole goal is to enhance the security of America, since ignorance about the citizenry has brought down more governments than any other single factor. They also talk vaguely about protecting the republic from "subversive elements" within the country. In fact, however, the Census Bureau's stock in trade is power, and its main goal is to maintain the power it has, and expand it whenever possible. Census Bureau dogma holds that those who fight for personal privacy — the Cypherpunks (q.v.), for instance — are doing it only because they have something to hide.

The Bureau routinely monitors the activities and communications of most other government agencies. Presumably the only thing that stops the

directors of these agencies from taking action is fear of what the Bureau might have in their *personal* files...

LEADERSHIP

The director, Judith Roanoke, runs the Census Bureau like her own feudal fief. She's surrounded by people she trusts implicitly — mainly because she's got something on them, and they know it — and she keeps power concentrated in her "inner circle". When it comes to individual investigations, Census Bureau "assets" have great autonomy, but they have absolutely *no* say in policy.

RESOURCES

The Bureau's data processing resources are, in a word, staggering. It's said that, by drawing on different files, Roanoke could reconstruct the minute-by-minute activities of *any* person in America. (This isn't *quite* true, but it seems to be a goal close to Roanoke's flinty heart.) While it concentrates heavily on electronic intelligence (ELINT), the Bureau doesn't neglect other forms of intelligence-gathering. It has few undercover agents of its own, but the Bureau has a disturbing amount of influence over how other agencies — like the Anti-Sedition Squad and the FBI — assign their investigative resources, and has direct access to any information they generate.

CRYO-DAWN INC.

FACTS AT A GLANCE

Business Profile

Home Office Location: La Jolla, CA

President/CEO: n/a

Chairman of the Board: n/a

Corporate Status: Privately-held corporation

Primary Business: Unknown

Annual Revenue: Unknown

Personnel

Total Employees: Unknown

BACKGROUND

Cryo-Dawn Inc. was founded in 1995 in La Jolla, California, by a man named Neil Finkwaller. Despite the fact that, during its heyday, Cryo-Dawn was known as perhaps *the* most innovative and visionary biomedical company in existence — not entirely justifiably, of course — Finkwaller wasn't a doctor or a scientist. He was an entrepreneur, pure and simple, although he promoted himself as a "futurist" and "emerging technology consultant". Finkwaller had promoted himself differently at various times in the past — as a "crystalomancer" in 1992, as a deacon in the "Church of the All" in 1993, and as a licensed sex therapist in 1994 (that one netted him a short sojourn in jail). In 1995, however, he managed to grub together sufficient funding to launch Cryo-Dawn, and to maintain a heavy cloak of secrecy around everything the company was doing.

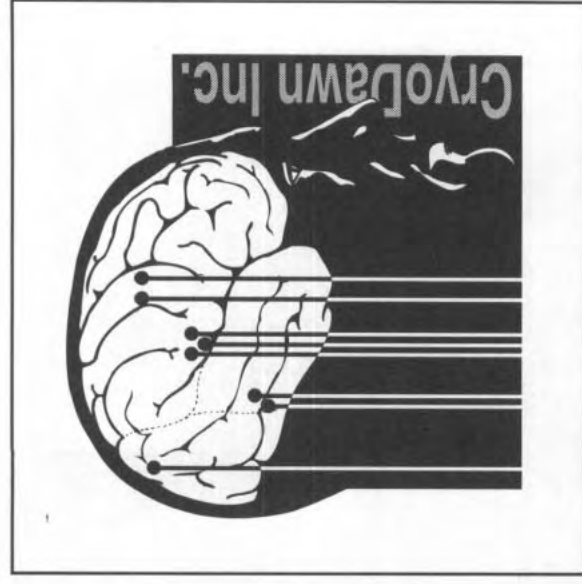
In fact, what the company was doing in 1995 was precisely nothing. Cryo-Dawn consisted of Finkwaller and three PR gurus, and that was it. The PR experts' job was to periodically send statements to various of the news media, denying certain rumors — which actually didn't exist — about Cryo-Dawn. These statements claimed, in effect, that, no, Cryo-Dawn *wasn't* working on cryogenics, and that no, it *hadn't* developed a way of freezing a living human being, and that no, it *wasn't* preparing to market this innovative new technology. These press releases were, of course, absolutely true — Finkwaller was currently working on none of these things. They had the effect, however, of drumming up an incredible amount of interest in Cryo-Dawn. In September, 1995, Finkwaller made his first public stock offering for Cryo-Dawn Inc., stating categorically in his prospectus that the company possessed *no*

cybernetic technology whatsoever, and may *never* acquire any. Institutional investors and stockbrokers figured these statements were just clever ways for Finkwaller to protect himself if the highly innovative technology he *had* to possess just didn't play out, and subscribed to the stock offering, buying it out *in toto* within minutes.

Now Finkwaller had the money he needed to go ahead with his scheme — *lots* of money. He went out and hired the best and the brightest in the cryogenics field, sparing

no expense in acquiring the hardware and software they needed. Finkwaller understood that cryogenic freezing was a huge untapped market. As medical advances were eliminating the old, familiar diseases as threats, and as people's expectations rose as to what length and quality of life they could (and *should*) expect, the horror of the incurable diseases that seemed to be emerging more and more frequently became overwhelming. (While he publicly speculated that, perhaps, something about the decadence of modern society was bringing these diseases out of the woodwork, he understood that all that was happening was that the elimination of the "old standby" diseases was just letting people live long enough to come down with these "new" ailments. For example, when one person in several billion reached 100, nobody lived long enough to contract so-called "George Burns Disease".) Just looking at the Landon-Bixby Memorial Home for Life-Threatened Entertainers, Finkwaller saw a huge market for his new technology... if he could ever get it up and running.

Because what Finkwaller wanted — a technique that could safely freeze and (ideally) thaw out a living human — was way beyond the capabilities of modern technology. Certainly, for some time various companies had been freezing the bodies of the dead — specifically, the *rich* dead — in the hope that eventually science would advance to the point where the dead could be brought back to life and the "corpsicles" could be thawed out and revived. And, in the 1980s, investigators cryogenically froze a beagle and thawed it out again several hours later, with no apparent ill effects. Finkwaller needed something much more advanced. Anybody could freeze a corpse; beagles weren't as picky as rich ailing actors; and a couple of hours in deep freeze just



WAIVER OF LIABILITY (CON'T)

21.0 Recognition of Risk

21.1 I recognize that the technique of cryogenic freezing employed by Cryo-Dawn Inc. (hereafter referred to as "cryo-freeze") is a potentially risky technique. I recognize that there are many risks inherent in the process itself, in long-term storage of my inert body, and in the reverse process of thawing. These risks include, but are not limited to: surface tissue necrosis (sometimes referred to as "freezer burn"); formation of ice microcrystals within and between cells, causing structural damage; damage to microvesicles responsible for cellular respiration; premature thawing caused by unexpected power loss, fracture of containment structure, or other related or unrelated causes.

21.2 I hereby certify that I, my heirs and assigns, will not hold Cryo-Dawn Inc. liable for any damage to my person while in their care—up to and including death—even if such damage is the result of negligence on the part of Cryo-Dawn Inc., its employees, its officers, its shareholders, or the assigns of any associated personnel, whether listed here or not...

wasn't going to cut it. Finkwaller needed a technique that could cleanly and safely keep a human in deep-freeze for years, perhaps *decades*.

In early 1997, his researchers thought they had it. Countless beagles and baboons underwent "The Big Chill", seemingly without suffering any ill effects. Somehow Finkwaller managed to gain governmental approval for his technology — the fact that the chair of the committee in question was suffering from pancreatic cancer with an estimated three months to live might have had something to do with it — and the Cryo-Dawn technique was on the market.

At first, Cryo-Dawn's clients were all terminally ill, deciding to take the Big Chill in the hopes that they could be thawed out in a future where their ailment was curable. But soon Finkwaller's demographics changed, as many of America's glitterati realized that cryogenic freezing was effectively a form of time travel. By taking the Chill, they could travel into the future... The first people who approached Finkwaller from this standpoint were entertainers who figured their *careers* were terminally ill, hoping to jump ahead into a future where their look or style or material was in fashion again. The second phalanx of clients was bon vivants and others who simply wanted to see the future, and were willing to pay any price to manage it.

There was no third phalanx. In mid-1999, the news media revealed what Finkwaller himself had known since late 1997: there was something wrong with the Cryo-Dawn process. The bodies in the Cryo-Dawn cryo-vaults were perfectly intact, suffering none of the trauma from intercellular ice-crystal formation that had plagued earlier techniques. Their higher cerebral functions, however, had stopped, never to be re-started. All of the celebrities and glitterati who'd undergone the Big Chill were irreversibly brain-dead.

Understandably, Cryo-Dawn stock dropped off the market overnight, and a group of terminally-ill actors lynched Finkwaller. Cryo-Dawn tumbled into bankruptcy. As everyone knows, AMI acquired all of Cryo-Dawn's assets — including more than 250 frozen clients — and used the company's cryo-freeze technique to solve the cell-replacement problem that had been bedeviling AMI's genetic enhancement research. As far as the public is concerned, Cryo-Dawn Inc. ceased to exist by the turn of the century.

Then why is there still a "Cryo-Dawn Incorporated" on the roles of California corporations? There's a private corporation by that name, that still owns some of the *old* Cryo-Dawn's facilities in La Jolla. These facilities are, interestingly enough, totally disused... *apparently*. Investigative reporters have found hints that the new Cryo-Dawn is owned lock, stock and barrel by AMI, and that its leader is a mysterious figure by the name of Marcus Aurelius Haverstadt. AMI doesn't even dignify these claims with a denial, and Marcus Aurelius Haverstadt is never available for comment.

The question remains, then: what is the new Cryo-Dawn up to?

BUSINESS ACTIVITIES AND KEY DIVISIONS

Unknown.

CORPORATE CULTURE

Unknown.

CYPHERPUNKS

FACTS AT A GLANCE

Headquarters Location: None (a "virtual" location somewhere on the computer networks)
Current Leader: The Wraith (real name unknown)
Reputation: Electronic anarchists
"Mission Statement": To protect personal privacy from infringement by the government.
Total Membership: Unknown

BACKGROUND

Most people in 2021 think the Cypherpunks are something relatively new on the scene (if they think about them at all, of course). The fact is that individuals referring to themselves as Cypherpunks have been around since the early 1990s.

If asked, most Cypherpunks would describe themselves philosophically as "crypto-anarchists". Their central belief is that privacy is an inalienable right that wasn't included in the Bill of Rights simply because the Founding Fathers couldn't conceive of a situation where it might be directly threatened. Back in the 1770s, a man was who he claimed to be, and the only things others knew about his activities and beliefs was what he chose to tell or show them. Personal privacy was paramount — witness all the old saws inveighing against "butting in", "prying" and "sticking your nose where it doesn't belong" — but nobody gave it much thought, just as fish don't pay attention to the fact that they're always wet...

Things have changed, and changed drastically. As new methods of communication proliferated, so did ways of monitoring those channels. Initially, laws designed to protect individual privacy kept pace with technology — to some degree, at least. The concept of freedom of speech was extended to protect written and telephonic communication; law enforcement agencies and the government could intercept mail and tap phone lines — *legally*, at least — only if they could show probable cause, and obtain the appropriate warrant.

In the early 1990s, however, this legal protection started to break down. Various governmental bodies — mainly, but not exclusively, intelligence agencies like the NSA — had started to chafe under legal restrictions on monitoring communications channels. When new communications channels started growing in popularity — specifically, electronic mail sent through messaging systems or posted on electronic bulletin board systems (BBSs) — these agencies lobbied for privacy laws to be inter-

preted in the most restrictive way possible. In other words, while freedom of speech was protected under the Constitution, electronic mail should not be considered "speech" *per se*, and should be exempt from such protection. Organizations such as the Electronic Frontiers Foundation (EFF) fought long and hard against this infringement of individual rights, using the same legal mechanisms the intelligence agencies were using to *promote* the infringement, but it turned out to be a losing battle.

Too many influential agencies had too much to lose if free-speech protection were to be extended to electronic communications. Even before the 29th and 30th Amendments put legal restrictions on free speech, electronic messaging did *not* enjoy Constitutional protection. Anyone with the technical capability of intercepting or monitoring electronic data exchanges could legally do so.

And that's where the early Cypherpunks came in. If the law wouldn't protect people who use electronic mail from governmental monitoring, then they'd just have to protect *themselves*. In essence, the Cypherpunks' argument was, So what if the NSA can intercept your electronic mail... if they can't *read* it? The trick was simply to encrypt all electronic messaging so securely that *nobody* — not even the NSA, with its multiple Cray supercomputers dedicated to cryptanalysis — could crack it. By the mid-1990s, several variations on the public-key encryption concept were available that were simply too complex for any contemporary cryptanalysis algorithm to crack them within the projected life-span of the universe.

The security agencies fought back. In 1993, a "friendly amendment" was added to an otherwise-meaningless bill that would require all e-mail users who encrypted their messages to send plain-text transcriptions of *everything* to the NSA. This was voted down, but *just*. And in 1994, a bill was signed into law that made it illegal for anyone to sell, copy or otherwise disseminate any public-key encryption system with a key more complex than 60 bits (this, of course, was the most complex type of encryption that the NSA could routinely crack).



SURE IT'S ILLEGAL, BUT SO WHAT?

Kryptonite is the hottest data encryption package on the market—75-bit security, easy-to-use interface, automatic file management functions. Totally unbreakable (as of 3/28/21; 13:47 GMT). This is the encryption package the Census Bureau doesn't want you to have!

For a limited-capacity eval copy, contact The Slicer through usual channels.

Remember: Your privacy is our concern!
This message brought to you by the Cypherpunks.

The Cypherpunks — by then, a more or less organized group that had accreted around the central core of the EFF — kicked into high gear. Under their slogan, “When privacy is outlawed, only outlaws will have privacy,” they started to distribute — hideously illegally, of course — cutting-edge encryption software to anyone who wanted it, using algorithms and keys that were theoretically impossible to crack.

Thus started the “arms race” between crypto-anarchists and the establishment. Although the encryption schemes distributed by the Cypherpunks in the mid-1990s were theoretically unbreakable, theories change. Fortunately for personal privacy, encryption technology managed to stay one short step ahead of decryption technology. Many private individuals and the vast majority of businesses use encryption packages they’ve acquired from the C’punks. (It’s an interesting loophole in the law — which the Census Bureau is desperately trying to close — that, while it’s illegal to distribute currently-unbreakable encryption schemes, it’s *not* illegal to use them...)

Over time, the Census Bureau has taken over from the NSA as the main threat to personal privacy, and thus it’s the Bureau that’s now the Cypherpunks’ main enemy. The C’punks have taken to monitoring the Bureau’s activities, and publicizing each new infringement of privacy the Bureau conducts. The Bureau fears that the C’punks are planning to attack their computers directly with tailored viruses; as far as the

C’punks are concerned, however, this is way beyond the “mandate” they’ve granted themselves... for the moment, at least.

ACTIVITIES AND GOALS

The Cypherpunks are dedicated to protecting the right to communicate privately, without government monitoring. While most C’punks figure that the responsibility for protecting an individual’s privacy lies with that individual him- or herself and nowhere else, they see it as their duty to provide the public with the technology they need to do so.

LEADERSHIP

The Cypherpunk movement isn’t an organization as such, with an elected leadership, membership dues, and rules and bylaws. It’s more like an informal gathering of like-minded individuals with more or less the same goals and world-views. The individual who calls him/herself “the Wraith” is usually thought of as the leader of the Cypherpunks, although this might just be outsiders trying to fit the C’punks into a paradigm that they understand, but that the C’punks themselves see as unnecessary. The Wraith is the most frequent — and generally most eloquent — spokesperson for the Cypherpunks, however.

MEMBERSHIP

Even the Cypherpunks themselves don’t really know how many of them there are, or who is or isn’t part of the movement. As befits their attitude toward data communications, C’punks never meet face to face, only “virtually” over computer networks. Individuals generally know each other only by their “handles” or “screen names”. All C’punk communications are heavily encrypted and run through so many blind relays that tapping and tracking them are virtually impossible. “Membership” in the Cypherpunk movement is a self-selecting and pragmatic thing: if you can find your way through all the computer security and join the discussions, you’re a member by definition.

RESOURCES

Unknown.

DEPARTMENT OF DEEDS AND DISSEMINATION

FACTS AT A GLANCE

Organizational Profile

Headquarters Location: Washington, DC

Director: Marion Whales

Reports to: Geoffrey Sneed, National Security Advisor

Primary Responsibility: Enforcement of free-speech laws and restrictions

Annual Budget: \$10,750,000,000

Personnel

Total Employees: 10,000

BACKGROUND

The Department of Deeds and Dissemination — widely known as “the Triple-D” — existed as far back as the early 1990s, although nobody paid much attention. Back then, it was little more than a minor paper-pusher dwarfed by the much larger paper-pushers that made up the bureaucracy that was (and *is*) the federal government. It received a budget of a paltry few million, and its relatively few employees tried to convince themselves that they were doing something that *mattered*.

That all changed, and changed drastically, with the introduction of the Twenty-Ninth and Thirtieth Amendments to the Constitution of the United States of America in 2017. These two amendments (discussed elsewhere) greatly curtailed the right to free speech. As a result, the federal government promulgated laws that made it necessary to report certain types of free speech to various state and federal authorities, and that required citizens to obtain a license before engaging in some varieties of free speech. Obviously, to make any such laws meaningful, there needs to be some kind of enforcement — in other words, some group or body to monitor potentially illegal instances of free speech and take appropriate action, to receive and track the free-speech reports mandated by law, and to issue the required licenses.

Since laws arising from the new Amendments would be so far-reaching, it was obvious that the body charged with enforcement would gain great power and influence. Just about every agency — from the FBI to Health & Welfare — started scrambling, lobbying and horse-trading to get the nod from the administration. The director of the Triple-D at the time — one Lori Han — saw this as the perfect opportunity to

get out of the “bureaucratic backwater” in which her career had become stalled. She lobbied fiercely and unethically — perhaps even illegally — shamelessly trading favors and pulling in old debts, unearthing embarrassments from the past and weakness of the present, and basically using every trick that Machiavelli ever thought of, and some that would never have occurred to him. Ms. Han’s efforts paid off when, to everyone’s surprise, Geoffrey Sneed threw his support behind her arguments. (People still discuss *why* — whether Han had something on Sneed, or whether the National Security Advisor wanted someone in charge of the Triple-D who he could control or who owed him a major favor.) On December 20, 2017, the Triple-D was given responsibility for enforcing the new laws.

Winning that fight, of course, was only half the battle. Now Han had to ramp up her department to the point where it could actually *discharge* its new responsibilities. In the first three months of 2018, the Triple-D doubled and redoubled in size, expanding from a barely more than a thousand employees to about 10,000. Han used her vastly-inflated budget to bring in a computer system that rivals that of the Census Bureau in capacity and sophistication. Although the responsibility of tracking various files, such as the 1077s used to register criticisms of the US Government, officially falls to other agencies like the Anti-Sedition Squad and the FBI, the Triple-D’s system maintains unofficial “parallel” files. The Triple-D’s PR flacks claim that information in these files is *never* used when deciding whether or not to issue free-speech licenses, conventional wisdom holds that people who frequently file — or, worse, *fail* to file when appropriate — for 1077s *never* succeed when applying for free-speech licenses.

Since 2018, the level of infighting within the Triple-D has been almost as intense as the scrap that led to its new authority. In 2020, Lori Han “voluntarily stepped down” from her position of director, to be succeeded by the present director, Marion Whales. Despite Han’s repeated statements that her retirement was voluntarily, insiders concede that Whales somehow ousted her predecessor.



APPLICATION FOR DOCUMENT 1875-A (FREE SPEECH
FORM 1037)

(Related documents: 1037-E; 1384-RA; 1875-A; 1988-G;
1988-N; 3000-B)
(Subject: Application for Free Speech Permit)
(Keywords: Application; Free Speech; 29th Amendment;
30th Amendment)

Please provide all requested information. Incomplete
applications will be summarily rejected. Press hard,
you are making 13 copies.

Name: _____
SSN (Non-citizens must append Form 1384-RA): _____
Aliases: _____
Date of Birth: _____
Place of Birth: _____
Mother's Maiden Name: _____
Permanent Address: _____
Phone # (H): _____
Phone # (W): _____

ACTIVITIES AND GOALS

The main (official) activity of the Department of Deeds and Dissemination is to issue Document 1875-A, the license or permit required for certain forms of free speech. (The forms of free speech limited under the Twenty-Ninth and Thirtieth Amendments are described elsewhere, in the section on the "New Amendments.") Citizens seeking a Document 1875-A must apply to their local office of the Triple-D, either electronically or in person. Applicants must fill out a Form 1037 or Form 1037-E (the latter for electronic filing), providing all required details — specifically, personal information, proposed time and location for the "free-speech event", details on

the projected audience, a summary of the content of the free-speech event, and reasons why this incidence of free speech won't be deleterious to public morale or faith in government and other social institutions. There's also a free-form section at the end where the applicant can list any mitigating circumstances. The applicant must pay — again, in person or through electronic fund transfer — a processing fee of \$140. (This fee is taxable in some states.) Then it's just a matter of waiting.

The Triple-D usually rules on Form 1037s within five business days. If the application is accepted, a Notification of Acceptance (Document 1988-G) is sent to the applicant, informing him that the Document 1875-A is available for pickup at the local Triple-D office. If it's declined, a Notification of Rejection (Document 1988-N) is sent. While the 1988-N includes fields for an explanation of why the application was rejected, these fields are rarely filled out. Occasionally the Triple-D will send an Interim Document 1766-Z, which is notification the department needs more time to make a determination. An accompanying Document 3000-B might request the applicant attend a face-to-face meeting with a Triple-D official to elaborate on information in the original application.

There is no recourse for appeal: rejection of an application is irrevocable. There's also no recourse if judgment is delayed: while the Triple-D turns about half of all applications around in five business days, sometimes the process can take months. Note that approval of an application is *not* retroactive. If you apply for a Document 1875-A for an event in two weeks, you don't receive word from the Triple-D in time, and you go ahead with the free-speech event anyway, you've broken the law even if, sometime later, the Triple-D approves your application...

LEADERSHIP

Power within the Triple-D is concentrated with Marion Whales and a very few of her closest confidants. Local offices have very limited authority, in that they can issue or refuse Document 1875-As without bumping the decision up the ladder (with some notable exceptions). All applications and decisions are recorded, however, and are frequently audited. Individuals, or even whole offices, who are found to have broken the Triple-D's official and/or unwritten guidelines suffer quick, and sometimes harsh, discipline. Rumor has it that Whales' office keeps a list of individuals who are *never* to be granted Document 1875-As, regardless of details on their applications. Individuals on this list may be treated in different ways; some find their applications rejected immediately, while others find them held up "in channels" for months... *then* rejected.

RESOURCES

The Triple-D has extensive data processing resources. It has no assets to actually apprehend people who abuse the system, although it *does* track them itself. Arrests are made by the FBI.

DEPARTMENT OF HOUSING AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT

FACTS AT A GLANCE

Organizational Profile

Headquarters Location: Washington, DC

Director: Alan Andreisen

Reports to: Clinton F. Gore, Secretary for Veterans' Affairs

Primary Responsibility: Providing housing for veterans

Annual Budget: \$6,975,000,000

Personnel

Total Employees: 4,000

BACKGROUND

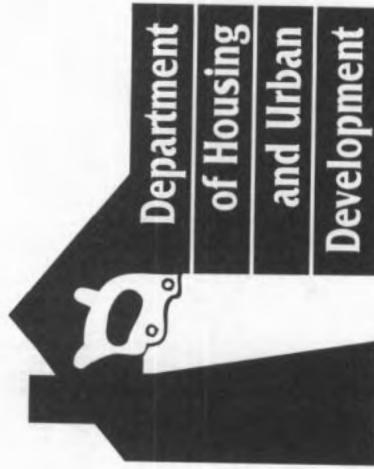
The Department of Housing and Urban Development — more commonly known just as HUD — is a federal executive department established back in 1965 to administer programs that provide aid for housing and community development. In its initial “incarnation”, its mandate was to grant loan assistance for low-income housing programs, and encourage the participation of private home-building and mortgage-lending industries in urban development projects. In 2017, however, its initial mandate became much more tightly-focused and specific.

In that year, public pressure forced Congress to pass the Veterans Fair Housing Act, requiring the federal government to provide housing for veterans who served in conflict firms that held American accounts. The Department of Housing and Urban Development was given responsibility for carrying this out. Over the next year, HUD built a number of high-rise housing projects on government-owned land in California’s major cities. Since then, more similar projects have been started — only 60% of them as yet completed — all in California. Although government spokespeople categorically deny it, it’s more or less an open secret that HUD is carrying out unofficial government policy by concentrating all project construction on the West Coast. Government spin-doctors claim that the locations are chosen to coincide with high veteran populations — critics cite this as a “chicken-and-egg” situation and a fatuous argument — and to take advantage of low subcontracting costs in California.

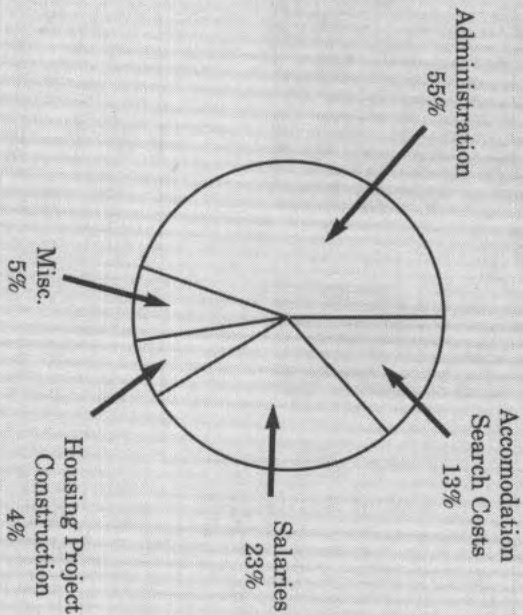
As well as building the projects, HUD administers them as provided for under the Veterans’ Fair Housing Act of 2017. According to this Act, *all* veterans demobilized

by militant corps with American accounts are entitled to rent-free housing for a period of three years after their demobilization. Unfortunately, the number of demobilized vets is *vastly* greater than the number of HUD housing units available. Initially, applications to HUD for housing were made by the conflict firm itself on behalf of its departing employee. Recently, however, HUD has changed to procedure in an attempt to decrease — if only marginally — the load on their resources. Now the vet him- or herself must apply — using a complex Form 51000-C (or 51000-CE for electronic filing) — and must append his or her detailed military record, paying a \$100 “processing fee” for the privilege. Since there are some — perhaps *many* — vets who can’t be bothered, don’t want to, or *daren’t* supply detailed information like this to HUD, the demand *has* dropped slightly. Vets refer to the Form 51000-C as the “lottery ticket”, because the chances of actually getting housing because of it are about the same as winning at Powerball. The process can take some time from application to receipt of results: anywhere from a few days to a few months. (Obviously, vets must give HUD a way of contacting them with those results, another consideration that dissuades some individuals from using the service...”

In 2020, HUD was charged with handling the accommodations side of the GI Bill as well. While the decision as to whether an individual is eligible for GI Bill benefits is made by another agency, once an eligible claimant has elected for rent-controlled accommodation, it’s up to HUD to find it. HUD officials claim — with some justification — that this shouldn’t be part of their mandate, since the accommodations they have to track down often aren’t part of HUD housing projects. Gore — who charged them with this new responsibility — isn’t backing down, however. As a form of passive resistance, HUD takes just as long as it possibly can when seeking such accommodation. Thus the process can take up to a year... and that’s *after* the bureaucrats have decided to grant GI Bill benefits in the first place.



HUD'S BUDGET- YOUR TAX DOLLARS AT WORK!



The Department of Housing and Urban Development in 2021 has a reputation for an almost boggling degree of corruption. While the situation isn't *quite* as bad as popular perceptions paint it, "voluntary contributions" to HUD officials *can* streamline various procedures. Unfortunately, while some HUD officials are open to *baksheesh*, others are real straight-arrows who'll immediately report any attempted bribes. (Veterans considering the bribery route should keep this in mind...)

