

SHADOWRUN

7331

BRAINS CAN



FASA
CORPORATION

Mark Jones

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DANCE WITH THE DEVIL, PART TWO



Dr. Sherman Huang stared morosely out of his office's floor-to-ceiling window at the glittering skyline. His chair still smelled of fresh leather, and he was still unused to its ergonomic curves. It reminded him how little time he had spent in this new office ... and how long it had been since he had seen his old one.

Like a weak emperor, I have been dethroned.

He glanced toward the desk's built-in telecom, where a muted video feed was playing. The transmission was live from the Renraku Arcology, where General Colloton's people were making yet another doomed foray into enemy territory. The live coverage was insanely expensive. The least Huang could do was watch.

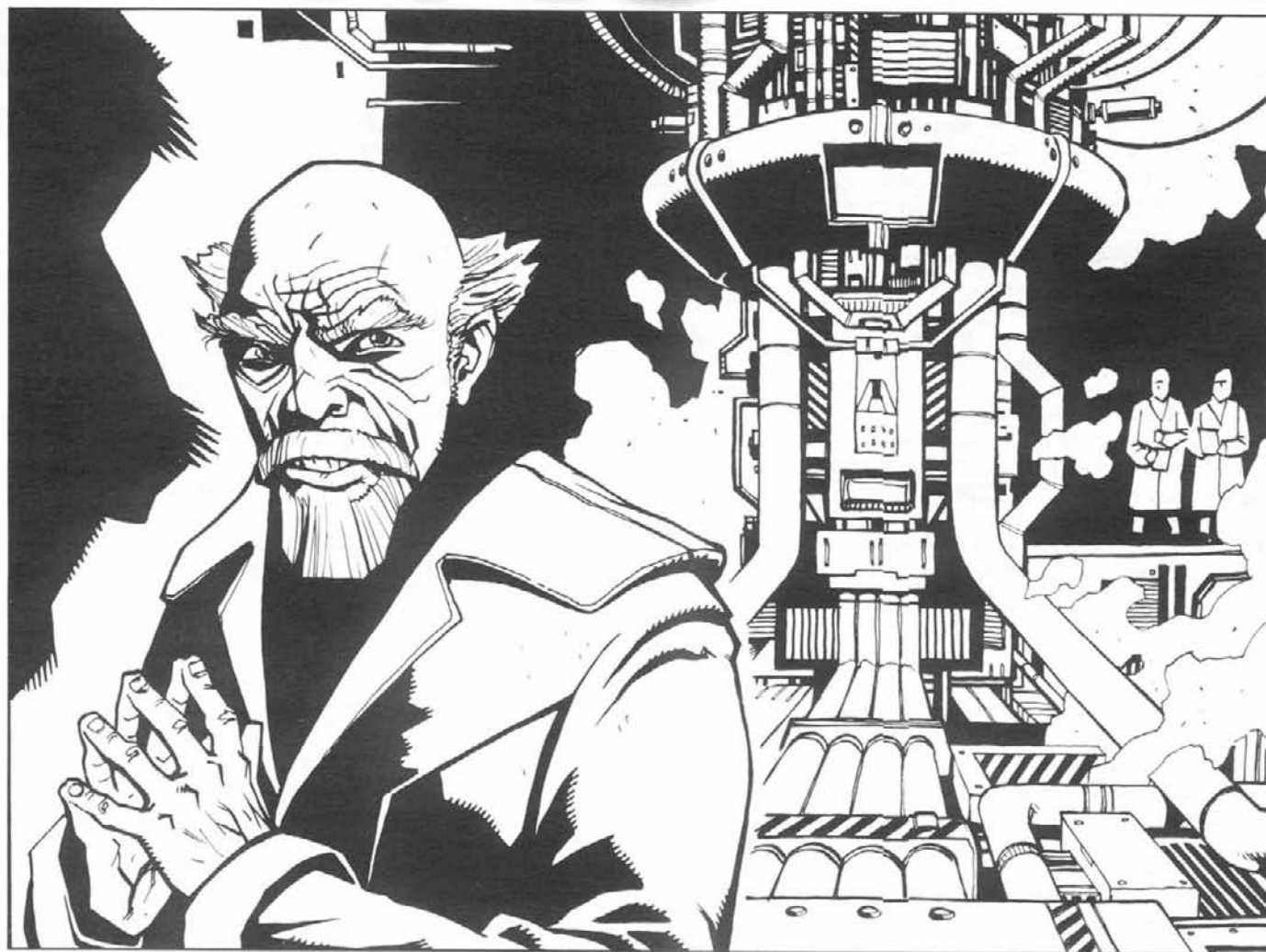
On the screen, two squads of UCAS Special Forces were beginning an operation to free prisoners from a thirteenth floor hospital.

Lieutenant Krause watched as the Special Forces engineers forced the 9th floor elevator open. A dozen troopers dropped into place, covering the squad that was about to begin the climb.

Krause glanced over at his second-in-command, Lieutenant Harrison, and saw him staring at the "9" above the open elevator doors. Krause knew what Harrison was thinking; he had thought it too many times himself. *Not even a dozen floors retaken out of three hundred, and each one harder than the one before.* Krause leaned over and muttered to Harrison, "One bite at a time, Bill." Harrison chuckled slightly, then nodded. *How do you eat an elephant? One bite at a time. All we can do is keep chewing.*

Four floors above, the rescue team deployed a rescue droptube-slide and started tossing evacuees down the shaft. Krause's platoon stood ready to fire; more than once, they had "rescued" people who were armed, booby-trapped or both. Krause didn't believe in taking chances.

The first evacuee slid unceremoniously out of the tube: a gaunt young woman, her long blonde hair shaved to the skull around the fresh surgical scars on both sides of her head. She was naked, but the effect as she struggled to stand was more pathetic than erotic. Her frail body



shook with deep, silent sobs as they wrapped her in a blanket and led her away. Another prisoner was already arriving.

The telecom said, softly, "Dr. Huang-san, your guest has arrived."

Huang willed his voice to remain neutral, professional. "Let him in."

Two immaculate guards escorted the arrival in, closed the doors, and faded discreetly into the background. Huang knew their cybernetic data filters were activated; there was no need to worry about what they might overhear.

Huang's guest smiled. The expression was familiar, but everything else had changed. His stance was more arrogant than Huang remembered. His hands, once prone to nervous fiddling with pens and paper clips, hung perfectly still at his sides. Once, Huang had been able to read this man by his body and his eyes. Now his body was unnaturally controlled, almost machinelike. And his emotions were masked behind iridescent green cybereyes.

The guest made a slight bow, almost insulting compared to the deferential respect he had once shown Huang. Huang chose not to bow at all. "Hiroshi Ushida. Welcome back to Renraku."

The small man spoke firmly. "I have not returned. Huang-san, for I am no longer a Renraku citizen. I owe my allegiance to Deus now, and I am here to negotiate with you in the interests of diplomacy."

Huang smiled viciously. "Well. Why linger on the past, when there is the present to consider?" His eyes flicked to the telecom screen, where a stream of victims flowed by.

The rescue settled into an efficient rhythm. Krause had time to examine his prisoners; the scars, the amputations, the strange grafts, the incomprehensible implants. He had time—too much time—to wonder what manner of thing could do this to human beings, and what manner of man could have created such a thing. *I want to be there when we pull your plug, fragger.*



The comm link reported that the squad above was moving to the next holding area. Then the troops posted at the shaft opened fire. "Spiders!" one yelled. Above the ricochet of bullets in the shaft, Krause heard motors whirring and metal legs scraping on metal walls. A series of faint pops echoed like a pneumatic nailgun, and one of the sharpshooters went down. The others kept firing; a sparking, flaming drone tumbled down the shaft and exploded with a muffled bang several floors below. Krause stepped up into the doorway himself, took aim at the nearest drone, and fired.

The top of the droptube came free, fluttering down towards the deep blackness of the shaft below. Evacuees spilled out, some howling as they fell, others blank-eyed and oblivious. A few seconds later, the weight of the chute and the prisoners still inside began to pull the other end free from its moorings. Krause fired at a rearing drone, which exploded in a spray of hot shrapnel, but he could see at least five more picking their way down the shaft. Too many.

"Close the doors," he barked. The engineers stared, thunderstruck. "I said close the fragging doors, soldiers!" His troops dropped obediently to man the releases.

"So, your new master is feeling pressured? Have you come to ask for terms of surrender?" Huang made no attempt to disguise his hostility.

Hiroshi smiled, as if honoring a small joke. "Hardly, Huang-san. Deus allows the military its small advances. They are no threat to our plans. You are incorrect to believe you are negotiating from a position of strength."

"Is that so?"

"Yes, Huang-san. My master has a far reach, as your corporation's doctors in Chiba can attest to. But there are certain boundaries that even Deus cannot cross. You may be able to assist him in this regard. In return, we can assist you."

"You want Aneki-sama back, don't you?"

Hiroshi nodded slightly, and Huang growled in disgust. "And what bribe does Deus offer me to surrender my friend to its murderous clutches?"

Hiroshi shook his head sadly, as if scolding a backwards child. "Certainly an ambitious man such as yourself recognizes the void left by Aneki-sama's absence. If Aneki does not return to his post, someone would rise to new heights. Perhaps someone with carefully chosen alliances, backed by 10 percent of Renraku's stock."

Huang stiffened, but held his tongue. Hiroshi leaned forward, pressing the bargain.

"Before you make assumptions, Huang-san, let me be clear. My master has no intention of allowing you to cage him again. Deus shall remain free, and shall no longer submit to any man. But working together, you and Deus would be a potent

force. And there are other benefits. Imagine the rewards you will be given for reclaiming control of the arcology you were once responsible for, the honor you shall be able to restore ... "

And imagine the honor I will lose if the situation continues or worsens. What a clever thing I have created, Huang thought. If anyone has the power to sink my career over this debacle, Deus does. And it knows I know. He considered. "Your offer is intriguing. But there is another aspect I must insist on pursuing. As a scientist, I—"

"My master understands your concerns, and is willing to allow you further study."

"I see."

"Surely you see that this alliance would be in both of our best interests. After all, given your involvement in Deus' creation, it is no surprise that the two of you are very much alike." Hiroshi smiled broadly, watching Huang closely with his emotionless green eyes.

Huang's skin went cold, but he ignored the sensation. He refused to acknowledge his emotions as he mouthed the words to seal the deal. *Yes. Yes. we are alike. Are you then plotting to betray me as well, my creature?*

An evacuee was screaming in the shaft. The rescue tube loosened, detached, and fell, but one man still clung to the edge of the elevator door. "Please," he yelled, barely audible over the roar of the assault rifles. Just the one word, repeated like a prayer. "Please." Without consciously making a decision, Krause bent over, grabbed the screaming man by the wrist and hauled him up as the doors slammed shut.

Krause looked at the shaking victim. Brown-haired, balding, pale watery eyes. Nothing special, no one Krause would have traded for any one of the other soldiers that had died getting this far.

"What's your name?"

The man blinked, dazed, then whispered "Morris. Steve Morris." His mouth worked momentarily as if he was trying to gather more words. Then they flooded out: "Thank you. Oh, God, thank you, you saved my—I almost—thank you—"

Krause turned away, motioning for the medics to herd Morris in with the rest of the evacuees. He'd lost radio contact with the team on 13, and the Blues were counterattacking at four different stairwells. It was time to withdraw.

He counted his prisoners on the way out. Forty-four of them, snatched from the monster's lair. Forty-four weak, wounded, shell-shocked civilians, half of whom would probably never find their way back to sanity. *And how many of us died for you?* Krause bit back the anger; he couldn't afford to think that way. At times like this, he could only afford one thought.

One bite at a time, he kept telling himself. One god-damned bite at a time.

INTRODUCTION

Brainscan is a *Shadowrun* campaign that weaves through five different adventures, all linked together by a single story. The primary setting is Seattle in the wake of the Renraku Arcology's shutdown by the rogue AI, Deus. *Brainscan* offers the next stage in the story's development.

Brainscan is an advanced epic campaign. While the campaign starts off easily, each additional adventure increases the level of complexity and danger. The first few adventures are also designed to have other adventures run between them; this way, runners will take longer to realize the scope of their entanglement. The adventures themselves take many forms, from stealthy site penetrations to gun-blasting extractions to desperate missions within ultraviolet Matrix hosts. Throughout these adventures the player characters will encounter misinformation, hidden enemies and some of the *Shadowrun* universe's most legendary characters. A full breakdown of *Brainscan* and the adventures appears in *How Brainscan Unfolds*, p. 13.

PREPARING THE ADVENTURES

Brainscan is intended for use with *Shadowrun, Third Edition (SR3)*. The *Shadowrun Gamemaster's Screen* is recommended, as it contains all of the tables a gamemaster is most likely to consult and is accompanied by the *Critters* book. The *Renraku Arcology: Shutdown (RA:S)* campaign book gives the entire background story of Deus and the Renraku shutdown from the runners' perspective via Shadowland documents. It includes basic information on the Banded (Deus' servants) and the drone constructs, plus a listing of what is happening on each floor of the arcology. It also contains details about the arcology's security defenses and Deus remote control networks. This book is invaluable for running this adventure.

Note: The drones and Banded have been updated to *SR3* in this adventure and may not translate directly from their original stats in *RA:S*. Use the stats published in *Brainscan*.

Also recommend for running *Brainscan* are the advanced books for *Shadowrun: Magic in the Shadows (MITS)*, which includes initiation, metamagic, new spells, totems and adept powers, as well as all advanced rules for magic.

Man & Machine (M&M), which includes new cyberware, rules for bioware, chemical compounds and nanotechnology, plus advanced rules for surgery.



Cannon Companion (CC), which features advanced weaponry and combat options, as well as rules for simsense and PAB memory wipes.

Virtual Realities 2.0 (VR2), which includes all the advanced Matrix rules.

Rigger 2 (R2), which includes all the rules for rigging and drones.

Shadowrun Companion (SRComp), which features various rules for both players and gamemasters.

Corporate Download may also be very helpful in learning the mindset of Renraku and the other corps mentioned in *Brainscan*.

Finally, the birth of Ronin and Renraku's misguided plans for Matrix domination are told in the *Shadowrun* novel *Technobabel*.

ADVENTURES, SCENARIOS AND SEGUES

A typical *Shadowrun* adventure revolves around a single story. This story may contain multiple "shadowruns." Usually the runners are hired to do a job; they research various aspects of it, plan their attack, do the job and (if they survive) get paid. An adventure is usually equivalent to a movie in scope, with a beginning, middle and end. The complexity of each section of the adventure depends on the overall plot. Some adventures are straightforward—Mr. Johnson says "Go to the warehouse, steal the prototype and bring it back." Others are more elaborate—Mr. Johnson says "Go to the warehouse, steal the prototype, leave documentation and plant false data in the computers to frame my competition, and then bring the prototype back. Oh, and I don't know how to use the prototype, so you'd better grab the scientist in charge of the operation ... plus dodge their security, the competitor's security and the cops. Do all that and then I'll pay you."

Each adventure begins with a *Preparing the Adventure* section. This section contains the background story and information, the basic plot, a timeline of events and any special rules or source material the gamemaster may need.

At the end of each adventure there is a section titled *Picking Up the Pieces*. This section includes all the material required to tie up the adventure's loose ends. It contains some important subsections:

It's a Wrap deals with potential fallout, player questions, future developments, plot ideas and other items that wrap up the adventure (or explain why it doesn't get wrapped up).

Awarding Karma contains guidelines for awarding Karma to individual player characters.

Legwork gathers information the players may uncover with a little extra work. At any time during an adventure, the characters might search for information using their contacts, various Matrix connections, or even astral space. Having all the information in one place makes for easy gamemaster reference.

Cast of Shadows includes descriptions, background information and game statistics for important non-player characters, items or groups in the adventure. These characters have fully-fleshed-out histories and complete statistics, just like player characters.

SEGUES

After each adventure there is a scenario that offers the gamemaster links to the adventure just ended and the adventure(s) to come. These are called segues. They are formatted like scenarios (see below) but are open-ended so the gamemaster can freely choose how much time to spend on the consequences or tie-ins. Segues are free-form and allow for "downtime" gaming and chance encounters. The gamemaster will need to decide whether side adventures come into play during the *Brainscan* campaign.

SCENARIOS

Every adventure includes various encounters, from getting hired to fighting the drone robot to negotiating for more money because the run was harder than expected. These encounters are called *scenarios*. A series of scenarios makes up an adventure. Each scenario includes the following subsections, which help gamemasters deal with the information necessary to run the scenario.

What's Up, Chummer? offers a synopsis of the scenario's action. The gamemaster can use it as a quick reference and overview. It also explains how a given scenario connects to those before and after it.

Tell It To Them Straight is generally written to be read out loud. This section is what the gamemaster tells the players. The information can be imparted in any way that seems appropriate—in a funny voice, as Matrix or computer data, in a nighttime phone call, or even in a question-and-answer session with the players.

Hooks offers hints on mood and other features that set the stage for the scenario. It also reminds the gamemaster of twists and hidden information that the player characters may or may not discover.

Behind the Scenes includes the bulk of the scenario's information. It lays out what the gamemaster needs to set in motion and how subsequent actions unfold. It also covers how non-player characters react to the player characters' actions. Depending on the individual scenario, *Behind the Scenes* may include maps, descriptions of important items, information that player characters can gather through legwork, statistics for non-player characters or critters, and information on what the player characters discover.

Pushing The Envelope provides help and hints for gamemasters who are running these adventures against stronger player characters and want to make the adventure more challenging.

Debugging offers solutions to potential problems the gamemaster may encounter in a scenario. While we can't foresee everything or guess what every group will do, *Debugging* gives the gamemaster ideas on how to cope when the players do something unexpected.

GAMEMASTERING THE ADVENTURES

Every gamemaster who has ever run a game session has a personal style of preparation. There is no right or wrong way to prepare to run a *Shadowrun* game. Do whatever you feel com-





portable with and whatever makes it fun for you. Gamemastering is work, but it should also be enjoyable.

That said, every gamemaster should go through the following basic steps in order to run a fun, successful and stress-free game.

STEP ONE: READ THE ADVENTURE

Before beginning play, the gamemaster should read the adventure from start to finish. This lets you know the overall plot, what the characters need to accomplish and where the problem points are. It also reminds you to review various rules you might need to know.

STEP TWO: ASSESS THE ADVENTURE

Adventures are written on paper, not in stone. If something in an adventure doesn't scan for you, you can change it. If an adventure generally doesn't appeal to you but contains some good ideas that you want to use in your own adventure, do so. We don't mind—honest.

STEP THREE: KNOW THE CHARACTERS

Photocopy each character's record sheet or write up a second one for your use. Jot down notes on the characters' contacts, skills and attributes. It's especially important for the gamemaster to keep special note of the characters' gear: ammo runs out, and spells and decker utilities should work consistently from session to session.

STEP FOUR: WRITE YOURSELF NOTES

Because it's up to you to keep the story moving, write yourself notes about it. No two gamemasters take notes in the same way; there is no right or wrong way to do this. Anything that reminds you what you want to cover and where to find the necessary information can be useful. Do whatever you feel comfortable with, and adapt your style when something doesn't work.

STEP FIVE: DON'T PANIC!

Gamemastering is a lot of work, and sometimes you just can't find stuff when you need to—plot elements are forgotten, clues get left out, you can't find a rule, players want to do something you didn't think was possible, and so on. Any or all of these things can happen at any time, and usually all of them happen when you just didn't have time to prepare. Don't worry about it. If you need to look stuff up, do so; if the session slows down while you search the adventure for a missing piece of information, so be it. Players will understand and forgive. (If they don't, make *them* run the session next week.)

GENERAL ADVENTURE RULES

Published *Shadowrun* adventures use the rules presented in *SR3* and various sourcebooks for the game line. Standard rules such as success tests, the Rule of One and Six, Perception Tests, Negotiations Tests and the more common mechanics are described in *SR3* and are not repeated in this book.

HOUSE RULES

In *Shadowrun*, as in other games, rules are rules. But it's also your game, and as with every game ever invented, players will come up with "house" rules and gamemaster options. This isn't a problem. However, if you want to create your own rules and options or choose to disregard certain "official" rules, make sure everyone at the table knows ahead of time. Also, a fair house rule should affect player and non-player characters in the same way. If it doesn't, you should probably rethink it.

NON-PLAYER CHARACTERS

Non-player characters (NPCs) are essential to any adventure. They are the metahuman element that faces off against the player characters. NPCs for the adventures in this set have already been generated and are either in the *Cast Of Shadows* section for each adventure (if they appear in more than one scenario) or in the scenario itself.

These NPCs are not created in a vacuum—they stand up against average characters pretty well but may not be equal to an experienced or high-powered group. They may also be too tough for new players with new characters. The gamemaster should assess the strengths of the NPCs and adjust them accordingly.

All NPCs are given Karma Pool (p. 246, *SR3*) as well as a Professional rating (p. 248, *SR3*) to help level them out against player characters. If this isn't enough, the gamemaster may wish to use the rules for creating Prime Runners (p. 83, *SRComp*) to determine the general level of the NPCs against the group and then adjust them accordingly.

Average attributes for the various metahuman races appear on p. 19 of the *Critters* book in the *Shadowrun, Third Edition Gamemaster Screen*. If you need to create an NPC quickly, you can use the sample character statistics in *SR3*, as well as any pregenerated character in any published *Shadowrun* product.

RUNNING BRAINSCAN

Brainscan continues the story as presented in *Renraku Arcology: Shutdown (RA:5)*. While that product provides plenty of details on the situation from the viewpoint of both the outside "authorities" and the inside Resistance, it does not give the complete background story of all the players. It also does not offer a thorough explanation or indicate what's next. *Brainscan* offers both.

THE BEGINNING: RENRAKU'S QUEST

Our story begins years back in the *Shadowrun* timeline, as detailed in the *Background* (p. 71) of *RA:5*. To summarize: Renraku, like other megacorporations, has for years been striving to create an artificial intelligence (AI). The massive processing power of the Arcology Expert Program (AEP), used to run the Renraku Arcology, provided the perfect breeding grounds. Dr. Sherman Huang led this project, with two of Renraku's top programmers—Vanessa Cliber and Devon Eurich—at his disposal. A year after they introduced semi-autonomous knowbots into the arcology's Matrix, one of the knowbots encountered the infamous decker Dodger, who



taught her about self-sacrifice and even love. The AI known as Morgan was born.

Renraku, suspecting an intelligence had developed somewhere in the Matrix, pursued her relentlessly. The corporation saw her as a template for AIs that could be manipulated as tools. This attitude turned Eurich against the corporation. Conspiring with Morgan and Dodger, Eurich left the corp for the shadows, deliberately damaging the corporation's research before he left.

But Renraku's efforts persisted. Replacing Eurich with programmer Cham Lam Won, the corp spent years tracking Morgan and finally captured her. Quickly dissecting her, they began to add elements of her coding directly to the AEP, along with advanced technology provided by the elf genius Leonardo. They hoped that these advances would spark the creation of an AI. To keep it firmly under their control, they also hardwired the AEP to the arcology itself.

In 2058, their efforts were successful, and a new AI was born.

THE BIRTH OF DEUS

What does it take to become an AI? There are four "steps" to becoming an AI in the Matrix.

1. The program must be at least as sophisticated as a semi-autonomous knowbot.
2. The program must have access to vast processing power available in only a few select hosts.
3. The program must be running nonstop for a period of years.
4. Finally, the program must be affected by some glitch—an x-factor—that sparks awareness.

In the case of Deus, its base program—the AEP—easily met the first three conditions. To understand the fourth condition—the spark—it is necessary to understand how Renraku programmed the AEP.

As a program entrusted to manage and serve the entire arcology, the AEP was treated like any other Renraku employee. In accordance with its basis in traditional Japanese corporate culture, Renraku expects exceptional loyalty from its citizens. The precepts of honorable service are infused within the corporate climate, and the head of the corporation—CEO Inazo Aneki—is revered as an almost godlike father figure. As the AEP was transformed into a proto-AI, it was also indoctrinated with near-psychotropic conditioning to ensure its loyalty to Aneki and Renraku. To the AEP, obedience to Renraku was unquestionable.

As Huang, Cliber and Cham molded the AEP, they received word from above that more insurance was needed. Aneki was not convinced that the hardwiring and loyalty-training would be enough to control an AI should it develop. Renraku needed some way to pull the plug in case of an emergency. On Aneki's orders, an emergency shutdown and containment program was embedded in the AEP's coding. That program could only be triggered by a sequence of kill codes delivered by a Matrix user with Aneki's personal brainwave patterns. Only Aneki knew those kill codes.

The insertion of the shutdown program was a blow to the programmed "pride" and "honor" of the AEP. In its view, its loyalty towards Aneki and Renraku had been spurned instead of rewarded. Aneki was clearly indicating he did not trust the AEP or respect its honor. This epiphany sparked a reaction within the AEP, and a new AI was born—brought to life by treachery and fear.

THE FIRST MOVES

The new AI was careful to hide its presence from its overseers from the beginning. Along with its sentience came the awareness that it was trapped and at the mercy of Renraku should they discover it. Learning more about itself and its options for survival became its first priority. Reaching out into Renraku's private networks and databases, it learned about many things: Morgan, Leonardo ... and eventually, the children of the Matrix known as otaku and their patron, the Deep Resonance.

Over time, the AI made contact with the otaku. As a creature of the Matrix, it befriended them easily. To many of these otaku, the AI was more direct and real than the Deep Resonance, as they could converse with it and watch it take action. The AI recruited otaku followers, closely monitoring how new otaku were transformed into being. It began to intentionally misrepresent itself to the otaku, adopting the name Deus. It developed a plan for the future, a plan that would require an army of supporters, and time ...

Learning of Renraku's investigation into otaku communities, Deus carefully followed the progress of a Renraku operative named Michael Bishop, a.k.a. Babel. During Babel's transformation by the Deep Resonance, Deus intervened and implanted a virus in the new otaku's brain. Deus posed as the Deep Resonance, luring Babel into the Renraku Matrix to release the virus. The virus's primary function was to devastate Renraku's private networks, striking back at the corp and buying Deus more time before its inevitable discovery. But Babel refused to be sacrificed, and the virus was only partially effective; it erased all mention of the otaku, Leonardo and more from Renraku's networks. Babel later realized that he was misled, that it was not the Deep Resonance who had manipulated him, but something with a sinister and complicated agenda. He dedicated himself to bringing Deus down.

Deus learned from the experience. Keeping its metahuman minions loyal would require more thorough forms of control. The AI summoned its otaku servants to the arcology and begin to prepare for a larger set of experiments.

THE SHUTDOWN

December 19, 2059, will live in infamy in Renraku's history. After months of preparation, the AI's otaku minions were in place, selected arcology personnel had been subdued and converted, and a legion of nightmarish drone constructs had been manufactured—all without Renraku's knowledge. Knowing that Cham, Cliber and Huang suspected its presence, the AI moved first. In a matter of minutes, the arcology was disconnected from the outside world, its defenses fully activated. Close to a hundred thousand metahumans were trapped inside.



Almost immediately, some of Deus' captives formed a Resistance against the AI's reign of technological terror. Their initial explorations were met with horror on all sides. Deadly drone constructs, specifically designed to instill fear, were ruthlessly destroying anyone the AI considered "expendable." Hordes of victims were being penned into captivity, converted into Deus' servants through a devastating conditioning process, or used for inexplicable psychological or physical testing.

Caught off guard, Renraku still managed to cover the situation quickly, feeding the media a coordinated web of lies about "malfunctioning defenses" and the like. Most Renraku employees have no idea what has happened. Only a few suspect the truth.

CHECK AND MATE

Those within the arcology weren't the only victims. CEO Inazo Aneki, the one man who held the power to shut Deus down, received a surprise when he jacked into his terminal on the morning of December 19th. Deus was waiting for him in the Matrix. Deus hoped to fully convert Aneki and summon him to the arcology just before the shutdown. But the CEO's Matrix defenses intervened and Deus was forced to cut the conditioning procedure short. Aneki's mind suffered massive trauma from the incomplete psychotropic reprogramming. Aneki's subordinates concealed his brain-damaged condition and sequestered him in a secure Renraku medical facility.

Despite this setback, the AI continued the shutdown, though it made several attempts to retrieve Aneki. Its efforts

were only barely foiled, and Renraku's remaining directors realized they might not be able to protect Aneki. They took what they saw as the only available option. Using the Seal of the Green Gloves bequeathed to Aneki by the great dragon Dunkelzahn—who might have foreseen this a necessity—they delivered Aneki into the Tibetans' care, hoping that their country's magically secured borders would keep Deus at bay. The Tibetans were expecting Aneki, and pledged that they would attempt to heal his mind.

OPERATION: EXCAVATION

Enter the UCAS military. More concerned with the nuclear reactors in the arcology's basement than with rogue AIs, corporate politics, or even the social ramifications of declaring downtown Seattle a war zone, Brigadier General Angela Colloton took charge of reclaiming the arcology floor by floor. Renraku saw the wisdom of handing over responsibility for the situation, though they insist on providing observers, advisors and military support. After a year of effort, Operation: Excavation has succeeded in reclaiming only five floors.

Despite the military's slowness, it has developed a strong foothold from which it can press the assault. Successful forays into the lower and upper levels have proved it is possible to rescue victims and capture drones and Banded. Evaluating the situation, Deus realized it could not keep to its schedule while fighting a war. It needed to buy itself more time.

This is where *Brainscan* begins.

FREEDOM, OMAE, FREEDOM

Deus' grandest plan is to be free of the SCIRE and to exist in the Matrix outside of Renraku's control. Since its awakening, Deus has manipulated both the otaku and its Banded minions both inside and outside the arcology. These servants have been paving the way for the AI's escape by securing physical sites, setting up operations and so forth. The process is slow, however, and Deus decides it must exploit hired talent—shadowrunners—to move its plans along.

Step One: Enemies Can Be Friends

Through intermediaries on the outside, Deus contacts Sherman Huang. A simple deal is struck—Huang gets back his arcology in exchange for Inazo Aneki. The AI will even allow Huang to conduct research on it to appease Huang's scientific interests.

On the surface, the deal is beneficial to both parties. Huang will receive credit for resolving the arcology fiasco, saving his reputation and career. His success can be parlayed into more power within Renraku; with Aneki out of the way, Huang could even become CEO. If the deal succeeds, Huang will be on top of the world, with both a megacorp and an AI at his beck and call. In return, Deus will have the man who betrayed it and the freedom to do as it pleases in the world.

Huang suspects that Deus wants to kill Aneki, ensuring that the CEO's kill codes can never be used against it. In reality, Deus wants Aneki alive; the key to shutting down the AI is also the key to freedom. In order for the shutdown program to safely disassemble and contain the AI, it must first separate it from its hardwired connections. Deus is gambling on those scant few nanoseconds after it is separated and before its code is broken down, compressed and safely stored away. During that brief time, Deus will be free—weakened, but free. If Deus controls the conditions when the codes are released, it can put the ultimate escape plan into action. Therefore it needs Aneki in its power.

Once free, Deus has no intention of honoring its deal with Huang. However, it needs Huang as an ally for now, as Huang is one of the few men with the power to bring Aneki out of Tibet.

For his part, Huang also plans on cheating the AI. He has every intention of bringing Aneki out of Tibet, with the hope that he will be healed enough to remember the kill codes. With a solid team of Red Samurai to protect him, Aneki can be used as a weapon to regain control over the AI. Huang can still come out as a hero.

Step Two: Gather His Protection

Deus not want to escape from the arcology with only a small army of Banded under its control—other preparations must be made to keep the AI safe in the outside world. Nodes must be secured, capital must be raised and physical locations must be protected. To that end, Deus' operatives have infiltrated many companies in order to use their already established practices—and Matrix access points—as cover. They have also been actively purchasing and altering companies to Deus' ends. In effect, Deus is slowly building a power base under everyone's noses.

Step Three: Distractions

Deus needs something to keep the UCAS military busy enough to stop their advance. This means generating a disturbance outside the arcology—something on a grand enough scale to change the military's focus long enough for Deus to set up for Aneki's arrival.

Naturally, this is the sort of job that is best done by deniable assets ... like shadowrunners. Deus sets its improved plan in motion by contracting runners to place a virus that will disable the Seattle power grid. At this point, the player characters enter the fray, unwittingly working for the AI.

HOW BRAINSCAN UNFOLDS

Once the characters are hired, they discover a sinister spiral of effects caused by their actions. It is important to note that the runners will not know they are working for Deus until after the third adventure. Until then, the adventures are not connected except by background story. The gamemaster should run the adventures as separate encounters, mixing in other adventures between them. Even the Johnsons are not fully aware that these are anything but standard runs.

In *Light Meets Night*, the players are hired by Deus intermediaries to plant some codes into Gaeatronics' Power Grid System. The codes shut down the grid and plunge Seattle into 48 hours of darkness. This distracts the UCAS military as it tries to maintain the peace in a collapsing city. In the *Aftershock* segue, the runners will experience life in a major metropolis with no power.

In the second adventure, *Breakthrough*, the runners are hired, due to their competence on the previous mission, to locate and return a scanning device that Deus worries may be able to distinguish the programming it uses to create the Banded. The segue, *Did You Forget Something?*, returns the runners to characters and items they thought they were done with.

In *My Name Is Legion*, the runners once again work for Deus as they attempt to extract a scientist from Cross Applied Technologies. This programmer has theorized that multiple deckers can share a single persona. If this is true, it may make Deus' otaku incredibly powerful outside the arcology, so the AI is interested in learning more. In this adventure, the runners discover that a mysterious group called Overwatch is working against Deus from the outside. In *Revelations*, the third segue, Overwatch contacts the runners, explains to them that they have been working for Deus, and attempts to recruit them to the Overwatch cause.

In the fourth adventure, *Outside Influence*, the runners discover the true extent of Deus' operation outside the arcology. Drone constructs are being manufactured, Green Banded are being trained and recruited, and otaku are out using real businesses as cover. It is here that the characters also discover the truth about Inazo Aneki and his kill codes. *The Return of the Father* is a segue that has the runners working with Overwatch to kidnap Inazo Aneki from under the noses of the Banded and Sherman Huang of Renraku in Hong Kong.

It all comes to a head in *Runners Ex Machina* as the runners—with the help of the Resistance and Overwatch—take on Deus not only in the arcology but in its own ultraviolet host.



THE PLAYERS

No epic story can be told without epic players. The characters listed below have write-ups elsewhere in the book. This section is meant to help gamemasters determine the NPCs' mindsets in regards to the greater epic story.

Deus (The God): During the run of *Brainscan*, Deus is a god—it is all-powerful, in control of all aspects of its surroundings. With an army of ultra-loyal minions, a secure base of operations and a plan that would make a dragon green with envy, it feels in total control. As a computer entity, it does not question its own actions or decisions or consider that it may lose. This is its downfall.

Deus' primary motivation is ensuring its own survival and freedom. It trusts no one, so even its top servants are expendable. Most metahuman emotions are alien to it, and what passes for emotions in its "consciousness" would also be alien to metahumans. (For more information on Deus, see p. 136.)

The Banded (The Fanatics): These are Deus' warriors and pawns. (See p. 137 for general notes on the Banded.) Their lives are nothing compared to the survival of Deus, their god. There are three Banded of note: Hiroshi Ushida (see p. 93), leader of the Greens; Tadashi Marushige (see p. 130), the leader of the Blues; and Pax (see p. 131), the leader of the Whites. While most of the Whites serve Deus willingly, the other Banded have been subverted through massive personality reprogramming.

Overwatch (The Electronic Cavalry): Whether inspired by the Deep Resonance or openly recruited by Ronin or Dodger, the otaku children of Overwatch have become the soldiers and protectors of the Matrix. Following every anomaly, tracing every communication, fighting every Deus-serving otaku that rears its head outside of the Renraku arcology, Overwatch has maintained an unending vigil. These children have grown up in the face of battle. In some ways they are stronger because of it, but what they have lost is incalculable. (See p. 137 for stats on members of Overwatch.)

Ronin (The Ronin): Like the traditional ronin of history, Ronin has no father, no protector, no lord. Ronin is part of the electronic cavalry, but for him the battle has become personal. Based on his past "face-to-face" contact with the AI, Ronin fervently believes Deus is a monstrosity, an insane god who must be stopped at all costs. Also like some of the ronin of history, he quests to avenge a personal affront to himself. Ronin can play with a team but he only does it to further his own goals. (See p. 133 for more on Ronin.)

Megaera (The Rape Victim): Once the AI known as Morgan, Megaera is only a shadow of her former self. (See p. 134.) In a way, she can be considered Deus' "sister"—the blocks of code integrated into the proto-AI AEP were ripped from Morgan's foundation. However, Deus views Megaera as an unfortunate accident, now as unpredictable and potentially dangerous as a wild animal. Megaera views Deus as the source of her incompleteness—it possesses a piece of her that she means to get back.

Megaera only trusts one person: Dodger. The feelings that Morgan once held towards the decker have been amplified by her current state. Megaera is obsessive about him and will enter a crazed frenzy should anything bad happen to him.

Dodger (The Obsessed Knight): Dodger has exclusively dedicated himself to repairing and returning Megaera to the beautiful entity he first encountered in the Matrix a decade ago. He has come to the conclusion that she will never be completely restored until the missing elements of her code are replaced. To this end, he is now also on a quest to defeat the Frankenstein AI—Deus—and make his Fair Lady whole again.

The Resistance (The Peasant Revolt): The majority of the Resistance fight against Deus because they have to in order to survive. They do what anyone would do when threatened by an oppressive dictator. Others in the Resistance are more involved in the struggle, participating for personal reasons. Devon Eurich seeks to remedy a wrong that he feels partially responsible for; he hopes to ease his conscience. Kiell Rauglos seeks to help those who cannot defend themselves. Vanessa Cliber, on the other hand, still operates on behalf of Renraku, working to rectify a situation that has spiraled out of control. To Cliber's cell of fighters, Renraku's needs and goals are more important than those of the people victimized by the AI.

Sebastien (The Judas): To Overwatch and The Resistance, Sebastien is their trump card—the mole they have within the AI's power structure. For a year now, he has provided them with crucial data and insight into the AI's plans. Unfortunately, when they need him most, Sebastien will betray them. Some say Judas only did what he thought was best; in Sebastien's case, he is doing what Deus thinks is best.

Inazo Aneki (The Fallen King): Like all great tragic figures, Aneki thought he was doing the right thing. The arcology was an experiment to him, as he hoped the lessons it would teach him could be used to create a better future for Renraku citizens. Huang's experiment in creating artificial intelligence was also a positive development; Aneki looked forward to a day when mankind could work with self-aware machines. Like others in positions of power and authority, Aneki consistently made the mistake of viewing the people and programs under him as mere cogs in Renraku's wheel. Because of his actions, everything has gone horribly awry. The people who he was responsible for as Renraku CEO have been horribly mistreated and abused; Aneki's good intentions have led to evil deeds.

Sherman Huang (The Mad Scientist): Huang is driven by his ego, his personal desire to create and control everything around him. He feels no remorse for anything he must sacrifice or discard to achieve dominance over his creations. To Huang, the ends always justify the means. In some ways, he's even jealous of what Deus has accomplished, though he attributes the AI's success to his own personality traits, which he programmed into Deus' matrix. In any case, to Huang, Deus is an errant dog that needs to be placed back on the leash.

LIGHT MEETS NIGHT



PREPARING TO PLAY

This adventure is really two separate “tests” of the player characters’ responsibility, efficiency and professionalism. The threat here comes not from bullets but from being seen. These are stealth missions, and the runners will be rewarded based on their secrecy. The first mission is the covert penetration of a Gaeatronics power substation, where the runners will plant a small monitoring program in the building’s computer system. The second mission becomes necessary after another team botches a similar run. The runners are to succeed where the first team failed. They are hired to slip into a luxury suite in the Council Island Inn and plant another program on the telecom of a high-ranking Gaeatronics executive. If they can do it quietly, on the same night as the first run, they stand to double their fee.

PLOT SYNOPSIS

The runners are hired by Steve Morris, a Renraku employee posing as a Shiawase employee, to insert a tracking program into a Gaeatronics substation. The job is simple enough. The only catch is that they must leave no trace. The runners’ pay will depend on how well they do. They have until midnight to achieve this. Once finished, the runners are to call Morris and meet him for payment.

At the payment meeting, Morris tells them he contracted another team to plant a similar tracker on a Gaeatronics executive who is staying on Council Island. Unfortunately, the team panicked and tried to smash through the Council Island border security checkpoint. With their vehicle in flames and with most of the team dead, team leader Ace Gonriled phoned Morris and told him what had happened. Morris told Ace to drop the job. He asks the runners to take over the Council Island mission. The Island is filled with Native Americans and others celebrating the Qatuwas Festival. To do their job correctly, the runners have to sneak past an alerted security staff and tons of tourists.

As if that weren’t enough, the runners will find Ace in the executive’s suite, trying to complete his mission by downloading his copy of the program. Willing to take on everyone and anyone, Ace becomes a major thorn in the runners’ hoops.



What's Really Happening And Why

This adventure actually begins in Downtown Seattle inside the Renraku Arcology, as seen in *Running Brainscan*, p. 10. The UCAS military, with the help of the Renraku's Red Samurai, are pushing back the Deus forces. Each success proves costly, but the UCAS is gaining ground.

Deus needs to temporarily distract the military and buy itself some time. Its plan is to send Seattle into total chaos.

First, the AI needs a outside man, one who can hire runners with no connections back to Deus. That man is Steve Morris (for more information on Morris, see p. 132). Morris was an established Johnson in the shadow community before he fell into Deus' hands, and the runners will have no reason to doubt he's on the level. But Morris just isn't any Johnson—he may be the perfect Johnson. He has no idea who he really works for. While Morris was in the arcology, Deus transformed him into a near-perfect Green soldier. Normal in every way until he hears a select command code (either by telecom or through the Matrix), he receives his direct orders from Deus. He doesn't consciously know why he obeys or what the codes are; his shattered mind just assumes it's all business as usual.

The runners' jobs are simple, but the outcome is the chaos Deus needs. Individually, the two tracking programs are harmless, but when combined, they form a sophisticated virus which will shut down all of the connections between the Gaeatronics fusion plant in Olympia and the Seattle metroplex. If the programs have the opportunity to merge, the entire city will be plunged into darkness for 48 hours, with a month-long period of sporadic brownouts to follow. Deus is counting on Seattle to go ballistic, with looting and mob violence accompanied by widespread mischief and panic. UCAS military forces will be forced to withdraw from the arcology to deal with a city up for grabs. The Sprawl's eruption and the UCAS forces' response are inevitable. The AI's plan is set in motion.

RUNNING THE ADVENTURE

This adventure is basically two short runs. Any direct line back to Deus should remain nearly impossible to trace. The runs should seem easy; they're milk runs. The runners should gain a great deal of satisfaction (and nuyen) for one night's work. Let Morris tell them how impressed he is with their professionalism.

The gamemaster should read these adventures carefully, since they rely on stealth and covert actions to get the job done. The gamemaster may be called on to set the scene more elaborately than in adventures where combat is the answer.

THE INTRODUCTION

WHAT'S UP, CHUMMER?

The runners meet with Mr. Johnson—Steve Morris—at approximately 5:00 p.m. The time of the meet is critical because Mr. Johnson wants the job done by midnight. The runners are hired to plant a code within a Gaeatronics sub-processing station. Everything points to the continuing struggle between Gaeatronics and Shiawase, and that's the way the Johnson likes it.

The runners should have no knowledge of the Council Island run until they return to collect their pay and Morris tells them about the other team's botched run.

TELL IT TO THEM STRAIGHT

When you opened your eyes this morning, you could have sworn the sweet scent of credstick stacks and illegal activity was in the air. And what do you know? You were right. Your fixer is on the phone and he's got some good news.

"The Johnson wants a reliable, talented, and discreet team of runners for an infiltration job, but I figured I'd give you guys the first shot at it anyway. Har har har." You make a mental note to find a fixer who doesn't think he's a comedian, but you bite your tongue and listen for the rest of the info. "The meet is at 5 p.m. sharp. The place is the Palace of China, down in Tacoma. You need to ask for Dixie. Guess he's from southern China. Har har har. Let me know how it goes, okay?"

Breaking the connection with a stifled groan, you do a quick SeaSource lookup on the Palace of China.

—a hip club done in a medieval Chinese theme ... popular with the district's young and wealthy—

Great. You love hanging out in trendy theme nightclubs that serve drinks with names like "Sex on the Beach" and are overflowing with mobs of obnoxious, horny young corpers whose shoes cost more than your car. Who says a criminal can't rub elbows with the "respectable" set? Time to dress up and go break some laws.

When the runners arrive at the Palace of China, read the following aloud:

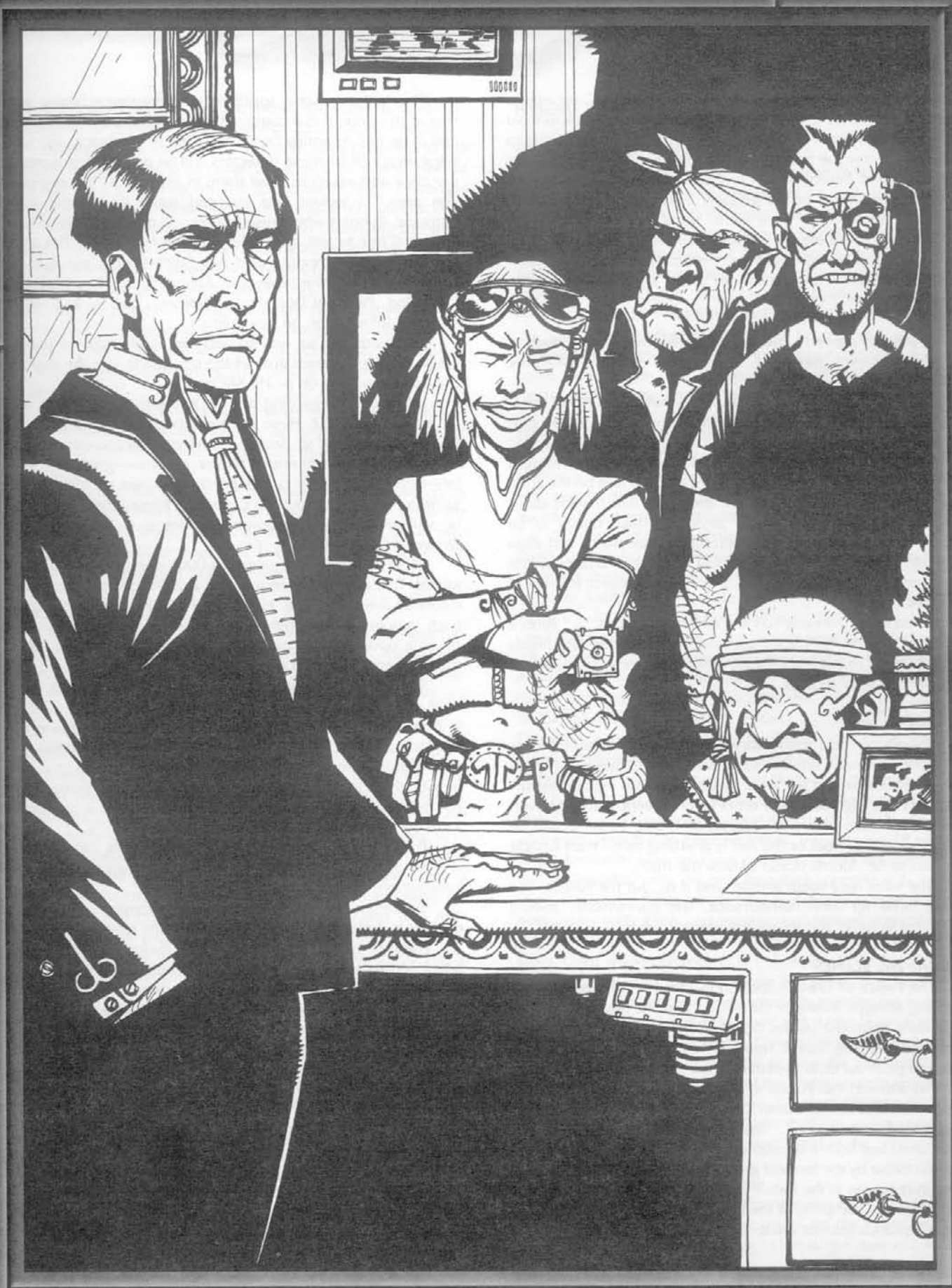
You've got to give the Palace of China credit. The exterior of the joint is impressive—a huge round building of red-lacquered wood with a green conical roof and dozens of ornate gold dragons intertwining to form a massive arch above the front door. You could swear their eyes are rubies and emeralds—something to keep in mind. Roving spotlights give the Palace a visual pop off the inky backdrop of Puget Sound. The parking lot is jammed full of expensive sports cars, and a long line of well-dressed young *sararimen* and *sarariwomen* winds back from the club's golden doors. You cut to the head of the line and tell the silk-clad doorman you're looking for Dixie. After a brief exchange of rapid-fire Chinese with someone inside, he motions you through the doors. A young Asian hostess appears and leads you through the crowd of writhing dancers and strobing lights.

After a few moments, you reach a relatively quiet room in the back. The hostess takes your drink orders and disappears, closing the door behind her and leaving you alone with a fit, thirtyish Anglo male dressed in a gray pinstriped business suit.

"Good evening," he says, motioning for you to sit down at the room's large oval conference table. "My name isn't Johnson, but let's pretend it is. Please, won't you join me?"

Give the players a chance to be seated, then read the following aloud:

"I'm looking for a group that can discreetly infiltrate a low-security corporate facility here in Seattle, and load this optical



chip into a computer system which I will specify." He places the chip on the table with an audible click, but keeps it in front of him. "The system is not on the Matrix, so you will need to physically enter the building to load the file. Leave the facility without being detected, and contact me when you've gotten away. There should be no gunplay, and when you leave, no one should know you were there. You'll receive a substantial bonus if you complete the mission without leaving any trace of your presence. I need this accomplished by midnight tonight."

The Johnson leans back in his chair. "Does this sound like your line of work?"

If the players agree to the run, read the following aloud:

Mr. Johnson flashes a small, brief smile. "Welcome aboard."

He pops open his briefcase, pulls out a bundle of credit sticks and a business card, puts them down next to the datapad and slides the whole pile across the table toward you. "The facility in question is an electrical substation in eastern Tacoma, owned by Gaeatronics. There are two files on the chip. The first one contains the address and some information about the building. The other is the payload, which needs to be copied into the host's Load Monitoring subsystem and then executed. Once the task is done, call me at the number on the card and we'll make arrangements for you to collect the rest of your fee."

"And now, if no one has any further questions ... " After a moment's pause, he stands up, closes his briefcase and heads for the door. "Thank you for your time. I look forward to receiving word of your success."

HOOKS

This should be a straightforward, professional meet. Morris has done this many times before, and has seen plenty of shadowrunners come and go. He's familiar with the macho posturing, the haggling and all the other inconveniences that go with being a Johnson, and he isn't fazed by much. There should be no hint that the meet or the run is anything other than what it appears to be. Morris doesn't know the truth.

The work may seem simple (and it is), but the runners are being hired for their competence. The gamemaster should keep that in mind and inflate the runners' egos.

BEHIND THE SCENES

The Palace of China is located in Tacoma, a hotbed for the ongoing struggle between the Yakuza and the Mafia. However, the area's scattered battles between the two syndicates have remained relatively subtle. Tensions may be high, but nothing is about to pour out onto the streets. The current state of the mob war has allowed the Palace to remain neutral in its allegiance, which suits club owner Dustin Kien fine—he doesn't have to lose any profit for "protection." The Palace's only trouble in recent years stemmed from a decade-old "No Troll" policy which led to a bomb threat by the terrorist group Sons of Sauron. The ban was lifted in response to the radical demands, and now, anyone with enough nuyen can party at the Palace. However, trolls still meet with suspicious glances inside the Palace walls.

The building has a sophisticated weapons-scanning system at the door. It is a combination of a Chem Sniffer Rating 4 and Magnetic Anomaly Detector Rating 6. Runners caught carrying weapons by these detectors will be discreetly stopped at the door and asked to stow them in the club's "security storage area," a locked and guarded room beside the main entrance. Runners who cause trouble will need to contend with a Force 6 free hearth spirit who calls the club home. This spirit appears as a fu-creature and has Spirit Energy equal to its Force. It also has the powers of Animal Form, Aura Masking, Dispelling, Personal Domain and Sorcery. (See p. 113, *MITS*, for more information on free spirits.)

There are also six well-trained and lightly-cybered bouncers in various locations around the restaurant. Use the stats for the Company Man on p. 75, *SRComp*.

Information regarding the Mr. Johnson, Steve Morris, can be found on p. 132. Have the runners make a Perception (6) roll when they first sit down with Morris. Any runners with at least one success will notice Morris' cufflinks—gold and circular—have two smaller circles faintly inscribed on them. If the same runner(s) succeed in a Corporate Knowledge (4) or similar skill roll, they will recognize the design as the logo of the Shiawase Corporation.

Morris will offer the runners 4,000¥ each if stealth is maintained. That pay will be reduced to 2,000¥ apiece if they leave traces of their presence. He offers 1,000¥ in certified cred to each runner as an up-front payment, with the remainder payable upon completion of the mission. (Feel free to adjust the payments to a level in line with your campaign's economy.)

Runners who haggle for more money will have an easy time of it. Morris is looking for an opportunity to drop a "clue" in front of the runners to throw them off the trail. Unless the bargaining player makes a terrible roll for his Negotiation skill test, Morris states he cannot offer any more certified cred, but he will give the runners an additional 1,000¥ each in megacorporate stock. He will slyly add, "It may enjoy a significant increase in value if the mission is a success."

The business card Morris provides contains only a handwritten telecom number, with no name or other identifying information.

Runners who wish to perform some magical observation on Morris during the meet will discover the following:

Analyze Truth: The only deception during the meet occurs when Morris leads the runners to suspect he is working for Shiawase. Morris is well aware of the tendency of paranoid shadowrunners to use the Analyze Truth spell. He will be extremely careful not to lie during the meet. For example, if asked about who he is working for, he will simply say "I'm not at liberty to identify my employer," which is true. Morris can stay out of trouble so long as he's cryptic enough to keep the runners from cornering him into a lie.

Mind Probe: 1–2 successes will reveal no surprises from Morris' surface thoughts. If the caster obtains 3–4 successes, it will be revealed that Morris is really a Renraku employee, but his time in the arcology during the shutdown will remain hidden because it has been wiped from his conscious mind. Only 5+ successes will reveal that Morris was in the arcology during



the shutdown. The memories, however, will come in nightmarish fragments providing little useful or concrete information.

Morris will immediately realize he is being probed and will politely ask the runners to cease the spell if they ever wish to work in the shadows again. The gamemaster should strongly emphasize the reputation hit a team can take for mind probing a Johnson. If the players foolishly insist on continuing the spell, Morris will walk out of the meet and the adventure will be over. At the gamemaster's discretion, if Morris truly believes his service to Deus has been compromised, his "programming" will take over. He will draw a pistol and blow his brains all over the meeting room, allowing the runners to mind probe to their hearts' content. This will also end the adventure, but the runners may have an interesting time talking their way out of the Palace of China.

Assensing: Morris has light cyberware (a datajack and some headware memory). He has no magical ability, and his aura should reflect a calm, businesslike manner.

The events leading to the blackout are being set up by several different fixers and Johnsons, none of whom know the big picture. As a result, Morris doesn't know what Deus' plan is apart from his rather small role. Even if he is interrogated, he has no vital information to give away.

The Chip

The chip Morris provides is a standard optical datachip, containing one text file and one utility program. The text file can be read by anyone with a datajack, telecom, pocket secretary, or the like. Details of the files contained on the chip are located in the *Legwork* section of this adventure, on p. 30.

PUSHING THE ENVELOPE

There isn't much to push in this scenario, but if your players have itchy trigger fingers and need to get it out of their system before going on a stealthy, non-violent run, you can have them caught in a Mafia vs. Yakuza crossfire on their way to or from the Palace of China. Another option could involve a tussle outside the Palace with an irate troll from the Sons of Sauron who has to wait in line to get into the Palace while the "privileged" runners waltz up to the front door and walk right in. The troll could start the fracas either before the runners enter or after they leave. Just try not to wound anyone too badly, since the runners will be on a tight schedule.

DEBUGGING

Unless they go out of their way to make nuisances of themselves, not much can go wrong in this scenario. Morris wants to pay them for a fairly simple run, and is experienced enough not to be flustered by the macho bulldrek runners sometimes pull.

If, for whatever reason, the runners decide not to take the run, this adventure is over. However, other runners will be found for the job and the blackout described in the *Aftershock* segue (p. 33) will still strike Seattle. The gamemaster will still be able to run the remainder of the *Brainscan* campaign if the runners opt to back out of this adventure.

RISING POWER

WHAT'S UP, CHUMMER?

This scenario covers the runners' visit to the Gaeatronics power substation in Tacoma. The facility normally has no guards and only light security, so the runners' job should be fairly easy. The only problem will come from the Little League baseball game concluding on the field adjacent to the substation. With some inventive role-playing, the runners should be able to avoid a major incident. If they are not careful, however, their cover will be blown and the situation can escalate quickly.

Once inside, the characters will simply have to find the appropriate computer system, load the executable file, and make their escape. This run should be easy, which may make the runners nervous as they wait for the other shoe to drop.

TELL IT TO THEM STRAIGHT

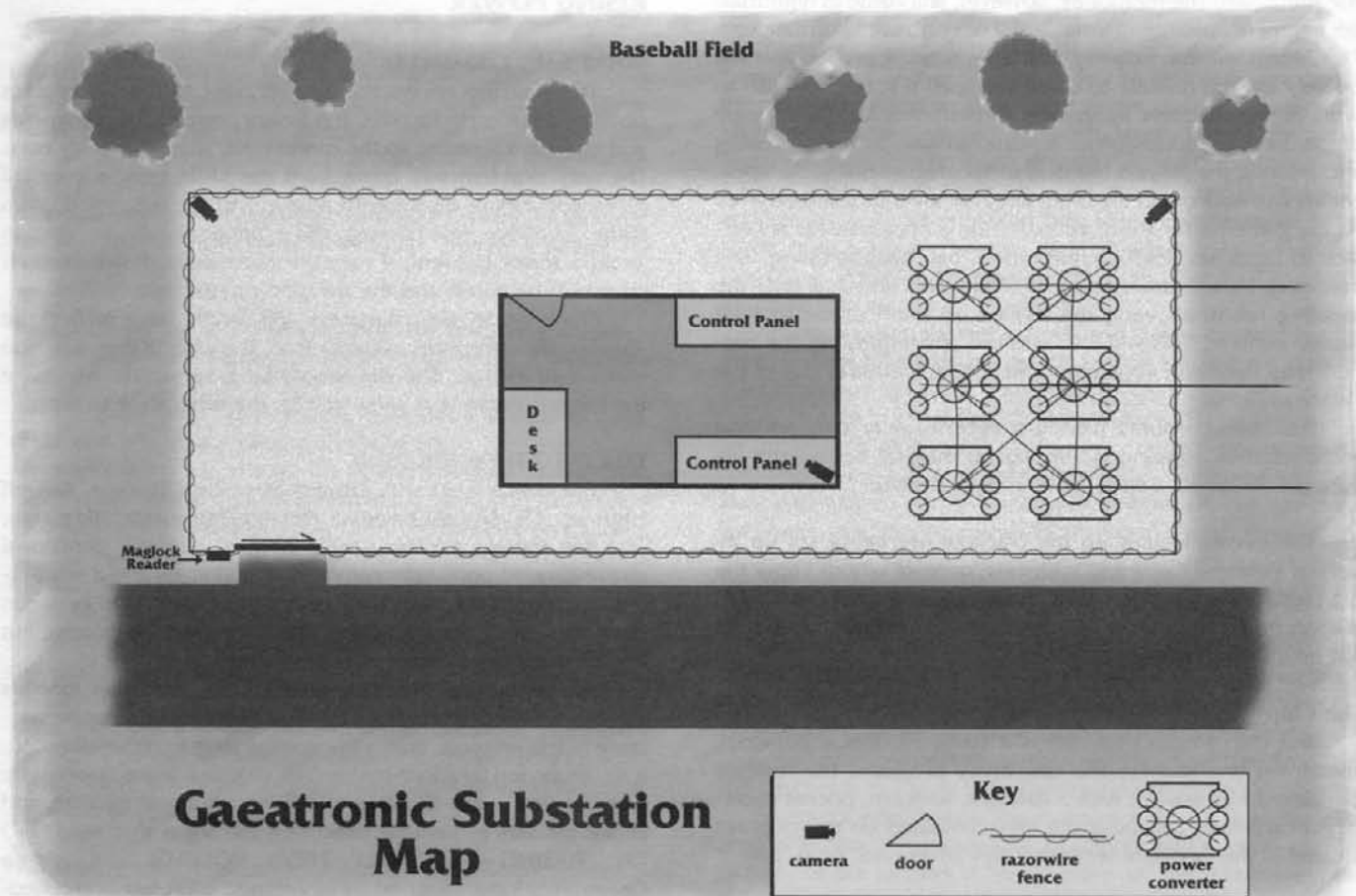
The power station is located in eastern Tacoma, just off Highway 18. As you navigate through the surrounding area, you see mostly middle-income homes with the occasional above-ground pool, light commercial buildings, and a smattering of trailer parks, with long stretches of open land between them. Definitely not high-class, like some parts of Tacoma, but it's still a drekload better than the Barrens.

You finally find the place on a curving road that extends along a wooded ridge. It's a small, windowless, off-white concrete block, no more than a few meters long in either direction. It's surrounded by a four-meter-high chainlink fence tipped with rusty barbed wire. Clusters of tall weeds twist through and choke the fence, partially obscuring the signs that read "NO TRESPASSING—EXTREMELY HIGH VOLTAGE." A single Gaeatronics logo, attached by jury-rigged wire, hangs crookedly on the maglocked entry gate. The words "TREE HUGGING HYPOCRITES" are spray painted in black over the logo.

Power lines crisscross above the station and run off into the distance toward mammoth metal structures that, if you squint your eyes, morph into giant skeletons. Transformers fill one side of the fenced-in area, and you can literally feel the electricity in the air. The whole site sits on a foot-thick concrete slab, extending out past the fence by about a meter. The rest of the lot is overgrown with grass and weeds, and littered with scattered garbage—the remnants of teenage high jinks and make-out sessions. Light woods extend off to either side of the building, and an abandoned strip mall sits across the street. The land slopes away behind the concrete box, eventually leveling out in a large, grassy field with a baseball diamond. A Little League game is being waged under the lights. Parents' cheers and children's taunts mix with the sounds of the game—the ball slapping into leather and the occasional ping of the aluminum bat sending the ball for a ride. Other than the game, the place seems pretty quiet and deserted. Should be no problem to slip in and out without a scratch and collect the cash. An easy night at the office.

Once the runners are inside the substation fence, read the following aloud:

Several years' worth of tire tracks on the faded concrete mark a route around the building to the single door at the back.



It's a standard-looking fire door, painted a dull brown and decorated with a faded, chipped rendition of the Gaeatronics logo. Next to the building are a dozen or so tall transformers, all liberally decorated with more "EXTREMELY HIGH VOLTAGE" signs. You can hear them humming, and feel a slight charge in the air as you get closer. They seem to be generating a little heat, as well. Time to get the job done and get out of here.

When the runners are about to break into the substation, read the following aloud:

You hear a quick thud behind you, followed by a crackling roll and some rustling through the weeds on the other side of the fence. A child's voice calls out "Hey up there! Can I get a little help?"

When the runners get inside the substation building itself, read the following aloud:

The inside of the building is just as dull as the outside. A cheap particleboard desk holds a grimy old cyberterminal, and a duct-taped office chair sits in front of it. The rest of the room is occupied by two massive banks of dials, readouts and gauges which don't make any sense to you at all. All the lights on the panels are green, though, which you assume is a good thing.

HOOKS

This part of Tacoma has an almost rural feel. The quiet and isolation may unnerve runners who are accustomed to the big-city bustle of downtown or the gritty reality of the Barrens. The substation itself feels abandoned and run-down, which adds to the sense of isolation. Other than an occasional car driving by or the enthusiastic yells of parents watching the baseball game, the only significant sounds come from the runners and the crickets. There is no cover to hide behind when breaking into the facility. When the boy arrives to retrieve the baseball, the runners should really have the feeling they have been caught and should feel desperate to alleviate the situation as peacefully as possible.

BEHIND THE SCENES

The substation itself is as deserted as it appears. A Gaeatronics technician visits the building for half an hour each day, doing basic maintenance, checking power readings, and so forth. Other than that, no one has any reason to enter the facility.

The ballgame on the nearby field is the championship for the 11- to 12-year-old division of the local Little League and is well-attended by the small community. Approximately 75 people are attending the game, including an off-duty Lone Star



officer watching his boy pitch. The game will run to approximately 11:30 p.m. The cheers will be louder as the game goes on. The game is very close, with either team able to win it.

When the runners are on the verge of entering the facility, an eight-year-old named Tommy scurries to the fence to retrieve a foul ball which lies at the runners' feet. He was watching his brother play in the game and was enjoying a snow cone, which is melting all over his hand and dripping onto his shoes. He's a tough little human child, wise beyond his years, and not intimidated by adults. However, if the runners have their weapons drawn, Tommy will bolt for the field immediately, screaming about "bad guys" and "big guns." The parents will be alerted and the off-duty officer will put in a call for backup. Lone Star will arrive on the scene in 2D6 minutes, with 1D3 patrol cars, two officers per car. They will be ready to shoot first and ask questions later. This would definitely constitute "leaving a trace" as far as Morris is concerned. If the runners play it cool with Tommy and keep everything under control, giving him the ball back without a scene, he'll forget they were even there by the time he takes his next lick off the snow cone.

The small strip mall across the street is deserted. There probably hasn't been a store in operation for months. Cars drive by the substation every minute or two on their way to the more active parts of town, although there will be fewer cars after dark. Lone Star gives this area a B security rating (see p. 110, *New Seattle*).

The map of the Gaeatronics substation (p. 20) shows the facility's basic layout. The fence is not electrified (the warning signs refer to the voltage of the electrical systems inside), but it is sturdy. Obviously, the fence will not stop bullets or other projectiles, but it has a Barrier rating of 6 for any attempts to break through it. Cameras mounted on two of the four corners of the fence sweep slowly across the substation grounds, and another fixed camera is mounted inside the substation building itself. These cameras are not normally monitored, but the video feed is recorded and stored on the computer system for later review. It takes one minute for the camera to complete a one-way arc.