ACTIVITIES AND GOALS

Apart from administering veterans' housing projects that already exist, HUD is officially responsible for building more. Unfortunately, it simply doesn't have the budget to conduct the huge construction projects it's supposed to. Making its task

even more difficult are roadblocks placed in its way by the municipal governments of most California cities, who don't want any more "vet ghettos" (or "vetos") within their city limits.

HUD is also officially responsible for enforcing the three-year limit on all housing granted under the GI Bill and the Veterans' Fair Housing Act. This is easier said than done, of course, since the recipients of this housing are all enhanced, and evicting a boosted vet who doesn't want to go can be somewhat problematical...

LEADERSHIP

As director of HUD, Alan Andreisen is officially responsible for every facet of the department's operation. It's unfortunate, then, that Andreisen is a lame-duck manager. His heart is in the right place; he shares with Secretary Gore a concern for the plight of veterans (even though, unlike Gore, he isn't boosted himself). The senior managers who officially report to him handle their areas of responsibility more or less the way they like, telling Andreisen only what they want him to know. Some of those managers are responsible and honest; others are corrupt, twisting their authority to benefit themselves and their friends. Subconsciously, Andreisen knows this, but consciously he won't admit to himself — let alone to anyone else — that he isn't in control of his department. He keeps forwarding "don't worry" reports to Secretary Gore, who believes everything is ship-shape and Bristol fashion in the ranks of HUD.

RESOURCES

The Department of Housing and Urban Development has nowhere near the resources it needs. The entire Veterans' Affairs "secretariat" keeps getting its budget squeezed, and Secretary Gore must divvy up what little money he receives among many programs. Largely because Andreisen soft-pedals his department's real problems, and simply doesn't scrap hard enough for his slice of the pie, HUD always ends up with less than its fair share come budget time.

Obviously, with its small budget HUD can't construct any housing projects with its own assets, and must contract everything out. Various corrupt managers in the department have set up "sweetheart deals" with contracting companies belonging to friends, or in which they have financial interests themselves. Several projects weren't completed simply because the prime contractors took the money HUD paid them and run.

DEPARTMENT OF IMMIGRATION, NATURALIZATION AND PROCREATION

FACTS AT A GLANCE

Organizational Profile

Headquarters Location: Washington, DC

Director: Gerhard Maus

Reports to: Victoria Darnhelm, Director, Justice Department

Primary Responsibility: Enforcement of immigration laws and Hartley-Simmons Act

Annual Budget: \$10,350,000,000

Personnel

Total Employees: 14,000

BACKGROUND

The Department of Immigration, Naturalization and Procreation (DINP) arose out of the Immigration and Naturalization Service (the INS), which has always been responsible for enforcing legal restrictions on immigration into the US and becoming an American citizen. Over the years, the INS's power increased as those restrictions — the Immigration and Nationality Act, and 1990's Immigration Act — propagated and became more far-reaching. In 1997, by Presidential order, the INS ramped up its assets and enforcement capabilities so that it could, if necessary, totally "close the borders" to all immigration. (This was an overreaction to the possibility of "economic refugees" flooding into America from all over the world. Wiser heads soon recognized the expected flood just wasn't going to happen — mainly because, by this time, the US wasn't that much better off than anywhere else in the world — but the INS's increased powers were never rolled back.)

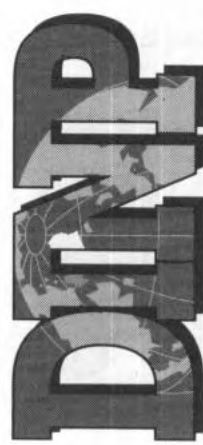
In 1999, the so-called "Procreation Bill" — a package of legislation restricting the birth rate in an attempt to reach zero population growth — was passed, and the INS was given the responsibility for enforcing the new laws. The Immigration and Naturalization Service was renamed the Department of Immigration, Naturalization and Procreation, had its budget massively increased, and was given much more prominence within the Department of Justice. Again, the requirement for this increase in power was short-lived — the Procreation Bill was declared totally unconstitutional and repealed in early 2000 — but the increase was never rolled back. The newly-formed DINP was, to use an appropri-

ate cliché, all dressed up with nowhere to go.

That changed by 2007. MacRaney's (q.v.) had perfected the technique for creating artificial people, and by that year had cranked out over a million clones. The Director of the DINP — Gerhard Maus, who still holds that office 14 years later — decided to enforce one of the provisions of the Procreation Bill that had never been repealed. (Interestingly enough, while all provisions of that Bill which restricted the right to bear children had been overturned, other provisions that restricted population growth had never been repealed. Until the cloning process represented a way by which the population could grow without the natural bearing of children, these provisions had been totally meaningless. No longer.) Under Maus, the DINP placed a flat 100,000 per annum limit on cloning.

This, predictably, earned the DINP the ire of many powerful corporate interests: MacRaney's itself, of course, since each clone represented a significant profit for the company (see the entry on MacRaney's itself); plus the many manufacturing firms all over the US that hired the pre-frontals created by the MacRaney's process. These corporate interests argued for the total abolition of all restrictions on cloning, and lobbied hard for the removal of Maus and the elimination of the DINP's "interference" in their business concerns. Maus stood fast, however, and managed — through heavy lobbying, favor-trading and a little Machiavellian maneuvering — to drum up support elsewhere in the government for the DINP's stand. The corporations were initially unable to oust or discredit Maus, or to eliminate the annual limit on cloning, but they kept escalating the pressure, and everyone involved knew that the corporate interests would eventually succeed, and that Maus' little "empire" would fall.

Maus knew that as well, and decided to take action. To this day, nobody knows exactly what bureaucratic back-alleys he followed, or what pressure he applied where. The result of his work is no mystery, however: the Hartley-Simmons Act of 2009. Although it was "sold" to the public, and to the less intelligent members of the Senate



**The Department of Immigration,
Naturalization and Procreation**

DINP

The Department of Immigration,
Naturalization and Procreation

Ph#: 534-54367-44-2
FAX: 3466-4368-3

Gerhard Maus
Director

and the House, as creating more stringent restrictions on cloning, in truth it was a compromise bill. The flat limit on clones was removed, but corporations that wanted to create clones had to obtain special federal licenses to do so, and pay heavy duties. These duties, plus the administrative costs of acquiring the necessary licenses, turned out to be less, per clone created, than the revenues corporations would see from those clones. Thus the corporations gained. Maus, too, gained, because the Act put the DINP firmly in control of issuing those licenses and collecting those duties. The DINP had, with a stroke, converted its corporate enemies into allies, and had carved out another very important niche for itself in society.

The DINP has, with time, become hideously corrupt (predictably, perhaps). Officially, *any* corporation — American or foreign-owned — can apply for cloning licenses, and expect to receive them if they meet the criteria set out by the Hartley-Simmons Act. In practice, however, only a small and elite group of corporations (MacRaney's at their head) ever receive licenses. Every other application gets "lost", or is rejected on a technicality. Investigative journalists like Peter Argot (q.v.) *know* — although they can't yet prove — that these corporations pay vast sums into various secret bank accounts controlled by Maus and various of his trusted lieutenants.

While regular licenses are limited to this elite group, Maus has recently shown himself willing to consider waivers and special short-term exceptions for other corporations who approach him in the right way (and with the right sum of untraceable money). The elite corporations like MacRaney's aren't particularly thrilled to see Maus "freelancing" like this, but so far the number of special waivers hasn't been high enough for the elite corporations to take action. For how long Maus can maintain this balancing act — supplementing his income without turning his "core business" against him — is an open question.

ACTIVITIES AND GOALS

The official goal of the DINP is to enforce laws relating to immigration, citizenship and population control. The *unofficial* goal for Maus and his lieutenants is to line their own pockets.

LEADERSHIP

Maus is a canny political operator, who knows just how Washington works. Before entering government service he was a corporate lawyer, so he knows how things work in the private sector as well. As with many government agencies, almost all of the power is concentrated with Maus and his half-dozen trusted lieutenants. Field offices of the DINP have almost no autonomy.

RESOURCES

The DINP doesn't have assets to actually enforce the laws it administers; in other words, the DINP has no agents to arrest malefactors. Instead, it just hands over names and personal details to the FBI. The DINP has a large and complex bureaucracy, but it's a very self-serving structure, in that its main focus is to maintain and enhance its own influence on the national scene. In its relationships with other agencies, the DINP doesn't start "turf wars", but it has a nasty reputation for *finishing* them...

EVOLUTION IN ACTION

FACTS AT A GLANCE

Headquarters Location: Los Angeles (suspected)

Current Leader: Ballbreaker (real name unknown)

Reputation: "Genetically-altered freaks gone wild"

"Mission Statement": Helping the "dinosaurs" (i.e., unboosted humans) along the path to extinction...

Total Membership: 10 (estimated)

BACKGROUND

In many ways, the group known as Evolution In Action (EIA) is the culmination of what so many "mundane", un-enhanced humans feared would happen when genetic boosting became common. Basically, EIA is perceived as a pack of *Homo superiors* run amok, using their "un-Godly" powers to kill innocent civilians and weaken the social institutions and social contracts that make life in America worth living (?). That's how various grand-standing politicians and conservative religious figures have described them, at least. Unfortunately, they don't seem to be too far wrong.

The name "Evolution In Action" first entered the news in 2017, as referring to one of the many veterans'-rights political action committees that came into being around that time. At that time, its leader and major spokesperson was a boosted vet who went under the codename "Ballbreaker". (This isn't the codename she served under, however; no conflict firm has a Ballbreaker on any of their active or inactive files. Investigators have been unable to discover her real name either.) At first, Ballbreaker seemed little different from other boosted-rights activists; certainly, her rhetoric was fiercer than that of people like Jagged Reg (q.v.), but *most* people were more hard-assed than "Reg the Edge".

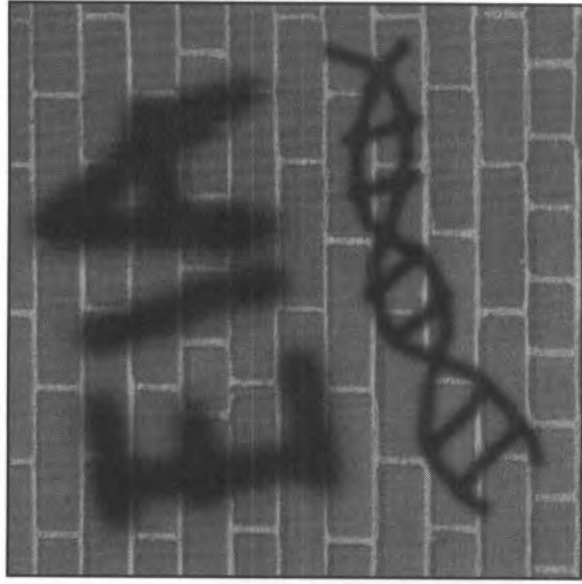
As everyone knows, rhetoric — whether hard-edged or soft-pedaled — has never done much to secure rights for people the government and populace doesn't want to deal with. Ballbreaker soon grew impatient, and her ever more fiery rhetoric — actually, closer to "screaming rants" — started to reflect that impatience. In early 2018, Ballbreaker went on record as advocating that boosted vets *take* the rights the "mundanes" won't willingly give them. While this attracted some of the "loose cannons" among the rights activists to her banner, it alienated the moderates. Ballbreaker responded in mid-2018 by vanishing from the public scene.

A couple of months later, Ballbreaker posted a message on the Internet claiming that the scientific term for genetically-enhanced individuals — *Homo superior* —

wasn't appropriate. A better term, she argued, was *Homo absolutus*, reflecting the fact that genetically-enhanced humans are the next logical evolutionary step beyond simple *Homo sapiens*. *H. absolutus* is much better equipped to adapt to and survive in *any* environment, her manifesto continued, and so should simply supersede *H. sapiens* the way better-adapted mammals superseded the dinosaurs. Unboosted mundanes should just face facts, Ballbreaker claimed, and just step aside in favor of their superior "descendants". Her manifesto concluded with a chilling call to action: if the "mundanes" don't have the courtesy to simply lie down and become extinct like the dinosaurs, *Homo absolutus* should have no qualms about taking the process into their own hands. She had a group of followers, she claimed — Evolution In Action — who would gladly take the lead in this "great enterprise".

Few people paid much attention. The vast majority of people who read it thought it was a joke, albeit in very bad taste. Most of the others thought Ballbreaker had to be some whacked-out loony who was more of a danger to herself and her friends than she ever could be to society in general. Only a few people took it serious. Most of those were conspiracy fanatics, members of the religious right, and others of limited mental capacity, who pointed gleefully at it as proof positive that "those foul monsters" were a threat to truth, justice and the American way. Maybe a handful of people — both mundanes and *Homo superiors* — considered Ballbreaker's statements rationally, and concluded that there might be a real risk inherent in them... and that this risk might not be to the mundanes...

EIA struck for the first time in late 2018. A band of five boosted ops — all flight-capable, all armed to the teeth, and all with lethal enhancements — attacked an LAPD precinct house in Long Beach. The building was reduced to a smoking ruin, casualties among the LAPD personnel ran high, and all of the attackers escaped without a scratch. Although the LAPD tried to brush the whole thing off as a gang attack of some kind, journalists soon dug up the truth. Firstly, the attack was much too well-



Federal Bureau of Investigations Report #485349-76

BALLBREAKER: AN EVALUATION

This report is based on standard bureau methodology. Unsupported conjectures are accompanied by a confidence estimate.

Ballbreaker is a caucasian female, age range 25-32 (confidence 85%). She shows genetic enhancement (confidence 99.8%). In addition to the normal strength and resilience increases associated with boosting, Ballbreaker possesses the powers of Flight (100%) and Energy Absorption (68%). Analyses of personal tactics and action patterns hints at training from Aillied Mayhem, Inc. (19%). (AMi denies any connection; see supporting document 2148-84).

coordinated for a typical gang-type operation, showing true military precision. Secondly, a distinctive logo and the words "Evolution In Action" were spray-painted on the ruins of the building. Apparently — and no matter how much the LAPF might want to deny it — Ballbreaker had started her campaign to ease *Homo sapiens* into extinction...

As soon as the news broke, there was a serious backlash. Anti-vet activists staged protests around various HUD projects, and Boosted Operatives for Christ churches. Some of these protests got out of hand, leading to violent attacks on veterans' property and persons. Although most of the vets involved showed admirable restraint, some fought back, adding to the all-too-common perception that *all* boosted veterans are kill-crazy monsters.

Since 2018, Evolution In Action has only staged a dozen more raids. Each one, however, has been as high-profile as the attack on the LAPF precinct house (despite feeble attempts by authorities to keep the EIA connection secret).

ACTIVITIES AND GOALS

EIA's actions don't seem to match the group's avowed goal, making some analysts wonder if there isn't something really strange going on. LAPF and other official reports have identified roughly ten distinct EIA members involved in the various raids. Each raid, however, has comprised no more than five or six attackers. Why

don't all ten (or more) members participate in each raid to maximize damage? And why has the group limited itself to an average of five or six raids a year, with a total death toll among non-boosted victims of under 200? If the EIA *really* wanted to wipe *Homo sapiens* off the face of the earth, its ten members could be working a *lot* harder at wiping out "mundanes"...

Some people suspect that Ballbreaker's "dinosaur" rhetoric is just a way of increasing pressure on the government, forcing concessions that grant more rights to boosted vets. EIA's actions, however, are *hindering* the boosted-rights battle more than they're helping. The government frequently points to EIA as a reason for *not* granting the rights, privileges and freedoms that peaceful activists like Jagged Reg are demanding.

In general, only the most radical — or most sanity-blasted — vets support EIA's actions. The logical thinkers among the veterans' community

hate EIA for playing right into the hands of opponents to veterans' rights.

Some of the more paranoid vets suspect — or truly believe — that Evolution In Action is actually funded and directed by the *federal government*, to discredit the entire vets' rights movement.

LEADERSHIP

Ballbreaker is a strident, committed woman — flight-capable, with the Energy Absorption boost. She seems to have been involved in every EIA raid, and some analysts argue this implies she's the sole leader of the militant group.

MEMBERSHIP

Of the ten or so boosted ops involved in the raids, none have been specifically identified. All are flight-capable — apparently a criterion for membership — and all seem to be cold-blooded killers. All except for Ballbreaker herself have offensive, rather than strictly *defensive*, boosts — things like Bomb, Pyrokinesis, Electric Discharge and Telepathic Blast.

RESOURCES

Unknown.

GOD, INC.

FACTS AT A GLANCE

Business Profile

Home Office Location: Mount Shasta, CA
President/CEO: Dirk Blocker
Chairman of the Board: Fusaaki Ito
Corporate Status: Public corporation
Primary Business: Religion
Annual Revenue: \$8,375,000,000

Personnel

Total Employees: 5,000
Total Clients (i.e., congregation members): 2,750,000

BACKGROUND

God, Inc. is an organization based on the understanding that all organized religions have the same needs, and must maintain the same functions, as a corporation... whether they admit it or not. Despite the avowed purpose of any organized religion, spokespersons for God, Inc. claim, it must actively prospect for new clients (i.e., worshippers), and must continue to meet the needs and provide value to those it has; it must maintain its infrastructure; it must recruit, train and continue to pay its employees; it must generate revenue at least equal to its expenditures; and it must market and position its services to counteract competition from other organizations — whether other religions or not — for market share and for clients. How, God, Inc. spokespersons ask, does this differ from the function of any corporation in the world?

God, Inc. is the brainchild of one Dirk Blocker, a onetime vice-president of marketing for a major clothing manufacturer (Bent One Inc.) and member of the Church of Now. He broke with the Church of Now in 2011 when, he claimed, he realized that the organization wasn't providing value top its clients. According to the teachings of the organization, God, Inc., Blocker withdrew into the wilderness — specifically, an exclusive "executive retreat" on the slopes of Mount Shasta — and, after three weeks of aerobics, aquacize and rock-climbing, emerged into civilization again with "The Answer".

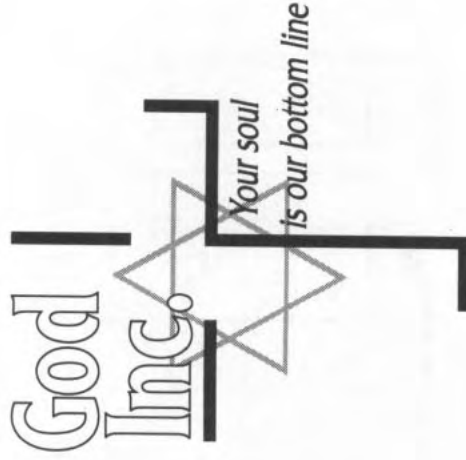
"Answer" took many theologians by surprise. All existing religions are marketing themselves wrong, Blocker claims. Each religion claims to possess "the truth" (whatever that is), and seems to assume that "clients" (worshippers) will flock in. Yet

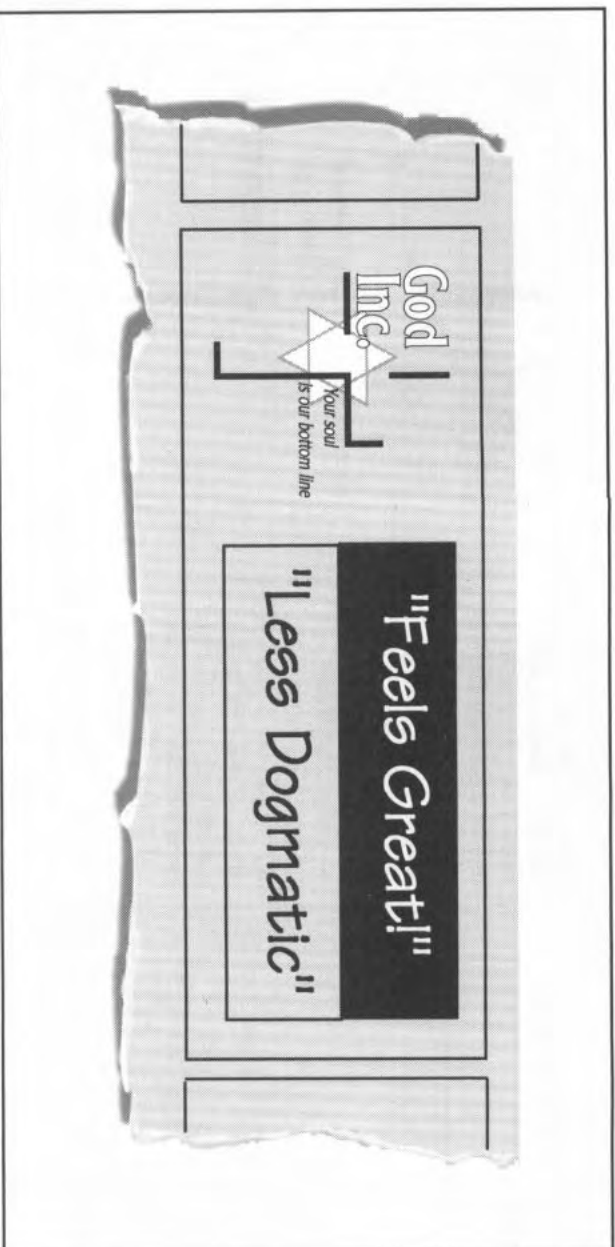
when people turn to a religion, they're not looking for some abstract, impersonal truth; they're looking for something that will personally benefit *them*. The keys to marketing *anything*, Blocker argued, are the concepts of feature, advantage and benefit. In terms of an automobile, for example, a feature might be anti-lock brakes; the advantage is that the car is less likely to go into a skid under hard braking; the benefit — the "warm-and-fuzzy" emotional gain that people receive — is the feeling of safety you

experience whenever you get behind the wheel. "The truth", so much ballyhooed by conventional religion, is just a feature. Yet it's *benefits* that people are looking for when they select *any* product or service, whether an automobile or a religion.

The *benefits* people gain from joining a religion, Blocker claimed, were the sense of belonging they experienced, the feeling of being part of something *significant*, something bigger, more pervasive, and closer to immortal than themselves. These benefits had nothing whatsoever to do with whether the religion possessed "the truth" or not. So why did truth matter at all?

While conservative theologians reacted with predictable outrage at Blocker's "heresy", the marketing manager quit his company and founded a new religion — which he named God, Inc. — based in the sleepy northern California town of Mount Shasta. He approached the creation of the new religion as he would the creation of a new business, establishing a home office and hiring an administrative staff plus marketing and PR experts. While the new corporation's marketing arm started raising public awareness, Blocker himself worked on hiring the "front-line service professionals" — what other religions would refer to as priests — who'd actually provide services to the clients. Instead of trying to poach away priests from other faiths — a course he'd contemplated for awhile — he recruited from an industry that was already providing many of the services he wanted God, Inc. to offer: the industry of psychological and crisis counseling. He offered social workers — who are generally severely under-paid — a good salary, plus the chance to help people and really "make a dif-





ference", which was the reason that most of them went into social work in the first place.

Blocker's advertising campaigns brought in "clients" almost faster than the God, Inc. corporate structure could handle them — a fact that reassured Blocker he was right about what the market wanted and needed. To raise the organization's profile even further, he challenged five influential conservative theologians, from five diverse faiths, to a six-way public debate. As he'd expected, the theologians attacked him and God, Inc. on the fact that it was a "cynical public-relations scheme" and not a religion at all. When he asked them what distinguished *their* faiths from his, all claimed that they had The Truth on their side... then fell to squabbling among themselves as to *whose* Truth was *The* Truth. Blocker let them wrangle for awhile, then cut them off by pointing out how divisive traditional religions could be. God, Inc. wasn't so divisive or dogmatic, he stated, simply because it made no claims to *any* truth, let alone The Truth. All he offered was the sense of belonging that most people wanted from religion in the first place. After the debate, he had to vastly increase his recruiting scheme to hire enough "service professionals" to handle the massive influx of new "clients".

God, Inc. services are a smooth, well-paced amalgam of the finest features of more than a dozen different religions, combined into something that feels like a unified whole. There are statement-and-response prayers and group singing to build

camaraderie. There are recitations in Latin, Greek, Aramaic and Indo-European to create a sense of majesty and antiquity. There's voluntary confession for those who want it. There isn't the slightest hint of hatred, prejudice or exclusion. Everyone is welcome.

As with any service provider, the clients of God, Inc. must pay for what they receive. Some clients follow the "pay-as-you-go" plan, paying an admission fee for each service, and paying an hourly rate for one-on-one consultations with "priests". Most clients, however, choose one of God, Inc.'s many subscription plans, paying by pre-authorized check each month. The organization's Customer Service Department prides itself on being able to create a payment plan that meets each prospective client's needs, while staying within his budget.

In 2021, ten years after its founding, God, Inc. is still the organization that traditional religions love to hate. Its clientele is growing by leaps and bounds, however.

BUSINESS ACTIVITIES AND KEY DIVISIONS

The corporate structure of God, Inc. is such that each city is treated as a semi-autonomous division, and the Division Manager for each city has profit & loss responsibility for all functions under his authority. Most divisions have various wholly-owned subsidiaries that operate low-cost medical clinics or soup kitchens.

CORPORATE CULTURE

Everyone within the God, Inc. organization is proud of the good work the company is doing. Corporate culture stresses customer service and instant responsiveness to client needs. As such, God, Inc. is quite possibly the most customer-focused organization in the world, and is frequently cited in marketing text-books as an example of true customer service excellence.

HEURISTIC COMPUTING SYSTEMS INC.

FACTS AT A GLANCE

Business Profile

Home Office Location: Cupertino, CA
President/CEO: Roberta Schuller
Chairman of the Board: Maureen Fusokawa
Corporate Status: Public corporation
Primary Business: Data processing hardware and software
Annual Revenue: \$17,985,000,000

Personnel

Total Employees: 12,500

BACKGROUND

Heuristic Computing Systems Inc. is repeatedly touted in the American business press as one of the country's true success stories, one of the few major high-technology firms that's still 100% American owned and operated. (This isn't *quite* true, but at least the three layers of shell companies which conceal who HCS's real owners are have headquarters somewhere in America...)

The early history of HCS is rather confusing. Much of the enabling technology, and most of the major corporate players, first appeared on the scene in the mid to late 1990s, scattered among almost a dozen California-based high-tech firms. For example, Roberta Schuller — according to the HCS's "authorized" history, the company's founder, and still its president — and HCS's head researcher, Dr. Sumi Chen, first knew each other in 1994 when the companies they ran were the most bitter of rivals. Over the next five years, the companies the major figures worked for formed a bewildering array of strategic alliances and joint ventures, allying in blocs to counter the actions of other blocs, allegiances shifting seemingly on a daily basis. This led to a great degree of cross-pollination between the companies, of course, as senior employees frequently moved back and forth between organizations. Much of this intercorporate jumping should have been prohibited by the anti-competition clauses included in most employment contracts in use at the time. The fact that it *wasn't* — or, more specifically, that no company chose to invoke those clauses — led some analysts at the time to conclude that there was really no competition or rivalry between the firms

involved, just the *appearance* of competition and rivalry. The companies were, these analysts claimed, operating below the surface as though they were part of a single organization, while the superficial trappings of competition and intercorporate hatreds were maintained just to mislead investors, competitors and regulators.

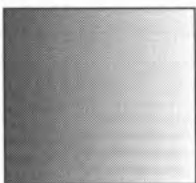
The whole competition-or-no-competition argument became a moot one when, in 1999, nine of the most vibrant of the companies merged into a

single corporate body, known as Heuristic Computing Systems Inc. (Two of the corps that had been involved in the "cross-pollination" scheme were left out of the amalgamation, leading to hideous recriminations and a nasty spate of backbiting. This phase came to an end just a few months later when HCS drove both of these companies out of business, buying up many of their assets and hiring the best of their employees, leaving the rest to fend for themselves.) This kind of borderline-unethical, yet highly effective, activity became a trademark of Roberta Schuller, who emerged as the president and CEO of the new Heuristic Computing Systems Inc.

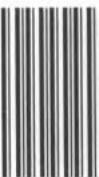
HCS made its first major mark on the data processing field only months after its formation when it released a mainframe software product called ThinkTank that combined self-modifying neural nets with Expert System technology to create an effect that certainly seemed like Artificial Intelligence. While the technology was much too complex for any imaginable business application — operators needed the equivalent of a Ph.D. to understand how to get ThinkTank to do anything at all — the National Security Agency recognized its applicability for electronic intelligence (ELINT) analysis and codebreaking, and quickly classified it top secret. Schuller approached the government for compensation — after all, she argued, having HCS's flagship product classified so she couldn't sell it severely harmed the company's cash flow — and received arguably more than she could ever have made actually selling ThinkTank on the open market... which is exactly what she had in mind all along, business analysts claimed. As well as making a whack of money, HCS had estab-



HEURISTIC COMPUTING SYSTEMS, INC.



JONATHAN J. SCHWARTZ
ID# 237b-45.6-752-9



lished an important business relationship with the nation's intelligence community, which would stand the corporation in good stead over the years.

Over the next decade, HCS spent more than half its time working on specific projects for the intelligence community. Between 2000 and 2011, the company released five highly-successful products onto the civilian data processing market, while completing seven highly-classified projects for various intelligence agencies. Although it's hard to be sure, most of these classified projects seemed to have something to do with breaking the various kinds of data encryption being disseminated by data-privacy advocates like the Cypherpunks (q.v.). HCS earned itself the enmity of many individuals and groups that feared a government that feared their privacy, but HCS didn't care: it was making money hand over fist, and getting in ever tighter with the intelligence community.

In the second decade of the 21st Century, the major problem that HCS's intelligence clients kept running up against was one of data storage capacity. Hard disks, electro-optical disks and holographic storage were increasing in capacity at an astounding rate, but the intelligence community's requirements were increasing even faster. Dr. Sumi Chen, still HCS's head researcher, realized that the solution to this

problem might be no further away than her own head. It had long been known that the primate brain had a data capacity in bytes per cubic centimeter orders of magnitude greater than any other storage technology. Chen dedicated herself to finding a way of replicating that kind of efficient data storage in hardware rather than in "wetware" (i.e., living tissue). Before she headed off too far down this research path, however, Schuller pointed out that it didn't make much sense to reinvent the wheel. If primate brains could already do it, why not just figure out a way to use primate brains as storage devices? Chen accepted this new direction, and the bio-drive was born.

HCS's first bio-drives used chimp brains, but animal rights activists soon put a stop to that. Schuller raised the possibility of using *human* brains, and the animal rights activists fell silent. It was Schuller herself who initiated the huge advertising campaigns to popularize artificial brains, and to offer "trade-ins" for people who donated their "meat" brains to HCS for use in bio-drives. With the vastly increased storage capacity offered by bio-drives, HCS earned itself the undying gratitude of the intelligence community and of the newly-powerful Census Bureau. (Incidentally it also earned itself the undying *enmity* of the Cypherpunks and others, but so what?)

Recently, HCS has been bedeviled by anti-bio-drive activists, who point to rudimentary evidence that the brains used in bio-drives still remain aware. According to this rather horrific hypothesis, the brains used in computer systems still retain the memories and personality of the person they once belonged to — the "self", or even the "soul" — and use in a bio-drive condemned this "self" to eternal imprisonment and servitude. Predictably, HCS is doing whatever it can to squelch this kind of "irresponsible speculation", with the aid of the NSA and the Census Bureau (both heavy users of bio-drives).

According to various unsubstantiated rumors, HCS is currently working on a new project for the Census Bureau that will allow that agency to track down and finally eliminate the Cypherpunks who've been bedeviling it for so long...

BUSINESS ACTIVITIES AND KEY DIVISIONS

HCS has three main divisions: Bio-Drives (currently in a little trouble, thanks to the activists); Commercial Data Processing, which concentrates on civilian business applications; and Special Projects, the largest division, which works on classified projects for the federal government and various governmental agencies.

CORPORATE CULTURE

HCS's corporate culture is encapsulated by the slogan emblazoned above the front door of its Cupertino headquarters (on the inside, so only employees and authorized guests can see it): **Think... don't talk.**

LOS ANGELES PEACE FORCE

FACTS AT A GLANCE

Business Profile

Home Office Location: Los Angeles, CA
Division Head: Tanis Morgan
Chairman of the Board: Terrance L. "Leroy" Brown
Corporate Status: Division of Mars Corporation
Primary Business: Law enforcement
Annual Revenue: \$950,000,000

Personnel

Total Employees: 6,250

BACKGROUND

The Los Angeles Peace Force (LAPF) was created in 2017 as a result of the Los Angeles Police Department strike (q.v.) of that year. As described elsewhere, when the old LAPD went out on strike *en masse*, the city fired them all, and requested all the major conflict firms and other security providers to tender bids to handle law enforcement in the Greater Los Angeles area. Dallas-based Mars Corporation (q.v.) tendered the lowest bid, and was granted the contract. Mars Corp. CEO Terrance L. "Leroy" Brown created a new division, naming it the Los Angeles Peace Force, and assigned executive vice-president Tanis Morgan (q.v.) to head up the new enterprise. Morgan has a great degree of autonomy in running her division, but can draw on the extensive resources — in terms of money, personnel, intelligence and expertise — of the parent corporation. Unfortunately, she is also responsible to Police Commissioner Alphonse Moscoso (q.v.), the "civilian" rep in the police structure. The two of them are constantly at odds in their attempts to pull the loyalties of the cops to their side. Tanis sees the LAPF as a pure money-making entity; Moscoso sees it as the latest evolution of a long and proud tradition. Although the LAPF is, strictly speaking, only a division of Mars Corp., it has a greater degree of real autonomy than some wholly-owned subsidiaries that are — on paper, at least — distinct corporations.

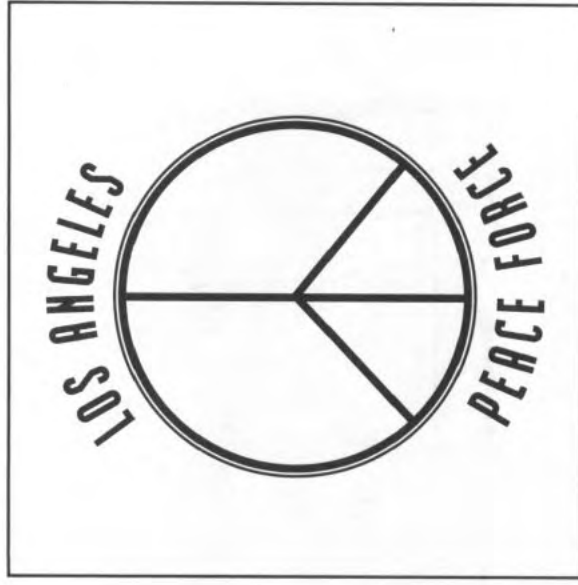
Of the LAPF's 6,250 employees, most are direct "law enforcement assets" — in other words, beat cops and detectives. In contrast to conventional law enforcement agencies, the LAPF functions with fewer than 1,000 support personnel, such as clerical workers. Most of the infrastructure is handled by sophisticated data processing systems provided by the parent corporation. (This is one advantage of a non-union-

ized environment. No unionized law enforcement agency would allow the massive dislocation of jobs that would result from bringing in such sophisticated and capable computer systems.) Some analysts claim that the LAPF's data processing and electronic intelligence (ELINT) gathering capabilities rival those of the much larger Census Bureau.

The LAPF has a reputation in the underworld of using wiretaps and other similar surveillance techniques on a regular basis.

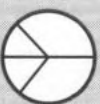
Strictly speaking, these techniques are illegal without specific warrants issued by various courts (or without the blanket dispensations granted to government agencies like the Census Bureau, of course). Tanis Morgan understands that the concept of "illegality" is basically meaningless... as long as you don't get caught. Viewing her law-enforcement mandate as she would any business, Morgan recognizes that "breaking the law" by using wiretaps, etc., has a huge beneficial effect on the overall "cost-benefit analysis" of her operations. These strictly-illegal activities allow her to bring to justice more criminals than she ever could without them, which means she's providing greater "added value" to her client, the city — and, indirectly, the people — of Los Angeles. The sole trick is keeping the use of these techniques secret... or, at least, making it impossible for defense attorneys to prove that they were used. For obvious reasons, the LAPF can't use transcripts from illegal wiretaps as evidence in court, but that's usually not too much of a handicap. Wiretaps and other illegal surveillance are used only as preliminary "ground-work". Then other, *legal* techniques are used to develop the cases against perpetrators.

Most of the LAPF "beat cops" and detectives are "off the rack" — that is, non-boosted. (This is both because of Morgan's own preferences and prejudices, and because she knows how the populace at large would react to enhanced cops patrolling their city...) Because so many criminals *are* boosted, LAPF patrolmen (often referred to derogatorily as "street monsters") wear heavy armor and carry heavy-caliber aut-fire weapons. In low-threat (emerald) neighborhoods, cops can patrol alone. In



Your wellbeing is our only business.

LOS ANGELES



PEACE FORCE

BUSINESS ACTIVITIES AND KEY DIVISIONS

The LAPF has only the one division, focused exclusively on providing law enforcement for Greater Los Angeles.

CORPORATE CULTURE

Tanis Morgan has moderated the arrogance typical of Mars Corporation subsidiaries, while keeping the parent corporation's "can-do" attitude. She's fostered a real pride in her employees, which shows on the streets. LAPF personnel are *proud* to be cops, and this enhances the respect which most civilians feel toward the police.

areas of moderate threat (amber), they usually patrol in pairs. In true crimson zones, however, they patrol in double fire-teams, coordinated for mutual defense, often supported by an armored personnel carrier equipped with a heavy machine-gun and water cannon. Most LAPF patrolmen have been poached away from other private security providers, rather than directly from the military. This usually means they're less likely to instinctively select lethal force as the way to solve any problem. All cops *have* been extensively trained with their heavy weapons, however, and in small-unit tactics.

In the old days, the LAPD had the reputation — not completely unearned — for arbitrary brutality. Today's LAPF is, if anything, even more brutal and arbitrary than the LAPD ever was, yet their reputation is orders of magnitude better. This reflects the fact that Morgan and the other managers understand the importance of good public relations. In general — and with notable exceptions, like the residents of Upper Bel Aire, Upper Hollywood, Upper Beverly Hills (q.v.) — law-abiding Angelenos like and respect members of the LAPF. (Morgan spends a considerable chunk of her annual budget on ad campaigns designed to maintain this situation.)

Sometimes situations arise that can't be handled by off-the-track patrolmen, no matter how heavily armed. The Boosted Operative Organization was developed, over Tanis's objections, to handle such situation.

MACRANEY'S

FACTS AT A GLANCE

Business Profile

Home Office Location: Milwaukee, WI
President/CEO: Marcia Alovich
Chairman of the Board: Ken Fraser
Corporate Status: Public corporation
Primary Business: Fast-food/"lifestyle"
Annual Revenue: \$29,712,000,000

Personnel

Total Employees: 110,000

BACKGROUND

MacRaney's was founded in the late 1990s, a late entry in the "fast-food sweepstakes", but a fierce competitor. Before entering the fast-food business, MacRaney's founder — Miller Randolph; *nobody* associated with the company has ever had the name "MacRaney" — spent several years studying the major players in the market, analyzing their strengths and weaknesses. After a lot of computer analysis, focus-group work, and simple face-to-face interviews, he thought he understood the formula that would catapult his company into market dominance. While the other major fast-food companies were stressing flavor, value and nutrition, Randolph decided that all the market *really* wanted was convenience, and the conviction that buying fast-food was socially acceptable — that eating fast-food four days a week didn't make them "geeks" or "winks". Flavor and nutrition, Randolph decided, were secondary considerations. Who cared what a burger tasted like, or whether it had any nutritional value at all, if you could get it *now*? While industry analysts decried Randolph's ideas as utter stupidity, the market saw things differently. Within six months of MacRaney's Grand Opening — potentially a logistical nightmare, yet pulled off flawlessly, that saw an even hundred MacRaney's locations opening at precisely the same instant across the nation — the new chain was the number-one seller and money-maker among the fast-food companies.

Rather than taking a profit and consolidating his position as number one, Randolph rolled all net income from the chain back into the MacRaney's machine, opening up another hundred locations every two months. His avowed goal was to drive the other major players right out of the industry, by competing directly on a site-

by-site basis. He tried to open a MacRaney's across the street from every MacDonald's, Wendy's and Burger King in the United States. While he didn't quite achieve this grandiose goal, he *did* rack up a market share approaching 80%, something that *nobody* had managed before.

MacRaney's initial advertising thrust had chosen convenience — "Your way, anywhere, any time... why not *now*?" — as its key selling feature, with the "social acceptability" of fast-food as a "second level of sell". Now Randolph shifted the central message, and started to branch out into new markets. Fast-food wasn't a single service or market, he recognized; it was an entire lifestyle, an entire mind-set and way of viewing the world. In the "fast-food ethos", quality and value are meaningless in absolute terms. *Perceived* value is all, and the key element in the perception of value is simple convenience. Consumers are basically lazy, Randolph believed; any effort whatsoever that comes between a desire and the satisfaction of that desire decreases perceived value. Other companies grasped part of this concept — that given two competing products, consumers will pick the one that's easier for them to acquire, more or less regardless of quality — but Randolph knew there was more to it than that. His concept of effort didn't just include the action of getting in a car and driving to a store; it also had to include the *mental* effort of deciding what the consumer really wanted. If a company could eliminate *that* effort as well, Randolph believed, it would take the world by storm. That's what MacRaney's offered.

The first new product line was casual clothing. MacWear was one-size-fits-all, disposable clothing that came in muted, complementary colors, so that every item would go well with any other item. Individual items weren't sold separately. People simply had to phone the MacWear 800 number and order a wardrobe. Three weeks later, a complete MacWear wardrobe would arrive on their doorstep, each piece of clothing guaranteed to fit, and guaranteed to coordinate with every other piece of the wardrobe. This concept, Randolph figured, eliminated not only the effort of assem-



Need it?
We got it.
Don't know what you need?
We'll tell you.

MacRaney's



bling a wardrobe in the first place, but also of coordinating clothing items each morning. Again, business analysts predicted humiliating failure; again, the marketplace just ate it up.

MacRaney's soon spread into other lifestyle-oriented markets: clothing, vacations, diet plans, even specialized cable channels with programming tailored to different personality types (to eliminate the effort of picking what show to watch from a selection of over 1,500 channels). Every new endeavor seemed even more profitable than the last. MacRaney's never turned away from its primary business, however, and still dominates the fast-food industry.

By about 2008, MacRaney's growth seemed to be reaching a plateau. Randolph was concerned that his business acumen was slipping until he realized something that explained the decrease in growth: MacRaney's had basically saturated every market it had entered. There simply weren't enough consumers to fuel continued growth at the rate Randolph — and his shareholders — had come to expect. He decided to attack this problem head-on, establishing a research team to look into the possibility of creating artificial humans. In 2009, this research reached to fruition, proving it was possible to create artificial humans almost indistinguishable from the genuine article. However, the cost — about \$10,641 per person created — seemed prohibitively high.

One of Randolph's executive vice-presidents — Marcia Alovich — ran through the calculations and demonstrated that each artificial person would spend, on average, \$18,331 on fast-food during its lifetime. The potential for profit was significant — \$7,690 per person created — assuming that the company could guarantee that only MacRaney's fast-food were purchased.

Alovich had a way of ensuring that, too, involving the implantation of an instinctive distrust of all food but MacRaney's products in the minds of every artificial human... To reward her visionary thinking, Randolph named Alovich as his successor when he retired in 2018.

Today, as everyone knows, America is full of "prefrontals" created by the MacRaney's process, their sole reason for existence being to buy hamburgers. Again MacRaney's sales are starting to flatten out, and there are rumors that Alovich is working on a new scheme to get them climbing again. Considering how much her last such scheme changed the face of America, many people are quite fearful about what might come out of the MacRaney's Research Park, a heavily-guarded enclave in New Berlin, Wisconsin.

BUSINESS ACTIVITIES AND KEY DIVISIONS

MacRaney's has its corporate fingers into dozens of pies. Second only to its primary fast-food business, the MacWear division is hideously successful.

CORPORATE CULTURE

In direct contrast with its "no-effort" marketing position, MacRaney's corporate culture is one of intense focus and unremitting effort. MacRaney's employees are expected to work long hours without getting paid any overtime. Contracts prohibit terminated employees from ever working in the "lifestyle" field again (and the way the corporation's avid legal department defines "lifestyle", that includes almost every conceivable job...). Anything created by a MacRaney's employee — whether at the office or at home, whether a potential product idea or even just a lousy poem scrawled on a napkin at a tavern — officially is the property of the corporation.

MARS CORPORATION

FACTS AT A GLANCE

Business Profile

Home Office Location: Dallas, TX
President/CEO: Terrance L. "Leroy" Brown
Chairman of the Board: Lucas Andrews
Corporate Status: Public corporation
Primary Business: Conflict firm
Annual Revenue: \$4,540,000,000

Personnel

Total Employees: 14,500

BACKGROUND

Founded in 2003, Mars Corporation has only recently entered the market as a full-fledged conflict firm. Although much smaller than the major players like TWD and AMI, Mars has recorded a rate of growth and a return on investment orders of magnitude greater than those of any other militant corporation.

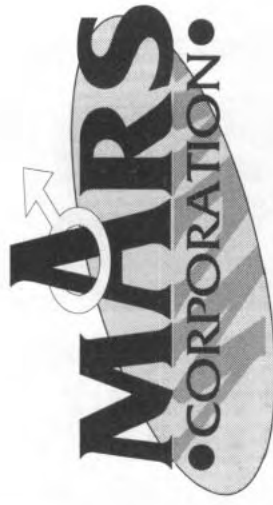
Mars was founded in Dallas, Texas, where it still has its headquarters and training facilities. The corporation is more or less the brain-child of Terrance L. Brown, who remains the president and CEO and by far the most influential person in the corporate structure. (Although the Board of Directors is nominally in charge, and can theoretically fire the CEO at any time, Brown has a strong enough "lock" on the board that his position is unshakable. While the present Chairman of the Board — Lucas Andrews — would apparently love to see Brown's head mounted over his fireplace, there's nothing he can do about it at the moment.)

Terrance Brown — known to friends and enemies alike as "Leroy" — has led the corporation through a number of "incarnations", as it has changed its primary business. Initially — back when Mars was nothing but Brown himself and maybe half a dozen part-time employees — the corporation developed software and hardware products for computer security, including some fairly sophisticated antivirus products the central algorithms of which are still in use today. Over the next few years, Brown grew the company fast, bringing dozens of new products to market, and branching out into the consulting side of the business as well. By 2006, Mars Corporation had branch offices in a dozen major cities across America.

In 2008, Mars bought out Wolverine Security Technologies, a company which marketed surveillance and physical security products, and provided consulting services for companies wanting to upgrade their site security. By incorporating the products and expertise he acquired from Wolverine, Brown turned Mars into a "full-service" security provider, able to handle all facets of corporate security. The company doubled in size — and tripled in revenue — over the next four years or so, employing trained and experienced security guards that it then turned around and hired out to corporations ranging from Ford to Hammer of God. At the same time, Mars bought out two struggling gunmakers — Remington and Colt — and started selling civilian and military-grade weapons.

Militant corps like AMI and TWD were making big news — and big bucks — at this time, and "Leroy" Brown decided it was about time Mars Corporation broke into that new market. Although nobody was ever able to prove anything in court, it's an open secret that Brown acquired information on genetic enhancement and the Slumberland system through an extensive — and highly effective — campaign of industrial espionage. (While this obviously turned the *subjects* of this campaign against Mars Corp., many more companies signed on with Mars for security services afterward presumably on the principle that any company that could *perform* industrial espionage on that scale would be just the outfit to *protect* against a similar campaign.) By 2015, Mars Corporation was competing against the "big boys" for conflict contracts, underbidding them surprisingly often, and discharging the contracts admirably. A new force had emerged in the conflict market, and it was a force to be reckoned with.

In 2017, when the Los Angeles Police Department went out on strike and was subsequently fired, Brown put in a bid for Mars to handle law enforcement for the city. The city accepted his tender, and Brown immediately created a new division of Mars Corporation which became the Los Angeles Peace Force. Mars Corporation Activities and Key Divisions



CORPORATE CULTURE

"Leroy" Brown sees himself as a living, breathing incarnation of the old Texas Ranger spirit. He considers himself a "good ole boy", full of piss and vinegar. He's loud, brash, and aggressively outgoing. While he prides himself on never starting fights, he finishes them. One of his favorite quotes is, "Push me hard enough, and I'm gonna have to come over there and clean ya up." Brown has worked hard to inculcate the whole corporation with this same attitude. Employees at all levels are expected to show a self-sufficient, can-do attitude, and in the Mars corporate culture perhaps the biggest crime is backing down from a challenge.

Everything about Mars Corporation is slightly larger than life, boisterous and often a little overdone.

	
MARS CORPORATION	
MARCUS F. JOHNSON	
HT: 5'4"	
WT: 160	
EYES: HAZEL	
HAIR: BROWN	
24526-H-347	

Since 2016, the Militant Division has been the largest and most important section of Mars Corp. The corporation currently has two units in the field, the Mars Rapid Deployment Force and the Mars Heavy Infantry Division. The Militant Division is responsible for about three-quarters of the corporation's annual revenue.

Although much less profitable, the LAF is arguably Mars Corp's most well-known and well-respected division. Brown has personally orchestrated a PR campaign that involves "leaks" of how little money the company's making from the Los Angeles contract, implying to the civilian populace that Mars Corporation is doing this "because it's the right thing to do". As a result, Mars Corp as a whole is the most highly respected of all militant firms.

Mars still continues in its original markets. The Data Security Division still handles computer security, while a wholly-owned subsidiary — The Hard Option — provides physical security for clients ranging from corner groceries to the Department of Housing and Urban Development.

NATIONAL ASSAULT RIFLE ASSOCIATION

FACTS AT A GLANCE

Organizational Profile
Headquarters Location: Richmond, VA
Director: Clive Drummond
Mission Statement: "To safeguard the Constitutional rights of autofire weapon enthusiasts".
Annual Budget: Unknown
Personnel
Total Members: 23,500

ment's abandonment of various bills that would slap harsh restrictions on the ownership of rifles, the NRA would cut back on its lobbying against restrictions on *pistols*. Understandably, the pistol-owners decided the NRA had betrayed them, and formed an independent splinter group known as the National Pistol Association. (As it turned out, even with the arrangement between the NRA and the gun-control lobbyists, all provisions of the gun-control bills in question were voted down in the House...) To this day, the NRA despises the NRA as "traitors to the cause", while the NRA in turn hates NPA members for "putting their own personal concerns ahead of the key issues of the entire membership". The rivalry between the two has escalated recently, as each has tried to position itself as the advocate for gun-owners' rights in America. Violent confrontations between the two organizations, and sporadic sniping at annual meetings, continue to escalate.

BACKGROUND
 The National Assault Rifle Association (NARA) is one of several spin-offs from the National Rifle Association (NRA), a political action committee (PAC) originally founded in 1871, purportedly to defend the right to bear arms as granted by the Constitution. Throughout the 1980s and 1990s, the NRA was a steadfast opponent of all gun-control legislation, lobbying vehemently against the Brady Handgun Violence Prevention Act (passed by the House in 1992) and other similar acts which it saw as contravening the inalienable rights entrenched in the Constitution.

During the early 21st Century, strife developed within the ranks of the NRA, as the membership polarized sharply. Some members believed that the mandate of the NRA was made clear by its name, the National Rifle Association. The Association, these members believed, should concentrate on preserving Americans' freedom to own and use "long arms", which could be used for hunting as well as for civil and personal defense. If concentrating on rifle-owners' rights required a decreased focus on the rights of pistol and short-arm owners, then so be it. The other faction believed more or less the converse. Most gun-control legislation was aimed at infringing the rights of *pistol* owners — in the form of mandatory waiting periods, background checks and the like — and this faction argued vehemently that the NRA's resources should be thrown into the fight against the most egregious infringements of gun-owners' Constitutional rights.

This strife came to a head in 2017, when the NRA's leadership actually cut a secret deal with certain gun-control activists. In return for the gun-control move-



In early 2020, the NRA suffered another schism, as various top-ranking officials decided their colleagues were "getting soft" on attempts to restrict ownership and use of autofire weapons. (With the increase in crime by boosted vets, this has become a very "hot" issue for many people.) When an "internal coup" by these autofire advocates failed, they split off from the NRA entirely, forming the National Assault Rifle Association, and immediately tried to position *themselves* as the "true defenders" of Constitutional rights to bear arms. The three-way conflict between the NRA, NPA and NARA continues to heat up — both in the media and in the streets — with the NARA winning the majority of engagements in both venues.

In violent confrontations with the NRA and NPA, the National Assault Rifle Association generally comes out ahead because it has the big guns. In the "battle of the media", the NARA also generally wins. The ex-NRA officials who formed the NARA seem to understand better than the leaders of the other two groups the power of the press, and have gone to great lengths to spread their message to the people. The NARA's slogan — "Peace Through Superior Firepower" — can be seen on

misc.

TECHNOLOGY

EVENTS

ORGANIZATIONS

PLACES

PEOPLE

NARA DISCOUNT COUPON

NARA members only.

Present this coupon at all fine gunsmiths and you'll receive a 10% discount on bulk ammunition purposes.

"You're in the NARA—don't let them forget it."



billboards, the sides of busses, handbills and vid-net commercials throughout America. The Association also spends a *lot* of money to buy one-hour "infomercials" on various key vid-net channels. (The NRA and NPA have started doing the same thing, but while their infomercials run at one and two o'clock in the morning, the NARA pays the big bucks for prime-time slots.) On their infomercials, the NARA circulates the "proof" they've collated — some critics would say "concocted" — over the years, that the possession of mil-spec autofire weapons by civilians has slowed the rate of increase of violent crime in the U.S. Further, they argue that *totally unrestricted* access to full-auto weapons with extended clips, enhanced targeting systems and sophisticated recoil suppression would actually *roll back* violent crime statistics. The numbers they present are impressive, at least superficially, and the NARA's legal department is quick to level lawsuits against anyone who challenges those figures (particularly trained statisticians). Recently, the infomercials have become a little more strident, arguing that the world would be a very different place if restrictions on autofire weapons had never existed. (For example, a recent vid-net spot argues that things might have gone *very* differently in Dallas in 1963 if JFK had been able to shoot back...)

ACTIVITIES AND GOALS

The NARA's goal is to lift all existing restrictions on autofire weapons, and to block the introduction of any further restrictions. As a powerful PAC, its lobbying clout is extreme, possibly greater than that of the NRA and the NPA combined. (It would be even more effective if some of that clout weren't used to play bugger-your-neighbor against those two other groups...) The NARA is the sworn enemy of any organization dedicated to restricting right to own firearms *to the slightest degree*. Its main enemy is saved for the militant Brady Foundation (q.v.), of course.

LEADERSHIP

Clive Drummond is the charismatic leader of the National Assault Rifle Association. He's a talented administrator, and dedicated (to the point of obsession) to the NARA's avowed goals. He's personal friends with the Cracker Brothers (q.v.), and the band often plays at NARA functions. Drummond is a card-carrying member of the National Anti-Socialist party, and is thought to have political aspirations (although he denies this.. for now). Drummond has a knack for coming up with memorable lines — or for picking good speechwriters, perhaps — including the now-famous, "We should fear a government who fears our automatic weapons!"

RESOURCES

The NARA hires many top-notch lobbyists, spin-doctors and public-relations gurus, funding for which comes from its high membership dues (\$9,000 a year). Most of its members not only own autofire weapons but are *very good* at using them, which means the Association has no trouble finding people to take part in its "direct action" campaigns against the NPA, the NRA and the Brady Foundation.

NEO-SCIENTOLOGY

FACTS AT A GLANCE

Organizational Profile

Headquarters Location: New York, NY

Director: Mary-Beth Bloomfield (officially recorded as deceased)

Annual Budget: Confidential (\$750,000,000 estimated; Neo-Scientology-US only)

Personnel

Total Members: 19,250,000 (Neo-Scientology-US only)

BACKGROUND

As its name implies, the religion/corporation/social movement known as Neo-Scientology springs from the old movement of Scientology. The old form of Scientology was founded by science fiction author L. Ron Hubbard — born in 1911, died in 1986 (or considerably later, depending on who you ask) — based on his book *Dianetics* which has remained somewhere on the top-10 best-sellers list since it was first published. (Journalist Peter Argot (q.v.) suggests this is because members of the movement are charged by their leaders with buying copy after copy of the book — returning them to the organization to be put back into the distribution channel — to keep its sales up. Other journalists believe this assertion led to at least one of the recent attempts on Argot's life.)