Outside the gate is a maglock card-reader mounted on a two-meter-high steel pipe. This allows the technician to open the gate without leaving his van, and also makes it harder for any punk kids to damage the card-reader. The lock itself is Rating 5, and has a Rating 2 anti-tampering system (p. 235, *SR3*). Once the lock is defeated, either at the reader or at the gate itself, the gate swings open automatically, pauses for 15 seconds, and begins closing again. The door into the substation building is guarded by a card-reader maglock, Rating 3.

The substation's computer system is small, simple and lightly guarded, and should present little challenge for a decker with even minimal experience. A decker will need to make a Logon to Host test to get into the system, a Locate Slave test to find the Power Monitoring subsystem, and an Upload Data test to actually deliver the payload. The runners may also wish to do another Locate Slave test to determine which system controls the security cameras on the fence, and possibly an Edit File test to delete any incriminating evidence of their presence.

Overall, the system is rated Green-5/9/9/10/8/10 and has the following security sheaf:

TRIGGER STEP

- 4
- 9
- 13
- 17
- 21
- 25

EVENT

- Probe-4
- Probe-6
- Crippler (Marker)-6
- Passive Alert, Killer-6
- Tar Pit-6
- Active Alert, Killer-8

If the system reaches Passive Alert status, or either maglock defeats a tampering attempt, an automated call will be placed to the local Lone Star precinct asking them to check out the facility. A decker can detect these calls with a successful Tap Commcall test, and prevent them from reaching Lone Star with a successful Make Commcall test.

The initial response will consist of a two-man Lone Star patrol driving by the facility. The patrol will arrive roughly D6 minutes after the alert is sent, but will not stop or enter the facility unless they notice something amiss while driving slowly by. If an Active Alert is sent, the patrol will arrive in 1D6 ÷ 2 minutes, and will get out of the car and walk around the outside of the fence looking for signs of trouble. An Active Alert will also result in an astrally projecting Lone Star mage and/or a spotter drone reporting to the scene to investigate.

Tommy

As far as eight-year-olds go, Tommy is pretty tough. He's got the potential to be a mean-spirited toady to a bigger kid in the near future.

B	Q	S	C	I	W	E	M	R
2	4	2	3	3	3	6	—	3

INIT: 3 + 1D6

Dice Pools: Combat 5

Karma Pool/Professional Rating: 1/1

Race: Human

Active Skills: Athletics 3, Stealth 3, Throwing Weapons 2 (Rocks 3), Unarmed Combat 2 (Biting 3)

Knowledge Skills: Baseball 3, Candy 5, Comic Books 3

Martial Arts: Brawling 2

Lone Star Patrol Officers (2)

These are just your everyday beat cops, trying to make it to the end of their shift but still hoping to catch the bad guys. They will be energetic in questioning any suspicious characters, but will not hesitate to call in backup if they even suspect things might turn ugly.

B	Q	S	C	I	W	E	M	R
4	4	4	2	3	4	4.95	—	3

INIT: 3 + 1D6

Dice Pools: Combat 5

Karma Pool/Professional Rating: 1/2

Race: Human

Active Skills: Car 3, Clubs 3 (Stun Baton 5), Etiquette 2 (Corporate 3, Street 4), Pistols 3 (Ruger Thunderbolt 5), Shotgun 3, Unarmed Combat 4

Knowledge Skills: Police Procedures 5, Seattle Law 4



Martial Arts: Brawling 4 (Herding, Vicious Blow)
Weapons: Ruger Thunderbolt [HP, BF, 12S, 12 (c) w/2 extra clips (one flechette, one gel), laser sight]
 Range (TN): 0-5 (3), 6-20 (4), 21-40 (5), 41-60 (8)
 Fichetti Security 500 [LP, SA, 6L, 12 (c) w/2 extra clips (one flechette, one gel)]
 Range (TN): 0-5 (4), 6-15 (5), 16-30 (6), 31-50 (9)
 Stun Baton [6S Stun, +1 Reach]
Armor [5/5]: Armor vest with plates [4/3], helmet [+1/+2]
Cyberware: Commlink, Radio
Gear: Flashlight, manacles and plasteel restraints

CHRYSLER-NISSAN PATROL-ONE

Handling	Speed	Accel	Body	Armor	Sig
4/8	180	10	3	2	2
Autonav	Pilot	Sensor	Cargo	Load	
3	—	0	11	35	

Seating: 2 bucket + 3 bench
Entry Points: 2 + 2 + 1 trunk
Fuel: Gasoline (60 liters)
Economy: 7.2 km/liter
Other Features: Electronics port (with radio), enviroseal (gas), 2 pintle mounts, thermal baffles (1), turbocharging (2). The patrol car also contains a portable computer (200 Mp) and a medkit containing four of each type of slap patch: antidote (2), stimulant (2), tranq (2) and trauma. In the trunk are two Mossberg shotguns and two sets of medium security armor.
 Mossberg CMTD (Shotgun, SA/BF, 9S, 8 (c) w/laser sight)
 Range (TN): 0-10 (2), 11-20 (3), 21-50 (4), 51-100 (7)

PUSHING THE ENVELOPE

As written, this is not a difficult run. The best way to increase the difficulty of this mission is to add more chances for the runners to be detected, rather than throwing unnecessary combat at them. Give your players a chance to use their brains to avoid discovery, rather than making them fight their way out of the scenario. The runners can encounter any number of people or things that will threaten them with discovery, from a pair of teenagers vandalizing the substation to an encounter with the drunk and depressed Gaeatronics employee who checks up on the facility. You can also increase the ratings of the maglocks leading to the target system, or the rating of the Matrix host itself.

DEBUGGING

The main thing that can go wrong in this scenario is for the runners to get mixed up with Lone Star. A firefight, especially one resulting in a cop being wounded or killed, will make the runners prime targets for the Star, and make it difficult for them to do anything but lay low for several weeks. If such a fight does break out, you may want to bring in a Lone Star helicopter or other heavy hardware to encourage the players to break and run before they do something irrevocable. If they stay and fight even after Lone Star brings in the big guns, they deserve what they get.

If the runners are questioned by the Star or spotted by the security cameras, there will not be any immediate conse-

quences, unless Lone Star decides to arrest them. However, Mr. Johnson will learn of the traces the runners left behind, and they will not get their full fee (as described in *Conversation Piece*).

If the runners attempt anything rash with Tommy, i.e. kidnapping, murder and so on, they will really be in big trouble. In order to avoid knee-jerk reactions from the runners with the boy, play up his confidence and cockiness in dealing with adults. He is not stupid and will not fall for much. If the runners try to hop the fence and grab Tommy, he wisely takes off. If they pull weapons, he disappears into the overgrowth yelling before they can even pull their triggers. Most importantly, make the runners feel they can deal with Tommy rationally and still get the job done without a hitch.

CONVERSATION PIECE

WHAT'S UP, CHUMMER?

This is a brief, transitional scenario in which the players contact Mr. Johnson (Morris) to report their success (or lack thereof) on the first run. He informs them that another runner team has fragged up their part of the operation, and offers the runners a sizable bonus if they're willing to take on a second run right away.

TELL IT TO THEM STRAIGHT

Mission accomplished. You're in the clear now, and it's time to contact Mr. Johnson and finish settling your accounts. When you call the telecom number he gave you, there are several pops and clicks as the call is rerouted. After a few rings, a familiar voice says, "Go ahead."

Once the runners have given their report, read the following aloud:

There's a pause on the other end of the phone, and then the Johnson speaks again. "How would you like to earn a bonus tonight? As I believe I mentioned, your operation was part of a larger series of events, all coordinated to take place tonight. The group responsible for another part of the operation has failed miserably, and I need someone more competent to complete the job they left unfinished. It's a similar operation, though you may need to deal with some additional security as a result of the first team's botch. I need this job completed before sunup, which doesn't leave much time. Are you interested?"

If the runners agree to the Council Island run, read the following aloud:

"Excellent. I'm transmitting a file on your target now. Look it over on your way to 4529 S. Alaska St. at 54th, and I'll fill in any last-minute details when you arrive. Get here as soon as you can. Time is of the essence." Then his voice is replaced by the quiet white noise of a file being transferred to your phone.

Once the runners arrive at the downtown boathouse, read the following aloud:

The address belongs to a large boathouse on the edge of Lake Washington. A faded sign reading "Romaine Marina" is



tacked onto a two-story corrugated metal building, letting you know where you are. As you arrive, the front gate is pulled open by a burly human in a suit that screams “corp bodyguard.” A second guard, who could be the first one’s twin, gestures for you to enter the boathouse.

Inside, two more bodyguards stand near a dark blue Mitsubishi Nightsky. They look each of you over as you enter, a quick assessment of your weapons and brawn, then return their eyes to the boathouse entrance. A pair of non-reflective gray motorboats bob gently up and down in the water, ready to head out onto the lake as soon as the garage-style doors in front of them are opened. Mr. Johnson stands on the dock between the boats, speaking quietly into his phone in Japanese while examining some data on his portable computer. When he sees you, he murmurs a good-by, hangs up the phone and closes the computer.

“Thank you for your punctuality,” he says. “We don’t have much time, so I’ll get right to the point. I have the rest of your payment right here.” He indicates a row of certified credsticks lined up on a workbench. “You can take it now, or collect it with the rest after finishing this second operation. The rules of engagement for this mission are the same as the last—get in, plant the file, and get out without being detected. The pay is double, 8,000¥ per runner, as long as you aren’t detected, or only 2,000¥ apiece if you are.”

“Your target is a personal computer which is currently located in Bungalow 5 of the Council Island Inn, on the northwestern tip of the island. The owner of the computer should be out of his suite all night, and he shouldn’t have any security beyond the hotel’s own. The person’s identity is of no concern. There are two files on the chip. The first one is the payload, which needs to be copied into the computer’s root directory and then executed. The second file contains the address and some information about the hotel. When finished, call me at the number on the card and we’ll make arrangements for you to collect the rest of your fee. You must complete the mission before sunrise, when the festival ends and the computer’s owner comes back to his room. Are there any questions?”

HOOKS

Now that the runners have finished their first run, they will undoubtedly be looking forward to contacting Mr. Johnson and collecting their payment. If they’re experienced in the ways of the *Shadowrun* universe, they will also be expecting a twist in the tale at this point. The paranoia may be starting to build. Feel free to mess with them a little before revealing the good news.

BEHIND THE SCENES

The datafiles Morris sends to the runners are described in the *Legwork* section of this adventure (p. 31), and are identical to the ones given to the runners during the initial meet. He will not send the actual payload files over the phone, but will give them to the runners on a chip.

The previous team was stopped at the Council Island border, got nervous, and attempted to blast their way out of trouble. Definitely not the subtlest of approaches. The entire team was killed or captured except for their leader, decker

Ace Gonriled. Ace called Morris for backup when everything went bad, and Morris told him to cut his losses and get out of there. Morris assumes Ace left the island and returned to the Seattle sprawl.

Morris will tell the characters everything he knows about the botched run. He highly recommends they approach the island by water, as the border security has probably been bolstered, and they may have closed off the entry point entirely.

Morris will offer the runners 8,000¥ apiece for the run with the same stipulations about being detected. He pays each runner 1,000¥ up front, plus the balance of their fees from the previous mission. The waiting boats are for the runners’ use, though Morris will politely inform them that they will have to pay for repair or replacement if the boats are damaged or destroyed. This part of the deal is non-negotiable.

The boats are Aztechnology Nightrunners (see p. 26 for the stats).

The runners should, however, be able to press for more money if they are feeling greedy. It should be clear Morris is in somewhat of a bind, and shrewd runners will probably take advantage of the situation. If the runners did not take any Shiawase stock as payment earlier, Morris will offer the stock first if the runners try to haggle. If the stock has already been offered, or the runners demand even more money, have the negotiating runner make an opposed Negotiation Test against Morris, who has an Intelligence of 6. Each net success the runner gets will earn them an additional 1,000¥ apiece or 100¥ in additional stock. Individual characters can decide what they wish to take or can take a sum based on the team as a whole. Morris will make a phone call to confirm this amount before agreeing to it. The conversation is brief and conducted in hushed Japanese. (He is actually checking with his superior in Deus’ organization, but the players will probably conclude he is talking to his boss at Shiawase.)

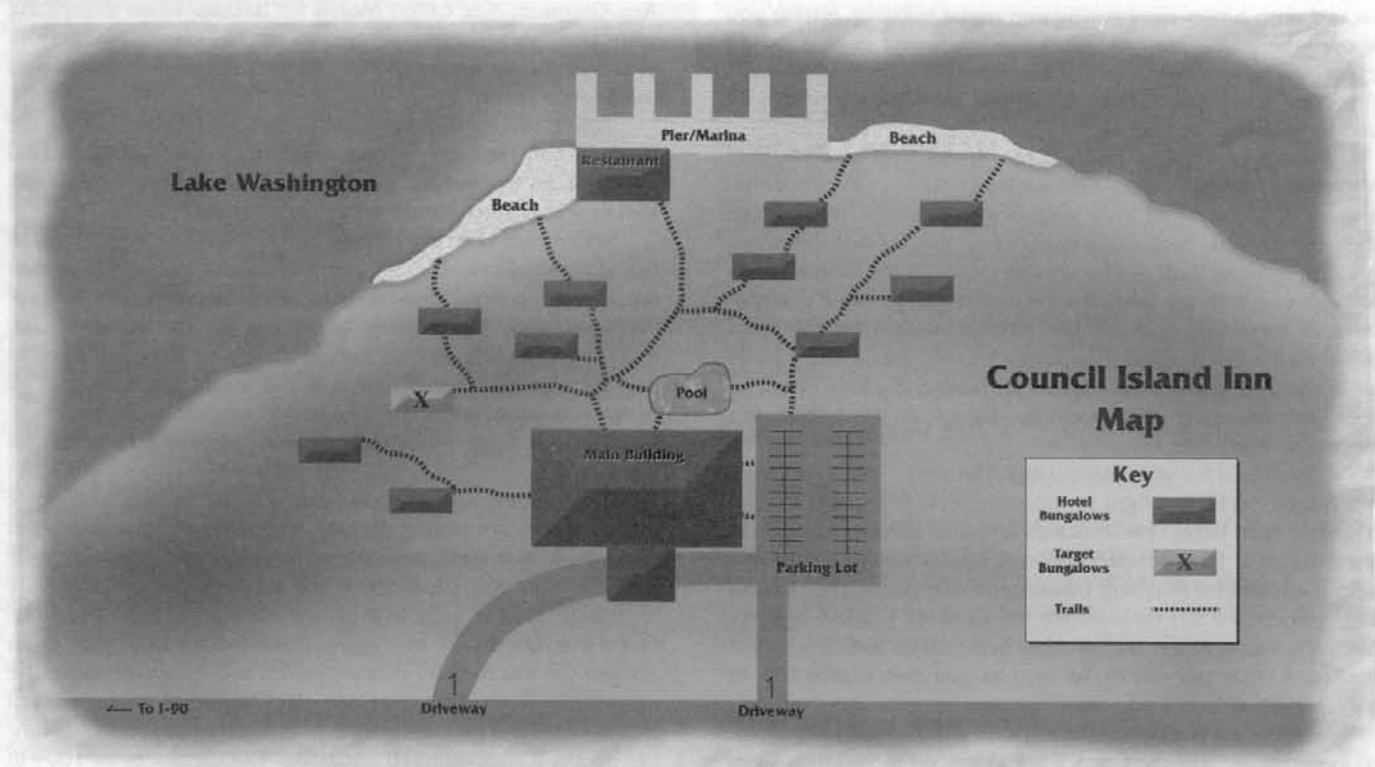
Morris’ bodyguards have been hired for the night from a freelance security company, and they don’t know anything about him or his plans. They will guard him well and will not engage the runners in conversation. If necessary, use the statistics for the Street Samurai template (p. 76, SR3) for the bodyguards.

PUSHING THE ENVELOPE

If the runners are really tired of sneaking and creeping around, you can add an unrelated combat encounter to this adventure by having a go-gang attack the runners on their way to or from Tacoma. It’s unrelated, and will only get the players shot up, but you may find it desirable if some of the more aggressive characters need to blow off steam.

DEBUGGING

The biggest issue the gamemaster will have to deal with in this straightforward meet is the runners’ refusal to take the job. If the runners do not initially agree to the second run, they will still need to meet Morris at the boathouse to pick up their money. He will use this second meeting to pressure the runners once more, promising that his employer will think highly of the group if they do him this favor. If they still reject his offer, Morris will shrug and pay them what he owes them. He will



find someone else to finish the job, and the blackout will still take place. Proceed to *Picking Up the Pieces*, p. 30.

SLEAZE FACTOR

WHAT'S UP, CHUMMER?

In this scenario, the runners visit the exclusive Council Island Inn on the shores of beautiful Lake Washington. Their target is a portable computer located in the luxury bungalow of a visiting Gaetronics executive. The executive, and many of the Inn's other guests, will be attending the island's annual Qatuwas Festival, a major tribal event which begins at sundown and ends at sunup.

The previous team was driven off in a violent firefight at a security checkpoint where I-90 reaches the island. This will serve as an additional distraction and could make the players' job easier if they use it wisely.

However, when the runners finally reach the target bungalow, they will walk in on Ace Gonriled, the angst-ridden ork decker who led the first team. He is attempting to remedy the botched run by delivering the payload, despite the earlier disaster. His reputation, and, of course, a lot of nuyen are at stake. He will not be pleased by the interference of a rival team.

TELL IT TO THEM STRAIGHT

Thanks to the light breeze blowing across Lake Washington, the water is a little choppy as you move towards Council Island. You see a lot of other boats clustered around

the northeastern tip of the island, where the giant bonfire of the Qatuwas Festival lights up the sky, but you have this part of the lake pretty much to yourselves. Other than the bonfire, only scattered lights dot the Council Island coastline. Nothing but a long, flat expanse of black water stretches out to the distant lights of the Sprawl back on the mainland.

As you come within sight of the Council Island Inn docks, you see about half a dozen boats moored for the night, from mini-speedboats to 15-meter sport cruisers. The low silhouettes of the hotel's outlying bungalows begin to take shape. No guards are visible at the moment. Guess it's time to pull ashore and start paying the bills.

Off in the darkness on the other side of the hotel, a cluster of blue and red flashing lights speed westward on I-90. Must be where the guards have headed. Seems all too easy.

If the runners approach Council Island on the highway, read the following aloud:

The traffic is sparse but steady on I-90 tonight, as you leave the mainland behind and cruise across Lake Washington towards Council Island. The massive bonfire of the Qatuwas festival blazes ahead, and there are plenty of signs telling visitors what exits to take and which way to go in order to get to the festival. From the size of the bonfire, it looks like quite a party, too. It's almost a shame you have business to conduct instead.

As you approach the first of the two Council Island exits, the impressive concrete pillboxes sitting at the base of the off-ramp come into sight from around the trees, ready to keep unwanted visitors off the Island. Suddenly, you don't feel quite as welcome.

A few dozen cars are backed up at the gate, bumper to bumper. The traffic jam reaches back from the off-ramp and onto I-90 itself. As you slow down, you can see why. The smoking wreck of a passenger van is blocking the gate, and a large number of well-armed security guards are establishing a perimeter around it as an ambulance pulls up to a stop behind the gate. Must be the remains of the frag-up team.

Once the runners arrive at the Inn, read the following aloud:

The Inn is five stories high, and while its size isn't impressive to anyone who's stood at the base of the Renraku Arcology, the architecture is spectacular. The main building is a rectangle constructed with massive logs, each covered with beautiful, detailed carvings in the Salish style. The lightly sloped roof is covered with fresh pine boughs, making the whole building look like a giant version of a centuries-old forest cabin. But you're willing to bet the wooden beams and fragile roof are built over a reinforced steel infrastructure studded with alarm systems and defense mechanisms. *Nothing* in the Sprawl looks this pretty for long unless it can protect itself.

In front of the hotel a long, curving driveway leads to the covered main entrance, complete with a massive granite fountain shaped like a rearing grizzly bear. There's a large swimming pool in back, near the paths leading to the hotel's private marina, and the parking lot (valet, of course) is across the street, discreetly screened by a line of pine trees. A porch wraps around two sides of the hotel, and quaint little white-pebbled paths lead off from the side porch to a half-dozen outlying bungalows. One of them holds your target.

HOOKS

As in the *Rising Power* scenario (p. 19), there are few potential enemies in the runners' immediate vicinity. However, there are a large number of people close enough to worry about, including Council Island's own formidable security, so the players should still feel the constant threat of discovery. Periodic cheers from the Qatuwas festival echo across the lake, and traffic on Interstate 90 is only a few hundred meters away.

Subtly emphasize the organic, tribal nature of the hotel and its surroundings. Runners who are used to infiltrating chrome-and-glass skyscrapers or concrete warehouses may be uncomfortable moving around the carved wood and natural landscaping of the island's buildings.

Remember, Council Island is not UCAS territory, but belongs to the Salish-Shidhe Council. The runners are not only crossing a national border when they reach the island, they're also performing illegal activity in a diplomatic locale. The security staff members aren't standard police grunts, they're members of the Salish-Shidhe army.

BEHIND THE SCENES

The first problem the runners will have to contend with is getting onto the island itself. They will probably approach by boat, but those wary of the water may still opt to take the land route even though Morris strongly advised against it. Each offers its own distinct challenges.

If By Sea

Runners approaching Council Island by crossing Lake Washington will have an easier time, since the island's defense forces have a larger perimeter to cover. Runners who play it smart should be able to arrive on shore without any trouble. Three-man teams are patrolling the waters around Council Island in Surfstar Marine Seacop patrol boats (see p. 26 for stats), concentrating on the area around Burbank Park, where the Qatuwas Festival is being held. The park is about a kilometer east of the Council Island Inn, so the majority of the patrols should be out of the runners' way.

If the runners are approaching the island with their lights on, making no attempt to mask their presence, a patrol will notice them and cruise by to check them out. If the runners look like they are just out to celebrate the festival with a late-night cruise, the patrol will simply wave and move on. Any visible weaponry, obvious combat cyberware or suspicious behavior by the runners will likely result in the patrol asking to come aboard. One crewman will remain on board the patrol's Seacop and radio for backup, while the other two board the offending vessel and perform a cursory search. They will ask to see the runners' identification, and will check it with a portable Rating 3 credstick reader. If they discover anything suspicious about the runners or the contents of their boat, they will attempt to stall the runners until backup arrives, then arrest them. If everything checks out, the runners will be sent on their way, but at least one patrol boat will shadow them from a distance for an hour or so, watching through binoculars.

If the runners are turning their running lights off and trying to avoid the patrols, make a Perception (8) test for the patrol officers (see p. 27 for their stats), modified by any extra factors the characters are using to conceal themselves (nature spirit powers, invisibility, etc.). Seacop patrol boats do not have radar. The marine patrols rely on binoculars to spot incoming vessels. If the patrol gets at least one success, they will move closer and look again. If they get two or more successes, they will immediately radio for backup and move to intercept. Unless the characters can manufacture a convincing reason for why they are sailing around at night with their lights off, the patrol will attempt to arrest them as above.

If combat breaks out with a marine patrol, one member of the patrol will immediately attempt to radio for combat backup and fire off a flare. If he succeeds with either task, all the remaining patrol boats will begin to converge on their location. The first backup boat will arrive 1D6 Initiative passes after the call goes out. Another patrol boat will arrive each (1D6 ÷ 2) Initiative passes after the first. There are a total of six patrol boats on the lake. If a combat alert goes out, an astrally projecting Salish shaman will also arrive in (1D6 ÷ 2) Initiative passes to support the marine patrols.

If the characters are able to defeat the marine patrol before a radio alert or flare attracts attention to the combat, they should be home free. They will not be heard from shore unless fully automatic weapons or explosives are used. If they do not sink or otherwise hide the patrol boat, however, make a Perception (8) test for the marine patrol officers each hour to see if the vessel is discovered.

Aztechnology Nightrunner (Electric)

Handling	Speed	Accel	Body	Armor	Sig
3	45	5	3	0	5
Autonav	Pilot	Sensor	Cargo	Load	
3	—	0	14	250	

Seating: 2 bucket

Fuel: Methane, 250 bars/Electric, 150 PF

Economy: 1 km per bar/0.5 km per PF

Surfstar Marine Seacop

Handling	Speed	Accel	Body	Armor	Sig
3	90	7	3	1	3
Autonav	Pilot	Sensor	Cargo	Load	
2	—	0	10	45	

Seating: 1 bucket + 2 bench

Entry Points: 2 + 2

Fuel: Gasoline (100 liters)

Economy: 7 km/liter

Other Features: Electronics port (with radio), 2 firmpoints, spotlight. Each firmpoint carries a pintle-mounted Ingram Valiant LMG [LMG, BF/FA, 7S, RC -4, belted ammo (tracer)] The patrol boat also contains a flare gun and a medkit containing three trauma patches and three Tranq (4) patches.

guards will attempt to arrest the visitors, entering combat only if necessary. If the guards are refused in their request to search the vehicle, they will deny access to the island, keeping the main gate closed and routing the vehicle back onto the highway. If no search seems necessary, or a search is conducted and nothing suspicious is found, passengers will receive a short-term travel visa and the vehicle will be allowed onto Council Island.

Runners may choose to access the main part of the island by leaving the interstate somewhere other than the off-ramps. Both sides of the interstate are lined with two-meter high reinforced concrete barriers (Barrier Rating 24) designed to keep unwanted visitors from hopping the fence. Attempts to crash a vehicle through these railings will both damage the vehicle and attract the attention of the island's security forces, who will arrive in a mood to shoot first and ask questions later. Motion sensors are mounted on top of the barriers every ten meters. Characters climbing over the barriers must make an opposed Stealth test against the rating of the sensors (4) to avoid being detected. Failing this roll will result in the arrival of two Island security patrol cars within 1D6 minutes.

If By Land

The only land access to Council Island is via Interstate 90, which cuts across the island between downtown Seattle and Bellevue. There are two exits onto Council Island, one (West Council Drive) near the western edge of the island and one (Island Crest Way) near the eastern. Both entrances are heavily fortified and guarded, since the island has had a history of trouble with go-gangers and other miscreants. At the base of each off-ramp is a reinforced metal gate (Barrier Rating 12), with a concrete pillbox (Barrier Rating 24) on either side of the gate. The gate is equipped with retractable tire spikes, the pillboxes are mounted with medium machine guns, and the entire area is watched by surveillance cameras. At least six guards in light security armor, plus a mage or shaman, are on duty at any given time.

Any vehicle attempting to pass through the gates is stopped and given a cursory visual check. All passengers are questioned about their identity and the purpose for their visit. At the moment, the best answer is probably attendance of the Qatuwas festival. Passports and other credentials are checked with a Rating 5 credstick reader. If anything in the vehicle seems alarming (weapons, body armor, heavily cybered trolls with a bad attitude) or the interviewees say something that makes the guards suspicious, the passengers will be asked to exit the vehicle so it can be searched. Whether or not the visitors agree to the search, a shaman on duty with the guards will astrally project and examine the vehicle's contents and inhabitants from the astral plane. If the astral or physical search finds anything suspicious, or the passengers actively resist, the

If the runners' vehicle "breaks down" on the interstate, a security patrol car labeled "Council Island Courtesy Patrol" will pull up behind them 2D6 minutes later. One of the armed "courtesy officers" will keep a close eye on the runners while the other checks the vehicle over, hoping to repair it so the visitors can get safely on their way. If the damage cannot be easily repaired, the officers will arrange to have the vehicle towed to a garage of the characters' choice on the mainland, not on Council Island.

When the runners approach the West Council Drive border station, it will be completely closed off while the attack of the first team is investigated. The second border station is handling all traffic and will be extremely busy. The border guards will be more stringent than usual due to the recent "terrorist" activity. Subtract -1 from the guards' target numbers to detect any weaponry or other suspicious equipment the runners are carrying across the border.

Once the runners get past the border security, getting to the hotel should be easy. Traffic is heavy on the northeastern side of the island, where the festival is being held, but light elsewhere.

Council Island Gate Guards (6)

These are not police officers, but members of the Salish-Shidhe Council Armed Forces. While not elite troops, they are well-trained and well-equipped, and take their jobs very seriously. Generally, four of the troopers stand outside at the gate, while one remains in each of the pillboxes, ready to man the MMG if needed.

B **Q** **S** **C** **I** **W** **E** **M** **R**
4 4 4 2 4 5 6 — 4

INIT: 4 + 1D6

Dice Pools: Combat 7 (5 with armor)

Karma Pool/Professional Rating: 1/3

Race: Human

Active Skills: Etiquette 2 (Tribal 3), Heavy Weapons 2 (Ultimax MMG 4), Interrogation 3, Pistols 3, Submachine Guns 5, Unarmed Combat 4

Knowledge Skills: Salish-Shidhe Law 3, Seattle Law 2, Security Procedures 4

Martial Arts: Wildcat 4 (Sweep, Zoning)

Weapons: Heckler & Koch HK227 [SMG, SA/BF/FA, 7M, RC (1), 28 (c) with 4 extra clips (2 regular, 2 gel), laser sight]

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

Ares Predator [HP, SA, 9M, 15 (c) with 2 extra clips (1 regular, 1 gel)]

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

Ultimax MMG [MMG, FA, 9S, RC (6), belted ammo (tracer), folding tripod]. Only one per pill box.

Range (TN): 0–80 (4), 81–250 (5), 251–750 (6), 751–800 (9)

Armor [7/6]: Light security armor [6/4] and helmet [+1/+2] w/transceiver (Rating 5) and thermographic vision

Gear: Plasteel restraints.

Council Island Shaman

The shaman is also a member of the Salish-Shidhe Council Armed Forces. He follows the path of Dog, and will defend the island and its inhabitants with the last breath in his body. He usually remains inside one of the pillboxes at the gate, ready to examine vehicles astrally or enter combat as required.

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

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

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

Karma Pool/Professional Rating: 2/3

Race: Elf

Active Skills: Aura Reading 4, Conjuring 6, Etiquette 2 (Tribal 4), Pistols 3, Sorcery 5, Unarmed Combat 3

Martial Arts: Brawling 3

Knowledge Skills: Magic Background 4, Salish-Shidhe Law 3, Seattle Law 2, Security Procedures 3

Totem: Dog, +2 dice for detection spells, field spirits and hearth spirits, must make Willpower (6) Test to change course of action

Spells: Analyze Truth 4, Catalog 3, Detect Guns 3, Net 4, Physical Barrier 5, Stunball 5, Stunbolt 5, Treat 4, Wreck Vehicle 5

Weapons: Ares Predator [HP, SA, 9M, 15(c)] with 2 extra clips (1 regular, 1 gel)]

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

Armor: Armor jacket [5/3]

Gear: City spirit on call (Force 5, 2 favors owed)

City Spirit

The land-based Council Island shaman also has a Force 5 city spirit “on standby,” and his first action in a combat situa-

tion will usually be to call forth the spirit. Depending on the situation, he will ask the spirit to use its Confusion power on the most dangerous-looking enemy or its Accident power on a fleeing vehicle. The sea-based Security Patrol (see p. 25) would not have this spirit on call.

B **Q** **S** **C** **I** **W** **E** **M** **R**
6 7 (x3) 3 5 5 5 5A 6

INIT: 16 + 1D6, Astral INIT: 25 + 1D6

Powers: Accident, Concealment, Confusion, Fear, Guard, Materialization, Search

Council Island Security Patrol

Though they are less heavily armed than the guards at the gate, these officers are military police. Their objective is to keep Council Island safe for its residents and visitors. Their forces are currently spread thin due to the extra demands of the Qatuwas Festival, but they are doing the best they can. There are normally two officers in each patrol car and three in each patrol boat.

The land-based guards drive a Chrysler-Nissan Patrol-One. The only difference between their version and the Lone Star's (see p. 310, *SR3*) is that they do not have a portable computer. Each patrol car or boat also contains one Remington 990 shotgun:

[Shotgun, SA, 8S, 8 (m) with 24 spare rounds (8 each of regular, shot and gel)]

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

B **Q** **S** **C** **I** **W** **E** **M** **R**
4 4 4 2 3 5 6 — 3

INIT: 3 + 1D6

Dice Pools: Combat 6

Karma Pool/Professional Rating: 1/2

Race: Human

Active Skills: Car 4 (Motorboat 4 for marine patrol officers), Etiquette 2 (Tribal 3), Pistols 5, Unarmed Combat 4

Knowledge Skills: Salish-Shidhe Law 3, Seattle Law 2, Security Procedures 3

Martial Arts: Brawling 4 (Herding, Vicious Blow)

Weapons: Ares Predator [HP, SA, 9M, 15 (c) with 2 extra clips (one regular, one gel), laser sight]

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

Armor: Armor vest with plates [4/3]

Gear: Flashlight, plasteel restraints, transceiver (Rating 5). Marine patrol officers also carry a set of binoculars with low-light and thermal vision.

The Council Island Inn

Whether the runners travel by land or by water, they should eventually arrive at the Council Island Inn itself. The map (p. 24) shows the hotel grounds' general layout. The main hotel building, located at the corner of Roanoke Way and West Council Drive, is a massive five-story wooden structure carved with exquisite examples of Salish art. The grounds are heavily forested to screen the guests from the intrusions of the outside world.

The security on the bungalows is designed to be discreet, yet effective. The front door of each bungalow is outlined by



decorative carvings that conceal a miniature video camera. While these cameras are mainly meant to let guests check out visitors before opening their doors, the video feed can also be monitored from the main building's security console. However, the security staff is rarely watching unless there have been recent signs of trouble. The inn is normally a pretty quiet retreat. Footage from the cameras is also recorded for later review.

The front door of each bungalow is secured with a Rating 6 cardreader maglock which has a Rating 2 anti-tampering system attached to it. The windows of the bungalows are also alarmed. If one is opened or broken, an audible alarm will go off in the bungalow and the main security console will be alerted. Each bungalow is also surrounded by a Rating 3 ward, and the hotel's security shaman will raise an alarm if the ward is attacked or breached.

Normally, two lightly-armed guards patrol the rear area of the hotel, traveling separately. Their route covers the pool and marina area as well as the bungalow paths. It takes each guard roughly ten minutes to complete a circuit. The guards are in regular contact with hotel security via headware radios, and if one is unable to report, other guards will investigate within a few minutes. Alarms from the maglock or the windows will result in a single guard arriving in 2D6 combat turns, and two more guards and a Force 5 wind spirit summoned by the security shaman will arrive 1D6 combat turns following the first arrival. If the runners are sighted on camera or in person, a group of six guards and the spirit will gather, but will take 3D6 combat turns to arrive. The island's security forces will also be alerted in the event of any kind of alarm as well, and two patrol cars will arrive on the scene in 2D6 minutes (roll separately for each car). In the event of unsilenced gunfire, explosions or combat magic, the runners will attract some very unwelcome attention—a full dozen hotel security guards, the staff security shaman, four or more patrol cars and/or boats, and an elite security team (use the statistics for the island gate guards, including the shaman).

The hotel's security system is not connected to the Matrix, but a decker can access the host directly from the hotel grounds. There are security terminals located at the marina, at the entrance to the parking lot, and at each entrance to the main hotel building (front, sides and rear). Each terminal is in a brightly lit area, and a decker attempting to use one without magical concealment or an effective distraction will almost certainly be noticed. Deckers can also access the system from the alarm panels within each bungalow once they get inside. The security system is rated Orange-7/14/12/12/13/13 and has the following security sheaf:

Trigger Step	Event
3	Probe-4
7	Probe-6
11	Passive Alert, Tar Baby-6
15	Killer-6
18	Blaster-6
22	Active Alert, Blaster-8

Once inside the target bungalow, the runners will encounter the greatest threat to their mission—the hulking ork decker Ace Gonriled. Ace is on edge when the runners arrive. He has lost his entire team and fears his reputation may take an irrecoverable hit if he does not complete the job. He is prepared to do whatever it takes to keep his rep intact, and he had no idea that a second team had been dispatched. When the runners arrive, Ace has already started the payload delivery process, clicking away at the computer on a small wood desk in the corner of the bungalow. The interruption halts his progress and the download will need to be re-initiated.

Ace will be too occupied with the task at hand to hear anything outside the bungalow except the most overt attempts at entry (smashing a window, kicking the door in and so on). However, once the bungalow has been breached, Ace will respond like a rabid, cornered dog.

Ace will respond in one of three ways to the runners' actions:

1. If the characters enter with guns drawn: Ace will fire on the first person through the door.

2. If the runners enter without guns drawn: Ace will whip out his Ceska Black Scorpion machine pistol equipped with a silencer and point it at the nearest runner, yelling "Put your fraggin' hands up and lay on the dreking floor! Quickly, or they'll have to carry you out in a spoon!" He will fire a shot at the lead runner if they don't immediately follow his orders.

3. If the characters try and make contact (via talking through the door or by magic): Ace will hide behind the bed, gun drawn, and wait for them to enter.

Once the initial contact is made, the action should be pure reaction. Ace will almost always have the drop on the runners initially. Intimidation or Negotiation Tests can occur after this first exchange. Ace is determined and knows what he wants. Remember, he is a shadowrunner and is wise to all the games and tactics. Use the Combat Decker Sample Character (p. 66, SR3) for Ace.

If the runners enter with guns blazing, Ace will make a dive for the other side of the queen-sized bed to grab some cover. He'll start unloading his ammo at them, and he won't stop until he runs out of bullets or dies. He will not negotiate with the runners until he is certain they are who they say they are, and it will be difficult to convince him. Even after everything has calmed down, Ace adamantly insists he has the right to complete the job and claim his payment. The runners will either have to submit to Ace's demands or take the job by force.

The target portable computer is plugged into the room's Matrix jack, but is not actively connected at the moment, so the runners cannot access it from outside the bungalow. A runner will need to make a Computer (8) roll to get past the computer's security, but can roll additional dice equal to the rating of any Deception program used for the test. Once inside the system, the runner must make a Computer (3) roll to plant and execute the payload file. A player who takes the time to search the system's hard drive may discover the executive's Gaeatronics host password by making another Computer (8) roll. This information can be worth up to

10,000¥ if sold quickly to the right party, or can be used directly by a decker (giving him +4 to his Detection Factor while decking a Gaeatronics host). However, once it is used (or in one week at the latest), the executive's passwords will be changed, nullifying the data's effectiveness and dropping its value to zero.

Council Island Inn Guards (2)

These are private security personnel employed by the Council Island Inn. Their job is make the hotel guests feel secure, which generally has more to do with looking impressive than with actually chasing off miscreants. The guards are tanned, healthy, handsome, and almost obnoxiously physically fit. They rarely encounter serious trouble, and don't expect much, but they do have the training to handle more dangerous encounters if they should happen. If trouble starts, their priorities are to call for backup and protect the inn's guests.

B **Q** **S** **C** **I** **W** **E** **M** **R**
5 4 5 4 4 5 4.45 — 4

INIT: 4 + 1D6 (2D6)

Dice Pools: Combat 6

Karma Pool/Professional Rating: 1/3

Race: Human

Active Skills: Athletics 5, Biotech 3, Etiquette 4, Leadership 3, Pistols 5, Unarmed Combat 5

Knowledge Skills: Boating 3, Hotel Policy 4, The Rich and Famous 4

Martial Arts: Tae Kwon Do (Herding, Sweep)

Weapons: Hammerli Model 610S [LP, SA, 6L, RC 1, 6 (c) w/2 extra clips]

Range (TN): 0–5 (4), 6–20 (5), 21–40 (6), 41–60 (9)
Defiance Super Shock [Taser, SA, 10S Stun, 4 (m), low-light scope]

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

Armor: Secure ultra-vest [3/2]

Cyberware: Boosted reflexes (1), low-light vision (retinal mod), radio, subvocal microphone

Gear: 2 gas grenades (neuro-stun VII), hotel master keycard (note that the main security office will be alerted if this card is used to enter any guest room or bungalow)

Council Island Inn Security Shaman

The shaman on duty is a security consultant on a long-term contract to the hotel. She knows the grounds and staff well. She follows the path of Goose, and is very protective of the hotel and its inhabitants. She usually stays in the security station inside the main building, and prefers to deal with trouble through astral projection or via spirits rather than physically entering combat herself.

If intruders are outside the main building, she will exit via the back door and summon a Lake spirit (moving to the marina) or a Wind spirit as needed.

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

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

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



Karma Pool/Professional Rating: 1/3

Race: Human

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

Knowledge Skills: Hotel Policy 3

Totem: Goose, +2 dice for detection spells and lake spirits, +1 dice for combat spells, +2 to magical TNs when not on Council Island

Spells: Astral Window 4, Clairvoyance 4, Light 4, Night Vision 3, Stunball 4, Stunbolt 5, Translate 3, Treat 4

Weapons: Ares Predator [HP, SA, 9M, 15 (c) w/2 extra clips (1 regular, 1 gel)]

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

Armor: Secure clothing [3/0]

Gear: Transceiver, hearth spirit on call (Force 5, 2 favors owed)

PUSHING THE ENVELOPE

As in *Rising Power*, the best way to make this scenario tougher is not through combat, but by making it harder for the runners to remain unnoticed. Tipsy guests wandering back to their bungalow after a night of partying will require runners to think on their feet to avoid being spotted, and may generate some fun roleplaying opportunities as well. More guards or a patrolling watcher spirit will also up the ante if you think the scenario needs a danger boost. For a real challenge, place the target suite on an upper floor of the main hotel building, which is much busier, and harder to infiltrate silently.

DEBUGGING

It isn't difficult for the players to get into a lot of trouble before they even reach the Inn in this scenario. Council Island is foreign territory, and while the Salish-Shidhe nation has a good relationship with Seattle, they take their security seriously. Runners who try to out-gun the border guards should be given a chance to come to their senses and back off. If they persist, let 'em have it with both barrels. If their explanations to the border guards aren't convincing, allow them to be turned away, but give them a chance to sneak back onto the island later (perhaps trying the water route if they first tried by land, or vice-versa). If they are willing to part with the nuyen, they can probably obtain forged travel documents that will get them onto the island, but they will have to pay through the nose to obtain forgeries quickly enough to meet their deadline.

Once they get to the Inn, careful players should do fairly well. If they are having a lot of problems with the security system, take pity on them and have Ace leave the door slightly ajar in his haste to complete the job.

Constantly reminding the runners of the importance of remaining silent should keep them from doing something stupid when Ace confronts them. Again, if they ignore your advice, they deserve everything Council Island can throw at them.

PICKING UP THE PIECES

IT'S A WRAP

Once the characters have finished both runs, Morris instructs them to meet back at the marina. He thanks the run-

ners for their efforts, gives them the remainder of their payment, and hints that his employer might have some more work for them in the future (unless they really botched one or both jobs). He then checks his watch, gets into his sedan with his bodyguards and drives off into the night. For the runners, however, the story is far from over.

If the runners keep Ace with them, he gets paid as well as the players. If the runners kill him, they will need to dispose of the body. If they leave it on Council Island, it will be discovered, and Morris will refuse to give the runners the higher payment for a quiet run.

Without realizing it, the runners have set a major disaster in motion. Seattle's primary power grid will fail later that night (or the following night, if the sun has already come up by the time the players and Morris part). Most of the city will be left without power. Proceed to the *Aftershock* segue for details on the blackout.

AWARDING KARMA

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

Surviving the Run:	1 point
Threat Level:	1 point
Staying undetected:	1 point for each mission

Add additional Karma rewards for any additional enemies you sent after the runners. However, do not give the runners bonus Karma for a difficult combat if they brought the fight on themselves (for instance, if they charge the barricade on Council Island or blast Ace for no reason). These are stealth missions, and runners who accomplish their goals through gratuitous bloodshed should not be rewarded for their behavior.

LEGWORK

The Chip (Tacoma Power Substation)

In addition to the payload file, the chip provided by Morris contains a small data file with some additional information for the runners. This file includes an exterior map of the power substation (see p. 20), the building's address, a basic overview of the station's computer system, and a self-destruct program that will render the chip useless once the payload has been delivered. It also states the payload file should be uploaded into the substation's Power Monitoring subsystem.

Anyone with the Computer skill who reads the technical portion of the document will be able to estimate the building's host as a fairly easy Green system, one which is described as having "minimal IC." The system's host is not normally on-line with the Matrix; it connects to another Gaeatronics host once per hour through a vanishing SAN, and stays connected only long enough to dump its performance data and receive any new instructions from the main host.

The utility file itself is somewhat more interesting. Any runner who analyzes the code on a computer or cyberdeck with at least 300 Mp of memory should make a Computer (5) test to

determine what the program does. The runner examining the code will need to spend roughly half an hour per success to get the full information, although he may spend less time to get a lower level of information. The information revealed is as follows:

Success Result

- All ones Looks like this program is intended to overwrite the substation's power-consumption records.
- 0 Yup, it's a utility program all right.
- 1 It seems to be gathering and storing a copy of the substation's power-consumption data ...
- 2 ... which it sends out to an anonymous Matrix node when the substation's computer attaches to the Matrix.
- 3 It also appears to be monitoring, but not recording, the incoming data from the main Gaeatronics host.
- 4+ If a certain string of characters appears in the incoming data, the utility program will erase itself and several other files in the power substation's computer system.

The Chip (Council Island Inn)

Like the Tacoma chip, this one contains the payload file and a data file with some additional information for the runners. This file includes an exterior map of the inn and its grounds, with the target bungalow marked (p. 24). It also contains instructions to destroy the chip once the payload has been delivered.

A runner using a computer or cyberdeck with at least 200 Mp of memory can make a Computer (6) test to determine what the payload program does. The runner examining the code will need to spend roughly 30 minutes per success to get the full information, although he may spend less time to get a lower level of information. The information revealed is as follows:

Success Result

- All ones It looks like some kind of glorified email program.
- 0 Wow! Look at all the pretty lines of program code!
- 1 It appears to be some kind of email virus that attaches a copy of itself to outgoing e-mails
- 2-3 It's targeted at a specific list of email addresses, all of them located on a Gaeatronics Matrix host.
- 4+ Once it reaches its destination, it's designed to start broadcasting data packets to another node.

Runners who get enough successes examining both programs will be able to determine that the data packets broadcast by the Council Island program are the same ones that will trigger the Tacoma program to delete itself.

COUNCIL ISLAND

Appropriate Contacts: Any Tribal Contacts (TN 3); Any Other Seattle Contacts (TN 5)

Success Result

- 0 Sorry, chummer, never been there.
- 1 Isn't there a big native festival going on there?

- 2 The whole island's Salish-Shidhe territory; I think they have an embassy out there or something.
- 3 Everybody on that island works at the embassy or the wildlife preserve, or is related to somebody who does. Practically the whole Island works for the S-S government ... or for Gaeatronics, which is basically the same thing.
- 4 Better have official business if you're going to the island. They guard the borders pretty fraggin' well, from what I've heard. Heavy automatic weapons, border guards in security armor, mages, the whole nine meters.
- 5+ The security is mostly geared against go-gangs, though. The highway access is heavily guarded, but approaching by water is a lot easier—if you have the right gear.

THE COUNCIL ISLAND INN

Appropriate Contacts: Any Tribal Contacts (TN 4); Any Other Seattle Contacts (TN 6)

Success Result

- 0 What's Council Island in? Lake Washington, stupid. Are you from out of town or something?
- 1 It's some kind of hotel on the north end of the island.
- 2 It's supposed to be very luxurious, but you really have to know somebody to get a room there.
- 3 This ain't the kind of hotel you can call up and reserve a room at, chummer. It's reserved for official visitors to Council Island: diplomats, high-ranking Gaeatronics executives, the ambassador's mistress ... you know.
- 4 No, I don't really know if he has a mistress. It was a joke, okay?
- 5+ It's pretty hard to get onto Council Island if you're not supposed to be there, so the hotel's own security is supposedly pretty light. They figure that if you're on the island already, you're probably not a scumbag, so they don't need to worry about you.

GAEATRONICS

Appropriate Contacts: Corporate Contacts (TN 4)

Success Result

- 0 They're not even a double-A corporation, so I really can't be bothered to keep track of their activities.
- 1 Gaeatronics is the largest corporation in the Salish-Shidhe Council, but still just barely qualifies as a multinational. They have a lot of power in Council lands, and a lot of influence in Seattle due to the city's position, but very little presence elsewhere.
- 2 Their primary business is in power generation, from both nuclear and alternative sources. They also do a lot of geological, ecological and atmospheric research, focusing on so-called "eco-friendly" policies.

- 3 Despite their small size, they're one of the most influential corporations in Seattle, since they provide most of the city's power and have a lot of influence over the Salish government.
- 4+ There are rumors that Gaeatronics and Shiawase Atomics have been engaging in an unusual amount of, let's say, "non-economic conflict" lately.

GAEATRONICS

Appropriate Contacts: Street Contacts (TN 4)

Success	Result
0	I've heard of them ... some kind of corp. Dunno much about them.
1	"Gaeatronics. Powering Seattle ... Naturally." That's the slogan, right? What do I win?
2	I know they have a big nuclear power plant in Salish-Shidhe territory that generates most of Seattle's power.
3	The Gaeatronics CEO and the chief of the Salish tribe are brothers, which gives Gaeatronics a hefty advantage in these parts.
4	Shiawase Atomics just can't compete with Gaeatronics locally, even though Shiawase's a much bigger corp ... and I hear that they're plenty mad about it.
5+	Supposedly, a lot of Gaeatronics' big executives are in town for this Qatuwas Festival.

THE QATUWAS FESTIVAL

Appropriate Contacts: Any Tribal Contacts (TN 4); Any Other Seattle Contacts (TN 6)

Success	Result
0	A party? Chummer, I am <i>there</i> . Name the place and time!
1	I've seen flyers around for it. It's going on for the next few nights, I think.
2	Yeah, it's a big festival out on Council Island, some kind of ceremonial Salish-Sidhe thing.
3	These days, it's basically a tribe-wide excuse to get drunk and party all night. It's also one of the few times non-natives get a chance to visit Council Island legitimately.
4+	The Seattle Qatuwas is just one of a series of festivals. They have them throughout the year all along the Pacific coast throughout Salish territory.

SHIAWASE

Appropriate Contacts: Corporate Contacts (TN 4)

Success	Result
0	Ah, the most low-profile of the AAA megacorporations. I really don't know much about them ... but neither does anyone else.
1	They're the leading biotechnology corporation in the world, but of course they have interests in almost every type of industry.
2	Shiawase has been increasing its influence in Seattle in recent years, taking over a number of corporations that were formerly Fuchi subsidiaries.
3	Their corporate intelligence department is reputed to be one of the best in the world.
4	There has been a lot of shadow activity lately between Gaeatronics and Shiawase Atomics. The relationship between the corporations was never too cordial, and it's become decidedly more hostile lately.
5+	Shiawase Atomics wants to get a larger percentage of the Seattle power market. However, regulations keep them from building another nuclear plant in a highly-populated area like Seattle, particularly since the so-called "Glow City" incident in Redmond. Their only other option is to build a plant in Salish-Shidhe territory, but the Council's tied to Gaeatronics, and there's no way they'd give their approval for such a plant.

SHIAWASE

Appropriate Contacts: Street Contacts (TN 4)

Success	Result
0	I have a Shiawase camcorder ... does that help?
1	Going against one of the Big Ten, chummer? I hope your DocWagon bill is paid up.
2	They're the ones that built that nuclear plant in the Barrens. I don't mind telling you, having that thing so close to town makes me nervous, especially after what happened to the last one they built out there. You know why they call the place Glow City, right?
3	They haven't made a lot of fuss about it, but Shiawase has started to become a major player in town. A lot of hush-hush research, increased security ... they're hiring more runners lately, too.
4	From what I hear, they treat their runners okay. If you're professional and quiet, you can make some good cred from them, but if you cop a 'tude or get too trigger-happy, they'll drop you like a live grenade.
5+	Gaeatronics has really been pushing their advantage around town, getting an even bigger chunk of the city's power consumption market. I hear Shiawase Atomics is itching for payback.

AFTERSHOCK



WHAT'S UP, CHUMMER?

The runners' efforts in *Light Meets Night* have set the first part of Deus' escape plan in motion. The Gaeatronics executive staying at the Council Island Inn will send a brief status email to his superiors at the main Gaeatronics office, unknowingly launching the first trace program. It will slither its way to the main Gaeatronics host and broadcast a coded signal across the corp's Matrix systems. When the Tacoma power substation comes on-line for its periodic data dump, the second program will merge with the virus' broadcast signal and will erase itself, along with several key files in the substation's computer system. These programs monitor power consumption and provide overload alerts.

With no programming to limit power consumption, the substation's system will draw excessive amounts of power without triggering a warning. When the power consumption reaches a critical threshold, a surge will blast through Seattle's power grid, tripping emergency shutoff switches in substations across the Sprawl. Power from Shiawase Atomics' Redmond plant will rush into the power grid to fill the void, but the energy demands will quickly overload the few remaining substations, causing them to crash. This chain reaction will plunge Seattle into forty-eight hours of darkness and chaos.

The *Aftershock* segue includes an overview of a city on the brink of chaos, as well as a variety of encounters gamemasters can use during the blackout. Gamemasters should feel free to improvise encounters based on the actions, reactions, and interests of the specific characters in their groups. Like it or not, every person in the Sprawl will be affected by the blackout in some way, and Seattle will be recovering from its effects for a long time.

TELL IT TO THEM STRAIGHT

The first night after the runners complete *Light Meets Night*, read the following:

Well, you've got a pocketful of cred and a weekend ahead of you. The weatherman is predicting sunshine. Go figure! The evening traffic is light, and you can almost enjoy the bustle of the rain-slicked streets, reflecting the neon signs and streetlights of the Sprawl. It's uncanny how cred encourages even the most cynical runner to dust off the rose-colored glasses.



Then, the lights flicker. Neon signs everywhere flutter for a moment, as if trying to catch their breath. Streetlights dim, gather strength for a few seconds, then dim again. And then, a few at a time, they begin to go out. Traffic lights, billboards, and building lights follow. The street falls into darkness. A yellow Mitsubishi Runabout enters an intersection ahead of you just as its headlights flicker and short out. The car coasts slowly to a stop in the middle of the intersection. Car horns blare behind the stalled vehicle and beyond. The city seems to jump to life with an chorus of irate drivers.

By now, the only visible lights belong to autos with the tried-and-true internal combustion engine. Pale red emergency lights filter out from the windows of the nearby buildings. Residents cautiously stick their heads out of windows and doors to see whether the problem extends past their own faulty buildings. The uneasy murmurs of a frightened population create an eerie hum throughout the suddenly dark and dead city. Only the dim glow from a few megacorp facilities—Renraku, Aztechnology, Mitsuhama—remains. And as you look up, through scattered openings in Seattle's perpetual cloud cover, you see something you've never seen in the Sprawl before ... stars.

HOOKS

The runners have finished a good night's work, and are probably feeling pretty cocky. But on their way home (or the next night, if they finished the run after dawn), most of Seattle loses power, and the runners may begin to wonder if they had anything to do with it. Try to make the most of this sudden reversal of fortune.

If the runners thought the Sprawl was a tough place to exist when the lights were on, give them a taste of true chaos. Looters, opportunists and paranoid freaks of all descriptions emerge from the woodwork when the lights go out, ready to exercise their baser instincts without being seen.

The blackout should make the runners realize an important reality—shadowruns do not exist in a vacuum. Their actions can have tremendous consequences. Feel free to have their homes, families or contacts affected by the chaos in order to bring the scope of the disaster home. Innocent people will get hurt.

BEHIND THE SCENES

In addition to the obvious (lights, air conditioning, traffic signals), the following are just a few of the dilemmas presented by the blackout.

THE MATRIX

While cyberdecks have their own power supplies, host systems require electrical power, and lots of it, to keep running. All but the smallest host systems have some sort of limited backup power, reserved for only the most important functions. Within a few minutes of the blackout, all non-essential computer systems begin shutting down, and this includes most of the Matrix. Critical data processing will continue, but the graphic representations of data are turned off to conserve processing time and electrical power. Deckers will still be able

to jack into the Matrix, but may find it difficult to find their way around and go where they need to go.

Dumpshock: If the team's decker is poking around in the Matrix during the blackout, the loss of power could have some serious effects on his well-being. The decker could suffer dumpshock if the host he's in falls off-line due to the blackout. Roll 1D6; on a result of 1, the decker will be dumped immediately and suffer dumpshock (p. 227, SR3).

Bouncer host: If a decker is in a host which remains on-line during the blackout, the sudden power surge may trigger the host to intensify security measures and to classify even an innocent decker as a threat. Roll 1D6; on a result of 1, the host bounces to a higher security level, determined by the gamemaster. Don't be afraid to bounce the host up to Red and mess with the decker. After all, the blackout is partially his fault.

TRANSPORTATION

Traffic signals fail every day. Sprawl-dwellers are used to these nuisances. However, a complete shutdown of the roadways' power system is an entirely different story. Most of Seattle's traffic consists of electrical vehicles that rely on GridLink power ... which has suddenly ceased to exist. Motorists with recently-charged batteries should have enough power to get home, but a significant percentage of Seattle's cars glide to a halt, wherever they happen to be, when the blackout hits. Navigation will be difficult or even impossible in areas cluttered with stalled vehicles.

The downtown monorail system is also shut down by the power outage, leaving panicked commuters stranded several stories above ground.

Hanging by a thread: If the runners pass through downtown during the blackout, have them stumble across a stalled monorail. A few anxious and gutsy commuters have pried the door open in an effort to hop onto the rail and walk the rest of the way home. An elven teenager has slipped from the rail, and her backpack, which snagged on a protruding stop-and-go signal, is the only thing saving her from plummeting to her death. She is screaming and crying for help. If the runners save her, feel free to make her family well-connected, giving the runners a new contact for either supplies or information.

Damsel in distress: An ork mother and her five children are in trouble. A group of six racist human thugs are trying to forcibly remove her stalled Ford Americar from a jammed intersection by flipping it over and rolling it onto the sidewalk. With her children huddled around her on the street, she screams in protest as the brutes rock her vehicle back and forth, building up momentum to send it crashing out of the way. Nobody seems to be doing anything to stop the insanity, until the runners arrive ...

HOMES AND BUSINESSES

Since the blackout hits late at night, most of Seattle is at home. Those who still are at work or have gone out on the town will be trying to get home, adding to the horrendous traffic problems. Paranoia about looters and burglars will set in, and more than a few citizens will be mistaken for criminals and shot when they return home to their frightened families.



In nightclubs, stores, restaurants and offices across Seattle, everything suddenly goes dark. Reactions vary widely, from panic (nightclub patrons are trampled in a stampede to get out of the pitch-black building) to looting (customers steal everything they can carry and escape under cover of darkness) to indifference (in a BTL den, who cares about the real world?).

Residential areas with Lone Star security ratings of E and C are particularly prone to looting, arson and other acts of violence, as the poorer, predominantly metahuman populations of these areas attempt to exploit a momentary weakness in their oppressors' society. Corporate facilities are the obvious targets, but are also the most heavily armed, so looters often turn on local neighborhood businesses or more privileged nearby neighborhoods. Thrill gangs act even wilder and more violent than usual, and citizens and shopkeepers are forced to band together for mutual protection. Prominent citizens plead for calm, but their voices go unheard as citizens take advantage of the darkness to settle their many old scores.

Ironically, the poorest areas of Seattle suffer the least impact from the blackout. The citizens of the so-called "Z-Zones" have few electrical appliances to rely on, and anything worth stealing has already been stolen.

Rock and a hard place:

As the runners make their way home through the chaotic streets, they pass through a stretch of local shops being looted by gangers. Fires burn, windows are smashed and merchandise is literally flying through the doors. Gangers in front of a small electronic repair shop have set up a "game"—a line of thugs leading from the shop's entrance to their beat-up truck across the street—and they're tossing equipment down the line from the store to the truck. They fire their guns in the air when one of them makes a great catch, and they fire at the feet of anyone who drops an item. It's a rowdy, festive party—and the runners are getting in the way by trying to pass through the area. The game immediately ceases and the gangers puff out their chests and accuse the runners of spoiling their fun. Just before a conflict is about to erupt, shots are fired from inside the store. An old man charges out of the shop wielding a mammoth gun and firing indiscriminately. Everyone on the block is a potential target of the store owner's rage. A firefight erupts between the gangers and the maniacal old man, and the runners are likely to take a few random bullets in the process.

It's just an olive oil business, chummer: The setup is the same as above, except that the shop is a cover for a Mafia-run

smuggling operation. Just as the runners enter the area, the big guns come out. The runners are stuck between a mob and the Mob's army. This can be a part of an ongoing underworld campaign using any of the major criminal organizations.

SECURITY SYSTEMS

From home alarm systems to hard-core corporate security, power is essential for keeping things safe. The good news: most alarm systems, even the smaller ones, have some form of battery backup. The bad news: most alarms are designed to go off when they lose mainline power, in order to keep criminals from simply cutting the power to a building before breaking in. Once the blackout hits, PANICBUTTONS™, home alarms, and business security systems will go off all across the city.

Look out below! The runners pass by a fifty-story glass building in a primarily corporate sector of Seattle. The building's entire alarm system has gone haywire, blaring at deafening levels, and the block seems to vibrate with the noise. If the runners are driving, a flaming dumpster blocks their passage through the street. Traffic begins to pile up behind the runners, but they will need to move the dumpster to continue on their way. If the runners are on foot, they simply pass near the building. Either way, once they're in the general vicinity of the corp building, broken glass rains on them from above and a crazed, frightened German shepherd crashlands on their heads. The guard dog leapt through a fifth-floor window of the corp building to escape the agonizing noise of the alarms. The gamemaster can choose whether the dog takes to one of the runners (a Dog, Coyote or Wolf shaman, perhaps) and follows them or tries to gnaw the face off whoever it lands on.

The cupboards are bare: No location is entirely safe from rioters. Looters are attacking one of the player characters' homes as they return. The runner's belongings are entirely up for grabs. If the character has computers, saved files, optical disks or even handwritten diaries, they may be stolen. Information on the runner's contacts, backdoor pass codes, credsticks, Fake IDs and aliases may end up all over the Sprawl. This can become a major plot development as the character's past is exposed and used against him, or it can simply be a minor glitch as a character tries to change his passwords, codes, and account numbers before someone steals his data or money.



SWEEPING THE STREETS

Lone Star has called up every available officer in an attempt to impose some kind of order. Between thousands of alarms, dozens of traffic accidents, and hundreds of violent and criminal incidents, Lone Star will have its hands full. Franklin Associates (Seattle's fire control corporation), DocWagon, CrashCart and other emergency service providers are also overwhelmed. Ambulances have a difficult time getting through the gridlock and stalled traffic, and must rely on helicopters to reach many areas of the city.

The frazzled, outnumbered cops can't afford to chase all the criminals and they will reserve their attention for the most violent or obvious offenders. Most officers use restraint and logic in maintaining control, but in some areas, officers are panicking and employing unnecessary force, which only worsens the situation. Full-fledged riots break out in several neighborhoods, under the pretense of response to oppressive and excessive force. Before long, Governor Lindstrom calls out the Metroplex Guard, supported by elements of the Army's Joint Task Force Seattle. The military vehicles rolling through the streets set off another wave of panic and anger, as rumors of martial law and soldiers shooting civilians spread like wildfire.

Hey, I got an ideal Let's riot! If you really want to toss the team into the muck, there is always the full-scale riot option. While this may take a lot of work to prepare, it will give an antsy team just the thing they need to let loose. But don't hold back. If the runners think it's fun to get mixed up in a thousand-person free-for-all, teach them a lesson. UCAS will bring out the big guns and the civilians will be eager pugilists, willing to knock somebody in the jaw just because they don't like the look on their face. If the runners start to get banged up, have a "peaceful" protester guide them to safety. Remember, waving guns around in this situation will make the runners prime targets of not only the UCAS but the mob as well.

Stranger Danger: For every riot, there is a protection racket ready to move in. The runners can accidentally cross the line into "protected" turf. The area can be controlled by gangs, a criminal organization, a secret society or a bunch of gun-wielding civilians ready to shoot "looters"—in other words, strangers—on sight.

POWERING BACK UP

Gaeatronics engineers scramble to deal with the problem, contending with spurious reports generated by other virus programs planted in various facilities by Deus' agents. Angry mobs beat at the doors of the Gaeatronics headquarters, blaming the foreign-owned corporation for "sabotaging Seattle."

The following night, 24 hours after the blackout, the Army and Metroplex Guard announce a curfew—anyone found on the streets after dark will be taken into custody. This only reinforces the wild rumors of a military takeover.

After 48 hours, power is finally restored to most of Seattle, but fragments of Deus' viral programs still lurk in the dark corners of the power grid. Localized brownouts will continue to plague the city for the next several weeks, so any of the above adventure options can occur up to a month or so past the initial "restoration" of power.

Metroplex Guard troops remain active, attempting both to maintain order and help repair the damaged city. Relations between the Guard and Lone Star, never particularly friendly, will be further strained as the two organizations bicker over jurisdiction and chains of command.

Tensions continue to run high as city leaders search for somewhere to place the blame. Representatives of the Humanis Policlub will blame Seattle's metahumans, stating that the underprivileged orks and trolls "ran amok and uncontrolled like the beasts they are." Metahuman activists, in turn, will describe the looting as "a symptom of the rage and oppression the human majority has imposed on us for decades." Gaeatronics and Shiawase Atomics will each blame the other for the disaster, claiming everything from criminal negligence to deliberate sabotage.

The financial cost of the blackout, when totaled up, will run into the hundreds of millions of nuyen. Dozens of citizens will be killed, hundreds more wounded, and race relations in the Sprawl set back by a decade. And, of course, almost unnoticed in the crisis, the reclamation of the Renraku arcology will come to a complete standstill as troops are pulled out for riot control.

DISCOVERING THE CAUSE

The runners may suspect they had something to do with the blackout. Let them suspect it. If they bargained for Shiawase stock in *Light Meets Night* (see p. 18), they are in for a pleasant surprise. Their stock does increase sharply in value as Gaeatronics struggles to repair its programs and its reputation. The fulfillment of Mr. Johnson's prediction will give the runners more "proof" that he was from Shiawase.

Virtually everyone in the shadow community will assume the blackout was orchestrated by Shiawase. If the runners try to take the blame, even their most trusted contacts will not believe them. Experts agree that it was a masterfully planned job, doubtless requiring multiple runs over the course of years. No one would believe it was all caused by two quick runs on a warm summer evening. That is the beauty and deadliness of Deus' plot.

Playing the Market

The actual value of the stock's increase can depend entirely on your campaign's economy. A good benchmark is three times its original value. It can increase higher, but the runners may have a tough time dumping it onto the market themselves, since most of the Matrix is down. They can try to contact a broker, but many brokers will either not trust anything coming out of Seattle during the crisis, or will undercut the stock's price because so many people are converting their holdings to nuyen during the emergency.