Neo-Scientology is the brainchild of Mary-Beth Bloomfield, an entrepreneur, freelance writer and sometime confidence scam-artist. Despite claims to the contrary by the Neo-Scientology organization's extensive public relations assets, Bloomfield was *not* a member of Scientology or follower of Hubbard for many years before she changed the movement's direction so drastically. In fact, various investigators have shown, she had no interaction with the Scientology establishment — other than dodging its members canvassing for donations in airports — until 1996, just one year before she announced the founding of *Neo-Scientology*.

Bloomfield founded Neo-Scientology in the tiny principality of Liechtenstein, the only country in the world at that time where *traditional* Scientology had no official presence. She published her famous book — *A Treatise on a New World Order*, a shameless rip-off of everything Scientology professed, but leavened with a little New Age philosophy (crystals, channeling and the like) to make it a little more palatable — in that country, and tried to distribute it throughout the world. The response from

traditional Scientology was as fast as it was brutal. Bloomfield's international publishers were tied up in endless lawsuits, and those who managed to extricate themselves from legal complexities found many of their facilities “accidentally” catching fire. Bloomfield managed to escape from several potentially-fatal “accidents” herself, ducking totally out of sight for awhile. (It's during this time that she is thought to have struck up her famous friendship with Salomon Rushdie.) Every copy of the book that was printed ended up getting “lost” or destroyed. After the fifth “tragic accident”, no publisher in the world would touch the project.

In any decade before the 1990s, that would have been the end of the story. As it was, however, Bloomfield simply uploaded her manuscript to every major electronic bulletin board and computer network in the world. Several of these crashed when their server hubs suffered “spontaneous failures” or accidentally burned down, but once the text was on distributed systems like the Internet, there was no way to stop its dissemination. By the turn of the century, literally billions of people had read Bloomfield's (admittedly confusing) treatise.

Many of those — particularly in the US — were suffering from that malaise of the spirit that some socio-historians now call the “death of the dream”. There were numerous “hooks” in Bloomfield's work that made it seem to many of these that the text was written specifically for *them*, hinting at something of vital importance that they just *had* to know and come to understand. (This is exactly what Bloomfield intended when she wrote the *Treatise*, of course.) Thousands of people tried to contact Bloomfield — largely over the Internet — so she could explain to them that “message”. Bloomfield agreed to do so... charging these thousands of “followers” large consulting fees for the privilege of hearing more of her psychobabble. By 1998, she'd netted several million dollars, and the flow of money seemed to be increasing.

It was in June of 1998 that she received a fascinating invitation... from the traditional Scientology organization. They wanted to incorporate her “revisions” of



A Treatise on a New World Order

by Mary-Beth Bloomfield

TWENTY-FOUR YEARS ON
THE NEW YORK TIMES BEST-
SELLERS LIST

THE BOOK THAT WILL
CHANGE YOUR LIFE

Hubbard's initial work into Scientology doctrine... and wanted her to become the public leader of the organization. She didn't consider the invitation seriously, until a second message told her just what kind of salary and benefits the organization was willing to pay her. When she'd satisfied herself that the organization wasn't running some kind of scam on her, she accepted with alacrity. She moved from her home in Vaduz, Liechtenstein to the new Scientology HQ in New York. On August 1, 1998, the massive organization that Hubbard had started officially renamed itself Neo-Scientology, with Bloomfield as its (hideously well-paid) figurehead.

The changes that Bloomfield had wrought in Scientology doctrine breathed new life into the organization. New members flocked to the Neo-Scientology banner, swelling its ranks dramatically over the next years. Bloomfield's "New Truth" — as the organization called it — caught on elsewhere in the world even better than it did in the US. In 2013, Neo-Deutschland adopted Neo-Scientology as its official religion, mandated by the government. In America, by 2021 it boasted almost *twenty million* loyal — and dues-paying — members.

According to the Neo-Scientology organization, Bloomfield is still its leader, and still writes a quarterly newsletter distributed to all its members. Independent investigators state — but not too loudly — that Mary-Beth Bloomfield actually died in 2015, but that the Neo-Scientology establishment is keeping that fact secret for their own purposes.

ACTIVITIES AND GOALS

Neo-Scientology's central goal is to get larger, to make more money, to attract more members, and to garner more power and influence — economic, political and *other* — throughout the world. The American chapter of the globe-girdling organization — Neo-Scientology-US — enjoys the tax-free status granted to all religions, regularly uses anti-hate laws to silence anyone who speaks out against it, and is trying to make it illegal for members to quit. Neo-Scientology's influence over various branches of the federal government is significant, much larger than most people realize. This is partially because many members of congress are Neo-Scientologists, but mainly because the organization uses liberal applications of both the carrot (bribery) and the stick (threats of violence) to influential individuals.

Neo-Scientology might very well have some hidden agenda, but nobody inside the organization can do any more than make wild guesses. Neo-Scientology has been accused of kidnapping, brainwashing, intimidation and psychological torture... and those practices have been used against its *members*. It doesn't bear to think about what it does to its opponents.

LEADERSHIP

Bloomfield is nominally still the leader of the international organization (despite the fact that she's almost certainly dead). Nobody knows who *actually* controls the Neo-Scientology monolith, however.

RESOURCES

The resources of Neo-Scientology are even greater than those of its progenitor organization, and that's saying quite a bit. Neo-Scientology has members in every level of government (whether they publicly admit it or not), in many important industries, and throughout the military/industrial/entertainment complex. Neo-Scientology has more lawyers on staff than Apple, the Association of Tobacco Growers and TSR combined, and is willing to use them at the drop of an assertion. The organization also hires private investigators to dig up dirt — and sometimes simply to intimidate — opponents that it believes are a real danger to it.

SHADOW TEAM

FACTS AT A GLANCE

Headquarters Location: Langley, VA
Current Leader: Unknown
Reputation: Death incarnate, modern-day ninjas, governmental assassins, quite possibly the killers of President Milkovich.
"Mission Statement": To serve the national interest (as defined by the National Security Advisor).
Total Membership: Unknown

BACKGROUND

The Shadow Team is undoubtedly the best-known of the covert-ops units that the United States has fielded over the years. While this may sound like an oxymoron, it's quite characteristic of the Shadow Team. Virtually everyone knew the Shadow Team existed; virtually *no*-one knew any substantive details about it.

The Crisis Management Operations Unit — the Shadow Team's official name — was founded in 2010. Official government histories claim that the Team was created by a small cabal of radical conservatives in Congress, while Geoffrey Sneed (q.v.) — at the time, "personal advisor" to President Raymond Milkovich (q.v.), and later National Security Advisor — strove to oppose the radicals' hidden agenda. *Unofficial* histories claim that the Shadow Team was actually Sneed's brainchild, and his (ineffective) opposition to the covert-ops group was all feigned.

Regardless of who actually created the unit, its original members were "assets" transferred from other covert-ops units, military and otherwise: Consular Operations (ConsOps), Delta Force, the Phoenix Team, Scalpel, and others. All were experts at deep-cover infiltration, espionage/counterespionage, counterinsurgency, sabotage and demolition, small-unit tactics, and "asset reduction" (assassination). These field operatives were supported by intelligence-gathering and -analysis resources transferred from the NSA and CIA. Although all records concerning the Shadow Team are highly classified, it seems that the initial team comprised perhaps fifty field operatives and twice that number of support personnel.

The Shadow Team first, and most widely-known, missions involved "insertion" into Third World countries that were American allies, to destroy caches of weapons in these countries' arsenals. The countries then had to turn to America to replace those weapons, giving the American government considerable control over their military capabilities, and netting the military/industrial/entertainment complex huge profits.

While most of the countries hit by Shadow Team operations knew roughly what was going on, they didn't have enough proof to turn it into an international incident. And anyway, few of them had much choice in the matter; America was the only major country that would supply them with the arms they needed at *any* price.

These "business development" missions took place mainly in 2010, with a few in subsequent years. After 2010, however, the Shadow Team sunk even deeper into the

labyrinthine world of espionage and covert operations. The organization apparently was busy; judging from some "traffic analysis" a couple of journalists — who both died in tragic accidents in 2012 — performed on the Team's Langley headquarters, the Team was almost never on the base, presumably meaning they were elsewhere in the world on some mission. During the first half of 2011, various "troublesome" figures throughout the world — tin-pot dictators, one-time CIA collaborators, and the like — were assassinated, or suffered elaborate accidents. Although there was no proof, it was something of an open secret that the Shadow Team was behind many, if not all, of these incidents. It's important to point out that these assassinations directly contravened new restrictions President Milkovich had put in place on the American intelligence and covert-ops community. While Milkovich had no more concrete proof than anyone else of Shadow Team involvement, he took steps that would eventually lead to the dissolution of the Team.

Those steps ended, of course, with a single hyper-caliber rifle shot on Chuck D-Day, August 1, 2011. To this day, there are many who claim that the sniper was a Shadow Team member, and that Team resources were used (and *abused*) to slip the assassin with his weapon through the very tight security surrounding the president. Predictably, however, there was no concrete proof — at least, none that survived the severely-botched initial investigation.

After Milkovich's assassination, National Security Advisor Geoffrey Sneed took over official command of the Shadow Team. (Some say, of course, he'd *always* been



American Enquirer

KA-BOOM!

Dozens of American-Made Pakistani Missiles Mysteriously Go Up In Flames

its commander...) The Team slipped deeper into the shadows, effectively disappearing off the face of the earth.

In 2016, Sneed announced that the Shadow Team had been disbanded, ending an era in American covert operations. Few analysts believe the Team's story ends there, however. There is absolutely no documentary evidence of any members of the Team being transferred to other organizations or being cashiered out. Some say the members of the Team were "vanished" so they couldn't talk to *Hard Copy* about their activities. Others say they just went deeper underground, and the Team is still in existence.

If so, then it seems that the Team's ties to the American government aren't as tight as they once were. There are repeated claims in the international underground community that an organization calling itself the Shadow Team is hiring out its services to anyone willing to pay its (hefty) asking price. Nobody is admitting to using these services, of course, although there *have* been several incidents over the last two years that seem to match the old Shadow Team *modus operandi*.

Is this "new" Shadow Team the same organization as the old Crisis Management Operations Unit? If so, is it still even partially under the control of Geoffrey Sneed, and just freelancing to fill the time between missions he assigns? Or has the Team broken away from the American intelligence and covert-ops community entirely? If the former, then America is safe from Team operations... more or less; if the latter, then there's a real danger of Team strikes against American interests, here and abroad. Another alternative, of course, is that the "new" Team is truly new — a band of Johnny-come-latelies trying to cash in on the Shadow Team's reputation. If this is the

case, then there's no telling exactly how competent the "new" Shadow Team is... or what its goals and intentions are.

ACTIVITIES AND GOALS

The old Shadow Team was basically the "blunt instrument" Geoffrey Sneed used to further his own personal goals, in and out of government — that's the picture painted by Peter Argot (q.v.) and certain other journalists. Today, nobody knows whether this is still the case. Does the Shadow Team still exist after its official dissolution in 2016? And if it does still exist, is it still under Sneed's control? Many people in and out of government consider these to be vital questions.

LEADERSHIP

Unknown. Unit membership and reporting structure was always highly classified.

MEMBERSHIP

Initially, the members of Shadow Team were all "off-the-track", unboosted individuals — still incredibly lethal nonetheless, of course. In later years, there were unsubstantiated yet recurring rumors that Sneed had arranged for boosted operatives to be seconded from various conflict firms to the Team.

RESOURCES

Unknown. Today, the Team's resources will depend on the nature of its connection with the American government and military... if such a connection even exists any more.

THE BRADY FOUNDATION

FACTS AT A GLANCE

Headquarters Location: Stone Mountain, GA

Current Leader: Travis Wolverhampton

Reputation: Rabid anti-gun nuts with guns...

"Mission Statement": To promote gun-control legislation at any cost.

Total Membership: Confidential (1,400 estimated)

BACKGROUND

Although one of the smallest political action committees (PACs) dedicated to gun-control legislation, the Brady Foundation has by far the highest profile throughout America. Founded in 2010 by the man who still leads the organization, Travis Wolverhampton, the Foundation is named after Press Secretary James Brady who was wounded in an assassination attempt against then-president Ronald Reagan by John Hinckley Jr. on March 20, 1981. Unlike the Brady Handgun Violence Prevention Act (passed by the House in 1992) and other similar legislation, bills and organizations, James Brady did *not* willingly give permission for the Foundation to use his name, and — before his death in 2011 — categorically refused to express any degree of support whatsoever for Wolverhampton and his followers.

From the first, the Brady Foundation has distinguished itself from other gun-control PACs by its tactics. Most other groups work by trying to raise public awareness of the social benefits of gun-control legislation, and by combating the actions of gun-control opponents like the NRA and NARA (q.v.) mainly by debating their interpretations of firearms-related statistics. The loosening of restrictions on firearms possession and use has shown how ineffective those tactics have been, Wolverhampton argues. The only way to "fight the good fight" is directly, to take the battle to the enemy.

When the Brady Foundation was formed, its first act was to buy space in dozens of magazines and on numerous vid-net shows, and to run an incredibly brutal "smear campaign" against the National Rifle Association. This campaign named names, identifying individual officers of the NRA, elucidating their ties to gun and ammo manufacturers, and itemizing the "donations" the NRA as a whole and those officers as individuals received from those manufacturers. (Predictably, this led to some serious house-cleaning within the NRA, as the officers named in the Brady Foundation campaign moved heaven and earth to learn who'd leaked that information to the gun-control activists...) The NRA and the arms manufacturers combined to launch libel and slander suits against the Brady Foundation. The various suits were filed, with

great fanfare, in November, 2010. They were quietly withdrawn only a month later when the NRA's lawyers saw the evidence the Foundation possessed, and realized they couldn't win. The Foundation immediately launched a counter-suit... which it lost. (To this day, Wolverhampton claims that the judge who ruled against the Foundation had been bribed by the NRA.)

Although the judgment in the counter-suit hurt the Foundation badly, Wolverhampton wouldn't give up. In 2011, the Foundation launched another widespread smear campaign against the NRA. This one was even more vicious, comprising direct personal attacks against certain NRA officials. Again the NRA filed suit against the Foundation, and this time it won — and won *big* — when the judge decided that Wolverhampton's personal attacks were totally unfounded and unsupported by concrete evidence. The judgment drove the Brady Foundation to the brink of bankruptcy, and seriously harmed its reputation with the general populace. Again, however, Wolverhampton swore he'd continue to take the fight to the "enemy".

In late 2011, two well-known opponents of gun-control were assassinated, and in 2012 three more fell. Wolverhampton claimed not to know who was behind the assassinations; although nobody believed a word of his denials, there was no concrete evidence linking the Brady Foundation with the deaths. (When, after the first of the assassinations, he was asked for his comments by a journalist, Wolverhampton expressed his sorrow for the dead woman's family, but suggested that "we should also keep in mind, and grieve for, the thousands of others who have died, indirectly because of her beliefs and actions".)

Between 2012 and 2017, three dozen gun-control opponents died, all killed by a sniper using a .50-caliber military sniper rifle firing exploding rounds. Although Wolverhampton continued to deny any involvement, and although no proof could be found linking him to the deaths, it was an open secret that the Brady Foundation was behind them. When, in 2017, the National Pistol Association split off from the NRA,



RED DYE #28 KILLED SIX LABORATORY RATS.

AUTOFIRE WEAPONS KILLED 29,745 AMERICANS.

Which do you think is the one that gets banned?

Support gun-control legislation.

the "Gun-Control Sniper" (as the press had termed him) proved totally unbiased in the attentions he awarded to both groups. Between 2017 and 2020, both the NRA and the NPA lost an even twenty influential members to the sniper. Since this death-toll was minor compared to the casualties inflicted in the sometimes-violent rivalry between the two groups, the Brady Foundation didn't get that much press during this time.

That changed in late 2020, after the schism within the NRA which created the NARA. The Gun-Control Sniper targeted senior members of the NARA exclusively, letting the NRA and NPA totally off the hook. As the Gun-Control Sniper continued his/her grisly work, Wolverhampton and the Brady Foundation kept distributing press releases and paying for ad campaigns that seemed to tie in much to well with the campaign. (Of these campaigns, the one based on the slogan, "Those who live *for* the gun die *by* the gun" was by far the most effective.)

In January of 2021, a "renegade" member of the NARA hosed down the Brady Foundation's headquarters with autofire. Rather than silencing Wolverhampton, it only drove him to greater heights of rhetoric. Opinion polls commissioned by the NARA showed that the attack had only raised popular approval of Wolverhampton, and so "coincidentally" no other "renegades" have taken action against the Foundation.

Since the beginning of the year, the Brady Foundation seems to have changed its tactics. So far, there have been four dozen random sniping incidents, the victims of

which have been innocent civilians with no connection whatsoever to gun-control legislation, on *either* side of the issue. Following each sniping, Wolverhampton and the Foundation released statements claiming that these incidents showed the dangers of inadequately-restricted access to firearms...

ACTIVITIES AND GOALS

Wolverhampton's avowed goal is to get strict, effective and *well-enforced* gun-control legislation onto the books. He has gone on record several times as saying he'll do anything it takes to achieve that end.

LEADERSHIP

Travis Wolverhampton is the sole official of the Brady Foundation. In fact, he *is* the Foundation; the organization would almost certainly collapse without him. Wolverhampton recognizes this, of course, and his personal security provisions are arguably more stringent than those of the President.

MEMBERSHIP

Considering the enmity the well-armed NARA feels toward the Foundation, it's understandable that *very* few of the roughly 1,400 members admit it publicly. Currently membership in the Foundation is dropping, and Wolverhampton's recently more inflammatory statements make the recruiting process a lot more difficult.

RESOURCES

Nobody knows exactly where funding for the Foundation comes from. Major ad campaigns like the ones the Foundation keeps running don't come cheap. Some members believe — or *choose* to believe — that Wolverhampton is independently wealthy, and funding it all himself. Objective analysts don't think this is the case, and are looking around for the Foundation's "sugar daddy" — thus far with no success. (Certain cynics suggest that, since 2020, it's the *NRA* that's funding the Foundation, both to chew up their rival the NARA and to discredit the entire gun-control movement.)

THE CBS

FACTS AT A GLANCE

Headquarters Location: South Central Los Angeles
Current Leader: "Ice Pick" (real name unknown)
Reputation: Toughest gang in America
"Mission Statement": Build rep, gain power, make money.
Total Membership: 9,000 (estimated)

BACKGROUND

The gang called the CBs came into existence in 2012 when the two best-known and most influential gangs in America — the Crips and the Bloods — merged. When news first spread about this merger, popular reaction was dumbfounded amazement; after all, the Crips and Bloods had been implacable rivals since the late 1980s, frequently cutting each other's members down with Uzis and MAC-10s. That was the public perception, at least. Law enforcement officials who really knew the way gangs operated and interacted had changed understood all too well, and in fact had been expecting it for some time.

Back in the 20th Century, when gangs started to become noticeable, their sole reason for existence could be described as "inclusion/exclusion". People joined gangs to be part of a group which had similar world-views (inclusion), and to set themselves apart from others who were outside the group (exclusion). Many gangs didn't *do* anything; their members just hung out, wearing the jackets or colors or other identifiers that denoted membership. They'd sometimes come into conflict with *other* gangs, who were doing (or *not* doing) much the same thing, but these conflicts were rarely over anything more concrete than concepts of pride, group identity, vendetta, and territory. Gangs would claim "turf" and defend it jealously, but not because that turf provided any concrete, measurable value. That was just "what gangs do".

With time, this changed. Gangs grew, and started finding reasons for their own existence beyond just "hanging out". Many went into business, the nature of that business depending on their members' world-views. Some became burglary or armed-robbery rings; others started marketing drugs and weapons. Suddenly, the rivalries between gangs came to mean a lot more than pride. When two gangs were in the same business, competing for the

same clients, instead of competing — like "traditional" businesses — through marketing, product differentiation, advertising and the like, they'd compete through drive-bys.

In the 1980s and 1990s, the Crips and the Bloods were the most influential gangs in California, and were already spawning "chapters" across the rest of the country. Both gangs were heavily into selling drugs and weapons, along with other lucrative forms of

semi-organized crime, turning over millions of dollars worth of business each year. Pride, vendettas, inclusion/exclusion issues and knee-jerk hatreds were still widespread — "civilians" driving through the wrong neighborhood wearing the wrong color baseball cap were sometimes killed — but more and more of the direct conflict between the gangs was over matters of supply and demand, distribution and customers. By 2005, both the Crips and the Bloods had annual revenues rivaling those of major American corporations (their after-tax pictures were *much* better, of course...). The people rising to leadership positions in these and other major gangs were starting to be those who understood the ins and outs of doing business in a competitive environment. By 2009, the leadership of both gangs had realized a chilling truth — their ongoing violent competition was hurting the bottom line of both gangs. Shooting each other to gain a slightly larger "slice of the pie" was totally counterproductive when the environment of violence was keeping the entire pie small. Both gangs would gain if they'd move their competition to less violent arenas... like marketing, product differentiation, advertising, etc. (As Ice Age, Crips war-boss in 2009 put it in his autobiography, *Listen Up, Butthead*: "Don't see the suits at Pepsi and Coke cacking each other when they go for market-share, do you? People don't buy cola when they're too busy dodging bullets.") For three years, the two organizations — "gangs" largely in name only, now — competed purely in business and economic terms, until in 2012 the two leaderships negotiated a merger.



The CBs
STATEMENT OF RETAINED EARNINGS
For the Month Ended January 31, 2021

Retained earnings, Dec. 31, 2020	\$7,710,000
Net income for November	\$184,439,998
Subtotal	\$192,149,998
Less: Dividends	\$23,675,555
Retained earnings, Jan. 31, 2021	\$168,474,443

Today the CBs are largest organized-crime establishment in the country. The Mafia and the Yakuza have failed to keep pace with the changing times; not so the CBs. There are other gangs that have undergone the same kind of evolution, but they're much smaller and less influential. The CBs' center of operations is still Los Angeles and the West Coast, but they have "branch offices" in virtually every city in America.

Currently, the CBs are being forced back into a kind of competition they thought they'd left behind. The organized crime empire of Santa Claws (q.v.) is hurting them badly up and down the West Coast, not only by undercutting the CBs' prices on many products and services, but also by blowing away CBs members, safe-houses, warehouses and manufacturing facilities. The CBs still have *some* "street soldiers", but not as many as they need to fight off the predations of Santa's boosted ops. The leadership is currently gearing up for a major recruiting drive.

ACTIVITIES AND GOALS

The CBs are into just about every illegal business imaginable, and a growing number of *legal* enterprises as well. The CBs' products and services range from drugs, gambling, prostitution and small-time gun-running right the way up to high-tech industrial espionage and international trade in mil-spec weaponry. Until the appearance of Santa Claws, the CBs were the *only* black-market source for military-grade weapons.

Apparently, the CBs have some influence with most levels of government. Some journalists claim that the LAPF (q.v.) is cutting the CBs some slack in return for the CBs' going after Santa Claws' operation, but nobody's been able to show convincing proof of this assertion.

LEADERSHIP

The current leader, or "CEO", of the CBs is a man who calls himself Ice Pick. (Although some people outside the gang suggest he's a boosted vet, most think this is just a gangster's street name, not a military codename.) There's convincing evidence that Ice Pick and the other senior "officers" of the CBs have extensive business training — MBAs at the very least — and experience. (A recurring, though unsubstantiated, rumor claims that Ice Pick was a junior vice-president for Ford-Toyota before quitting to join the CBs.)

MEMBERSHIP

The CBs are open to "employment candidates" of any race, nationality or creed. All that matters is competence. Boosted vets are no more welcome or unwelcome than anyone else just because of their enhanced nature. Since few vets have any marketable skills, and since — up until recently, at least — the CBs have had little need for straight "street muscle", there aren't too many boosted individuals in the gang. This is definitely changing.

The CBs recruit members of all types, just like any diversified business concern. They hire skilled managers, accountants, marketers and human resources types, as well as specialists — pharmacists, weapons buyers, chemists, computer programmers, etc.

RESOURCES

The gang is thought to have an annual cash-flow running in the *billions*, most of which is tax-free. The CBs' resources are frighteningly extensive.

THE NEW SAMOANS

FACTS AT A GLANCE

Headquarters Location: None
Current Leader: None
Reputation: Surly primitivists
"Mission Statement": "Back to the land in comfortable RVs".
Total Membership: 1,000 (estimated)

BACKGROUND

The group calling itself the New Samoans is one of the many primitivist "tribes" that have sprung up across North America since the founding of the Primitivist movement in 2014. Like all primitivists, the New Samoans believe that modern human society is fouled up beyond redemption, and the only way to get things back on track is to revert to a simpler, more primitive mode of life, and develop a *new* advanced society based on totally different lines.

The primitive mode of life the New Samoans chose to emulate is that of the Polynesian islands, a thousand miles or so northeast of Australia, and roughly an equal distance southwest of Hawaii. Or, at least, they adopted what they *believed* to be the lifestyle of Samoa. Cynics claim that the New Samoans must have got their ideas about Polynesian life from bad movies, cheesy travelogues and *Gilligan's Island* re-runs... but *not* to the New Samoans' faces. In fact, the New Samoans seem to have borrowed the features that most appeal to them from various different Polynesian cultures, and to have made up the rest.

New Samoans tend to live a very sedentary lifestyle, doing as little as they can possibly get away with while maintaining some degree of creature-comforts. Some New Samoans live in normal apartments and — in the case of boosted vets — in HUD projects, while others live in shanty shacks and "grass huts" they've built for themselves. The vast majority, however, seem to have decided that RVs and trailers — often old 20th Century Airstreams — suit them best. There are half a dozen New Samoans trailer parks throughout California, and an equal number scattered across the rest of the continent. These "villages" (as the New Samoans call them) are all tightly-knit communities that strictly exclude anyone who doesn't buy into the New Samoan ethos and world-view. Particularly in California, these trailer-park villages are made to look as Polynesian as possible. Trailers are often given thatched roofs, making them look like tropical grass huts. Fire-pits for the roasting of pigs are prominent, and wherever possible the trailers are set up among palm trees.

Individual New Samoans try to emulate what they see as the Polynesian lifestyle. Many have taken on Polynesian names — or Polynesian names like Toflau, Eti and Malietoa. They like to eat well, and many New Samoans are exceptionally fat. Favored foods are roast pig, tropical fruits and coconuts (most of which they have to buy from supermarkets, of course). New Samoans typically wear sarongs, pareos or lava-lavas — simple pieces of cloth wrapped around them. Those who live in New Samoan villages throw elaborate luaus on a regular basis, listening to Polynesian music — actually, all they can usually lay their hands on is old Don Ho CDs and recordings of Hawaiian standards like "Pearly Shells" — late into the night.

The New Samoans are a tightly-knit group, and they're *very* sensitive about people not taking them seriously or making fun of them. A catch-phrase that's caught on throughout the New Samoan subculture is, "Samoaans make the best friends and worst enemies," and they try to live up to that description. New Samoans will fight, sometimes to the death, to defend someone they've accepted as a "bruddah", but will expect the same solidarity from their comrades. They have long memories, and a deep belief in the tradition of vendetta. (It's been said, with some truth, that a New Samoan's best-developed muscles are the ones used for holding a grudge...)

As long as people treat them with the respect and consideration they think they deserve, most New Samoans have a very laid-back attitude to life. There's nothing better than to quaff a few cold rum-punches under the palms on a sunny afternoon, looking forward to gorging on roast pig after the sun's gone down. Let the rest of the world run itself ragged, following some outmoded work ethic, or striving for consumer items the vid-net tells them they should want. The typical New Samoan will work only long enough, or often enough, to keep himself in papaya juice, rum, coconuts and pigs.



His Pacific Majesty, King Malietoa Tanumagili III,
Sovereign of the Village of Apia,
and Lord of the Santa Anna Freeway cordially
invites you to a luau to commemorate
His ascension of the throne.

BYOB/RSVP

The New Samoans' laid-back, low-stress approach to life has attracted quite a few boosted veterans to join the primitivist tribe. Most of these vets trade in their costumes for pareos, and simply drop out of any and all on-going conflicts. The presence — or just the *possibility* of the presence — of boosted vets in any New Samoan village protects the tribe from aggression by most rival tribes, local gangs and the like.

ACTIVITIES AND GOALS

Although many cynics believe the New Samoans *have* to have some hidden agenda, members of the tribe themselves claim they're part of no organized group, and have no shared agenda. If the New Samoans have any concisely-stated goal, it would have to be, "Take it easy, bruddah, and put another pig on the spit."

LEADERSHIP

The tribe has no overall leadership. Individual trailer-park villages might have a king or a chief, but this individual's authority and significance can vary widely — from outright dictator to meaningless figurehead — as can the methods used to select him or her. (For example, the trailer park of Apia has a hereditary king — currently King Malietoa Tanumagili III — while, a little further south on I-5, the trailer park of Pago Pago has a democratically-elected Prime Minister.)

MEMBERSHIP

Anyone's welcome to become a New Samoan, regardless of race, creed, nationality or genetic status. (Very few *real* Polynesians join the tribe, however, mainly because they know how far off-base the New Samoans really are.)

RESOURCES

There are no resources that can be said to belong to the tribe as a whole. The resources of individual New Samoans varies wildly; some are just scraping by, while others — independently wealthy before they joined the tribe — have enough resources to keep an entire village in pigs and coconuts out of petty cash. Different villages have differing attitudes toward personal possessions. Some believe that each individual is entitled to his or her own personal possessions, whatever they may be; others hold that everything belongs to the village as a whole.

THE SONS OF LUDD

FACTS AT A GLANCE

Headquarters Location: Unknown

Current Leader: "Ned Ludd" (real name unknown)

Reputation: Radical anti-technologists with an attitude problem
"Mission Statement": Erradicating technology in all its forms.

Total Membership: 1,000 (estimated)

BACKGROUND

The original "Luddites" were bands of laborers who rioted during a five-year period in the early 19th Century, in the industrial areas of England. They named themselves after their leader Ned Ludd, who was actually almost certainly a mythical figure. The riots began in Nottinghamshire, with the Luddites destroying textile machines, to which they attributed high unemployment and low wages. The riots were harshly suppressed by the British government. Over the next two centuries, the term "Luddite" or "neo-Luddite" has often been applied to anyone who blames technology for society's woes, and believes happiness and peace can come only from the eradication of "inappropriate" technology. (The definition of "inappropriate", of course, varies extremely widely...)

The most recent expression of Luddite tendencies has been by the group calling itself the Sons of Ludd. Unlike most neo-Luddite groups, the Sons of Ludd are actually a well-organized terrorist organization, rather than a motley band of fellow-travelers. They have a leader — some mysterious individual calling himself "Ned Ludd" — they have an effective organizational structure, and they have a distinct agenda. Like all other neo-Luddites, the Sons' goal is to eliminate all forms of inappropriate technology — which they seem to define, some cynics charge, as anything more complex than a pair of scissors. Unlike earlier neo-Luddite groups, the Sons are starting to have a significant impact, and have so far escaped all government attempts to suppress them.

The Sons of Ludd burst onto the scene in April of 2018, when a bomb severely damaged the Sepulveda Dam automated flood control system, which is used to "bleed off" overflow from Chatsworth Reservoir northwest of Los Angeles. The apparent goal of the bomber was to blast open the floodgates of the dam, flooding the Los Angeles River (the "Racetrack"; q.v.) with billions of liters of water — and, incidentally, killing perhaps thousands of the normally-dry river's unofficial residents. Although the municipal government downplayed the risk, independent analysts admit that the bomb was powerful enough, and placed correctly, to destroy the control systems and open the floodgates. Only the fact that the floodgates themselves hadn't been adequately maintained for years, letting their bearings rust into immobility, prevented a catastrophe. Predictably, many terrorist groups immediately claimed responsibility for the bomb. The only claim that got the facts right,

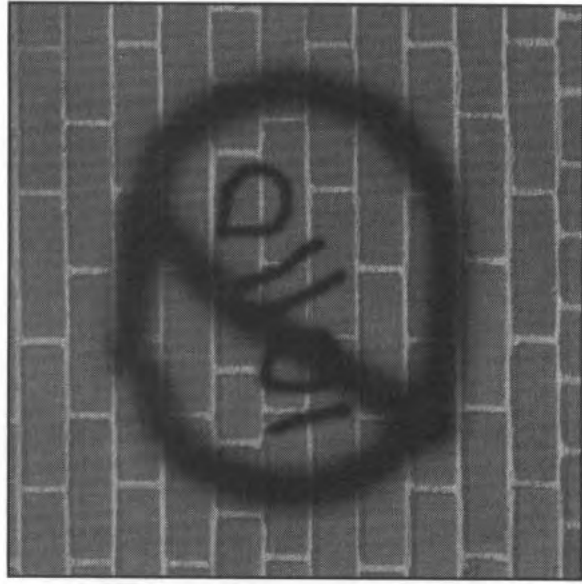
however, was the message sent to the mayor's office — with copies sent to all news outlets, of course — by someone claiming to be Ned Ludd...

There were three more major bombing attacks against technological targets in 2018; only the one against the Simi Valley nuclear power plant failed. In 2019, there were five attacks — against airports, power distribution centers, vid-net distribution nodes and major computer installations — and in 2020 another six. So far in 2021 there have already been five similar attacks; the Sons of Ludd have claimed responsibility for all of them, and the authorities have accepted their claims as factual.

"Ned Ludd", the group's leader and spokesperson, has frequently publicized the Sons' goal — to prove the vulnerability of advanced technology, and demonstrate the "criminal foolishness" of depending so heavily on something that can so easily be destroyed. Ludd's official statements go on to urge Americans to "listen to the truth" of his message, and voluntarily turn away from "the dark, satanic mills" of technology, to a simpler and purer way of life that used to exist before the Industrial Revolution. If, however, people *won't* turn away from technology voluntarily — the messages all conclude — the Sons of Ludd will do their damndest to force them to do so... by destroying all manifestations of advanced technology throughout North America. (Governments at the municipal, state and federal level have been trying to prevent Ludd's message from reaching the ears of the public, but the various vid-net broadcasters have circumvented all attempts to silence them.)

The FBI and the Census Bureau have devised what they believe is an accurate "profile" of the Sons of Ludd organization. It's led by a single charismatic individual who breathes life into the whole group, they claim — with the unstated corollary that the elimination of Ludd might just put a stop to the Sons' sabotage campaign. There can be no fewer than 800 members across the country, but no more than 1,200.

If they're right about these numbers, the thousand or so Sons have been extremely busy of late. While the news media concentrate on the major bombing attacks, there are many more cases of anti-technology sabotage — much smaller than an attack on a dam, for example, but *much* more numerous. For example, *someone* has been grenading public vid-



THE MIDNIGHT SUN

INSIDE:

"WHO IS NED LUDD?"—The Midnight Sun reveals the *truth!*

"SONS OF LUDD: Crusaders for a Better Life, or Psychotic terrorists?"

phones throughout Los Angeles, and scrawling "King Ludd Rules!" on the smoking wreckage. Someone else has been doing the same to bank ATM machines, while what seems to be an entire "task force" within the Sons has been screwing up the programming of stop lights throughout Greater Los Angeles. There are countless other examples of minor neo-Luddite vandalism, throughout California and elsewhere in the country. Although the FBI and Census Bureau won't admit it, outside analysts have compiled figures showing that there's no way a mere 1,000 Sons of Ludd could do all of this, and still have time to plan major operations. Either there are many more members of the group, these analysts claim, or people outside the group — "unofficial" Luddites — have taken Ned Ludd's message to heart, and are acting on it.

Over the last several months, the Sons of Ludd have turned at least some of their attention to a manifestation of modern technology they'd seemed to be ignoring up to then: genetically-enhanced humans — boosted vets. Since January, 2021, there have been five terrorist-style attacks on congregations of boosted ops — mainly bombs planted in HUD projects, or machine-gun attacks on gatherings of vets. Of these, the LAPF is convinced that three were, truly, perpetrated by the Sons of Ludd. The other two — although "King Ludd Rules!" spray-painted nearby seems to imply the Sons were involved — might well be the actions of "copy-cat" perpetrators... yet one more thing for boosted vets to worry about.

A week or two ago, a local congregation of the Boosted Ops for Christ (q.v.) received a bomb-threat purportedly from the Sons of Ludd. The LAPF has been noticeably slow in following up on this, and BOC church-goers are understandably nervous.

ACTIVITIES AND GOALS

The surface motivation of the Sons of Ludd seems easy enough to understand (although maybe not so easy to countenance): to return American society to a simpler, earlier period before the Industrial Revolution and the Protestant work-ethic "ruined" everything. Public support for this position is sporadic, at best. While some people think the Protestant work-ethic has to go, they recognize something the Sons seem to have missed: advanced technology is all that allows the world to support its current huge population. Curtailing technological development would lead to a new Dark Age. Still, the Sons' recent attacks against boosted vets seems to have earned them considerably more popular support.

One disturbing question keeps coming up: Is the goal publicly espoused by the Sons of Ludd their *real* goal, or is it just a smoke screen to conceal their *true* agenda?

LEADERSHIP

Nobody knows anything about "Ned Ludd" — whether Ludd is male or female, or whether he/she is even a single person or a group? Although Ludd is commonly referred to as the "spokesperson" for the Sons, nobody outside the radical group has ever seen or heard him/her. All messages purportedly from Ned Ludd are sent via electronic mail, through so many "blind relays" that the message is untraceable. (Relays like these are set up by the Cypherpunks (q.v.), giving the C'punks something of a moral dilemma: does their protection of privacy and freedom of speech extend to people like the Sons who number the high-tech C'punks among their worst enemies...?) The "electronic signature" is always "Ned Ludd", and the style is always similar, but the different messages could easily have been written by different people.

MEMBERSHIP

The only published estimate of Sons of Ludd membership was concocted by the Census Bureau and FBI, and few other analysts consider it worthy of any credibility whatsoever.

RESOURCES

Unknown.

NAME:

FACTS AT A GLANCE

DESCRIPTION

PEOPLE

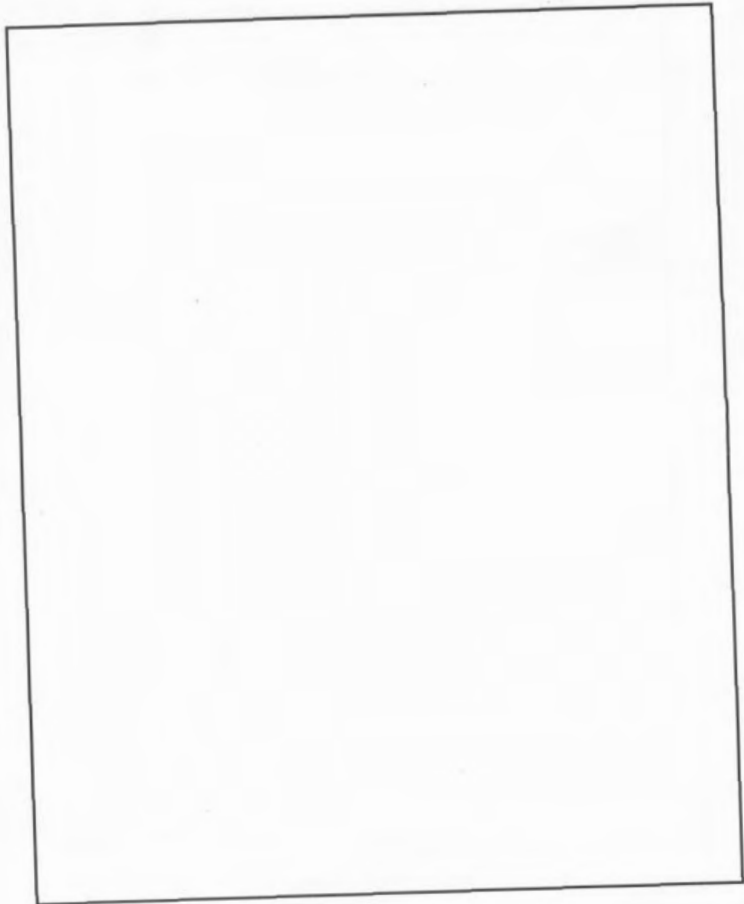
PLACES

ORGANIZATIONS

EVENTS

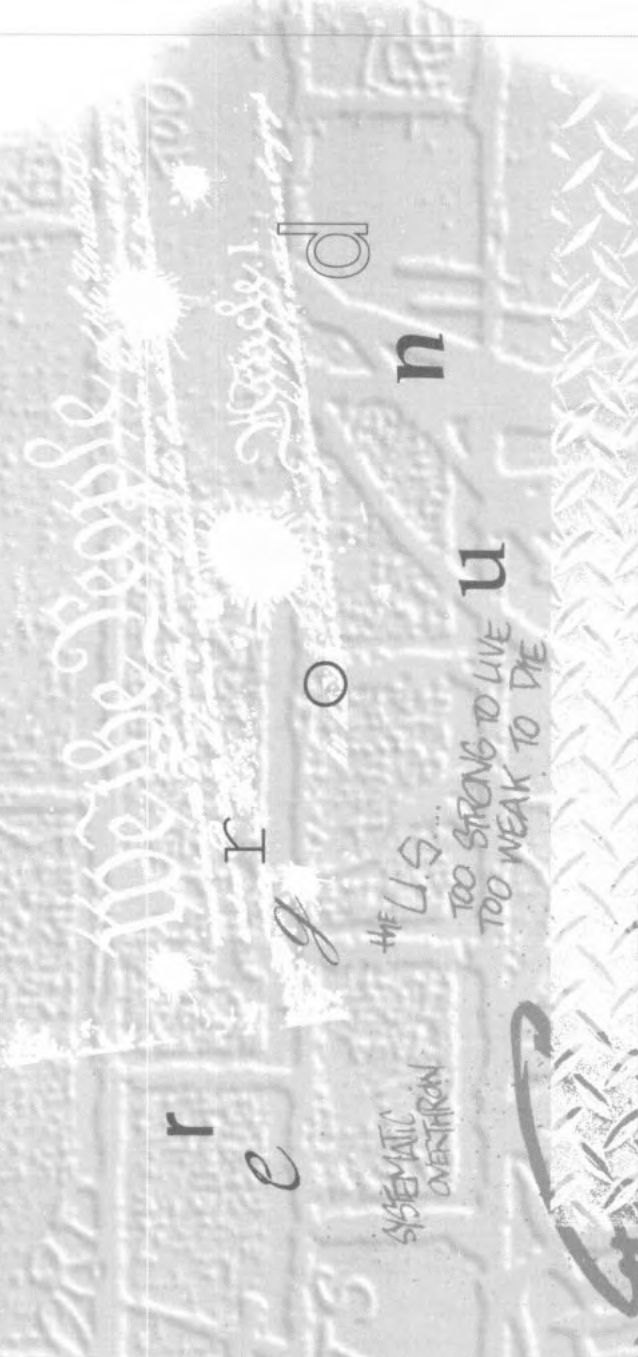
TECHNOLOGY

MISC.



Handwriting practice lines consisting of 15 horizontal lines.

Handwriting practice lines consisting of 20 horizontal lines.



THE NOTIE BOOK

EVENTS

AN UNDERGROUND TIMELINE

1996 - STLs Alpha and Beta Crashland on Earth

1998 •Rap group Public Enemy assassinated •Ross Perot dies under mysterious circumstances	1999 •Cryo-Dawn Inc. goes bankrupt •New Soledad built on Luna	2000 Pub	2001 •Communism collapses in China •MacRaney's creates the pre-frontals •Congress declares Chuck D-Day a federal holiday	2002 •Global depression
2003 •Neo-Deutschland forms and quickly gains control of the European Common Market •Canada becomes part of United States; PRQ declares independence	2004 Pub	2005 Pub	2006 •MacRaney's ramps up pre-frontal production	2007 •US Government turns alien secrets over to AMI
2008 •New Soledad inmates take control of facility and declare independence	2009 •Enhanced Cyber-Celeb cyborgs now common the battlefield	2010 •Avant-Garbage establishes New Providence •Congress pass MacMurtry Foodstuffs Act •Shadow Team founded	2011 •Tastee Ghoul opens its 1000th store •Milkovich assassinated	2012 •Dr. Rudolph Bushmiller accepts a job at AMI

PEOPLE

PLACES

ORGANIZATIONS

EVENTS

TECHNOLOGY

MISC.

AN UNDERGROUND TIMELINE (CONT)

2013
Pub

- First genetic enhancement of living subjects
- Vid-net goes on-line

- Bushmiller process evolved
- Soma-vid houses start licensing dead Hollywood stars

2016

- *Freedom League Quarterly* cancelled
- PTIO obliterates San Luis Obispo in a nuclear holocaust
- Shadow team disbands

2017

- Veterans Fair Housing Act passed
- Catholic church flees to Nicaragua and founds Neo-Vatican
- NARA forms

2018
Pub

2019

- Rudolph Bushmiller retires
- Warfare rocks Paraguay

2020
Pub

2021
Pub

BOOSTED PRIDE DAY, 2019

DATE

Friday, May 10, 2019

BACKGROUND

It seemed like an excellent idea at the time. Various veterans' rights activists, led by Red Jack and Simon St. Lauren (a.k.a. Scarlet Fever), decided that what the movement really needed at the moment was a higher profile, with some heavy-duty symbolic overtones. The public at large simply wasn't hearing enough about veterans' struggles for their rights and for fair treatment, these activists believed. The news media didn't bother covering the issue, or if they did, they always did so from the government-biased point of view, depending on press releases and analyses from PR flacks and administration spin-doctors. What was needed, the activists decided, was something that the news media simply *couldn't* ignore, and that would give the veterans' groups a forum to tell *their* side of the story. What better than a huge "Veterans' Rights" march and demonstration, in the heart of the nation's capital? Or, better yet, a "Boosted Pride" day! (Because, after all, the question wasn't just one of veterans vs. civilians, was it? Enhanced vs. non-enhanced was also a huge part of it.) The capital was the perfect venue for the march and celebration, of course. Not just because the politicians couldn't ignore it, but also because of the wonderful symbolism. America had turned its collective back on its veterans once before, hadn't it, but had been eventually shamed into giving them the respect they deserved. Where better to end the Boosted Pride march than right in front of the Viet Nam Memorial?

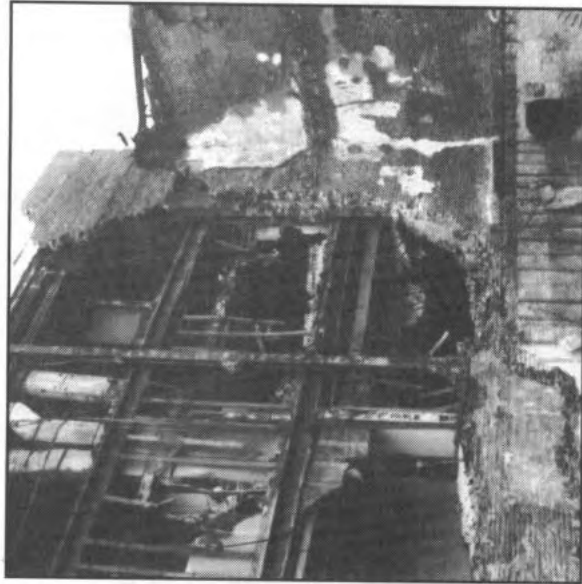
Thus Boosted Pride day was born. The different vets' rights groups spread the word throughout their memberships. All vets who could manage to make it to Washington — by plane, train, car or however — *should* make it. The greater the number, the greater the impression. The organizers chose Friday, May 10 as the date for the event. The weather *should* be good enough to guarantee a good turnout of "civilians" and the news media; more importantly, it was one of the few days when the Mall wouldn't be filled with some longer-standing event. The organizers acquired the appropriate licenses and waivers from the different levels of government, and everything was set.

Red Jack and the other organizers knew just what kind of impression they wanted to make with the Boosted Pride event. The message they wanted to send to the watching civilians was, "You may think we're different from you, but our similarities vastly outweigh those differences. Like you, we deserve to be treated as human beings, with all the respect that entails." (A simple message, and one that, in an ideal world,

should have been self-evident.) In order to send that message, however, the boosted vets participating in the march would have to cooperate. There could be no violence, or aggression of any type, regardless of provocation. The march must be totally and utterly peaceful, or the damage done to the vets' rights movement would be incalculable.

Further, all participants should be careful not to flaunt their super-normal powers. This didn't mean conceal them or somehow deny them; this was Boosted Pride Day, after all. But the message "the differences are less than the similarities" would be lost if everyone flew, or phased in and out, or set off pyrotechnics around themselves throughout the event. The organizers demanded a promise of cooperation from everyone taking part, and — surprisingly to some — they go the assurances they wanted.

May 10 dawned clear and bright. As the Boosted Pride marchers prepared for their demonstration, they saw for the first time just what was waiting for them. The entire route of the march was lined with police, National Guard and full-on military units. Armored personnel carriers and even tanks were parked in some intersections. Machine-gun nests were sited atop strategic buildings, while Apache gunships cruised overhead. While city officials claimed that all these preparations were "for the protection of the veterans", the organizers knew the government was sending a message of its own: any gathering of boosted individuals — whether purportedly peaceful or not — represents a massive threat to the civilian populace. Many participants classified this — with some justification — as outright provocation. The organizers begged for peace, however, and — again surprisingly — everyone went along. The boosted vets marched under the clear Washington skies, their costumes bright, their demeanor purposeful but non-threatening. Everything seemed to be going perfectly as the march approached the Viet Nam Memorial. The small crowds of daring spectators that had come out to see the start of the march had swollen to thousands, and the news media were having a field-day. The organizers really believed their message was coming



BOOSTED PRIDE DAY- FRIDAY, MAY 10, 2019 WE'RE PEOPLE TOO!

America is a country of diversity—diversity in color, race, nationality, creed, sexual orientation. We believe it's that diversity that makes our nation strong. There are words for those who try to deny that diversity—racist, sexist, homophobic, bigot... Strong words. *Unpleasant* words. There are words for anyone who would define "American" to exclude other citizens, for whatever reason.

Yet what is the word for those who would deny rights to the genetically enhanced?

across perfectly. At 13:00 on May 10, the marchers reached the "black wall" memorial, and the speeches began.

Red Jack was at the podium when the trouble started. A group of non-boosted troublemakers had broken through the military cordon, and started throwing Molotov cocktails at the massed veterans. Predictably, chaos broke out, only to spin totally out of control as a small contingent of boosted ops fell upon the mundane trouble-makers with intent to kill. Other vets tried to stop their boosted comrades before they committed murder, while others came to their aid. The peaceful demonstration instantly degenerated into a massive boosted melee. The National Guard panicked and opened fire, adding to the carnage. When the fighting finally ended, the death toll stood at close to 300 dead (five or six of them vets) and thousands wounded. Material damage — most of it caused when a squadron of Apache gunships cut loose with their rocket pods — was estimated in the billions of dollars.

repressive policies toward veterans... which, some people believe, is exactly what the government had in mind. While some vets and analysts consider any attempt to implicate the government to be paranoia run rampant, others point out the ease with which the Sons of Ludd attackers managed to get through the police and military cordon around the march. How could that have been possible without participation from those in charge of security? To this day, nobody has been able to answer that question adequately.

SIGNIFICANCE AND REPERCUSSIONS

Obviously, Boosted Pride Day didn't send quite the message its organizers intended. The carnage and destruction added to the popular distrust, fear and outright hatred of enhanced individuals. The massive death toll silenced many critics — both boosted and mundane — of the government's

Estimates of civilian spectators range from about 1,000 (government figures) to over ten times that many (organizers' figures). The group of mundanes who started the carnage with their Molotov cocktails are thought to be members of the Sons of Ludd group (q.v.). Attempts by the organizers to identify who among the veterans fought back all failed. Many people who were involved believe that it was a group of boosted individuals who'd joined the march near the end — in other words, not official Boosted Pride Day participants — who fought back. Today, the most popular theory is that these "newcomers" were actually members of the group Evolution In Action (q.v.), looking for — or perhaps *expecting* — trouble.

PARTICIPANTS

There were close to 1,000 enhanced vets who took part in the first (and last) Boosted Pride Day. Maybe twice as many police and soldiers lined the march route.

CHUCK D-DAY, 2011

DATE

Monday, August 1, 2011

BACKGROUND

Few events have rocked the entire nation as much as the assassination of Raymond Milkovich (q.v.). (The deaths of JFK and Martin Luther King are, perhaps, the only two.) As described elsewhere, Milkovich was an independent and an iconoclast — two characteristics that would, at any other time in history, almost certainly have eliminated him as a real candidate for the presidency. In 2008, however, the general dissatisfaction with the political system that had been growing since the 1990s came to a head. The popular perception was that anyone who classed him- or herself as a politician was innately untrustworthy, and potentially corrupt. Anyone who actually sought political office — so the conventional wisdom went, at least — was automatically unworthy of attaining it. The only figure worthy of receiving a vote — other than in the (all too common) case of selecting the lesser of two evils, of course — was someone who simply wasn't a politician. But who other than a politician would stand for election? That paradox was the central characteristic of politics in the decade after the turn of the century.

Until Raymond Milkovich appeared on the scene, of course. As a "non-politician", he was seen as the only viable alternative to the "dinosaurs" — the career, partisan politicians. He was swept into the White House, and was seen by a large proportion of the population as the savior of America. Instead of talking a good game during his campaign and then conforming totally to the status quo once he was in office, Milkovich actually was seen as challenging the vested interests in Washington and throughout the military/industrial/entertainment complex, and that challenge seemed to really be making a difference. Maybe Milkovich could turn things around...

Of course, these vested interests didn't take kindly to some "fuzzy-headed dreamer" messing around with procedures, institutions and understandings that had been in place for decades, and worked just fine, thank you very much. Within his first hundred days in office, Milkovich had made many very powerful enemies. The intelligence community hated and feared him for slapping new restrictions on covert operations overseas. The radical conservatives in Congress hated and feared him for blocking some of their cherished "law-and-order-at-any-price" programs. The military hated and feared him for initiating major investigations into corruption and "sweetheart deals" with defense contractors. The traditional political parties hated and feared him for proving beyond the shadow of a doubt that an independent *could* make

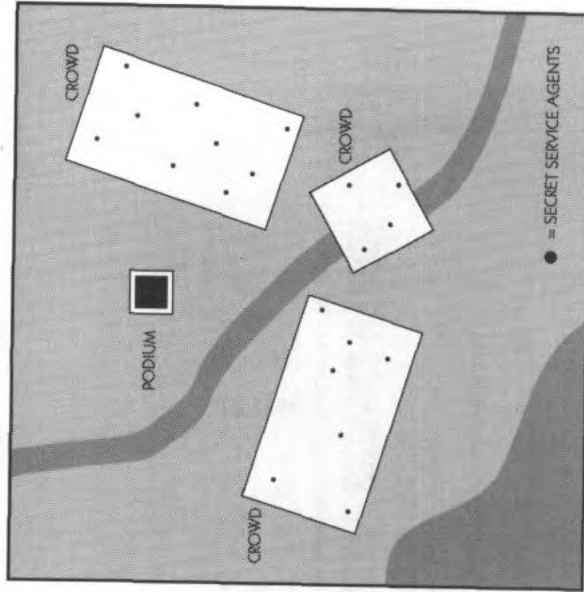
things happen without the party politics machinery behind him. The people, however, loved him. Of course, it's always been known that hate and fear are much more powerful emotions than love.

Analysts claim that Raymond Milkovich signed his own death warrant the day he stood for election as President of the United States. His execution was assured; the only uncertainties were the time, the location, and the identity of his executioner.

On August 1, 2011, Raymond Milkovich was scheduled to speak at the Chuck D-Day celebration in Seattle, Washington. Although Milkovich was arguably the most-loved president ever, the Secret Service and other security agencies took their usual precautions against some nut trying to off "the Man". Security personnel in concealed body armor surrounded the podium. SWAT team snipers patrolled the roof-tops. Weapon detectors were everywhere, creating a "zero zone" several hundred meters in diameter. "Firetrack" radars swept the area, providing almost guaranteed security. No weapon could be smuggled into the zone (theoretically, at least); and a round fired from *outside* the zone would take at least a second to hit its target. The Firetrack system would detect the round while it was still in transit and would warn the security personnel, one of whom would knock the president bodily out of the way, taking the round himself if necessary. It was a well-tested, foolproof system.