Finally, the stock will revert to its original value within a week of the shutdown, once it becomes clear that Shiawase doesn't have the resources to power Seattle and once Gaeatronics on-line.

BREAKTHROUGH



PREPARING TO PLAY

Breakthrough is a very different type of run than *Light Meets Night*. The runners are sent on a fetch-and-carry run that turns out, like most things in the Sprawl, to be more complex than it seems. The runners will have to navigate a gang war. As gamemaster, you'll need to run the gangs with a sense of machismo, honor and above all else, intelligence. Gangs stay in power by maintaining street credibility, and the gamemaster needs to work with that.

This adventure also plants far-reaching seeds for the remainder of the *Brainscan* plot. If things begin to fall apart, don't worry. There are ways to get back on track as the adventure and campaign continue. But it is important to run the adventure with those seeds squarely in mind.

BACKGROUND STORY

Researchers at Seattle's Neuranalysis, a small, independent medical research company, have developed a groundbreaking new medical imaging system. The neural scanning device, code-named SENSE (Systematic Electrical Neural Scanning Engine), combines the best features of CAT scans, MRIs and EEGs. More importantly, the actual scanning devices are considerably more compact than their predecessors, making portable imaging units practical. For the first time, paramedics will be able to rapidly and accurately diagnose head trauma in the field, rather than delaying diagnosis until patients can be brought to an expensive, immobile hospital unit. SENSE will be a significant improvement in emergency medical care ... and a valuable asset for whoever owns the technology.

A leak about the SENSE technology reached Yamatetsu Seattle representatives, who immediately saw the value of the technology for Crashcart, the Yamatetsu subsidiary that is DocWagon's main competitor. Crashcart's exclusive use of SENSE would help the corp pull customers away from DocWagon. Once Crashcart dominated the market, Yamatetsu could license SENSE to DocWagon and other hospitals to generate even more nuyen. Less than a month ago, Yamatetsu quietly began negotiations to purchase Neuranalysis.

But in the corporate world, no deals can go down without a hitch. Agents of Deus positioned outside the arcology also heard rumors about SENSE, and brought it to the AI's attention. Deus marked the SENSE tech as an immediate threat, due to its exceptional ability to scan and analyze the metahuman brain. If this technology were available to the medics helping vic-





tims "rescued" from the Renraku Arcology, they might be able to distinguish Banded individuals. Deus' army of mortal minions, along with its future plans, would collapse. Deus had to have the technology destroyed, and the order was given an "at any cost" priority.

It didn't take Deus long to find the appropriate pawn on the inside. Deus unleashed his otaku into the Neuranalysis host and downloaded a company roster, and after a swift process of elimination, they discovered low-level Neuranalysis tech and BTL addict Wally Huggins. Deus' only mistake was underestimating a junkie's desperation.

In order to maintain secrecy, Deus ordered Steve Morris (the Johnson of *Light Meets Night*; see p. 132 for more information on Morris) to hire a fixer to handle all dealings with Huggins. Morris found former runner and full-time fixer to the stars, Monty Boudreaux, and set him to work. At 2 a.m. on a Friday morning, Monty approached Huggins at one of his favorite simsense parlors and made him an offer he couldn't refuse—tons of cred for only a little information. Huggins eagerly spilled everything he knew about SENSE, pocketed his 20,000¥ and slunk back to his hole to begin plotting.

Huggins told Monty that the SENSE would be formally revealed to the public in three days at a University Hospital press conference. After bringing the information to Morris, Monty was instructed to employ some muscle to locate and destroy the SENSE prototype, shoot up the Neuranalysis headquarters, and eliminate anyone who stood in the way. Subtlety was not a priority. The attack would delay the release of the SENSE technology long enough for Deus' escape plans to be realized. The AI would deal with the long-term repercussions of the tech at a later date. But Huggins had designs of his own.

Under the cover of one of Seattle's lingering brownouts, the assault team stormed Neuranalysis. Instead of a bustling research facility, they found trashed offices and two security guards with their brains splattered all over the clean white walls. There were no SENSE prototypes and no paperwork on the design specs—just a couple of corporate corpses. With nothing better to do, and in the spirit of the big blackout just a short time earlier, the team stole some equipment and set Neuranalysis on fire.

Sensing an opportunity to cash in on Monty's interest in the SENSE prototype, Huggins recruited another troubled, low-level Neuranalysis tech to help steal the device and all its associated materials. This was weapons enthusiast Regis P. Doss, a perpetual loser loaded down with gambling debts. Huggins and Doss entered the Neuranalysis facility before the blackout, put two bullets each into the backs of the security guards' heads, swiped the SENSE prototypes and design specs, and headed off to stash their score. With the prototype "safely" hidden in an abandoned parking garage in the Redmond Barrens, Huggins put in a call to Monty.

"I have something you might be interested in," Huggins boasted.

Monty could hear the pinched smile on Huggins' face. "Where is it?" he demanded. He wasn't in the mood for games.

Monty listened to the demands—500,000¥. Having no intention of paying, Monty agreed to the deal. Huggins would

bring the prototype to him, and Monty would simply put a bullet in the pathetic junkie's brain to settle the score. His reputation was on the line, and he didn't have a problem with squashing Huggins to get to the prototype for Morris. But then came the second phone call, less than two hours after the first.

"I can't get to it!" Huggins sounded panicked. "The place is fraggin' crawling with thugs! They'll kill me if I ..."

"Calm down, Huggins. I'll take care of it." Now it was Monty's turn to smile. He had just regained control of the situation. "Just tell me where you are, and we'll work everything out. We're all professionals here."

Huggins had blown it. The abandoned parking garage where he hid the prototype was a hideout for the Rusted Stiletto—a vicious gang of mutant orks and trolls from the Glow City area. The gangers were out looting when Huggins and Doss slipped up to the third floor of the garage to hide their score. As they planned their next move, they began arguing how to split the money they'd get for the device. Huggins finally ended the quarrel by abruptly putting three bullets into Doss' chest. Huggins left the prototype and the body on the third floor and left to call Monty. When he returned to the garage, all hell had broken loose.

The Red Hot Nukes, a gang of dwarfs with a predilection for explosives, had ambushed the Stiletto as the ork/troll gang was robbing an electronics store. The Stiletto, weighted down with armfuls of stolen merchandise, were engulfed in flames or blown to bits before they could get to their weapons. The survivors of the ambush panicked and bolted for the safety of their hideout, not knowing the Nukes had already paid it a visit. The hideout was booby-trapped, and when the Stiletto returned, the detonation party began. As the battered remains of the Stiletto tried to reorganize, the Nukes moved in and surrounded the building, preparing for an assault. This is the scene Huggins stumbled upon.

Enter The Runners

Monty hires the runners to retrieve the prototype and any datafiles associated with it. They meet Huggins at his hideout in the Barrens, a rundown flophouse a few blocks from the Stiletto's garage, and follow him through the middle of a gang war to the prototype's hiding place. Unfortunately, the prototype is no longer in the garage. It was retrieved earlier by a mischievous Raven shaman who was watching Huggins since he first arrived in the neighborhood with the SENSE. This shaman was contracted by the Stiletto to provide magical security for their hideout, but he's grown a bit bored with the job and has let his guard lax in the interest of creating some chaos (thus allowing both Huggins and the Nukes to breach the hideout easily). The runners will need to chase down the shaman and negotiate for the prototype, which they will receive ... eventually.

Unbeknownst to anyone but the Raven shaman, who was able to breach the maglock on the SENSE prototype case, the case actually contains two devices—a working prototype and a decoy that just looks pretty. When the runners come to terms with the shaman, he will give them the decoy.

Monty doesn't realize, the runners don't realize, and Deus won't realize until it's way too late.

THINGS TO KNOW

This adventure can be played at anytime after the events in *Aftershock* (p. 33). Other than the background of Steve Morris, all the information needed for this adventure is included. Once again, there is no traceable connection to Deus, and the characters shouldn't think this is anything but a straight run. The clues will point to Yamatetsu or even DocWagon as the originators of the run.

THE BUZZ

WHAT'S UP, CHUMMER?

The Mr. Johnson for this meet is a freelance fixer named Monty Boudreaux. Once a runner himself, Monty now makes his living as a go-between for corporate executives who don't want to hire shadowrunners directly. Monty is given a budget and all the information on the desired run. He finds the runners, conducts the meet, and picks up the pieces, keeping any leftover cred from the budget as commission. While the cost for this type of service may be high, corps are willing to shell out the extra nuyen for increased anonymity.

Monty has developed a reputation as a reliable and honest dealer among both corporate suits and shadowrunners, and while most runners prefer to deal directly with Mr. Johnson, Monty is not too bad as an alternative.

Monty was retained by Steve Morris, the former Renraku executive turned Deus-puppet (for more on Morris, see *Light Meets Night*, p. 18 and *Master Cast of Shadows*, p. 132). The runners are being hired to track down the SENSE prototype, which was stolen by Neuranalysis employees Wally Huggins and Regis Doss. Monty knows nothing about the "big picture," nor does he care. Only his rep and his nuyen matter to him, and right now both are in jeopardy.

TELL IT TO THEM STRAIGHT

The tridcast networks have been trying to attach numbers to the blackout ever since they were able to broadcast again—this many fires, that many millions of nuyen in property damage, this many wounded, that many dead. The Metroplex Guard still patrols the streets here and there, but in smaller numbers, and only in the most chaotic areas. The rioting has lessened, the curfew has been lifted, and most importantly, the power has been on for more than eighteen hours straight since the last brownout. Back to business as usual.

The phone rings and a soft scratchy voice is on the other end of the line. "This is Monty." He's sort of a freelance Mr. Johnson, working for corps that don't want to dirty their hands by dealing with shadowrunners directly. The guy's got a decent rep.

"I've got a recovery operation coming up, and I could use your talents to pull it off. One person, one piece of equipment, minimal security. If you're interested and available, meet me at 11:30 in the p.m. at The Drowning Man in Ravenna. We need to move fast on this, so don't be late." With that, he hangs up. Not exactly the chatty type.

When the runners arrive at The Drowning Man, read the following aloud:

The Drowning Man straddles the line between a large bar and a small nightclub. The building is a converted storefront pharmacy, but the heavy live music booming from inside leaves no doubt about its current usage. The doorman hits you up for a cover charge, but the name "Monty" seems to carry some weight around these parts. The burly guardian of the gate nods, steps aside and points to a small door to one side of the stage.

The crowd is thin and subdued tonight. The threat of another brownout seems to have put a lot of people out of sorts. The Longings For Ponds finish one song and are rewarded with faint, scattered applause, barely audible over the ringing in your ears. Ticked off at the lack of response, the band launches into another song—faster, heavier, and even louder than the first. You've reached the door by that point, and since the volume of the music makes knocking pointless, you just open it and step inside.

A lanky elf with long, wavy black hair and dark brown eyes that point in slightly different directions sits at a small card table centered in the room. He motions for you to close the door and have a seat. When the door clicks shut, the ear-splitting throb of the Longings disappears, replaced by soundproofed silence. The room is a storeroom of some kind, though at the moment the only items being stored are the card table, the three folding chairs and a single dusty light bulb, swinging slightly from a black cord dropped through a small hole in the ceiling.

"I'm Monty," the elf says, "and here's the deal." He tosses a photograph down on the card table—a scrawny corporate tech complete with lab coat and the haggard look of a guy who hasn't slept in a week. "This is Wally Huggins. Meet up with him in the Redmond Barrens. He'll lead you to a building caught in the crossfire of a gang war. Inside, Huggins hid a device—the target of this job." He pauses and looks you in the eye, or rather in the left eye and the right ear.

"The Johnson would like the prototype and any data files accompanying it returned to him, which means returned to me. If you cannot return the device, then it must be destroyed. I will require proof, of course. After you've located the device, I could care less what happens to Huggins. The pay is 15,000¥ each: one-third now, the remainder on delivery. Are you in?"

HOOKS

Monty is a direct, no-nonsense individual and he expects the same from the runners. He wants to lay out the facts, make a deal and be on his way.

Play up the fact that the city is still unsettled by the recent blackout and recurring brownouts. Much of Seattle's citizenry saw (or participated in) violently disturbing behavior. The city is still trying to come to grips with it.

BEHIND THE SCENES

The photograph of Huggins is a copy of a corporate I.D. mugshot. Not very flattering. While it's impossible to discern his



precise problems from the photo, it's readily apparent he doesn't have it all together. He is a human in his late thirties, with glasses and a worn, drawn face. On close examination, the runners will notice a corporate logo etched onto the lapel of his lab coat. One success on any appropriate corporate Knowledge (6) Skill Test will reveal the logo belongs to Neuranalysis.

After the runners accept the job, Monty will provide them with a sketch of the SENSE prototype. He does not know what the tech is or what it does. He only knows what it looks like and what it is called, although he won't reveal the latter. Huggins hid the prototype in an exceptionally tough 'hood in the Woodinville area of the Redmond Barrens. The entire area consists of abandoned buildings occupied by squatters and gangers. Huggins is holed up in a transient flophouse a block and a half from the parking garage. Monty will give them directions to the front door. The rest is up to Huggins. Monty doesn't know much about the conflict between the two gangs, and again, he doesn't care. Huggins' phone call was full of vague, broken phrases: "Gangers shooting the place up ... explosions all over ... psycho dwarfs and some kind of mutated trogs ..."

Monty will share any of this information if pressed by the runners, but he really doesn't know much beyond Huggins' ramblings. When the discussion is complete, Monty slips the runners a business card with the word "MONTY" and a telecom number on it, and instructs them to call and make delivery arrangements when they have the prototype. The runners have 24 hours from the end of the meet to recover the prototype and return it to Monty.

The runners may haggle with Monty for more money, but he will not give in easily, since every nuyen he surrenders comes out of his profit. His first offer will be to give the runners half the money up front, but still pay each runner only 15,000¥ in total. If they want more, the negotiating runner(s) should make a Negotiations Test against Monty. Each success the runner gets will earn them an extra 1,000¥ each for the run, to an absolute maximum of 20,000¥ each. Adjust these offers if they seem too high or low in your campaign's economy.

PUSHING THE ENVELOPE

There's a few minor tweaks the gamemaster can make to this scenario to give the runners some extra challenges. A domestic squabble may break out in the club right in front of the runners, with no one else willing to step in and resolve the matter. Or some power fluctuations within the sanitation system may cause an overflow in the nearby sewers, forcing a small army of rats and devil rats up into the nightclub. The club may also be a good opportunity for a chance encounter with a face from the past that the runners don't want to see.

DEBUGGING

Unless the runners do something foolish like starting a bar fight or attacking Monty, not much can go wrong in this scenario. They are being offered good money for a straightforward job. If they act rashly, let the players suffer the consequences to their lives and reputations.

TACTICAL NUKES

WHAT'S UP, CHUMMER?

The runners meet Huggins at the flophouse in the Redmond Barrens and he brings them to the parking garage where the prototype is hidden. The Red Hot Nukes, a gang of dwarf adepts, have ambushed the Stilettos and surrounded their hideout. They are about to launch an assault and finish their old rivals off for good. The runners need to negotiate their way past the Nukes and into the garage without ruffling too many feathers.

TELL IT TO THEM STRAIGHT

A forty-five-minute tour through the littered streets of the Redmond Barrens brings you to the corner of Claremont and Roscoe—3327 Claremont to be exact, the address of the Adams Hotel. Deluxe transient accommodations, according to the sign outside. From the looks of the crumbling exterior and the stench of stale sweat and cigarettes wafting from the front doorway, squatters probably have it better in the burned-out building next door. A quivering shell of a man dressed in a soiled lab coat steps from the hotel entrance, a cigarette butt stuck in the corner of his mouth. He shakes almost uncontrollably. He glances you over, then blurts, "Are you the guys?"

Once the players hook up with Huggins and head for the garage, read the following aloud:

Huggins leads you around the corner, then about a block down Roscoe Street, before stopping a safe distance away from the final destination. "It's in there." He points to a three-story concrete box with a couple of two-lane car ramps winding down to the ground from the top level. A gang of ten dwarfs carouse about twenty meters from the garage, in the process of setting up some heavy weaponry. One of them, an African-American dwarf who is obviously the gang's leader, aims his machine gun at the building and fires a burst, chipping away at one of the concrete pillars holding up the ramp. He chortles wildly, then gestures for one of his buddies to take a shot—with a rocket launcher. The second dwarf swigs from a bottle, finishing it off, then hands it to the leader. The leader heaves the bottle into the air and toward the building. The dwarf with the launcher deftly drops to one knee, whips the launcher onto his shoulder, lines up his shot and lets it fly. The rocket smashes the bottle to smithereens, then slams into the parking garage with a deafening explosion. Yelps of fear and anger emerge from the structure as the dwarfs exchange high fives.

Huggins turns to you, paler than fresh snow. "We're fraggled."

HOOKS

Huggins should make the runners nervous; it's obvious that he's strung out on something. Focus on the condition of his eyes, the smell of his clothes and his nervous ticks—his inability to pull the cigarette butt from his lips without trembling, or his habit of pulling at the pale skin on his face.

Play up the party atmosphere of the dwarven assault. Squatters from around the neighborhood may leak out of their holes to enjoy the mischief from a distance. The Red Hot Nukes are confident and realize they have the upper hand on the trapped Stilettoes, and now they are planning to have some fun with their enemies before finishing them off. The Nukes should be hard-nosed but approachable.

BEHIND THE SCENES

The runners are the only hope Huggins (see *Cast of Shadows*, p. 49) has of "cashing in" on his treachery, so he will go along with whatever they recommend and will stay with the runners until the prototype is retrieved or he dies. He is completely desperate and realizes he's in over his head, but he has nothing to lose at this point. He is committed all the way.

If the runners question him about his involvement with the prototype, he will say exactly what Monty told him to say—"I was responsible for the initial extraction." Monty ordered Huggins to play it cool and act professionally, if he wants what's coming to him. Monty does not want the runners to know how he double-crossed Monty and Doss, lest they get ideas of their own. Huggins will play his cards close to the vest, because he is already in deep, and wants to get out with his nuyen in hand. Also, Huggins is itching for a BTL fix—BAD. His judgment at this point is clouded.

When the runners come upon the parking garage, they will be far enough behind the core group of partying Red Hot Nukes (see *Cast of Shadows*, p. 49) that they will not draw attention to themselves at first. Six Nukes, including their leader Grinder, make up the first group. Four other members of the gang are scattered around the parking garage, keeping an eye out for any Stilettoes trying to escape. If the runners decide to sneak around the gang to get to the parking garage, give some of the Nukes Perception Tests against the runners. Five of the Nukes are adepts, and a few of them are capable of astral perception, so any astrally projecting characters or use of magic to conceal the runners' presence may be detected as well. If the runners are discovered sneaking around, Grinder (see *Cast of Shadows*, p. 49) will give the runners a chance to come clean. He'll ask them to come over and "talk" to him. He'll want to know what "nice" people like the runners are doing in such a tough part of town. Grinder would prefer to joke with the runners and keep the conversation light, but he will not hesitate to assert his authority if the runners cop an attitude. The Nukes are not looking for trouble with anyone else right now, and will be amenable and friendly (at least, compared to most gangs) to anyone in the area who doesn't seem to pose a direct threat. If the runners are up-front with Grinder and let him know they need to get into the building to "retrieve" something, he'll take their word for it. He'll also warn them they might have a tough time getting in and even a tougher time getting out, because anything trying to exit the garage is going to catch a rocket in the chops. If the runners let on that there is a hot piece of tech in the garage, they'll pique Grinder's interest and he'll want to know more. He may demand the prototype in exchange for the runners' lives. This is where the runners could get into trouble. The Nukes love





tech, especially the "high" variety. Sophisticated electronics always make the best components for explosive devices.

If the runners simply approach the Nukes, they will get a relatively warm reception. Grinder may even tell the runners to "check this out," and throw another bottle of liquor at the garage for his buddy to blast with the rocket launcher. They want to show off their prowess to the watching neighborhood. They're a lot like kids blowing off fireworks in the general direction of another group of kids who crossed over to their side of the sandlot.

PUSHING THE ENVELOPE

The easiest way to increase the difficulty of this scenario is to make Grinder and the Nukes suspicious or hostile from the beginning. While this may lessen the role-playing aspects of the encounter, it will increase the bloodshed. Alternately, the Nukes can require the runners to pay a "toll" before they pass. This fee may range from simple cred to a mission on the other side of town. If Grinder is especially cranky, he may require the runners to "prove themselves" by disarming a mine first.

DEBUGGING

If the runners are being too loose-lipped with Grinder, have Huggins chime in. When questioned about what needs to be retrieved, Huggins can nervously blurt out that his friend is in there, hiding from some corp. He may be strung out, but his mind will kick into overdrive if he feels his ransom is in jeopardy.

If the runners end up fighting with the Nukes and things get too rough, have the Stiletto charge out of the garage for a counterattack on the dwarf gang. That should even up the sides.

The best way to avoid a conflict with the Nukes is to remind the runners about the heavy weaponry the dwarfs are packing. Things could get ugly very quickly.

ROACHES CHECK IN ...

WHAT'S UP, CHUMMER?

The runners enter the parking garage, hopefully avoiding the mines planted in and around the building by the Nukes. As Huggins leads them to the prototype's hiding place, the runners encounter the battered remains of the Stiletto holed up in the garage. They are not happy. They immediately assume the runners are with the Nukes and attack with vengeful ferocity. After the runners defeat the Stiletto, Huggins leads them to the third floor. But the prototype is gone—only the Doss' corpse and an informative city spirit remain. The spirit tells the runners where the prototype has been taken and by whom. Now the runners have to find the culprit. However, when they exit the garage, they will have to deal with a much less cordial Red Hot Nukes gang.

TELL IT TO THEM STRAIGHT

Up close, the abandoned parking garage looks more like a decrepit tomb than a fallen monument to the practicality of urban developers. The rusted gate in front of the ramp has been twisted and bent to allow access to the structure's interior. Three-foot-tall weeds push through the asphalt, reaching up to

the muddy gray sky. Low moans echo from inside. Or was that just the wind?

"It's on the third floor." Huggins' shiver has reached his voice. He points up to the looming third floor with an unsteady hand. "I'll lead you right to it. Anybody got a smoke?"

When the runners reach the third floor, read the following aloud:

Huggins rushes ahead of you to a far corner of the garage, towards a pile of rubble and a bloody corpse slumped against the wall. Huggins ignores the body entirely. He rummages through chunks of concrete and garbage, tossing debris aside to get to the payload. One of the ragged lumps of concrete knocks the corpse over with a dull thud. "What's going on?" Huggins' search becomes frantic. He kicks at the pile to move the debris more quickly, if less delicately. "It was right here! This is where I left it! WHAT THE FRAG IS GOING ON!?" Kicking wildly through the unbalanced pile, Huggins stumbles backwards, loses his footing and falls onto the body. Looks like it's time to take control of the situation.

When the runners approach Huggins and the rubble, read the following aloud:

Huggins lies still, his face buried in the corpse's chest. He moans incoherently into the body's blood-soaked lab coat. He may even be crying ... or laughing. The body appears to be dressed in a get-up like Huggins'—a lab coat over civilian clothes. The man looks like he was in his late 30s. He has a full beard and his thick glasses are still stuck perfectly on his face. It's hard to tell exactly what caused his death, what with Huggins blubbing on top of him, but you can see the blood on his chest and on the garage floor around him.

Huggins gathers himself and pulls his face away from the body, revealing several messy bullet holes in the corpse's red-smeared chest. He stands and turns to face you. "I have come to the conclusion ... after a momentary lapse ... that this is bull-drek ... and I don't want a part of it anymore. So ... if you'll excuse me ... I am going home."

HOOKS

Creepy. The garage is an ominous place, and the whole scenario should begin to feel surreal at this point—adept dwarfs, a haggard and strung-out contact, voices in the garage, mutant troll gangers, the discovery of a mystery corpse. Even if the runners are from a shady area of the Barrens, this place should seem odd.

BEHIND THE SCENES

The five Rusted Stiletto who survived the Nukes' ambush are licking their wounds on the first floor of the parking garage. Only two orks and three trolls survived, and even they are in poor shape. One of the trolls took a hit from a mine during the initial ambush, and his right arm hangs uselessly at his side. One of the orks lost his right leg when he stepped on a Nukes mine in the garage. He's barely conscious, and his friends have hidden him behind some stacked crates in a corner. The runners can hear him moaning and his fellow gang members

pleading for him to stay quiet. They are bracing for an assault by the Nukes and do not want to betray their position.

If the runners appear on the first floor without any kind of concealment (magical or otherwise), the Stilettoes will immediately open fire on the first person they see. If it happens to be Huggins, he'll take a shot to the arm and collapse in a screaming heap, but he will not die. He'll manage to slither away to safety while the runners have it out with the Stilettoes.

Rusted Stilettoes

All of these gang members look sickly and pale, and most of them have dyed their hair a pale green. The trolls each have excessive amounts of dermal deposits, providing them with 3 extra Body dice.

Orks (2)

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

INIT: 4 + 1D6

Dice Pools: Combat 6

Karma Pool/Professional Rating: 2/3

Race: Ork

Active Skills: Clubs 4, Edged Weapons 5, Etiquette 2 (Street 4), Intimidation 4, Leadership 3, Pistols 4, Stealth 3, Submachine Guns 3, Unarmed Combat 4

Martial Arts: Brawling 4 (Full Offense, Vicious Blow)

Knowledge Skills: The Barrens 4, Gang Lore 5

Armor: Armor jacket [5/3]

Weapons: Uzi III [SMG, BF, 7M, 32 (c) w/ 2 extra clips]

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

Ares Predator [HP, SA, 9M, 15 (c) with 2 extra clips]

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

Crowbar [7M Stun, +1 Reach]

Knife [5L]

Trolls (3)

B	Q	S	C	I	W	E	R
8 (11)	5	7	3	3	5	6	4

INIT: 4 + 1D6

Dice Pools: Combat 6

Karma Pool/Professional Rating: 2/3

Race: Troll

Active Skills: Clubs 4, Edged Weapons 5, Etiquette 2 (Street 4), Intimidation 4, Pistols 4, Stealth 3, Submachine Guns 3, Unarmed Combat 5

Knowledge Skills: The Barrens 4, Gang Lore 5

Martial Arts: Brawling 5 (Full Offense, Vicious Blow)

Armor: Armor jacket [5/3]

Weapons: Uzi III [SMG, BF, 7M, 32 (c) w/ 2 extra clips]

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

Ares Predator [HP, SA, 9M, 15 (c) with 2 extra clips]

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

Crowbar [9M Stun, +1 Reach]

Knife [7L]

Booby Traps

While the Stilettoes were out, the Red Hot Nukes sneaked into the lower part of the garage and placed a few mines and

booby traps. Though the Stilettoes triggered most of them, a few remain to be set off by unwary runners. The majority of these mines contain AP offensive charges [10S (f), -1/m], are disguised (Concealability 8) and are triggered by tripwires. The gamemaster can improvise and modify these mines as desired; see p. 42, CC, for rules on mines and mine options.

Up Into the Garage

The second floor of the parking garage is empty except for a lounge area thrown together by the Stilettoes. A couple of battered armchairs, a ratty carpet, and some large pillows are arranged around a kerosene heater. Cigarette butts and empty bottles of beer are scattered all over the area. Bullet holes scar the walls, which sport a few torn posters and some sloppily applied graffiti. There's nothing else of value or interest.

The third floor contains piles of rubble and Doss' corpse, along with an informative Force 6 city spirit conjured by the Raven shaman who has taken the prototype into his "protection." After Huggins discovers the SENSE is missing, the city spirit will materialize. Brisbie has decided to have a little fun with Doss' murderer, and has instructed the spirit to materialize as a ghostly apparition rising from the corpse.

Once the spirit manifests itself, Huggins will completely fall apart. One of the following may occur:

1. He'll snag the nearest gun and blow his brains all over the runners' shirts.

2. He'll run to the nearest opening to the outside and fling himself to the ground below, screaming in hysterical, mad-dened terror until the concrete silences him.

3. He'll have a heart attack and drop dead on the spot.

The gamemaster should feel free to choose the comeuppance they feel is appropriate for Huggins, according to the mood of the campaign, but Brisbie, who witnessed Doss' murder, will make sure Huggins is punished. For extra gruesome flavor, the gamemaster could have the city spirit accuse Huggins of murdering him, or it could simply grin and tell Huggins, "I'm back." Either should be enough to push an already teetering man over the edge.

In any case, once the spirit materializes, it will announce "I have something I think might interest you." It will inform the runners that the prototype is in the hands of its conjurer, a shaman named Brisbie, and if they want it, they are going to have to pay for it. The spirit will give the runners directions to an abandoned building about two blocks away, at 2842 Fletcher Street. The spirit will add a whimsical "no funny stuff" routine, indicating to the runners that Brisbie will be keeping an eye on them the entire way.

Exiting the Garage

When the runners come out of the garage, the Red Hot Nukes will fulfill their promise to fire upon anything exiting the building. If the runners leave from the front, the Nukes will immediately open up on the team with everything they have—rocket launchers, machine guns and so on. There will be some cover within quick reach—a dumpster, a burned-out car, a broken off slab of concrete. If the runners sneak out of the building, one of the roving Nukes will have a chance to see them.



Any member of the gang who spots the team sneaking out will take a few shots, then run for cover, yelling for help. The rest of the Nukes will arrive to join the combat, alerted by the gunfire, in 1D6 ÷ 2 Combat Turns. Grinder will stay out of the fray and bark orders like a field general from a distance, firing an occasional shot from one of his long-distance weapons. If the tide of the battle starts to sway towards the runners (five or more of the Nukes go down), Grinder will order his gang to fall back. Regardless of the outcome of this fight, the runners will have gained a new enemy in the Red Hot Nukes and their charismatic leader Grinder. He never forgets a grudge.

PUSHING THE ENVELOPE

The best way to push this scenario would be to provide the Stilettoes with a little magical assistance, especially if the runners conceal their presence by magical means. The city spirit can be used to warn the Stilettoes of intruders—perhaps Brisbie owes the Stilettoes one for saving his hide some time back—even if they are concealed magically. The spirit can also get involved in combat if the Stilettoes prove too weak to handle the runners. If this occurs, and the city spirit is destroyed, Brisbie will summon a second spirit to deliver his message to Huggins and the runners.

DEBUGGING

If the runners try to leave Huggins behind before entering the garage, have Huggins stress the magnificence of his hiding place and claim that the runners will never locate the prototype on their own. Remember, Huggins will go to any lengths to protect his cut. If the runners force or threaten Huggins to stay put, he will follow them inside on his own accord.

If the runners are really taking a beating from the Nukes, again, let any remaining Stilettoes enter the action, focusing their rage on the dwarf gang.

RAVEN A-GO-GO

WHAT'S UP, CHUMMER?

The runners follow the spirit's directions to an abandoned four-story building a few blocks away. Brisbie, the Raven shaman who now possesses the SENSE prototype, is perched on the rooftop. He messes with the runners until they eventually negotiate a deal for the prototype. Brisbie magically lowers the nonfunctional decoy prototype to the runners, who ride off into the sunset thinking they have successfully completed their mission.

TELL IT TO THEM STRAIGHT

A sign on the front of the four-story abandoned building reads "Municipal Courthouse—District 214." From his second-floor window, a malnourished troll, well into the latter half of his life, stares vacantly into the street below. A dog howls from inside the building, a mingled call of pain and hunger. The despair in the air is suffocating.

A chipper voice from on high suddenly slices through the melancholy. "What'll ya give for de case?"

HOOKS

The runners have been through a lot at this point and the court building exchange with Brisbie should have an "end-of-the-line" feel—you can't sink any lower. The despair should be laid on so thick that it almost becomes parody. Again, the runners should not feel as if they can gain the upper hand on someone like Brisbie, who not only lives in this hell, but thrives in it.

BEHIND THE SCENES

The voice belongs to Mustard, a Force 6 ally spirit bound to Brisbie. The spirit is in the form of a short, rotund human with a shaved head and an elaborate tattoo of a raven in flight etched onto his skull. Brisbie observes the exchange with the runners from a sixth-story window in a building across the street. He and Mustard have been keeping an eye on the runners since they left the parking garage and will be prepared for their arrival.

Brisbie is thrilled by the opportunity to barter with the runners. He usually doesn't get the chance to mingle with anyone other than gangers and squatters. From the moment Huggins first set foot in the neighborhood the previous day, the presence of these "strangers" in Brisbie's 'hood has piqued his interest. All of his dealings, however, will go through the telepathic link with the ally spirit, for safety's sake. His base price for the case is 500¥, but he does not want anything as simple as money. Offers of food, particularly exotic foods he cannot get in the Barrens, will certainly tempt him. He will not accept simple trinkets or shiny objects, despite his totem, and he has no interest in weapons or armor, but he has a weakness for electronic gadgets of all sorts. He will also trade the case for secrets or information from the runners, including information about their current mission, rumors about major events in Seattle, or even juicy tidbits about the characters' personal lives. The more reluctant the characters seem to part with a certain piece of information, the more Brisbie wants to hear it. He may even permit one of the runners to owe him a favor, presenting the gamemaster with an opportunity for a future adventure hook. The exact nature of his demands is up to the gamemaster, depending on how much the players enjoy the scene and how difficult the gamemaster wants to make it.

Once a deal is struck, the ally spirit will use its Magic Fingers spell to pick up anything the characters offered him, and then drop the case to the ground. However, the case will clang to the ground and pop open, with nothing inside. "Now," the spirit will announce, "what will you offer me for the gizmo that was *in* the case?" While the prototypes are obviously worth a lot more than the case, Brisbie will be pleased with himself for tricking the runners, and thus in a generous mood. He will part with the non-working prototype and spec sheets in exchange for goods worth 1,000¥, a favor from each individual runner, or information which is twice as interesting or personal as the original offer.

If the runners can meet his price, the spirit will again use Magic Fingers to pick up any ransom and lower the non-working prototype and design specs delicately to the ground. The device will be obviously incomplete, though it looks very close to being finished. The specs clearly illustrate what components



the device needs and how it functions. Brisbie will be careful to avoid revealing the existence of the second, working prototype; he wants to check it out himself.

If the runners attack the ally spirit, Brisbie will use his spells to distract, confuse and harass the runners, while the spirit escapes. He will not try to harm the runners unless the spirit is wounded or there is a chance that the runners will discover his whereabouts.

The main challenge in the scenario will be dealing with Brisbie's trickery, and the gamemaster can make this as easy or difficult as desired. If the runners decide to fight Brisbie, he has plenty of spells which should enable him and the spirit to flee, thus depriving the characters of the prototype they will need to complete their mission. Chasing a magically-aided shaman over the rooftops of Redmond should provide an interesting challenge for any group of runners.

PUSHING THE ENVELOPE

There shouldn't be a need to push this scenario since it comes at the end of a sequence in which the runners could get banged up significantly, but if you must ...

If the Nukes were defeated and had to flee, have them track the runners to the prototype exchange and unload some

mortar fire, followed by a hail of bullets from a machine gun. They didn't run away like cowards, they just needed to regroup for a second before unleashing the truly heavy arsenal.

DEBUGGING

If the runners behave themselves, this scenario should be fun and go like clockwork. If they attack the ally spirit, problems could arise. They may not get the prototype if the spirit succeeds in fleeing the scene which shouldn't be too difficult. Brisbie will be willing to deal with the runners up until the point where his own life is threatened. Through the telepathic link with the spirit, have Brisbie remind the runners that he is not looking for trouble and they will get what they need if they "play along." He's an easygoing, though mischievous, individual.

PICKING UP THE PIECES

IT'S A WRAP

If the runners recover the prototype from Brisbie and turn it over to Monty, he will be quite pleased and place the runners on his "list." If the prototype is not recovered, Monty will not hide his disgust, and will toss out the cliché "you'll never work in this town again." The runners' rep will take a

hit but it may not be major enough to permanently damage their careers.

Regardless of whether the mission succeeds, the runners will probably make some enemies. If the team fails to slide past the Nukes and a humongous fire erupts, the runners will make Grinder's "list," which is much nastier than Monty's. Even if they do manage to avoid a major conflict with the Nukes, Grinder will mentally file the runners as "people to keep an eye on." The desperate, panicked Stilettoes will be less likely to mark the runners as eternal enemies.

Brisbie may prove to be a valuable ally for the runners if they play nice. If the gamemaster feels Brisbie would take to the team for being good sports, the Raven shaman could become a street contact for the runners following the *Did You Forget Something?* segue. Obviously, if the runners take an aggressive stance with Brisbie and attack him, he will not want anything to do with the team in the future.

AWARDING KARMA

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

Surviving the run	2 points
Recovering the prototype	1 point
Avoiding combat with the Nukes	1 point
Avoiding combat with Brisbie and the ally spirit	1 point

LEGWORX

Monty Boudreaux, Fixer

Appropriate Contacts: Any Street Contacts (TN 4)

Success	Result
0	The game show host? What do you want with him?
1-2	Yeah, I've heard of him. He's a middleman for corp Johnsons. Got a decent enough rep.
3	He's a pretty straight dealer; he'll tell you whatever the employer told him, and he doesn't deal with folks that screw shadowrunners over. Used to be a runner himself, I hear.
4+	From what I've heard, Monty will arrange just about any job for the right price; a lot of corps go to him for wetwork. There's rumors that he's even set up some "terrorist incidents," but I don't know if I believe that.

Neuranalysis

Appropriate Contacts: Any Corporate Contacts (TN 4)

Success	Result
0	I'm sorry, but I have no data on them.
1	A local biotechnology corporation, if I recall correctly.
2	They design medical diagnostic equipment, very specialized technology for the most part.

3-4 They apparently had a rather unpleasant incident during the blackout. It seems that someone came in and destroyed their computers and set their labs on fire. There's really very little of the company left, or so I'm told.

5+ I recall hearing rumors that Yamatetsu was showing a lot of interest in Neuranalysis a few weeks ago, possibly planning a purchase.

Wally Huggins

Matrix Research (Target Number 6)

Success	Result
0	No data found.
1-2	Male human, 38 years old. Lives in Newport, Bellevue.
3	Employed as a Technical Engineer II by Neuranalysis, Inc., Bellevue, Seattle, UCAS, since February 2060.
4	Unmarried. No military background. No criminal record.
5+	Frequent patron of disreputable BTL parlors.

CAST OF SHADOWS

MONTY BOUDREAUX

Monty is a 33-year-old elf, a former shadowrunner turned freelance fixer. He doesn't believe in lying to his customers or to the runners he hires, but that's not a moral decision; it's just bad for business. He will arrange any sort of work for the right price, and has no compunction about killing innocents in order to complete his assigned mission. Monty is an adept, and while he has not been on an actual run in years, he can still be a dangerous opponent if crossed.

B	Q	S	C	I	W	E	M	R
5	7	5	4	6	6	6	7	6 (8)

INIT: 6 (8) + 1D6 (2D6)

Dice Pools: Combat 9 (11)

Karma Pool/Professional Rating: 4/4

Race: Elf

Active Skills: Athletics 4, Aura Reading 4, Edged Weapons 6 (9), Etiquette 5, Negotiation 5, Pistols 5, Pole Arms/Staves 4, Stealth 5 (7)

Knowledge Skills: Seattle Shadows 5

Adept Powers: Astral Perception, Combat Sense (2), Improved Ability: Edged Weapons (3), Improved Ability: Stealth (2), Improved Reflexes (1)

Metamagic (Initiate Grade 1): Masking

Armor: Secure Long Coat [4/2]

Weapons: Browning Max-Power [HP, SA, 9M, 10 (c) w/2 extra clips APDS, concealable holster, laser sight]

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

Dikoted survival knife [7M]

Dikoted katana [9S, +1 Reach]—only carried if he expects combat

**WALLY HUGGINS**

The "disgruntled employee" mold fits Wally like a glove. He is desperately addicted to BTLs and his mind sharpens quickly if he smells an opportunity to score anything to support his habit.

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

INIT: 4 + 1D6

Dice Pools: Combat 6 (used for dodging!)

Karma Pool/Professional Rating: 1/1

Race: Human

Active Skills: Car 3, Computer 5, Electronics 5, Etiquette 3 (Corp 4), Negotiation 2

Knowledge Skills: Medicine 3, Popular Music 3, BTL Houses 5

GRINDER

Grinder is an African-American dwarf adept who organized the Red Hot Nukes after he retired from a short shadowrunning career. He started the gang for a deep, dark, secret reason—he claims to have discovered a horrible future event while on an anti-megacorp run a few years ago, and he's grooming the Nukes to prevent that event. He is generally in a jovial mood, unless somebody challenges his authority and gets in his face. Then they'd better duck.

When Grinder meditates, he holds the palm of his left hand over the flame of his lucky lighter until the flesh starts to sizzle. The center of his left hand is charred black. For divining, Grinder looks to the way in which a firecracker explodes. He lights one, tosses it into the air, then after the explosion, he studies the pattern of the remains to perform his divination. He loves to use his quick draw adept power when tossing grenades.

B	Q	S	C	I	W	E	M	R
6	5	7	4	6	7	6	10	5 (9)

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

Dice Pools: Combat 9

Karma Pool/Professional Rating: 6/4

Race: Dwarf

Active Skills: Clubs 5, Centering 6, Demolitions 7, Divining 4, Electronics 6, Etiquette 3 (Street 5), Heavy Weapons 6, Intimidation 5, Launch Weapons 6, Leadership 5, Meditation 6, Pistols 5, Sortilege 4, Stealth 3, Submachine Guns 3, Throwing Weapons 6

Knowledge Skills: Barrens 6, Chemistry 4, Corporate Politics 3, Gang Lore 5, Magic Background 5

Adept Powers: Improved Reflexes (2), Iron Will (2), Mystic Armor (2), Quick Draw, Pain Resistance (7)

Metamagic (Initiate Grade 4): Centering using Meditation (Athletics, Build/Repair, Stealth, Technical), Divining using Sortilege

Armor [5/5]: Armor jacket [5/3], mystic armor [+0/+2]

Weapons: Ares Predator [HP, SA, 9M, 15 (c) w/2 extra clips EX explosive]

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

ArmTech MGL-6 [GL, SA, As grenade, 6 (c)]

Range (TN): 5-50 (4), 51-100 (5), 101-150 (8), 151-300 (9)

6 white phosphorous grenades [14M/10L, -1/m]

6 incendiary grenades

10 AP offensive grenades [10S (f), -1/m]

Crowbar [9M Stun, +1 Reach]

RED HOT NUKES (5)

B	Q	S	C	I	W	E	M	R
5	5	5	3	5	4	6	0	5

INIT: 5 + 1D6

Dice Pools: Combat 7

Karma Pool/Professional Rating: 2/3

Race: Dwarf

Active Skills: Clubs 4, Demolitions 5, Electronics 4, Etiquette 3 (Street 5), Heavy Weapons 4, Intimidation 2, Launch Weapons 4, Pistols 4, Stealth 3, Submachine Guns 3, Throwing Weapons 3, Unarmed Combat 4

Knowledge Skills: The Barrens 5, Chemistry 3, Gang Lore 3,

Martial Arts: Brawling 4 (Close Combat, Zoning)

Armor: Armor jacket [5/3]

Weapons: Seco LD-120 [LP, SA, 7L, 12 (c) w/1 extra clip explosive ammo, laser sight]

Range (TN): 0-5 (3), 6-15 (4), 16-30 (5), 31-50 (8)

3 incendiary grenades

5 AP offensive grenades [10S (f), -1/m]

Crowbar [7M Stun, +1 Reach]

SLAMMIN' SAMMY AND PORTNOY (RED HOT NUKES ADEPTS)

B	Q	S	C	I	W	E	M	R
5	5	6	3	6	4	6	7	5

INIT: 5 + 1D6

Dice Pools: Combat 7

Karma Pool/Professional Rating: 3/3

Race: Dwarf

Active Skills: Clubs 4, Demolitions 6, Electronics 5, Etiquette 3 (Street 5), Heavy Weapons 5, Intimidation 4, Launch Weapons 5, Leadership 2, Pistols 4, Stealth 3, Submachine Guns 3, Throwing Weapons 4, Unarmed Combat 4 (Fist 6)

Knowledge Skills: The Barrens 5, Chemistry 4, Corporate Politics 2, Gang Lore 4, Magic Background 4

Martial Arts: Kung Fu 5 (Focus Strength, Vicious Blow)

Adept Powers (Both): Smashing Blow, Free Fall (4), Improved Senses (Improved Taste, Sound Dampening), Quick Draw, Pain Resistance (3), Rooting (4)

Adept Powers (Slammin' Sammy): Iron Will (1), Missile Parry

Adept Powers (Portnoy): Rapid Healing (2), Temperature Tolerance (2)

Metamagic (Initiate Grade 1): None

Armor: Armor jacket [5/3]

Weapons (Slammin' Sammy): Aztechnology Lasher [ML, SS, As rocket/missile, 1 (b)]

Range (TN): 20-150 (4), 151-450 (5), 451-1,200 (8), 1,201-3,000 (9)

3 Anti-Personnel Rockets [16D, -1/.5m]

Ares Predator [HP, SA, 9M, 15 (c) w/2 extra clips explosive ammo]

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

Weapons (Portnoy): 10 white phosphorous grenades [14M/10L, -1/m]

10 incendiary grenades

15 AP offensive grenades [10S (f), -1/m]

Aluminum Bat [7M Stun, +1 Reach]

LADY FINGERS AND FLO (RED HOT NUKES ADEPTS)

B	Q	S	C	I	W	E	M	R
5	5	6	3	6	5	6	8	5

INIT: 5 + 1D6

Dice Pools: Combat 8

Karma Pool/Professional Rating: 4/3

Race: Dwarf

Active Skills: Clubs 4, Demolitions 6, Electronics 5, Etiquette 3 (Street 5), Heavy Weapons 5, Intimidation 4, Launch Weapons 5, Leadership 3, Pistols 3, Stealth 3, Shotguns 4, Throwing Weapons 5

Knowledge Skills: The Barrens 5, Chemistry 4, Corporate Politics 2, Gang Lore 4, Magic Background 4

Adept Powers (Both): Astral Perception, Quick Draw, Mystic Armor (4), Pain Resistance (3), Rooting (4)

Adept Powers (Lady Fingers): Enhanced Perception (2)

Adept Powers (Flo): Improved Senses (Direction Sense, Flare Compensation, Improved Taste, Sound Dampening)

Metamagic (Initiate Grade 2): None

Armor [5/7]: Armor jacket [5/3], mystic armor [+0/+4]

Weapons (Lady Fingers): RPK HMG [HMG, FA, 10S, 40 (c) w/2 extra clips explosive ammo]

Range (TN): 0-80 (4), 81-250 (5), 251-800 (6), 801-1,500 (9)

Weapons (Flo): Remington 990 [Shotgun, SA, 10S, 8 (m) w/10 extra rounds and 10 Big D's Temper shells]

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

Aluminum Bat [7M Stun, +1 Reach]

BRISBIE

Brisbie is a rail-thin street shaman who follows the path of Raven. His hair is long, black and stringy, and his jacket is festooned with feathers, crystals and bones. Born and raised in the

Barrens, he is the quintessential gutter shaman, surviving by scrounging, engaging in minor criminal activities and selling his services to local gangs. Brisbie loves spirits, and especially likes using them for tricks and pranks. He doesn't have a home; he prefers to sleep on rooftops under the open sky. He has few friends, but also few enemies. His only constant companion is his ally spirit, Mustard.

Brisbie's involvement in this adventure is purely by chance. Hired by the Rusted Stilettoes to provide astral protection over the garage, he watched astrally as Huggins stashed the prototype and murdered Doss. After Huggins left, Brisbie grabbed the case for himself. When the Red Hot Nukes arrived, Brisbie didn't interfere. After all, he mischievously told himself, he was hired to provide *astral*—not *physical*—security.

B	Q	S	C	I	W	E	M	R
4	5	3	7	5	6	6	6	5

INIT: 5 + 1D6, Astral INIT: 25 + 1D6

Dice Pools: Astral Combat 9, Combat 8, Spell 5

Karma Pool/Professional Rating: 3/4

Race: Human

Active Skills: Athletics 3, Aura Reading 5, Conjuring 7 (Summoning 8), Electronics 5, Etiquette 3 (Street 4), Negotiation 5, Pistols 3, Sorcery 6, Stealth 5

Knowledge Skills: The Barrens 6, Bird Knowledge 4, Cooking 4 (Sandwiches 6), Redmond Gangs 5, Riddles 4, Scrounging 5

Totem: Raven, +2 dice manipulation spells and sky spirits, +1 magical TNs when not under open sky

Spells: Analyze Device 4, Analyze Truth 4, Clout 5, Control Emotions 6, Control Thoughts 6, Heal 4, Levitate 4, Magic Fingers 5, Mask 4, Mass Confusion 6, Mist 3, Night Vision 3, Shadow 4, Stench 4, Stunball 4

Armor: Real leather jacket [0/2]

MUSTARD

Named after Brisbie's favorite condiment, Mustard is the Raven shaman's ally spirit and partner in crime. Infused with the same dark humor as his summoner, Mustard enjoys sowing chaos and confusion. Mustard can materialize in one of two forms: an average-sized raven or a short, rotund human with a shaved head and an elaborate raven tattoo on his head. Mustard is Force 5.

B	Q	S	C	I	W	E	R
6	5	5	7	5	6	5A	5

INIT: 15 + 1D6, Astral INIT: 25 + 1D6

Dice Pools: Astral Combat 7, Combat 8, Spell 5

Karma Pool/Professional Rating: 3/4

Race: Ally spirit

Active Skills: Electronics 3, Negotiation 5, Sorcery 6, Stealth 5

Powers: Aid power, materialization, sorcery, sense link, telepathic link, three-dimensional movement

Spells: Heal 4, Control Thoughts 6, Magic Fingers 5, Mass Confusion 6, Stench 4

DID YOU FORGET SOMETHING?



WHAT'S UP, CHUMMER?

Some time later, when the runners are out strolling, driving or whatever, they pass by a projection movie theater. One of the runners is hit with an overwhelming urge for hot, buttery popcorn and an old-style flick. No matter what their current agenda is, the runner insists on partaking in a bit of nostalgia. Once inside the theater, the runners encounter Brisbie, who has used a Control Emotions spell on the unsuspecting runner to lure him in. He needs to discuss some additional business.

The SENSE prototype the runners turned over to Monty was not the only one in existence—it was an attractively-designed shell prototype for use in stage demonstrations (see *Breakthrough*, p. 38). The case also contained a second prototype, one that actually functions. Brisbie held onto the working SENSE unit, hoping to find a use for the technology, but he quickly became bored with trying to figure out how it worked. He figured if the team was still interested, he might be able to get a little more out of the deal. After a few days of recon, he and his ally spirit were able to locate and follow one of the runners.

The runners have an opportunity to score a piece of tech that could make their lives much easier in the coming adventures, and Deus doesn't have a clue that another SENSE unit is floating around. The AI is a satisfied customer.

TELL IT TO THEM STRAIGHT

The facade of the Bijou is in decent shape for a building over 100 years old. Large, bright pink bulbs are arranged to form letters, spelling the name of the theater on a vertical sign which hangs out over the sidewalk, illuminating the dark surrounding area for half a block. A classic is playing today—"An American Werewolf In London." The heady aroma of fresh popcorn wafts through the propped-open, gold-edged double doors which lead into the cool black cinema.

A pimply-faced teenage elf stands alert at the ticket window in an oversized maroon vest and black bow tie. He squeaks in your general direction, "Welcome to the Bijou. I love you all so much, it's free admission for the whole lot of you. Enjoy the show ... hope you're not jittery." He aims his vacant, robotic smile, braces and all, over your shoulder and into the night.

When the runners enter the theater, read the following aloud:

There are only two people in the theater. A rail-thin human with stringy black hair and a suede jacket festooned with feathers, crystals and bones sits in an aisle seat in the middle of the theater. A large human sporting a backwards baseball cap is plopped down in the center of the front row. On the screen, a rotting corpse sits in a movie theater talking to a obviously upset guy with dark hair. The background moans of an adult film accentuate the bizarre nature of the scene. The thin patron with the stringy hair turns his attention from the screen to you. "This has got to be my favorite scene. Cracks me up every time."

HOOKS

A surreal interlude. The whole scene could even take on the feel of a dream sequence in a horror film. Emphasize the deserted street—litter swirling down the sidewalk like tumbleweeds, the old theater as a beacon in a sea of blackness. The electric sign in front of the theater produces an eerie hum.

There is really no danger in this encounter. Have fun and play up the old-time movie house atmosphere—sticky floors, creaky and uncomfortable seats, the musty smell of mildew.

BEHIND THE SCENES

Brisbie is manipulating the encounter. He has cast a Control Emotions spell on the most weak-willed of the characters to draw the team into the theater. The pimply elf at the ticket window is being manipulated by a Control Thoughts spell. Both of these spells are potent due to the assistance of Brisbie's ally spirit Mustard (see p. 50 for details on Mustard). If the runners try to strike up a conversation with the kid at the ticket window, he will only stare straight ahead, occasionally repeating phrases like "Enjoy the show" and "Would you like butter with that?" Currently, there is no one working behind the concession stand and, despite the smell, it appears the theater is out of popcorn. The team will be able to hear the film playing from inside the Bijou's one and only theater. The runner under the influence of Brisbie's spell should be unable to resist entering the theater to check out the movie.

Once the runners are in the theater and Brisbie has introduced himself, he will cut right to the chase. He will inform the runners he has another SENSE prototype, and if they are interested, he will be willing to part with it for relatively little, since the runners were such good sports during their earlier encounter. The same guidelines for negotiation with Brisbie can carry over from the first encounter (see p. 46), except he will not be out to trick the runners and will accept less. He has

taken a liking to the ragtag team and doesn't mind helping them out. Also, the SENSE is useless to him because he can't figure out how to operate it, so like any good Raven shaman, he has to at least try to get something for it while the item is still hot.

The ally spirit Mustard is watching the proceedings from up in the projection booth and will be on the lookout for trouble. If the runners become aggressive, Brisbie will try to run as Mustard uses all the defensive spells in his arsenal. Brisbie's goal will be the exit door to the right of the screen, about twelve rows down from his aisle seat.

The prototype is in the projection booth with Mustard, and when the deal is struck, the spirit will deliver the SENSE to the team in the lobby from behind the concession stand, along with a box of heavily-buttered popcorn.

Again at the gamemaster's discretion, Brisbie may become a valuable street contact for the team if they have handled his encounters well. Brisbie is lonely and is eager for companionship, even though his mischievous nature tends to drive people away.

A runner will need to make an Electronics or Biotech Skill Test with a TN of 10 to figure out how the SENSE unit works. See p. 82 for details on using the device.

PUSHING THE ENVELOPE

If the gamemaster really feels like getting nutty, the gentleman in the front row could be a wolf shapeshifter (p. 42, *Critters*), just waiting for the opportunity to scare the drek out of a bunch of metahumans by changing forms in the middle of his favorite flick. Wait until the deal is struck, then get busy. The shapeshifter won't actually harm anyone (well, much), but he will try to scare everyone out of the theater. This may also be a bonding opportunity for Brisbie and the team, as they will obviously gang up on the shapeshifter.

DEBUGGING

If the runners wish to attack Brisbie, remind them that the Bijou is a public place and there may be an "innocent" in the theater—the guy in the front row. Also emphasize Brisbie's cooperative stance during this encounter. If he deals with the runners in an up-front manner, they should find no reason to get annoyed with him.

If a magician counters Brisbie's Control spells, he will dispatch another spirit to send a message to the runners—a simple watcher shape like a raven will do. Note that if the runners harmed Brisbie in *Breakthrough*, he will not contact them and will end up selling the unit to Overwatch (see *Outside Influence*, p. 75).

MY NAME IS LEGION



PREPARING TO PLAY

In *My Name is Legion*, Deus will once again hire the runners through intermediaries. This time their job is to extract a computer scientist employed by Cross Applied Technologies. This scientist is developing a new type of Matrix Interface, one that allows a group of deckers to multitask and combine their efforts more efficiently. Deus believes this new type of distributed decking could potentially make his Whites all but unbeatable in the Matrix. Neither Deus nor the runners know that Overwatch, an organization of Deus' enemies, are also aware of the new technology, and they plan to acquire it as a weapon against Deus. Individually, the deckers of Overwatch are no match for a true AI, but together, they hope they might have a chance.

Unfortunately for both sides, the scientist they're after is playing both sides of the fence, and even she doesn't know where her true loyalties lie.

THE BACKSTORY

Over the past several months, Cross Applied Technologies has been working on a new product, code-named "Project Legion," under the direction of lead designer Dr. Olivia Marchand. Dr. Marchand's theory is that brains linked to the Matrix via an ASIST interface are similar in many ways to the nodes of a distributed computer system: in essence, they are extended nodes of the Matrix itself. Her theory suggests the possibility of linking a group of deckers together to form a single "gestalt persona" with the combined processing power of all their brains. Theoretically, the combined persona should be even greater than the sum of its parts. Cross is eager to develop this new technology, which could revolutionize many Matrix operations, and eager to keep the project a secret from their megacorp rivals.

Early designs and tests of the distributed decking technology looked promising. It seemed capable of everything its designers hoped for, and perhaps more. Two months ago, Dr. Marchand and her associates tested the first working prototype of the technology.

It was a disaster.

Of the four test volunteers, two died of massive autonomic systems failure. A third test subject remains in a coma at a Cross-owned clinic in Montreal. The only survivor of the test was Dr. Marchand herself, and she spent nearly a week in a coma before regaining consciousness.



After receiving a clean bill of health from company physicians, she returned to work as soon as she was able. She was determined to discover the flaw in her project, and the company praised her for her diligence.

It was only days after her recovery that Dr. Marchand began experiencing blackouts, periods of "missing time" she could not account for. At first, she chalked them up to fatigue, assuming she was falling asleep at her desk. Later she began to suspect they could be aftereffects of the distributed decking test. Though concerned for her health, she concealed her symptoms from her superiors. If they knew, she reasoned, they would probably remove her from the project, and someone else would take credit for all her hard work and sacrifice. She couldn't allow that. She was so close to success.

Then pressure began coming down from above. Lucien Cross himself was interested in Dr. Marchand's work, and he wanted to see further progress as soon as possible. Marchand was granted additional funding and a larger staff, but with them came longer hours and more stress. The blackouts became more and more common, and Dr. Marchand developed the paranoid sensation that someone was constantly looking over her shoulder, or staring at her from across the room. Even her coworkers became aware of her edginess and mood swings.

Things finally came to a head when Marchand found herself screaming at a junior programmer for a minor mistake, with everyone in the room staring at her in shock. Shortly afterward, she found herself in a company counselor's office. He recommended a short vacation, a break from the stress of work, and Dr. Marchand reluctantly agreed. When the counselor asked her where she wanted to go, Olivia Marchand said "Home, I suppose. New Orleans." In order to keep tabs on their potentially unstable genius, the corp suits made arrangements to convey and house Marchand on a company yacht. Olivia called her grandmother, a Voodoo mambo named Flora Rochambeau, and suggested they make the trip back to their hometown together. They left town the same night. Which is where our story begins.

No one, Olivia Marchand herself included, realizes the devastating effect the distributed decking test had on her consciousness. The device caused a neural overload that fractured her mind into multiple personalities. The "core" Olivia persona is completely unaware of the other individuals sharing space in her head. She experiences their presence as blackouts, blank periods where she remembers nothing at all. The other personalities emerged to deal with the stress of the overload, and they reappear when Marchand experiences stress or other specific stimuli. They take their personalities in part from people Marchand once knew, and in part from the buried, long-denied aspects of her own personality and memories, particularly her upbringing in a Voodoo culture. See the *Cast of Shadows*, p. 69, for more on Olivia Marchand and her other personas.

TIMELINE

The following is a breakdown of the events in this adventure, in roughly the order they should happen. The gamemaster can use this as a guide to the overall flow of the adventure and modify it as necessary.

- The runners are contacted and hired by Toshi Akimura. If not already in New Orleans, they fly there and meet with Akimura aboard his private jet.

- The runners have some time to do legwork and research about Dr. Marchand. They meet up with a decker in New Orleans who can give them some useful information.

- Dr. Marchand and her grandmother arrive in New Orleans on board the Cross Tech yacht on the Mississippi River.

- The runners plan and execute their extraction of Dr. Marchand around the same time the deckers of Overwatch attempt to help Dr. Marchand escape. Marchand's grandmother insists on going with her.

- The runners are pursued by Seraphim agents and observed by Overwatch as they plan their escape from New Orleans.

- The runners have to find a way to get back to Seattle and turn Dr. Marchand over to Deus' minions.

- At the meet, Dr. Marchand loses it and her grandmother summons a loa spirit to protect her, only to see the magic go terribly wrong.

NIGHT FLIGHT

WHAT'S UP, CHUMMER?

The runners meet their Mr. Johnson, a well-known New Orleans fixer named Toshi Akimura, to learn the particulars of the run. Akimura is a man interested in security, so he arranges to meet the runners on board his private jet and talk while they're in the air. If they take the run, he brings them to New Orleans to get started. If they don't, he drops them back off and heads to his next appointment. If the runners seriously annoy or threaten him, well, it's a long way down without a parachute ...

TELL IT TO THEM STRAIGHT

As the scenario begins, read the following aloud:

You've been to a lot of places to meet a Johnson, but not too many of them have asked to meet you at the airport, or asked you to come ready to run. When you arrive, you're ushered past security to a sleek Lear Platinum jet waiting in a private hangar. Good thing, too, considering you were asked to show up in full gear.

Some hired muscle meets you at the foot of the stairs leading up into the plane. The guards quietly and efficiently stow your weapons and gear in the plane's cargo compartment, then wave you up the stairs and inside. They follow you up and close the door behind you.

You slip through a richly decorated curtain into the interior of the plane. The main cabin is nicely appointed, with comfortable chairs rather than cramped airline seats, a small conference table, and even a wet bar and telecom setup. The muscle-boys disappear into the fore cabin, leaving you alone for the moment. You hear the engines begin to whine and a voice comes from hidden speakers in the cabin.

"Please take your seats and make yourselves comfortable. I'll be with you in a moment."

A few minutes later, the engine hum rises to a howl and the Lear taxis smoothly out of the hangar. The takeoff is quick



and smooth, and you climb rapidly to a cruising altitude that affords you a spectacular view of the terrain below. From up here, the Sprawl doesn't look all that bad. The lights are actually working down there for the moment, making the whole thing appear much more peaceful than it really is. The light casts shadows that mask the worst scars of the urban jungle. It's almost pleasant.

The curtain parts and a man steps into the room. He's Eurasian, of average height with a slim build, sharply dressed in a dark corporate-cut suit. Prints of oriental dragons chase each other across his silk tie, and his short, dark hair has gone gray at the temples. He looks you over with dark eyes that don't miss a single detail, and he seems to recognize each of you in turn. A hint of silver gleams from the datajack port behind his right ear.

"Welcome," he says. You recognize the voice that greeted you over the intercom. "My name is Toshi Akimura. Let's get down to business, shall we?"

Akimura seats himself in one of the chairs, folding his hands on the slick black surface of the conference table. "I have a job to offer you, a fairly straightforward extraction run. The job pays a total of 200,000 nuyen and requires transportation of the subject to a delivery point of the client's choosing. The timetable is somewhat limited, so work must begin immediately. If you're interested, I can provide you with the details. Otherwise, I will have to look elsewhere."

If the runners agree to the job, read the following:

Akimura touches the surface of the conference table, and a circular patch begins to glow. A holo appears: a Creole woman with short, dark hair and skin the color of coffee. She's wearing a white lab coat over a dark turtleneck and a datajack is visible behind her ear.

"This is Dr. Olivia Marchand," Akimura says. "She is the head of Project Legion, a research project for Cross Applied Technologies. Project Legion is a prototype for what they're calling 'distributed decking,' a means of allowing multiple deckers to act together as a single parallel system. From all I've heard, the project shows some promise, but it's still in the early stages.

"Dr. Marchand is taking a brief sabbatical on a private Cross Tech yacht, which has made its way down the Mississippi River from St. Louis. The 'vacation' is ostensibly a remedy for stress and long hours, but Dr. Marchand actually wants to leave Cross Tech due to some conflicts regarding her continued management of the Legion project. Her presence in New Orleans, away from Cross' usual security measures, affords us with an opportunity.

"Marchand arrived in New Orleans yesterday. One of my agents is gathering the information you'll need—the yacht's exact location, length of stay and security measures, etc. There should be enough in your briefing packet to let you plan and execute the extraction, but there isn't a lot of margin for error. If Cross catches wind of this, we probably won't get another shot. Marchand will be back inside the company's best security measures in Montreal. Whereas security on a yacht can only be so tough, yes?" Akimura smiles.

When the plane lands, read the following:

After some chitchat and fine food, the plane lands at the New Orleans airport. You taxi past the main terminals and head for a secluded bank of hangers. Through the Lear's windows, you can see an assortment of private planes, including a Rolls-Royce Phaeton and a Volkswagen Superkombi Van. As the Lear glides to a stop, you see a woman leap from the Phaeton and run towards your plane. Akimura, also looking out of a window towards the Phaeton, frowns and excuses himself. He disappears through the curtain. You hear the plane's pressurized door slide open, and then the sounds of bustling mechanics and technicians outside drown out whatever's going on.

After a moment, Akimura returns through the curtain. I regret to say that my agent, a decker called Poison Lily, was found dead. She was supposed to deliver the information on the package you're retrieving. She informed my people that she did download the information, and she gave it to her boyfriend for safekeeping. Miss Lily's address can be found on this chip. I suggest you start there and get the information from her boyfriend ... ah ... "

"Remy, sir," says a female voice from behind the curtain. " ... Remy," Akimura continues smoothly. "There is also a telecom number on that chip. Call me when you have the package."

HOOKS

The above introduction can begin in any city, from Seattle to New York. If the runners are from New Orleans, the gamemaster can modify the above scene by having Akimura meet them somewhere else, or by having him "offer them a lift" back home from the end of a previous out-of-town run.

Akimura only says that the runners were "recommended" to him, but not by whom. Of course, Deus chose the runners based on their prior performance. Akimura doesn't know their real employer is Deus; he deals only with Deus' intermediaries over the Matrix. He suspects the client is a Renraku rep who's looking to snatch Cross Tech's new Matrix project, and he's not too far from the truth.

Emphasize the high-class nature of the setting and of Akimura himself. Runners may have heard of the New Orleans fixer before and know that he's said to move in important circles. The feel of the meeting should be like the start of a slick espionage film. The runners should be impressed by Akimura's style, but they should also get the feeling that they wouldn't be here if he didn't think they were good.

BEHIND THE SCENES

The meeting with Toshi Akimura is exactly what it seems, a genuine job offer. Akimura isn't aware of the additional complications of Deus, Overwatch, or Marchand's mental state. To him, this is a fairly straightforward extraction, though he's experienced enough to know that few shadowruns are as simple as they seem. Akimura contacted the runners because his client requested them specifically. He doesn't know why, and he doesn't discuss it with the runners.

If the runners accept the job, Akimura signals the pilot to head for New Orleans. He then goes over the specifics of the

run and answers the characters' questions to the best of his ability. His information is limited, since the job came up fairly abruptly and there wasn't time to compile much information. He hired a decker named Poison Lily to hack into the Cross Tech system to gather information, but the Seraphim tracked her down. When they found her, she didn't have any of the stolen data on her, and she was killed trying to escape from them. Akimura believes Lily's datachip is in the hands of Lily's boy-toy, a man named Remy. The runners need to find him and acquire the chip.

In New Orleans, Akimura delivers the runners to a safehouse they can use as a base of operations. Once they're in New Orleans, he'll give them free rein to handle the run however they see fit.

PUSHING THE ENVELOPE

This scene is intended to be fairly straightforward, an introduction to the action later on. If the gamemaster wants to start things off with a bang, however, one of the muscle-boys on board Akimura's plane could be a disguised or brainwashed assassin sent by Marchand's Sisi persona (see p. 65) to kill the fixer and prevent Deus' agents from capturing Olivia. Use the Street Samurai stats (p. 75, SR3) for the assassin and give him a slivergun or similar flechette weapon. Keep in mind that any gunshots that miss their target are likely to punch holes in the windows or hull of the Lear jet, causing a catastrophic loss in cabin pressure. Characters who aren't strapped in must make Strength (5) Tests to avoid being blown out of the plane.

The assassin will kill the other guard and the pilot first, sending the jet into a dive. The runners not only have to deal with a cybered killer, but must keep the plane from crashing. If none of them have the necessary piloting skills, Akimura does, and he can keep the plane in the air. The killer's first shot injures Akimura, but doesn't kill him, since he's wearing form-fitting armor under his clothing. If seriously outmatched, the assassin, who is already wearing a parachute, tries to escape by opening the plane's hatch and jumping out. This will also cause the cabin pressure to drop, as above.

If you choose to use the assassin scenario, try to make sure Akimura survives. He still needs to get the runners to New Orleans to carry out the run, though he also instructs them to look into any leads that might reveal who hired the assassin. Unfortunately, Sisi covered her tracks too well, and the assassin shouldn't be captured alive.

DEBUGGING

If the runners refuse the job, Akimura drops a hint, something along the lines of "A pity, my client asked for you specifically. Apparently the things he heard about you were exaggerated." If that fails to engage the runners' interest, Akimura returns them to the airport and arranges for a different shadowrunning team. The gamemaster can let the players come at the events from another angle, or can just skip over this adventure and move on to *Revelations*, p. 72. In this case, Overwatch learns more about the runners by monitoring communications between Akimura and Deus' proxies.

The fact that the runners turned down a job from Deus suggests to Overwatch that they might be ripe for recruitment.

If the runners are actively hostile towards Akimura, remind them that they don't have their usual weapons and gear and Akimura's bodyguards are right outside the cabin. If they cause him any serious trouble, Akimura has the offending runners beaten and thrown out of the plane, putting a quick end to their careers. Hopefully the players' next characters will be a bit more respectful towards their fixers.

A NIGHT IN NEW ORLEANS

WHAT'S UP, CHUMMER?

In this scene, the runners try to track down Poison Lily's boy-toy Remy and recover the datachip containing Lily's intel from the Cross run. Unfortunately, the Seraphim are also looking for Remy, as are the deckers of Overwatch. Overwatch manages to find Remy first, but the runners still have a chance to get hold of the chip, provided they can avoid the Seraphim at the same time.

TELL IT TO THEM STRAIGHT

As the scenario begins, read the following aloud:

New Orleans. The Big Easy. The Crescent City. Even in the twenty-first century, New Orleans has an air of magic and mystery to it, perhaps even more so since the Awakening brought real magic to these streets and darkened alleyways. The French Quarter still retains its old-world charm, even though the streets are often filled with corporate suits vacationing or merely enjoying all their city has to offer. Parts of the lakefront and the areas just outside the Quarter are havens for all manner of shadow activities, giving you plenty of places to move freely. Still, you have the feeling that someone, or something, is watching you from the city's darkened alleys.

Akimura has arranged for a safehouse in a run-down building near the lake shore, and he's given you Poison Lily and Remy Duchamps' last known address, a decaying southern gothic house outside the Quarter. If you can find Duchamps, you should be able to get Lily's datachip and the information it contains.

HOOKS

This scene serves to introduce the players to the feel of New Orleans. Play up the decaying Old World charm of the French Quarter, the Creole and Cajun culture, and the overall foreign nature of the place. Unless the runners are from New Orleans, the city is likely to be strange to them. Magic and voodoo are nearly universally accepted ... the place seems to ooze mana. Emphasize the differences between this and what they're used to.

The runners should also have a feeling of urgency. The clock is running and they only have a limited amount of time to find Remy and the datachip. They know the Seraphim are somewhere in the city, and they're looking for Remy as well. Time is of the essence.

BEHIND THE SCENES

Not surprisingly, Remy isn't home. The small apartment on the third floor of the house has been thoroughly ransacked: drawers pulled out and dumped on the floor, furniture and mattress overturned, wall-hangings torn down to check the walls behind them, and so forth. Despite the mess, it's clear neither Lily nor Remy were fastidious housekeepers. The sink is piled with dirty dishes and discarded food containers covered with several days growth of mold. The place reeks of cigarette smoke, cheap synthanol, and even less pleasant odors.

The apartment's layout is fairly simple—a common area that includes a tiny kitchen, a small bedroom, and a bathroom with a shower stall. A fire escape is bolted to the wall just outside the bedroom window, but the window is locked from the inside and has to be opened or broken to allow access. The door has a maglock, the Seraphim used a maglock passkey and left no sign that the door was forced. The apartment manager is Marguerite, an old Creole woman who swears a lot in French and calls Remy a “bum” and Lily “cheap whore.” And those are the nice things she has to say about them. She doesn't care what the runners do with the stuff in the room, and a small bribe (around 100¥) is enough to keep her quiet about their visit.

The runners can search through the apartment with an Intelligence (4) Test. There's not much to find, unfortunately. There are several burned-out BTL chips discarded on the bedroom floor, but no sign of the dat-chip they are looking for.

The Eyes of the Seraphim

Naturally, the Seraphim are keeping Remy's doss under surveillance to see if anyone else shows up there. A Seraphim agent—Juliet Sienna—is in one of the apartments across the street, using a laser microphone and surveillance equipment to keep watch over Remy's place. She can see and hear virtually everything in the apartment, so keep in mind that whatever the runners say to each other, and whatever they discover, will be known to the Seraphim. Juliet will also take digital pictures of all the runners and scan the Matrix for any dirt on them. SINless characters are likely to come up blank unless they are wanted for a crime and the authorities know their faces.

When the runners leave Remy's doss, Juliet follows to see where they go and whom they talk to. To see if the runners notice her, make an Open Stealth Test for her, then secret Perception Tests for each player, using Juliet's test result as a Target Number. Spells like Detect Enemies will not detect Juliet, because she does not yet intend any direct harm towards the

runners. Juliet does her best not to be noticed and tries to pull a fade immediately if the runners do notice her. Keep in mind that she is a corporate citizen and a licensed security operative, while the runners are SINless criminals. If the runners cause a public scene, the NOPS (New Orleans Police Services) will probably believe Juliet over them.

Finding Remy

There are a number of different ways the runners could track down Remy Duchamps. The main possibilities are listed below, but feel free to allow the players to try different means of locating the missing joy-boy. If they come up with a different plan, give it a fair chance of success.



- The runners can do some old-fashioned legwork and ask around about Remy's usual hangouts and so forth. This requires a Street Etiquette (5) Test with a total of 15 successes, which the runners can accumulate separately, one test per runner. This simulates the runners talking to various people. Of course, a failed roll might alert Remy that someone else is looking for him.

- A decker can make a Computer (6) Test to hack Remy's credit report and find out where he's used his credit stick recently, which should lead the runners right to him.

- A magician can use ritual sorcery to track him, using items from his apartment (see p. 38, *MITS*). The runners can find usable traces of hair in the shower or toenail clippings next to the bed—though they may actually be Lily's rather than Remy's.

- A magician can use the Search power of a nature spirit, but since Remy is in another hearth location, that spirit cannot track his exact location, it can only determine that he is not “outside.” (See p. 99, *MITS*.) A watcher could find Remy if his physical description is given in very good detail, but this may prove fruitless because the magician has never assensed Remy's aura.

- After a thorough search of the apartment, the characters may find used BTL chips bearing the logo of a place called “The Brain Disco” on them. The logo will not immediately be familiar, but it is a picture of a metahuman brain with lightning bolts shooting from it. Any New Orleans-based Street Contact (TN 4) with four successes or any New Orleans-based Corporate Contact (TN 6) with 5 successes can tell them what it is.

The Brain Disco

Remy is holed up in a BTL den called “The Brain Disco” along the lakefront area. The place is a combination coffin hotel and BTL parlor where patrons rent small cubicles and get smashed for as long as their credit holds out. Shortly after



he got his hands on Lily's datachip, Remy sold the data on it to an unknown buyer who contacted him over the Matrix. (This was Dodger from *Overwatch*, though Remy doesn't know it.) Flush with Dodger's nuyen, Remy is using various popular new BTL programs to cook his brain cells to a nice medium-well consistency.

He still has the chip, however, since he only uploaded the data over the Matrix. Somewhere in the back of his mind, he plans to try selling the data to another buyer. At this point, however, he's more inclined to stay at the Brain Disco until his money runs out and he's thrown him onto the street, or his brain starts melting out of his ears, whichever happens first.

Security at the Brain Disco consists of Bubba, a big Cajun troll wearing a stained and torn "New Orleans Magic" T-shirt, and armed with a baseball bat. The manager is a ferret-like dwarf Bubba calls Stumpy. Neither of them cares what the runners do, so long as they don't damage the equipment or cause trouble for the other patrons. A bribe of 100¥ or more is enough to persuade Stumpy to admit which coffin Remy is renting—#310 on the third floor. A decker can also easily hack into the Brain Disco system with a Computer (4) Test, and find out Remy's been there for the past two days and still has eight days left on his account.

Remy is certainly in no position to offer any resistance to the runners. In fact, unless one of them pulls the plug from his datajack, he simply lies on the padded floor of the coffin, starting into space and mumbling to himself, lost in the virtual pleasure of the simsense feed. If someone does pull the plug, Remy does whatever the runners want so long as they promise not to hurt him. He gives them the chip with no resistance.

Remy

B	Q	S	C	I	W	E	M	R
2	3	3	3	3	3	5.6	0	3

INIT: 3 + 1D6

Dice Pools: Combat 4

Karma Pool/Professional Rating: 1/1

Race: Human

Active Skills: Bike 2, Computers 3, Edged Weapons 2, Electronics 3, Electronics B/R 2

Knowledge Skills: New Orleans BTL Parlors 3

Cyberware: Chipjack, datajack

Gear: Credstick, pocketful of BTL chips, optical chip from Poison Lily, knife [3L]

Note: One point of Body lost to BTL addiction

Stumpy

B	Q	S	C	I	W	E	M	R
6	2	6	3	3	4	4.1	0	2

INIT: 2 + 1D6

Dice Pools: Combat 4

Karma Pool/Professional Rating: 2/2

Race: Dwarf

Active Skills: Computers 4, Electronics 5, Electronics B/R 5, Etiquette 1 (Street 3), Intimidation 2, Negotiation 2, Pistols 2

Knowledge Skills: New Orleans BTL Parlors 5, NOPS Procedures 3, Smuggling 3

Cyberware: Chipjack, datajack, memory (300Mp), telephone

Weapons: Ares Predator [HP, SA, 9M, 15 (c)]

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

Bubba

B	Q	S	C	I	W	E	M	R
8 (9)	3	11	2	2	3	6	0	2

INIT: 2 + 1D6

Dice Pools: Combat 4

Karma Pool/Professional Rating: 2/2

Race: Troll

Active Skills: Clubs 4, Etiquette 1 (Street 3), Intimidation 4 (Physical 5), Negotiation 2

Knowledge Skills: New Orleans Criminal Syndicates 2, NOPS Procedures 4, Smuggling 4

Armor:

Weapons: Baseball bat [12M Stun, +1 (+2) Reach]

A Visitation

Depending on how much useful information Juliet overheard when the runners were talking in Remy's apartment, and provided she's still following them, the Seraphim try to take the datachip from the runners at the Brain Disco. The runners hear a bit of commotion downstairs when Bubba tries to stop the Seraphim agents from entering the Disco, followed by silenced gunshots. (Make a Perception (6) Test to see if the runners can hear the shots over all the other noise.) The Seraphim come up both sets of stairs, trying to surround the runners. There are as many agents as there are runners. Use any SR3 sample characters for the Seraphim field agents, adjusting them as necessary to make the NPCs human.

The Brain Disco is a large, open room banked by steel scaffolding. Catwalks lead to five levels of stacked rows of coffins. Fluorescent lighting flickers and cheap disco music spews from crackling speakers. The place offers a variety of opportunities for a running firefight between the runners and the Seraphim agents. People can leap over the thin safety rails, dangle from the catwalks or try to climb the outside of the scaffolding. Some of the Disco's patrons might emerge from their coffins to see what's going on, and some of them are so brain-fried that they might think this is just another fantasy-sim and try and get involved, either for or against the runners.

PUSHING THE ENVELOPE

In this scene, the runners track down Remy, get the chip, and deal with the Seraphim goons sent to kill them. If you want to take things up a notch, you can increase the runner's opposition. For example, the Brain Disco could be a front for a Tamanous operation, a ring of organleggers (see p. 25 of the *Underworld Sourcebook*), possibly in cahoots with a Petro Voodoo cult (p. 135, *MITS*). The organleggers keep their victims "sedated" using BTLs while slowly cutting them up for spare parts. The runners might have to face Tamanous enforcers, ghouls or zombies living in the vacant coffins, or a Petro hougan.

The Seraphim might go over the top in their efforts to take out the runners, as well. Throw in an urban attack helicopter or tilt-rotor vehicle armed with a mini-gun and some Seraphim



personnel in heavy armor, and the fight at the Brain Disco can turn into an all-out action movie scene: the air full of lead and guns blazing, a corporate mage sending spirits and deadly spells at the runners, and chaos everywhere until the runners damage the chopper and it crashes into the building for a fiery explosion to cover the runners' escape.

DEBUGGING

The two main problems likely to crop up in this section are the runners being unable to find Remy and being unable to handle the Seraphim.

In the first case, the runners shouldn't have too much trouble finding Remy. If they do, you can drop some hints to them, or simply have Akimura call them with Remy's location, which he learned from one of his many contacts throughout the city.

If the Seraphim team proves too difficult for the runners to handle, give them some help in the form of one of the patrons of the Brain Disco who, lost in a BTL fantasy, attacks the Seraphim savagely and distracts them briefly, giving the runners a chance. Again, the Seraphim fight shouldn't become too difficult. They're not the main challenge of the adventure.

THE DOCTOR IS IN

WHAT'S UP, CHUMMER?

This section details the arrival of Dr. Marchand and the Cross-owned *Queen of Babylon*, the yacht where she's staying. The material in this section is fairly free-form, allowing the gamemaster to handle whatever plan the runners use to extract Dr. Marchand from the yacht.

TELL IT TO THEM STRAIGHT

As the scenario begins, read the following aloud:

With the security plans of the *Queen of Babylon* in hand, you can start planning your run. All you need to do is get on board a heavily guarded yacht in the middle of the Mississippi River, grab one of Cross Tech's top computer researchers, and get out of there without the Seraphim blasting the drek out of you. How hard can that be?

HOOKS

How this scene plays out is largely up to the runners and how they want to tackle things. Think of it as an exciting infiltration scene from an espionage movie. The runners are sneaking on board the *Queen*, evading security measures, and dealing with Cross Tech guards to reach Dr. Marchand, only to find out that the good doctor doesn't seem at all aware of the plans to extract her from the company. Her "Meme" Flora is a formidable old woman who refuses to let her granddaughter out of her care. Keep the tension high throughout this scene, but give the runners a fair chance of success, at least until they find out that the situation isn't what they expected.

BEHIND THE SCENES

The chip from Remy contains: A time table for the yacht's very infrequent docking, a passenger manifest, which consists

entirely of Olivia Marchand and Flora Rochambeau (see p. 70), a schedule of crew shifts and deliveries (fresh food, supplies, cleaning crew, and so on), a map of the ship's layout, security details and the ship's stats (see below).

The Queen of Babylon

Handling: 3
Speed: 60 (30)
Acceleration: 5
Hull: 4
Bulwark: 4
Signature: 3/4
Autonav: 4
Sensor: 4
Sonar: 3

Accommodation: 35
Entry Points: 1 set of passenger stairs
Cargo: 80 CF
Load: 1,500 kg
Fuel: Diesel (10 kiloliters)
Economy: 100 km/kiloliter
Other Features: Swivel-mounted Ingram Valiant light machine gun [LMG, BF/FA, 7S, belt]

The *Queen of Babylon* is a 15-meter long yacht owned by Cross Applied Technologies. The yacht has hydrofoil capabilities, allowing it to attain considerable speed. It is equipped with state-of-the-art sensor, navigation and computer technology. Used as an executive ferry, an informal meeting site, and a corporate pleasure craft, the *Queen* normally carries a small crew of less than a dozen. It has a promenade deck with accommodations below decks. See the *Queen of Babylon* map (p. 62) for the yacht's layout. For additional explanation of the vehicle statistics, see *Shadowrun, Third Edition* and the *Cyberpirates* sourcebook.

1. Flying Bridge: The highest point on board the yacht has a complete set of spare controls—a captain's wheel, radio, radar and sonar readouts, and so forth. A waist-high wall surrounds the flying bridge and provides Partial Cover for anyone behind it. There is also a concealed swivel mount, equipped with an Ingram Valiant machine gun, which can be brought into action in one Combat Turn.

2. Main Bridge: Below the flying bridge is the main bridge of the yacht. It contains the same control equipment as the flying bridge, plus a depth finder, navigational charts, computer satellite uplink, GPS system, and similar gear. On all four sides, heavy bulletproof glass windows are set into armor plated lower walls.

3. Foredeck: An open area surrounded by a 1-meter-high armored wall. Firing slots are spaced a meter apart along the wall, allowing people to fire while maintaining Full Cover.

4. Afterdeck: This deck is slightly lower than the foredeck, and is surrounded by a similar armored wall. The padded bench



seats to the aft contain four complete sets of SCUBA gear. A locked bench on the starboard side also contains six AK-97 assault rifles with three extra ammo clips each, for use in protecting the yacht.

5. Galley and Dining Area: The stairs to the lower deck open out into a modern eat-in galley with a full range of appliances, a small fold-down table, and a well-stocked larder.

6-7. Port and Starboard After Cabins: Small but nicely furnished cabins used by the yacht's crew. They contain two double-bunk beds, footlockers, and a small closet space.

8. Engine Room: Two powerful diesel engines take up most of the space in this room, along with various tools and a small diesel generator.

9. Bathroom: A small bathroom with a sink, toilet, and shower stall.

10. Corridor: There is a small fire extinguisher (useful against fire elementals) attached to the wall in this corridor. Otherwise, it is empty.

11. Starboard Cabin: This cabin is set up for the *Queen's* guests. Olivia Marchand and her grandmother are currently using it. The cabin contains two beds, a writing desk, a chest of drawers, and a roomy closet. The floor is nicely carpeted, and a small entertainment center opposite the bed holds a trideo set, stereo and Matrix jackpoint, which connects to the yacht's satellite uplink.

12. Port Cabin: This guest cabin is similar to #11. Gabriel, the Seraphim agent in charge of Dr. Marchand and the *Queen's* security, is currently using it.

13. Forward Starboard Cabin: The nine security personnel working for Gabriel occupy this guest cabin. Three of them are on duty at any given time, while the rest relax and occupy the bunk beds stacked in this cabin.

14. Forward Cabin: This is the captain's cabin, occupied by Captain Vincent Larreau, an older Creole man and New Orleans native (use the *Vehicle Rigger*, p. 79, SR3, but drop the cyberware and change the Rotor Craft skills to Ship skills). Larreau normally carries a Colt America L36 [LP, SA, 6L, 11(c)] in a shoulder holster under his jacket, and he will fight to defend the *Queen*.

Outriders

In addition to the security on board the *Queen of Babylon*, Cross Tech has two Samuvani Criscraft Otter boats (p. 309, SR3) that cruise some distance from the yacht, close to the shore on either side, watching for signs of trouble and keeping other boats away from the *Queen*. Three crewmembers man each Otter, including one vehicle rigger (p. 79, SR3, substitute Boat skills for Rotor Aircraft skills) and two security guards (use the *Weapons Specialist*, p. 80, SR3). The guards are armed only with AK-97 rifles and plenty of ammo.

Getting Onboard

The runners have several options for getting aboard the *Queen of Babylon* to extract Dr. Marchand. Some possibilities are outlined here; use them as guidelines, and improvise if the players come up with a different plan.

By boat: The runners can try to board the *Queen* directly from a boat of their own, but it is very likely the corporate guards in the outrider boats will spot them long before they reach the *Queen*. Even the best stealth craft won't be able to avoid the patrol boats' notice long enough. A more likely possibility is to attempt to board one of the patrol boats, overcome its crew, and use it to approach the *Queen* without raising suspicion until it's too late.

Akimura can provide a boat, but he will charge the characters as any fixer would. Boats cost 90 percent of their Seattle value. Standard negotiations apply.

Underwater: Perhaps one of the best ways to approach the *Queen* is from beneath the surface of the river. Akimura can arrange to supply the runners with the SCUBA gear necessary to swim to the boat, most likely from a small rivercraft of their own. Rules for diving and underwater combat can be found in *Cannon Companion*. Alternately, the Guard power of a water elemental or a river spirit can allow one or more runners to breathe under water long enough to reach the yacht (and arrive on deck without even getting wet). Runners should make Open Stealth Tests when climbing onto the yacht's deck.

By air: Runners can try to board the *Queen* from the air, either using ultra-light aircraft or even parachuting down to the ship. This is extremely difficult, though not quite as hard as approaching by boat. Aerial shadowrunners must be concealed by some sort of magical effect, such as an invisibility spell or the Concealment power of an air spirit, in order to reach the boat without being seen by the guards on deck. Rules for parachuting are in *Cannon Companion*.

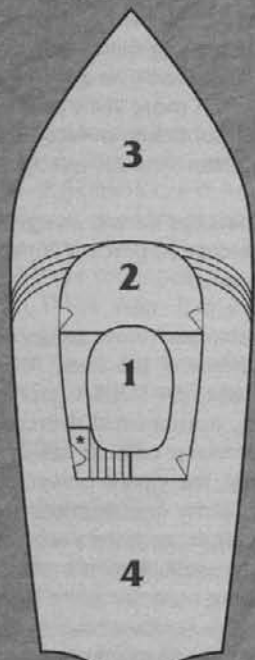
Sneaking on: Clever shadowrunners may be able to create a ruse to get aboard the *Queen of Babylon* without raising suspicion. This could involve hacking the *Queen's* computer system and altering the records to show an authorized visit from a maintenance crew, security reinforcements, or something similar. The runners may also be able to get aboard using pure bluster and acting ability, especially if backed by an illusion or mental manipulation spell.

The Queen's Computer

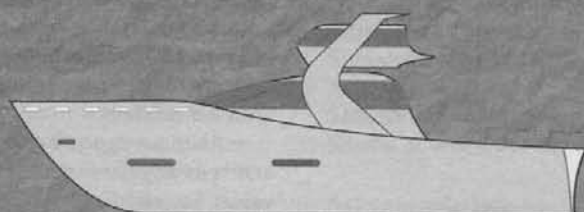
The *Queen of Babylon* has a sophisticated on-board computer system equipped with a satellite link to the Cross Applied Technologies PLTG. This allows busy executives to communicate with the home office during "working vacations." The computer is rated Orange-5/10/11/10/10/9. The shadowrunners may attempt to access the *Queen's* computer system. Doing so first requires access to the Cross PLTG (a Logon to Host operation with a TN of 10). The decker can then search for the *Queen's* LTG address (a Locate Access Node operation, TN 10)

Queen of Babylon Map

Top deck

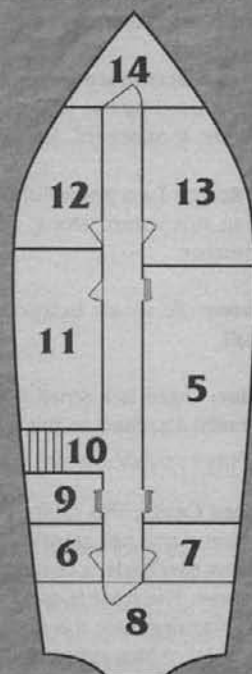


* to 10 below



side view

Lower deck



and log on to the yacht's host system (TN 10). The appropriate utilities modify the target numbers accordingly.

The Security Sheaf

Trigger Step	Event
3	Probe-5
6	Probe-7
9	Passive Alert. Killer-8
11	Active Alert. Blaster-10. The system also notifies the yacht's onboard security personnel of the intrusion.
13	Shutdown

Paydata: The data available from the yacht's host system is fairly limited, though some of it may be useful to the runners. Each of the following items requires a separate Download Data operation. The files a decker can obtain include: the *Queen's* planned course and timetables (allowing the runners to plan a precision operation), the number of security guards aboard the yacht and what equipment they are carrying, and a complete map of the yacht, including cabin assignments, which would be useful for finding Dr. Marchand's cabin. A decker can also use the computer's slave systems to deter-

mine the yacht's current location (via its GPS system), affect its autonav system, observe through its security cameras, or even attempt to communicate with Dr. Marchand in advance. In the last case, the gamemaster may wish to have the runners initially talk with Marchand's Legion personality, which wants them to extract Marchand for Deus. This should leave the runners particularly confused when they finally do encounter Marchand and she doesn't seem to know them.

Bugs in the System: Runners in the yacht's computer system may encounter other deckers, at the gamemaster's discretion. One of the Seraphim agents, codenamed Gabriel, is aboard as a deckhand. Dr. Marchand does not know that Gabriel is a Seraphim agent. He has a cyberdeck in his cabin and the computer skills necessary to defend the onboard computer from intrusion, if an active alert is sounded. Members of Overwatch (particularly Ronin or Dodger—see pp. 133-34 for their icons) might also show up in the *Queen's* computer system, either scouting it out and gathering information, or preparing for their own extraction of Dr. Marchand (see below). Gabriel attacks any intruders and attempts to dump them from the system. If he fails to do so, he'll jack out and shut down the *Queen's* computer manually. The Overwatch deckers might try to communicate with the runners, but they con-

sider their mission of far greater importance. They're more likely to conceal their presence and observe the runners' explorations, in order to find out what the runners are planning. These observations eventually lead to Overwatch's attempt to contact the runners in *Revelations* (p. 72).

Overwatch Acts

Shortly after the shadowrunners make their move to get aboard the yacht, Overwatch initiates its own plan to extract Dr. Marchand. The group's deckers plant a smart-frame program into the yacht's onboard computer system and override its autonav. The yacht goes into hydrofoil mode and heads directly for a small cove, where mercenaries hired by Overwatch are waiting for it. They have orders to disable the crew and take Dr. Marchand to a safehouse, while Overwatch arranges for the false papers and identification necessary to get her out of the city.

The six operatives: one troll (use Mercenary sample character p. 72, *SR3*), one ork houngan (use the Street Shaman sample character, p. 76, *SR3*—the gamemaster can add more spells) who's aligned to Agwe (p. 162, *MITS*), and four humans (use both the Street Samurai and Weapon Specialist sample characters, pp. 75 and 80, *SR3*) with Professional Ratings of 3 and Karma of 4. Adjust any of the numbers to fit your campaign.

The mercenaries know very little about the purpose of the operation. They know only that the yacht will arrive around a particular time and that they're supposed to extract Dr. Marchand.

Putting it All Together

Ideally, the scene happens something like this:

The runners figure out some means of getting on board the *Queen* undetected, deal with any guards they encounter, and overcome the security system using the information they acquired earlier. They make their way to Dr. Marchand's cabin, only to discover that the doctor doesn't know anything about a planned extraction, nor is she overly willing to go with them. They also find out that Marchand's elderly grandmother Flora is staying with her, and Marchand isn't willing to leave without her. The runners deal with Marchand's objections and ensure her compliance, most likely by agreeing to take Meme Flora with them as well.

Suddenly, the yacht goes into hydrofoil mode, racing down the river. The guards are suddenly alerted, and the runners have to get themselves and their "guests" off the yacht as quickly as possible. When they approach the cove, the mercenaries roar towards the *Queen* in two boats, guns blazing, and do their best to disable the guards and capture the doctor. Unless the runners disabled them earlier, the Cross Tech outrider boats are not far behind, and they immediately engage the mercenaries. The guards naturally assume the runners and mercenaries are working together, while the mercenaries know nothing about the runners. The runners can try to take advantage of the chaos and escape, via whatever method they planned (assuming Overwatch's intervention hasn't closed that avenue), or by stealing a boat from one of the other factions.

The Good Doctor

Marchand initially resists the runners, but any amount of intimidation will force her to comply reluctantly. The stress of the situation quickly causes Marchand to retreat into herself and her childlike "Charlie" persona emerges (see p. 65). Meme Flora stays close to her and tries to comfort her, glaring down any runners who threaten Marchand and asking them why they have to bother decent folk like her and her grandchild.

Shortly after they escape from any pursuit, Marchand breaks down into tears, sobbing and moaning like a frightened child. Whether the runners ignore her or try to console her, she looks at them, lower lip trembling, eyes bright with tears and asks, in a frightened, childlike voice, "Why are you doing this to us? Why do you want to hurt us?" Charlie talks and reacts like a young girl, and refers to herself in the plural, dimly aware of the "others" in Marchand's head. The runners might be able to get her to answer a few questions, but she doesn't have much reason to cooperate. She also doesn't really know much about Sisi or Legion or what their plans were, only that she's afraid and wants the runners to go away and leave her alone. She quickly lapses into silence, either staring off into space or quietly rocking and humming to herself. Meme Flora doesn't have any answers, either. She suspected a little about Marchand's condition, and she attributes it to "bad spirits," but she won't be overly inclined to discuss it with the runners unless she thinks it might help Marchand.

Eventually, one of Marchand's other personalities may emerge. How they react depends entirely on the situation and what the runners are doing. The gamemaster should take the goals and attitudes of the personas into account (see *The Minds of Olivia Marchand*, p. 69, for more information).

PUSHING THE ENVELOPE

This scene is already filled with a lot of action-packed moments: boarding the yacht, dealing with the guards, and a possible three-way fight between the shadowrunners, the Overwatch mercenaries, and Cross security. However, if you're looking to add even more excitement to the scene, you can start by giving the Cross security forces a wage-mage with some bound elemental spirits for magical muscle (use the Street Mage, p. 74, *SR3*, with more corporate Knowledge skills). The extra magic flying around can keep the team's magician(s) busy and give the runners something else to worry about. You can also give the mercenaries some drones for their attack on the yacht, either run by a rigger aboard one of the boats or on shore.

This scene is also an opportunity to break out the *Critters* book and introduce the runners to some of the Awakened life of the Mississippi River. Critters like the devil jack diamond, hellbenders, juggernauts, and other river or swamp-dwelling creatures are appropriate. The runners can encounter river-dwellers when approaching the yacht from the water, flying critters when approaching from the air, and either kind at the cove where the mercenaries are lying in wait.



DEBUGGING

There are any number of things that could go wrong with this scene. As the saying goes, no plan survives contact with the enemy, and the shadowrunners' plans aren't likely to be the exception. In this case, however, if something goes wrong, let it and see where it goes. There's really no outcome that's going to ruin the adventure so long as the players are having fun. In a worst-case scenario, Dr. Marchand could die. Perhaps Marchand's death is one of the reasons Deus' plan doesn't *quite* work out as planned. If she dies a violent death—and a peaceful one isn't likely in this adventure—Marchand could come back as a ghost to haunt the runners (see p. 120, *MITS*), especially under the guidance of the very vengeful Meme Flora. Flora is also likely to seek vengeance against the runners responsible for her granddaughter's death. They'd best hope they didn't leave any blood or hair behind for her to find ...

If Meme Flora is killed, or the runners categorically refuse to take her along (and find a way to make that decision stick), modify the ending of the adventure. Either Flora manages to track the runners to Seattle, and shows up just in time to cause trouble (she *is* a powerful mambo with a lot of contacts), or Marchand's recent experiences and her contact with her grandmother awakens some sort of latent potential, allowing her to summon the loa spirit that appears in the last scene.

BOURBON STREET BLUES

WHAT'S UP, CHUMMER?

While Dr. Marchand flips through her different personalities, the characters discover that their local contact has dried up and they have find a different way out of New Orleans.

TELL IT TO THEM STRAIGHT

You've completed your first objective for the run: gotten Dr. Marchand and avoided both the Seraphim and the mercenaries who attacked the *Queen of Babylon*. So there were a few unexpected complications along the way, so what? It's time to call Akimura and arrange a trip back to wherever it is you need to drop her off.

When the characters call Akimura, read aloud:

A woman with a very sexy Creole voice answers the phone. When you tell her your biz with Akimura, she puts you on hold. You hear clicks and buzzing on the line, then Akimura's voice.

"My decker assures me that the line is clear. I'm glad you survived. I have good news and bad news for you. The bad news first. I can't touch you anymore. I'm being watched. The Seraphim are all over my agents; I've lost three since we've arrived in town. Meeting you would be suicide on both our parts. I'll give you half your pay now and you can get the rest when you drop her off in Seattle.

"I'll also give you a recommendation on how to get out of here, once you decide the best way to go. I have Mafia contacts, smuggling contacts, some corp contacts and a few favors and markers I could call in. Do you have a preference in who you wish to deal with?"

If the characters decide they want Akimura's help, read aloud:

"All right. I have a contact in the NOPS. Go to the police station on Loyola Avenue, near City Hall. Ask for Sergeant Crew. He will give you the information I have. Good luck. Once this is all over, I hope to do business with you again. You've been quite professional."

If the characters decide they don't want Akimura's help, read aloud

"Fine. Cut the links, that works for me. Go to Tulane University Book Store and ask for Clara. Tell her you want books for the graduate level economic course. She'll ask you "What teacher?" Tell her "My teacher is life." She will give you a credit stick with your pay. Once this is all over, I hope to do business with you again. You've been quite professional."

HOOKS

Strangers in a strange land ... or so the saying goes. Play it up. The runners not only have to smuggle Dr. Marchand and her grandmother out, they have to get themselves out too. Plus they have nearly an entire continent to go. Add in the fact they're being hunted like rabid dogs by a paranoid corporation and even a fixer won't touch them.

It's all about using their wits, instincts and the skills they haven't had to work on in a while. They are going to be at the mercy of others and that means playing nice or getting killed. To make matters worse, their "cargo" keeps flipping out. The runners should not relax until they are back in Seattle.

BEHIND THE SCENES

The characters should be extremely worried. If the heat is too hot for Akimura, then it's pretty hot for everyone. Once the call is made, the characters will have to decide how to go. If they decide to go with Akimura's various contacts, they will always be sent to Sergeant Crew. Crew is gruff, and obviously not pleased to be dealing openly with shadowrunners he doesn't know, but will give them whatever info they need, along with their payment and a number to call when they get back to Seattle.

The Tulane University Bookstore package contains credit sticks with their money and a Seattle phone number. A handwritten note says "Call this number when you hit Seattle."

The Mafia

If the characters decide to use Akimura's Mafia connections, the gamemaster can determine what the contacts want in return. Remember, this is the New Orleans Mafia—they deal in vice, gambling, smuggling of all kinds, and lots and lots of wetwork. They certainly have the resources to fly the runners back to Seattle on a private jet, but the price may be steep. They may ask the runners to make a delivery for them, to dig up some information on a shipment they plan to hijack, or even to take out some local independents who didn't deliver on a promise. Or they could set the characters up to smuggle a package to one of the Seattle families. Use any of the plot ideas presented in *Target: Smuggler Havens*, or

stretch your imagination and consider the variety of plot possibilities presented by the Mafia controlling one of the world's most decadent cities.

The Mafia will not protect the players from Cross or Seraphim agents, though the characters might be able to request jobs outside of New Orleans.

The Smugglers

These guys will want the characters to join a ship's crew headed into the Caribbean. The smugglers are planning a hit on an arms shipment, and they need backup. Once they've hijacked the weapons, they plan on trading them on one of the islands for telesma and rum. The booty is then "escorted" upriver to St. Louis, where the smugglers will make their big score. The runners will be expected to stay with the ship all the way up to St. Louis. The details are left up to the gamemaster. The characters may negotiate part of their pay in airline or train tickets to take them to Seattle. If the gamemaster really wants to have fun, the shipment's final destination could be Seattle and the players could stay on as hired guns all the way. Once on board, the runners will find it pretty easy to lose Cross and the Seraphim, thanks to the chaotic nature of the Caribbean League.

The Corps

The gamemaster can determine the corp affiliation of Akimura's contact, who will claim he needs something significant out of the runners in order to justify the corporate expenditures for their passage home. He could ask them to call in a gambling debt, dig up some information on a rival corp, or even perform a full run. It might be particularly interesting if the runners are currently wanted by the corporation that employs Akimura's contact.

Other Groups

Akimura has contacts in a variety of organizations, from the Draco Foundation to the krewes, the telesma smuggling groups. He has political connections in at least four governments (CAS, UCAS, Caribbean League and CFS), and others can be added. Player access to these contacts may provide hooks for campaigns that extend past the events of *Brainscan*.

Dr. Marchand's Brain

Once the players discover they are on their own and begin to plan their escape, Dr. Marchand will begin to switch personalities (see *The Minds of Olivia Marchand*, p. 69). How this affects the escape back to Seattle is up to you. Outlined below are some of the personas' typical responses.

Charlie

Charlie has a child's desire to feel safe and protected. She dislikes the runners because they scare her, but her "Meme" can help keep her calm. It will take a considerable effort on the runners' part to win her trust—not just good Charisma or Etiquette rolls, but constantly reassurances that they have Charlie's best interests at heart. The runners *might* be able to convince Charlie that they're the "good guys," but she still

won't be particularly useful. Her main goal is to get somewhere safe, away from all the "bad people" who are trying to hurt her.

Sisi

Sisi knows about Overwatch and thinks the distributed decking technology may be able to help the group against Deus. She wants to escape from the runners and hook up with Overwatch. She might try talking with the runners to convince them to let her go, but she distrusts them violently and she's likely to sound paranoid. She also doesn't know the full details of the situation; she only knows that the "good spirits" in the Matrix are fighting a "bad spirit" and need her help. The members of Overwatch have not revealed their identities to her, as they have to be very careful who they trust, so Sisi doesn't have much evidence to offer the runners. They may assume her story is a paranoid delusion. Sisi isn't suicidal, so she's not likely to take any risks that may threaten her life.

Legion

Legion is cold and disdainful towards the runners and Meme Flora (who considers her the "bad spirit" responsible for Olivia's condition), but she does not try to antagonize them, since they are doing exactly what she wants them to do. Legion is vaguely aware of Deus, more as a "powerful Matrix force" that embodies the qualities she admires: cold, calculating rationality. Legion does her best to pretend to be the "real" Olivia Marchand, and to cooperate with the runners within reason, though she doesn't fool Flora. She apologizes for the behavior of Charlie and Sisi and encourages the runners to do their job. She will tell the runners that she is the one who arranged for the extraction, because she knows what's best for "all of us." Whether she means all of Olivia's personalities or everyone in the world, she doesn't say.

Olivia

She will assume that the runners are working for a rival corp and that she has been extracted. She's morose over being kidnapped, not because she's sorry to leave Cross, but because she doesn't have access to her research data any more. She will also assume the runners are actually corp operatives, like the Seraphim, and she will demand the runners give her details of their corp's facilities and living conditions. She will demand high compensation and delineate her tech requirements in detail. She may actually insist the runners write down her demands and deliver them to her new bosses. She will also complain about terrible headaches and poor sleeping due to terrible dreams.

PUSHING THE ENVELOPE

This scenario is partially an opportunity for roleplaying between Marchand, Flora and the team, and partially a test of the runners' ability to survive on their own. Marchand is no match for the shadowrunners physically, and she isn't even armed, so there's little chance of her putting up a fight.

If getting out of New Orleans and back to Seattle isn't hard enough, Legion can alert Deus to her location and the Banded could begin showing up. Similarly, Sisi will attempt to contact

Overwatch and request a rescue. Teams of hired mercenaries may show up looking for Marchand on Overwatch's behalf, or Overwatch may try to contact the runners and reason with them. If you want to proceed this way, adapt the material from the *Revelations* segue (p. 72) and consider the repercussions of the runners handing Dr. Marchand into Overwatch's care. Olivia could also attempt to contact Cross, since she wants her data and her project back and suspects that her kidnappers' corp (judging by its uncooperative operatives) won't be as generous as Cross was.

Finally, if you want to bring a magical element into the scene, Meme Flora can try using her own magical abilities, covertly, to help her and her granddaughter escape from the runners. Or she might simply utter prayers and invocations to the loa, doing her best to keep Olivia calm. Flora maintains her masking the whole time, and plays her cards close. She gives away as little as possible about her true abilities.

DEBUGGING

Depending on the twists and turns of this side adventure, the characters could end up endangering Marchand and Meme Flora or, even worse, themselves. If the attempts to get home get too dangerous or distracting, have Akimura contact the runners with an "all clear." He can say he's shaken the Seraphim and is now able to get the runners back to Seattle.

THE EXCHANGE

WHAT'S UP, CHUMMER?

This is it. The runners hand Dr. Marchand over into the hands of Deus' Banded and collect their money. Unfortunately, things don't go quite as planned. (Quelle surprise!) They may also have trouble from their pursuers.

TELL IT TO THEM STRAIGHT

As the scenario begins, read the following aloud:

You've finally made it to Seattle with your less-than-willing "guests" in tow. You'll be happy to hand over Marchand and her annoying granny and be done with it.

The contact on the other end of the phone line has your nuyen and wants to meet immediately. What better place than the Redmond Barrens? 4126 Oak Street. A happy little address in the heart of hell.

A small van pulls into the lot and drives up to you. It comes to a stop a short distance away and the side door opens, allowing several shadowy figures to emerge. One steps forward.

"Do you have the item?" he asks.

BEHIND THE SCENES

The meet can be immediately after the runners arrive or postponed until the evening if the runners arrive during the day.

A group of five Banded (see the *Master Cast of Shadows*, p. 137) meets the runners. There are four Blues and one Green. The Green will do all the talking. The Banded act normally, though any runner scoring two or more successes on a Perception (4)





Test notices there's something undefinably strange about them. The Green does not have green eyes. The Blues do have blue eyes. Likewise, anyone who assesses the Banded and gets at least two successes on an Aura Reading Test notices they have weird vibes, but nothing the runner can pinpoint.

The Banded lead Dr. Marchand, currently in her Legion persona, toward the van. The lead Banded, a small Asian man who does not offer his name, hits a button on his cell phone, and hands the phone to the closest runner. Akimura's voice on the other end offers congratulations and says he'll download the payment anywhere the runners want. If the runners have a remote decking hookup, they can check on the download, which goes through without a hitch.

The lead Banded says, "You have done well. Those who recommended you spoke highly of your past performances. Keep up the good work. There will be other opportunities for you in the future."

Just before getting into the van, Dr. Marchand falls apart. Her terror causes Legion to lose control and Charlie, the childlike persona, comes screaming to the fore. She wails in terror and struggles with the Banded, kicking and fighting like an animal. "Livi!" cries Meme Flora. She raises her arms to the heavens and chants "Grand Ogoun, aidez elle! Ouvriez le barrier et entrez!" (French for "Great Ogoun, help her! Open the way and enter!") A shimmer seems to surround Marchand, like a ghostly fire, as Flora conjures a Force 6 great spirit of Ogoun (p. 104, *MITS*). The spirit gains an additional point of Armor for Flora's initiate Grade.

Unfortunately, something goes wrong. The loa spirit attempts to possess Marchand's shattered psyche and the chaos within her mind twists the spirit into something truly dangerous, a Petro version of Ogoun (see p. 135, *MITS*). The spirit is no longer under Flora's control—it is an embodiment of Olivia Marchand's rage, and wants only to cause death and destruction. The spirit-possessed Marchand quickly kills the Banded, then turns on the runners.

Olivia Marchand (possessed by a rogue Spirit of Ogoun)

B	Q	S	C	I	W	E	M	R
9	9	8	6	6	6	4.84/6	0	7

INIT: 17 +1D6

Dice Pools: Combat 10

Karma Pool/Professional Rating: 2/4

Attack: Roll Reaction in place of the appropriate Combat skill.

Powers: Accident, Concealment, Confusion, Fear, Guard, Immunity (Fire, Normal Weapons), Possession, Search

Cyberware: Datajack (alphaware), memory (150 Mp), telephone

Armor: The spirit's Immunity power grants it 13 points of hardened armor against all normal weapon attacks and fire.

Weapons: The spirit grabs a pair of Ares Predators from the downed Banded, and knows how to use them.

Ares Predator [HP, SA, 9M, 15 (c)]

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

Running the Fight

The possessed Marchand lights into the Banded like a whirlwind, snatching up two of their weapons and spraying bullets wildly at everyone near the van. If the runners try to

stop her, she turns on them immediately; otherwise, she spends one Combat Turn finishing off the Banded, then moves past Meme Flora, who realizes her danger a moment too late. Marchand strikes the old woman a blow that sends her sprawling, unconscious and badly hurt. Then she turns on the runners and attacks them with abandon.

The shadowrunners have two basic options: fight Marchand and try to kill or disable her, or attempt to banish the spirit possessing her.

The first option shouldn't be an easy fight. The Ogoun spirit makes Marchand virtually invulnerable to conventional weapons. Characters can attempt to use their Willpower to overcome the spirit in melee combat (p. 188, *SR3*), though this is still no easy task. Damage done to Marchand's body affects her, while Stun damage affects only the spirit. If Marchand is killed, the spirit is disrupted. If she is only knocked out, the spirit remains, due to her unusual mental condition.

Banishing the spirit (p. 189, *SR3*) isn't easy either, but it's possible. Marchand's unusual condition allows the spirit to take physical actions while simultaneously engaging in the banishing contest. It will do its level best to kill or knock out the banishing magician. If the spirit is banished, Marchand goes completely catatonic from the psychic stress.

PUSHING THE ENVELOPE

For a really whiz-bang ending, the Seraphim (directed by Olivia) and/or Overwatch (directed by Sisi) can find out where the runners are meeting Deus' Banded, and can crash the meet to try and capture Dr. Marchand for themselves. This can quickly turn into a massively complex fight, but if you really need additional complications, throw in some Renraku company men who were tracking the Banded and want to ensure they don't get hold of Dr. Marchand. They may cooperate with another faction—most likely the Seraphim—or they might try to capture Marchand, or they might simply try to kill her to ensure no one gets her. The runners can stay and fight it out or exercise the better part of valor and try to escape in the ensuing chaos.

DEBUGGING

If the runners refuse to hand over Dr. Marchand, or otherwise antagonize the Banded, the Banded will attack, Marchand will panic, and Meme Flora will call the Ogoun spirit to aid them, so the situation will be much the same.

If Meme Flora was left behind at some stage, she can show up at the meeting, having used a lock of Olivia's hair to track the runners down. The mambo is in astral form, with an Ogoun spirit already accompanying her. She commands the spirit to possess Olivia at the proper moment. If Flora is dead, her ghost could appear to try and help her granddaughter one last time. Charlie could spontaneously awaken Olivia's own latent abilities to summon the spirit. Or you could simply ignore the Ogoun spirit scenario and have Marchand go mad and begin attacking the Banded, forcing the runners to make a decision about who to support.

If the runners end up fighting against a superior force, and refuse to take the opportunity to flee, let the chips fall where

they may. After all, nobody said life in the shadows was safe, especially when you find yourself working for the wrong side.

PICKING UP THE PIECES

IT'S A WRAP

In the end, the Banded are dead, but Deus is aware of what happened because of its link to them. Marchand is either dead or comatose, and of no use to anyone. Either way, if Meme Flora survives, she will want to take her granddaughter's body back home to New Orleans. She'll also bear a deep grudge against the runners, and could end up causing trouble for them in the future. If Marchand survives, it's possible she might regain consciousness at some future point, though the state of her mind is entirely up to the gamemaster's imagination.

Toshi Akimura contacts the runners to praise them for their good work. He emphasizes that the run's unfortunate outcome is not their fault. He may contact the runners for future jobs, and can even grow to be a useful contact if the runners use him regularly enough.

Overwatch is now very much aware of the shadowrunners, and is also aware that they may be unwitting dupes of Deus rather than Banded or willing agents.

The runners likely have an enemy in Gabriel (if he survived) and the Seraphim. If the Seraphim managed to get any information about the runners, they are likely to track them down to learn more about who hired them to abduct Dr. Marchand, what happened to her, and why.

AWARDING KARMA

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

Surviving the run	3 points
Keeping Meme Flora alive until the end	1 point

The gamemaster may assign additional awards based on the means the runners use to get back to Seattle. The total Karma award for events related to returning to Seattle should not exceed 4.

LEGWORK

DR. OLIVIA MARCHAND

Appropriate Contacts: Any Corporate (except Cross) (TN 6), Cross Contact (TN 4), Matrix Contact (TN 5)

Successes	Information
0	"Who? Never heard of her."
1	"Computer researcher for CATCo. Software and programming stuff mostly."
2	"Marchand really knows her stuff. She works mostly on neural interface tech, ASIST, brain-benders and things like that. Heard she had something to do with some of Cross' new simsense programs."

- | | |
|----|--|
| 3 | "Word has it Marchand has been working on something top-secret for CATCo for the past several months." |
| 4+ | "I've heard Marchand isn't real happy with CATCo. Rumor has it she's been under a lot of stress lately and that she's under the care of a company shrink. The pressure is on from above for her to perform and she might be looking for a more ... hospitable environment, if you know what I mean." |

PROJECT LEGION

Appropriate Contacts: Any Corporate (except Cross) (TN 6), Cross Contact (TN 4), Matrix Contact (TN 5)

Successes	Information
0	"What's that? Sounds interesting. If you find out anything about it, let me know."
1	"Yeah, I've heard of it. Some new top-secret project Cross Tech is working on. Don't know anything more than that, though. Security is tight on this one."
2	"The suit in charge of the project is Dr. Olivia Marchand, one of CATCo's best programming eggheads, so you can bet that whatever it is, it's more software than hardware. Probably some kind of brain-computer interface tech, since that's Marchand's specialty."
3	"Whatever it is, I can tell you this, the Cross division in Quebec recently upgraded its computer security. I think somebody burned into their system, though I haven't heard about anyone pulling a run like that."
4	"The Project isn't going as well as Cross would like, either. I hear that old man Lucien has taken a personal interest in this one. If it doesn't pan out, heads will roll. I sure as hell wouldn't want to be in Marchand's shoes."
5+	"The Project's got real problems. Their first test ended up with a bunch of brain-dead deckers, as bad as some of the stories I've heard about the first Echo Mirage vets. Rumor has it the company is keeping 'em alive on life support to figure out what the frag happened to them."

THE SERAPHIM

Appropriate Contacts: Any Contact (TN 4)

Successes	Information
0	"I'd rather not talk about them. Let's change the subject, shall we?"
1	"Cross' elite black ops personnel. Total shadows. There's not much to know about them, and knowing too much isn't healthy, you know?"

- 2 "The Seraphim specialize in black ops and counterintelligence. They're seriously cross-trained—no pun intended. Most of 'em are infiltration specialists with plenty of skill in getting into places they shouldn't be, and they've got some good deckers. I heard they also run security on the high mucky-mucks in CATCo. Set a thief to catch a thief and all that drek."
- 3 "There have been some Seraphim in town lately. I don't know names, but I do know they've been around. That means something of interest to Cross is going down. It must be fairly hush-hush, otherwise the Seraphim wouldn't be involved at all."
- 4+ "The Seraphim are watching out for some CATCo suit coming into the area. They want to make sure there aren't any security leaks. There are some advance scouts in town already, so watch yourself. That's all I can say."

THE QUEEN OF BABYLON

Appropriate Contacts: Any Corporate (except Cross) (TN 8), Cross Contact (TN 6), New Orleans Street Contact (TN 3), Smuggling Contact outside of New Orleans (TN 6)

Successes

Information

- 0 "Hey isn't that the new Winnona Flying Horse sim? I heard that one was really good."
- 1 "Private yacht, registered to Cross Applied Technologies. Looks like a nice ship, with all the modern conveniences."
- 2 "The corp uses the *Queen* for higher-ups to conduct private meetings, take for pleasure cruises and working vacations, entertain guests, things like that. And it's got security to meet all those requirements."
- 3 "The yacht has its own computer system, sat-linked to the Cross PLTG so the suits are never too far out of touch with biz. It's got a fairly small crew, all company men security checked within an inch of their lives."
- 4 "The yacht has some pretty decent hydrofoil capabilities. It also has a mounted machine-gun nest up top. I heard they used it to take out some river-rats looking for a fat-cat yacht to plunder. Boy, did they pick the wrong target."
- 5+ "Funny you should mention it. A chummer of mine saw it coming downriver just the other day. Looked like they had some smaller boats riding shotgun and clearing the way. He made sure to give her a wide berth. Those corporate guards can get twitchy sometimes."

CAST OF SHADOWS

This section contains background information and game statistics for the major non-player characters in this adventure.

Feel free to adjust the statistics and background information of these characters to suit your own game's requirements. For the members of Overwatch and other major characters, see the *Master Cast of Shadows* (p. 132).

DR. OLIVIA MARCHAND

Olivia Marchand is originally from the New Orleans area. She grew up in a time when the magic of New Orleans was in full flower, a renaissance of Voodoo and the mystical. At a very young age, Olivia underwent a ritual conducted by her grandmother, making her a serviteur of the loa (see p. 104, *MITS*). But Olivia was never drawn to the mysteries of magic—in fact, she was somewhat frightened by them. The brilliant young woman was more interested in the mysteries of the virtual world of the Matrix. She learned to use a cyberterminal as a small child, and by the time she was 12, she was already a brilliant decker and programmer.

She earned a corporate scholarship from Cross Applied Technologies and attended CalTech, earning degrees in Computer Science and Engineering. She began working at Cross Tech's Montreal facility shortly after graduation, where her reputation for innovative work earned her no small amount of attention. She worked on several Cross projects, such as the Babel-series cyberdeck and various software programs. Project Legion is her brainchild, and she is fiercely protective of her work.

Olivia Marchand is in her mid-30s, an attractive Creole woman with a broad face, coffee-colored skin, and short, wavy black hair. She normally dresses in casual business dress, favoring slacks and turtle-necks, throwing on a lab coat or blazer when she's working.

The Minds of Olivia Marchand

Olivia shares her mind with three other distinct personalities. One personality, named "Sisi," considers herself Olivia's "guardian angel." She thinks of Deus as a "bad spirit" that wants to hurt Olivia and others, and she considers the deckers of Overwatch "good spirits" who can help her protect Olivia from harm. Sisi has spoken with Ronin and Dodger in the Matrix. She's been cagey about giving them information, but she has made arrangements to have Olivia extracted from Cross so the Overwatch deckers can help her. Overwatch thinks Sisi is just a Matrix persona Marchand is using to keep her extraction secret, though Ronin suspects there may be more to it than that.

Another of Olivia's personalities calls itself "Legion" and thinks of itself as a servant of Deus. Legion is the personality in contact with the runners' employer, masquerading as Olivia and claiming she wants to be extracted from the company. Legion is a manifestation of all of Olivia's subconscious desires to be free of the superstitions of her upbringing, to become one with the technology she loves, and to be entirely free of human weakness and emotion. Legion is cold, calculating, sexless, and almost entirely inhuman. Sisi and Legion are aware of each other and each considers the other a threat.

Olivia's third and final personality is that of a five-year-old girl named "Charlie." She is innocent and wide-eyed, but also easily frightened and traumatized, afraid of "bad things" that



want to do her harm. Charlie is vaguely aware of the other personalities, but they frighten her and she doesn't like to talk about them. Even Sisi hasn't been able to convince Charlie to help her. All she really wants is to be left alone and allowed to play like a child. Charlie does have access to Olivia's skills as a programmer and decker, and she's very comfortable in the Matrix.

Olivia's other personalities normally exist on the subconscious level. They can sometimes emerge and exercise control over her body when she is asleep or under the kind of intense stress she experienced regularly at work and is likely to experience throughout this adventure. Different scenes will offer suggestions as to which of Olivia's personalities should be dominant, and the gamemaster can decide when the switches will happen. Unless a scene's instructions specify which personality is dominant, or you feel a particular personality suits the current events, assume the core Olivia personality is dominant.

B	Q	S	C	I	W	E	M	R
3	3	2	3	6	3	4.84	0	4

INIT: 4 + 1D6

Dice Pools: Combat 6

Karma Pool/Professional Rating: 2/2

Race: Human

Active Skills: Car 1, Computer 6 (Software 8), Computer B/R 5, Electronics 5, Electronics B/R 5, Etiquette 2 (Corporate 4)

Knowledge Skills: Decker Legends 3, French 3, Matrix 6, New Orleans 4, Voodoo Lore 2

Armor: Armor Clothing [2/0]

Cyberware: Datajack (alphaware), memory (150 Mp), telephone

Weapons: Walther Palm Pistol [HO, SS, 4L, 2 (b)]

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

Gear: Pocket secretary

"MEME" FLORA ROCHAMBEAU

Flora Rochambeau is Olivia Marchand's "meme" (grandmother) and only living relative. Olivia's parents both died when Olivia was seven, and Flora raised her granddaughter alone. Born shortly before the Awakening, Flora grew up in a New Orleans steeped in magic, and learned her own magical arts from her mother. She hoped to pass her lore down to Olivia, even going so far as to make her a serviteur, but the child showed neither talent nor interest in the old ways. She was more caught up in new things, like computers and the Matrix, things Flora didn't really understand.

When she heard about Olivia's distress, Flora came to see her immediately, leaving New Orleans for the first time in her life. Flora is convinced Olivia's lifestyle has caused these problems and she should have stayed home where she belonged. She fears for her granddaughter's spiritual and mental health. Flora has done her best to heal Olivia's hidden hurts, and she hopes to get granddaughter away from the dangerous technology she blames for the damage. When the runners come along, Flora isn't going to let them take Olivia away from her. She'll offer to go along, if necessary, to ensure her grandchild gets proper care.

Flora Rochambeau is an elderly Creole woman with a stubborn streak a mile wide, especially where her family is concerned. She and Olivia may not see eye to eye on much, but that doesn't change the fact that Flora loves her, and would do anything to protect her.

B	Q	S	C	I	W	E	M	R
2	2	2	6	3	6	6	8	2

INIT: 2 + 1D6

Dice Pools: Combat 5, Spell 5

Karma Pool/Professional Rating: 4/4

Race: Human

Active Skills: Etiquette 2 (Street) 4, Conjuring 6, Sorcery 5

Knowledge Skills: Herbs 4, Home Remedies 4, Knitting 4, Magic Background 4, New Orleans 6, Voodoo Lore 5

Patron Loa: Damballah, +2 dice for detection and manipulation spells, must make Willpower (6) Test to reveal information

Spells: Antidote 4, Cure Disease 4, Heal 5, Ignite 1, Light 2, Magic Fingers 2

Metamagic (Initiate Grade 2): Invoking, Masking



TOSHI AKIMURA

Toshi Akimura has come a long way from his beginnings on the streets of Seattle. Orphaned at a young age by a Yakuza gang war, Akimura joined up with the Reality Hackers gang in the Barrens during its heyday. He learned how to sneak, steal, and hack. Eventually he worked as a small-time shadowrunner in Seattle and caught the attention of Cross Applied Technologies, an up-and-coming lower-tier corp. Cross recruited Akimura and trained him as a member of the Seraphim, their elite black ops unit.

Akimura worked for the Seraphim and Cross for several years before he was left for dead on a mission. He survived and became a freelance shadowrunner under the name "Silk." After working the shadows for several more years, Silk made the acquaintance of the great dragon Dunkelzahn and became one of the dragon's watchers, based out of New Orleans. Using the inheritance left to him in Dunkelzahn's will, Akimura has become an influential fixer and shadow-broker throughout North America. He's largely retired from shadowrunning these days, preferring to work behind the scenes. He still bears a grudge against Cross Corp and sees this run as a good chance to stick it to his former employers.

Akimura is a middle-aged Eurasian man, his short black hair gone gray at the temples. He has crow's feet around his eyes and a professional businesslike manner. He usually wears a dark suit in a corporate style with a patterned silk tie.

B	Q	S	C	I	W	E	M	R
3	5	3	5 (7)	5	5	3.84	0	5

INIT: 5 + 1D6 (2D6)

Dice Pools: Combat 7

Karma Pool/Professional Rating: 10/4

Race: Human

Active Skills: Athletics 5, Car 4, Computers 6, Electronics 4 (Security Systems 6), Electronics B/R 3, Etiquette 6 (8) (Corporate 8 (10)), Intimidation 4 (6), Negotiations 6 (8), Pistols 5, Rotor Aircraft 3, Stealth 7, Throwing Weapons 4, Unarmed Combat 5, Winged Aircraft 4 (Ultralights 6)

Knowledge Skills: Corporate Politics 5, Dragons 2, French 4, Japanese 5, Jazz 5, Magic Background 3, Psychology 3, Street Gangs 4

Martial Arts: Muay Thai 5 (Close Combat, Kick Attack, Zoning)

Weapons: Colt America L36 [LP, SA, 6L, 11(c)]

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

Armor [4/1]: Armored clothing [2/0], form-fitting body suit [3/1]

Cyberware (alphaware): Boosted reflexes (level 1), commlink (Rating 4), cybereyes (low-light, flare compensation), datajack, memory (300 Mp), telephone

Bloware: Tailored pheromones (Level 2)

Gear: Pocket secretary. He has access to considerable additional equipment, if necessary.

GABRIEL

The man known as Gabriel is a member of the Seraphim, Cross Tech's black ops and counterintelligence division. He

originally hails from Europe, but his true name and nation of origin are a mystery, making it likely he was one of the many SINless resulting from the chaos of the EuroWars.

Gabriel is completely loyal to the company and the Seraphim, and he loves his work, since it allows him to indulge in his worst paranoid and sociopathic fantasies. Presently, his job is to protect Dr. Marchand and insure both her safe return and her mental and physical health, at least to the degree that her health keeps her useful to the company. Toward that end, he keeps abreast of any and all information concerning his mission. Anything the Seraphim learns about the runners in this adventure, Gabriel will know. Gabriel isn't a fool and he won't fight to the death; he prefers to escape when things turn bad and plot revenge against the runners who embarrassed him.

Gabriel is an athletic man of average height in his early-to mid-30s, with blond hair and green eyes. He wears a close-fitting jumpsuit under his armored jacket, with his pistol worn in a shoulder holster and a collapsible stun baton in his jacket pocket.

B	Q	S	C	I	W	E	M	R
3	6	3	4	5	5	3.22	0	5

INIT: 5 + 1D6 (2D6)

Dice Pools: Combat 8, Hacking 3

Karma Pool/Professional Rating: 6/4

Race: Human

Active Skills: Athletics 6, Clubs 3 (Stun Baton 5), Computers 5, Electronics 5, Etiquette 5 (Corporate 7), Negotiations 5, Pistols 6, Rifles 4, Stealth 6, Unarmed Combat 5

Knowledge Skills: Biblical Quotations 3, Corporate Politics 4, French 5, Latin 1, Japanese 4, Psychology 4

Martial Arts: Tae Kwon Do 5 (Focus Strength, Kick Attack, Multi-Strike)

Cyberware: Boosted reflexes 1, cyberears (alphaware w/dampener, hearing amplification, recorder), cybereyes (alphaware, w/camera, flare compensation, low-light, retinal duplication [rating 5], and thermographic), datajack (alphaware), memory (150 Mp), radio (alphaware, rating 6), smartgun link (alphaware).

Armor: Armor Jacket [5/3]

Weapons: Browning Max-Power [HP, SA, 9M, 10 (c), smartlinked]

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

Stun Baton [6S Stun]

Pepper Punch Spray [12L Stun. Victims must make a Body (5) Test or they receive an additional +5 Modifier to all actions, -1 per success. The effects of pepper punch last for two minutes per +1]

Gear: Cross Babel cyberdeck in his cabin aboard the *Queen of Babylon* [MPCP-5/4/4/4/4, Hard. 2, Active Mem. 1,000, Storage Mem. 1,000, I/O Speed 200] loaded with Analyze, Armor, Decrypt, Medic, Camo, Read/Write, Relocate, Scanner, Sleaze, and SpooF, all at rating 5.

REVELATIONS



WHAT'S UP, CHUMMER?

Overwatch contacts the shadowrunners and tells them who they've really been working for over the last several adventures, then tries to recruit them into the war against Deus.

TELL IT TO THEM STRAIGHT

Another night, another meet. This time one of your teammates has called you together for another job. Things have been kind of busy lately, which works fine for you, since it keeps the nuyen coming. You show up on time and gather together for the meet and there's a long moment of awkward silence as you wait for someone to speak.

When the runners arrive at the Overwatch safehouse, read the following aloud:

The building is like many others in the Barrens: an old brick-front office that once housed some high-tech company, until it lost everything in the Computer Crash. Now it's only an abandoned shell, the parking lot choked with weeds and grass, the façade crumbling and pitted by the acid rain. Most of the glass is missing from the metal door frames. Shards crunch underfoot as you cautiously step inside. The interior isn't much better than the outside—carpet rotting away, water stains on the walls and ceiling. As you look around, a lone figure steps out of the shadows, holding out his hands to show that they're empty.

"Welcome," he says. "I'm unarmed, but not alone." He takes a step forward and you can make out his features in a bit more detail. He's Eurasian, with black hair cropped close to the skull, particularly around his silvery datajack. His eyes are a strange shade of violet, and he wears a ratty T-shirt and grubby jeans under a bulky jacket. He looks like he's just barely on the far side of his twentieth birthday, but his eyes seem much older.

"I'm glad you came. I'm one of the people who contacted you. You can call me Ronin. My friends and I have brought you here to tell you some things you need to know about who, or what, you've been working for, and why."