Theoretically, at least. What happened one minute and three seconds into President Milkovich's speech was theoretically impossible, but it happened. A hyper-caliber delayed-fuse explosive-tipped bullet punched through the front of the podium and literally blew the president apart. None of the security personnel reacted until after the single round had struck. What had happened?

The investigation that followed was, perhaps, the most colossal screw-up ever. With so many security and law enforcement agencies involved, operating without sufficient central coordination, evidence was destroyed or lost, until it was totally impossible to reconstruct what happened. (Many cynics claim that was *precisely* what was



The American Enquirer

vol. 4879

PREZ POPPED!

WORLD-FAMOUS PSYCHIC FORESAW ASSASSINATION:

"I felt him die three hours before the killing"

Milkovich ghost already haunting White House

PARTICIPANTS

Conspiracy theories are still rife, even ten years later. The most widely-accepted theory is that the assassin was a member of the vaunted Shadow Team (q.v.), under the command of National Security Advisor Geoffrey Sneed (q.v.), who is suspected of being sympathetic to the goals and interests of the radical conservatives in Congress. The Shadow Team must have had some assistance from the security forces present in Seattle that fateful day, however.

SIGNIFICANCE AND REPERCUSSIONS

The major significance is the effective death of all trust in the political system. The people saw Milkovich as someone who wanted to change the system, and then saw him cut down by that very system. Chuck D-Day, 2011, is often referred to as the "Death of Hope"; the voter apathy that led to the minuscule turn-out at the 2020 elections dates back to the death of Raymond Milkovich.

According to official histories, Milkovich's death was what changed Geoffrey Sneed from a dove to a hawk, showing him the essential truth of the radical conservatives' belief structure. *Unofficially*, very few people believe that Sneed was ever opposed to the radical conservatives, regardless of what he said on the issue.

intended...) Several indicative facts were made public, however, despite efforts by the Secret Service — and just about everyone else — to keep them confidential. First, the Firetrack system had been turned off for a period of five seconds, during which the sniper had taken his shot. Thus there was no record of exactly where the shot had come from, and no warning to the security personnel that a round was on its way in. Second, it wouldn't have mattered much anyway. Judging from the angle of impact, there was only one place the sniper could have been... and that was well *inside* the zero zone, close enough that the transit time of the round would have been a twentieth of a second — much too short a time for *anyone* to respond. The major questions, then, are, "How did the sniper get a hyper-caliber weapon — not something you can slip into a coat pocket — into a presidential zero zone?" and, "Who turned off the Firetrack system?" The only explanation that makes sense is that the Secret Service or some other security force was collaborating with the assassin. Of course, there's no proof of this. The official investigation concluded that the assassin was a single psycho, working entirely alone. No suspect was ever arrested.

THE LIGHTBRINGER DISASTER, 2020

DATE

Saturday, June 6, 2020

BACKGROUND

The *Lightbringer* was justifiably famous as the greatest achievement of AUS, the Australian Union for Space, the nation's semi-military space agency. The *Lightbringer* was a prototype power-generation facility, a large, manned satellite that deployed a mylar mirror more than a kilometer in diameter to focus sunlight onto its large solar panel array. This array converted the incident sunlight into electricity — clean solar power that was then to be converted to microwaves, and beamed down to a collector on the ground. With a large enough system of *Lightbringer*-style satellites, AUS believed, it would be possible to supply all the power the world needed without any of the pollution or contamination risk inherent in the power-generation systems currently in vogue.

The *Lightbringer* itself was launched in 2003 from Australia's Woomera launch facility. It was never intended to go fully on-line. For one thing, it was much too small — to generate any meaningful yield, the mylar mirror would have to be at least *four* kilometers in diameter. Yet the *Lightbringer* was important as a feasibility study. If a small version could be made to work, it implied that the full-scale system could also work.

Work it did. The *Lightbringer* was able to beam down almost a megawatt of power, 105% of the theoretically predicted yield. Scientists lined up to suggest modifications that would increase that yield still further. It seemed as though the world would finally have the cheap, plentiful power science fiction writers and futurists had been predicting for decades.

Not everyone relished this idea, of course — most notably the corporations (and there were *many* of them) that depended on the scarcity and cost of energy for their continued profitability. Several of these corporations banded together and, effectively, bought that arm of the Australian government that handled AUS. For reasons of “cost-cutting”, these corps immediately “proxmired” the *Lightbringer* project. The satellite's crew was brought home, the ground-based microwave receiver was disassembled, and everyone was urged to forget the *Lightbringer* had ever been launched. For almost two decades it orbited, forgotten.

Meanwhile, other things were happening in Australia. The country got into the genetic enhancement business in a big way, monopolizing the technology itself rather

than licensing it off to conflict firms as in America. The ranks of the military were swelled with thousands of boosted individuals, and the Australian army was more of a force to be reckoned with than it had been since World War II.

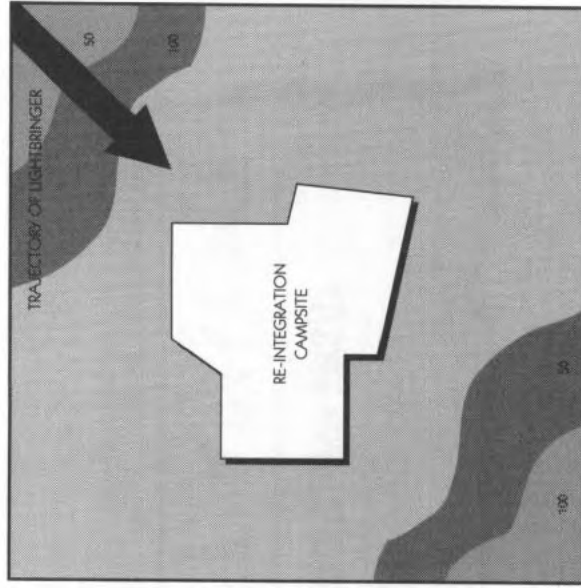
Of course, boosted soldiers in the military implies boosted vets *leaving* the military — a situation that the government hadn't adequately considered. Within months, Australia was facing the same “veteran problem” as America, but it solved it in its own way. A so-called

“Re-Integration Camp” was set up in the outback, near Ayers Rock, and all boosted vets were sent there for “re-socialization” as they were demobbed. The Camp also offered free housing for the veterans, in the (vain) hope they'd choose to live there permanently rather than trying to re-enter civilian society. Few did, however, and the major Australian cities soon suffered from the same boosted crime waves as American cities. The Australian government stopped all enhancement work, and by 2017 all Australian boosted ops had been demobbed from the military.

Back to the *Lightbringer*. Most people had forgotten the satellite, but the laws of physics hadn't. The space station's orbit was decaying, and eventually it would re-enter like a huge meteor. The corporations that owned AUS publicly promised they'd solve the problem, and contracted a shuttle mission from Space City (q.v.) in America. Boosters were strapped onto the space station to control its re-entry, and make sure it didn't land anywhere inhabited.

Back to the vets. In April, 2020, the Australian government declared that all veterans must return to the Re-Integration Camp for further re-socialization. (After all, the initial training *couldn't* have worked, could it? If it had, there wouldn't be a crime problem.) The majority of vets were rounded up and shipped out to Ayers Rock by late May.

On June 6, the *Lightbringer* plunged back into the atmosphere and smashed to earth... in the outback of Australia, near Ayers Rock... and directly on top of the Re-Integration Camp. Nobody in the camp survived.



The American Enquirer

vol. 4826

DOWN TO EARTH!

AUSSIE SHUTTLE OFFS DOZENS OF BOOSTS

Details Inside!

The outcry wasn't as great as might be expected. Few boosted vets had managed to avoid the "sweeps" that sent their comrades to the Camp, and most of those had had good reason to stay underground — reasons made even more pressing now. Popular opinion was that all vets were a threat, so few civilians mourned. The new media blamed the corporations that owned AUS of "mini-genocide", but those corps just claimed computer error, and provided proof to support that claim. Basically, most Australians were glad to see the whole situation ended.

PARTICIPANTS

Casualty estimates vary. The records listing how many vets were shipped to the Camp are highly unreliable, and after the *Lightbringer* struck down there were absolutely no remains to examine. The best estimate is that 2,500 or so boosted vets lost their lives. Today, there are thought to be perhaps 500 boosted individuals throughout Australia, keeping their identities and abilities secret.

SIGNIFICANCE AND REPERCUSSIONS

There have been very few repercussions within Australia. The news media treated the issue as a nine-day wonder, then promptly forgot about it. Most civilians care only that they now can go visit a crater almost as impressive as the one in Nevada.

Outside the country, however, there are many people struggling to keep public outrage over the *Lightbringer* incident alive. There are several vets' rights groups in the States trying to apply pressure on the Australian government, the UN and anyone else who'll listen to prosecute the corporations involved for genocide. Although the death toll from the *Lightbringer* incident was horrible, the main reason that American activists are so fired up about it is to prove to the American government that it can't get away with any analogous "final solution to the veteran problem" ...

THE LOS ANGELES POLICE STRIKE, 2017

DATE

Friday, August 18, 2017 — Tuesday, August 22, 2017

BACKGROUND

The circumstances that led to the Los Angeles Police Strike had existed for some time. Since the early 1990s, the city had been putting more and more unreasonable restrictions on the police force — that's the way the officers and their union described it, at least — making it steadily more difficult for the cops to do their job. Most of these restrictions related to the use of force, specifically *lethal* force, and intense investigations of bribes and police-aided narcotics deals.

Spokespeople for the police unions claimed that the new restrictions on officers' actions would not only lead to a lower level of law enforcement, but would also increase casualties among the force. Very few people — either civilians or in government — paid much attention, however. Popular opinion held that the LAPD was much too quick to use force with the slightest provocation — witness the whole Rodney King incident — and believed that more stringent restrictions help avoid similar incidents in the future. Although the police union threatened to go out on strike over this issue, and even held a strike vote, job action didn't happen. The municipal government seemed to believe that the union had tried to finesse more lenient policies, but when they'd failed they'd just forgotten about the issue. They couldn't have been more wrong.

Over the next two decades, the LAPD and the police union became less and less satisfied with the way they were being treated by the city. While they received regular raises which kept pace with inflation, they *didn't* receive the lavish hand-outs that other unions throughout the country enjoyed. The city tried to placate the union by offering better health benefits and more paid vacation, but the union accepted those offered "perks" and *then* demanded higher wages on top of them. The city refused, citing inability to pay. In response, in 2013, the police union went on strike.

The strike lasted for a grand total of seven hours — although it felt like *much* longer than that to the citizens of LA who suddenly found themselves without any police presence on the streets — before the federal government ordered them back to work. Grudgingly the police obeyed, although they were infuriated by what they saw as the "high-handed" way they were being dealt with. The level of anger was raised another notch when, just two months later, a bill was rammed through, declaring that

law enforcement was an "essential service". Under this new law, no police union was allowed to go out on strike. Although police across the country were angry, no action was taken.

Then came 2017. Early in the morning of June 4, LAPD officers were involved in hot pursuit of a boosted vet suspected of involvement in a fly-by shooting. The suspect easily evaded the patrol cars sent to investigate, so the beat cops called in a helicopter. Details of what followed

are still rather hazy. All that's known for sure is that the helicopter blew the suspect out of the sky with its 20mm minigun. The officers involved claimed they'd fired in self defense when the perpetrator reversed course and started his own attack run on the helicopter. Witnesses on the ground tell contradictory stories. Some — all boosted vets, theoretically with their own vested interests — claim the suspect was trying to surrender. Others say he was just trying to evade.

The result was a PR nightmare. The city announced it would be looking at new, even more severe, restrictions on lethal force. The police union threatened strike action — even though a strike would be illegal — if anything of the sort happened. That put the city's symbolic back against the wall. The mayor couldn't be seen as backing down before *any* union, and railroaded through the new restrictions. At midnight on August 18, 2017, the LAPD staged an illegal "wildcat" strike, ignoring back-to-work orders from all levels of government.

Los Angeles promptly became a war zone. Criminals and looters took advantage of the lack of police presence. Homeowners and businesspeople defended their homes from criminals — and anyone foolish enough to come too close — with the heaviest weapons they could lay hands on. Gangs seized the moment to settle longstanding grudges without the risk of police intervention. The riots of the early 1990s had been bad enough; the riots of 2017 were much worse. Most of the difference came from the fact that many people had long-range, high rate-of-fire weapons. With a "home-defense" .32-caliber pistol, the consequences of misjudgment or mistaken



*Office of the President of the
United States of America*

Dear Officer Carla D. Hughes:

This letter is to formally notify you that your employment as an officer of the Los Angeles Police Force has officially been terminated, as of 18:00 hours, August 22, 2017.

You are hereby enjoined from entering any building or other facility owned by the Los Angeles Police Force, on penalty of arrest. Your personal effects will be sent to you under separate cover.

identity are bad enough; with an assault rifle with an extended clip, they become much worse. The carnage was horrible.

Throughout, the union stood fast, convinced that the federal government would have to step in and force the city to settle. At six o'clock on August 22, the federal government *did* step in. The president appeared on the vid-net, and publicly "pulled a Reagan" — officially firing all members of the police union, Los Angeles chapter. He then instructed the city to obtain law-enforcement services from somewhere else.

While the union members were still stunned, the city struck a deal with Mars Corporation (q.v.), a conflict firm, to police the city. Within hours, Mars had assets on the street — supported by the National Guard — calming things down, and within two weeks the Los Angeles Peace Force (a newly-established division of Mars) was on the job.

PARTICIPANTS

Officially speaking, every member of the old LAPD was fired — not only the street cops, but the support personnel as well. Many support workers were quietly rehired by Mars; however, no police officer from the defunct LAPD has ever been hired by Mars Corporation.

SIGNIFICANCE AND REPERCUSSIONS

The major consequence of the police strike is that now LA is policed by a private corporation. In some ways this simplifies the political situation, while in other ways complicating it. The union movement throughout America has suffered a major setback, which might well have been a secondary goal of the government's action.

Journalist Peter Argot (q.v.) has recently dug up the interesting fact that one of the key advisors to the leadership of the police union in 2017 had, in 2016, been on the payroll of Mars Corporation and was, in 2018, hired back by the conflict firm. Although Argot draws no conclusions from these facts himself, many others have strong opinions on the subject...

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FACTS AT A GLANCE

DATE: _____

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MISC.

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SYSTEMATIC
OVERTHROW

THE U.S...

TOO STRONG TO LIVE
TOO WEAK TO DIE

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we the people

we the people

ICCAB

*FREE THE PRISON
NEVER WAR*



**THE
NOTICE
BOOK**

UNDERGROUND™ Weapon List									
Melee Weapons	Acc	Pen	Dmg	Ring	Ammo	Rate	STR	RES	
Survival Knife	-5	4	LW/LW/MW/HW	0/2/3	-	-	-	4	10
Longsword/Katana	0	6	LW/MW/HW/HW	-	-	-	-	10	12
Swiss Army Sword	0	6	LW/MW/HW/HW	-	-	-	-	11	11
The Glaive	0	6	LW/MW/HW/HW	-	-	-	-	0	1
Crossbow	-3	8	LW/MW/HW/HW	5/10/14	1	-	1 (3)	0	5
Throwing Stars	-2	3	LW/LW/MW/MW	0/3/4	-	-	1/2	4	10
Whirling Death BADS	0	6	LW/MW/MW/HW	-	-	-	-	5	10
Pistols	Acc	Pen	Dmg	Ring	Ammo	Rate	STR	RES	
9mm Walther antique	-2	9	LW/MW/HW/IN	3/9/12	7	1	-1	13	13
9mm ZW "Toshiba"	0	9	LW/MW/HW/IN	3/9/12	8	1	-1	13	13
9mm Wei Weapons "Mr. Smith"	-1	9	LW/MW/HW/IN	3/9/12	15	1	1/3	13	13
10mm ZW "Demonsturn"	0	10	LW/MW/HW/IN	3/9/12	15	1	0	13	13
12mm DA "Death's Head"	0	10	LW/MW/HW/IN	3/10/13	13	1	0	13	13
15mm Urban Nightmare #802	0	11	LW/MW/HW/IN	4/10/13	5	1	0	13	13
15mm UN/Hog "Excommunicator"	-1	11	LW/MW/HW/IN	3/8/13	20/32	1/2	3	13	13
20mm Urban Nightmare #822	0	12	LW/MW/HW/IN	4/10/12	4	1	1/2	13	13
20mm GCS 15Gso	0	13	LW/MW/HW/IN	4/10/13	11	1	5	13	13
20mm Urban Nightmare Iron Monger	0	13	LW/MW/HW/IN	2/7/10	7	1	1/2	13	13
20mm Urban Nightmare EP420	-1	14	LW/MW/HW/IN	2/8/11	7	1	5	13	13
25mm Urban Nightmare EP425	-1	15	LW/MW/HW/IN	2/9/11	6	1	4	13	13
25mm NeoMag Megacat Magnum	0	15	LW/MW/HW/IN	3/9/12	6	1	6	13	13
30mm Silver Bullet Arms SSF 2/30	-4	18	MW/MW/HW/IN	2/6/10	7	1	7	13	13
.22 cal "Chummer"	-3	5	ST/LW/LW/MW	3/9/12	7	1	3	10	10
.50 cal Urban Nightmare EP450	0	11	LW/MW/HW/IN	2/7/10	9	1	2	13	13
Rifles and Shotguns	Acc	Pen	Dmg	Ring	Ammo	Rate	STR	RES	
9mm M-21	-1	11	LW/MW/HW/IN	10/17/20	20	1/2	0	14	14
10.75mm Plotz Cintel	0	12	LW/MW/HW/IN	11/17/21	20/32	1/2	1	14	14
12.5mm ZW 385i	0	13	LW/MW/HW/IN	12/18/21	20/32	1/2	3	14	14
12.5mm DohungShing-shing 26br	-1	13	LW/MW/HW/IN	12/17/20	20/32/50	1/2	3	15	15
20mm GCS DW 770/g	0	15	LW/MW/HW/IN	12/18/22	20/32	1/3	6	14	14
30mm ZAG	-1	19	MW/MW/HW/IN	10/16/22	20	1/2	8	14	14
8 gauge Melbourne Arms	+2	9	LW/MW/HW/IN	8/14/18	8	1	2	13	13
10 gauge Melbourne Arms	+2	9	LW/MW/HW/IN	8/13/17	20/50	1/2	3	13	13
7.62mm Silver Bullet Minigun w/HERG Missile launcher	-6	8	LW/MW/HW/IN	3/7/11	50	1/4	7	13	13
9mm TWD "Carberus-Vordog"	+2	11	MW/HW/IN/KL	10/17/20	750*2	1/5	14	12	12
40mm Pumpit (blast: 3)	-5	16	LW/MW/HW/IN	7/12/16	12	2	3	13	13
40mm GCS M87/g	-2	21	MW/HW/IN/IN	6/15/28	10/20	1/3	9	14	14
45mm GCS BFW 2060/g	-4	24	MW/HW/IN/KL	6/15/31	20	1/2	11	14	14
50mm GDW BARR w/	-1	27	MW/HW/IN/KL	12/18/24	1	1 (2)	10	13	13
40mm Grenade Launcher	-5	16	LW/MW/HW/IN	7/12/16	2	1	4	13	13
75mm Silver Bullet Man-thowler	-5	30	HW/IN/IN/KL	6/15/31	4/8	1 (2)	13	16	16
AMT Char-Baby	-2	26	MW/MW/HW/IN	6/19/33	20	1	8	14	14
AMT M92 PAC	-2	26	MW/MW/HW/IN	6/19/33	20	1	8	13	13
AMT "Rice gun"	0	27	LW/LW/LW/KL	25/28/35	32	1 (2)	9	13	13
Other Weapons	Acc	Pen	Dmg	Ring	Ammo	Rate	STR	RES	
Sm Missile	16	17	LW/MW/HW/IN	22/28/31	-	1	3	11	11
Hy Missile	16	21	MW/MW/HW/IN	24/29/32	-	1	5	11	11
AMT "Jertcho" Missile (blast: 5)	16	9	LW/MW/HW/IN	21/26/30	-	1	5	13	13
TWD "Bastion" Missile (blast: 2)	16	16	MW/MW/HW/IN	18/24/28	-	1	3	13	13
AMT "Samson" Missile (blast: Special)	19	17	LW/MW/HW/IN	23/28/35	-	1	5	13	13
Snop-Tite™ Grenade (blast: 2/4)	0	10/16	LW/MW/HW/IN	3/5/8	-	1	2	11	11
Hy Grenade (blast: 4)	-2	17	MW/MW/HW/IN	5/7/9	-	1	6	11	11
TWD E.M.P. Grenade (blast: 4)	0	18	Special	3/5/8	-	1	3	11	11
AMT Golden BB biogrenade (blast: 2)	-2	12	IN/IN/KL/KL	3/5/8	-	1	3	16	16
ZW "Morgengeweher"	-5	12	IN/IN/KL/KL	5/7/9	-	1 (2)	0	10	10
AMT Punk-coaster Napalm Proj.	+3	12	LW/MW/HW/HW	7/11/14	1	1	2	9	9
Turbo Tazer	-3	12	Special	2/4/6	1	1	1	10	10
Beachdog Gun	-4	10	Special	1/3/5	1	1	0	10	10
20mm Urban Nightmare RK for Her	-2	12	MW/HW/IN/IN	0/3/5	1	1	-1	10	10
30mm Urban Nightmare "Deuce"	-2	18	MW/MW/HW/IN	2/6/10	2	1	7	10	10
66mm Urban Nightmarer	+1	19	LW/MW/MW/HW	3/9/12	8	1	-1	10	10

Miscellaneous Equipment

Item	Availability	Cost	Item	Availability	Cost
Armor					
Mondo.....	A.....	\$10,000	Peripherals		
Heavy Mondo.....	B.....	\$75,000	Laser Printer.....	A.....	\$20,000
Heavykey.....	A.....	\$5,000	Video Camera.....	A.....	\$18,000
Chaff.....	B.....	\$3,000	Microphone.....	A.....	\$5,000
Ammunition.....	Varies.....	Varies	Bio-Drive.....	B.....	\$10,000,000
Vehicles					
Tehran Jihad.....	C.....	\$175,000	Robots		
BRS 49.....	C.....	\$120,000	TWD XKM770.....	E.....	\$40,000,000
AMC City Runabout.....	C.....	\$240,000	Eliminator 4440.....	D.....	\$30,000,000
AM1 Hvy Assault Cycle.....	D.....	\$180,000	LM770.....	B.....	\$20,000,000
Personal Aircar.....	C.....	\$1,500,000	Combat Goggles.....	A.....	\$2,000
Airboard.....	A.....	\$130,000	Cellular Phone.....	A.....	\$4,000
Computers					
Average Home.....	A.....	\$16,000	Porta-Fax.....	A.....	\$5,000
Economy Home.....	A.....	\$12,000	Punkbuster Radar Detector.....	A.....	\$5,500
Average Pack.....	A.....	\$32,000	Punkbuster Signal Jammer.....	A.....	\$25,000
Economy Pack.....	A.....	\$25,000	Xanxarox Copier.....	A.....	\$10,000
Software					
Pueblo Sniper.....	A.....	\$12,000	Fibalert.....	B.....	\$30,000
Pueblo Firefight.....	A.....	\$15,000	Nowlan Flying Harness.....	E.....	\$35,000
Eliza.....	A.....	\$3,000	Medikit.....	A.....	\$1,500
Skill Software.....	B.....	\$4,000/Unit	Gas Mask.....	B.....	\$3,500
Home Appliance Software.....	A.....	\$3,000	Spotlight.....	A.....	\$2,500
Pueblo Mapit.....	A.....	\$18,000	Megaphone.....	A.....	\$1,250
Porta-Term.....	A.....	\$9,000	Flexi Cable.....	A.....	\$700
Library Load.....	A.....	\$3,000	Ammo Belts.....	A.....	\$1,000
Vehicle Navigation/Maint.....	A.....	\$8,000	Holsters.....	A.....	\$400
Pueblo Recordit.....	A.....	\$10,000	Drugs		
Anti-Radar.....	A.....	\$8,000	Pain Killers.....	C.....	\$800
Vocalizer.....	A.....	\$15,000	Amphetamines.....	C.....	\$1,000
			Suit of Clothing.....	A.....	\$300-\$14,000
			Meal.....	A.....	\$75-\$1,400
			Rent.....	A.....	\$2,800-\$70,000
			Music Album (CD).....	A.....	\$200
			Television.....	A.....	\$2,500

[illegible]

GAME STATS:

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SYSTEMATIC
OVERTHROW

THE U.S...

TOO STRONG TO LIVE
TOO WEAK TO DIE

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We the People

FREE THE PACS
NEVER AGAIN

SMYTH



THE
**NOTICE
BOOK**

MISC.

stress recovery modifiers

No strenuous activity since Stress sustained (ie. no fighting, strenuous physical activity, or anxiety)	-3
Character spent the majority of the last 12 hours in a serene setting (in the country, a quiet suburb, etc).	-3
During the last 12 hours, a character with the Psychology/Therapy Specialty successfully attended to the character attempting the Recovery	-3
Character spent the majority of the last 12 hours in an anxiety-filled setting (Los Angeles, on a battlefield, etc).	+3

Stress recovery challenge every 12 hours.
Standard WILL challenge (Diff:0)

The Grade earned in the Recovery Challenge indicates the number of Stress points removed according to the table at the right:

Grade	Stress Removed
F.....	1
D	2
C.....	4
B.....	6
A	8

multiple chart

Multiple	Add
x 1/4.....	-6
x 1/3.....	-5
x 1/2.....	-3
x 2	+3
x 3	+5
x 4	+6
x 5	+7
x 10	+10
x 20	+13
x 50	+17
x 100	+20
x 500	+27
x 1000	+30
x 10,000	+40
x 100,000	+50
x 1,000,000	+60

difficulty chart

Description	Approx. Odds	Difficulty
Simple	3 in 4	-4
Easy	2 in 3	-2
Average	Even Money	0
Tricky	2 in 5	2
Difficult.....	1 in 3	3
Very Difficult.....	1 in 4	4
Impressive	1 in 10	9
Phenomenal	1 in 25	15
Legendary.....	1 in 100.....	20
Superhuman	1 in 1000	30

healing chart

Make a Recovery Check every 24 hours after last damage taken (P/F RES Challenge).

Wound Level	Difficulty
LW	3
MW	6
HW	9
IN	12

Success lowers Wound Level one step.

Medical Treatment: Passing a P/F Challenge against the patient's Recovery Difficulty before the Recovery Challenge allows the patient to subtract 3 from the Recovery Recovery Challenge Difficulty.

Surgery: is necessary before Incapacitated characters can attempt Recovery Challenges.

effect of anti-stress medication

Result	Tolerance Gained
F	0
D	+1
C	+2
B	+3
A	+4

Standard WILL Challenge against a Difficulty of 0.

challenge chart

Difference	Grade
1-3	D
4-7	C
8-10	B
11+	A

stress from other sources

- 1 Stress whenever a wound is suffered.
- 1 Stress on 5th Turn of combat.
- 1 Stress on 10th Turn of combat.
- Flashbacks (see Chapter Five).

Once Stress equals or exceeds Tolerance, Difficult P/F Will Challenge to avoid manifesting Psychosis.

COMBAT, COMBAT, COMBAT!

BACKGROUND

Combat, Combat, Combat! is a natural outgrowth of the “reality shows” that first really started to make an impact in the late 1980s and early 1990s. The television audience of the time seemed to show an insatiable appetite for cops-and-robbers shows, so all the major networks kept churning out new retreads of old ideas. Budgets kept going up, however, as the cost of pyrotechnics and artificial blood went through the roof. Eventually some brilliant innovator figured out one way to keep the costs way down. How much would it cost to stuff a film crew into a *real* cop car, out on patrol? Video tape’s cheap, and the only salaries you have to pick up are the members of the camera crew. Brilliant!

Thus were born *Cops*, *Top Cops* and all the other spin-offs. The networks soon diversified beyond police work — realizing that it wasn’t just police procedure, but *human tragedy* that got the viewers’ blood pumping — and shows focusing on rescue workers, Coast Guards and paramedics started popping up on the schedule.

The next development appeared with something called *Eye Witness*. In this show, the network cut costs even further. Why pay a camera crew at all — network execs asked themselves — when there are so many people out there with video cameras? Soon *all* of the major networks were offering to buy dramatic videos from the general populace — arrests, riots, natural disasters, plane crashes, etc. — and trying to outbid each other to lay their mitts on the most spectacular. (Various analysts at the time worried that the ever-increasing prices paid for these videos would prompt people to *manufacture* crises to videotape, but the networks — predictably — gave no credence to these complaints.) Even with the high prices paid for “hot” tapes, the networks still saved money, since they didn’t have to pay for a camera crew to sit around idly in a cop car for days or weeks, waiting for something interesting to happen. It can be argued, then, that *Combat, Combat, Combat!* isn’t anything new and, in fact, can trace its lineage back to such fine examples of innovate programming as *Cops in Milwaukee*.

Allied Mayhem Inc. first aired *Combat, Combat, Combat!* on the NBS vid-net in 2017. The company had several reasons for doing so. First, as part of its deal with NBS, it received a cut of all advertising and cross-marketing revenue (i.e., *Combat, Combat, Combat!* T-shirts, lunch boxes, etc.), and every little bit of profit helps.

Second, AMI needed to give its recruiting program a boost. The ads revolving around Captain Conflict (q.v.) were helping the company’s numbers, but not enough, since it seemed that too many people automatically distrusted any message that was part of a paid advertisement. Looking back on how the ancient movie *Top Gun* had helped Navy recruitment, AMI’s PR department figured a “reality-based” program on

the vid-net — heavily edited and glossed, of course — would be just the ticket.

Third, in 2017 AMI’s pollsters noticed, with some alarm, that a grassroots movement was growing that opposed the government’s use of conflict firms. Many people were disturbed by the growing power and lethality of military weapons, and of the boosted ops using them, and were starting to apply pressure to the government to “get out of the war business” — in other words, to stop hiring conflict firms to achieve goals by force that could be achieved through negotiation and diplomacy. Obviously, this movement was a threat to AMI’s bottom line, a threat the corporation took very seriously. Certain sociologists on staff pointed out how the extensive TV coverage of the Viet Nam conflict in the 1960s and 1970s seemed to desensitize many people to the ugly realities of war, and suggested using something similar to derail the peace movement.

According to current AMI studies, *Combat, Combat, Combat!* is admirably meeting all of these goals. *Combat, Combat, Combat!* cross-marketing is pumping billions of dollars into AMI’s coffers as CCC fan club magazines, coffee mugs, shirts, jackets, boxer shorts, novels, CDs, vid-games and all the rest are scooped up by the public as fast as they can be churned out.

At first, the government was a little concerned about how AMI’s *Combat, Combat, Combat!* was dominating the airwaves, and how it might glamorize and idealize boosted ops. After several discussions with AMI executives in 2018, the slant of *Combat, Combat, Combat!* changed slightly. Always jingoistic, now it became more patriotically jingoistic — no longer war for specific goals, but war for the greater

#347



M A G A Z I N E



ACTION! DANGER! HEROISM! *COMBAT. COMBAT. COMBAT!* MAGAZINE

If you're like any other red-blooded American, you can't get enough of the heroism and heartache, the courage and carnage that is *Combat, Combat, Combat!* haven't you always wished you could look up the stats on your favorite AMI units? Or read in-depth articles about the weapons and equipment your favorite soldiers pack into battle? Or collect and trade poster-size photographs of the red-blooded American heroes you see on your vid-screen?

Now you can in *Combat, Combat, Combat!* magazine! Subscribe today!

glory of America! The focus shifted from the soldiers themselves to their heroic feats, and the use of boosted ops was "positioned" as a unpleasant necessity. The subtext of the whole show is now that, while the people actually on the vid-net screen are enhanced, what they're doing is what *any* red-blooded American would do under the same circumstances. (Nonsense, of course — most red-blooded Americans would be wetting themselves with fear under the pressures of modern combat — but it's an attractive, palatable lie.)

To generate "footage" for *Combat, Combat, Combat!*, AMI installs a microcamera and optical-chip recorder somewhere in the equipment of every combat soldier — usually in the gunsight, leading to an exciting "gun-cam" point of view. At the end of each mission, the optical chip is swapped out for a new one, and the recorded "footage" is reviewed for usability. Because of the grotesque and horrible nature of modern warfare, editing this footage down into something palatable to the masses is a big job. With footage coming in every day or two from *every* AMI op on active duty, however, there's lots of raw material to work with. AMI has no qualms about splicing together footage from two or more totally different operations to make a coherent story-line.

A lot of combat on the modern battlefield takes place at extreme ranges — not a very "video-friendly" situation, of course. Most battlefield kills are classified as

"BVR" (Beyond Visual Range), meaning a soldier saw something move in a cove of trees two kilometers away, and flattened the area with missile fire. While BVR actions show off the weapons quite nicely, the sense of personal heroics is missing. To counteract that, on certain operations AMI enforces specific Rules of Engagement (ROIs). For example, under certain ROIs, a soldier must *confirm visual contact* with a target before "zeroing" it. (In the example above, the soldier seeing movement in the cove of trees would have to *go and investigate*, firing only when he or she *spotted* the enemy.) While these ROIs generate better *Combat, Combat, Combat!* footage, they increase casualty rates drastically. All AMI soldiers *have* ROIs, and will do anything and everything they can to circumvent them.

D.A.R.T.

BACKGROUND

Since the last of the streetcar lines shut down in the 1930s, the city of Los Angeles has never had any public rapid transit that's worked worth a damn. Most buses were limited to surface streets — which meant they could take many hours to cross the city — and those that were allowed on the freeways were all too often locked in traffic jams during rush-hours, which is when rapid transit is really needed. Although some conspiracy theorists claim that the automobile industry sabotaged each and every attempt to create meaningful rapid transit for LA simply because the city represented such a huge market for cars, saner heads point out that the very nature of the city just isn't compatible with systems like buses or subways. What was really needed, some analysts claimed early in the 21st Century, was a more flexible system, based on independent vehicles much smaller than buses, with variable routes. Critics pointed out the city *had* just such vehicles — they were called "taxis" — but City Council seized on the analysts' suggestion.

D.A.R.T. — Distributed Automated Rapid Transit — was the result. Introduced in 2013, D.A.R.T. was heralded as the "beginning of a New Age for Los Angeles". Perhaps predictably, it hasn't lived up to its advance billing.

D.A.R.T. consists of more than a thousand individual "Autonomous Carriers" or ACs — little vehicles that look like minibuses without driver compartments. Each AC gets its primary guidance from control grids laid down in the road surface, with secondary guidance and collision-avoidance coming from a suite of sensors installed all the way around the vehicle. During standard operation, an AC shows very little in the way of "local smarts". The entire system is controlled by a central computer system, located in the fifth sub-basement of city hall. This system continuously tracks each AC, routing it throughout the city depending on the destinations its current passengers select, and where prospective passengers are calling for D.A.R.T. service.

Using D.A.R.T. is simple. Throughout the city there are D.A.R.T. Stops like bus stops, each one equipped with a push-button that calls a D.A.R.T. AC. When not in use, the ACs cruise like cabs; they don't follow a set route like buses. No matter how long you wait at a D.A.R.T. Stop, an AC isn't going to come and pick you up... unless you press the call button. Then, within a few minutes — the delay depending on the load on the system — an AC will pull up and open its door. Just inside the AC's door is a touchscreen computer system that lets you select your destination... but only after you've paid the fare (\$15, regardless of how long or short your journey).

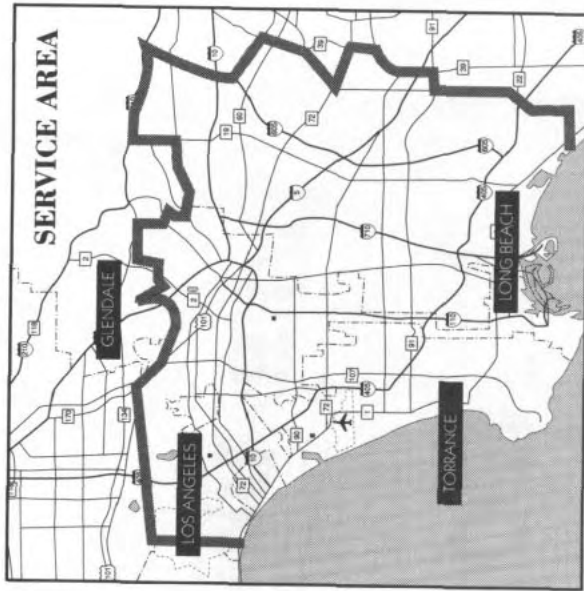
An AC can carry up to 12 passengers, each of whom will almost certainly have different destinations. That's why the routing function of the central computer is so important. Using various hideously complex weighting algorithms, the computer

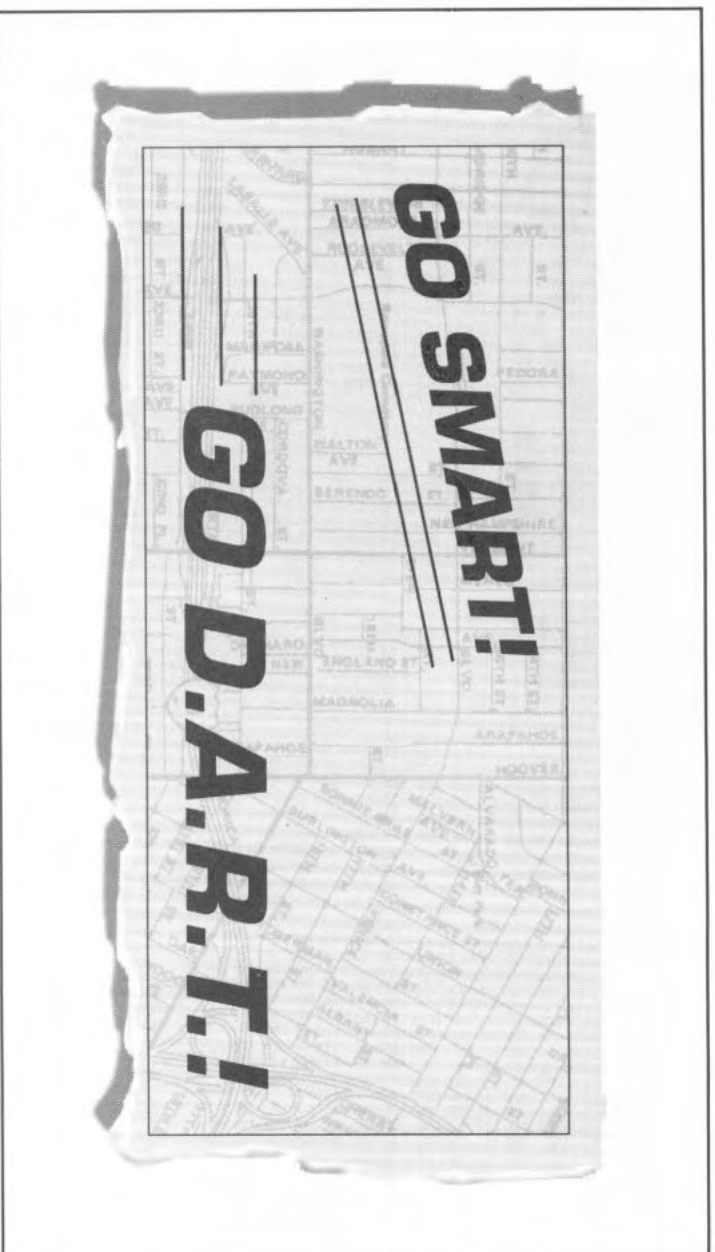
directs each AC so it takes all its current passengers to their destinations, while picking up new passengers along the way — without exceeding its 12-passenger capacity, of course — in the most efficient way possible.

Some people don't like the inconvenience of having to go to a D.A.R.T. Stop to call an AC. For those people, the D.A.R.T. system sells something called a CallButton™, a small portable unit that lets the user "whistle up" a D.A.R.T. AC wherever they happen to be at the moment. (They still have to use the touchscreen system inside the AC to select a destination, however.)

In theory, D.A.R.T. sounds like a great idea. In practice, it's an unmitigated disaster. First of all, the routing algorithms the central computer uses are almost unbelievably complex — so complex, in fact, that they can't be adequately debugged. About half the time, the algorithms work more or less correctly. The rest of the time, D.A.R.T. seems to have a mind of its own. A passenger wanting to go from Los Feliz to West Hollywood — a distance of less than a mile — might find herself sitting on the AC for hours while it cruises out to San Bernardino to pick up a passenger there. (This situation illustrates two major flaws with the design of individual ACs — no provision for canceling a command and getting off the AC en route; and no washroom.) The Transit Commission in charge of D.A.R.T. points out, in the system's defense, that every AC *has* delivered each of its passengers to his or her destination... eventually. Critics of the system accept this as the literal truth, but point out that Rapid Transit isn't much good if it can't be depended on to be rapid. Independent analysts have examined system logs, and have found that 67% of all passengers are delivered to their destination within the span of time considered by the system as "acceptable". For the other 33%, however, the average time span beyond the "acceptable" limit is something like three hours!

All this is only true if the central computer system functions at all. On an average of about once a week, the entire computer system crashes. Without central guidance,





each AC tries to continue working using its own on-board "smarts". These are incredibly limited, however. The vehicle's average speed drops from about 25 mph down to about 7mph. It will deliver all its current passengers to their destinations — although *not* in the most efficient order — but it can't accept calls for pickups, either from D.A.R.T. Stops or CallButtons. Most of the time, the central computer is brought back up within an hour or two; after that it takes another hour or so for the central system to get all the individual ACs back on track. The longest interruption in centralized service was almost 24 hours, however.

If this weren't bad enough, there are lots of people in L.A. who seem to consider messing with the D.A.R.T. system to be a great form of entertainment. Some gangsters take great pleasure in simply blowing ACs apart. (The vehicles are sufficiently armored to survive anything up to assault rifle fire, but there are weapons *much* more destructive on the streets.) Other people enjoy jiggering the call buttons at D.A.R.T. Stops so they issue a new call every few seconds. (Granted, it *can* be amusing to see two dozen or more ACs lining up at a single stop...) Still others blow holes in the roadbeds to destroy the D.A.R.T. guidance grids.

All in all, only the very desperate depend on D.A.R.T.

ROGERNET

BACKGROUND

RogerNet is the largest and longest-lasting of the "pirate stations" that occasionally show up on Vid-Net (q.v.).

By definition, a "pirate" is any broadcaster (or narrowcaster, for that matter) who taps into the Vid-Net distribution network illegally. Pirates don't contribute anything — license fees, lease payments, hardware or software — toward the maintenance of the Vid-Net, and they evade censorship by the various governmental watchdog agencies monitoring Vid-Net traffic. Predictably, then, the government and the companies who make up Vid-Net will usually combine resources to track down and eliminate any new pirate.

Most pirates are short-lived, "single-issue" affairs. Some new militant group or political action committee (or whatever) has a message that it simply *must* get out to the people. The group finds some way to tap into the Vid-Net hardware — usually through a hard-wired connection into a land-line, although some enterprising pirates have electronically subverted communication satellites to accept their feeds — and dumps its program down the network. Vid-Net can support up to 6,144 distinct channels, while fewer than 2,000 are actually in use in Greater LA (Vid-Net's largest market). That means there's no problem with finding an unused channel... if that's what the pirate wants, of course. The problem with this choice is that nobody will tune in to a pirate channel if they don't know it's there, and for obvious reasons pirates can't advertise widely. The most important message in the world simply isn't going to get heard if it's broadcast on channel 5,666 while no viewer bothers to scan higher than channel 2,000. For that reason, most of the more militant pirates will pre-empt the signal from an existing channel that people might conceivably be watching — something popular, like *The Star Trek Channel*, for example. Technically, this isn't simple, and it will definitely bring down the ire of the station or network pre-empted, but it *does* increase the chances of getting the pirate's message heard. Pirates that use "vacant" channels survive for an average of 72 hours (standard deviation of 1.4 hours, according to independent figures) before they're closed down; pirates pre-empting another channel survive for an average of 3.2 hours (standard deviation of 0.3 hours). Thus RogerNet is completely atypical for pirates, since it's been in existence for more than two years! Granted, it's never "stamped on" any existing channel, but still two years is a phenomenal length of time for *any* pirate to exist, let alone one which broadcasts twenty-four hours a day.

Although it's strictly a pirate, in many ways RogerNet is more professional than the "fringe" establishment channels and networks. For example, RogerNet has programming around the clock, even if a lot of it is just a manic VJ doing a high-speed suicide-rap for

hours on end against a black background. Among professional broadcasters, there's grudging respect for RogerNet's smooth switching between segments, without any glitches or dead air. (In the trade, this is known as "running a tight board".) Although RogerNet doesn't use special video effects just for the sake of flash — like most other broadcasters — when it *does* do something fancy it's absolutely state-of-the-art, implying access to some pretty sophisticated (and very expensive) technology.

RogerNet operates like a huge version of the "community access" TV channels that existed in the 20th Century, although it considers its "community" to be the whole of California. It doesn't broadcast standard network fare; you won't see *The Tortinis* or *Combat, Combat!* on RogerNet. What you *will* see is a staggering diversity of politically incorrect, subversive and outright *weird* opinions. RogerNet will give air-time to *anyone* who asks for it. (The only criterion — and it's a major one — is that you have to know how to get in contact with RogerNet... and that's not something you can look up in the yellow pages.) RogerNet tries to cover the full spectrum of opinions — from Evolution In Action (q.v.) to the Sons of Ludd (q.v.), from the NARA (q.v.) to the Brady Foundation (q.v.) — without prejudice. If the can, the programmers will try to offer balancing opinions one after the other. One of the pirate's major goals is to give the public exposure to opinions, beliefs, facts and fancies that the government would just as soon keep totally silent.

Not that RogerNet doesn't broadcast *some* regular features. A favorite feature is *Their Lips are Moving*, a show that broadcasts clippings of the more egregious lies told by politicians, followed by a description of the *true* situation. Another favorite is *And That's the Way it Really Is*, which does much the same thing with official network news coverage. And then there's *Condemner Reports*, which tears apart the false claims made in corporate advertising. For these three shows alone, RogerNet earns the ire of most of the establishment.



ROGER NET

get has to be in the billions. It uses state-of-the-industry technology. And its operators show a better understanding of how to avoid Vid-Net interference than anybody really should...

The big question is, then, *who is behind RogerNet?*

ROGERNET TONIGHT 3/24/21 Ch. 3500
16:30
TBA - VS MARQUISE MARK
17:30
There UPS ARE MOVING - Foster Fools UP again!
18:00
Community Access - Fostered Operations for Christ
18:45
Community Access - The Church of the Fallen
Angels.

RogerNet goes to great lengths to avoid being traced. Every twenty-four hours (give or take an hour) it changes locations on the Vid-Net, shifting to another channel. It doesn't advertise these changes, and doesn't seem to have to. Most regular RogerNet watchers seem to be part of a state-wide grapevine which keeps track of where to find the pirate.

The pirate also constantly shifts the techniques it uses to crack into the Vid-Net. Sometimes it's dumped into the net through a hard-wired tap in a fiber-optic line. Other times it "piggybacks" on the NVC feed through the CommSat "death-star". Still other times, it seems to be coming in on its own satellite downlink. So frequently does RogerNet change its access method — and so well-concealed are these techniques — that neither the government nor the other companies comprising Vid-Net have been able to block the pirate's access, or learn where it's broadcasting from.

Apparently, at least. While most RogerNet viewers blindly accept that the pirate manages to stay one step ahead of the Vid-Net watchdogs, and that it's totally free of all governmental and corporate influence, those who are more technically savvy have to really wonder. RogerNet isn't a shoe-string operation; its annual bud-

SYSTEMATIC OVERTHROW

BACKGROUND

Almost sixty years ago, when John Lennon compared the popularity of The Beatles with that of Jesus Christ, the public uproar in certain quarters was intense. When lead singer and song-writer Speed-Zero (q.v.) claimed the band Systematic Overthrow was "more fricking popular than fricking *anybody*", many people found themselves forced to agree.

Since it burst into public awareness three years ago, Systematic Overthrow has made more of an impact on the music scene — and on popular culture as a whole — than *any* band in history. To a populace disenchanted with familiar cultural icons, and seriously distrusting all traditional forms of authority, SO's iconoclastic, almost nihilistic world-view was the greatest thing ever to come down the pike. The fact that the government acted openly — albeit ineffectively — in an attempt to silence SO before it could really catch on only added to the band's cachet with the populace at large. Systematic Overthrow was saying the things *they* wanted to say, espousing the attitudes *they* wanted to espouse... but were all too often too frightened to admit aloud. Listening to SO's CDs and attending the band's always-packed concerts — particularly when every conservative news medium in the country was decrying the group's music as just so much subversive noise — was a way to show solidarity with Speed-Zero's iconoclasm and give the establishment the collective finger. SO attracted as fans many people who simply didn't have the guts to rebel in any more meaningful way (after all, attending a Systematic Overthrow concert wasn't quite as daunting a proposition as participating in civil insurrection against the government). What it also did, however, was sublimately the anger and dissatisfaction of many people who *would* eventually have gone on to civil insurrection. Systematic Overthrow, some sociologists claimed, was actually working like a lightning rod, conducting the potentially-damaging "discharge" of public anger and distrust, and "grounding" it in a safe manner.

Which, of course, is exactly what the government and the military/industrial/entertainment complex had in mind when it created Systematic Overthrow from scratch.

Although the music magazines will never print the fact, Systematic Overthrow — as a *concept* — existed long before its current members were ever aware of each other's existence. Like the Monkees almost sixty years ago, Systematic Overthrow was a manufactured phenomenon. The band's image was crafted, and the songs that would appear on their first two CDs written, before the personnel had even been selected. The "establishment" designed the whole "SO package" specifically to *be* the lightning rod that would prevent — or at least postpone — the civil disobedience, and eventually outright insurrection, they feared. Only once the concept had been created,



carefully market-tested, refined, polished and tested again, did the search get underway to find the personnel who would make up Systematic Overthrow. For various demographic and marketing reasons, the public-opinion gurus tasked to create SO focused on a specific group: boosted ops who were also ex-cons (a "double-whammy" when it came to "casting" rebels...). After several months of searching, analyzing and VQ testing, the line-up was set: Speed-Zero (vocals and front-man); D-Bite (guitar); King Raster (synth); Sin Seer (synth); and Alad Insane (DJ).



Systematic Overthrow's purpose was a closely-guarded secret. Certain music critics — most notably Edmund Mingus of *USA Alive* — sensed that the band wasn't exactly what it seemed, that its "anarchy-for-anarchy's-sake" stance was just posturing, but they assumed this was just a marketing ploy. Apparently, nobody guessed that this posturing had a purpose more significant than just selling CDs and concert tickets.

It seems that one of the first people — outside the small group who actually created Systematic Overthrow, that is — to realize the truth was Speed-Zero himself. (The idea that a conspiracy on this scale could actually exist simply wouldn't have occurred to many other people. For Speed, however, it just came naturally...) His first reaction to this realization was predictable — another attempted suicide — but a much better course soon occurred to him: rather than just destroying *himself*, why not destroy *everything*? Why not use SO to tear everything down, and give the cockroaches a chance to do better...? It was at this point that Speed started writing his own songs, rather than just performing songs constructed for him by psychologists, sociologists and media-relations types.

He didn't tell the band's management company — actually a shell company created by the government — what he had in mind, of course. He and the other members

of the band wrote what would become their third CD over a period of four weeks before their biggest concert yet, an outdoor extravaganza that would turn most of Venice, California, into a huge stadium. During the same period, D-Bite — who turned out to have a knack for business — negotiated secretly with a large management company (Phuncky Buddha Audio) to take over the business that was Systematic Overthrow.

The Venice concert came as a horrible shock to the band's current management, the government, and the military/industrial/entertainment complex as a whole. Instead of playing the set that had been designed and choreographed for this particular audience, SO played nothing but their own, new music. Government representatives tried to shut down the concert the moment they realized what was happening, but were almost lynched by the fans for their efforts. The concert went ahead — short of dropping cluster-bombs on Venice, the establishment couldn't do anything to stop it — and the high point was Speed-Zero's impassioned (and highly obscene) statement that the band was changing management companies, effective immediately.

The establishment did everything in its power to stop, or at least deflect, the juggernaut that was Systematic Overthrow, but that wasn't very much. The PR types who'd created the SO phenomenon had done their work too well. There was simply no way to destroy SO's momentum. A particularly bright sociologist suggested the best way to eliminate SO's popular support would be for the government to actively throw its support behind the band. The administration tried this for a whole three weeks, before Speed-Zero's verbal abuse of the establishment became just too vitriolic and poisonous for any Plutocrat to support in any way, shape or form. Systematic Overthrow became, in reality, the social movement it was created to be, but is now totally out from under the control of its creators.

THE CRACKER BROTHERS

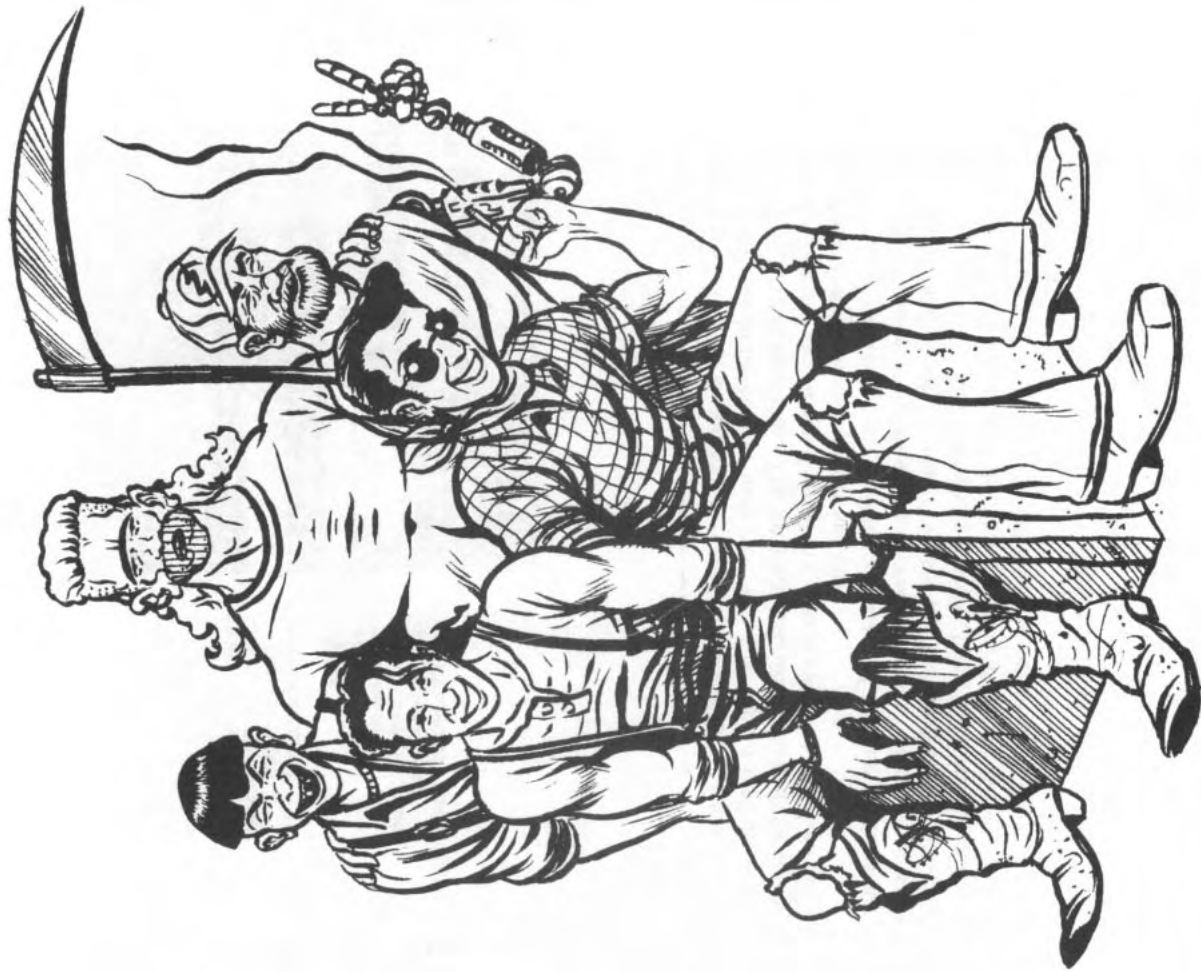
BACKGROUND

The phenomenon that is the Cracker Brothers is the brainchild of Allied Mayhem Inc.'s large and innovative marketing department, and part of the cross-marketing scheme surrounding the company's vid-net hit, *Combat, Combat*! (q.v.). Hitting the scene in 2019, the Cracker Brothers churn out a slickly-produced sound that combines country-western with rock and pop influences, carrying with it the strong patriotic and jingoistic overtones that form the subtext of *Combat, Combat, Combat!*

It shouldn't come as much surprise to anyone to learn that the Cracker Brothers aren't brothers, and that no member of the band is called Cracker. Like the members of Systematic Overthrow (q.v.), the only a couple of the band-members knew each other before AMI approached them, and then only peripherally. Unlike Systematic Overthrow, the members of the Cracker Brothers *can* play their instruments and sing, and all had careers — albeit generally struggling ones — before AMI got into the act. For example, Lyle Boggs — the Cracker Brothers' lead singer and front-man — had struggled for ten years to make it in the Dallas CW scene fronting go-nowhere bands like "New Rodeo" and "The Urban Cowboys". In contrast, Travis Nelson, rhythm guitarist and back-up singer, had been struggling as a solo act in local taverns. When AMI's marketing gurus approached the soon-to-be-Crackers with their offer, the musicians jumped at it.