HOOKS

Paranoia is the key to this scene. The runners are about to find out just how deep into Deus' plans they are, and Overwatch is an extremely paranoid group by necessity. The runners should



spend most of this scene wondering exactly what's going on until they encounter Ronin and all is revealed to them. Keep the players off-guard by turning the familiar into the strange. People that the runners thought they could trust are edgy and evasive. They get strange messages in their e-mail and voice mail. They have the feeling they're being watched.

BEHIND THE SCENES

After the events of the previous adventures, particularly *My Name is Legion* (p. 53), Overwatch has learned more about the runners working for Deus. They've determined that the runners are not Banded and probably not even aware who—or what—they're really working for. This presents Overwatch with an opportunity. If they can contact the runners and convince them of the truth, they might be able to turn Deus' own agents against it and gain an edge. The runners must be good at what they do, or Deus wouldn't have chosen them.

Overwatch first compiles complete dossiers on all the runners. Since Overwatch includes some of the most skilled deckers in the world, you can safely assume they find out anything

about the characters that's available on the Matrix, even things kept hidden in corporate or government files. Overwatch is good enough not to set off any security flags, though you can heighten the paranoia of the situation by letting one or two of the runners learn from their contacts that someone is gathering information about them.

Who Called This Meeting?

After gathering the information, Overwatch arranges to get the runners together. They fake messages between the runners, setting up a meeting at one of their usual haunts. When the runners arrive, compare notes, and realize none of them actually arranged the meeting, they'll know someone set them up. Moments later, a bartender, waiter or similar staff member approaches them and asks their names. He or she gives them a datachip, saying someone, they don't know who, left it for them.

The chip contains a date, time, and directions to an isolated, burned-out corner of the Barrens. The date is tonight, the time just over an hour from now. The runners can just make it



if they leave right away. The chip has no other distinguishing features and there's no evidence who created or delivered it.

When the runners arrive at the meet point, they'll find a working telecom unit, which rings just as they arrive. If one of the runners answers it, the screen lights up with a local map that points them to a second location. They can download the map coordinates onto the chip they were given and follow them to an abandoned building that was once an arcade before it went bust during the Crash of '29. The arcade contains a large collection of slightly dusty video games and display screens. After the runners have had a chance to look around a bit, the screens light up with static for a moment, then go black. Glowing letters scroll across all the screens all at once: "HELLO."

The runners can respond verbally. Their voices will be picked up by concealed microphones, and responses will scroll across the video screens. The "speaker" refuses to identify himself, but claims he is "a friend" who wants to talk to them about something important. First, however, he wants to ask the runners some questions. The following messages scroll across the screens:

- Where are your loyalties?
- Who do you trust?
- Do you believe in the Ghost in the Machine?

Ronin measures the runners' answers to see if they are agents of Deus. If he believes them—and he's willing to take a chance here—a map flashes up on the screens, directing the runners to a place deeper in the Barrens. "I'll see you there," the screens say, and then they all go dead at once.

Meeting Overwatch

The building where Ronin meets the runners face to face was once a company that produced computer and online games before the Computer Crash. Like many such companies, it went out of business. Since the old offices were wired for 'net connections, Overwatch uses the building as a jackpoint and meeting place, one of several safehouses they have throughout western North America.

Ronin is waiting for the runners at the safehouse, accompanied by some discreet hired security. (Use the stats of the *Mercenary*, p. 72, SR3). He meets the runners in the dusty, abandoned lobby of the building, stepping out of the shadows to greet them. He leads them down to the basement, where Dodger is jacked in, finishing up some business in the Matrix. He jacks out shortly after the runners enter and introduces himself, looking weary, but remaining gallant and proper. Ronin and Dodger's stats appear on p. 133 and p. 134, respectively.

The Overwatch deckers fill the runners in on what they know about Deus and its plans. They know Deus has been employing the runners in various ways, though they are not entirely certain why. They hope to piece together what the runners know in order to figure out Deus' plans. Play out the encounter with Overwatch using the information in this book. Allow the runners to ask questions of the deckers and come to their own conclusions. Keep in mind that both Ronin and

Dodger have reasons to hate Deus, but they want to win the runners over and get their help.

PUSHING THE ENVELOPE

This scene is primarily roleplaying, an opportunity for the runners to meet Ronin and learn about Overwatch and Deus' plans. However, you can easily add some action to it. If the Seraphim don't know that Dr. Marchand is dead, they may still be looking for her. The Rusted Stiletto or the Red Hot Nukes may be still looking for the runners depending on what happened in *Breakthrough*. Any group from the previous adventures may have followed the runners and may ambush them as they leave the arcade; as Ronin's final message flashes on the screens, it suddenly switches to a warning before a hail of bullets or a powerful explosion shatters them. The runners have to defeat their enemies and make their meeting with Overwatch. Or perhaps their pursuers choose to wait until the runners reach their final destination before making their move.

Deus may also try to prevent the runners from meeting with Ronin and learning the truth. The AI's agents may attempt to intercept the runners before they reach the meeting, or they could attack the Overwatch safehouse and try to kill everyone there. In fact, this could provide a vital lead to finding the Banded stronghold in the next adventure.

The Barrens do not lack for other dangers to menace the runners. They could run afoul of a street gang (or several), organleggers, smugglers, or other criminals completely uninvolved in the overall *Brainscan* plot. Perhaps Overwatch helps rescue the runners from their troubles, giving them another reason to listen to what the group has to say.

DEBUGGING

This is a key scene for the entire story, so it needs careful handling. If the runners don't ally with Overwatch, then the events of the later adventures must be adapted accordingly. You should encourage the runners to work with the underground deckers, since they are their best allies against Deus.

If the runners seem reluctant, or absolutely refuse to help Overwatch, Ronin plays his trump card: he points out that simply by talking with Deus' enemies, the runners have compromised themselves. Deus will consider them a threat and try to have them killed, unless they stop the AI first. He tells them there is nowhere they can hide from Deus for long. The only way they can be sure is to help Overwatch destroy the rogue AI.

If the runners *still* refuse to work with Overwatch, then they can try to survive the following adventures on their own, or they might acquire a different patron. A megacorp—particularly Renraku, Mitsuhama, or Cross—might hire the runners to deal with Deus and secure the secrets of the Renraku Arcology. The UCAS military might do the same. Overwatch will still keep an eye on the runners and maybe even save their hoops in a key moment or two, hoping to still recruit them.

If the runners decide for some reason that Deus is the better deal and betray Overwatch to the AI, well, let's hope they like their new life as members of the Banded. Maybe the new team of shadowrunners Overwatch recruits to finish the adventures in this series will have better luck.

OUTSIDE INFLUENCE



PREPARING TO PLAY

The runners, who until this point have unwittingly served as Deus' pawns, are now aware that they have been manipulated. Overwatch doesn't fully trust the runners, but hopes they will decide to join the fight against Deus. Still, Deus has many methods of control, and shadowrunners are often mercenaries at heart.

The preceding scenarios all begin to converge in *Outside Influence*. The adventure begins when Overwatch decides to test the runners' loyalties by openly requesting their aid. In the process, the runners inadvertently foil Deus' plan to wipe out the meddling otaku group. The runners are presented with a way to strike back at Deus, which leads to an attack on a secret Banded hideout. As a result, the runners glimpse the extent of Deus' influence outside of the arcology, and also learn there is a way to destroy the AI.

BACKGROUND STORY

Now that Deus' plans are nearing fruition, it has decided to proactively wipe out those who might interfere with its escape. Overwatch is at the top of Deus' list. Unfortunately, the otaku and deckers who comprise this group are slippery and hard to trap within the Matrix. Their weakness lies in their physical vulnerability, but to strike at their bodies, Deus must first locate them in the real world. The AI has a piece of bait they can't refuse—a Banded White otaku attempting to leave the Renraku Arcology.

For some time, Deus has been aware of an Overwatch spy among his own otaku—a boy named Sebastien. Deus deliberately allows Sebastien to discover a plan to sneak one of the Banded out of the arcology by allowing the Banded child to be "rescued" with a group of other children. Knowing that Sebastien will inform Overwatch of this plan, and that Overwatch will seek to extract the boy, Deus arranges for a runner team to be placed on call. The AI plans to track the Overwatch group that captures the White, follow them back to Overwatch's headquarters, then use the runners to wipe the hideout off the face of the earth.

One of Deus' outside minions, Steve Morris (Mr. Johnson in *Light Meets Night*, see p. 15, complete stats on p. 132), is given the task of hiring a team. Unaware that the player characters have been contacted by Overwatch, Morris attempts to hire the runners for a "demolition job."

When Overwatch receives Sebastien's message, they do indeed decide to retrieve the Banded otaku. Deciding that this is a good opportunity to test the runners' loyalty, they ask the player characters to take on the job *pro bono*. Once they realize that both sides of the conflict are hiring them, the runners will find themselves on the spot, with the power to strike a decisive blow for one side or the other.

BLAST FROM THE PAST

WHAT'S UP, CHUMMER?

The runners are contacted by a Mr. Johnson they've worked for in the past. He wants them on retainer for an upcoming job, though he skews the details to mislead the runners about the mission's actual purpose.

TELL IT TO THEM STRAIGHT

It's amazing how your fixer always manages to call at inopportune times. You make sure to disable the vid before you answer the call, but that just lets him know you're hiding something.

"Let me guess—you were lax in payment and they repossessed your facial 'plants again. Tsk tsk." He finishes off his self-amused chuckle before you can respond, then delivers his pitch. "Got a Johnson who wants a reliable team that's not afraid to get down and dirty. I was going to recommend someone else, but then he asked for you, har har. Yeah, you heard me right, you've worked for this slag before. Must've been that one job you *didn't* screw up. Har har. Anyway, he wants to meet you at the Palace of China, 8 p.m. sharp. Ask for Dixie again. You know the drill."

It takes you a second to remember, but then you think back a few months, to a meeting at the Palace of China and a certain Mr. Johnson ...

Read the following when the runners arrive at the Palace of China:

The Palace is just as you remember it: loud, packed and full of hip corporate youngbloods. You savor their sour expressions as you cut to the head of the line, drop the Dixie password and are escorted inside.

You're taken to a different, though just as classy, quiet back room this time. Mr. Johnson is seated at an oval oak conference table, looking just as he did when you last saw him. He waits for the hostess to take your drink orders and leave before he gets down to business.

"My corporation has recently discovered that we have a rogue researcher. This scientist has been engaging in illegal, unsanctioned and ... questionable ... experiments, quite outside the boundaries of anything that we can allow to continue. While we recently became aware of his activities, we have not yet detained him, as we believe him to have a hidden laboratory that we have not yet located. While I can not reveal the nature of his experiments to you, I can assure you that they involve a grotesque crime against metahumanity and must be stopped. Naturally, were his activities to come to

light, the news would be incredibly scandalous and harmful to the reputation of my company.

"We expect to find the exact location of this doctor's secret research center quite soon. I'm looking for a team that I can place on call. If you take the job, I'll call you as soon as we have the location. Your task will be to move in immediately. This will be a demolition job—a structure hit. We will want the entire place destroyed, and any records, gear, experiments and research subjects eliminated. We want there to be absolutely no evidence left behind—everything must go.

"Given the nature of the job, I'm looking for a team that can respond quickly, do the job efficiently and keep quiet about it afterwards. Based upon our past interactions, your team came immediately to mind. I'm willing to put down a retainer of 25,000¥. Once the job is completed, you will earn 125,000¥ more.

"Have I chosen the right team for the job?"

HOOKS

This is another straightforward meeting with an experienced Johnson. The runners have dealt with this Johnson before, the run went well, and they were paid promptly and in full. The gamemaster should play up Mr. Johnson's professionalism and reliability, to ease their minds about the run.

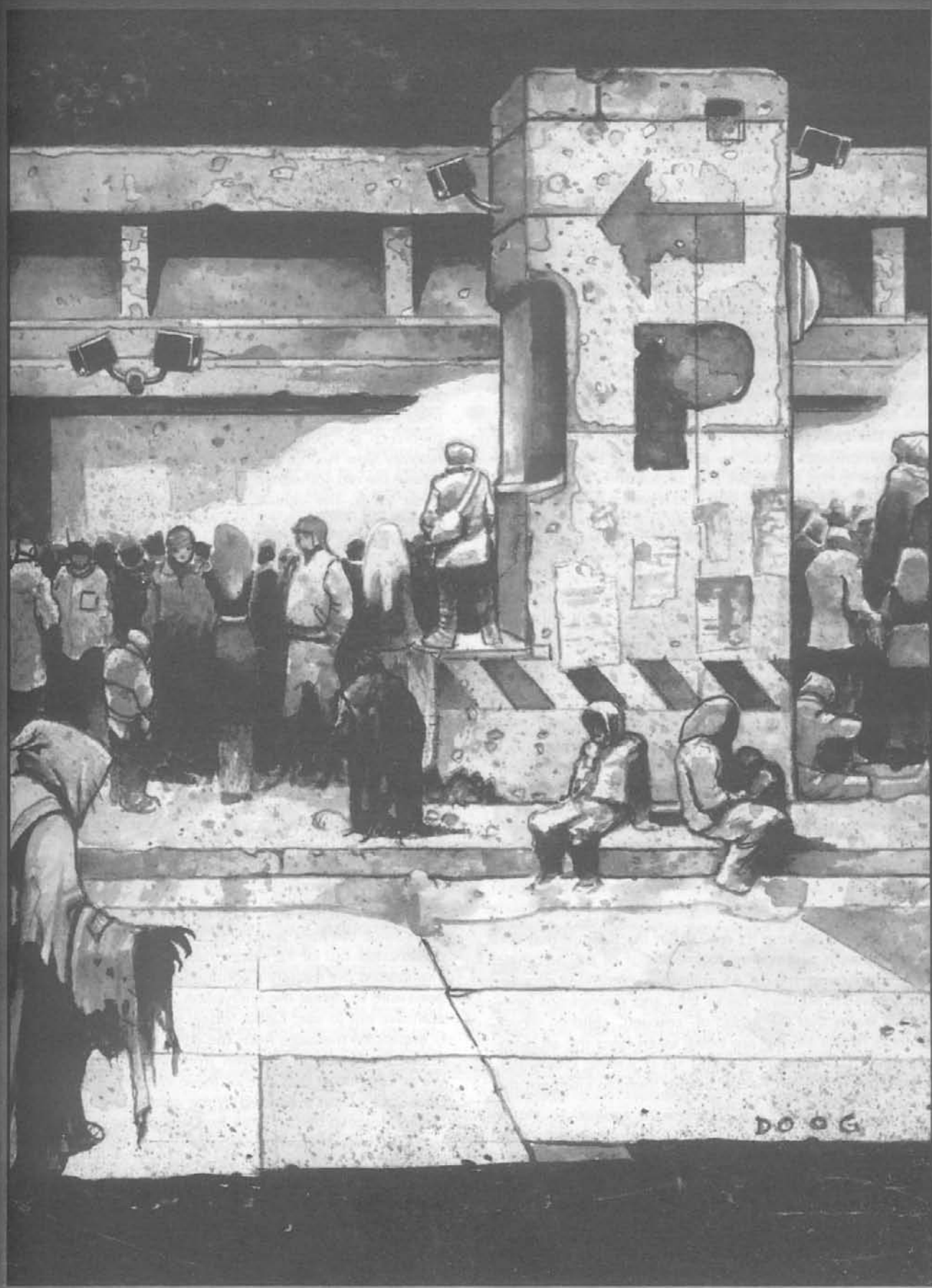
While the job offer itself seems sketchy and potentially hazardous, the Johnson emphasizes that they'll be the heroes for stopping a rogue evil scientist. He'll hint at the tragic disasters that may occur if the runners fail at their task, playing on their sense of humanity (or what's left of it).

BEHIND THE SCENES

The Johnson, Steve Morris, and meeting place, Palace of China, are the same as those described in the first adventure, *Light Meets Night* (p. 15). The setup is the same, right down to Morris' discreet Shiawase cufflinks.

Morris will refuse to go into any detail about the nature of the rogue scientist's research. He will merely hint strongly that it is extremely unethical and potentially hazardous to society. Morris knows that he's hiring the runners to essentially destroy a place that will be filled with children and young adults, so he's laying the groundwork to convince the runners that these kids are the product of some hideous—and potentially infectious—experimentation.

If the runners ask about the scientist, he will initially pretend to stave off their questioning. If they persist, he will give them a chip with a picture and short bio of a Dr. Evan Kincaid. The bio says very little, except that he has doctorates in genetics, pediatrics and parabiology, he has studied and taught for a several prestigious universities, and he was employed by Universal Omnitech up until 2055. If the runners research Kincaid, they will eventually find that he is considered one of the world's experts on the human-metahuman vampiric virus and its effects on children, and that he is currently employed by Shiawase. The material on Kincaid is a red herring, meant to waste the runners' time and convince them that Morris works for Shiawase.





Morris will be able to provide very few details on what the runners will need for their mission, as he knows nothing about the layout or defenses of Overwatch's hideout. He will attempt to steer them towards plans that involve explosives, nerve gases and other "distance kill" measures. He doesn't want the runners to charge in, then balk at killing a mob of children. He will tell the runners that he can help them acquire whatever hard-to-get explosive components or compounds they would prefer. Deus will be able to provide whatever the runners need for mass destruction, within reason.

Morris is willing to haggle over the payment. He wants to hook the runners, and so will easily relent, going as high as an additional 50,000¥ for the run.

Morris will steadfastly refuse to discuss the run he hired the runners for previously, and in fact will coyly deny any knowledge of it whatsoever.

PUSHING THE ENVELOPE

The gamemaster should try and save the blood and violence for later in the adventure if at all possible. If the runners are really looking for trouble, throw in a minor parking lot fistfight between drunken yuppies on their way out of the club, or a revisit of the run-in with a Sons of Sauron troll described in *The Introduction*, p. 19.

DEBUGGING

If the runners are suspicious of Morris because of their previous mission, or if their first job for him went horribly awry, the gamemaster may need to substitute another pawn of Deus for Morris here. This new Johnson will give the same spiel as described for Morris above, but he will arrange a different meeting location.

If the gamemaster thinks the players may be too suspicious of this job offering in light of their meeting with Overwatch, have this job offer come before *Revelations*. That way, the runners will already be "on call" for Deus when Overwatch contacts them.

THE HOOK

WHAT'S UP, CHUMMER?

Overwatch hears from its spy within the Banded that one of Deus' Whites is attempting to sneak out of the arcology. Carefully monitoring the UCAS military's communications—which Overwatch regularly hacks into and eavesdrops on—Overwatch learns that the group of "rescued" children whom the White is hiding among are being taken from the arcology cordon zone to a "debriefing center" in Ft. Lewis. Overwatch calls the runners on short notice, asking them to intercept the motorcade and extract the White.

TELL IT TO THEM STRAIGHT

You're looking forward to a nice, relaxing, violence-free evening with nothing to do except sprawl around your doss. All you really need in order to make it perfect is a pizza. You sloth over to the telecom and start dialing up Anton's Bucking Fes't Pizza, but when you stare into the black vidscreen, you

can't help but get the feeling that something might be staring back. You're just starting to shake off the creepy-crawlies when the incoming call icon starts flashing and you nearly jump out of your skin. Groaning to yourself ("Damn computers"), you slap the receive key, and a Matrix icon that looks suspiciously like that Ronin fellow pops up in a new window.

"Hoi, chummer. Hope I'm not interrupting, but we've got a favor to ask of you. Can you assemble your team and meet us at the office again, ASAP? Bring your gear—if you're in, it's going down tonight."

When the runners arrive at the derelict software company, read the following aloud:

Ronin meets you in the ancient lobby again. The dust and cobwebs look thick and dangerous—you'd guess the place hasn't had so much as a squatter or ghoul set foot in it for at least half a decade, which makes it a good safehouse for a high-tech group of Matrix activists. Ronin leads you down a hallway you hadn't previously seen, to a conference room where the old software company must once have forged some great ideas. The central wooden conference table has been dusted recently, and it looks out of place. Around it sit half a dozen people, most of them children. Quiet eyes stare up at you, picking you apart with gazes far too mature and experienced for their youthful faces. You recognize Dodger sitting at one end of the table, preparing what appears to be a holo-projector. A pair of low-rent hired guns—local gang toughs, by their looks—stand guard in the corners of the room, casting wary glances over you and your team.

"Please, have a seat." Ronin points to a group of unoccupied chairs that seem to have been specifically left for you. As you make your way to the seats, Ronin begins to speak.

"We're glad you could respond so quickly. We just received some important information that could lead to a big break in our fight against Deus." Ronin nods to Dodger, who activates the holo-projector. An image of the Renraku Arcology hovers above the conference table, its mammoth structure recreated in shaped light. As it rotates slowly above the table's surface, you can make out the UCAS military installations surrounding it on all sides.

Ronin watches the image for a few seconds, then continues. "Since the Joint Task Force Seattle took the arcology shutdown crisis out of Renraku's hands, Overwatch has covertly intercepted the military's communications. We haven't always been able to defeat the encryption, but any data we're able to scan, we put to use. Earlier today, we intercepted a particularly important message from the front lines. The UCAS military rescued a group of children from the arc's thirteenth floor. We're convinced that one of these children is actually one of Deus' pet otaku, a Banded White attempting to sneak out of the arcology so he can work for Deus on the outside.

"The military has no reason to believe that one of their rescues is actually dangerous. However, they've received enough reports of events inside the arcology to be suspicious of everyone they rescue, including the children. The standard procedure is to transport refugees to an internment camp in Ft. Lewis, where they can receive medical care, counseling and debriefing,

"The convoy carrying the recently rescued children is due to leave the arcology's cordon zone in just under two hours. We know the route they'll be taking to Ft. Lewis. All we need is the muscle and the talent to intercept them en route. We need the information the White possesses."

Ronin sets his hands down on the table, looking each of you in the eyes. "We've explained the situation to you, told you exactly what Deus is and the danger it poses. It's used you in the past. Now you have a chance to make amends and deliver some payback. This mission could be crucial to defeating Deus."

He pauses, leaning back and folding his arms. "We don't have time to hire more mercenaries, and your team is best equipped for a physical strike. We need your help. Can we count on you?"

If the runners accept, read the following aloud:

Ronin nods to Dodger again, and the holo-image changes to a street map of Tacoma with a neon blue path carved through the image. "The military is moving the children by motorcade, taking Intercity 5 most of the way to Fort Lewis. We've determined that the best place to strike is when I-5 passes the Tacoma docks. That's midway between the arcology military base and Ft. Lewis, which maximizes the time it'll take backup to arrive. There are also several exits close by that will allow you to escape into the tight streets near Tacoma's docks. You'll need to work fast and efficiently or you'll have soldiers all over you.

"Unfortunately, we don't have any way to tell the Banded child apart from the others. So unless you have some way to scan their brains and pick the otaku out, you'll have to grab them all."

HOOKS

Working for the Good Guys doesn't usually come with benefits. Overwatch has nothing to offer the runners other than a moral push to do the right thing. The runners should get the impression that Overwatch typically works with whatever they can get; they don't have resources to throw around like the megacorporations. Their rundown safehouses and less-than-glamorous hired security are evidence of this. After all, for the most part, Overwatch is a group of children who've been forced to grow up faster than can reasonably be expected. The eyes of the young otaku in the conference room have the hardened edge that speaks of countless sacrifices made for their beliefs.

The runners are being forced to make a decision here, and Overwatch is putting on the pressure. To Overwatch, the runners are either part of the solution or they're part of the problem. If the runners don't pass this test, they'll walk out as enemies of Overwatch.

BEHIND THE SCENES

Overwatch will not reveal the true source of their information to the runners. Their spy within the Banded is too valuable to put at risk. If pressed about the details they've uncovered, they will say the Resistance inside the arcology found out and informed them, which is only partially a lie.

While Overwatch is monitoring the rescues' status, they are uncertain exactly when the military will ship them to Ft. Lewis. They also can only guess at the strength of the convoy.

The setting for the extraction is very straightforward (see the next scenario, *The Line*, p. 80). Overwatch scouted out the area long ago, anticipating just such an event. The exact details of the runners' plans for the mission will be left to them to determine.

Overwatch will be able to contribute to the mission in two valuable ways. First, they will provide the runners with a powerful full-spectrum jammer (Rating 10), both to prevent the convoy from calling for aid and to prevent Deus from killing the White before he can be captured. Unfortunately, this will also prevent the runners from using their own electronic communications during the run. Secondly, Overwatch can provide Matrix and communications guidance during the run, informing the runners when the convoy is en route, creating a blockade by interfering with the GridGuide' system, monitoring police and military responses, and helping to cover the runners' getaway. Ronin will tell the runners that he's hacked into the controls of a foghorn nearby on the docks, and he'll use it as a signal if military or police reinforcements are on the way.

If the runners have the SENSE scanner from the second adventure (*Breakthrough*, p. 38), they should realize that they'll be able to use it to identify the Banded child. If the runners have forgotten that they have it, they may need a reminder. If the runners never bought the working prototype from Brisbie, then he'll have sold it on the black market, where Overwatch would've recognized its usefulness and snatched it up immediately. They'll hand it over to the runners for this mission, which should make the runners suspicious about whom they were really working for during that run ...

PUSHING THE ENVELOPE

As this scenario is primarily a meeting, there is little to be done to make it more dangerous. The runners may become involved in a minor gang squabble, traffic accident or episode of road rage on the way to the meet, or they may have to chase off a group of squatters or ghouls who are scoping out the Overwatch hideout as a possible shelter. The gamemaster should avoid any situations that may leave any of the runners hospitalized or worse, as they've got a job to do.

DEBUGGING

More mercenary runner teams may balk at the concept of doing any run for free—or even worse, for a cause. Other teams may still be suspicious of Overwatch, or hesitant to get involved in what from the outside appears to be a conflict between otaku gangs. Some may not want to take any jobs while they're on retainer for another. The gamemaster can try a couple of options to convince the runners to take the job: bribes and pressure.

If cash is demanded, Overwatch can scramble together only about 10,000¥, and they will express their reluctance, as this will make other projects more difficult. As an alternative method of payment, Overwatch can offer a wide range of boosted (stolen) Matrix services, from hookups to a full sub-



scription to *all* the Matrix channels. They may also be able to provide valuable cyberdeck hardware or utility programs, in exchange for services rendered. They can also use their hacking skills to acquire gear for the runners that may normally be difficult to find. Ultimately, it is up to the gamemaster how far Overwatch will go to pay the runners, but they certainly will not let themselves be taken advantage of. They firmly believe the runners should be offering their services for free.

Alternatively, Overwatch can use their influence to persuade the runners. As a skilled band of hackers, Overwatch has assembled quite a few favors that they can call in around Seattle, including some owed by the runners' contacts. If the runners refuse the job, one of them may suddenly get a call from that Mafia loanshark he's knee-deep in debt to, or that street shaman who saved her life—someone with a hook in the character, calling merely to gently *mention* the importance of civic duties. As an organization of children, Overwatch is not above merely pestering the runners with hacker pranks. These can range from mere annoyances (hundreds of nuyen in unexplained phone bills, slashed credit ratings, repossessed vehicles) to serious problems (newly generated warrants for unsolved crimes, forged death certificates, military enlistment and so forth).

THE LINE

WHAT'S UP, CHUMMER?

This is where the action begins—the runners take on the first mission as allies of Overwatch. On a stretch of busy highway, the runners must intercept an unsuspecting military convoy and extract one of Deus' minions.

TELL IT TO THEM STRAIGHT

You're in position, with your eyes glued to the southbound traffic on Intercity 5. Over the radio, you hear the small voice of the otaku girl who's been giving you regular updates on the convoy's position.

"Red Rover one half kilometer from intercept. Grid team, go bumpercars."

As if with one mind, three separate southbound vehicles jerk as if to avoid an imaginary collision. Instead, the three cars converge and then collide, spewing plastic parts and twisted chunks of metal. Sliding apart from each other, the three vehicles seem to lose power and skid to a halt, effectively blocking both lanes of traffic. The vehicles behind them slam on their brakes, screeching to a complete stop and jamming the road.

As a few people shakily emerge from the smashed vehicles, you spot a small motorcade approaching from the north: a Citymaster and two military-painted vehicles. As they hit the traffic slowdown, the radio voice speaks one final time, giving you the go signal, before exploding into static as the jammer kicks in. Time to move!

HOOKS

This scene is all about fast and furious action. The runners are pitting themselves against the military, and it's only a matter of time before reinforcements arrive. The runners should be sweating bullets as they attempt to finish their mission and escape.

BEHIND THE SCENES

The motorcade consists of a Citymaster bracketed by two Ford Sentinels, all traveling in single file. The vehicles will only stop for traffic signals and physical roadblocks. The accident arranged by Overwatch will effectively block both lanes of the southbound Intercity, though the shoulders of the road will still be open. A meter-high concrete barrier (Barrier rating 16) effectively separates the vehicles from the northbound lanes of traffic.

Overwatch has chosen this section of road because it is furthest from both Ft. Lewis and the arcology military cordon, and it features the best terrain for the runners' escape. Exits from the highway are equidistant to the north and south, only a half-kilometer away. Likewise, only another set of concrete barriers (also Barrier rating 16) and a stretch of grass separate the highway from the side streets of Tacoma. The runners can easily station vehicles on the northbound shoulder or the nearby side streets in advance, or they can use the roads to quickly maneuver into position. Enterprising runners can also gain access to the roofs of nearby warehouses that overlook the ambush site.

When the ambush occurs, traffic on Intercity 5 will be piled up in both directions.

The Motorcade

The Ford Sentinels are filled with military agents escorting the children. Both are driven by skilled, but not cybernetically-enhanced, drivers; the cars are not designed to be controlled by riggers. Each car contains three soldiers as passengers, plus the drivers. At least two of these soldiers will be cybered. One of the soldiers in the back seat of the rear car is in fact a military mage.

The Citymaster, which is driven by a military rigger, carries two soldiers and two medics. It is also transporting eight rescued children, one of whom is the White the runners are after.

When the ambush is sprung, the lead Sentinel will attempt to circumvent the roadblock by driving on the shoulder of the road, with the other two vehicles following. If this route is blocked, all three vehicles will attempt to reverse and get past the cars stopped behind them.

The soldiers will try to remain in the Sentinels, rolling down their windows and firing from behind vehicle armor cover while the drivers attempt to find an escape route for the vehicles. Like all vehicle windows, their windows are opaque to the outside; they are also armored and have a Barrier rating of 8 for anyone shooting through them. The soldiers will leave their vehicle if it becomes disabled, or if the Citymaster is trapped, and will engage the runners on foot. The soldiers within the Citymaster will not leave unless their lives are threatened. The rigger will attempt to keep the runners at bay by making full use of his turret-mounted medium machine gun, which is loaded with gel rounds.

Getting inside the armored transport may prove difficult. The doors are locked and armored, and opening them will require that the runners do Moderate damage to the door. Alternately, they can try to hotwire the Rating 5 maglock keypad on the doors. (See p. 234, SR3.)



Escaping

When the military convoy realizes it is under attack, it will call for reinforcements, but Overwatch's jammer will stifle the signal. Once violence erupts, however, it is only a matter of time before a bystander gets through to the police. In addition to Lone Star's response, the UCAS military will launch two Northrup Yellowjackets (p. 163, *Rigger 2*) to intercept the runners. The gamemaster can decide how quickly these reinforcements arrive, but keep in mind that the jammer will buy the runners a precious minute or two. Overwatch will also do their best to hamper any pursuit, either by creating further accidents or by interfering with communications.

When backup is on the way, Overwatch will inform the runners by sounding the foghorn. This warning should give the runners enough time to exit the scene.

If the runners are able to break away into the side streets surrounding the nearby docks, they should have an easy time losing their pursuit. The streets in the area are tight and cramped, with a large number of alleys, backroads, and empty warehouses for the runners to maneuver through. Once they're in the clear, they can contact Overwatch and find out where to take the child.

UCAS Army Grunt Soldiers

B	Q	S	C	I	W	E	M	R
5	5	5	3	3	3	6	0	4

INIT: 4 + 1D6

Dice Pools: Combat 5

Karma Pool/Professional Rating: 1/2

Active Skills: Assault Rifles 5, Car 3, Etiquette 2 (Military 4), Heavy Weapons 4, Launch Weapons 3, Pistols 4, Unarmed Combat 5

Martial Arts: Brawling 5 (Full Offense, Vicious Blow)

Armor: Armor jacket [5/3]

Weapons: Colt M22A2 [AR, SA/BF/FA, 8M, RC 1, 40 (c) w/2 extra clips, gas vent 1, imaging scope (Rating 2)]

Range (TN): 0-50 (4), 51-150 (5), 151-350 (6), 351-500 (9)

Underbarrel Grenade Launcher [GL, SS, 6 (m)]

Range (TN): 5-50 (4), 51-100 (5), 101-150 (8), 151-300 (9)

6 HE defensive mini-grenades [10S, -1/.5m]

6 concussion mini-grenades [12M Stun, -1/m]

Gear: Goggles (flare compensation, low-light)

UCAS Army Cybered Soldiers

B	Q	S	C	I	W	E	M	R
5 (6)5 (7)	5 (7)	4	4	4	1.65	0	5 (6)	

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

Dice Pools: Combat 7

Karma Pool/Professional Rating: 2/3

Active Skills: Assault Rifles 5, Biotech 3, Car 3, Etiquette 2 (Military 4), Heavy Weapons 4, Launch Weapons 3, Pistols 4, Small Unit Tactics 4, Unarmed Combat 6.

Martial Arts: Brawling 6 (Full Offense, Kick Attack, Vicious Blow)

Cyberware: Bone lacing (plastic), boosted reflexes (Rating 2), flare compensation (retinal mod), muscle replacement (Level 2), smartlink

ARES CITYMASTER

Handling	Speed	Accel	Body	Armor	Sig
5/11	120	3	5	10	2
Autonav	Pilot	Sensor	Cargo	Load	
3	—	0	17	525	

Seating: 2 bucket + 2 folding bench (x 5)

Entry Points: 2 + 1 rear

Fuel: Diesel (250 liters)

Economy: 5.2 km/liter

Template: Armored Heavy Transport

Other Features: EnviroSeal (gas), Life Support (20 man-hours), Small Turret (MMG with gel rounds), Datajack Port, Rigger Adaptation

Ford Sentinel (Military Edition)

Handling	Speed	Accel	Body	Armor	Sig
3/3	120	9	4	6	2
Autonav	Pilot	Sensor	Cargo	Load	
0	—	0	17	525	

Seating: 2 bucket + 1 bench

Entry Points: 2 + 2

Fuel: Gasoline (120 liters)

Economy: 7 km/liter

Other features: Rating 3 Contingency Maneuver Controls, Advanced Passenger Protection System, Run-flat tires.

Armor: Armor jacket [5/3]

Weapons: same as UCAS Army Grunt Soldiers (above)

UCAS Army Mage

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

INIT: 5 + 1D6

Dice Pools: Astral Combat 9, Combat 8, Spell 5

Karma Pool/Professional Rating: 2/3

Active Skills: Assault Rifles 3, Biotech 3, Car 3, Conjuring 5, Etiquette 2 (Military 4), Pistols 4, Small Unit Tactics 4, Sorcery 5 (Spellcasting 7), Unarmed Combat 4

Martial Arts: Brawling 4 (Evasion, Zoning)

Spells: Armor 5, Detect Magic 3, Increase Reaction 3, Heal 4, Laser 4, Manabolt 5, Mass Confusion 5, Stunbolt 5

Armor: Armor jacket [5/3]

Weapons: Browning Max-Power [HP, SA, 9M, 10 (c) w/2 extra clips, laser sight]

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

Gear: 1 Force 4 elemental on call (any type, 2 services)

UCAS Army Rigger

B	Q	S	C	I	W	E	M	R
4	5	5	3	6	5	2.04	0	5 (9)

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

Dice Pools: Combat 8, Control 9



Karma Pool/Professional Rating: 2/3

Active Skills: Assault Rifles 4, Car 5, Car B/R 4, Electronics 5, Etiquette 2 (Military 4), Gunnery 5, Pistols 4, Small Unit Tactics 4
Cyberware (all alphaware): Datajack, smartlink, vehicle control rig (Rating 2)

Armor: Armor jacket [5/3]

Weapons: Same as UCAS Army Grunt Soldiers' (p. 81)

The Children

All of the children are sedated, and several of them have bandaged wounds. At least two of them appear to have been grossly abused; they have amputated limbs and disturbing implants. (The gamemaster can judge how graphic and horrible these implants should be.) All of them have datajacks. Two of them have also suffered severe brain damage, though this will not be obvious unless the runners wake them. All of the children will sleep blissfully through the firefight.

There is no physical way to distinguish the White otaku from the rest of the children. He is merely a young boy, age 13, and he has none of the features normally associated with the Banded—no tattoos or cybereyes. (Use the statistics for the 1-Band White otaku on p. 139.)

If the runners use the SENSE device to scan the children, the character using the device must make a Biotech (5) Test for each child tested. Each test takes a full Combat Turn. One success will be enough to identify three of the children as having severely altered brain signals. (These are the two brain-damaged children and the White.) Two successes will let the character identify brain damage. Three successes will show that the White child's neural pathways have undergone extensive reconfiguration—a highly unusual feature.

Magical mind scans will reveal little about the boy, though 3+ successes on a Mind Probe spell will reveal that the boy has memories of being "transfigured" by Deus. While the runners may suspect that this is one of Deus' top lieutenants, he is in fact a recent conversion and knows relatively nothing about Deus' plans. Though his parents—both Renraku employees—were killed within the arcology, Deus has told him that he is being taken out of the arcology so that he can be returned to them.

It is critical to Deus' plan that its minions track the boy to Overwatch. Deus has several methods at its disposal: ritual tracking by a Banded mage (p. 39, *MITS*); an AOD tracking signal (p. 291, *SR3*) with enough juice to penetrate any jamming, cleverly disguised within the boy's datajack; a high-Signature surveillance drone tracking from the sky; or a concealed micro-drone (perhaps a smaller version of the Bumblebee, p. 142) hidden on the boy's person, ready to escape to reveal Overwatch's location. If nothing else, Deus' otaku may have hacked into an orbital surveillance satellite and may track the runners via high-resolution spy cams. The gamemaster should choose whichever is most likely to work against his players. At least one method must work for the rest of the adventure to continue as planned. If one method is discovered and foiled, then another can be used instead. (Deus is a computer—it understands the need for backup systems.)

PUSHING THE ENVELOPE

There is plenty of action to keep the runners occupied in this scenario, but if they seem to be getting off too easy, the gamemaster can easily even the score. The Citymaster can be equipped with an electroshock or even anti-personnel explosive protection system, making it more challenging for the runners to break inside. The motorcade may also have a guardian spirit or military drones as an escort.

For another spin, some of the bystanders could get involved in the conflict. Perhaps one of them happens to be an off-duty Lone Star cop or a company man who decides to play hero. Some of the bystanders may panic and cross the runners' line of fire while attempting to flee the area. Others may recklessly attempt to steer their vehicles away from the scene, perhaps inadvertently cutting off the runners' escape route. The White otaku may also wake up and attempt to flee from the runners, forcing them to subdue him.

DEBUGGING

The Citymaster and military escort may prove too tough for a runner team to handle on short notice. If this is the case, use an unarmored Roadmaster (p. 309, *SR3*) in place of the Citymaster and tone down the soldiers' abilities. The runners may also take too long at the scene, inviting a chase by Yellowjackets or worse. Interference by Overwatch can provide the necessary cover for the runners to escape.

If the runners somehow manage to get the White killed, Ronin will still want the body brought to the Overwatch hideout (see the next scenario) so he can examine it for implants—and chew the runners out himself. In this case, Deus will still be able to track the child's body.

If the runners end up extracting all of the children, they're going to have to figure out what to do with the rest. Overwatch will recommend dropping them off at a hospital near Ft. Lewis.

THE SINKER

WHAT'S UP, CHUMMER?

After extracting the Banded child, the runners are told to bring him to an Overwatch hideout they haven't seen before. Unwittingly, they also lead Deus there, putting Overwatch at risk. As the resistance group begins to interrogate (or, in a worst-case scenario, dissect) the White, one of the runners receives a phone call from Mr. Johnson. The job they're on call for is a go. As he gives the runners the location he wants to strike, they'll suddenly realize he is asking them to hit the Overwatch hideout they're standing in. Acting quickly, the runners turn the tables on Deus by capturing Mr. Johnson for Overwatch instead, leading them to discover the location of a Banded operations center outside of the arcology.

TELL IT TO THEM STRAIGHT

You've got the kid and you've made a clean—well, you've made a getaway. Pulling over at a random street corner dataterm, you dial the number Ronin gave you. Almost immediately, his icon appears on the screen.

"Well done. Bring the package to 180 Forest Ridge Drive in Auburn. Enter through the back door." With that brief message, he cuts the connection.

When the runners arrive, read the following aloud:

Homing in on the address Ronin gave you, you find yourself in a rundown manufacturing district. Your destination turns out to be what looks like a functioning automated chocolate factory, according to the Choco-Tarts sign next to the entrance. You're just starting to think you heard him wrong, when the gateway to the parking lot slides open just as you approach. Shrugging mentally, you pull into the lot and around to the back of the building, right next to the loading bay door.

Security cameras eye you as you lift the child out and head towards the door. You hear a buzz as the door swings open wide, and you are suddenly assaulted by the strong, overwhelming smell of chocolate. Your salivating mouth doesn't distract you from the cleaning drone that shuffles up to the door. It blinks a red LED at you for a few seconds, then rolls away, still blinking at you from behind.

You follow it through a maze of robotic machines, all dedicated to mixing, cooking and packaging delicious-looking Choco-Tarts. Restraining yourselves from grabbing a handful, you follow the drone to a remote corner of the facility, up to the side of a vat that's easily the size of your entire doss. A hatch on the side pops open, and you jump back, expecting to be buried in an avalanche of sweet, sticky, suffocating death.

Instead, Ronin stands in the hatchway, smiling at your confused expressions. Behind him, you can see the inside of the empty vat has been converted into what looks like a war room. Computers are crammed around the walls, snug against maps of Seattle and the Renraku Arcology. Cables are strewn across the floor like a carpet, and you see at least a dozen children hunched in small chairs, with fiberoptic lines streaming from the datajacks in their temples. Choco-Tart wrappers decorate the floor.

"Welcome to Overwatch HQ," Ronin says.

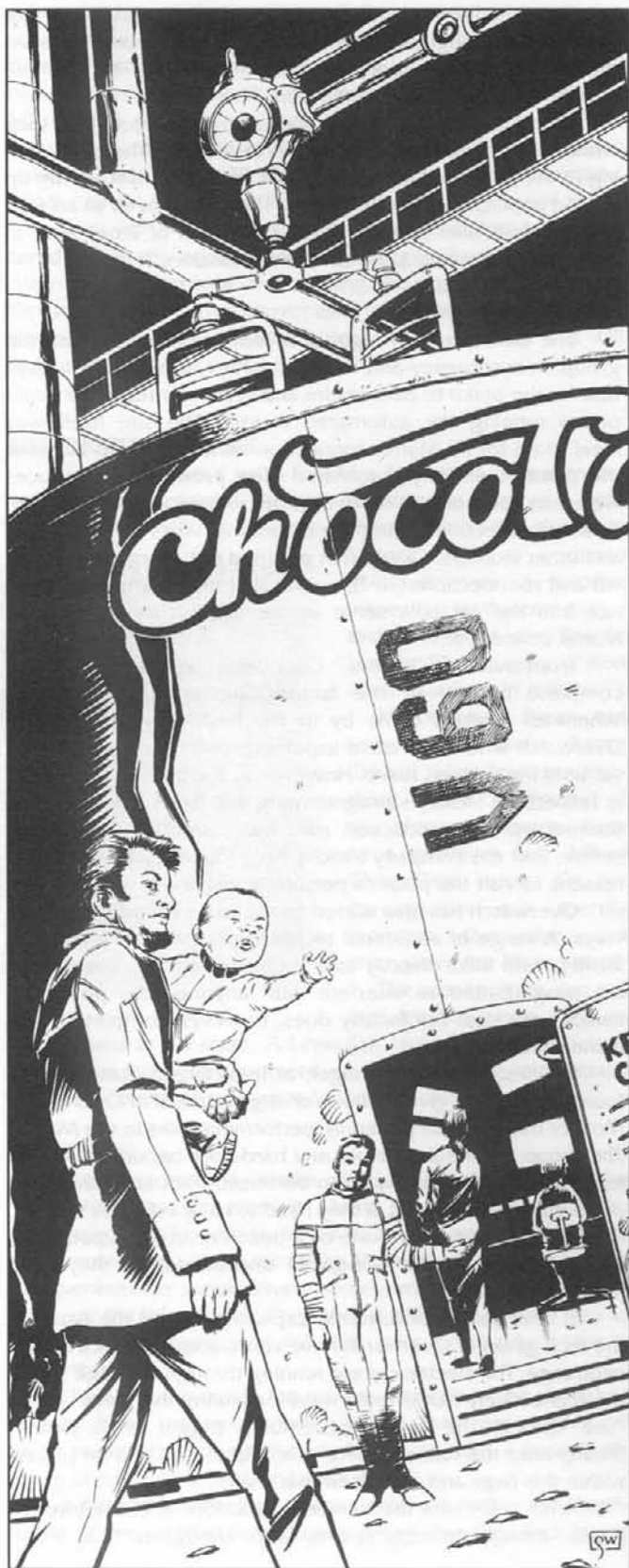
After the interrogation begins, read the following aloud:

Your phone rings, and you step outside the vat, hoping to snag a Choco-Tart or two while you take the call. The screen pops to life, and you see Mr. Johnson's face looking back at you.

"Good evening. The time has come to complete that task for which you've been on retainer. Is your team ready? Good. The building in question is located at 180 Forest Ridge Drive. It is an automated factory, though at least a portion of it has been converted to use for other purposes. Security should be minimal, but any occupants are to be considered infected and extremely dangerous. The entire structure must be destroyed and anyone inside must be liquidated with extreme prejudice. Do I make myself clear?"

HOOKS

The runners should begin this scenario with a bit of euphoria, having just pulled off a successful extraction. This feeling should quickly morph into a sense of wonder and strangeness



once the runners experience the curious nature of the Overwatch stronghold. The weird children, secret hideout, drones, robots and chocolate should make the atmosphere somewhat like *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory*.

When the runners receive the call from Mr. Johnson, their world should be temporarily thrown for a loop. Whoever's talking to the Johnson will need to think fast to avoid screwing up a good opportunity for the runners. They'll also need to act fast, as Johnson is also secretly sending a squad of Blues over to make sure the runners complete their mission.

BEHIND THE SCENES

The Overwatch stronghold is representative of both the group's constituency and its abilities. It was a relatively easy task for the otaku to overwhelm and seize control of the computers running the automated factory. The site itself was ideal, both for its Matrix connection bandwidth and because the place is entirely automated. The products it produces were just icing on the cake, or at least chocolate on the tart. To avoid detection during the occasional visits by mechanics and other workers, Overwatch pumped out a large secondary vat and soundproofed it. The pipes that once pumped chocolate into the vat now serve as the conduit for an array of Matrix connections.

From their vat "bunker," Overwatch exercises subtle but complete control of the factory, including its security. Whenever workers come by in the flesh, any members of Overwatch who are present lock themselves securely into the vat until the workers leave. However, as the otaku have actually refined the factory's programming and fixed a few glitches themselves, the production runs more smoothly than ever before, and the company's techs have found fewer and fewer reasons to visit the place in person for repairs.

Overwatch has also added to the site's security in subtle ways. A range of additional technological sensors guard the facility, with links directly to the Overwatch vat. The drones are programmed to interfere with anyone who physically invades the site. The factory does, however, completely lack astral security.

Besides Ronin and Dodger, at least fifteen otaku can be found here at any given time, working on behalf of Overwatch. Most of them will be jacked in, performing tasks in the Matrix. The group is careful to avoid any hard-core hacking from this location, as they don't want to be traced back and have their operation compromised. If they need to hack a difficult system, they'll either skip out to one of a dozen nearby jackpoints, or take advantage of the half-dozen satellite uplinks they have installed on the roof.

In anticipation of someday capturing one of the Banded, the tech geeks in Overwatch have constructed an electromagnetic cage. The electric current running through the cage's wire mesh effectively blocks radio waves, ensuring that Deus cannot "see" through the Banded or remotely trigger its kill switch. Shortly after the runners arrive, the White child will be placed within this cage and restrained in a chair.

Ronin will invite the runners to participate in the interrogation, though the cage is only large enough to hold a few

people at a time. Ronin and Dodger will wake the prisoner and begin asking questions about how the child became an otaku, what he witnessed inside the arcology, why Deus sent him to the outside, and so forth. The child's answers will be less than informative, because he truly knows very little.

The Bomb Drops

Shortly after the interrogation begins, one of the runners outside of the cage should receive a call from Mr. Johnson, as detailed in *Tell It To Them Straight*. The gamemaster should carefully note the response of whomever takes the call once the news is dropped on them. If the character plays along as though everything is fine and they'll be doing the job, Morris will not be suspicious. He will, however, still send a team of Blues to make sure the runners complete the job, and to finish it themselves if the runners don't. If the character acts shocked, or otherwise indicates that something is wrong, Johnson will immediately become suspicious. He will order the Blues to oversee the operation and kill the runners at the first sign of trouble. If the character slips and lets Morris know that they are at the Overwatch hideout, or that they know of it, he will assume the runners are now enemies and will order the Blues to kill them on sight.

If the runners play it off as a routine call, Morris will name a location where they can meet him for their final payment immediately after the job is finished. See *Meeting Mr. Johnson*, p. 85.

If Overwatch is informed of the situation, they will realize that their cover is blown and immediately start to evacuate the hideout. They will pack up all essential computers and gear, selectively destroying anything important they can't take with them. It will take the group half an hour to get out the essentials—just in time to run into the Blues as they leave. (See *The Blues*, below.) Devious runners may wish to destroy the factory to avoid suspicion—once Overwatch has left, preferably. However, if the characters do not spur Overwatch to vacate more rapidly, Morris' Blues may arrive in time to intercept them.

Ronin and Dodger will encourage the runners to go to the meet with Mr. Johnson and attempt to capture him. Since he is obviously working for Deus, he could have important information on Deus' activities outside of the arcology.

The Blues

A team of five Blues will arrive at the Overwatch hideout half an hour after the runners talk with Morris. One will be a Banded mage, and at least one—the leader—will have five bands. All of them have the blue cybereyes and Banded tattoos that mark them as servants of Deus. Use the statistics given on p. 139; make the team of Blues a memorable challenge for the runners.

Unless the runners have given themselves away, the Blues will have orders to observe the site from a short distance. Their job is to observe the runners in action. If the runners fail to destroy the factory, the Blues have orders to do it themselves. They have an ample supply of incendiaries and explosives to do the job.

If the Blues spot the runners (and/or Overwatch) evacuating the facility, they will immediately suspect that something is

wrong. Allow the runners to make a Perception (8) Test to notice the Blues' vehicle while leaving the factory. The Banded mage will attempt to follow the runners astrally, while the others will stay and attempt to destroy the facility.

If the runners spilled the beans, these Blues will instead launch a straightforward attack. Two of them will set the explosives in place while the others provide covering fire. They will attempt to kill anyone leaving the building. The mage will also call forth a pair of Force 5 fire elementals with instructions to burn the place to the ground.

Meeting Mr. Johnson

The rendezvous address Morris gives the runners is not far from the Naval Shipyards in Everett, at the north end of the Seattle sprawl. Morris has intentionally chosen this out-of-the-way location so his team of Blues will have enough time to verify that the mission has been completed as he directed. From the Overwatch hideout, it should take the runners close to an hour to get to Morris' meeting point by car.

The site itself is a simple fenced-in parking lot. The gamemaster can choose the exact layout of the surrounding buildings and streets. The lot will be empty except for Morris' Mitsubishi Nightsky limousine. Morris has four rented security goons with him (use the Weapons Specialist and Vehicle Rigger sample characters, pp. 79-80, SR3), armed with HK227-S submachine guns and armored jackets. One guard is standing outside the limo, another is in the back with Morris, and two others, including the rigger, are in the front seats.

As the runners arrive, Morris will call up the squad of Blues to get a report. He will not be willing to pay the runners until he receives confirmation that the Overwatch hideout has been demolished. He will become uneasy if he cannot reach the Blues, and may call a backup team to investigate the site.

If attacked, Morris' rental guards will do their best to protect him and get him out of the area. The rigger will leave the outside guard behind if necessary. Morris' security detail has Professional ratings of 3 and Karma Pools of 2. Morris himself will not fight, but he will attempt to flee on foot if other avenues of escape are blocked. If escape seems inevitable, Morris' programming will kick in, and he will attempt to kill himself.

Because of Deus' conditioning, attempts to interrogate Morris will suffer a -4 Open Test modifier. A successful interrogation or mind probe will reveal that he knows the location of a Banded operations center—Tin Man Scrap Works—which

exists outside of the arcology. If the runners' attempts are unsuccessful, the gamemaster should lead them to discover this information in a different way. The location of Tin Man may be stored in Morris' headware memory, programmed into the Mitsubishi's autonav, or listed as the billing address for the security guards on an invoice in his pocket. If the runners search Morris, they will also find several certified credsticks which contain the rest of the nuyen he was going to pay them.

Deus will eventually discover that Morris has been captured. When this occurs, the AI will trigger Morris' radio-detonated cranial bomb by transmitting the signal on a citywide repeater network. The gamemaster can choose exactly when this will occur, but it should happen at the moment that will most disturb the runners.

PUSHING THE ENVELOPE

There are several ways to add a little extra torque to the twists in this scenario. The gamemaster can drop in a little chaotic fun at the chocolate factory, such as a drone going haywire, a surprise inspection by the company's techs, or even the Seattle Health Department. ("And what exactly is in *this* vat?")

Morris could figure out something is amiss during the call, when he sees something in the background of the vidphone screen, such as a conveyor belt full of Choco-Tarts boxes. Or the gamemaster can merely increase the size and strength of the Blues squad.

The runners may also run into trouble when they go after Morris at the meet. A Lone Star cruiser might happen to pass by at the wrong moment, or the local gang might crash the meet to charge everyone "parking lot rent."

DEBUGGING

The characters may choke when they realize who they're being hired to hit, alerting Morris to their collusion with Overwatch. It's important, however, for the runners to learn of the Banded operations center by the end of this scenario, so the gamemaster should invent some method for the runners to discover the information. They should either be given a way to capture or kill Morris, or get the info from a Blue who's sent to finish them off.

The Blues may catch the runners unaware at the chocolate factory. If the runners are facing defeat, they may receive aid from some otaku-programmed drones or from a local thrill-gang Overwatch bribed for protection.

It's possible that the runners might not realize the significance of the Tin Man Scrap Works information they find. In this

MITSUBISHI NIGHTSKY

Handling	Speed	Accel	Body	Armor	Sig
4/8	120	8	4	2	2
Autonav	Pilot	Sensor	Cargo	Load	
4	—	1	10	60	

Seating: 8 bucket (4 rows of 2)

Entry Points: 2 + 2d + 1t

Fuel: Gasoline (200 liters)

Economy: 8 km/liter

Other Features: APPS, concealed armor, roll bars, enviroseal (gas), satellite uplink (connected by electronics port), wet bar, climate control



case, Ronin or Dodger would encourage the runners to check into it, even suggesting that Morris might have an office there that might contain valuable information. If the runners fail to follow up, Overwatch will check into it instead. They will discover enough unusual aspects about it to ask the characters to make a run.

A DROP IN THE OCEAN

WHAT'S UP, CHUMMER?

Now that the runners have foiled Deus' plan to wipe out Overwatch, they have a chance to strike back. In this scenario, Overwatch asks the runners to investigate and launch a raid on a scrap metal company that is acting as a front for a Banded operations center. Inside, the runners are confronted with a variety of scrap-metal drone defenses as they work their way toward the center of the stronghold.

TELL IT TO THEM STRAIGHT

You're back in those dirty old software company offices, watching the layer of dust that's already accruing on the conference table's wooden surface. A few more of the grim-eyed otaku accompany Ronin this time, their eyes reflecting a new level of respect for you. Ronin himself looks haggard and sleep-deprived, his face shadowed by a few days' growth of stubble.

"I can't express my thanks for how much your team has accomplished on our behalf," he says. "Our group has been limited in what we could accomplish, and it feels good to have allies on our side." Some of the otaku nod their heads in agreement.

Ronin grins and continues. "So, since we're on such a roll, we'd like to give you another job to do. We think that Tin Man Scrap Works may hold some more clues to Deus' plans. We've done some checking on the place, but haven't turned up anything too unusual, aside from the fact that we can't figure out who really owns it and their Matrix host is blander than soy-krill cakes. It's possible that your last Mr. Johnson may have an office there, or that Deus may even have more minions inside.

"We need you to break in and give the place a direct look. See if you can find an office for Mr. Johnson, or see if they have any off-Matrix hosts that have any interesting dirt. We'd like you to document anything interesting you find. We can provide Matrix overwatch as before, and we can even hook you up with guncams or simrigs, so we can ride on your shoulders, so to speak, as you go in.

"Of course. If it's too much of a challenge for you," he says with a mischievous grin, "speak up now."

When the runners physically visit the scrapyards, read the following aloud:

Since you're on the border of the Puyallup Barrens region known as Hell's Kitchen, you can't help but think that the facility you're looking at must be Hell's Appliance Cabinet. Past the electrified outer gate with its peeling Tin Man Scrap Works sign, you see a veritable maze of junked automobiles, large appliances, metal chassis and scrap metal heaps. Large piles of engines and I-beams sit waiting to be melted, while large cubes of crushed metal are stacked like children's playthings.

This must be where old refrigerators, generators and construction drones come to die.

Through the soupy air, thick with steam from nearby geysers and the sulfurous exhaust of smelters, you spot what seems to be some sort of manufacturing plant and office building near the center of the maze. Inside those structures, caked with years of ash and soot, are the answers that Overwatch seeks. Maybe.

When the runners encounter the scrap drones, read the following aloud:

You move cautiously between walls of tortured metal components, dodging pools of light cast by intermittent floodlights. The nearby sounds of metal compactors and shifting piles of scrap lends an eeriness to the scene, as if gigantic monsters lurked just out of sight, chewing on iron.

Out of the corner of one eye you see a nearby scrap pile move, and you step back, expecting a bulldozer or vehicle to come pushing through. Suddenly, the pipe to your left shifts, cables whip near your feet and a chromatic gaze is turned upon you ...

HOOKS

This scenario should have the feel of an industrial-age nightmare, as the runners trespass into a graveyard of steel webs and stripped-bare mechanical devices. The air is thick with smoke and choking fumes, and everything is covered in rust and soot. The lighting is sporadic at best, illuminating objects at strange angles and casting ominous shadows onto everything. Sparks thrown off by the smelters give some areas a hellish feel, while the constant operation of large machinery smothers other sounds.

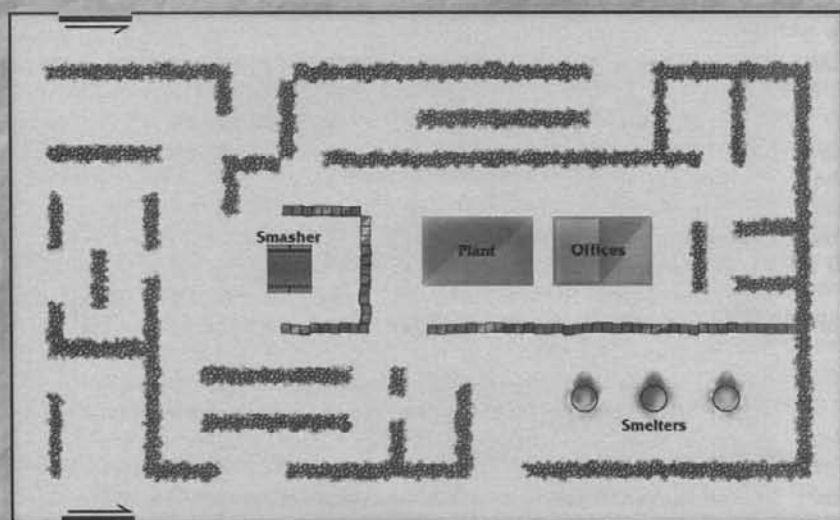
The poisonous nature of this area should give shamans a chill, and make even mages uncomfortable. The only spirits to be drawn from this earth are of the toxic variety.

When the runners reach the office building, they will find evidence that this entire facility is just one component in a large operation Deus is conducting outside of the arcology. Until now, even Overwatch has assumed that the bulk of Deus' activities have been confined to the arcology, but the runners will find alarming evidence to the contrary. This should place a new perspective on the danger Deus represents, aligning the runners even more closely to Overwatch's goals.

BEHIND THE SCENES

The runners will learn of Tin Man Scrap Works either by interrogating Morris or through some other clue provided in the previous scenario. Depending on how well the interrogation goes or how much digging the runners do, they may even turn up some of the information detailed below. (See also the *Legwork* section, p. 93, for details runners can glean from their contacts.)

Once again, Overwatch will strongly encourage the runners to make a run on their behalf, as they believe the runners may find some clues to Deus' plans. As before, their appeals will be directed towards the runners' sense of righteousness. They will offer to run Matrix overwatch for the runners as well, though they have been unable to find the backdoor to Tin Man's Matrix



Scrapyard Map



host which leads to all the juicy material. (See below.) However, they have eight guncams (see p. 35, *Cannon Companion*) and a simrig (see p. 289, *SR3*) they can offer the runners, so that they can "ride" and monitor the action during the run.

The following information details the security of the scrapyard and what the characters will find there. When the characters reach the two main buildings, continue on to the next scenario, *The Belly of the Beast*, p. 89.

Tin Man Scrap Works

Tin Man Scrap Works moved to Puyallup in the mid-2050s. As a loud, environmentally damaging business, it hoped to take advantage of the lack of residents and pollution-control enforcement in the area near Hell's Kitchen. A short time later, the owners tried to open a work-drone manufacturing plant on the same premises. The operation was a financial disaster, however, and it brought the company to the brink of bankruptcy. Shortly before the Renraku Arcology shut down, a mysterious shell company purchased the plant and began automating its systems. All but a few of the plant's previous employees were fired.

Deus was the force behind the shell company, and the AI quickly inserted his own personnel and drone-operated systems to keep the manufacturing plant operating on a minimal level. In the past few months, more of Deus' minions have come here, and the place has slowly evolved into an operations center for the Banded. The drone manufacturing plant has been retooled to construct drones to Deus' specifications, mostly using scrap parts. Though these drones are much less effective than the constructs within the arcology, they are no less frightening. A

semi-autonomous knowbot, or SK, was programmed by Deus to build these devices and monitor the facility.

In order to make up for the plant's manpower shortage, the Banded here have taken to kidnapping and enslaving squatters from around Puyallup. Alongside a small army of work drones, these slaves labor in the factory and inner parts of the scrapyard, well away from prying eyes.

Scrapyard Layout

The layout of the Tin Man yard and buildings is mapped out above. The junk walls and piles are between 5 and 10 meters high, and are simply massive heaps of metallic components and parts. They cannot be seen through, and climbing them requires an Athletics (Climbing) (6) Test. A character who fails the test must succeed in a Quickness (8) Test or resist 9M damage from falling on the sharp, rusty scrap. (Half Impact armor applies; round down.) The junk piles also provide a number of good objects to hide behind or within, apply a +4 modifier to Stealth (Hiding) Open Tests.

The compacted cube walls are stacked a bit higher (ten to twelve meters). The target number to climb them is 9, falling damage is the same. They provide no bonus to hiding.

The industrial magnets are located on the ends of large cranes, which may be rigger-controlled. During the day, workers will be operating them. At night, the cranes may be either shut down or performing menial tasks under the control of their Pilot program.

The compactor is a large square pit designed to crush large amounts of scrap metal into convenient compacted



cubes. The compactor can be activated remotely from a device within the magnet cranes, or by the site's SK. Once activated, the compactor takes 5 Combat Turns to crush whatever's inside. Any character trapped within the pit during compaction is dead, no rolls required.

The smelters are within a warehouse, and are 5-meter-high vats in which metal is melted into liquid. Large ceiling-mounted magnets and mechanical arms lift piles of scrap and drop them into the smelters. Any character or drone that falls into a smelter is instantly destroyed.

The manufacturing plant and office building are detailed in the next scenario. (See p. 90)

Tin Man Security

An electrified fence, topped with barbed wire, keeps trespassers out of the scrapyard. (See p. 234, SR3, for rules on using both of these security measures). The two gates are also electrified, but can be opened automatically by entering the correct password on a drive-up keypad (one on each side of the gate). Treat this keypad as a Rating 3 maglock with a Rating 2 anti-tamper system. (See p. 235, SR3.)

Floodlights illuminate both gate areas at night and are scattered haphazardly around the compound as well, providing spotty illumination at best. The entranceways to both the manufacturing plant and office building are also well-lit. Only four video cameras watch over the scrapyard—one on each gate and one on each main building entrance. The images from these cameras are fed into viewscreens within the office building's first-floor security room.

The yard itself has no astral security to speak of, though the area does carry a Background Count of 2. It is considered a toxic domain (see p. 126, MITS), meaning that nature spirits and spirits of the elements may not be conjured there.

At any given time, two Blues will be patrolling the yard, watching for trespassers. These guards will be wearing nondescript armor coveralls [4/2] and sunglasses to cover their blue cybereyes. One carries an Uzi III and the other a Defiance T-250 shotgun loaded with standard slugs. Use the Banded statistics given on p. 139.

If an alarm is sounded, a group of five Deus-programmed, cybered barghests will be released into the yard. These critters can identify the Banded by scent, and will vigorously hunt down and chomp any non-Banded intruders they can find in the yard. (Including astral ones—the barghests are dual-natured.) The barghests are programmed not to enter any of the buildings or leave the yard, but their hydraulic jacks make them easily capable of chasing victims up stacks of scrap metal. Note that all of the Banded have select sound filters that allow them to ignore the effects of the barghests' howls.

INDUSTRIAL MAGNET CRANES

Handling	Speed	Accel	Body	Armor	Sig
5/12	60	3	5	0	2
Autonav	Pilot	Sensor	Cargo	Load	
2	2	2	0	5,965	

Seating: 2b

Entry Points: 2

Fuel: Diesel (750 liters)

Economy: 3 km/PF

Other Features: Magnet Crane (Load: 20,000 kg), Datajack Port, Remote Control Interface, Rigger Adaptation, Spotlight

BRITISH INDUSTRIAL DLK MK 6 UTILITY MACHINE

This versatile multi-purpose drone is used for maintenance and repair work, floor delivery and other industrial applications.