As with Systematic Overthrow, the marketing geniuses behind the Cracker Brothers had devised, refined, tested and tweaked the concept long before they started researching for people to fill the Brothers' snakeskin boots. All of the songs on the Brothers' debut CD — *Red, White, Blue and Green* — were written by sociologists, psychologists and marketing specialists (despite the fact that the CD's liner credits all the songs to various members of the band). The lyrics, the music itself, and the entire Cracker Brothers "package" — that is, the band's stage look, their interview style, etc. — combine into a single unified whole. Nothing can be allowed to detract from the "positioning statement" AMI wants to get across.

The Cracker Brothers are positioned as “kick-ass good ole boys” who won’t take crap from *anyone* — *particularly* not from foreigners, unreconstructed communists, Neo-Scientologists, bleeding-heart anti-American liberals, clones, intellectuals, gun-control nuts, experimental video directors, Satanists, liberal independents, animal-rights activists, and the people who brew beer with so few preservatives it doesn’t have any damn shelf life. Their philosophy is simple enough to be summed up in a couple of bumper-stickers: “America: Love It or Leave It”, “My country, right or wrong”, and “You’re either with us or against us.” All Cracker Brothers songs glorify “the American way of life” — generally at the expense of other nations, societies or





Side One
 Red, White, Blue and Green
 Daddy had 46 Chromosomes
 Eagles over the Chaco
 My Mixed-Up, Broken-Down,
 Gosh-Dam XM70
 Shennadoah Sunrise

Side Two
 Eatin' Crio
 Double Deutsch
 No More Cussin' and Fussin'
 Get Back in the Kitchen
 Red, White, Blue and Green (reprise)

world-views — and set it up as something to defend, to the death if necessary. The fact that almost nobody in the country lives “the American way of life” the Brothers describe is lost on most of their fans. The Brothers describe the way life *should* be in the Land of the Free and the Home of the Brave, and if everyone just lived the way the Crackers do, everything would turn out just fine.

Predictably, the Crackers are very strong advocates of keeping America strong using conflict firms to protect the country's interests overseas. Their music is often used as background on *Combat*, *Combat*, *Combat*, and they perform the well-known theme song, *Do or Die!* At Cracker Brothers concerts, huge video screens show clips from *Combat*, *Combat* episodes as a background to such favorite songs as *Double Deutsch*, *Eagles over the Chaco* and the new mega-hits, *Fightin' Mad* and *These Colors Don't Run*.

The Cracker Brothers' militant, flag-waving approach ties in well with the message that the National Assault Rifle Association (NARA; q.v.) is trying to get across — peace through superior firepower — so it only makes sense that the NARA's leader, Clive Drummond, has incorporated the band in his own marketing strategy. The NARA pays AMI a “licensing fee” — an undisclosed, but presumably large, sum

— to use the Cracker Brothers' likenesses and music in the organization's ad campaign. For additional payments, Drummond has even been allowed to bring the band out to perform at NARA functions. (At a recent NARA bash, Lyle Boggs publicly awarded Drummond with a replica of the band's platinum disc for *Red, White, Blue and Green*, as a way of recognizing how Drummond “brings to life what we sing about in our music”. In return, Drummond gave each of the Brothers a customized AR-24 “Rapture” assault rifle from Hammer of God Munitions.) Although this all started out as a pure business proposition, it seems that Drummond and the bandmembers have actually become friends. The government, too, pays license fees to AMI to use Cracker Brothers music and images in the new “Stand Up for America” patriotic ad campaign.

A major difference between the Cracker Brothers and Systematic Overthrow is that the Brothers always knew they were a “manufactured phenomenon”, created for a particular purpose. While Speed-Zero (q.v.) and the other members of Systematic Overthrow reacted... *unpredictably*... when they realized they were being used, the Crackers simply couldn't care less. They're getting to do what they've always wanted to do — make music for millions of rabid fans — and they're getting paid *very* well for it. Most of the band-members are sympathetic toward the message they're putting out anyway, and those who aren't are keeping their mouths shut. There's virtually no chance that the Cracker Brothers will go “off the rails” the way SO did.

THE NEW AMENDMENTS

BACKGROUND

The term “the New Amendments” refers to the 27th through the 33rd Amendments to the Constitution of the United States of America. Most of these were drafted and shepherded through the approval procedure by the radical conservative elements in the Senate and in Congress. The significance of each Amendment is discussed below.

Article XXVII (Passed 2016)

Congress shall make no law inhibiting the rights of duly incorporated entities to enter into treaties with foreign bodies and to grant Letters of Marque and Reprisal sovereign to their own domains.

It was this rather innocuously-worded Amendment that granted corporations extraterritoriality within the United States. By granting them the right to negotiate treaties with other countries, and the right to give individuals the privileges to (in effect) go to war against other nation-states — like privateers granted Letters of Marque and Reprisal — the government effectively waived all authority over corporations, even those operating exclusively on American soil.

Article XXVIII (Passed 2017)

Section 1. After one year from the ratification of this article, each State shall relinquish any and all claims to properties and real estate owned and operated by the federal government.

Section 2. The Congress shall have the power to enforce this article by appropriate legislation.

Dear to the hearts of radical conservatives, this Amendment helped consolidate power with the federal government, effectively putting federal properties — like military installations, for example — totally beyond the jurisdiction of the states in which they exist.

Article XXIX (Passed 2017)

Although the First Amendment prohibits the Congress from making laws abridging the absolute right of free speech, the Congress may legislate reasonable criteria necessary for a claim to this right so long as such criteria is independent of race, age, means and religion.

Article XXX (Passed 2017)

Congress may not legislate criteria necessary for a claim to the right of free speech that is dependent upon sexual preferences or practices.

These were the two Amendments that put current limits on free speech. The 29th Amendment is perhaps the finest example of “verbal jujitsu” ever to appear on the law-books *anywhere* in the world. While stressing that free speech is an “absolute right” that cannot be abridged, it brings in criteria necessary for *claiming* this right. While it may seem totally reasonable — reasonable enough to be passed — it’s an obvious abridgment of the right it claims to uphold. A “right” which has criteria under which it may or may not be claimed — criteria which certain individuals might not meet — isn’t a right any more. The second clause in the 29th and the whole of the 30th Amendment are basically a sop to civil libertarians, in that any restrictions the government sees fit to legislate on “claiming” the right to free speech must be “politically correct” and equal for everyone.

Article XXXI (Passed 2018)

Congress shall make no law restricting the fundamental human rights to pursue peace, to seek unity of spirit, and to love; nor shall equality of rights under the law be denied by the United States or by any State on account of aura.

The so-called “Shirly Maclaime Amendment”, this is considered meaningless by most legal theorists... other than as an indication of how flaky the country is getting.

Article XXXII (Passed 2018)

Section 1. For all purposes of law, a human being is hereby defined as any sentient creature, and all sentient creatures are thus entitled to all legal rights and privileges commensurate with humanity.

Section 2. This amendment was brought to you in part by Candy Cola, makers of adrenaline-free Candy Light. *You can't take the Candy from this baby!*

This Amendment was a reaction to the creation of pre-frontals by MacRaney's Corporation (q.v.). The ACLU and other similar organizations lobbied hard for the bill, in an attempt to prevent the abuse and oppression of clones. The Amendment was passed in a transport of warm-and-fuzzy satisfaction about doing “the right thing”.

The 32nd Amendment set the precedent for private sponsorship of legislation by corporations. Many legal theorists decry the very real potential for abuse, but most taxpayers have no problem with anything that will put more money into the coffers of government without taxing it out of their pockets.

*We The People of the United States,
in order to form a more perfect Union,
establish justice, insure domestic tranquility,
provide for the common defense, promote the
general welfare, and secure the blessings of
liberty to ourselves and our posterity, do ordain
and establish this Constitution for the
United States of America.*

Article XXXIII (Passed 2019)

Section 1. For all purposes of law, the definition of a human being is hereby amended to include only sentient creatures possessing or having once possessed forty-six chromosomes.

Section 2. Congress shall have the power to grant individual classes of sentient beings not meeting the amended human standard any or all rights and privileges accorded humanity by appropriate legislation.

Section 3. This amendment was sponsored in part by New Providence® Vacations and Resorts. *Just Relax.*

It didn't take certain politicians long to realize just what the "warm-and-fuzzy" 32nd Amendment had actually done — given all rights and privileges of humanity and citizenship to the million or more pre-frontals created by MacRaney's Corporation. Suddenly, beings created by a corporation — who might or might not have various pre-dispositions "hard-wired" into their brains — have been given the vote...

The 33rd Amendment was backed by an intriguing alliance of differing political interests. At the forefront were the radical conservatives, whose xenophobia *definitely*

extended to the pre-frontals. The Plutocrats realized that the 32nd Amendment might lead to the pre-frontals demanding minimum wage and other expensive benefits, thus harming the interests of their business constituency. Various intellectual and technocratic groups noted with alarm that the inclusion of the pre-frontals as "humans" and "Americans" dropped the national average IQ by seven points. Even some mainstream factions feared that the pre-frontals might become a voting block easily swayed by unscrupulous politicians. The upshot was that very few people voted against the Amendment. (Note that Section 2 gives the government an "escape clause" should it ever become necessary... not that anyone really thinks it will, of course.)

"THE TEFLON CURTAIN"

BACKGROUND

In 2003, just before the Canadian provinces were absorbed into the USA as the 51st through 58th states, the province of Quebec seceded from the rest of Canada. This didn't surprise anyone, really; if anything at all was surprising it was the fact that Quebec had waited this long to go its own way. The largely French-speaking province had been threatening to separate from the rest of Canada since the 1970s. Independence fever had apparently come to a head in the early 1990s after a failed attempt by the government to modify the Constitution to grant Quebec the distinct privileges it demanded, but somehow separation didn't occur for another ten years. The federal government in Ottawa kept giving Quebec perks — lucrative military contracts and the like — essentially as bribes to remain in Confederation, and until the beginning of the 21st Century this seemed to be working.

In 2002, everything started to collapse in Canada. For more than a decade, the nation had suffered under a national debt much larger, per capita, than that of the USA. Many of the country's creditors were foreign lenders, which meant the Canadian government had no control over them. In 2002, the first of those lenders decided to call in its debt, concerned that the country wouldn't be able to maintain interest payments much longer. In a terrible domino effect, other creditors did the same. Suddenly faced with having to repay literally trillions of dollars with a grace period of only 30 days, Canada defaulted and declared national bankruptcy. The economy collapsed. Social chaos followed. Cities burned.

And that's when America offered to incorporate the Canadian provinces into the United States. The Canadian government jumped at the chance.

All except for Quebec, of course. The province was used to special treatment, and its people realized that would come to an end under American government. Days before Canada amalgamated with America, Quebec finally seceded.

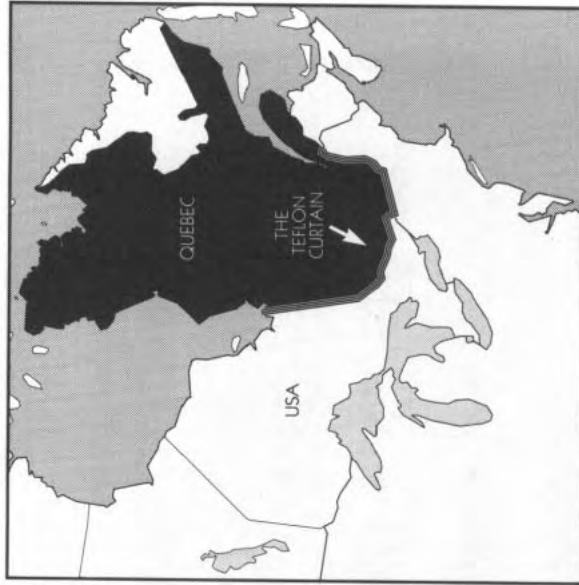
For decades before secession, Quebec had been largely dependent on Ottawa's *largesse* for its economic stability. Although the separatists conveniently ignored the unpleasant reality, Quebec could not survive as an independent, autonomous nation. The reality of this finally struck home in late 2002. The economy of Quebec had been pummeled by the national debt crunch, and now it started to collapse as America canceled the lucrative defense contracts and awarded them to more efficient bidders. Quebec needed outside help.

In 2003, it received it from newly-formed Neo-Deutschland. Already the world was polarizing into new military and economic spheres, with Neo-Deutschland and America as major rivals. Remembering the significance of Cuba (before it was ushered into the USA, of course), the Neo-Deutschland government realized how valuable it would be to

have a "client state" right on the American border. Berlin quickly offered extensive economic aid to Quebec; Quebec jumped at the chance. Four years after secession, the Communist party won a landslide victory in national elections and transformed Quebec's government into a communist collective. Although there's some ideological friction between the Neo-Scientological world-view of Neo-Deutschland and the hard-line communism of Quebec, the economic links between the two nations have grown stronger.

Politically, the "Quebec situation" is slightly more complex than the problems posed by Cuba. After all, Cuba was an island, separated from the continental US; Quebec is contiguous, separated from America by a border several thousand kilometers long. While Quebec has no military assets to speak of, the Pentagon frequently points out the possibility that Neo-Deutschland could transfer military forces to the communist nation and use it as a staging area for strikes into the American heartland. Few people outside the rather paranoid military community give this possibility much credence. There are *economic* consequences of Quebec's proximity, however. Since 2004, a trade embargo has existed between Quebec and America; it's illegal for any American company to sell goods to Quebec, or buy goods from Quebec. Predictably, companies on both sides of the border want to circumvent this restriction, so smuggling is a major problem.

To curb this problem, the "Teflon Curtain" was created. The American government touts this as an impenetrable barrier, separating the two hostile nations. High fences topped with strands of razorwire line the entire length of the border. Guard posts are positioned every few kilometers. The stretches of fence between guard posts are supplemented by extensive — and very sensitive — sensor arrays, and patrolled by armed soldiers and guard dogs. The "no-man's-land" extending one hundred meters from the border is as flat and bare as a parking lot, so there's no possible cover for anyone trying to cross the border in either direction. Automated weapons are



SECURITY CHECKLIST

Sector: 134-B4

Time/Date: 13:35 4/2/21

Pressure Sensors: NOMINAL

Motion Detectors: NOMINAL

MAD Detectors: 95% of NOMINAL. Refuse?

Autocannons: NOMINAL. TEST-FIRE 150 rounds.

AP Radar: NOMINAL

Mini-SAMS: NOMINAL

ready to turn non-man's-land into a killing zone on an instant's warning. There is categorically no way for anyone to illegally cross from America into Quebec or vice versa.

That's what the American government claims, at least. In reality, it seems that, on most moonless nights, the Teflon Curtain is almost as busy as a superhighway with smugglers, infiltrators and others crossing the border in both directions. (Certain cynical smugglers claim that the only time you're in danger while crossing the Teflon Curtain is if you stop to tie your shoelace... and then only because you'll be trampled by all the other smugglers...) Certainly, there *are* sensor nets and razor-wire in place. But along the widely-used "highways" these obstacles have been removed or disabled... and the guards who are supposed to monitor them either don't notice, or don't care. The whole length of the border is about as "impenetrable" as a sieve. People who are in the know refer to the border as the "Smoke-And-Mirrors Curtain".

How could this have come to pass? There are three main theories. The first claims that the border is porous simply because the American government wants it that way. There's some benefit to be gained by relatively unrestricted trade with Quebec, while international pride and "face" requires the *posture* of unrelenting vigilance.

The second theory claims that one of the major smuggling concerns — possibly a confederation of smaller crime rings — has paid off the government agencies responsible for maintaining the border defenses. And the third simply suggests that this is what you should expect when the government contracts major projects out to the lowest bidder...

VID-NET

BACKGROUND

"Vid-Net" is the name generally given to the entire entertainment and telecommunications distribution network. The term combines a number of elements: standard, pre-scheduled video — like 20th Century television, really — whether beamed directly to palm-sized satellite ground stations, or distributed down cable; specialized "pay-for-play" services; "service-on-demand" video, usually ordered and controlled by phone; interactive services, like home-shopping channels, on-line libraries, expert-system travel consultants, etc.; and limited Virtual Reality services where "viewers" find themselves *inside* their favorite shows (*The Cleavage Squad*/VR has the highest ratings of these services).

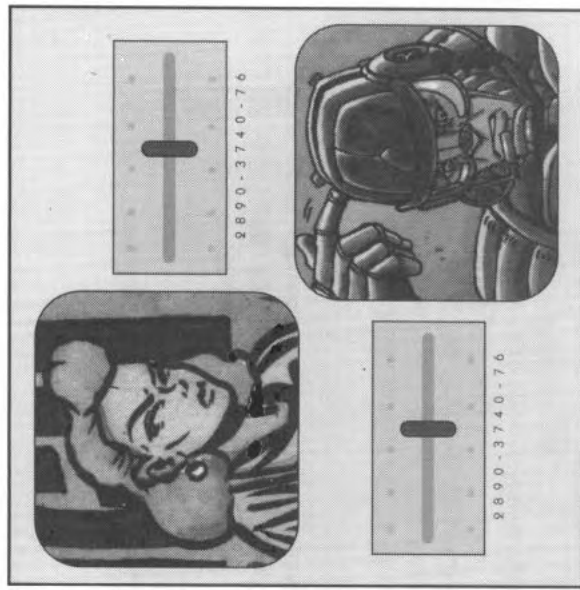
The current implementation of Vid-Net is completely digital, using optical fibers for all of its land-line distribution. The current software can support 6,144 distinct channels to any given "reception node" (i.e., video system or computer); in Greater LA, fewer than 2,000 of these channels are actually in use. (As some analysts suggested way back in the 1990s, the main limitation on the development of television isn't the number of channels, but the dearth of programming that's worth watching...) In the 1990s and the early years of the 21st Century, it looked as though old-style "big network" television was dying. Viewers were deserting the old networks, for specialist interest channels, for pay-for-play services where movies weren't interrupted by interminable commercials, and for any channel that provided *anything* other than the old, mindless pap. New, "fresh", "upstart" channels, and even networks, burst on the scene to provide *new* mindless pap, but the market was becoming so fragmented that it seemed impossible for any big network to survive. There just weren't enough dependable demographic segments large enough to sustain the kind of ratings advertisers were looking for.

Until the two technological developments that spelled the renaissance of the big networks: cloning and artificial brains. Suddenly the big demographic segments were back. The big networks could give the "pre-frontals" the level of sophistication in programming that they wanted (i.e., close to zero), and there were enough of the clones around to be a worthwhile market. People with artificial brains were even more dependable, demographically speaking. As the program analysts delineated the quirks and eccentricities in each new model of artificial brains, they quickly bashed out video programming to match those quirks. Video programming suddenly became much easier, since it was now provable mathematically that brain model BB8544 (for example) will find 96.3% of the humor in the latest episode of *The Tortinis* hilarious. While the major networks were starting to climb back out of the abyss, the rest of the market segmented even more. By 2020, as well as *The Glam-Rock Channel* and *The*

Weather Network, there were *The American Croquet Channel*, *Dog Grooming Now*, *The Star Trek Channel* and *Lucy! Lucy!* Interactive services made it possible to buy anything from cutlery to cars, hamburgers to houses without leaving the couch. Pay-for-play services like *The Splatter Depot* let people watch their favorite movies — in HDTV resolution and CD-quality sound — at any time of the day or night, without the overwhelming aggravation of going to the corner video-disk rental outlet. With the near-certainty of being able to catch a re-run of *Married...With Children*, *Roseanne* or *The Tortinis* at any time of the day or night, it seemed to many that television had finally fulfilled its potential.

There are several government agencies that claim to monitor anything and everything that gets distributed over the Vid-Net, and expurgate shows that are "detrimental to public morals or morale". Considering just what gets shown — for example, crudely-edited hard-core pornography mixed with graphic combat footage without even a shred of story, in the show *Bang Bang, You're Dead* — most people think these agencies just aren't paying attention. In fact, they are; however, graphic sex and violence simply isn't what they're worried about. In general, the government relishes a passive, satiated, *anaesthetized* electorate, and if *Bang Bang, You're Dead* is a step in the right direction, then ATV can show it every night. What the monitoring agencies *are* concerned with is subversive material — anything that might start the masses thinking that maybe the government isn't handling things quite as well as it could, or that their lives might be better if only the system could be changed. Anything that even *hints* at such destructive ideas will be blacked out, or pulled and replaced with a "canned" episode of *Camelot: The Next Generation* or *The Tortinis*.

Even though the different networks and stations that make up the Vid-Net might look as though they're competing tooth and nail, their competition is a minor thing compared to their cooperation. The Vid-Net is a cooperative entity, and would come crashing down if everybody didn't play by the rules.



Thursday, July 22, 2021 (continued)

naked on the Santa Monica freeway, with hilarious consequences. (Repeat)
NBS: *Combat, Combat, Combat!* The Paraguay counterinsurgency campaign.

(Repeat)

CBA: T&A Titus tries to stare down a boosted psycho gunman. Alice tries to use the station's new coffee machine, with hilarious consequences. (Repeat)

20:00

ABI: *The Cleavage Squad*. Candi goes undercover to bust a murderous outcall topless massage service; all of Juli's problems are behind her as she infiltrates The Spankers Club; Nikki's date with a CB gang boss ends with a bang. (Repeat)

NBS: *Maximum Impact*. Rex faces down an entire boosted slasher gang. (Last show of the series)

There are many different technologies that make up the Vid-Net. Some local stations use line-of-sight broadcast from a central antenna, possibly with repeaters to extend their range. Some dump their programming right onto the fiber-optic "data highway" (which is also used by the phone companies, by the way). Other broadcasters have their own satellites or "deathstars" (ultra-high-capacity satellites), while still others lease bandwidth on other commercial satellites, including those belonging to "competitors". These different technologies have to interface seamlessly for the "Vid-Net experience" to work. No matter where a viewer is in Greater LA (for example), he or she should be able to select channel 1024 confident that *The Leftovers Channel* will fill the screen. The viewer shouldn't have to worry about the fact that *The Leftovers Channel* is actually beamed from a basement studio in Truth or Consequences, New Mexico, to a relay in Taos, where it gets dumped onto the fiber-optic net for transmission to LA. It shouldn't matter that the relay is owned by the syndicate that owns *Dog Grooming Now* and the bandwidth on the fiber-optic net is leased by CVC (both apparently "in competition" with *The Leftovers Channel*).

This cooperation means that the Vid-Net is a closed "club", and new members can join only if they can convince the "establishment" to let them use the technology.

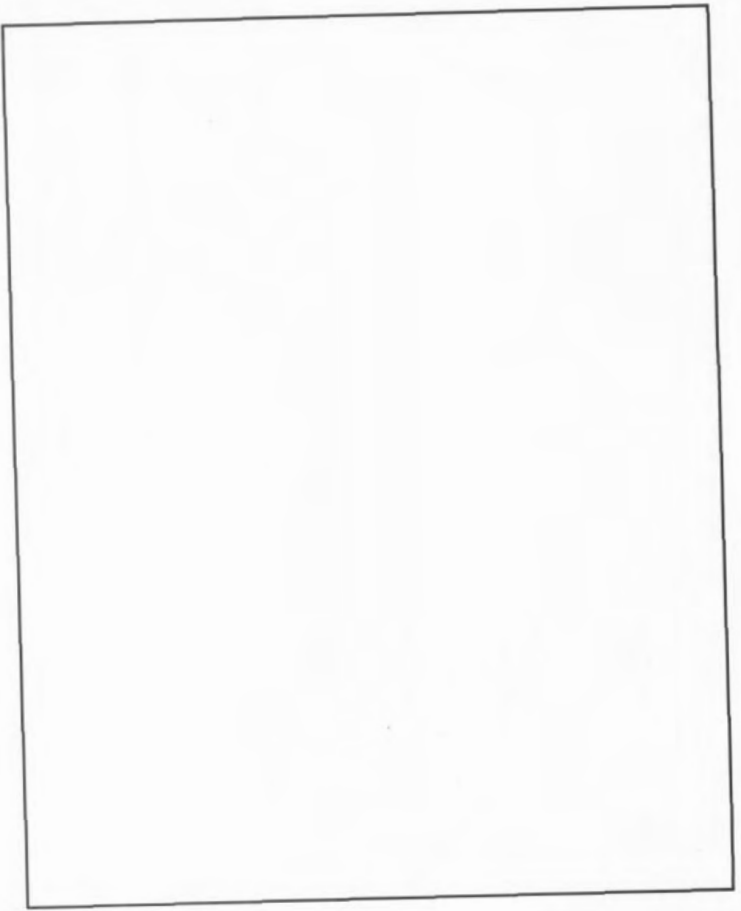
Theoretically, this means that "pirate" networks — like the infamous RogerNet (q.v.), for example — can reach only those segments of the viewing public they can broadcast to directly through line-of-sight transmission. (Of course, as anyone who's ever watched RogerNet knows, "theoretically" and "practically" are two different things...)

The Neilson Company still compiles ratings for all participants on Vid-Net, as it did in the 20th Century. Technology has advanced drastically, of course; the PeopleMeters® installed atop the video units of the revered "Neilson Families" automatically register what channel the video is set to every moment of the night and day, and even automatically identifies which members of the family are watching! (Since the government monitors Neilson PeopleMeter® results, and since the government *hates* RogerNet, members of the Neilson Families should use restraint in watching any of the pirate's broadcasts...)



FACTS AT A GLANCE

BACKGROUND



Handwriting practice lines consisting of 15 horizontal lines.

Handwriting practice lines consisting of 20 horizontal lines.

character record sheet

NAME		CODE NAME		HT		HAIR	
UNIT		RANK		WT		EYES	

HAND-TO-HAND DAMAGE

PEN _____
DMG _____

ATTRIBUTES	
STR	DEX
INT	WILL
SPD	RES
AURA	TOLERANCE
PSYCHOSIS: _____	

MOVEMENT		WOUND STATUS		CHALLENGE CHART	
MOVE	LAST WOUND	DIFFERENCE	GRADE	1-3	D
FASTER	STRESS	4-7	C	8-10	B
TOP	LAST STRESS	11+	A		

ARMOR		TRAITS	
NAME	BONUS	NOTES	

CODES	

SKILLS		GOV ATT		ADD		RATING		NOTES					
NAME													
ENHANCEMENTS		STRESS		RATING		BON/LIM		NOTES					
NAME													
WEAPONS		ACC		PEN		AMMO		RNG		STR		DMG	
NAME													

*after name means weapon fires full-auto

CONTACTS, FRIENDS, ETC.

NOTES

[illegible]

BACKGROUND

BACKGROUND