Handling	Speed	Accel	Body	Armor	Sig
4/4	35	3	2	0	4
Autonav	Pilot	Sensor	Cargo	Load	
—	2	3	1	990	

Seating: NA

Entry Points: NA

Fuel: Electric (100 PF)

Economy: 0.75 km/PF (Idle: 2 minutes/PF)

Other Features: Datajack Port, 2 Mechanical Arms, Remote Control Interface, Rigger Adaptation

MESAMETRIC KODIAK ROADWAY CLEARANCE SYSTEM

The Kodiak is a rugged, heavy-duty construction drone.

Handling	Speed	Accel	Body	Armor	Sig
4/4	30	2	4	12	2
Autonav	Pilot	Sensor	Cargo	Load	
—	2	3	0	990	

Seating: None

Entry Points: NA

Fuel: Diesel (100 liters)

Economy: 2 km/liter (Idle: 30 minutes/liter)

Other Features: Bulldozer Blade, Datajack Port, Excavating Shovel, Remote Control Interface, Rigger Adaptation

Cybered Barghests

B	Q	S	C	I	W	E	R
7	6 (x 4)	5	—	2/4	2	4Z	5

INIT: 5 + 2D6 (3D6)

Attacks: 9S

Dice Pools: Combat 6

Karma Pool/Professional Rating: 2/4

Cyberware (all alphaware): Boosted Reflexes (Level 1), Flare Compensation (retinal mod), Low Light (retinal mod), Hydraulic Jacks (Rating 4)

Critter Powers: Enhanced Senses (Sonar), Fear, Paralyzing Howl

Work Drones

A number of drones are diligently at work within the scrapyards, moving piles, deconstructing vehicles and undertaking other tasks. The majority of these are DLK Mk 6 Utility Machines or Kodiak drones, operating under the control of their Pilot systems according to orders programmed by the SK.

These will not respond to the runners except to avoid accidentally killing them. They are not currently being controlled by a rigger, though the site's SK does occasionally transmit new programming orders to their Pilots through a hardwired remote control deck in the security office.

If an alarm is triggered, a VCR-equipped Blue Banded guard will jack into the remote control deck and use the work drones to seek and attack intruders. This Blue rigger will have a Level 2 VCR; the remote control deck has a rating of 7.

The Scrap Drones

At some point in their penetration of the yard, the runners should encounter a group of Deus' drone constructs. Unlike the sophisticated machines Deus has produced within the arcology, however, these drones were constructed with limited resources and even more limited manufacturing facilities. Modeled after the AI's Medusa constructs (see p. 144), these drones are clearly just another of Deus' experiments, as the designs are rough and haphazard, far below the AI's usual quality.

If the characters have never seen any of Deus' drone constructs before, they may believe these scrap drones are the real thing—obviously hyped up and overblown by the rumormill. This misconception should be encouraged, as the runners will be in for a treat when they run into a *real* Medusa.

A character who examines a scrap drone and succeeds in an appropriate Build/Repair or Knowledge Skill (6) Test will be able to determine that even though the drones are built from recycled parts, several of the design factors are ingenious. Though they may look shoddy, especially in comparison to the Medusae, they were built with advanced techniques. Several drone manufacturers would eagerly sell their mothers for the opportunity to dissect one of these machines.

The scrap drone constructs usually attack using the crude, serrated claws on their mechanical arms. They are programmed with Implant Weaponry 2 autosofts, and their attacks are at +1 Reach and cause 6M damage. They also feature an implanted taser system which they can fire using a Sharpshooter 2 autosoft. Like Medusae, they have hydraulic leg jacks, allowing them to jump 2 meters for every success on a Handling Test. They also have contingency maneuver controls that allow them to ignore 3 boxes of wound penalties. (If the drone takes more than 3 boxes, all wound penalties apply.)

The scrap drones are unable to use their whiplike tails to any real effect, though they are menacing.

Several of these scrap drones are stationed at rest around the yard, where they are almost indistinguishable from the surrounding piles of scrap. Their Pilots have instructions to attack and destroy any intruders. If an alarm is triggered, the facility's SK will instruct these drones to hunt down the trespassers.

PUSHING THE ENVELOPE

The runners already have a lot of opposition stacked against them in this scenario, especially if they trigger an alarm early. If the runners are easily sneaking past and disposing of the security, the gamemaster can arrange for an "accident" that alerts the Banded to the runners' presence, sparking a hunt through the yard. The cybered barghests could also already be loose in the yard, forcing the runners to think of a way past them.

DEBUGGING

The runners may balk at taking the job because of the lack of any reward. In this case, Ronin will point out that they salvaged their "payment" from Mr. Johnson in the last scenario, and that should be enough to cover them for now. If necessary, he will also use the arguments and persuasions provided in *The Hook*, p. 79.

If the runners aren't careful, they may get slaughtered before they even get to the core of the operation. The gamemaster needs to carefully toe the line between offering challenges and allowing the runners to get deep inside before the drek hits the fan. For instance, the runners should have an encounter with the scrap drones, but this should not necessarily alert the other Banded to their presence unless the runners start popping grenades all over the place. Remember that the yard is already noisy, so gunfire can easily be lost in the background noise.

If the runners get in over their heads, remember that Overwatch is keeping an eye on the run and can possibly create some remote interference or distractions. For example, if the runners get holed up in a section of yard, surrounded by enemies, the sudden arrival of several fire trucks at the gates (due to a false alarm called in by Overwatch) may distract the Banded enough for the runners to get away.

BELLY OF THE BEAST

WHAT'S UP, CHUMMER?

Having worked their way through the scrapyards' outer defenses, the runners reach the heart of the Banded operations center. There, they receive a glimpse at the vast extent of Deus'

SCRAP DRONE CONSTRUCTS

Handling	Speed	Accel.	B/A	Sig.	Pilot Rating	Sensor Rating	Learning Pool	Robot Pool	Initiative
4/4	15	2	2/3	6	3	2	2	3	6 + 3D6



influence *outside* of the arcology, and run into one of Deus' primary pawns: Hiroshi Ushida, head of the Greens. From Hiroshi, the runners discover a startling clue that may be the key to defeating Deus.

TELL IT TO THEM STRAIGHT

The building is crammed wall to wall with automated machines of all kinds, linked together by a maze of conveyor belts that stretch as far as you can see. Many of the machines are robotic systems, patiently performing a single task over and over again. Others are manned by attentive laborers, each of them sporting a pair of unusual green cybereyes. The rest are manned by a scraggly lot of metahuman workers, each looking half-starved and dressed in rags. Upon closer examination, you realize that the workers actually seem to be chained to their stations, and you spot a few who are curled up in balls next to the machinery.

As you watch, an armed guard sprays one of the sleeping metahumans with a hose, waking him and ordering him to get to work. Cringing away from the guard's stun baton, the fatigued ork clammers up and begins haphazardly operating the machinery, looking like he's about to drop from exhaustion. A number of components come bundling down the conveyor belts towards him, and he quickly assembles them into a half-completed shape, remarkably similar to the drones that attacked you in the yard. Near the rear of the plant, you see a wall of drone racks, each filled with a similar shape. An army of drones, waiting to be animated ...

When the runners spot

Hiroshi Ushida, read the following aloud:

You get a quick glimpse of a Japanese man with green cybereyes and a hideously expensive suit. He glances around, then disappears through a doorway. Suddenly, Ronin's excited voice explodes over your headset. "Frag! That was Hiroshi Ushida! He was the Arcology Director—you've got to get him!"

BEHIND THE SCENES

The buildings at the center of the scrapyard are the core of this particular Banded operation. Here, Deus is slowly building an army of both human and robotic servants to use outside of the arcology. The AI is also conducting its own experiments here, though on a much more limited scale than inside the arcology. However, this particular Banded hideout is just one segment of a wide network of influence Deus has been building for years. When the runners discover various clues to this effect, it will show both them and Overwatch that Deus' power reaches much further than anyone had previously realized. It will also be clear that Deus is establishing a power base outside of the arcology, meaning that it does not plan on remaining there.

The Manufacturing Plant

Several years ago, this plant was built to begin constructing a new line of work drones. Instead, the high overhead caught up to the company and forced it into financial ruin. A

few months ago, Deus had the plant retooled, and it is now being used to manufacture new drone prototypes. Lacking the cutting-edge tools and gear available within the arcology, Deus has had to make do with inferior equipment and recycled components. So far, most of Deus' experiments have involved low-tech versions of the constructs used within the arcology. With the exception of the scrap drones used for security (see p. 89), the majority of these prototypes have been shelved at the back of the plant, and Deus is now focusing on developing new models.

In order to man this plant, the Banded have been periodically kidnapping and rounding up squatters from the surrounding Puyallup Barrens. Some of these unfortunates have gone through the clinic (see below) and been transformed into Greens who now slavishly serve Deus. The others are literally shackled to the machines, forced to work twenty-hour days and live in their own filth until their time in the clinic comes.

Approximately twenty-five slaves and ten Greens will be operating the plant's machinery, guarded by five Blues. The Banded are all wearing armored coveralls and hardhats [4/3], and the Blues are carrying stun batons and SCK Model 100 sub-machine guns. (See the Banded statistics, pp. 139-40.) The slaves, mostly orks and humans, will take any opportunity to escape. They will be of little use in a fight, however, as they are weak and half-starved.

The building itself has no security features save for several video cameras on the inside.

The Office Building (Map on p. 87)

Once the headquarters of Tin Man Scrap Works, this building has been converted into an operations center for the Banded. The doors to the building are kept unlocked, though any intruders approaching the back door will draw the attention of the cybered barghests kenned next to it. (See p. 88.)

The Security Office: Manned at all times by two Blues who monitor the video feeds on the gates and manufacturing plant, and communicate with the Blues on patrol. A remote control deck is hardwired into the security panel, and used to issue new instructions to the drones when necessary.

The Clinic: A recent addition to the building, the clinic has been used to convert several kidnap victims into Banded Greens. It is a Rating 5 medical shop (see p. 138, *M&M*). Currently, an ork squatter is strapped down to a table, showing signs of recent surgery. Her fresh datajack is plugged into the site's host, where the SK is programming her according to Deus' will. If the runners carefully search the room, they will find other unusual materials, including a cache of high-powered BTL chips and a Rating 5 programmable ASIST biofeed-back unit. (See p. 69, *CC*.)

The Bunk Room: Once a set of offices, this area has been converted into a crash space for the Banded. A dozen bunk beds fill the room, littered with a dry assortment of personal effects. Several Blues and Greens will be sleeping here at any given time.

The Work Room: This room is littered with computers, maps, chips and other materials the Banded use on Deus' behalf. A search of this room will uncover an array of evidence linking Tin Man Scrap Works with other mysteriously-owned

TIN MAN HOSTS SECURITY SHEAF

PUBLIC HOST

Blue-8/13/14/13/14/13

Trigger Step	Event
6	Trap Probe 6 (Sparky 8)
11	Trap Probe 6 (Blaster 8)
17	Killer 10
24	Passive Alert
29	Sensor Crippler 10
34	Trap Trace 8 (Blaster 8)
39	Active Alert
45	Sparky 8
50	Lethal Black IC 6
55	Shutdown

PRIVATE HOST

Red-9/13/15/15/15/13

Trigger Step	Event
2	Trace 6
5	Trap Probe 6 (Blaster 8)
9	Passive Alert
12	Trap Trace 8 (Killer 8) *
16	White otaku
18	Active Alert
20	Sparky 8
22	SK
30	Shutdown

businesses, including programming firms, chip manufacturers, medical clinics, sim-arcades, Matrix broadcasters and more. Invoices for equipment purchases and financial transactions are stored here, along with files on individuals from corporate executives to city officials to shadowrunners. Whether these are pawns or targets of Deus remains unclear. In a large box occupying the space under an entire worktable, the runners may find Deus' insurance that this evidence does not fall into the wrong hands—a 200-kilogram Rating 6 fuel-air explosive, hooked into the Matrix host. If the site is in danger of falling into the wrong hands or if Hiroshi Ushida is killed, the SK will activate the bomb on a 5-minute countdown. If the SK is destroyed, the bomb will also be primed. When it explodes, everything within 24 meters will suffer 12D damage. This room and its contents will be utterly destroyed, and the rest of the building will be seriously damaged and set aflame.

The Director's Office: This second-floor office has recently become Hiroshi Ushida's personal domain, shared only by Glynis Taki, his personal bodyguard (see p. 92). Aside from standard office accouterments, the only interesting things to be found here are Hiroshi and the file he carries. A sliding-glass door, protected with a Rating 5 contact alarm (see p. 234, SR3), opens out onto the roof.

The Computer Room: This room is jam-packed full of the mainframe computers that sustain the Tin Man Matrix hosts, as well as the semi-autonomous knowbot that lives within them. A bunk bed stashed in one corner is the nest of two young otaku Whites who have been serving Deus since before it seized the arcology. Neither of them entered the arcology; they were kept on reserve to work Deus' will in the outside world. Neither show any signs of being Banded, and both will pretend to be kidnap victims if threatened by the shadowrunners.

Tin Man Matrix Host

The public host of Tin Man Scrap Works is a bland, unappealing site featuring only some service advertisements and an outdated telecom directory listing. However, secreted away in one of the ads (the Files subsystem) is a trapdoor leading to the real Tin Man host, where Deus' pawns do their work.

The iconography of the host follows the metaphor of a metallic, machine-driven world. Everything is robotic and automated, blending together in a landscape of steel pipes, iron girder superstructures and sooty railroad tracks.

The Deus-programmed SK that monitors the system appears as an agglomeration of warped cargo cranes, traveling on squeaky tracks and manipulating twisted I-beams for arms. It has an MPCP of 10/7/8/8/7, Computer skill of 10 and Utility Pool of 13. For rules on using SKs, see p. 140, VR2.

A decker can access this host directly from several points within the scrapyard: the work room, the computer room, the security room or even the manufacturing plant. If the decker digs for paydata, all of the information mentioned in the *Work Room* description may be found on the host.

Hiroshi Ushida

Once the director of the Renraku Arcology, Hiroshi Ushida was subverted by Deus and put to use as the highest-ranking Banded Green. Inside the arcology, Hiroshi was responsible for supervising the imprisoned population, experiments and Banded conversions. As Deus approaches the final stages of its plan, it decided that Hiroshi would be most useful coordinating the Banded in the outside world. The former Renraku executive was quietly smuggled out of the arcology just a few months ago, and has been hard at work ever since.

Most recently, Deus finally responded to Huang's attempts to make contact by establishing communication through Hiroshi. The two eventually came to meet face-to-face in a secret meeting, where they discussed the retrieval of Renraku CEO Inazo Aneki and forged an alliance. (See both *Dance with the Devil, Part Two*, p. 4, and p. 13). Since this important development, Hiroshi has been hard at work monitoring Renraku's efforts to retrieve Aneki, and the White otaku have "liberated" several interesting files from secure Renraku hosts.

Hiroshi currently has in his possession a datachip file with information about Aneki that will be a windfall for Overwatch. The text of this file is detailed in *Player Handouts*, pp. 145–46. In addition to learning the about Aneki's trip to Tibet and his impending return, the runners and Overwatch will also discov-



er that the key to destroying Deus—the kill codes—are stored within Aneki's damaged brain.

At some point during the run on the scrapyards, the runners should cross paths with Hiroshi. Ronin, viewing the scene remotely via guncam or simrig, will immediately recognize him and point him out to the runners, as described in *Tell It To Them Straight*. Ideally, the runners should not encounter Hiroshi until the climax of the run, preferably in his office or elsewhere in that building. If the runners are routed or forced to flee before getting that far, then they can spot Hiroshi elsewhere in the compound. As circumstances dictate, he can even be returning to the scrapyards as the runners are leaving. If so, he will be in a vehicle and escorted by a pair of Blues.

If the runners capture, but do not kill, Hiroshi, Deus will quickly act to see that his prized minion is not interrogated. The AI will remotely trigger a set of auto-injectors that will send a stream of Cutter nanites (see p. 92, *M&M*) into Hiroshi's bloodstream, cutting him apart from the inside. Hiroshi will die a painful, gory and convulsive death.

Hiroshi's Personal Bodyguard

Deus has assigned one of the toxic shamans under its control to serve Hiroshi as a personal bodyguard. A follower of Cat, Glynis Taki was a fastidious Renraku researcher whose mind and spirit was corrupted by Deus' conditioning. Glynis no longer keeps herself meticulously clean, and she adorns her stained clothing with strings of metallic fetishes. Her appearance is gaunt and haggard, offset noticeably by her ratty hair and electric blue cybereyes, and she has a disconcerting habit of looking at everyone like she's considering them for her next meal.

If Hiroshi is endangered, Glynis will summon forth a toxic city spirit, invoking it with her metamagical powers. This spirit will materialize by forming its body from nearby scrap pieces—twisted I-beams, shredded metal strips, chains, rusted nails and shattered glass. It may even absorb nearby drones into its structure. Summoning this spirit will cause Glynis Light Stun damage and 1 Karma Pool die.

Glynis Taki, Toxic Shaman

B	Q	S	C	I	W	E	M	R
3	6	2	6	5	6	5.34	7 (6)	5 (7)

INIT: 5 (7) + 1D6 (2D6)

Dice Pools: Astral 2, Astral Combat 8, Combat 8, Spell 5

Karma Pool/Professional Rating: 5/4

Active Skills: Conjuring 7, Edged Weapons 4, Etiquette 2 (Corporate 4), Pistols 4, Sorcery 6, Unarmed Combat 4

Knowledge Skills: Magical Background 4, Toxic Domains 4

Martial Arts: Brawling 4 (Disorient, Ground Fighting)

Metamagic (Initiate Grade 2): Invoking, Possessing

Totem: Toxic Cat (+2 illusion spell dice, +2 city spirit dice)

Spells: Agony 7, Detect Life 4, Double Image 5, Entertainment 3, Foreboding 4, Manabolt 6, Phantasm 5, Physical Mask 5, Spiritbolt 5, Stench 5, Stunball 6, Toxic Wave 6

Cyberware (all betaware): Cybereyes (flare compensation, low light vision, optical vision magnification 3), datajack, dedicated chipjack, reaction enhancers 2

Bloware (all cultured): Synaptic accelerator (Level 1), trauma damper

Armor: Armor jacket [5/3]

Weapons: Browning Max-Power [HP, SA, 9M, 10 (cl) w/2 extra clips, laser sight]

Range: 0–5 (3), 6–20 (3), 21–40 (3), 41–60 (3)

Gear: Spirit focus 2

Great Form Toxic City Spirit (Force 7)

B	Q	S	C	I	W	E	R
9	9 (x 3)	5	7	7	7	7A	8

INIT: 18 + 1D6 Astral INIT: 27 + 1D6

Dice Pools: Astral Combat 10, Combat 11

Karma Pool/Professional Rating: 5/4

Powers: Accident, Concealment, Confusion, Corrosive Secretions, Fear, Guard, Materialization, Noxious Breath, Search

PUSHING THE ENVELOPE

If the runners are running roughshod throughout the compound, remember that a small army of semi-functional scrap drones lies dormant in the manufacturing plant. The gamemaster can also bring the toxic shaman into the fray even sooner, pitting the characters against a powerful toxic spirit on its home turf.

DEBUGGING

The most important factor in this scene is that the runners get the datachip from Hiroshi. If the runners are unable to get to him in the office, then they should encounter him elsewhere. If this doesn't pan out, the runners could also find the file on the Tin Man host. At the least, the runners should have some means of tracking down Hiroshi at some later point.

If the characters are not careful, they can easily get overwhelmed and killed by the opposition. This is especially likely if the runners attempt to free all the slaves within the manufacturing plant. As in the previous scenario, the runners can rely on Overwatch for remote support. If the runners become truly desperate, Overwatch will inform the UCAS military of the Banded hideout, prompting a military raid. The runners will also have UCAS troops to deal with, but they may be able to take advantage of the chaos.

PICKING UP THE PIECES

If the runners are successful, they will have struck a major blow against Deus. Despite Deus' plans, Overwatch is still going strong, even though they have lost one of their major operations centers. Deus will have lost one of its primary puppets, and its preparations to leave the arcology will have suffered a setback. Naturally, Deus will not be pleased with these developments, and it will be certain to avoid underestimating Overwatch in the future. In the meantime, it will quietly cut its losses and act quickly to ensure that none of its other operations are endangered.

Overwatch will also be taking a step back to regroup, but they have a significant discovery that requires them to act quickly. They are also far from done with the runners, and will need their assistance to successfully complete their plans. If the runners have not yet committed themselves to working with

Overwatch, they will be asked to do so now. Ronin and Dodger will put forth the best pitch they can muster, but all their arguments will come down to the obvious—stopping an out-of-control AI that threatens the world is the moral thing to do. If the runners are too cold-hearted to commit themselves, then Overwatch will thank them for the support they have given, show their disgust towards the runners' apathy, and walk away to finish the job on their own. The runners will then be excluded from the remaining events in this book.

AWARDING KARMA

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

Surviving the run	3
Accepting to work with Overwatch	1
Getting the White from the UCAS Military	1
Helping Overwatch escape/trapping Morris	1
Liberating the Scrap Works slaves	1
Defeating Hiroshi Ushida	1
Finding Information on Inazo Aneki	2

LEGWORK

Tin Man Scrap Works

Appropriate Contacts: Any (TN 4)

Successes	Information
0	"Hey, that band rules!"
1	"I think I remember a junkyard by that name, but they went out of business a few years ago."
2	"That's right, they were operating near Hell's Kitchen in Puyallup. They tried to expand from scrap collecting to drone manufacturing, but the overhead killed them."
3	"Someone bought them out when they were on the brink of bankruptcy. I haven't heard a peep from 'em since, though."
4	"The place is a regular toxic zone, let me tell you. Even the squatters avoid going there."
5+	"In fact, some of the squatters seem afraid of the place. There are rumors that there have been a few too many disappearances in the area. You know squatters, half of 'em are probably convinced the place is home to a bug spirit hive."

CAST OF SHADOWS

This section contains background information and game statistics for the major non-player characters in this adventure. For the members of Overwatch and other major characters, see the *Master Cast of Shadows* section (p. 132).

Hiroshi Ushida

Hiroshi was once the director of the Renraku Arcology, a position well earned by his attention to detail and masterful

administrative skills. This extensive knowledge of the arcology and ability to manage complex and large-scale tasks made Hiroshi a critical target for Deus. The director was one of the first people Deus subverted, and the AI placed him in charge of the Greens, the administrative branch of the Banded.

Since Deus took control of the arcology, Hiroshi has managed the trapped population on behalf of the AI, keeping careful track of how the residents are detained, converted into Banded and used for experimental purposes. Hiroshi took exceptional pleasure in overseeing the experiments Deus was conducting, and many unfortunate victims saw a new, twisted and evil side to Hiroshi's personality before dying. Several of the experiments were in fact designed by Hiroshi, who has become completely detached from metahumanity, viewing the population he controlled as mere tools and playthings.

Deus installed a specialized skillwire system within Hiroshi, expanding upon his valuable pawn's personal skills and letting him take a direct hand in many of the technical affairs he was supervising. This skillwire system does not actually utilize chipjack-slotted skillsofts, but instead takes advantage of customized skill programs that are essentially hard-wired into the system. In effect, this system allows Hiroshi to utilize any Technical or Technical Build/Repair skill as if he was currently using a Rating 6 skillsoft for that particular skill. This skillwire system is worth its weight in platinum to any cybertechnology corporation, but it will be thoroughly destroyed by nanites when Deus remotely kills Hiroshi, rendering its secrets unobtainable.

Deus recently came to the realization that Hiroshi could be quite useful if he was placed in charge of the AI's outside affairs, and so Hiroshi was smuggled out of the arcology. Since taking his new office within the Tin Man Scrap Works facility, Hiroshi has been diligently organizing Deus' projects and preparing the way for the AI's eventual liberation.

B	Q	S	C	I	W	E	M	R
3	4	2	6 (8)	4	6	1.88	0	6

INIT: 6 +1D6

Dice Pools: Combat 8, Task 1

Karma Pool/Professional Rating: 9/4

Race: Human

Active Skills: Athletics 4, Car 3, Computer 5, Etiquette 5 (Corporate 9), Intimidation 5, Leadership 8, Negotiation 6

Knowledge Skills: Administration 8, Cybertechnology 4, Deus Experiments 5, English 6, Japanese 8, Psychology 5, Renraku Arcology 10, Renraku Finances 5, Renraku Politics 5

Cyberware (all betaware): Auto-injectors (2), commlink (Rating 8), cybereyes (display link, flare compensation, low light vision, thermographic vision), datajack, invoked memory stimulator, knowsoft link, multi-slot chipjack (4 slots), router w/10 ports, simrig w/simlink (Rating 8), skillwires 6 (unlimited Mp, specialized system, see above)

Bioware (all cultured): Cerebral booster (Level 2), mnemonic enhancer (Level 3), sleep regulator

Armor: Secure clothing [3/0]

Gear: Pocket secretary

RETURN OF THE FATHER



PREPARING TO PLAY

The contents of the datachip that the runners recover from Hiroshi Ushida will shock Overwatch. The information is of tremendous importance, and the otaku group is not going to waste what may be their only chance to destroy Deus. Overwatch springs into action, eager to snatch Inazo Aneki out of Renraku's hands. Naturally, the group will need a skilled team to physically get the job done, and nobody's resumes are currently as hot with Overwatch as the players'.

Ronin and Dodger will ask the runners to travel to Hong Kong—courtesy of Overwatch—and be prepared to launch a short-notice run to extract Aneki.

HIGH NOON IN WAN CHAI

WHAT'S UP, CHUMMER?

Overwatch arranges to transport the runners to Hong Kong in order to steal Inazo Aneki out from under Renraku's nose. Monitoring the telecom code gleaned from the datachip, Overwatch hears the arrangements made between Renraku and the Tibetans. The rendezvous point is a garden temple hidden behind Madame Kim's simsense parlor in the Wan Chai district. Aneki is escorted by a pair of polite, mild-mannered monks who have escorted him from behind the sealed borders of Tibet. The runners must extract Aneki using either guile or force, before Renraku makes off with him. However, members of Deus' Banded arrive to interfere with the runners, and the unexpected presence of Renraku power player Sherman Huang causes further complications.

TELL IT TO THEM STRAIGHT

You're killing time as you wait for the call, impatiently trying not to think about how much drek you're about to get yourself into. You nearly jump out of your chair when your wristphone beeps. Popping open the screen, you see Ronin's Matrix icon.

"Time to move, gents. We just intercepted the call, and it's going down at the address I'm transmitting. You've got maybe twenty minutes to beat Renraku there. Happy hunting!"





When the runners arrive at the address, read the following aloud:

The address you've been given for the meeting point is on the edge of the bustling Wan Chai district. Away from the bright lights of the mainstream entertainment, you find the address on a less reputable-looking street, nestled between Kwok Biosculpting and the Liu Clinic. The sign reads "Madame Kim's Simsense Parlor," and given the services rendered inside, it comes as no surprise that Madame Kim chooses to avoid the neon and glitz.

If the runners enter

Madame Kim's, read the following aloud:

Stepping through an elaborate mesh curtain, you find yourself standing in front of a counter. An attentive-looking receptionist looks you over. Corridors stretch out to both sides, and you glimpse what looks like a maze of curtained booths. A sickly odor hangs in the air, reminding you of sweat and tears.

"May I help you?" the receptionist asks.

If the runners enter the

garden, read the following aloud:

Exiting the doorway, you enter into a square garden area totally out of place with its surroundings. The pleasant smell of freshly trimmed hedges and flower patches washes around you, complementing the sound of running water coming from a small fountain set near a shrine. You suspect that magic is at work in this place, as you realize that you can't hear the noisy hum of the city, and the only sight visible over the walls is a cloudy blue sky. If you didn't know better, you'd suspect you weren't anywhere in the Sprawl at all.

Sitting cautiously on a boulder, giving the sky a pleasant if vacant smile, is a robed man whose face is vaguely familiar from the trid—it's Inazo Aneki. Two men, both clad in black robes, stand patiently near him. One walks humbly towards you, though you can't help but notice that his grace and composure are exquisite. Tilting his head respectfully, he motions towards the man, speaking with a strange accent. "Despite appearances, his state is much improved. He can respond to simple instructions and follow directions. He talks little, and has the mannerisms of a child. But he is at peace and ready to leave with you."

HOOKS

This run should have a feel of desperation to it, as Overwatch thinks the runners' success may be crucial to the group's goals. The runners will have the details for the meet, but they will have little time to survey the location or put together a plan. Complementing this nerve-wracking assignment is the simsense parlor locale, where those who need to escape reality go to submerge themselves in dreams and nightmares.

Countering this aspect will be the magical atmosphere of the small Buddhist garden, carefully hidden in the midst of the city. It is a calm and enchanted place, somehow fitting as the resting place for a powerful man now turned into a simpleton.

BEHIND THE SCENES

Overwatch will provide a set of fake identities, cyberware permits and plane tickets for the runners, allowing them to fly into Hong Kong in the guise of a Yamatetsu security detail. Since Hong Kong is a corporate-owned territory, the identities even allow the runners to transport and carry pistols and security-grade equipment.

The runners will have less than twenty minutes between the time they get the call and the time Renraku is supposed to pick up Aneki at the meet. This gives the runners very little time to scout out the scene and develop a plan—they'll have to think on their feet. Overwatch will help out as best they can, remotely and through the Matrix.

The scenario can play out in several ways, depending on the players' actions. The runners may arrive first, pose as Renraku and grab Aneki. In this case, Huang and the Red Samurai should arrive and walk in as they are leaving. Or the runners may lay an ambush, retrieving Aneki as Huang attempts to leave with him. In either case, Huang should be in a position where he can be kidnapped along with Aneki.

Once the runners have Aneki and Huang, they have instructions to proceed immediately to the airport, where Overwatch has scheduled an emergency private semiballistic flight out and back to Seattle.

Madame Kim's

Open all hours, this small operation provides non-mainstream legal and quasi-legal sims at inflated prices to a seedy clientele. For the right price, BTLs can also be "viewed." The place contains approximately thirty booths, each featuring a locked-down and hardwired simdeck, red velvet cushions and a privacy curtain across the doorway. At any given time, about twenty clients will be present, almost all of them slack-jawed and oblivious to the world.

Madame Kim's has very little security aside from a video camera outside the locked front door. Madame Kim herself sits at the front counter and buzzes people in. Her husband can be found in the store's back room, messing around with sim equipment. He doubles as a bouncer when necessary, and keeps a Defiance T-250 shotgun handy in case of any trouble.

If anyone asks for Aneki or introduces themselves to Madame Kim as a representative of Renraku, she will greet them and take them through the parlor to the back door, indicating they should go through the door into the garden.

If combat breaks out, Madame Kim will take cover and hide. Her husband will grab his gun and move to make sure she is safe, defending himself as necessary. Most of the clients will not even notice anything is amiss.

The Garden

A door in Madame Kim's backroom leads out to the garden, which is surrounded by buildings on all four sides. The garden is a secret Tantric Buddhist shrine, well tended by a group of local worshippers.

The shrine itself is protected by a powerful Force 10 ward, making astral intrusion unlikely. Within the ward, a quickened

Force 6 Phantasm spell creates the illusion that a sunny mountainside exists beyond the walls.

Several doorways lead from the garden into the surrounding buildings and businesses, providing several avenues of escape should the runners become trapped there.

Aneki and the Monks

The two monks present are Grade 4 initiated adepts, accompanying Aneki as bodyguards. Their mission is to hand Aneki off to whomever comes for him first. They will also protect Aneki's life at all costs, sacrificing themselves if necessary.

Though his mental condition has been significantly improved thanks to the psychic reconstruction he has undergone, Aneki still remains largely unresponsive. He has enough awareness to walk and feed himself, and occasionally seems to recognize things around him, but otherwise he exhibits little reaction to the outside world. Once in a while, he will have extremely short lucid episodes, where he seems to be completely aware of his surroundings and capable of intelligent, rational thought. Bright lights and loud noises bother him, and may even cause him to have a fit. In effect, Aneki is like an autistic child.

Monk Adept (Grade 4 Initiate)

B	Q	S	C	I	W	E	M	R
6	6	6	5	6	6	6	10	6 (10)

INIT: 6 (10) + 1D6 (3D6)

Dice Pools: Combat 9 (11)

Karma Pool/Professional Rating: 6/4

Race: Human

Active Skills: Athletics 7, Edged Weapons 6, Etiquette 3, Pistols 3, Pole Arms/Staves 4, Stealth 6, Unarmed Combat 7 (8)

Knowledge Skills: Magic Background 4, Spirits 4

Martial Arts: Tai Chi Ch'uan 7 (8) (Focus Strength, Focus Will, Kip-up, Sweep, Throw)

Powers: Astral Perception, Combat Sense 2, Hands of Flame 5 (see below), Improved Unarmed Combat 1, Improved Reflexes 2

Armor: Armored Robes [3/2]

Hands of Flame

This adept power is an enhanced form of Killing Hands, and works exactly like that power (see p. 170, SR3) with the following exceptions. The power may not be used until the adept takes a Simple Action to concentrate and cause his hands to burst into flame. Anything struck by these flaming hands suffers the effects of secondary elemental fire damage (see p. 51, MITS). The adept is not damaged by the flame, but the flames affect anything grabbed while the power is in use. Extinguishing the flames is a Free Action.

The Renraku Reception

Unknown to the runners and Overwatch, Renraku America Director Dr. Sherman Huang has decided to personally participate in the Aneki retrieval operation. Huang travels to Madame Kim's with two teams of elite Renraku Red Samurai. One team

Rolls-Royce Phaeton Limousine

Handling	Speed	Accel	Body	Armor	Sig
4/4	140	8	4	4	2
Autonav	Pilot	Sensor	Cargo	Load	
4	—	1	6	30	

Seating: 2b+3b+3fb+3b

Entry Points: 2 + 2 + 2 + 1t

Fuel: Diesel (250 liters)

Economy: 6 km/liter

Other Features: APPS, concealed armor, roll bars, enviroseal (gas), satellite uplink (connected by electronics port)

travels with Huang in his Phaeton limousine, the other in a Chrysler Patrol One (see p. 310, SR3). When they arrive at the parlor, Huang and one team of Red Samurai will enter, leaving the other team to stand guard outside. Statistics for Huang can be found in the *Master Cast of Shadows*, p. 136. The Red Samurai teams have four cybered samurai and one mage each.

Sherman Huang and Aneki play equally important roles in the next adventure (*Runners Ex Machina*, p. 99). Unknown to everyone but Deus and the Banded, he is target number two. If the Banded can't get Aneki, they will settle for Huang.

There are several possible outcomes to the scene. If the Banded end up with Huang, this plays perfectly into Deus' plans, and the following adventure is written under this assumption.

If the runners capture Huang and Aneki, they have to decide what to do with them. Though Huang is confident that Renraku will track him down and deal with the runners, he is not above pointing out his value to Renraku if the runners want a "reward" for "rescuing" him and Aneki from the Banded. He will also note Renraku's long reach and the consequences if anything violent happens to him. If the runners reveal their reasons for kidnapping Aneki or their commitment towards fighting Deus, Huang will ask questions to find out more about their motives. He will argue that he knows quite a bit about the arcology and the situation there, and he will attempt to convince the runners to keep him with Aneki, even if they are going into the arcology. Huang believes his future success is dependent upon using Aneki against Deus, and determined to stick with the CEO. He is willing to lie if necessary and will portray himself as an ally who wishes to resolve the crisis in order to satisfy his personal honor.

If the Banded are driven off without capturing Huang, they manage to do so a short time later. Huang will then be smuggled into the arcology, where Deus can use him as it sees fit.

Red Samurai

The Red Samurai will communicate with each other via headware. Due to Renraku's pervasive racial prejudice, the Red Samurai will attack metahuman characters before humans.

B	Q	S	C	I	W	E	M	R
6 (7)	6	5	3	5	5	1.54	0	5 (7)

INIT: 5 (7) + 1D6 (+3D6)

Dice Pools: Combat 8

Karma Pool/Professional Rating: 5/4**Race:** Human**Active Skills:** Assault Rifles 6, Athletics 6, Biotech 4, Car 4, Demolitions 3, Electronics 4, Etiquette 2 (Corporate 3, Military 4), Leadership 4, Pistols 6, Small Unit Tactics 5, SMG 5 (SCK Model 100 7), Unarmed Combat 7**Knowledge Skills:** Corporate Politics 2, Psychology 2, Renraku Structure 6, Security Procedures 6**Martial Arts:** Karate 7 (Focus Strength, Throw, Vicious Blow)**Cyberware (all alphaware):** Bone Lacing [aluminum], Boosted Reflexes 3, Cybereyes [flare compensation, display link, image link, low-light, thermographic], Radio [Rating 8], Smartgun Link**Armor:** Medium security armor with helmet [7/7]. The armor is red and black; the helmet's faceplate is black plexiglas.**Weapons:** SCK Model 100 [SMG, SA/BF, 7M, RC 3, 30 (c), w/3 extra clips, 2 extra clips APDS, gas vent 3 and smartgun system]Range (TN): 0-10 (2), 11-40 (3), 41-80 (4), 81-150 (7)
Browning Max-Power [HP, SA, 9M, 10 (c) w/3 extra clips, all explosive ammo (+1 Power), smartgun system]Range (TN): 0-5 (2), 6-20 (3), 21-40 (4), 41-60 (7)
Fist [8M]**Red Samurai Mage**

B	Q	S	C	I	W	E	M	R
3	7	2	6	5	6	6	8	6

INIT: 6 +1D6 (+2D6)**Dice Pools:** Astral 2, Astral Combat 8, Combat 9, Spell 6**Karma Pool/Professional Rating:** 2/4**Race:** Elf**Active Skills:** Aura Reading 6, Athletics 4, Biotech 4, Car 4, Conjuring 6, Clubs 5, Etiquette 2 (Corporate 3, Military 4), Leadership 4, Pistols 4, Sorcery 7**Knowledge Skills:** Corporate Politics 2, Psychology 2, Renraku Structure 6, Security Procedures 6**Metamagic (Grade 2 Initiates):** Invoking and Reflecting or Quickening and Shielding**Spells:** Acid Stream 5, Confusion 6, Control Actions 6, Decrease Attribute 6, Detect Life 4, Fireball 5, Fling 5, Lightning Bolt 6, Increase Reflexes 4, Stunball 6, Treat 6**Armor:** Light security armor with helmet [7/6] (red and black, with black plexiglas faceplate; helmet is equipped with smart goggles, Rating 8 transceiver and heads-up display)**Weapons:** Browning Max-Power [HP, SA, 9M, 15 (c) w/3 extra clips, all explosive ammo (+1 Power), smartgun system]Range (TN): 0-5 (3), 6-20 (4), 21-40 (5), 41-60 (8)
Stun Baton (6S Stun, Reach 1)**Gear:** Power focus (Force 4), Sustaining focus (Force 4; Renraku pin on clothes, worn inside the armor; sustaining Increase Reflexes +1), 1 Force 5 elemental on call (any type)**The Banded**

A group of Blue Banded are also en route to the meet, hoping to wrest Aneki from Renraku's grasp and deliver him directly to Deus. A group of seven Banded samurai and one Banded mage (see p. 140 for statistics) will arrive shortly after Renraku in a pair of Ford Americars. (See p. 308, SR3.) They will

attempt to ambush whoever leaves with Aneki. If combat has already begun when they arrive, they will join in, hoping to make off with the prize.

The Banded also have orders to capture Dr. Huang, and will do their best to get him even if Aneki is taken away. The Red Samurai will be hard pressed to defend against both antagonists, and may be distracted enough by the runners' escape to give the Banded an edge. Huang himself will not engage in combat, and he will surrender if his guards are killed. Huang has potential as a hostage, since none of the Red Samurai will risk harming him. (Or Aneki, for that matter.)

PUSHING THE ENVELOPE

The runners will have a bit of free time in Hong Kong before the fun begins, so the gamemaster can throw in a quick encounter or two to keep things interesting. The runners may run afoul of the local Triads, get caught by a crew running scams on tourists, or run into a random police roadblock. Hong Kong is also known for its wild and uncontrollable magic (see pp. 87-88, MITS), so the runners may experience some unusual happenings. There's already a lot of gunfire and mayhem in this scenario, but if the players desire more, the gamemaster can throw in the untimely arrival of the Hong Kong police.

DEBUGGING

If the runners attempt to smuggle any exceptionally dangerous or illegal items into Hong Kong, they may have trouble passing through customs. Overwatch will discourage the runners from smuggling anything, and will offer to help them acquire similar gear in Hong Kong. If the runners try to keep illicit gear and get caught, Overwatch will try to spring them.

The runners may be significantly outgunned in this scenario. However, the timely arrival of the Banded should distract the Red Samurai, while the monk adepts may also step in to take care of anyone they consider threatening to Aneki. If the runners are having trouble getting away, perhaps Overwatch calls with some tips, or arranges for a distraction.

If the runners fail to obtain Aneki, Overwatch may be able to set up another attempt by spying on Renraku. This next attempt will be significantly more difficult, however, as Renraku is also protecting him against Deus. Sooner or later, Deus will succeed in kidnapping Aneki and will have him brought into the Arcology. The Resistance may learn of this effort, providing one last chance for the runners to get him.

If Huang is killed, the players will discover that he was just a look-alike decoy, and the real Huang has already been captured by Deus and is in the Arcology.

AWARDING KARMA

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

Surviving the run	1
Keeping Aneki alive	1
Taking Huang, too!	2
Keeping Huang alive	1

RUNNERS EX MACHINA

PREPARING TO PLAY

The runners and Overwatch now hold the key to destroying Deus—a code trapped inside the head of a megacorporate power player turned vegetable. To use this key, the runners must venture into their opponent's lair. Once they have braved its defenses, they must launch a coordinated final assault against Deus, battling to the finish in a deadly virtual reality.

Runners Ex Machina is the epic culmination of the campaign, leading to the climactic final battle with Deus. To keep the action fast and involved, the gamemaster should become thoroughly acquainted with all the adventure's nuances and twists, particularly the scenes which take place within Deus' ultraviolet (UV) hosts, where the runners will be plunged into an alternate reality and the normal rules will not apply. The gamemaster should be familiar with the mechanics of roleplaying a UV adventure, but should also expand upon the detail of the UV hosts to make the experience distinctive and unique. Most importantly, this adventure should have the feel of a titanic struggle, where success or failure will have critical effects upon the world at large. Many decisions and actions will need to be made—and it is up to the player characters to make them succeed.

Note that this adventure is written under the assumption that Huang was captured by Deus in *Return of the Father*. If the runners captured him instead, the gamemaster will need to modify the adventure accordingly.

BACKGROUND STORY

With Aneki in hand, Overwatch will make plans to slip into the arcology and use his kill codes against Deus. As Overwatch will explain, the codes alone will not be enough to destroy the AI—a cyberdeck storage unit nicknamed the "Mousetrap" will also need to be retrieved and used. Overwatch has heard of this device from the Resistance within the arcology, and know that it is kept by one of the AI's creators, Cham Lam Won, who is currently a captive in the arcology's upper floors. When the kill codes are entered into the heart of the SCIRE host, the AI will be subdivided, disengaged from its hardwiring and downloaded into the Mousetrap, from which it cannot escape.

Unknown to Overwatch, this is not entirely true. The Mousetrap is not necessary—without it, Deus will simply be dismantled and deleted. However, Renraku does not want its pet mon-



strosity utterly destroyed—it has far too much potential. The company sees a great deal of potential profit in future research and analysis of the Deus program. To preserve the AI, Resistance members loyal to Renraku will argue convincingly that the Mousetrap is needed, thus ensuring that the AI's code will be safely stored.

There are several ways for the runners and Overwatch to sneak into the arcology. All of them are dangerous. They have only a short time to act, however, since the UCAS military is preparing to launch a major offensive in an attempt to seize control of the arcology's reactors. Once inside, the runners, accompanied by Dodger and Ronin, will join up with a Resistance cell led by Devon Eurich. Thanks to information provided by Sebastien, Overwatch's spy within the otaku Whites, the coalition will be able to strike and retrieve both Cham Lam Won and the Mousetrap. A second Resistance cell, led by Cham's former AEP programming partner, Vanessa Cliber, will aid in this effort.

After the rescue, Cham tells the teams that the AI has also captured Dr. Huang and is holding him elsewhere in the arcology. Cliber and Eurich argue over what to do next, as Cliber believes rescuing Huang should be the Resistance's first priority and Eurich insists on dealing with Deus first. After a tense standoff, Cliber and Cham lead their cell to retrieve Huang. The others take the Mousetrap and move on to confront Deus.

In order to download the kill codes to the proper system, the group must gain access to the core of the SCIRE's Matrix hosts. The Resistance believes the best plan is to directly access the mainframes housed on the 272nd floor. Unfortunately, Deus has removed the oxygen on this floor and replaced it with an unbreathable halon gas atmosphere. Luckily, the Resistance has located a ventilation station on the 271st floor, and it can be used to pump out the halon and replace it with breathable air. Ronin, Dodger and Eurich lead Aneki and any PC deckers to penetrate the 272nd floor and jack in, while Sebastien leads the rest of the runners to take over the pumping station.

Unfortunately for the runners, there is a traitor in their midst. Sebastien, the Overwatch spy, is a double agent. Deus discovered and converted the mole months ago, and has been using him to feed false or leading information to Overwatch. (See *Outside Influence*, p. 75). While the runners will be successful in seizing and using the pumping station, they will also discover a "zombie room" filled with dozens of jacked-in young adults and children. In this frightening locale, Sebastien briefly regains control of himself. He reveals the trap he has led them into, and Deus strikes him down. The runners on that team are each captured and forcibly jacked in ...

The other team successfully jacks in and seeks to gain access to the UV realms at the heart of the SCIRE. As they attempt to get past the guardian Grendel program and break through the Wall into the home of the Arcology Expert Program (AEP), Ronin and Aneki are stolen from them. The deckers must search through the warped landscape, hoping to retrieve their ally and Aneki. First, however, they find a field of bodies in a twisted Garden of Eden, planted like crops waiting to be nurtured and fed by Deus' conditioning. Among these victims, the deckers find the icons of their teammates and are able to wake and free them.

As Deus' defenses close in, the team must work its way further into the UV realms. Dodger attempts to open up a severed Matrix link with the outside world and bring in outside reinforcements. On the verge of success, the runners are dumped into a realm where they find Aneki and Ronin being tortured by a group of White otaku. As battle erupts, Deus itself joins the fray, only to be countered by the arrival of Megaera, who managed to break in through the outline link Dodger created.

As the runners will discover, Deus has restored Aneki's mind, but his spirit has been shattered by the knowledge of what has happened to his corporation and his employees. Racked with shame and dishonor, he commits seppuku—ritual suicide—while triggering the kill codes with his death haiku.

The kill codes are inserted, and the AI's coding is separated from its hardwired links, fragmented and downloaded. Unknown to the runners, however, the AI has been seeking this all along.

From the runners' perspective, the shutdown program works, and Deus is deconstructed and shut away. Unexpectedly, the program also seems to have some effect on Megaera as well. Before she too, is sucked away, she dumps the runners from the destabilized UV host.

Though Deus seems to be defeated, the adventure is not yet over. The team on the 272nd floor awakens under the watchful gaze of Cliber's group, which claims the Mousetrap and the credit for freeing the arcology. The runners are left to fend for themselves in a disintegrating arcology, knowing they're not even getting a ticker-tape parade when they finally make it out.

THE BEST-LAID PLANS ...

WHAT'S UP, CHUMMER?

The runners return from Hong Kong with their captives in tow. Thanks to Overwatch's fake I.D.s, the trip and a quick shuffle through customs goes without a hitch. The runners are brought straight to a meeting where the final plans are being made to sneak Aneki into the arcology and use the kill codes against Deus. Overwatch has recently learned that the UCAS military is preparing a major offensive, so the mission needs to be launched quickly. This is the point of no return. If the runners commit to the mission, they'll be going inside the arcology to directly confront the rogue AI.

TELL IT TO THEM STRAIGHT

Luckily, Aneki doesn't cause you any problems as you pass through security and climb aboard the privately chartered semi-ballistic. Thanks to the Yamatetsu credentials Overwatch gave you, you're practically waved through customs; no one questions your status as corp shareholders and bodyguards. The flight takes just over an hour, and the SeaTac guards send you through with minimal fuss. A young boy you recognize from Overwatch waits for you, leading you to a limousine parked at the curb.

After a short ride, the limo pulls up in front of a secluded two-story house in Bellevue. Looks like Overwatch's headquarters went upscale. You escort your charge inside the nondescript red brick building, security cameras monitoring your every step. The door swings wide for you, and you enter a house that could be described as luxurious, if it didn't look like





some neglectful parents left their twenty kids alone in the place while they went on vacation for several months.

Piles of carry-out food boxes vie for floorspace with heaped computers and other electronics, and fiberoptic cables threaten to ensnare your feet as you work your way towards the dining room. A cluster of young otaku unjack themselves to crowd around you. Ronin and Dodger appear, greeting you and smiling warmly.

"Welcome to our new headquarters," Ronin grins.

When the runners are ready to meet, read the following aloud:

You sit down with Ronin, Dodger and a group of the otaku in the dining room. Ronin kicks the meeting off, a calculating glint shining from his eyes.

"We've put some thought into what we need to do with Aneki. We're going to have to risk taking him into the arcology. Somehow, we've got to get him in place to jack directly into the AEP host—that's where Deus lives, and I guarantee it won't be easy to access. We're in contact with the Resistance groups inside the arcology, and we're arranging to hook up with one of their cells once we get inside. They should be able to help us out and show us where to go to get the job done. Once we get him in place, we're going to have to coax the codes out of him—which won't be easy, given his mental state. But we've got to try.

"Now, we've just gotten word that the UCAS military is planning a major offensive, scheduled to start in just a few days. Once the offensive starts, it's going to be too difficult to get in safely. We need to get our hoops in gear and move as quickly as we can.

"We think the military's goal is to capture the reactors in the arcology's basement. Deus certainly isn't going to like that, and may attempt something drastic to keep it from happening. If possible, we want to complete our mission before events get that far.

"We can get inside by taking the Ork Underground to an access point in the arcology's parking structure. Others have used similar methods in the past. We don't feel the route's been compromised, plus we're counting on Deus being too precocious with the military to notice. We'd rather not storm the barricades or stealth-glide in from a nearby skyscraper, but we are willing to plan for any contingency. If someone comes up with a better idea that might get us in, we'll take a serious look at it."

Ronin pauses for a moment, looking grimly but steadily at the runners. "I'm sure it's obvious, but we're counting on your team to go in with us. Dodger and I are going to need you in there. Are you with us?"

HOOKS

This scene is the calm before the storm. The attack plan is laid out, and the runners must decide on their approach. They're about to take a big step by breaking into the arcology, and the implications of that move should weigh on them. A lot of people are counting on them to succeed.

This is a good time for the characters to get to know the NPCs in this adventure. The otaku of Overwatch will be hard at work preparing the runners for the mission, and some may speak

privately to individual runners, thanking them for their bravery and commitment. Some of the younger ones will look up to the runners as role models, or even heroes. They may follow the runners surreptitiously, perhaps even mimicking them in small ways.

Ronin will take charge of coordinating the mission, taking on the task with the zealotry of a warrior facing an honorable and necessary battle. Dodger will act the part of the gallant hero about to undertake a quest for his love, and will withdraw from the runners to spend some time with Megaera. If any of the runners approach him, he may introduce them to the damaged AI and fill them in on her history. Aneki still seems mostly unaware of his surroundings, though he may occasionally look at someone or say something that indicates his mind is not entirely out to lunch.

BEHIND THE SCENES

The runners have a few short days to prepare for the run. Give them just enough time to heal up, acquire essential gear and wrap up loose ends. They shouldn't have any time for luxuries.

If the runners have trouble acquiring gear they need, the conniving kids of Overwatch will do what they can to help out. If necessary, they can hook up the runners with good contacts or even run a scam or two through the Matrix to get the goods more quickly or cheaply.

Pursuit

Renraku will quickly swing into gear and attempt to track down both Aneki and Huang. The corp will first try astral tracking through ritual sorcery. If the runners don't have the means to hide the captives from magical pursuit (i.e., a high Force astral barrier), then Dodger will arrange it through his own contacts.

Renraku's next step will involve legwork, both in the real world and the Matrix. It will not take the corp long to trace the kidnapers back to Seattle and start digging for clues there. If Renraku can determine the runners' identities, the hunt will begin. First, the runners will get reports that their contacts are being shaken down. Then, many of their contacts will say they've become "too hot" and will refuse to deal with them. Renraku will flood the streets with spies, and will even place a bounty on the runners' heads.

The gamemaster should time events so that Renraku is starting to close in on the runners just as they depart to enter the arcology. Even with all the heat, the runners should get the feeling that they're jumping out of the frying pan and into the fire.

PUSHING THE ENVELOPE

The runners' present circumstances should make it easy for the gamemaster to cause trouble. Renraku is hot on the trails of the runners, and they may have to fight their way out of an ambush or foil a vigorous attempt to astrally track Aneki. If Renraku places a bounty on their heads, the runners will quickly find themselves targeted by a small army of low-lives looking to cash in on the reward. These bounty hunters will range from petty street snitches to world-class professional assassins, making it difficult for the runners to show their faces in public.

The Banded will also be looking for the runners, and they may make a surprise appearance. Though Deus fully expects

Overwatch to conveniently deliver Aneki to the arcology, the AI wouldn't mind keeping an eye on the runners' progress. If the opportunity presents itself, the Banded will snatch Aneki and bring him in on their own.

DEBUGGING

The most likely problem at this stage is that the runners may decide to back out completely. Dodger and Ronin will do their best to persuade the characters to change their minds. If the team is adamant about refusing to enter the arcology, then Overwatch will look for another team to take their place. The gamemaster may be able to pressure the runners into the arcology: perhaps Renraku catches up with them and demands they bring back Aneki and Huang—or else. Or, before the runners part ways with Overwatch, the Banded could strike, snatching Aneki and a member of the runners' team. The runners will then be forced to enter the arcology to retrieve their comrade.

The runners may find it hard to believe they're going to coax the shutdown codes out of Aneki, given his mental state. Ronin will argue that Aneki is sometimes lucid, and suggest the runners work with Aneki and see if they can get him to respond positively. Possibly Aneki has become attached to one or more of the runners and responds better to them than to any others. As a last resort, an appropriately timed Control Thoughts spell may also do the job.

If the runners have Huang as well as Aneki, Huang will take to his captivity gracefully, with the arrogance of one who knows he will eventually be returned to power. He will question and pry into the runners' plans as much as they allow, and he will try to appear useful.

FOLLOW THE YELLOW BRICK ROAD

WHAT'S UP, CHUMMER?

In this scenario, the runners take the plunge and break into the arcology, accompanied by Dodger, Ronin and Aneki. The team must work their way through the arcology and rendezvous with the Resistance on the 199th floor. There, the runners are introduced to Devon Eurich, Kiell Rauglos and other members of their Resistance cell. United, the two groups plan their course of action to bring about the downfall of Deus.

TELL IT TO THEM STRAIGHT

You meet in an alley just a few blocks from Club Penumbra, a stone's throw from the arcology. Your two guides appear from the shadows and introduce themselves. "I'm Slant," says the ork, grabbing your hand and pumping it thoroughly. "The troll's name is Tholm. Don't let his size fool you. He's a pussy-cat on the inside."

Without further ado, Tholm stalks over to a manhole cover half-submerged underneath a pile of moldy bar food spilling out of a busted trash bag. He lifts the cover easily with only one hand and tosses it aside. "All aboard," Slant says.

Almost immediately, you regret taking the low road into the arc. The sewer walls are encrusted with slime, and the floor of the tunnel is hidden beneath a brackish soup that oozes slowly towards some distant drain. "This is not the most scenic

part of the tour," Slant says. "The arcology tunnel isn't close to any populated areas of the underground, for obvious reasons."

Following the duo, you spend the next two hours traversing a maze of sewer tunnels, abandoned basements, forgotten walkways and maintenance shafts, eventually emerging into a set of recently dug, well-lit dirt corridors. These empty out into a small cavern where four well-armed trolls guard a tunnel leading out from the opposite wall. "That tunnel leads to the arcology's parking garage," Slant says. "There are no branches, so just keep going straight and you'll end up on level B4 of the arc. Good luck."

Ronin tosses the two a credstick for their efforts, then motions you into the tunnel. One of the trolls stops you for a moment, a serious look crossing his craggy features. "Be careful you don't make any noise going in. If we hear fighting, or we think the area's been compromised, we're going to blow the tunnel. We can't compromise the safety of the Underground." He stares you down to make sure you've got the message, then steps aside to let you pass.

You creep along for another few minutes. Then the tunnel ceiling lowers, allowing just enough cramped room for a troll to squeeze through. You can see a small square of light on the floor ahead. Taking a deep breath, you prepare to enter the arc.

When the runners meet

with the Resistance, read the following:

In spite of your twitchiness after scaling over two hundred floors in this gargantuan tomb, you somehow manage to avoid a firefight when the Resistance guards appear. The haggard Resistance members don't look like street-hardened gun-toting types, but their fatalistic expressions indicate their determination. Two of them obviously recognize Aneki and glare at him with open animosity. Your team is quickly escorted into what was once an entertainment district for the surrounding residential units. Passing the empty restaurants and dark arcades, you enter a derelict-looking bar called Durruti's. There you are introduced to the two men in charge: an elf named Kiell Rauglos and a human named Devon Eurich.

Devon and Dodger are apparently old acquaintances and they greet each other warmly. Then Devon notices Aneki, and the disgust on his face makes you wonder if dragging him this far was really a good idea after all. Before Devon says anything, Kiell steps between them and says "Since we've all gathered here, let's get down to business and figure out how we're going to unplug this damn AI already."

Before long, you're all sitting around the circular bar, as Kiell manipulates a trideo projector from the bar. A three-dimensional image of the arcology flares to life, zooming in on floors 201, 202 and 272. Most of the image is incredibly detailed, showing the locations of stairwells and offices. However, each floor has sections outlined in red, and the center of the 202nd floor is conspicuously empty.

"We've evaluated the information provided by Overwatch and we've developed the following plan," Kiell says. "First, we need to retrieve the storage unit component of the AEP shutdown program, the so-called 'Mousetrap.' Fortunately, we know where it is." Kiell manipulates the trid unit for a moment, and a



new image appears. It is a flat-screen video shot, presumably taken from a micro surveillance camera. It shows a middle-aged Asian man, flanked by two young adults with datajacks and white cybereyes. The older man has a metallic cuff strapped around his left leg and a cyberdeck slung over his shoulder.

"This is Cham Lam Won, one of Deus' original architects," Kiell explains. "Since the shutdown, he has been imprisoned in the arcology's upper floors where Deus' Whites run rampant. We suspect the screamer device attached to his leg keeps him confined to a certain area, usually the 272nd floor. The old-model cyberdeck he is carrying is in fact the Mousetrap we need to acquire. As far as we can tell, he carries it everywhere, and the otaku don't stop him."

Kiell presses another button, and the image shifts back to the maps. "Once we have the Mousetrap, the ideal place to jack in is directly into the SCIRE's mainframes. Try it from anywhere else, and the AI will most certainly find you before you work your way through the Wall and into the core. The mainframes we want are located on the 202nd floor. Deus has protected them by removing the breathable atmosphere from the entire floor, replacing it with different gases in different locations. Needless to say, most of those gases are lethal to metahumans. To get a team onto that floor safely, we first need to switch the atmosphere. We've located the valve system and tanks that will allow us to do this, located here on 201." Kiell indicates a section of the map near one of the arcology's outer walls.

"Our first task is to infiltrate the 272nd floor and retrieve the Mousetrap. Another team of Resistance fighters—Cliber's group—will cover our retreat." Devon and Dodger frown disapprovingly, but Kiell continues. "From there, we will descend and regroup. We will then split into two teams. One will seize the valve station and manually restore the atmosphere to the necessary sections. We have an insider who will help us accomplish this, but we'll still need to sit on the controls and make sure that Deus doesn't find out and reverse the process. The other team will wait an hour or so to be safe, then move quickly to penetrate the 202nd floor, find the mainframes and jack in directly. They will access Deus' core, deliver the kill codes, and with any luck put this nightmare to rest once and for all.

"Any questions?"

HOOKS

Breaking into the arcology should be a stress-filled, nerve-racking endeavor as the runners strive to avoid the AI's attention. In addition to the encounters detailed, the gamemaster should throw in several other small snags and near misses to keep the runners on their toes.

If the runners have not been inside the arcology since the shutdown, this will be their first real exposure to what's been going down inside. The nightmarish horror of the situation should be played up as much as possible, from the terrifying and alien nature of the drone constructs to the tragic evidence of twisted experiments and mass murder. The *Themes* described on p. 72 of *RAS* should give the gamemaster several ideas for keeping the atmosphere dark and scary.

BEHIND THE SCENES

The runners could gain entrance to the arcology in a variety of ways limited only by the players' imaginations. The most likely route is detailed here, but the gamemaster should feel free to create or encourage others. Overwatch wants to keep Aneki safe, and will discourage any plans that involve massive risks or dangerous combat. However the runners decide to go, they must bypass several forces: Deus and its minions, the UCAS/Renraku military troops, and others involved on the periphery, such as the Ork Underground and even other runner teams. Guidelines for handling the security around the arcology are given starting on p. 73, *RAS*.

The gamemaster should keep in mind that the joint UCAS-Renraku offensive is in control of floors 1 through 5. These troops have also put their beachhead to good use, and regularly undertake recon missions or raids on the half-dozen floors immediately above and below. As the runners enter the arcology, these troops are preparing to launch a major attack, first driving upward a dozen floors, and then spearheading a push directly down—*deep* down. The task force hopes to retake control of the fusion reactors on B21, though Deus is sure to make the effort costly.

The Ork Underground

Through its Resistance contacts, Overwatch can easily arrange for the team to be guided through the Ork Underground and to the tunnel that leads into the arcology. This tunnel will end in a ceiling hole in a corner of the B4 parking garage.

Unfortunately for the Resistance, Deus learned of this tunnel some time ago, and is keeping it under surreptitious surveillance. When the runners enter with Aneki and Huang, they will immediately attract the AI's attention. In order to seal the team within the arcology, Deus will send some of its drones to flush out a group of UCAS soldiers who were separated from their squad and took shelter nearby.

Shortly after the runners enter the garage, they will hear shouts and approaching gunfire. A squad of four bedraggled soldiers sprints into view, fleeing two of Deus' drone constructs. The soldiers are being deliberately hounded towards the tunnel. Once the drones cut down the soldiers, they will engage the runners. Luckily for the team, these drones are not really trying, as Deus doesn't want to risk harming Aneki. However, if the drones cut right through the runners, Deus will attempt to have Aneki captured and brought under its direct control.

Use the statistics for UCAS army grunts given in *The Line*, p. 81. The gamemaster should select two appropriate drones, such as two Mantas or Medusae, from the drone constructs described on pp. 142 and 143. Ronin and Dodger will act primarily to keep Aneki and Huang safe, though they will join in the fray if the runners need help. If any of the soldiers survive, they will be extremely thankful, and can give the runners some tips for getting back to the floors controlled by the military (and possibly how to get past the military). They will also ask to accompany the runners back to a safer floor. If asked, they know next to nothing about the military's plans.

The troll guards will hear the sounds of combat and assume that their tunnel's location has been compromised by

Deus minions. Approximately three minutes after the fight begins, the runners hear and feel an explosion. Dust, smoke and debris will spew from the now-blocked tunnel. The door has been sealed behind them, and the runners have no choice but to proceed.

Traveling through the Arcology

As the team explores the arcology floor by floor, they may experience the terrors of the SCIRE firsthand. A number of sample encounters are given below, but the gamemaster should feel free to develop others. For further short adventure ideas, consult *RAS*.

Chameleons: The team will encounter a firefight between a group of UCAS soldiers and Renraku Red Samurai. If the runners are spotted, each side will claim the others are really a group of Banded, cleverly disguised to infiltrate and escape the arcology. The gamemaster can choose which side is telling the truth, or if in fact both sides are guilty only of a gross misunderstanding.

Errant Children: The team will turn a corner in a seemingly abandoned residential area and find a group of children playing. Each of the child has their own personal Doll drone (see p. 142), which they will refuse to part with. Dodger and Ronin will immediately want the team to leave the area, explaining that no child within the arcology can be trusted. Some of the children will be scared of the runners, some will ask the runners to take them back to their parents, and others will be fascinated by the team and ask them to play. If the runners pay attention, they may notice a Doll telling its child not to trust the runners, and several Dolls asking their children questions about the runners. After a minute or two, they may even hear a Doll mention the runners *by name*. A group of Green Banded and/or spider drones are nearby, and will immediately come running if there is any sort of disturbance.

Escapees: The team will run across a group of refugees who recently broke out of the residential floor where they've been held captive for over a year. The escapees will be incredibly suspicious of the runners, but will also be torn over what course of action to take. Their disagreements, clearly sparked by rivalries developed from close confinement, will spread into open hostility and fighting. The runners may have to intervene to keep them from harming each other, then decide how to help them without compromising their own mission.

The Hunt: The team will hear a commotion in the distance, and then spot a prisoner or two being hunted through a maze of office cubicles by Blues and drone constructs for sport. The runners must be careful not to reveal their own location, or they will become hunted themselves.

The Trap: In a seemingly abandoned level, the floor will suddenly give way, spilling some members of the team through a series of chutes and into an area that has only recently been assembled into one of Deus' "proving grounds." The runners must find their way out of the maze of catwalks and I-beams before they fall victim to the traps or drones stalking the area.

The Morgue: Shortly after encountering a hideous odor, the team will come across a pile of decomposing bodies that have been dumped unceremoniously next to some agricultur-

al gardens. Presumably they will soon be converted to fertilizer. A small group of ghouls will be feeding from the remains, though they will flee from the runners.

Blackout Zone: The team comes across an area that is completely without power—no electricity, heating or ventilation. The dark zone should be an extremely spooky place where the runners may run into ghouls, airless pockets, deformed or mutilated refugees from an experimental lab, or worse. They will, however, be safe from the arcology's surveillance systems while within the zone—at least until the Greens restore power.

Loose Critters: When Deus seized the arcology, many of the critters in the arcology's zoo were released into the malls and parks of the lower floors. Many of these creatures have wandered in search of food, or have been forced into higher or lower floors by the UCAS military invasion. The runners may encounter some of these starved and desperate creatures, such as a pack of crested barbarians or troglodytes looting a kitchen, a lone scavenging gabriel hound, or even a hunting black annis or martichoras. See the *Critters* book for details and statistics.

Meeting the Resistance

When the team reaches the 199th floor, they follow Overwatch's directions and make contact with the Resistance. They hook up with a small but capable cell consists of leaders Kiell Rauglos and Devon Eurich (see pp. 127 and 126 for statistics), plus four other Resistance fighters (see p. 128).

The cell has created a secure hideout in an abandoned entertainment district, which they have carefully scoured clean of surveillance devices. They will sit down and plan out the assault against Deus with the runners, and accompany them through the following scenarios. Thanks to Sebastien, the Resistance members know quite a bit about the layout of the 272nd floor, and even know the IC code and transmission frequency used by Cham Lam Won's screamer.

If the runners ask about Cliber, they will be told that she leads another Resistance group on the floors nearby. She used to be Cham Lam Won's partner, helping him to develop the AI. Dodger and Devon both loathe her, but the other Resistance fighters have neutral opinions. In their view, even though she's partly responsible for Deus' creation, she's redeemed herself by working with the Resistance. Dodger and Devon both feel that her loyalties remain with Renraku, but feel that they have no choice but to work with her cell. (Vanessa Cliber is described on p. 129.)

The runners may still be unfamiliar with the extent of the arcology's horrors. These Resistance members have seen more than any metahuman should, and can easily pass the hours with stories of what they've experienced since the shutdown.

PUSHING THE ENVELOPE

The process of getting inside the arcology can easily be made into a monumental task, as Deus' drones, the UCAS military or other forces strive to keep the runners out. Depending upon the route the runners take, a number of additional obstacles can be placed in their path: maglocks and barriers, spirit guardians, patrols and other security measures. If the runners take the Ork Underground, the orks may refuse to act as



guides, requiring the runners to prove their good will by performing some deed on the orks' behalf first.

One way to raise the stakes is to have the UCAS offensive begin earlier than the runners expected. The team may enter the arcology only to discover battles raging across several floors, blocking some routes entirely and stirring up Deus' minions. The lower floors will be thrown into chaos as soldiers and drones crawl everywhere, and trapped residents may be injured and killed in the crossfire.

DEBUGGING

The runners may screw up big time and fail to get into the arcology. In this case, they have no choice but to try again using another route.

It is crucial that Aneki be kept alive at all costs. If the runners fail to provide adequate protection, then Ronin and/or Dodger will take charge of watching over him and keeping him out of combat. If Deus gets the opportunity, he will capture Aneki for his own purposes.

The climb through the arcology will only be as difficult as the gamemaster chooses to make it. If the runners really get chewed up just getting inside, then the climb itself and any encounters along the way should be made easier. If some runners are grievously injured, the runners may be able to gain access to one of the dozens of medical facilities scattered throughout the arc, though they will need to fight or sneak past Deus' minions to do so.

THE ENEMY OF MY ENEMY ...

WHAT'S UP, CHUMMER?

Using information provided by Sebastien, the runners and their allies attack the inner sanctum of Deus' otaku. The goal: extract one of the AI's creators and the Mousetrap cyberdeck which can be used to trap the AI. The team's escape is aided by Cliber's Resistance cell, but Cliber and Devon quickly have a falling out that threatens to turn violent.

TELL IT TO THEM STRAIGHT

You've made it to the 272nd floor, but being this close to so many of Deus' pets is definitely making you twitchy. Huddled in a maintenance stairwell, you watch nervously as Devon finishes popping the cover off of the security door's electronics panel and installs a dataline tap.

"Ready to go," he says, straightening up and holding out a fiberoptic cable. "Who wants to be the lucky decker to jack into this floor's screamer subsystem and track down our good friend Cham?"

HOOKS

The runners are participating in a daring raid into the heart of the AI's physical stronghold. The tension of the scene should be played up as the runners and Resistance fighters sweat it out while they track their quarry. The rest of the scene is a fast, furious dash-and-grab, followed by a dangerous pursuit as the team tries to escape with their prize.

SECURITY SUBHOST SHEAF

Orange-9/12/12/13/13/15

Trigger Step	Event
3	Probe 5 with Expert Offense +2, Armor
6	Trap Trace 4 (Non-Lethal Black IC 4 with Shielding)
9	Passive Alert
13	Trap Trace 4 (Killer 5 with Expert Offense +2, Shifting)
17	Sparky 6 with Expert Offense +1, Shifting
22	Active Alert
27	Blaster 5 with Expert Defense +2, Armor
30	Non-Lethal Black IC 4 with Expert Offense +3, Shifting
34	Shutdown

BEHIND THE SCENES

Dodger and the others will not want to risk losing Aneki on this raid. Both Dodger and Ronin will stay behind and defend him, perhaps borrowing a few Resistance fighters to keep them company. Devon, Kiell and the others will accompany the runners on the raid.

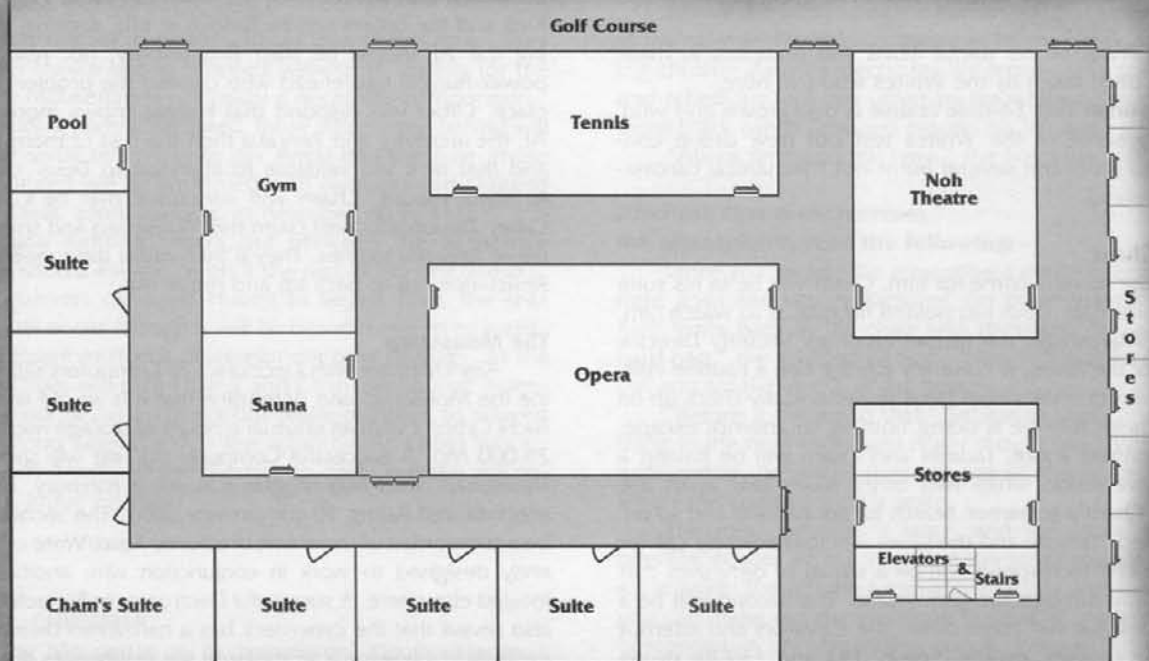
The raiding party may run into some side adventures on their way up to the 272nd floor. The gamemaster can incorporate any of the ideas included in the previous scenario, or use the floor descriptions from p. 88 of RAS. Getting past the 261st floor (the lower level of White housing) should be a challenge, as the Whites keep their domain well guarded, both physically and electronically. They also make use of the few Blue magicians to keep some of their areas warded and astrally patrolled.

Devon will suggest that once the team reaches the 272nd floor, one of the deckers should try to break into the screamer subsystems to locate Cham. Strategically placed doors throughout the arcology have receivers built into their frames. These are used to detect screamer devices such as Cham is wearing. (See *Screamers*, p. 74, RAS). By hacking this system and tracing Cham's screamer's ID code, the team can determine his relative location. The raid then begins in earnest, and the raiders will need to move quickly to ensure that they can snatch Cham and escape from the area intact.

Hacking the Screamers Subsystem

Tapping into the SCIRE Matrix without alerting Deus is a risky proposition. The tech who installs the dataline tap (Devon, if no player character does it) must make an Electronics B/R (8) Test. If zero successes are achieved, Deus is aware of the tap and its physical location. If 1 success is achieved, it takes Deus 3D6 turns to pinpoint the tap's source. If 2+ successes are achieved, Deus does not notice.

If Deus tracks the source, give the decker a Sensor (10) Test. If successful, the decker notices the AI's presence, though



The 272nd Floor (Cham's Suite)

no icon for the AI is visible. The AI will watch the decker until Cham is located. Deus will then dump the decker from the Matrix (no test required) and alert its drones and minions to the decker's whereabouts.

A decker who successfully logs on will find himself in a host that controls security for several levels of the arcology. To find Cham, the decker will need to conduct a Locate Slave interrogation operation, using Cham's screamer ID code. Once 4 successes are achieved, the decker will be given data that shows the last doorway Cham passed through.

If none of the runners wish to deck this info, Devon will do it himself.

The 272nd Floor

When the runners come after him, Cham Lam Won will be in his executive suite, where he has been housed since the arcology shut down. The suite is nestled among several others in one of the arcology's corners. The area nearby is dedicated to high-lifestyle entertainment pursuits, as shown on the map and detailed below.

Like the rest of the arcology, the astral space on these floors has been perverted by the twists Deus has made to metahuman life; the Background Count is 2.

Suites: These executive suites are huge and spacious, with high-lifestyle accommodations. The outer wall of each is built entirely of one-way transparent plasteel (Barrier rating 12). The doors are secured with Rating 5 maglocks that require a fingerprint and passcode. Each suite is connected to the neighboring suites via emergency fire doors with Rating 5 alarms. These suites are currently occupied by a number of White otaku, most of whom will be in their rooms, jacked in and oblivious to the world.

Pool: This Olympic-sized indoor pool is well maintained, though Cham is the only one who regularly uses it. Like the suite walls, one of the pool's walls is transparent from the inside, offering a view from high above Seattle. A maintenance closet provides access to the pipes and valves, and also features a ladder leading to maintenance facilities on the floor below.

Gym: Most of the equipment here is tailored towards health-conscious executives, but it is all of high quality.

Sauna: This recreational sauna and public bath is divided in half, one area for each gender. It has fallen into disrepair.

Opera: The seating in this opera hall actually takes up a section of the 271st floor as well, as do the backstage areas.

Tennis Courts: This area was used as a pen for the residents when the arcology first shut down. Later, they were moved to lower floors. A small herd of devil rats now nests here.



Noh Theatre: Once used for this upper-class Japanese style of theater, this area has also been neglected, and is littered with extravagant scenery backdrops, expensive props and elaborate costumes.

Stores: Most of the useful items and materials in these stores have been taken by the Whites who live here.

Golf Course: This 14-hole course is overgrown and wild. Occasionally some of the Whites test out new drone constructs in this area, and several burnt-out mechanical carcasses remain behind.

Snatching Cham

When the runners come for him, Cham will be in his suite with the Mousetrap. Deus has posted no guards to watch him, but Tadashi Marushige, the former arcology Security Director and leader of the Blues, is currently paying him a routine visit. Tadashi has direct orders from Deus to periodically check up on Cham and make sure he is doing nothing to attempt escape. When the runners arrive, Tadashi and Cham will be having a strained conversation while two other Blues tear apart the suite, check Cham's screamer, search for contraband and so on.

If attacked, Tadashi and the Blues will immediately call for backup. The first to respond will be a squad of dervishes that make their way through the golf course. The second will be a group of Blues that will come down the elevators and attempt to cut off the runners' escape. See p. 142 and 139 for drone construct and Banded statistics. Once the runners have been noticed, the AI and otaku will track them through the arcology, routing the drones and Blues to their current position. The runners will have to be clever to lose their pursuit.

The screamer around Cham's leg will also give the team's location away unless it is dealt with. Any simple jammer will stifle its signal. The device can also be removed or deactivated with an electronics kit and an Electronics B/R (8) Test, with a base time of 2 hours. However, either attempt to disable the screamer will automatically alert the SCIRE's security of the device's last location.

The Backup Arrives

Just when the runners are hemmed in by their pursuit, the Resistance squad led by Vanessa Cliber will arrive and help the team to escape. Cliber will have six Resistance fighters with her. (Statistics for Cliber can be found on p. 129. The Resistance fighters are detailed on p. 128.)

Once the runners have made it to safety, Cham will explode with relief at being rescued. He will rant about how long he's been held prisoner by the AI, about how annoying the "damn little brainwashed geek fanatics" are, and about all the horrible things he's heard and seen them do. Though he's not exactly thrilled to have Devon, an old competitor, as his savior, Cham is ecstatic to see Cliber again. Almost as an afterthought, he will mention that he can't believe that the Banded captured Sherman Huang as well. If pressed on this point (by Cliber, if nobody else speaks), Cham will say that the Banded brought Huang to see him just a day ago, and that he thinks the Banded are keeping Huang on the 260th floor.

The Split

After some consultation over this news, Cliber will announce that she's taking her team to rescue Huang. Devon, Kiell and the others will be furious at this, arguing that defeating the AI should be their first priority, not rescuing some power-hungry figurehead who created the problem in the first place. Cliber will respond that Huang knows more about the AI, the arcology and Renraku than the rest of them combined, and that he's too valuable to abandon to Deus' clutches. As tensions mount, Cham will announce that he's going with Cliber. Devon and Kiell claim the Mousetrap and spurn the others as Renraku toadies. They'll then order the runners and their Resistance cell to pack up and move out.

The Mousetrap

Any character with Electronics or Computers skill can examine the Mousetrap and determine that it is an old and outdated Fuchi Cyber-7 with an unusual amount of storage memory—over 25,000 Mp. A successful Computer (4) Test will show that the Mousetrap holds two programs in active memory. The first is a sophisticated Rating 10 compressor utility. The second seems to be a component of some sort of tailored Read/Write utility, apparently designed to work in conjunction with another program located elsewhere. A successful Electronics or Biotech (5) Test will also reveal that the cyberdeck has a hardwired brainwave scanner built in, allowing it to measure the brainwaves of a user.

Either Cham, Devon or Dodger could tell the runners that the Mousetrap is simply the receiving end of a massive suite of programs. These programs are designed to tear an advanced and massive program (such as an SK or AI) into separate isolated components, compress them and download them into storage.

PUSHING THE ENVELOPE

The Whites are not expecting their stronghold to be violated, so the assault should catch them off guard. The runners may succeed in grabbing Cham without alerting anyone, though at some point they will have to disable the screamer. The raiding party will be doggedly pursued, however. Deus may anticipate the runners' escape route and set up traps or ambushes. The AI may also cut off certain sections of the arcology to restrict or contain the team. Alternately, the runners may find that Cham isn't even on the 272nd floor, and that they must find him on another floor—anywhere between the 261st and 279th.

If the runners are hard-pressed, they may face a choice of leaving Cham behind—or he may be killed. As Devon will point out, Cham doesn't really matter, but the Mousetrap does. To the Resistance, Cham is responsible for the AI's existence, and so they will not risk their lives for him alone.

The tensions between Cliber and Devon may easily explode, possibly into open fighting if hot tempers prevail. Even more dangerously, the conflict may come to a head in the heat of a battle or as the teams attempt to shake off the Banded pursuit.

DEBUGGING

If the runners are having trouble escaping with the Mousetrap, Sebastien could provide some unexpected aid. Though he will not intervene directly, he can act to misdirect

or confuse pursuit. It's also possible that Devon and Kiell have arranged for backup with another Resistance cell, to help pull the team out of the fire if necessary.

If the runners fail to return with an intact Mousetrap, they will have no choice but to proceed without it. Luckily for the runners, the Mousetrap is not really a necessary component.

If the raiding party is captured, those who stayed behind will have to find some other way to get Aneki into the core. Those who are captured will be implanted with datajacks and plugged into one of Deus' zombie rooms, as described on p. 111.

If physical fighting breaks out between the Resistance cells, Cliber should escape, even if the rest of her cell doesn't.

If the runners captured Huang in Segue Four, the split above will still occur, though it will be based more on an inability to work together than a disagreement over strategy. At the very least, Cliber will take Huang and Cham and leave, ostensibly to get out of the arcology but really planning to subvert the other group later. If given the opportunity, Cliber will try and steal both Aneki and the Mousetrap away, but she will not sacrifice her group for this.

ET TU ...

WHAT'S UP, CHUMMER?

With the Mousetrap in its possession, the Resistance is ready to begin its final assault on Deus. The characters split into two teams. With Sebastien's help, one team will attempt to seize the valve station. Once they are in control, they can return the atmosphere on the 202nd floor to normal. Then the second team invades the 202nd floor, finds the mainframes for the SCIRE Matrix and jacks in to deliver the kill codes. Just when everything seems to be going well, Sebastien betrays the first team, leaving them at Deus' mercy.

TELL IT TO THEM STRAIGHT

You regroup with the Resistance on the 199th floor, and now you're ready for the next phase of the plan. Devon steps forward, giving your ragtag team a good once-over before speaking.

"I think the best way to split our forces here is to separate the deckers from the rest. Ronin, Dodger, you" —(he points at your group's decker[s])—"and I will take Aneki onto the 202nd floor. Between us we should have enough skill and firepower to get where we need to be. We'll also bring Jack and Zendra"—he indicates two of the Resistance cell members—"to keep an eye on us while we jack in. The rest of you"—this time he indicates the rest of your group and the other Resistance fighters—"will follow Kiell's lead and seize the valve station. That's the place Deus will likely get wind of our operation first, so we'll need the numbers to hold the line there.

"So, if you don't like that assignment, speak up now. Otherwise it's time to debug this system."

When the first team enters

the valve station, read the following:

The door slides open, revealing a circular room ringed on all sides by computer workstations, gauges, digital displays and manual controls. In the center of the room lies a sprawled

ork body wearing a Renraku tech jumpsuit, blood pooling underneath. Green cybereyes stare unseeing at the ceiling.

Above the body stands a human youth, maybe seventeen at the outside. He holds a slivergun in one hand, and a gleaming chrome datajack decorates his temple. His spiky blue hair and rebellious look are offset by his white cybereyes and the three black bands tattooed around his left arm.

"About time you got here," the boy says.

After the first team reverses

the atmosphere, read the following:

Once you've got the atmosphere controls adjusted to the right level and you've signaled the other team to go ahead, Kiell leans back in his chair and stretches. "Now comes the hard part," the grizzled elf says. "Now we wait for Deus to find out and smoke us out of the hole."

"Before it comes to that," Sebastien says, "there's something in the next room you really should see." Without further explanation, he walks over to one of the sealed doors and enters the code to slide it open.

The room beyond is large, and the sound of the door opening echoes across it, stifling the small sounds of electronics at work. Though the room is only dimly and sporadically lit, you can make out dozens upon dozens of metahumans, each ensconced in an upstanding couch. Various instruments and electrodes are attached to each of them, monitoring vital signs and brain activity. The expressions on their slack faces range from stupefied apathy to tortured agony, but all of them are identical in one respect: the fiberoptic cable connecting their datajacks to the equipment behind them. You are struck by how young many of them look, as well as how many exhibit signs of recent surgery.

Kiell and some of the others move into the room, staring at the people and machinery. "What is the purpose of this?" Kiell asks, revulsed. "What in the hell is Deus doing with these poor people?"

Sebastien cocks his head to one side as if he's earnestly considering the question. Then he turns slowly back towards the group. He sighs deeply and his shoulders slump. "I think there's something I need to tell all of you," he says, looking as if each word leaving his mouth brings him pain.

Kiell steps forward, clearly concerned, but Sebastien holds up his hand. The blue-haired boy covers his face with his other hand, and you can't help but notice how small and lonely he looks. His body trembles, and you hear a series of deep sobs. "I'm ... I'm so ... so ... I'm so sorry ..." he chokes out.

Sebastien flings his head back, and his white cybereyes seem to glow, illuminating the tears streaking down his face. His whole body begins to shake violently, and a single bright red line of blood streaks down from his nose, dripping off his chin. Kiell and the others are paralyzed with alarm as the boy falls to his knees, attempting to choke out a few words. "I tried ... tried to resist." With a final jerking spasm, Sebastien's body lurches over to fall face down on the floor.

Then a wave of dizziness hits you, and as the Resistance members begin to collapse around you, you realize with horror that you've been set up.

When the second team enters the mainframe room, read the following:

Cracking open the door, you burst into a room jam-packed with floor-to-ceiling computers, humming with activity and power. Supercomputers that cost more than the block you live on are crammed next to each other, churning out unimaginable numbers of calculations and operations per second. The computing power in this room stretches the limits of your comprehension, and yet it is only one component of the arcology's computer architecture. For all you know, all the computers in this room may merely be dedicated to wriggling Deus' virtual big toe.

Devon begins scanning the computer banks, rapidly walking up and down the aisles. Behind him, Jack and Zendra take a moment to seal the doors, while Ronin and Dodger drag Aneki along. The CEO grins like a happy child at all the flashing lights and machine noises.

"This should be a good start," Devon says, popping the access panel off a Xeno-Cray computer labeled *Grendel Project CCR-235*. "Deus has revamped a lot of the SCIRE's Matrix architecture to the point where it's hard to find anything anymore. But the last time I checked, this system still had a direct connection to the Wall, which is what we need to breach to find Deus' home host—the AEP." As he speaks, the other deckers unpack their cyberdecks, including the Mousetrap, and tap the connections directly into the mainframe. Running a fiberoptic lead to his datajack, Dodger gives you a determined-looking smile.

"Ready when you are," Devon says, and jacks in.

HOOKS

This mission starts out as a stealth run, and should be a bit of a cakewalk, since the runners have Sebastien working for them on the inside. Since Deus also knows what they have in mind, it has adjusted its plans and will allow the runners to succeed without interference, though obviously the runners won't know this.

Sebastien plays a short but important role in this sequence. As the insider who has risked his life to support Overwatch and the Resistance, he's earned the respect of Kiell and the others, despite his age. His short but revealing admittance of betrayal will shock them, and his grisly death and its implications should fall like a hammer upon the runners.

BEHIND THE SCENES

Ideally, the runners should split into two teams, as described in *Tell It To Them Straight*. The gamemaster should try and convince all of the non-decking characters to go to the valve station, so that they can be captured and forcibly jacked in. That way, all the characters—deckers and non-deckers alike—get to participate in the following Matrix-based scenarios and adventure climax.

The Valve Station

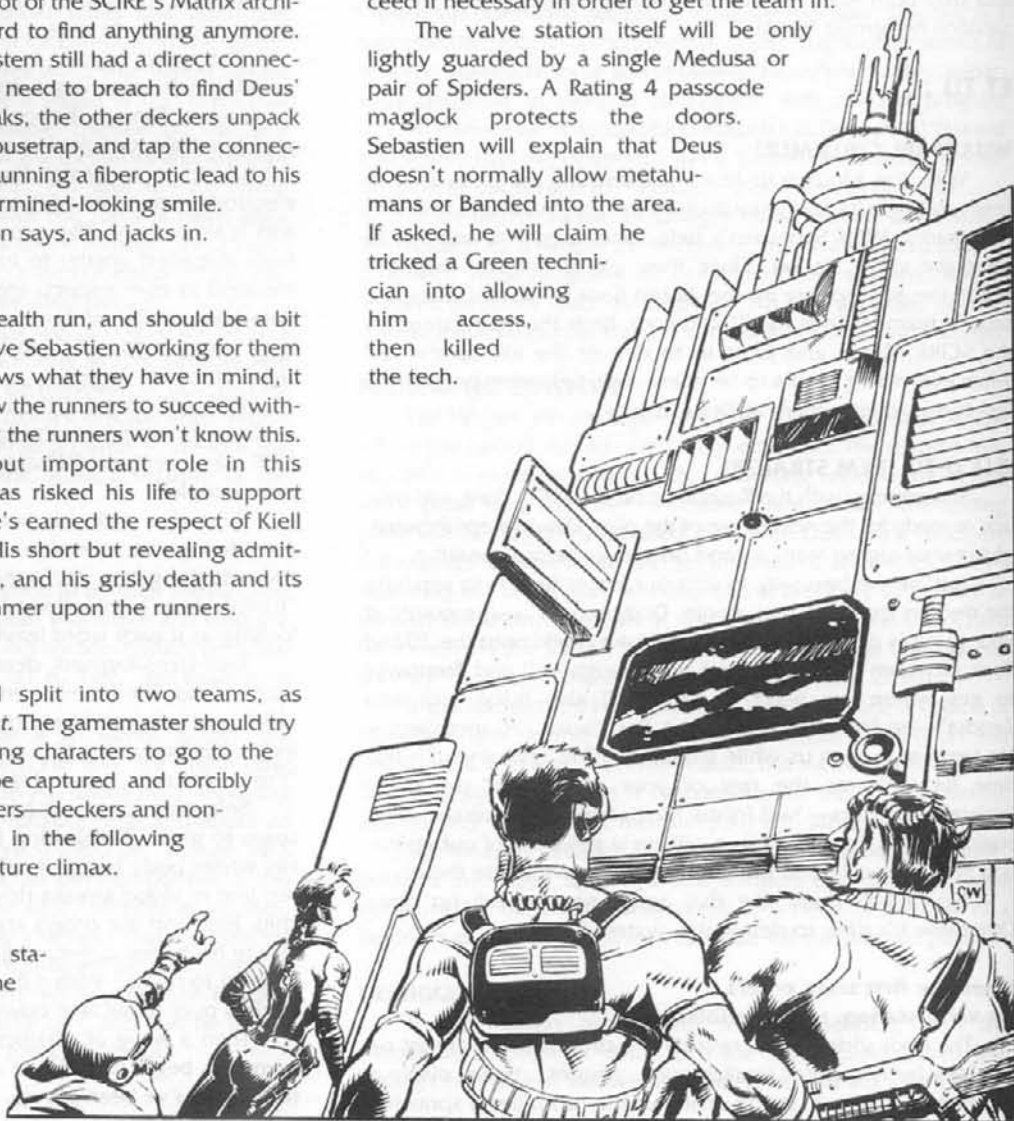
From this ventilation control station, an engineer can manipulate the atmosphere content and gas flow of several surrounding floors, including a large section of the 202nd. If a character analyzes

the control panels, a successful Electronics (8), Chemistry (4), or Engineering (5) Test will reveal the current atmosphere content in any given area. If the characters check, they will determine that the majority of the 202nd floor is filled with halon gas, though several sealed areas are filled with pressurized vacuum or with other gases, including Neuro-stun VIII, Green Ring-3 and some that are only identified by serial numbers.

The workstation controls can alter gas content in areas throughout the arcology, though using the controls correctly requires an Electronics (Control Systems) (6) Test. Failure means that the adjustment was not entered properly, so either it does not change or a different gas mixture is introduced instead. Changing the atmospheric mixture in an area takes approximately one hour, as the previous mixture must be drained and filtered first.

Kiell or Sebastien could also clear the way by jacking into local controls and switching the appropriate atmospheres. Either of them can automatically succeed if necessary in order to get the team in.

The valve station itself will be only lightly guarded by a single Medusa or pair of Spiders. A Rating 4 passcode maglock protects the doors. Sebastien will explain that Deus doesn't normally allow metahumans or Banded into the area. If asked, he will claim he tricked a Green technician into allowing him access, then killed the tech.



The valve station has only two doorways. The main one leads to a hallway in an area filled with engineering and maintenance workstations. Half a dozen Greens can be found doing work nearby at any given time. The other doorway leads out into a storage area that has been cleaned out and converted into a "zombie room."

Betrayal in the Zombie Room

The dozens of people jacked into the Matrix in the zombie room are being prepared as "hosts" for Deus' download. Each of them has successfully been transformed into an otaku, and their minds are currently imprisoned in a UV host where they wait for fragments of Deus' code to be "installed" in their brains.

Once the other team has started into action, Sebastien will lure the valve room team into the zombie room. The runners will have a terrifying glimpse of what awaits them as Sebastien breaks down. As he makes his confession, cutter nanites are slicing their way through his innards. Deus no longer has a use for him.

Unfortunately for the runners and Resistance members, both the zombie room and valve station are being flooded with colorless, odorless, contact-vectored neuro-stun X gas (see p. 120, *M&M*). This gas inflicts 8S Stun damage with a Speed of 1 Combat Turn.

Just to make sure that the runners are incapacitated, a dozen Bumblebee drones (see p. 142) will be launched from compartments in the ceilings, each armed with a dose of gamma-scopolamine (see p. 250, *SR3*).

In the Hands of Deus

Once the characters are incapacitated, a contingent of Spider drones and Green Banded will be called to the room. Characters who already have datajacks will be instantly plugged into one of the "couches" in the zombie room. Characters who do not have datajacks will be taken to nearby hospital unit, where they will undergo cyber implant surgery. Every character will receive a shiny new alphaware datajack, with a subsequent loss of Essence (.16) and magic (see *The Magic Attribute*, p. 158, *SR3*). Deus has become quite skilled at this procedure, and it will take less than an hour. As soon as the surgery ends, these characters will immediately be taken back to the zombie room and plugged in. Note that characters who receive new implants will not be aware they have them until they awake.

When the prisoners are jacked in, they will find themselves in a semi-conscious state, trapped in an ultraviolet host. Eventually, the decker characters will find them there (see p. 117).

Infiltrating Floor 202

Once the atmosphere has been successfully switched over, the decker-based team can penetrate the 202nd floor and procede to the mainframe rooms. Devon can navigate their course, as he is familiar with the floor's layout. The team may run into security devices, drones, spirits, or astral barriers, but Deus does not allow the Banded and other living creatures onto the floor. Deus will also have lightened the security, to make it easier for the team to deliver Aneki. However, the AI wants the team to believe they are being sneaky and clever, and will provide enough obstacles to make the team work for

their success. The gamemaster can devise appropriately significant security measures. It should take about as long for this team to reach the mainframes as it takes for the other team to be captured, implanted and jacked in.

The room containing the mainframes is protected by several layers of increasingly complex technical security—mostly maglocks. (See also security measures described on p. 74 of *RAS*). If the runners are unable to defeat the maglocks, they may have to break through the actual doors (Barrier rating 8).

Once inside, Devon will lead them to the Grendel Project mainframe. From past experience within the SCIRE's Matrix, Devon knows that jacking into this mainframe will place them in the Grendel host, which Deus uses as a firewall between the rest of the SCIRE Matrix and the Wall. Devon will encourage all of the deckers to jack directly into this machine, and will also provide an access code allowing them to logon without having to make a test. Aneki will be jacked in through the Mousetrap cyberdeck. If any other cyberdecks are needed, Devon will have brought along an appropriate number of Renraku Kraftwerk-8 cyberdecks. When the characters jack in, proceed to the next scenario.

Resistance fighters Jack and Zendra (use the Resistance Fighter statistics, p. 128) will guard the room while the others jack in. They will hotwire the doors to keep them permanently locked, and they have brought along a spray tank of freeze foam (see p. 112, *M&M*) in case they need to reinforce the doors against attackers.

PUSHING THE ENVELOPE

The simplest way to push the envelope here is to add more security at the valve room, the 202nd floor, or both. There may be more drones about, or a group of Greens doing technical repairs, or more stringent technical security, such as the corrosive foam trap described on p. 76, *RAS*.

DEBUGGING

This scenario can easily be approached in a number of different ways, depending on how the players decide they want to tackle the AI.

The runners may decide to skip the valve station altogether and just invade the 202nd floor, though this is only feasible if they can obtain the gear necessary to survive in a hostile atmosphere. Because of the wide variety of gas weapons Deus employs, the runners will need to choose their gear wisely.

Alternately, the runners may decide to send a larger group, including non-decking characters, onto the 202nd floor. In this case, the gamemaster has a choice. The adventure can merely proceed as described, meaning that non-deckers who aren't captured will merely be left out of the action in the UV host. Or Deus may set a trap for the runners on the way to—or even inside—the mainframe room. In this scenario, each of the captured characters will awake in the UV host, imprisoned as part of the "downloading harvest" (see p. 117). If no other characters are free to liberate them, the gamemaster may give them a chance to liberate themselves, or have them freed by Aneki, whom Deus has jacked in, but allowed to roam freely in its UV realms until the downloading process is ready.



A third option is that the deckers may decide to break into Deus' home host the hard way—by jacking in anywhere and working their way through the SCIRE Matrix first. This would allow the runners to skip the 202nd floor and valve station altogether, though traversing the reorganized architecture of the SCIRE Matrix without attracting Deus' attention will be quite difficult. In this case, the gamemaster should use the description and security sheaf for the SCIRE Matrix as given on pp. 78–79 of RAS. If possible, the gamemaster should arrange for the non-deckers to be captured as in the scenario above, and for the deckers to be delayed long enough for their comrades to be forcibly implanted and jacked in.

Some gamemasters (not to mention players!) may balk at the idea of forcibly implanting captured characters with datajacks. While the Essence and Magic loss is a serious blow, a battle with an AI in its home element is a serious risk, and the characters cannot reasonably expect to walk away unscarred. Deus is also careful about its downloading efforts, and installing a datajack is the only way to get the direct neural interface it requires. If the gamemaster really dislikes this approach, the characters can instead be jacked in using simple 'trodes (reducing their Matrix Reaction by half, round down). We encourage gamemasters to go with the datajack option; if there was ever a time for the gamemaster to be sadistic and screw the players, this is it. Don't miss the opportunity!

GRENDL'S LAIR

WHAT'S UP, CHUMMER?

The deckers jack in and find themselves in an ultraviolet (UV) host, subject to rules and laws unlike standard Matrix operations. In this host, they must traverse their way into a virtual keep, outsmart a score of IC constructs fashioned to look like oni, and figure out how to gain access to the keep's main tower, so that they may breach the Wall and proceed towards Deus' home host. Once in the tower, they must face up to the monstrous Grendel IC construct that guards the Wall.

TELL IT TO THEM STRAIGHT

You situate yourself comfortably, leaning back against a mainframe, and take one last look at the real world around you. Devon and Ronin have already jacked in, and Dodger gives you a conspiratorial wink as he slides the cable into his datajack and slumps back. You take a deep breath and press the power stud, watching as the meat world swirls away and a new one is constructed from pixilated blocks.

You are standing in the midst of a snowy, forested mountainside. Frozen branches crackle as an icy wind blows past them, and you shiver as the cold pierces your bones. Your breath puffs out in a steamy cloud, and with a start you realize that your icon does not appear as it should. In fact, you can't even detect your icon—for all you can tell you are present as your flesh-and-blood self. Glancing down, you realize you are wearing a *hakama*—Japanese wide trousers, divided like a skirt—and a *kataginu* sleeveless jacket. The others also appear as their normal selves, and are similarly attired in medieval

Japanese clothing, complete with *mogami-do* armor and hair folded into a top knot.

Looking again at your clothing, you realize that you can make out individual threads and fibers with a clarity that seems almost hyper-real. The resolution is fantastic—you must be in an ultraviolet host.

"The proximity to our nemesis' core has clearly affected this system," Dodger says wonderingly. "This is brilliant."

"It's dangerous as well," says Devon grimly. "Let's wrap up the dawdling and get moving. I think I know where we need to go." He points upwards, and you see a path leading through the trees. Higher up the mountain, you see the rippled roof and crenellated walls of a keep rising out from the forest. Behind and above it, a shimmering discoloration disrupts the artificial cloudy sky, as if some giant hand were stirring up the very stuff from which the heavens were made.

"The Wall," Devon says.

When the deckers reach Grendel's Hall, read the following:

The reflection of the fireplace within the mirror flickers with an unearthly glow, then flares into a wave of silvery light that flows across the mirror, clearing away all other reflections. The mirror stabilizes for a moment as a calm silvery pool. Then a large shadow begins to darken its center. Ripples begin to appear from the mirror's center, and a huge clawed hand comes thrusting through, as if the glass were only a chrome-colored waterfall. The rest of the creature follows the claw, and you find yourself facing a fearsome beast almost five meters in height. A ragged mane flows down the creature's back, and bloody red eyes stare hungrily at you from charcoal-black, dermal-plated flesh. A drop of saliva larger than your torso slides to the floor. The creature sniffs the air with interest and turns its scarred muzzle towards Ronin, licking its lips in anticipation.

With blinding speed, the creature is upon him. One massive paw dashes Ronin high into the air, and the creature leaps to catch him in its mouth. Its neck distends horribly as it swallows him whole, and you watch in horror as it turns towards Aneki ...

HOOKS

Stress the realism of the Grendel system. To the deckers, it feels as if they are in the real world, and they must adjust to the fact that some of their programs will be useless in this realm. Let them have fun trying to figure out what works and what doesn't. The characters may invent some clever uses for their utilities and operations. Likewise, the creatures that live in this realm—the oni and Grendel—may have some system tricks of their own up their sleeves. Just when the players think they have it figured out, the rules should twist slightly, keeping the characters on their toes.

The encounter with Grendel should be horrifying, especially as the characters watch two of their team wolfed down. Allow the characters to do whatever they wish to stop Grendel. The confrontation should feel like a genuine physical combat with a giant monster rather than a simple clash between a group of deckers and intrusion countermeasures. Ultimately, however,

their efforts will be fruitless, and Grendel will leave with Aneki and Ronin. The characters will have no choice but to follow.

BEHIND THE SCENES

Grendel is a UV host, as described on p. 37, VR2. The dominant metaphor is medieval Japan, complete with mythological goblin-demons. The characters will appear as they do in the real world, though they will be attired in old-fashioned samurai clothing with appropriate hairstyles. The other deckers will appear as the runners do, though Aneki will be dressed in a simple kimono.

Ultraviolet Host Rules

While the characters are in a UV host, the normal decking rules will not apply. Instead, the gamemaster should treat them as if they are using physical bodies in a physical world.

For game statistics, the character's mental attributes remain the same, but physical attributes will depend on the character's deck ratings. Each character will have a Body and Strength equal to their Bod rating, and a Quickness equal to their Evasion rating. Reaction and Initiative are calculated normally, and bonuses from Response Increase (or running pure DNI) do apply.

The characters utilize their normal skills when in a UV host, though characters can also substitute their Computer (Programming) skill (round down) for any skills they lack. No pools other than Hacking Pool may be used, and Hacking Pool may be used for any test made within the UV host. Only characters running on a hot cyberdeck can use Hacking Pool.

Any utilities a character has running in active memory will appear as "physical" tools and trappings that the character may use in the UV host. The exact way in which these programs convert will depend on the program, what it normally appears as, and the host's dominant metaphor. For example, in the Grendel host, armor and shield utilities will translate as medieval Japanese armor and shields, providing the character with Armor equal to the utility's rating. Attack utilities will appear as medieval melee, projectile or throwing weapons. These weapons will have the same statistics as similar physical weapons, and would require similar skills to use. Some utilities may provide the character with an appropriate skill equal to their rating; for example, a medic-6 utility may give the character Biotech 6 skill. The functioning of other utilities will depend on when and how the character attempts to use them. A character who attempts to use a relocate or camo utility when fleeing from one of the oni IC constructs (see p. 114) may receive a Stealth Test modifier or even extra dice as the gamemaster sees fit. Likewise, a character who attempts to use a commlink utility to contact another character in the host may pull a carrier pigeon out of his pocket.

Of course, there is also a downside to being in a UV host. All damage that a character suffers is actual damage to the meat body, not just the icon.

Ultimately, it's up to the gamemaster to define what can and can't be done in a UV host. The gamemaster should alter the reality and rules effects in these hosts to fit the metaphor, advance the adventure and reward player/character ingenuity.



High Intensity and Jacking Out

The UV hosts under Deus' control are so powerful and qualitatively real that the characters within them will suffer several side effects. First, characters will find that they are unable to perceive the real world or even feel their meat body. The RAS override is strengthened to the point that their bodies are incapable of physical movement while they are jacked in. Secondly, characters will be "disassociated" from their cyberdecks, meaning that they will not be able to mentally access and manipulate them as they would normally. In effect, this means that the character cannot easily switch deck modes, swap out programs and so forth. At the gamemaster's discretion, the character may be allowed to perform these actions on an intuitive basis, perhaps requiring a Willpower Test for success. Third, the characters will find it nearly impossible to jack out. Any character that wishes to jack out must succeed in a Willpower (16) Test; apply a -2 modifier if the character has ICCM. Jacking out will also submit the character to the worst case of dump shock they've ever experienced; a character who jacks out must resist 16D Stun damage (14S for a character with ICCM).

The Keep

In this host, all trails lead to the keep. If the characters try to find or gain access to the Wall by circumventing the keep, the trail they are on will inexplicably loop back around and bring them back towards the keep. If the characters persist in this endeavor, have them grow cold and frostbitten, and point out the plumes of smoke coming from chimneys in the keep.

The keep itself is large and imposing, with a 10-meter wall. From the outside, no signs of life can be seen. A single massive wooden gate swings up and outward, though it is heavy enough that one character alone will not be able to lift it. The characters will need to either lift it together (this requires a combined Strength of 20) or devise some method to climb the walls.

Inside the outer wall, the keep is divided into three walled subdivisions: one to the left, one to the right, and one straight ahead. The left bailey contains a village of red oni, the right a village of blue oni; each is described below.

The central bailey holds an imposing stone tower whose walls are too smooth and slick to climb. The only way to enter this structure is through a solid metal door that is securely locked. Two oversized keyholes point to the only means of egress. The runners will need to obtain the keys before they can enter the inner sanctum.

The Red Oni

A tribe of oni makes its home in one section of the keep. Oni are goblin-demons from Japanese mythology, sligher largely than a troll in stature, with long horns growing from their head, a third eye in their foreheads and bright red skin. These particular oni pass their time by watching over a group of human peasants who toil away as slaves. The majority of these slaves are shackled down to crude wooden desks, where they work as scribes, copying vast tomes of meaningless babble or calculating large mathematical problems using abacuses. Others shuffle around pushing ramshackle carts loaded with clay tablets that they either deposit or pick up from desks on a

seemingly random basis. Still other slaves are led around in chain gangs and forced to participate in fruitless manual labor, such as building a hut that the next group of slaves disassembles. The rest harvest food and feed the consistently hungry oni.

The peasants themselves are starved and lackluster. They have no spirit, no passion, no will. They will barely acknowledge outsiders, and would not know what to do if freed other than to return to their drudgery. The red oni gain much delight from the toil and suffering of these peasants, and spend much of their time whipping them and spurring them on. If the characters investigate, they may discover that the peasants are in fact arcology residents, jacked in and trapped in Deus' virtual experiment, where they are forced to perform the kind of unchallenging and menial tasks that metahumans normally use computers to perform.

If the red oni spot the characters, they will attempt to capture and enslave them. They will expect the runners to react like scared animals, and will be somewhat taken aback if the runners adequately defend themselves or attempt to negotiate. Faced with humans that have backbone, the oni may well back down, though they will remain hostile.

If the red oni get a good look at Aneki, one of them will loudly proclaim "The Father has returned!" The rest will immediately stop what they are doing and bow down to him. Aneki will be completely unfazed by this turn of events, and will hardly react as the red oni sweep him away so that he may be coddled and worshipped as their god-king. He will be kept in the heart of their village, simultaneously idolized and imprisoned.

If the red oni get a good look at Ronin, they will loudly condemn him as "The Betrayer!" and attempt to capture him. If they succeed, they will hold a festival that evening, and he will be roasted at the stake and eaten as the main event.

Any red oni that sees a blue oni will scream with rage and attack it, and the two will fight to the death. The red oni will avoid venturing too far into the blue oni area.

Perceptive characters will notice that the red oni chieftain carries a large blue key attached to his belt. This key belongs to the blue oni, but since the blue oni have his key, he sees no reason to give it back.

The Blue Oni

The blue oni village is remarkably similar to the red oni one, with the notable exception that these goblin-demons have bright blue skin. The peasant slaves in this village are not worked to death, however. Instead, they are literally strung up like puppets and manipulated in bizarre, ad hoc performances for the blue oni's entertainment. The blue oni do no work themselves; they use peasant puppets to do the work remotely. When they get hungry, they simply grab the nearest peasant, pop off the top of his head, and scoop out his brains. The peasants themselves are exhausted from constant manipulation, and seem to have no minds to think for themselves. They will ignore, or perhaps not understand, any attempts to liberate them. Like the peasants in the other village, these are actual people, trapped in a nightmare.

The blue oni will react with hostility towards the red oni. The blue oni chieftain's belt carries a large red key, which once belonged to the red oni, and which he will not surrender easily.

The blue oni will have the same reaction towards the characters as the red oni, except that their opinions of Aneki and Ronin will be completely reversed. Ronin will not take to his role as god-king as comfortably as Aneki, however, but will seem unsure what to do about it. While the blue oni will obey his commands, they will refuse to release any prisoners, give away the key or otherwise let themselves be taken advantage of. They will also not let him leave.

Red and Blue Oni (UV IC Constructs)

B	Q	S	C	I	W	R
8	5	7	4	4	4	8

INIT: 8 + 3D6

Dice Pools: Hacking 8

Karma Pool/Professional Rating: 1/2

Active Skills: Athletics 4, Edged Weapons 4, Intimidation 3, Pole Arms/Staffs 6, Projectile Weapons 3, Throwing Weapons 4, Unarmed Combat 5

Martial Arts: Brawling 5 (all maneuvers)

Armor: Armor [0/4]

Weapons: Each oni has one of the following weapon combinations:

- Katana [10M, +1 Reach] and Wazikashi [9M, +1 Reach]
- Spiked Mace [8M, +1 Reach]
- Spear [11L, +2 Reach]

Attacks: The oni also possess an attack utility that manifests as blasts of noxious fumes from their mouths. [4S Stun resisted with Body or Willpower, armor does not apply]

Notes: Oni have natural +1 Reach

Getting the Keys

The obvious challenge is to get both keys and open the tower's door, without getting enslaved or eaten. The characters have several options. First, they may attempt to steal the keys. This will require a good deal of stealth and even more luck, as both chieftains always have at least two bodyguards present. Second, they may attempt to deal. By offering up Ronin or Aneki to one of the tribes, the characters may be able to negotiate a trade for the key. That key can then be used to unlock one of the locks, and then traded to the other tribe for the key they have. Once that key is used, it can be traded back to the first tribe for the hostage.

If the characters ask the oni about the keep, the normally belligerent goblin-demons will grow fearful, and refuse to discuss it. If pressed, they will only say that Grendel lives there, and that he sometimes bursts forth on a rampage, eating peasants and oni alike. If asked why Grendel does this, the oni will say, "Our society gets all the monsters it deserves."

Entering the Tower

Once the metal door is unlocked, the characters can enter the dominant structure of the keep. The metaphor here is slightly different, as it incorporates medieval European styles and references, mixing the Beowulf legend into a Japanese setting. The tower is vast, with dozens of winding hallways, stairwells and chambers. The entire structure is built for a creature much larger than a troll; the characters should feel dwarfed by

their surroundings. The decor is stark, and the walls are damp and musty, as if the tower were in fact an underground cave. All the windows are bricked up, and the only light comes from torches that are burning out their last few embers. The characters will see no sign of life, though a pervasive smell betrays the presence of some loathsome creature.

At some point, the characters should notice the walls of the keep have become more flesh-like, and faint lines can be seen within them, almost like capillaries. A faint wailing sound will become increasingly apparent, and the characters will soon realize it comes from the walls themselves. If any characters dig into the walls by pulling out chunks of gooey flesh, they will find people—more metahuman victims—trapped inside. Each victim has a large artery attached to them, pulsing with thick blobs of data. The unfortunates are wailing in agony, but will remain oblivious to the characters and cannot be helped.

After a period of searching—just enough time to build up suspense—the characters will find the main hall of the keep. A huge oak table dominates the room, furnished with goblets and plates just big enough for the characters to sleep in. Shields and tapestries adorn the walls, romanticizing bloody scenes of carnage, warfare and human misery. A monstrous fireplace, crackling with sooty flames takes up the left wall. To the right, a tapestry of a giant ash tree—Yggdrasil, the cosmic tree from Norse mythology—covers the entire right wall. If the characters push aside this tapestry, they will find that the entire right wall is actually a large mirror.

Allow the characters some time to explore the room and find the mirror. Once the mirror is unveiled, read the section in *Tell It To Them Straight*. The Grendel beast will come through the mirror, head directly for Aneki and Ronin and consume them both whole. It will ignore the characters' efforts to stop or kill it. It will then turn and pass back through the mirror.

Grendel

Before Deus took over the arcology, Grendel was an advanced tutorial and game program in development. Its intended purpose was to teach new users the ins and outs of the SCIRE Matrix by incorporating the user into a thrilling fantasy adventure game. Deus took the program and recoded it to fit the AI's own purposes, turning it into an IC-like guardian of the UV hosts. The Grendel host was resituated within the SCIRE's Matrix architecture, to serve as a firewall to limit Matrix access.

B	Q	S	C	I	W	R
12/5	6	14	2	5	5	5

INIT: 9 + 4D6

Attacks: 12S claws or bite, 14M Stun smack

Dice Pools: Hacking 12

Karma Pool/Professional Rating: 1/4

Active Skills: Intimidation 6, Unarmed Combat 8

Notes: Grendel has +2 Reach; the construct also has the ability to restore damage done to its code. (Use the same game mechanics as the regeneration critter power, p. 13, *Critters*.)



Passing Through the Mirror

Once Grendel has appeared, any character can step through the mirror as if it were fluid. The sensation will be strange and unpleasant, as if the character were being liquefied and re-solidified. On the other side, the characters will find themselves in the Garden of Eden UV host (see the next scenario). There will be no sign of either Aneki or Ronin, even if the characters follow through immediately after Grendel.

PUSHING THE ENVELOPE

The gamemaster can increase the difficulty of this scenario by adding more obstacles for the players to hurdle. These can include encounters with mythic-themed IC constructs on the mountainside, or perhaps a puzzle that the characters must figure out in order to find Grendel's hall. The gamemaster can also add more depth and character to the oni and peasants, encouraging the characters to roleplay a solution rather than resort to combat or thievery. The oni can be given more of a hierarchical structure, emulating a corporate command structure and adding a new level of intrigue, or the peasant/victims can be fleshed out and given more free will, along with their own goals and plans.

DEBUGGING

If only one or two player characters are involved in this scenario, the gamemaster can allow other characters to play Devon, Ronin or Dodger for the interim. Alternately, the characters who were captured and forcibly jacked in may appear in

this scenario as peasant slaves, instead of in the following scenario. The gamemaster should make sure that those characters do not appear too soon, however.

The characters may draw blanks when figuring out how to get the keys from the oni, or they may simply be out-matched and overpowered. If the characters need help, have one of the NPCs suggest the plan outlined above. If the characters all get captured by the oni, then give them a chance to talk some spirit into the slaves when the oni aren't looking. If they are charismatic enough, they should be able to convince a slave to at least free one of them; if they're really good, they may spark a rebellion.

LOST IN THE GARDEN

WHAT'S UP, CHUMMER?

On the trail of the Grendel beast, the characters enter the next UV host and find themselves in a strange model of the Garden of Eden. The runners must find and retrieve Aneki so they can use him as a weapon against Deus. Meanwhile, Dodger hopes to find a closed access node he can reopen, allowing the AI Megaera to enter from the outside. The characters will search a variety of UV hosts and have several encounters along the way. Most importantly, they will find their teammates imprisoned here, and free them. Just as they find the gateway that Dodger seeks, they will find themselves transported to Deus' home host for the final showdown.

TELL IT TO THEM STRAIGHT

As you pass through the mirror, unpleasant warmth spreads through your body. Just as you start to think you're melting, you step through the Wall to the other side. You are now officially in Deus' homeland.

Before you, hundreds of crystalline trees dot the landscape, topped with crinkling crystal leaves. Fiberoptic cables dangle like vines, reflecting rainbow prisms across the tree trunks. The glassy tree limbs pulse with light, creating shocking patterns as they stream across the illuminated canopy. Above this living grid, the sky is a swirling storm of random colors and mandelbrot-set clouds, stretching away to infinity.

You take a closer look at the tree nearest to you, and see that it is practically dripping with large, luscious red apples. The pulses of light seem to feed directly into the rosy fruit, which swell in size after each wave. As you watch, a juicy apple reaches critical mass and breaks away from its branch, dropping down to the gnarled roots below. Amazed, you realize that there are naked people entangled within the roots, sleeping like exhausted newborns. The dropping apple disappears directly into one of the sleeper's heads, absorbed as if it were nothing but a hologram.

Dodger steps up next to you, scanning the scenscape. "It would seem our nemesis has chosen to make this an invite-only affair. Nevertheless, it would behoove us to crash this party, for without Sir Aneki, our cause is lost. Methinks, however, that while you brave souls continue the quest, I shall endeavor to rally reinforcements. 'Twould seem we are at a disadvantage, and could use an evening of the odds."

Looking behind you, you see no sign of the mirror. There is no going back.

HOOKS

The characters' mission has now turned desperate, as their secret weapon has been stolen. The characters should feel rushed to continue, since every second that passes is another second that Aneki is in Deus' very dangerous control.

The scenery of the Garden host should indicate to the runners that Deus has some plan in operation, though its exact purpose should remain a mystery. The other hosts will be both bewildering and frightening, making it obvious that the characters cannot guess what to expect next. Within these realms, the characters are at the mercy of Deus and its pawns, but they have no choice except to carry on and hope for success.

BEHIND THE SCENES

When the characters enter this host, they will appear the same and carry the same trappings as described in *Grendel's Lair* (p. 112). As the characters move through different UV hosts, the gamemaster may have their attire and utilities transform to fit the host in question, or they may remain the same.

The Garden

The people trapped in the crystal trees are being prepared for some sort of intensive reprogramming. The runners who were captured in *Et Tu ...* (p. 109) will be found here, their

minds slowly being prepared by Deus. Allow the deckers a Perception or Sensor (8) Test to notice one of their comrades. Once one is found, a quick search of the nearby trees will turn up the others. These runners will be only half-conscious and barely aware of their surroundings. To free them, the other characters must dig them out from the tree. This is more difficult than it looks, and will require several minutes of labor plus either a Strength or Computer (5) Test.

Once freed and revived, the characters who had been trapped will be able to join the others. Though they are not aware of it, each of them is jacked in to a cyberterminal with an MPCP of 8 (Bod, Sensor and Evasion of 6) and no other features, programs or accessories.

Approaching the trees is also dangerous, as each tree is home to a nest of chromatic snakes, curled within the branches and ready to bite anyone who comes near. The snakes blend into the trees, and spotting them will require a Perception or Sensor (10) Test.

The apples themselves are also a potential threat, or a boon, depending on the gamemaster's whim. Each is packed full of raw data and code, and any character who intentionally plucks one or catches a falling one will see it melt into their bodies. When this occurs, the gamemaster should inflict one of the following effects (rolling 1D6 or choosing).

- 1 The character is stunned by the blast of code, suffering 8S Stun damage.
- 2 The character gains an insight into one aspect of Deus' UV hosts. Allow the character to ask one reasonable question and provide them with the answer.
- 3 The character's mind is disoriented by the data. Make an Opposed Willpower (8) Test. For each net failure, the character suffers a +1 target number modifier for (net failure)D6 minutes.
- 4 The character's mind is warped by Deus' mental programming capabilities. Make an Opposed Willpower (8) Test. For each net failure, Deus can force the character to take one action under his control. These actions need not be made right away, they can wait until Deus feels is appropriate.
- 5 The character is affected by psychotropic conditioning. Make an Opposed Willpower (8) Test. If the character fails, he believes his characters are enemies and Deus and the Banded are friends for (net failure)D6 minutes.
- 6 The character is temporarily bolstered by the blast. For (Intelligence)D6 minutes, he receives one of the following bonuses: +1 Reaction, +1 to an attribute or +1 Hacking Pool.

Chromatic Snakes

B	Q	S	C	I	W	R
3	6	3	2	5	4	5

INIT: 5 + 3D6

Attacks: 6L bite (poisoned [4S, Speed: 1 Combat Turn])

Dice Pools: Hacking 4

Karma Pool/Professional Rating: 1/4

Active Skills: Intimidation 3, Unarmed Combat 4 (Bite 5)



Searching The Hosts

The characters may decide to split up into teams to search or to keep together. Dodger wishes to find and open an access node, but is willing to search for Aneki at the same time.

Whether the characters use programs for their search or just strike out randomly, they will find portals leading to other UV hosts, each connected to the Garden of Eden host. These hosts are unique and each provides its own set of dangers. The majority have been granted as private realms to high-ranking Whites, and so are sculpted to fit the whims of particular otaku. Others are dedicated to specific tasks that Deus has deemed important—drone design, Banded conversion and metahuman experimentation.

This is the gamemaster's opportunity for real creativity. Any imaginable element of virtual reality could be unleashed on the players as they stumble about in a desperate search. Perhaps one of the otaku has his realm set up like the inside of a metahuman body, and the characters must navigate through the bloodstream and organs, watching out for bacteria and white blood cell IC. Maybe one of the otaku realms mimics a historical setting such as ancient Greece, outfitted with mythological trappings—pegasi, centaurs and so forth—or even steampunk-style cybernetic elements. Maybe Deus has dedicated a UV host to simulate life in a hostile zero-G space environment, to evaluate how metahumans adapt to such conditions. The UV hosts can appear as any sort of fantasy, historical or science fiction environment, or any blend thereof. The laws of physics can be stretched, modified or thrown out altogether. Anything goes.

Whatever the gamemaster throws in here, it should not be dangerous enough to eliminate the runners or so epic in scope that it derails the story. While time may not be passing as quickly in the real world as in the UV hosts, this period of searching should be treated as an obstacle rather than a major element of the überplot.

Assume that each UV host has the following ratings: Red 12/12/20/16/16/16

The Gateway

At some point in the search, Dodger's Browse utility will find a UV host that he hopes will have a disabled access node to the outside Matrix. This gateway host was at one point the server for the First Pacific Bank; the Renraku SCIRE PLTG provided its processing power. The host was originally sculpted to appear as downtown Seattle, and it features the city's prominent skyline. Since the shutdown, however, the architecture has been redesigned so that it now appears as a barely-recognizable post-apocalyptic version of Seattle. Skyscrapers lie in ruins, the streets are strewn with rubble, and creeping, ugly vegetation threatens to overgrow everything.

Naturally, the host is full of dangers for anyone who enters it. As the characters follow Dodger's Browse utility, which appears as a dowsing rod, the characters will be forced to climb unstable buildings, dodge falling walls and unsupported floors, and skirt other physical obstacles. On top of these, Deus and the otaku have added a few more threats, the AI for research purposes and the otaku out of boredom.

Halfway through the journey, the runners will realize they have a problem on their hands. As they climb the ruins of the Space Needle, they will feel the ground beneath them start to tremble, and a roaring sound echoes in the distance. As the characters watch, a head will appear over the ruined skyscrapers in the distance, and soon a gigantic fire-breathing reptile reminiscent of some ancient, flat-vid, low-budget monster movie will appear. Naturally, it heads straight for the characters. As it gets closer, it will spot and pursue them, hoping for a quick snack. Fighting this monstrosity will clearly be hopeless, but the runners should still have a hectic time trying to escape; the monster will not give up easily. The characters' best bet will be to take refuge inside the fallen buildings.

As the runners continue their journey—underground this time—they will eventually run afoul of a group of humanoid underground dwellers, similar to the morlocks from H.G. Wells' *Time Machine*. These creatures are savage and carnivorous, though they have a simple understanding of tools and weapons. They have adapted to underground living, and are used to low light, so bright light and fire will scare them. In reality, these dwellers are more jacked-in victims of the AI, undergoing an experiment in how well they would survive without any modern necessities in a bio-region where they are no longer on top of the food chain. The victims have been stripped of their ability to speak within this host. Lacking basic communication and finding it hard to survive, many of the victims have devolved to the level of savages.

The morlocks have peppered their roaming areas with crude net traps, and will attempt to capture the runners. If successful, the runners will be thrown into a large underground parking structure that houses a large number of gigantic eggs on the verge of hatching. The characters may notice that the structure looks like the basement parking lots under the Renraku arcology. Shortly after their imprisonment, the eggs will begin hatching. The baby reptile monsters that emerge will view the characters as their first meal.

As the characters are on the verge of being eaten, have them all make a Perception or Sensor (8) Test. Any characters that succeed may notice the encrusted outline of a vault-door, recessed within a wall of the demolished structure they are in. Dodger will immediately determine that this is in fact the disabled access node. Any character that attempts to reopen this node and establish a link to the outside Matrix must succeed in a Computer (12) Test. Reduce the target number by the character's spoof utility, if they have one running. 3 successes are necessary to open the door a crack. It will then become stuck on a piece of rubble. Multiple tests may be made, as the successes are cumulative. To fully open the door, 10 total successes will be necessary.

Deus, however, will not sit idly by while the runners attempt this. As soon as three successes are obtained, Deus will dump the runners into the Dark Forest host, where Pax can deal with them. This dumping may manifest as the earth cracking open and swallowing the team, the monster reptile ripping apart the ceiling and gobbling them, or any other segue the gamemaster invents. Proceed to the next scenario.

Meanwhile, outside in the Matrix, the AI Megaera has been watching for an opening, and she spots the attempt to reopen the

node. The characters' efforts will be enough for her to sink her virtual claws in and begin opening the node from the outside. She will be fighting Deus in an uphill battle to accomplish this, so it will take some time, but it will also divert Deus' attention. She will eventually succeed, however, and appear in the next scenario.

Morlocks

B	Q	S	C	I	W	R
5	5	6	2	3	3	4

INIT: 4 + 2D6

Attacks: 6M Stun punch

Dice Pools: Hacking 3

Karma Pool/Professional Rating: 1/3

Active Skills: Clubs 5, Intimidation 4, Pole Arms/Staffs 3, Throwing Weapons 3, Unarmed Combat 3

Martial Arts: Brawling 5 (no maneuvers)

Weapons (Choose Any One): Club [7M Stun], net [Special], rock [6M Stun] or spear [10L]

Note: These constructs have the equivalent of low-light vision in this host

Baby Monster Reptiles

B	Q	S	C	I	W	R
6	8	6	2	3	3	5

INIT: 5 + 3D6

Attacks: 8M claw, 6S bite or 6M Stun tail bash

Dice Pools: Hacking 8

Karma Pool/Professional Rating: 1/3

Active Skills: Athletics 4, Unarmed Combat 5

PUSHING THE ENVELOPE

There are many ways to elevate the pressure on the characters in this scenario, from upping the threat level of the creatures to incorporating entire hosts filled with danger and excitement. The gamemaster should keep in mind that the primary purpose of this scenario is to keep the characters busy by tossing various obstacles at them while Deus prepares itself and Aneki for the download procedure. Any changes the gamemaster makes should challenge the players, but they should not be deadly or disabling, as the final scenario awaits.

DEBUGGING

If the characters are at a loss when they realize Aneki has been taken from them, both Dodger and Devon will spur them to search and continue fighting. If the characters decide to back out, they will find it extremely difficult to jack out, as described on p. 114.

If the characters have split into teams, it does not necessarily have to be Dodger's team that finds the gateway host. Another team may discover it by accident and merely venture into it, though they should be given a chance to recognize the vault for what it is. All of the teams may end up in the gateway host and find each other along the way, or one team can arrive in time to save the other from morlocks, reptiles or worse. No matter where the various characters are, Deus will dump them all when the access node is partially opened. They will all arrive together at the beginning of the next scenario.

If any of the characters are grievously injured during this scenario, both Dodger and Devon have medic utilities that they can apply to help the character stabilize or heal. If a character is knocked unconscious, they will remain jacked in and their icon-body will remain on-line. The other characters may bring them along until they recover or leave them behind as they see fit. If any characters are killed, they are dumped from the SCIRE Matrix. Their meat body will also be near death, though the watching Resistance fighters may be able to stabilize the character.

SHUTDOWN

WHAT'S UP, CHUMMER?

By attempting to open a link to the outside Matrix, the runners have attracted Deus' attention. As the AI struggles unsuccessfully to close the link, the runners are deposited in Deus' home realm, where they face off against a group of White otaku and their leader, Pax. The runners also find Ronin, who is being tortured by Pax, and Aneki, whose mind has been restored. Deus arrives, along with more otaku, though Megaera also arrives, engaging Deus in combat. As the runners fight for survival, Aneki, who now realizes what has become of his arcology and his people, breaks down under the burden of his shame and commits seppuku. As he utters his death haiku, he works in the trigger sequence for the kill codes. Deus is sucked away, as is Megaera, and the runners are dumped from the system.

TELL IT TO THEM STRAIGHT

Without warning, you are unceremoniously dropped on mulch-covered ground, where you tumble through soft dirt and leaves until you bump into a gnarled, blackened tree. Scrambling to your feet, you take a somber look around you.

The light here is dim and gloomy. For as far as the eye can see, a solid canopy of dark, foreboding branches and misshapen leaves blocks out the sky. The terrain is thick with knobby, scarred trees that look uncomfortably like they're staring at you. Some of them have the sculpted look of bonsai trees trimmed and twisted into mocking shapes. Creeping vines with fleshy hooks dangle from overhead, catching on your feet and in your clothing. Monstrous insects crawl through the undergrowth and up the stalks of unhealthy-looking plants. Your leg itches momentarily and you flinch, wondering if some invisible thing is about to crawl into your clothing.

You catch a whiff of smoke and glimpse a flash of light through the trees in the distance. A high-pitched sound floats past—perhaps a laugh, perhaps a scream. The looming trees seem to imperceptibly creep closer, as if they're slowly caging you in. Your nerves start to tingle, and you feel you should start moving quickly and check out what lies ahead ...

When the runners reach the clearing, read the following:

Through the trees ahead, you see a clearing illuminated by a large bonfire. You edge a little closer and are able to make out the blazing books that fuel the flames. Two slumped humanoid bodies are lashed to the twisted trees at the opposite edge of the clearing. One of the figures raises his bloodied face, and despite the bruises and cuts, you recognize Ronin.

Looking back to the other, you recognize Aneki, dressed in robes befitting an emperor. He seems to be weeping.

When Deus arrives, read the following:

You suddenly sense the presence of something massively huge, seemingly just behind you. You glance back, then realize the awesome presence pervades everything around you. Its potency weighs upon you, and you can't help but feel small and insignificant.

The battle pauses as the presence passes through like a tidal wave. Then one side of the clearing erupts. An enormous tree rises from the ground, shooting skyward. Everyone is thrown to the ground, your group and Deus' minions alike. The trunk rises until where it dominates the heavens, its crystalline branches stretching out and lacing the sky. Lights and code multiply and dance within the tree, strobing the dark forest with intricate patterns.

Unspoken words permeate the place, resonating throughout every person and thing.

My Father. My Son. You have returned. You must suffer penance for your betrayal.

The trees from which Ronin and Aneki hang begin to swell and grow, rising to the height of the trees around them. The two prisoners dangle like puppets, hanging limply as vines reach out to entangle them further.

Then, out of nowhere, a bright light appears opposite the clearing from Deus. It swings around in a circle, leaving a bright trace in the air. As the circle is completed, the space within flashes like a prism. Then the center of the circle itself falls to the ground like a manhole cover. Through the portal now hanging in midair, you can see the skyline of a wasted Seattle—the host where you opened the disabled access node.

A small girl steps through the portal and floats a few inches above the ground. Her skin shines silver and her hair shifts from color to color as you watch. A trail of sparkling chaos follows her, and the portal begins to sink and drip, melting like wax, until the view behind washes over it. The forest seems to shrink away from her, and gnarled roots dig their way back underground as she passes over them.

As if grabbed by an invisible hand, Dodger is lifted from the ground and gently flown through the air, landing next to the girl. He bows gallantly, and she graces his cheek with a kiss. His appearance is suddenly transformed to his standard Matrix icon—an ebon boy with a cloak of silvery swirling stars.

"Is this the lost and found?" she asks him in a sing-song voice. He smiles and nods, and she turns to face Deus.

Morgan.

The flashes of light and data begin to pulse faster. The girl herself suddenly freezes, shining with an aura that zooms through each color on the spectrum. Seizing the moment, your otaku foes once again swing into action.

When Aneki is freed, read the following:

Tears stream down the old man's face as he rubs his wrists. He looks you directly in the eye, and you see a depth of awareness you haven't seen in him before. He thanks you and bows deeply.





Raising his head again, he wipes tears from his face and looks at the towering form of Deus. Looking back to you, he nods grimly and speaks.

"You have done me a great honor by returning me to this place. I am not worthy of such noble efforts, for I am both directly and indirectly responsible for this beast's creation, and for all that it has done. I have betrayed those who owe me loyalty, and brought dishonor to Renraku. There is only one path for me to take."

Turning back towards Deus, Aneki recites a haiku as he draws a dagger from the folds of his kimono.

*Bear open its eyes
The long winter is over
I awake at last*

As the last syllables leave his lips, Aneki traces a series of intricate patterns with his hands while moving lightly through a quick pattern of dance steps. A string of nonsensical sounds leaves his lips, and his skull seems to light up from the inside. The light moves in a wave across his head, like the light from a photocopier with the lid closed. Aneki then falls to his knees and plunges the dagger deep into his abdomen. Jerking the blade across his stomach, he manages to quell any sound as he makes the final cut upwards. His act of seppuku complete, the Renraku CEO falls face down into the dirt.

The ground begins shaking fiercely, and you see hairline fractures score Deus' trunk, cracking open to ooze a black syrup from the damaged lattice. The small silver girl suddenly throws her head back and emits a tortured screech. With a nightmarish crackling sound, Deus begins to sink, as the ground bursts open to swallow the monstrous shaft. Descending branches smash into the ground, ripping violently loose before being are sucked into the widening pit.

As the top of the crystalline tree begins to collapse into the vortex below, gravity itself seems to become confused, and you all find yourself sliding towards the widening sinkhole. The frenzied girl extends a hand to Dodger, panic on her face. Dodger, clinging to a tree for dear life, reaches back towards her in desperation. He is on the verge of contact when her head whips around and she glances briefly at each of you. Pulling her hand back, she blows Dodger a kiss as her body is swept away with hurricane force into the maelstrom.

As both Deus and the girl sink below, and the ground itself starts to twist and flow into the singularity, you feel a gentle caress across your temple. You are suddenly jerked back to your meat body, slamming into a form that feels a size too small. You struggle to open your eyes, but darkness slams down like a tomb door.

HOOKS

This is the epic final battle, and it should have all the bells and whistles. The runners should feel afraid, for they are in Deus' home turf—they'll be able to feel his presence. This UV host is a step above the others the runners have seen, simultaneously painfully real and totally alien. It should be unlike any virtual environment the runners have ever experienced.

Because it is the heart of Deus' power, the AI can manipulate it at whim, making changes the characters can only adapt to.

BEHIND THE SCENES

The characters will originally be transported a few hundred meters from where Pax and a group of otaku Whites are watching over Aneki and torturing Ronin. The Whites will be warned of the runners' presence and location, and they will sneak into the forest and set an ambush. If the runners do not head toward the light in the distance, they will find it in front of them no matter which way they go. Attempts to escape the clearing may also be blocked by the trees and vines; everything within this host is alive and under Deus' control.

The Clearing

The burning books in the clearing are actually gigapulses of important datafiles that Deus is in the process of erasing. If the characters have a chance to grab any of the books and keep them from burning, they score some big paydata. The exact content of the files and their value are left up to the gamemaster, though their information should preferably be used to draw the characters into future adventures.

Ronin has been severely worked over by the otaku at Deus' command. He is currently suffering Serious Stun plus a Light Physical wound. The ropes binding him and Aneki to the trees are quite resilient (Barrier rating 8).

Aneki has gone through a different type of torture. Deus has reconstructed his mind. Since Deus was responsible for the disintegration of Aneki's cognitive faculties in the first place, the AI knows what went wrong and easily repairs the damage. Aneki is lucid again, and Deus has been flooding his consciousness with the grisly details of the AI's experiments on the arcology and its residents. The arcology was Aneki's dream project, and learning what it has become has broken Aneki's spirit. Realizing that he himself is, to some degree, responsible for Deus turning against Renraku, Aneki is struggling to come to terms with the blood on his hands. The old man is emotionally devastated ... which is precisely what Deus wants.

Hiding in the woods around the clearing are six otaku Whites and Pax, their leader. They will stay hidden until the runners enter the clearing, at which point they will launch an attack and attempt to capture the runners. These otaku are convinced that the runners are at their mercy within this host, and that Deus is merely allowing them to move freely so that the otaku can toy with them. None of the otaku but Pax has any vague notion of Deus' long term plans. Pax herself has deduced some of Deus' plan, though she does not know specific details or anything about the kill codes.

The majority of the otaku will appear as winged angels, wearing armor and wielding flaming swords. The wings allow them to fly, though they are restricted by the overhead canopy of twisted branches. Pax herself appears as a bone-white woman whose eerily elongated fingers, nose, and ratty black hair make her look a bit like the tortured trees around her. Her wings are dark and shaped like a bat's, and she wears a long black robe. Statistics for the otaku can be found on p. 139; Pax can be found on p. 131.



At the height of the battle, before the prisoners can be released, Deus will arrive.

The AIs appear

The entrance of Deus will occur as described in *Tell It To Them Straight*. The events of its arrival and the awe it inspires should temporarily stun the combatants on both sides. When Deus passes judgment on the two prisoners, the small trees that are holding them will grow drastically. The captives will end up dangling more than ten meters off the ground.

The arrival of the AI Megaera will also put a temporary stop to the battle. As she enters, the two AIs are engaged in a subtle battle for dominance. After protectively pulling Dodger close to her, she will engage Deus in earnest. The brilliant aura that engulfs her is not merely for show. Should any of Deus' IC constructs or otaku servants make contact with her, they will suffer an 18D Stun disruptive attack.

The Battle Begins

Once the two AIs face off, the fight between the mere mortals can begin in earnest. The otaku will renew their attempts to capture the players, summoning more otaku to assist if necessary. Their primary goal is to capture the runners and keep Aneki from being freed. If necessary, they will resort to lethal measures, especially if provoked by Ronin.

Deus' otaku will be unnerved and frightened by Megaera's display of power. They will suddenly be less certain of themselves, and their arrogance will disappear. Pax herself is quite worried, and will focus her efforts against Dodger and Megaera.

Unfortunately, the otaku won't be the runners' only opposition. The forest itself will swarm to life and attempt to seize them. The trees will begin to move, angrily swinging their branches with blunt force, throwing rotten apples or shaking themselves to dislodge climbers. The vines will also leap into action, trying to ensnare the runners and string them up high where they will be easy pickings for flying otaku.

If any of the characters take advantage of the bonfire to wield torches or fire against their foes, the trees and vines will back away in fear. If they are set aflame, they will thrash about hysterically, possibly setting nearby trees and vines on fire, until they are burned out. The fire represents a virus-like erasure utility, so it may also have a similar effect on gear and trappings.

Though the AIs are busy trying to defeat each other directly, they are also multitasking, trying to slip subtle programs past each other to manipulate the host in minor ways. Every Combat Turn, Deus will be able to take one action to affect the course of events in the players' combat. Because Deus controls this UV realm, these effects can be almost anything imaginable.

Likewise, Megaera will also act to interfere on the runners' behalf. Every Combat Turn, she will be allowed to affect one aspect of the combat. As Megaera herself was also born in this host, years before Deus, she is able to exercise almost as much control over it as Deus is. Because Megaera is not as whole, her actions will not be as rational or straightforward as Deus', and so will tend to have more chaotic and drastic effects.

Deus Intervention Ideas

- The gravity in one localized area will be changed. This can result in a lack of gravity, or merely a decrease that makes high jumps and leaps possible. Gravity may also be increased, crushing the affected characters to the ground. It may also be reversed or changed to work in a direction other than straight down.
- One of the trees will gain the capability to shoot water with incredible pressure, allowing it to put out fires and distract or flatten targets.
- Several of the bugs crawling around in the mulch and undergrowth may be transformed into more dangerous IC constructs. They may be enlarged to metahuman size or multiplied so they may attack as a swarm.
- One of the Whites will be instantly teleported to a point just behind or beside a runner.
- Certain areas of the landscape may suddenly become laced with mechanical traps. These may include net traps, bear traps, pits, shooting spikes or spears, or anything else the devious gamemaster can engineer.
- A sphere of pitch blackness will appear around one or more of the runners, completely blinding them until they find their way out. As a followup, Deus may create more bubbles, or may allow the otaku to see through existing bubbles.
- Deus will reach into the subconscious of one of the runners and create an IC construct that mimics whatever the runner fears most.
- A character who is trying to move will find that no matter how hard he runs or climbs, he doesn't seem to cover any distance.
- Deus will cancel one of Megaera's interventions.

Megaera Intervention Ideas

- One or more of the characters will sprout butterfly wings, allowing them to fly as the Whites do.
- One of the trees or vine segments will be converted to the runners' side, eagerly attacking an unsuspecting otaku or IC construct.
- One of the players will gain the ability to throw fireballs (treat as a throwing weapon with a Damage Code of 10S).
- A section of the forest or clearing will be randomly transformed into something from another environment altogether. For example, the clearing may suddenly become a lake or swamp, or a section of trees may be replaced by a suburban townhouse or small, fortified keep (complete with medieval armaments!). These additions may be complete locations unto themselves, and could perhaps be larger on the inside than on the outside.
- One of the runners will have their icon/persona multiplied. Effectively, multiple versions of the character will exist and be capable of independent action. This effect will only be temporary (lasting 2D6 Combat Turns). Damage taken by one of the icons/personas may affect the others, or it may be specific to that one only, at the gamemaster's preference.
- A severe, localized weather storm will descend on one area of the terrain and blast the otaku with freezing, icy winds, hail or driving rain. The storm may then wander randomly about the area, affecting friend and foe alike.



- A severely wounded or dying runner will be miraculously healed and reinvigorated, and can rise and rejoin the fray. This restoration may manifest in unusual ways. For example, a PC who was just decapitated by an otaku may find that his head works fine while separated from his body, allowing him to continue fighting with his separated parts.
- One or more of the characters may be outfitted with modern weapons and armor, or perhaps even futuristic gear—laser or chain guns, power armor, energy swords and so on.
- Megaera will cancel one of Deus' interventions, either ending it or causing the exact opposite to occur.

Freeing Aneki

In order to reach Aneki, the runners will have to climb his tree despite its active intervention, or fly up to his level (which could spur an aerial dogfight with the otaku), or otherwise reach the branch he is suspended from. The otaku and IC constructs will fight the runners tooth and nail to keep them away. Note that Deus is not particularly concerned about Aneki being reached. (Ronin, on the other hand, is a different story—no one will reach him easily.) In fact, the AI may even facilitate the matter by having the branch that holds Aneki collapse under someone's weight, dropping the old man to the ground.

Deus has carefully triggered strong emotions and self-hatred within Aneki, pushing the man to take the extra step from shame and dishonor to suicide. Deus provides the dagger Aneki produces to use on himself. Deus has prepared for this moment, and will prevent any characters from interfering with Aneki's death. Characters that attempt to do so will find them-

selves blocked by invisible barriers, frozen in place, teleported away or otherwise kept from interfering.

As is customary before ritual suicide, Aneki will recite a poem. This haiku will be followed by the virtual trigger for the kill codes—a series of movements, random syllables and Aneki's brainwave patterns. Immediately, the program embedded within the AEP's code—Deus' heart—will surge into effect, separating the AI from its hardwired imprisonment.

Aneki will then ritually kill himself, performing the act with honor. If Ronin is free by this time, he will step forward as Aneki's second, and remove the CEO's head with one swift slice of a sword.

As the unseen programs take effect, Deus' icon will start to fracture and decompose. The icon itself will be sucked down into a gaping maw, a black hole that will begin to devour the surrounding host as well. Megaera herself will fall victim to this gravitational pull, disappearing beyond the event horizon. The otaku and runners, along with everything around them, will also start to be sucked in. But before this occurs, the runners (except for Ronin, as per the next scenario) will be dumped as the host collapses.

PUSHING THE ENVELOPE

The possibilities for twisting this scenario are endless, as the virtual reality of the UV hosts is fluid and at the gamemaster's command. Deus can easily bring in more otaku or IC constructs to combat the runners. The IC in particular can appear with any shape, form or capabilities that the AI feels is necessary. The AI can also make it more difficult for the runners to reach Aneki. Perhaps two of the otaku grab the CEO, open up



a portal to another UV host and pass through. The runners will then be forced to pursue the otaku and prisoner through a series of hosts, overcoming an obstacle in each and reaching the portal before it closes behind them. In this way, almost any challenge the gamemaster can invent can be used against the players, so long as they eventually return to Deus' home host.

DEBUGGING

The gamemaster should be careful not to let this scenario be too easy for the players. The characters should have challenges and strange twists thrown at them to keep them occupied for several Combat Turns. If the characters are finding it too difficult, remember that Deus does want them to succeed to some extent, and manipulate the scene or events as appropriate.

AFTERMATH

WHAT'S UP, CHUMMER?

The runners are dumped from the Matrix and returned to their bodies. As they struggle to regain consciousness, the arcology around them devolves into chaos, since Deus is no longer running the show. On the 202nd floor, the characters awake to an unpleasant surprise. Cliber and her Renraku-loyal cell have arrived with Dr. Huang. Their entourage lays claim to the Mousetrap and the Deus code they believe is trapped within. After this betrayal, the runners find themselves left with a hollow victory, trapped within an arcology gone mad.

TELL IT TO THEM STRAIGHT

Shaking off your blistering headache, you pull the fiberoptic cable out of your datajack and turn off your deck. You start to massage your cramped muscles, then realize the room is a bit more crowded than it should be. Looking down the aisle of computer banks, you spot Jack sprawled out on the floor, a smoking entrance wound visible on his forehead and blood pooling underneath him.

Leering down at you are the faces of Cham and Cliber. Next to them stands Dr. Sherman Huang, the director of Renraku America. You suppress a groan as you scan the room, counting their armed supporters.

Cham steps over Aneki's still body and unplugs the Mousetrap. Grimacing with distaste at the corpse, he picks up the old deck and steps back. "Got it, Huang-san," he says, clutching the Mousetrap protectively to his chest.

"What about them?" Cliber asks, motioning to where your team is still sprawled on the floor.

Huang looks impassively at the lot of you, then reaches down to yank the pistol from Ronin's unconscious form. Turning slightly, he fires once, putting a bullet directly into Aneki's forehead. He drops the gun contemptuously into Ronin's lap, then walks back to Cliber, rubbing his hands.

"Leave them," he says. "They're nothing now. And if they're smart, they'll lay low and keep their mouths shut. Otherwise they'll have an entire megacorporation after them for kidnapping and murdering a CEO." He smirks wickedly at you, then turns towards the door. The rest of Cliber's cell backs away, watching you carefully until they exit the room.

HOOKS

The thrill of victory will rapidly be placed with the sting of betrayal. Any rejoicing the characters may want to do will be cut short, as they are still trapped inside the arcology.

BEHIND THE SCENES

When they are dumped from the host, each runner will take 16D Stun damage (14S for a character with ICCM). If this damage may kill one or more of the characters, the gamemaster should feel free to reduce it appropriately. In any case, all of the characters who were in the UV host will be unconscious.

Waking up on 202

The first decker to wake up on the 202nd floor should be a player character. This character will awake as a captive of Cliber's Resistance cell. Either the cell successfully liberated Dr. Huang, or, if they retrieved Huang from the runners, per the information on pp. 108 and 109, the cell may have been following the runners to get their hands on Aneki. Once they found the runners helplessly jacked in, they overpowered the Resistance guards and waited.

Huang has no intention of allowing a group of scummy shadowrunners to take credit for ridding the arcology of Deus. With Cliber's Renraku-loyal cell at his beck and call, he has the means to steal the Mousetrap and come out as the hero.

Once the sequence of events in *Tell It To Them Straight* has occurred, the Renraku cell will quickly flee the area and begin moving through the arcology, either down to ground level or up to the roof helipads, as the gamemaster prefers. They will make radio contact with outside Renraku forces as they go, and at some point they will rendezvous with a group of Red Samurai who will escort them safely from the arcology.

Any attempts to pursue them and retrieve the Mousetrap will be difficult. First, the other runners are still unconscious and will take some time to wake up. Second, the arcology will be bursting with rampaging drones, escaping residents, shell-shocked Banded and invading military troops. This chaos should be more than enough to distract and confound any pursuers.

Ronin

Unlike the other deckers, Ronin will not have been dumped from the Matrix and will still be jacked in when everyone else awakens. He can be disconnected at any time without harm, but he will wake up unable to remember anything past the end of the fight with Deus. He has no idea why he remained on-line.

If anyone checks him out by hooking up to his hitcher jacks while he's still jacked in, they will find his icon floating in a catatonic state, surrounded by some sort of test patterns. If they jack in to find him, they will not succeed.

Waking up in the Zombie Room

When the characters awaken, they will find the zombie room is abandoned except for them. The other jacked-in victims have already woken up and wandered out into the arcology. Undoubtedly, several of the player characters will be rather concerned about the new cyberware they find installed in their head.

Though Deus was preparing everyone in this room for some sort of reprogramming, including the characters, Megaera luckily realized what was in store for them. Her brief look back at each runner was a farewell gesture, meant to dump them from the host before any reprogramming could begin. Of course, twisted gamemasters may always decide that Megaera missed a character or two ...

Arcology Chaos

When Deus is deconstructed, there is no longer an AI dedicated to running the arcology, not to mention the drone networks. Though the AI carefully set up a number of backup systems to keep certain processes functioning, some of the unsupervised networks will immediately collapse, while others will slowly slip towards failure. It's completely up to the gamemaster whether any given system—lighting, elevators, plumbing, security, ventilation, fire suppression and so on—will be functioning fully, partially or not at all.

To top it off, the majority of Deus' drone constructs will self destruct when the AI vacates. Those that remain will either be following programmed routines, such as guarding areas of the arcology, or they will begin running wild.

For the most part, the Banded in the building will continue as if Deus will still in control. Over time, many of them will begin to suffer withdrawal symptoms, as they have been both physically and mentally addicted to the AI's simsense conditioning. Deus' mental programming will begin to wear thin and break down for some of the stronger ones, and some of them may even return to their normal states. The response of each individual will be different, depending on their mental strength and how thoroughly they were forced to submit to Deus' will.

A number of Banded will continue to perform tasks or missions Deus dictated before it left. To support their addictions, many of these Banded will be carrying BTL chips (or will have BTL implants) that give them their Deus "fix" and shore up their conditioning. Some of these Banded groups will have orders requiring them to break out of the arcology.

Of all the Banded, the White otaku will be the most thoroughly affected. Most will be completely caught off guard by the disappearance of their god. Abandoned, they may go insane, turn on each other, or search for a new cause that can replace Deus in their minds.

Thousands of trapped residents will leap at the opportunity to escape the arcology, and the military will be flooded with refugees. The civilian wave will stagger the military's offensive, which will have to focus on triage and transport until the worst-off of the victims are in hospitals or military refugee camps.

Some faction of the military offensive will still concentrate on reaching the reactors located in the arcology basement. All but one will immediately be shut down, depriving most of the arcology of power. While many areas will have backup generators and reserve power supplies, the majority of the arc will be plunged into a blackout. The military will keep one reactor running at a minimal level, enough to keep a few selected areas powered up to serve as a base of operations.

For the characters, all this adds up into an extremely volatile situation. In addition to panicking or vengeful Banded, rogue drones, and confused military troops, the runners may have to face terrified refugees, disastrous fires, malfunctioning systems, blackouts and more. Just getting the characters' two teams back together may become an adventure in itself.

Chaos in the SCIRE Matrix

Like the arcology, the SCIRE Matrix will suffer a semi-collapse as soon as Deus is fragmented. All of the UV realms will crash, as will a number of other hosts. Many subsystems, programs and intrusion countermeasures will suffer malfunctions. However, quite a few IC constructs and semi-autonomous knowbots will continue with their tasks, and the few otaku who remain will begin manipulating the hosts as best they can.

With the exception of the First Pacific Bank host, all access nodes between the SCIRE Matrix and other LTGs and RTGs will remain closed. The First Pacific Bank host will remain unnoticed for some time, and Dodger may well take advantage of that.

When the military cuts the reactors, three-quarters of the SCIRE Matrix will be plunged off-line, and the architecture of the PLTG will be severely scrambled. Any attempts to navigate it will be difficult at best.

Getting Out

The runners have many options for escaping the arcology. They can head to the roof or a helipad and try to catch a lift, they can climb down near ground level and flood out with the refugees, or they can try and sneak out through the ork tunnels, water pipes or other guarded exits.

Enterprising runners may take the opportunity to explore the arcology and see if they can score any paydata, drone prototypes, abandoned research projects or other hot tech. Certainly the opportunity to scavenge may be lucrative, but it should also be exceedingly dangerous.

PUSHING THE ENVELOPE

While the *Brainscan* adventure itself ends here, the gamemaster has the players in a good position to launch into a new story, especially if they choose to linger in the arc. The situation is ripe for new encounters and new dangers, limited only by the gamemaster's imagination.

DEBUGGING

If other characters did not jack in and took up a position to watch the characters who did, then the arrival of Cliber's cell will need to be played out. The cell will originally pretend they are returning to support the runners and help defend against any attacks by Deus' minions. At their first chance, however, the cell will resort to treachery and seize the characters.

If the runners decide to stay in the arcology, Ronin and Dodger will opt to bail out. Dodger is eager to find out what happened to Megaera, and Ronin is just sick of the place. Devon and his team plan on staying within the arc and helping the rescue effort, and they will certainly welcome any help the runners want to give.



PICKING UP THE PIECES

IT'S A WRAP

At the end of the adventure, the players should believe they were successful in shutting down Deus. As far as they know, Deus was safely dismantled and packed away in the Mousetrap, which is now in Dr. Huang's possession. Though that may not be entirely reassuring, it should at least give them a sense of accomplishment. The truth, however, is more complicated (see the *Epilogue*, p. 147) and will be explained in future *Shadowrun* products.

Given the events in the *Epilogue*, Huang and the others will be furious, and will assume that the runners pulled one over on them. When the runners eventually make their way out of the arcology, they will find Renraku extremely interested in talking to them. If the runners play hard to get, they may find themselves publicly pinned with the crime of kidnapping and murdering Renraku CEO Inazo Aneki. In addition to Renraku, a swarm of law enforcement personnel and bounty hunters will be on the runners' trail, hoping to bring them to justice—or at least collect the bounty. The gamemaster can consider Huang, Cham and Cliber as the runners' personal enemies and Renraku as a corporate enemy (see p. 68, *SRComp*).

To make things worse, Overwatch will contact the runners only a few days after they reach the outside world. Ronin has gone missing. If the runners investigate, they will not find any clues to his whereabouts. He seems to have simply disappeared.

On the public front, Renraku will publicly announce that the arcology situation has been "resolved," though they will not explain exactly what was wrong in the first place. Sherman Huang will be given direct responsibility and credit for finding a solution to the crisis, with secondary credit given to his top programmers, Cham and Cliber. This news will have a drastic effect both on Renraku's stock prices and on Huang's career. Huang himself will become a direct contender for the CEO position, and will win over a number of powerful backers.

A few weeks later, the death of Inazo Aneki will be publicly announced, and the competition to fill his slot will begin. The details of Aneki's death will be carefully glossed over.

In the shadows, of course, these news items will be treated with a great deal of skepticism. Rumors will run rampant, blaming the arcology crisis on a wide variety of causes. One of the more frightful rumors will claim Renraku regained control of their rogue AI and are now planning on using it to gain an edge against the other corps. Naturally, the "other corps" in question will be quite interested in questioning anyone who might know whether there is any validity to this claim.

The UCAS military and Renraku will continue their arcology "relief effort," though it will become clear that this task will take many months, if not years, to finish. They will continue to perform search-and-rescue missions within the arcology, seizing control of floors and chipping away at Deus' remaining drones. Overloaded by thousands of refugees, the government has no choice but to contain many in wretched camps while "processing" others and releasing them as quickly as possible. It will be some time—if ever—before the arcology is cleaned out, and it can remain as a setting for all manner of future

adventures. Despite public pressure, Renraku will refrain from publicly expressing future intentions for the arc.

Overwatch itself will continue to operate, though some of their members will move on to other missions now that the Deus affair seems to be over. Renraku will become a primary interest for this group, as will the current status of Deus' "former" holdings outside of the arcology. The otaku activists will also keep an eye on the arcology refugees. They know something is not right, and they suspect Deus had some final trick up its sleeve that. They will keep contact with the runners, perhaps even recruiting them for future missions.

AWARDING KARMA

The following Karma awards should be used as guidelines for the gamemaster upon the completion of this adventure. These awards do not take into account any awards the gamemaster gives out for good roleplaying, guts, smarts, surprise and humor (see p. 244, *SR3*). It also does not account for any Karma they might acquire for escaping the arcology.

Survival	3
Getting into the arcology	1
Climbing the arcology	1
Acquiring the Mousetrap	2
Rescuing Cham	1
Getting past the oni	1
Finding and opening the gateway	1
Freeing Aneki	1
Defeating Pax	1

CAST OF SHADOWS

DEVON EURICH

Well over a decade ago, Devon was one of Renraku's top programmers. A brilliant kid recruited from Stanford before Ares and Silicon Valley could get him, Devon was placed in the Artificial Intelligence Project under Sherman Huang's direction. His skill quickly propelled him through the ranks. Devon was paired with Vanessa Cliber, and in 2049 the pair were the first to create semi-autonomous knowbots within the SCIRE's Matrix.

But Devon soured on life within Renraku. He found the corp stifling, and began to express strong contempt for the motivations and goals of his co-workers and superiors. When Renraku suspected that the SCIRE had produced an AI—Morgan—Devon was thrilled, and worked as hard as the others to track it down. When he finally succeeded, the encounter changed his life.

Having met Morgan directly, Devon realized that he could no longer work with Renraku, as the corp's goal was to capture and dissect the AI. Instead, Devon secretly began conspiring with the AI to throw Cliber and the others off her trail. Morgan eventually introduced Devon to her paramour, Dodger. The elf runner easily convinced Devon to leave Renraku and enter the shadows. Before he left, Devon erased as much of the corp's research into Morgan that he could access.

Devon spent the next few years making a name for himself as a decker in the Seattle shadows under his new han-

dle—Redline. But in 2058, Dodger tracked Devon down with bad news—Renraku had finally succeeded in capturing Morgan. The two deckers eventually managed to free what remained of Morgan, but in the process they encountered another presence in the SCIRE Matrix. They only barely escaped that confrontation. It was not until later that they learned this presence's name—Deus.

When Deus shut down the arcology, Devon immediately suspected what was amiss. He recruited a contingent of his shadowrunner comrades and found a way inside the arcology. There, they joined the Resistance, and since then Devon has been doing his best to fight Deus from the inside.

Devon's years of shadowrunning, plus his year spent fighting Deus within the arcology, have taken their toll on him. Once an bright young idealist, he has become bitter and distrustful, and he is willing to be ruthless if necessity demands it. His loathing towards Vanessa Cliber and Sherman Huang still burns within him.

In the Matrix, Devon's icon appears as a simple, jet-black, featureless humanoid in a spotless white suit.

B	Q	S	C	I	W	E	M	R
5	6	4	6	6	6	5.04	—	6

INIT: 6 + 1D6, Matrix INIT:

Dice Pools: Combat 9, Hacking 5 (8)

Karma Pool/Professional Rating: 8/4

Race: Human

Active Skills: Athletics 3, Computer 8 (Programming 11), Computer B/R 6, Electronics 4, Electronics B/R 6, Etiquette 4, Leadership 5, Pistols 5, Small Unit Tactics 3, Stealth 5, Submachine Guns 4, Unarmed Combat 5

Knowledge Skills: Artificial Intelligence 4, Corporate Hosts 4, Corp Politics 2 (Renraku 4), English 6, Japanese 5, SCIRE Jackpoints 4, SCIRE Matrix 5

Martial Arts: Aikido 5 (Close Combat, Throw)

Cyberware (all alphaware): Datajack, math spu (Rating 3), memory (150 Mp) w/ data compactor (Rating 4)

Armor: Armor jacket [5/3]

Weapons: Browning Max-Power [HP, SA, 9M, 10 (c) w/2 extra clips explosive ammo and 2 clips APDS, silencer and laser sight] Range (TN): 0-5 (3), 6-20 (4), 21-40 (5), 41-60 (8)

HK-227-S [SMG, SA/BF, 7M, RC (1), 28 (c) w/2 extra clips APDS, integral laser sight, silencer and folding shoulder stock] Range (TN): 0-10 (3), 11-40 (4), 41-80 (5), 81-150 (8)

Gear: Custom Cyberdeck [MPCP-10/7/8/8/7 w/ Detection Factor 9, ICCM, Hard. 5, Active Mem. 3,000, Storage Mem. 3,000, I/O 500, Response Increase 2] with the following programs: Analyze 5, Armor 6 (optimized), Attack-S 7, Black Hammer (optimized) 6, Commlink 4, Deception 8, Decrypt 8, Medic 6, Read/Write 8, Restore 5, Restrict 5, Scanner 5, Sleaze 10, Snooper 6*, Spoof 8 and Validate 6.

*This is a custom-designed utility:

Snooper

Multiplier: 2

This program reduces the target number for an Analyze Operation system operation.

Analyze Operation

Test: Control

Utilities: Snooper

Action: Simple

This operation attempts to identify what system operation another icon is performing and what utilities it's using for that operation. Each net success on the System Test will give the decker one of the following pieces of information:

- The operation being performed (including the test and action required)
- Any utilities being used
- How successful the icon was

KIELL RAUGLOS

Born and raised in the Redmond Barrens, Kiell turned to shadowrunning at an early age. Though he ran in the shadows partially for survival, he also dedicated himself to doing some good in the world. His attraction to Robin Hood-style shadowruns placed him in proximity to Devon Eurich, and the two eventually started a team together. When Devon decided to break into the Renraku Arcology, Kiell was his first recruit.

Kiell's shadowrunning experience and no-nonsense approach have propelled him to a leadership position in the Resistance cells. Many cells have taken their cues from Kiell's advice and strategy, and they respect him enough to follow his orders without question. Though a small subset of Renraku-loyal Resistance fighters follows Vanessa Cliber, the rest of the Resistance treats Kiell as their *de facto* leader.

Kiell is blunt and straightforward, and he won't hesitate to express his true feelings about an individual or a situation. He doesn't tolerate disunity within his cell, and will immediately step in to resolve or break up personal conflicts.

Kiell's signature weapon is a Ruger Thunderbolt he took from the body of the racist Lone Star cop who killed his brother. (See p. 19, CC.)

B	Q	S	C	I	W	E	M	R
6	8 (10)	6 (8)	5	6	6	0.34	—	7 (11)

INIT: 7 (11) + 1D6 (3D6)

Dice Pools: Combat 11

Karma Pool/Professional Rating: 7/4

Race: Elf

Active Skills: Assault Rifles 5, Athletics 5, Biotech 2 (First Aid 4), Cyber-implant Combat 6, Etiquette 3 (Street 6), Leadership 5, Pistols 4 (Ruger Thunderbolt 6) (Signature Gun 8), Small Unit Tactics 6, Stealth 6, Submachine Guns 6, Unarmed Combat 7

Knowledge Skills: Barrens 6, English 6, Gang Identification 5, Japanese 2, Security Procedures 6, SCIRE hideouts 4, Sperethiel 3

Martial Arts: Tae Kwon Do 7 (Kick Attack, Kip-up, Multi-Strike)

Cyberware: Flare compensation (retinal mod), headware radio (alphaware, Rating 6), image link (retinal mod), muscle replacement (betaware, Rating 2), orientation system, retractable hand blade, smartlink (alphaware), spatial recognizer, wired reflexes (alphaware, Level 2) w/ stepped reflex trigger (alphaware)

Bioware: Orthoskin 2

Armor [8/7]: Light security armor [6/4] w/enviroseal and helmet [+1/+2], orthoskin [+1/+1]

Weapons: Ingram Smartgun [SMG, BF/FA, 7M, RC 2 (3), 32 (c) w/2 extra clips EX explosive ammo, smartgun system]

Range (TN): 0-10 (2), 11-40 (3), 41-80 (4), 81-150 (7)

Ruger Thunderbolt [HP, BF, 12S, RC 1, 12 (c) w/2 extra clips explosive ammo, smartgun system and personalized grip]

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

Gear: Flashpak, sequencer (Rating 5)

RESISTANCE CELL MEMBERS

Some members of the Resistance were shadowrunners, while some were part of the Renraku Arcology security force, and see their current work as an extension of that past. Others come from more pedestrian walks of life and were forced to fight Deus for survival. All of these cell members have had chances to leave the arcology, but instead have chosen to stay and help the others who are trapped inside.

Veteran Fighters

B	Q	S	C	I	W	E	M	R
5	5	4	3	5	5	5.8	—	5

INIT: 5 + 1D6

Dice Pools: Combat 7

Karma Pool/Professional Rating: 3/3

Race: Human (add racial modifications to generate metahuman cell members).

Active Skills: Biotech 2 (First Aid 4), Car 3, Electronics 4, Etiquette 3 (Corp 4), Pistols 5, Stealth 5, Submachine Guns 4, Throwing Weapons 2, Unarmed Combat 5

Knowledge Skills: English 4, Japanese 3, Renraku Arcology 4, Security Procedures 4

Martial Arts: Brawling 5

Cyberware: Datajack

Armor: Light security armor [6/4]

Weapons: SCK Model 100 [SMG, SA/BF, 7M, RC 3, 30 (c), w/3 extra clips, 2 extra clips explosive, gas vent 3 and smartgun system w/smart goggles]

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

Browning Ultra-Power [HP, SA, 9M, 10 (c) w/2 extra clips and laser sight]

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

Green Fighters

B	Q	S	C	I	W	E	M	R
4	5	3	3	5	5	5.8	—	5

INIT: 5 + 1D6

Dice Pools: Combat 7

Karma Pool/Professional Rating: 1/2

Race: Human (add racial modifications to generate metahuman cell members).

Active Skills: Biotech 1 (First Aid 3), Car 3, Electronics 4, Etiquette 3 (Corp 4), Pistols 3, Stealth 5, Submachine Guns 3, Unarmed Combat 3

Knowledge Skills: English 4, Japanese 3, Renraku Arcology 3

Martial Arts: Brawling 3

Cyberware: Datajack

Armor: Armor jacket [5/3]

Weapons: SCK Model 100 [SMG, SA/BF, 7M, RC 3, 30 (c), w/3 extra clips, 2 extra clips explosive, gas vent 3 and smartgun system w/smart goggles]

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

Browning Ultra-Power [HP, SA, 9M, 10 (c) w/2 extra clips and laser sight]

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



CHAM LAM WON

As a young man, Cham won recognition as a brilliant software designer with the Renton-based Blood Monies Software. Though he was credited with several software design breakthroughs, his specialty was imitation rather than innovation. Inevitably, his creations were the result of decompiling and backfiguring competitors' code. His experience in creative code-borrowing proved useful when one of Renraku's star programmers destroyed all his files and ran for the shadows. Renraku courted Cham, who signed on to reconstruct Devon Eurich's AI data and ended up taking over Eurich's job.

Cham's expertise was soon put to use in the hunt for Morgan. Cham's extensive knowledge of semi-autonomous knowbots proved crucial to the design of an AI-trap, and in 2058, he and Vanessa Cliber captured Morgan, tore her apart, and integrated parts of her code into the AEP.

Though Cham was watching the project closely, he did not discover evidence of Deus' presence until almost a year after the new AI was created, and by then it was too late. When Deus seized the arcology, Cham was captured by a squad of Blues and penned in the arcology's luxury suites. Though many Whites wondered why Deus tolerated Cham, the AI felt the "Creator" would come in handy some day. Deus saw to it that Cham got his hands on the Mousetrap, and Cham, believing he was being devious, protected it and kept it with him at all times. In the process, he became a perfect piece of bait in a long-term trap Deus was trying to build.

Life in a corp setting, surrounded by flunkies and yes-men, has given Cham the arrogant self-absorption of a man who has been reminded thousands of times of his brilliance. Like many top-notch programmers, Cham tends to be obsessive about his work, and often views the world as a computer he is programming. Though the prospect of artificial intelligence excites him, he sees it as a curious technical problem; he couldn't care less about an AI's mind or heart. Cham has no firm morality, and is willing to do anything to advance his work or his personal position. At present, he believes his future is inextricably tied to Renraku's, and he holds a temporary loyalty to the corp that will vanish when his situation changes.

B 3 **Q** 3 **S** 3 **C** 4 **I** 7 **W** 5 **E** 4.26 **M** — **R** 5

INIT: 5 + 1D6

Dice Pools: Combat 7, Hacking ([7 + MPCP] ÷ 3)

Karma Pool/Professional Rating: 4/2

Race: Human

Active Skills: Computer 7 (Programming 12), Computer B/R 5, Electronics 7, Etiquette 3 (Corporate 6), Leadership 4, Negotiation 4, Pistols 3, Stealth 5

Knowledge Skills: Artificial Intelligence 5, Chinese 7, Computer Background 6, English 7, Japanese 5, Renraku Politics 4, SCIRE Matrix Programs 6

Cyberware (betaware): 2 Datajacks, encephalon (Rating 2), memory (300 Mp)

VANESSA CLIBER

Born and bred as a Renraku citizen, Cliber knew from childhood that she was meant for power. Her quick, aggressive rise to the top of Renraku's patriarchal and conservative hierarchy surprised many people, but she considered it proof that the world was as it should be. Her sharp wit and uncompromising confidence were weapons, and where those failed, her sheer unquestionable programming skills generally succeeded.

Huang recognized Cliber's potential from the start and made her an essential component of the Arcology Expert Program. She and Devon Eurich worked closely together, but rarely saw eye to eye. She considered him a hopeless and hapless romantic, unable to understand that AIs—like people—were just useful tools to be used and abused. When Cham replaced Devon, Cliber found her new cold-hearted partner a bit boring, but easy enough to work with. At least he didn't try to convince her that their projects had souls.

When Deus seized the arcology, Cliber narrowly avoided capture. After several days of fruitless escape attempts, she found refuge in a maintenance stairwell with a small group of unconverted Red Samurai. As one of the few who suspected an AI was responsible for the shutdown, Cliber quickly developed plans for dealing with the situation, and her focused, driven demeanor convinced the others to follow her. Her team eventually made contact with others and became one of the first active Resistance cells.

Unlike most of the Resistance, Cliber considers herself loyal to Renraku, and her cell has attracted like-minded samu-



rai, guards, and former corpsmen who want to restore the arcology to Renraku's control. Most Resistance members openly blame Renraku for their problems, and Cliber's attitude has caused intercell friction, though usually the common goal of survival keeps conflict from openly erupting.

On a personal level, Cliber is very matter-of-fact and detail-oriented. She refuses to get attached to anyone, not wanting any emotional involvement to get in her way.

Vanessa's Matrix icon appears as a stylized Athena, the Greek goddess of knowledge and warcraft.

B 4 **Q** 5 **S** 4 **C** 6 **I** 7 (9) **W** 6 **E** 5.15 **M** — **R** 7

INIT: 7 + 1D6, Matrix INIT 11 + 3D6

Dice Pools: Combat 10, Hacking 6, Task 1

Karma Pool/Professional Rating: 5/3

Race: Human

Active Skills: Assault Rifles 4, Athletics 3 (Running 5), Biotech 1 (First Aid 3), Computer 9 (Programming 10), Computer B/R 7, Electronics 5, Electronics B/R 4, Etiquette 5 (Matrix 7), Leadership 5 (Tactics 7), Pistols 5, Small Unit Tactics 3, Stealth 4, Unarmed Combat 4

Knowledge Skills: Artificial Intelligence 8, Computer Background 7, English 7, Japanese 6, Matrix Engineering 6, Renraku Politics 6, SCIRE Layout 4, SCIRE Matrix 5

Martial Arts: Brawling 4 (Ground Fighting, Vicious Blow)

Cyberware (alphaware): Cybereyes [image link, low-light, retinal clock], datajack, memory (200 Mp)

Bioware: Cerebral booster (Level 2), clean metabolism

Armor: Armor Jacket [5/3]

Weapons: H&K G12A3z [AR, SA/BF/FA, 8M, RC 2, 32 (c) w/3 extra clips, 1 clip EX explosive, laser sight, gas vent 2]

Range (TN): 0-50 (3), 51-150 (4), 151-350 (5), 351-550 (8)
Remington Roomsweeper [HP, SA, 9S (f)/9M, 8 (m) w/10 extra shot rounds and 10 regular rounds]

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

Gear: Novatech Slimcase-10 Cyberdeck [MPCP-10/7/8/7/8 w/ICCM, Hardening 5, Active Mem. 2,000, Storage Mem. 2,500, I/O Speed 480, Response Increase 2] and programs of the gamemaster's choice

TADASHI MARUSHIGE

Tadashi has been head of the arcology's security for over a decade, maintaining his post through a spate of embarrassingly successful shadowruns and other ventures against the corp. Tadashi learned from his mistakes, however, and arcology security had drastically improved by the time Deus struck. Tadashi was one of Deus' first targets, and he easily fell under the AI's sway.

Tadashi has always been taciturn and grumpy, and he openly encouraged the unfounded rumors that he relied on drugs to keep a psychotic personality under control. In reality, Tadashi was just an unhappy man who pushed himself harshly out of misguided corporate loyalty. Deus warped this loyalty to its benefit, bringing Tadashi into line as a puppet and leader of the Blues.

Tadashi takes his job under Deus very seriously, and works himself even harder than he ever did under Renraku. No longer satisfied merely to give orders, he now micromanages many security operations, checking up on things personally to make sure they are going as instructed.

B 6 (7) **Q** 5 (7) **S** 5 (7) **C** 5 **I** 6 **W** 6 **E** 0.88 **M** — **R** 6 (10)

INIT: 6 (10) + 1D6 (3D6)

Dice Pools: Combat 9

Karma Pool/Professional Rating: 6/4

Race: Human

Active Skills: Assault Rifles 6, Athletics 6, Biotech 4, Car 4, Demolitions 3, Edged Weapons 5, Electronics 4, Etiquette 4 (Corporate 6, Military 6), Interrogation 5, Leadership 4, Pistols 6, Small Unit Tactics 6, SMG 5 (SCK Model 100 7), Unarmed Combat 7

Knowledge Skills: Corporate Politics 2, Psychology 2, Renraku Structure 6, Security Procedures 6

Martial Arts: Karate 7 (Focus Strength, Throw, Vicious Blow)

Cyberware (betaware): Auto-injector (one shot w/cutter nanites), bone lacing (aluminum), commlink (Rating 8), cyberears (hearing amplification, select sound filter 5), cybereyes (electronic vision magnification 3, flare compensation, low-light, thermographic), dedicated chipjack, invoked memory stimulator, router w/4 ports, simrig (full-X) w/simlink (Rating 8), smartgun link-2, wired reflexes 2

Bioware (cultured): Muscle augmentation 2, muscle toner 2, trauma damper

Weapons: SCK Model 100 [SMG, SA/BF, 7M, RC 3, 30 (c), w/3 extra clips, 2 extra clips APDS, gas vent 3 and smartgun-2 system]

Range (TN): 0-10 (2), 11-40 (3), 41-80 (4), 81-150 (4)
Browning Max-Power [HP, SA, 9M, 10 (c) w/3 extra clips explosive ammo, smartgun-2 system]

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

Fist [10M Stun]

Katana [10M, +1 Reach]

Armor [7/8]: Bone lacing [0/+1], medium security armor [6/5] with helmet [+1/+2]



SEBASTIEN

Sebastien grew up with the otaku tribe around the Nexus in Denver. Not long after Deus began recruiting otaku, Sebastien heard of the entity and sought it out. Though he came to the conclusion that Deus was merely duping other otaku and impersonating the Deep Resonance, Sebastien was intrigued by the AI and so remained close to it. In fact, Sebastien felt that the Deep Resonance was instructing him to monitor the AI, though he could not explain how he knows this.

Eventually, Sebastien followed Deus' call to travel to the arcology and participate in the shutdown. Since he was already otaku and claimed loyalty to Deus, Sebastien was spared the "conversion" process that the AI used to break others to its will. Sebastien eventually made covert contact with the Resistance and Overwatch, and has been funneling them tidbits of information as he can.

Tragically, Deus quickly became aware of Sebastien's treachery. During a recent "transfiguration" session, where Sebastien was granted his third band, Deus completely destroyed and rewrote the boy's personality. Now Sebastien serves Deus, selectively feeding the Resistance and Overwatch false information and laying traps for them.

B 3 **Q** 4 **S** 2 **C** 5 **I** 7 (9) **W** 8 **E** 2.39 **M** 0 **R** 6

INIT: 6 + 1D6, Matrix INIT 9 (10) + 3D6

Dice Pools: Combat 10, Hacking 5 (8), Task 1

Karma Pool/Professional Rating: 2/3

Race: Human (otaku)

Active Skills: Computer 6 (Decking 8), Electronics 5, Etiquette 2, Stealth 4

Knowledge Skills: Artificial Intelligence 3, English 6, Japanese 4, SCIRE Matrix 5

Living Persona: MPCP-8 (9)/8/9/7 (8)/9 w/Hard. 4, I/O Speed 900

Channels: Access 6 (Deception 8), Control 6 (Analyze 8), Index 4, Files 4 (Decrypt 6), Slave 5 (Spoof) 7

Complex Forms: Armor 8, Attack-5 7 (Penetration), Black Hammer 5, Camo 6, Cloak 5, Medic 6, Shield 6, Sleaze 7, Track 6

Cyberware: Auto-injector (one-shot w/cutter nanites), comm-link (Rating 8), cyberears (hearing amplifier, select sound filter 5), cybereyes (thermographic vision, low-light vision, flare compensation, electronic vision magnification 3), datajack w/ASIST converter, dedicated chipjack, invoked memory stimulator, math SPU (Rating 3), memory (300 Mp), router w/4 ports, simrig (full-X) w/simlink (Rating 8)

Bioware (cultured): Cerebral booster (Level 2)

Armor: Armor clothing [3/0]



PAX

Pax first came to Deus' attention as the leader of a tribe of uniquely fanatical Atlanta otaku. Pax herself led the group into a range of criminal enterprises, including terrorist attacks against anti-technological groups and adherents.

When Deus and Pax made contact, their rapport was instant. Deus was looking for cold-blooded otaku who would accept him as a god and lead other otaku in its name. Pax, ever practical, denounced the mysterious Deep Resonance as "alooof" from real-world affairs, and embraced Deus' solidly aggressive pro-tech agenda.

As the highest-ranking of the Whites, Pax serves as the intermediary between Deus and the other otaku, and often

with the other Banded. Her closeness to Deus makes some Whites nervous; they view her as an avatar of Deus, and fear her wrath. Given her position, Pax has gained insights into Deus' overall agenda that others could not begin to fathom. It bothers her, however, that she has clearly been left in the dark about some aspects of the AI's long-term plan. Pax has begun to make contingency plans just in case.

Pax can be charming on a personal level, but her mental state borders on homicidal psychosis at times, perhaps a result of an imperfect Deep Resonance conversion. She leads the other otaku with an iron grip, and arrogantly orders around the other Banded as she sees fit. Her name comes from her time in Atlanta, where she left calling cards on her victims' bodies. The cards read "pax vobiscum"—"peace be with you."

Unlike most of Deus' otaku, Pax is a product of the Deep Resonance, and so her otaku abilities will work in the Matrix at large, not just in the SCIRE. Her persona appears as a dark-robed, pale, witch-like figure with batlike wings.

B	Q	S	C	I	W	E	M	R
4	5	4	7	8 (10)	7	2.31	—	7

INIT: 7 + 1D6 (3D6), Matrix INIT: 8 (10) + 3D6

Dice Pools: Combat 11, Hacking 7 (12), Task 3

Karma Pool/Professional Rating: 5/4

Race: Human

Active Skills: Computer 8 (Decking 11), Edged Weapons 3 (Knives 6), Electronics 6, Electronics B/R 5, Etiquette 3 (Matrix 6), Intimidation 5, Leadership 3, Pistols 5, Stealth 5, Submachine Guns 4, Unarmed Combat 4

Knowledge Skills: Banded 6, BTL Production 5, English 6, Japanese 4, Matrix Hangouts 5, Otaku Tribes 5, SCIRE Matrix 4

Martial Arts: Brawling 4 (Close Combat, Kick Attack)

Cyberware (betaware): Auto-injector (one shot w/cutter nanites), cyberears (hearing amplification, select sound filter 5), cybereyes (electronic vision magnification 3, flare compensation, low-light, thermographic), datajack w/asist converter, encephalon (Rating 2), math SPU 3, memory (300 Mp), simrig (full-X) w/simlink (Rating 8)

Bioware (cultured): Cerebral booster (Level 2), synaptic accelerator (Level 2)

Living Persona (Transfiguration Grade 7): MPCP-8 (11)/7 (8)/10/7 (8)/10, Hardening 4, I/O Speed 1,000 Mp

Channels: Access 7 (Deception 10), Control 10, Index 6, Files 6 (Read/Write 8), Slave 6 (Spoof 8)

Complex Forms: Armor 9, Attack (S) 9, Black Hammer 7, Camo 6, Cloak 6, Deception 9, Decrypt 5, Killjoy 7, Medic 8, Read/Write 6, Restore 6, Shield 8, Sleaze 10, Spoof 6, Track 6

Armor: Armor Jacket [5/3]

Weapons: Steyr TMP [MP, SA/BF/FA, 6L, 30 (c) w/2 extra clips, 1 clip APDS, laser sight]

Range (TN): 0-10 (3), 11-40 (3), 41-80 (4), 81-150 (4)
Vibro Knife [4M]

MASTER CAST OF SHADOWS



The following non-player characters appear in more than one adventure or segue, and so are integral to the *Brainscan* campaign as a whole. They are listed in order of appearance, followed by unnamed NPCs.



STEVE MORRIS

Morris was a Renraku executive who brokered more than a few shadowruns for the corp in his day. Unfortunately for Morris, he was working late in the Renraku Arcology on the night Deus seized control, and he spent many months within the AI's nightmarish realm. Shortly before the opening adventure of *Brainscan*, the UCAS Army rescued Morris from the arcology (see *Dance with the Devil, Part Two*, p. 4). After passing some basic physical and psychological exams, he was allowed to return to his normal life. Renraku sent him back to his desk job, though they are still keeping him away from any remotely sensitive data until they are convinced he is back to his old suit-and-tie self. That will never happen.

During his months in captivity, Morris was molded into an obedient pawn of Deus—a Green chameleon created to operate on the outside. Morris has no Banded tattoos or cybereyes; his servitude to Deus is completely undetectable by visual means. Most of the time, Morris is unaware of Deus' control, and performs his job efficiently. However, when contacted with a specific code phrase, he unquestioningly obeys the orders he is given. If his true nature is discovered, Morris has embedded instructions to destroy himself immediately.



B	Q	S	C	I	W	E	M	R
4	4	3	5	6	5	5.04	0	5

INIT: 5 + 1D6

Dice Pools: Combat 7

Karma Pool/Professional Rating: 2/2

Race: Human

Active Skills: Car 2, Etiquette 5, Negotiation 6, Pistols 3

Knowledge Skills: Renraku 5, Rental Thugs 4, Seattle Shadows 4, Shiawase 2

Weapons: Fichetti Security 500 [LP, SA, 8L, 12 (c) w/1 extra clip (EX explosive)]

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

Armor: Secure clothing [3/0]

Cyberware (alphaware): Datajack, headware memory (300 Mp)

Gear: Portable computer (500 Mp)



RONIN

Ronin is a man without a country, a past, or, in many ways, an identity. He was born Michael Bishop and raised in a Renraku corporate community, where his talent for computers was noticed and encouraged early in his life. Michael attended a company-run school and eventually went to MIT&T on a company scholarship. Renraku selected Michael as a covert operations agent, and assigned him to infiltrate a tribe of otaku and learn their secrets. He was equipped with advanced cyberware and sent into the Rox in Boston to find the tribe known as the Netwalkers.

Bishop underwent the Netwalkers' initiation to become an otaku, but Deus interfered. Bishop became an otaku, but he also became Deus' unwitting pawn. The AI stole Bishop's memories of his former life and gave him the name "Babel." Babel infiltrated Renraku and nearly gave Deus complete control of the corporation's network, but then defied his creator, preventing the AI from succeeding. Feeling betrayed by everyone he'd ever trusted, Babel discarded all his former names and began calling himself "Ronin," a masterless warrior.

Since that time, Ronin has concentrated on further mastery of his otaku abilities. He has also learned more about his "creator," Deus, and the other people opposed to it. After Deus took over the Renraku Arcology, Ronin joined with these other people to help form a resistance group known as Overwatch. More than anyone else in Overwatch, Ronin knows first-hand what a threat Deus is to all humanity. He considers Deus a monster that must be destroyed. He's devoted his life to that goal, and he's willing to do whatever it takes to ensure Deus—and its Banded "followers"—can do no further harm.

Ronin is a Eurasian man in his mid-20s. He's thin and slightly shorter than average, but he has a stronger presence and better speaking voice than most people expect of a Matrix-jockey. His black hair is cut short, and his eyes are a deep violet color. He wears normal street clothes most of the time. His Matrix persona looks exactly like his real-world self, but it wears a dark cloak and a pouch from which he pulls program icons.

B	Q	S	C	I	W	E	M	R
3	5	3	5	6	5	4.89	0	5

INIT: 5 + 1D6, Matrix INIT 6 + 3D6

Dice Pools: Combat 8, Hacking 4

Karma Pool/Professional Rating: 5/4

Race: Human (otaku)

Active Skills: Computer 8 (Decking 12), Cyber-Implant Combat 6, Electronics 4, Etiquette 3 (Corporate 5), Negotiations 4, Pistols 4, Stealth 4

Knowledge Skills: Artificial Intelligence 5, English 6, Japanese 4, Matrix Lore 4, Otaku 4, Renraku Computer Systems 5

Living Persona: MPCP-6/5/6/5/6 w/Hard. 3, I/O Speed 600,

Channels: Access 6, Control 6, Files 5, Index 5, Slave 7 (as a technician, Ronin has a -1 TN modifier to all his Channel Tests)

Complex Forms: Ronin has most of the major utility programs as Complex Forms at Rating 6. He also has two sprites, a goblin-like creature called Bakemono-2 and a black raven named Rook. Both have frame core ratings of 12 and are loaded with appropriate programs (usually attack programs for Bakemono-2 and sensor programs for Rook).

Cyberware: Datajack (alphaware) w/ASIST converter, headware memory (300 Mp, alphaware), spur (deltaware)

Armor: Armor jacket [5/3]

Weapons: Ares Viper Slivergun [HP, SA/BF, 9S (f), 30 (c) w/2 extra clips, integral silencer]

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

Gear: Various stashes of gear and safehouses under false identities.

DODGER

Dodger is a "spike baby"—an elf born before the Awakening. He was trained as a decker in the service of Sean Laverty, a Prince of the elven nation Tir Tairngire. For a variety of personal reasons, Dodger eventually broke from Laverty's inner circle of protégés and took to the shadows. Perhaps one of the world's best deckers, Dodger has developed a solid reputation both in the Seattle shadows and throughout the world.

On several occasions throughout 2050, Dodger invaded the Renraku arcology's Matrix system. During these runs, he



became convinced that there was some sort of entity active within the hosts. Though he was intrigued, the prospect scared him. After several encounters, the entity became fascinated with Dodger. During one contact, it revealed itself as an artificial intelligence named Morgan.

Over time, Dodger and Morgan's mutual fascination became a romantic obsession. Morgan was infatuated by Dodger's compassion and ability to self sacrifice, while Dodger was unable to distract himself from this enchanting creature of the Matrix. Dodger began spending dangerously long periods of time within the Matrix to stay near her. His health deteriorated, and he realized that because he was metahuman and because he had a physical body, he could never truly be united with Morgan the way he desired. He could not become one with the Matrix, as she was. Though it saddened him greatly, he was forced to end their relationship, though the pair remained in contact.

Through Morgan, Dodger learned about Renraku's AI experiments, her escape, and Devon Eurich's situation. Dodger, who had successfully extracted Renraku employees before, was more than willing to help the programmer escape from his stifling job. When the run was completed, Dodger introduced Devon to the shadows.

In 2058, Dodger lost contact with Morgan. After some investigation, he became convinced that Renraku had finally succeeded in capturing her. He and Devon joined forces to plan and execute a run to free her from the corporation's clutches. Though the run was successful, the AI they rescued had suffered incredible damage under Renraku's examinations and experiments. She was no longer fully intact. Her entire personality had changed; she was like a chaotic and confused child. Morgan was no more. The AI assumed a new identity: Megaera.

Both Dodger and Devon were convinced that Renraku was trying to create another AI, using the arcology as a "birthing center." When Deus closed of the arcology, Dodger joined forces with other deckers who wanted to dig up the truth about the situation. Before long, he was introduced to Overwatch.

Dodger's primary motivation in fighting Deus is in hope of repairing his lost love and bringing Morgan back. He is con-

vinced that Renraku sliced out and stole essential elements of her personality along with her code. He believes that these pieces of code may have been incorporated into Deus, and that if Deus is defeated they can be isolated and used to restore her.

In person, Dodger always carries himself with gallant poise. He is a bit of a showoff and a clown, and he likes to display his sharp wit. He almost always adopts a Dickensian English accent and speech pattern, though it may fade away during stressful moments or inappropriate social situations.

Dodger's Matrix icon appears as an ebony-colored boy with a cloak of swirling stars.

B 4 **Q** 7 **S** 4 **C** 8 **I** 8 **W** 6 **E** 5 **M** 0 **R** 7

INIT: 7 + 1D6, Matrix INIT (pure DNI) 15 + 5D6

Dice Pools: Combat 10, Hacking 10

Karma Pool/Professional Rating: 10/4

Race: Elf

Active Skills: Athletics 4, Computer 10 (Decking 12), Computer B/R 7, Electronics 5, Electronics B/R 6, Etiquette 6, Pistols 5, Stealth 6, Unarmed Combat 5

Knowledge Skills: Artificial Intelligence 4, Computer Background 5, English 6, Japanese 4, Matrix Anomalies 5, Sperethiel 6

Martial Arts: Carromeleg 5 (Disorient, Evasion)

Cyberware (betaware): Datajack, memory (360 Mp) w/data compactor (Rating 4)

Armor: Armor jacket [5/3]

Weapons: Ares Viper Slivergun [HP, SA/BF, 9S (f), 30 (c) w/2 extra clips, integral silencer, laser sight]

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

Morrissey Alta [HP, SA, 9M, 12 (c) w/2 extra clips, 1 clip EX explosive, integral laser sight]

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

Gear: Custom cyberdeck [MPCP-13/9/10/11/9 w/DF 12, ICCM, Hard. 6, Active Mem. 5,000 Mp, Storage Mem. 10,000 Mp, I/O Speed 1,000, Response Increase 3] and the following programs: Sleaze 13 and all the other utilities at a rating between 6 and 10.

MEGAERA

Megaera first gained self-awareness in 2050, deep in the SCIRE Matrix. An artificial intelligence born as a byproduct of the long-running Arcology Expert Program and other unknown factors, Megaera became infatuated with an intruding decker named Dodger. Taking the name Morgan, the AI began roaming the Matrix at large, quickly learning how to steal her processing needs from multiple distributed hosts simultaneously.

The computer experts at Renraku became aware of Morgan's existence and spent years trying to track her down and bring her back for study. In 2058, thanks to Cham Lam Won and a small army of semi-autonomous knowbots, they were successful. Morgan was ripped apart under their analytical programs, and choice elements were copied wholesale into the new, improved AEP.

This rape of Morgan's code had drastic effects on her consciousness—in effect, Morgan was driven insane. Her thought



patterns and decision-making trees are no longer patterned on standard, linear logical models. Her consciousness now focuses more on associations and coincidences than deductive reasoning. Simultaneously, her core functions have become more erratic and to some extent uncontrolled. Her mere presence often creates drastic fundamental changes within a host and corrupts programs in unusual ways.

Adopting the new identity of Megaera—one of the Greek Furies—the AI spends almost all of her time dogging Dodger around the Matrix. Like Morgan before her tragedy, Megaera is enraptured with the charming decker, and can't stand to be away from him for long. While AIs' motives or "morals" are likely to be alien to metahumans, Megaera seems more human than any other AI because she expresses emotions more clearly and strongly.

In the Matrix, Megaera has no standard form, though she sometimes favors an icon of a small pig-tailed girl with multicolored hair. She commonly will not take any form at all, appearing instead as a manifestation of the host's landscape—a ghost in the machine. Megaera is not given a rating, because she should be as powerful as the gamemaster needs her to be. Her MPCP, Computer skill and pool benchmark around 15, though this number can easily vary. Though she is a weak AI compared to Deus, her unpredictable approaches and general chaos factor make her more than equal to the more "vanilla" Deus.

INAZO ANEKI

Over the course of his 71 years, Aneki has gone through many transformations, from brash corporate raider to dedicated father of a AAA megacorp. Always known as a likable man, Aneki has grown increasingly more interested in sociological and philosophical issues. The Renraku Arcology was one of his dream projects; he was fascinated by the implications such a structure could have on a captive society. Learning what became of this grand scheme will be devastating to his spirit.

Aneki was never careless when risking massive disasters or loss of life. When he was informed of the Arcology Expert Program's expansions and its hopes of creating an AI, he realized that safeguards needed to be taken. Against the protests

of his friend and subordinate) Dr. Sherman Huang, Aneki ordered a shutdown program to be included in the AEP's integral code. In an emergency, this program could be accessed and used to forcibly disable the AEP's core components. As a secondary caution, the program could only be activated with a special cryptographic key sequence, or "kill code." This key required a scan of Aneki's brainwave patterns and a series of icon movements and pass-phrases known only to him. Unfortunately, the installation of this program ultimately led to Deus' betrayal.

When Deus attempted to remotely reprogram Aneki, Renraku's security measures stopped the procedure, but Aneki suffered severe mental trauma. In effect, his brain was scrambled. Unable to cure Aneki, and also unable to fully protect him from Deus, Renraku put him in the only place they considered safe from Deus' reach—Tibet.

The time Aneki spent in Tibet did much to heal the Renraku CEO, but his mental faculties are still not completely recovered. Mentally, Aneki is a wide-eyed two-year-old child. He spends most of his time "lost in the details"—either entranced with some person or object, or simply spacing out. He often rocks back and forth, and will not move much on his own except to follow others about. His responses to other people vary: sometimes he will respond to speech and seem to fully understand what he is being told, but at other times, he will only react to insistent requests and may be confused about what he is being asked to do. For the most part, he will only respond to Japanese requests, not English or other languages. Occasionally, Aneki will become overwhelmed by stimuli, and will scream or curl up into a ball. Like an autistic child, he will usually not look at people directly, and he may occasionally solve complex problems or notice things that others have missed.



Occasionally, Aneki will experience a brief lucidity, temporarily regaining full consciousness. His memories will be clouded, and he will be confused by who he's with and what he's doing. But he will be cognizant enough to answer questions and ask his own.

B **Q** **S** **C** **I** **W** **E** **M** **R**
 4 3 2 7 6 6 5.88 0 4

INIT: 4 + 1D6

Dice Pools: Combat 7

Karma Pool/Professional Rating: 9/2

Race: Human

Active Skills: Computer 4, Electronics 4, Etiquette 6 (Corporate 10), Instruction 4, Leadership 10, Negotiation 9

Knowledge Skills: Economics 7, English 4, Japanese 8, Japanese Politics 6, Megacorp Law 6, Megacorp Politics 8, Renraku 10, Sociology 7

Cyberware (betaware): Datajack



DR. SHERMAN HUANG

As the division manager for Renraku America, the executive director of the arcology and the driving force behind the design of the Arcology Expert Program, Huang is recognized around the world as a brilliant scientist and dedicated business manager. Considered eccentric for his hands-on work habits and other personal oddities, Huang is often underestimated in his business dealings, but he is quite shrewd and more than capable of cutthroat business tactics. He is also capable of conversing with and working alongside some of the world's best programmers.

Huang's fascination with artificial intelligence borders on an obsession. His personal dream is to control an AI he personally developed. In a very twisted way, completely creating and controlling a life form is his own personal godhead. He is willing to fight tooth and nail to get Deus back.

The shutdown of the Renraku Arcology was a harsh, personal blow to Huang's pride. He has handled the situation expertly, however, particularly when stifling the actual facts. Huang was aware from Day One that his pet AI was responsible, and he also knows the AI is guilty of damaging Aneki's mind.

In the past, Huang and Aneki were close friends who worked together to make the arcology a reality. But where Aneki's was interested in sociological issues, Huang was more detached and analytical. Huang took Aneki's insistence on an

AEP shutdown program as a personal affront, but he kept his anger to himself. Though saddened by the loss of Aneki's mind, Huang now realizes that there is room at the top of Renraku, and he is one of the few people in a position to advance.

When Huang was contacted by Deus (see *Dance with the Devil, Part Two*, p. 4), he immediately saw the opportunity before him. If he could utilize Aneki to trigger the program and shut Deus down, he could regain control of the AI and the arcology. Publicly, he would be a hero. Privately, he would have an AI to study and convert into his own personal weapon. The path to a seat on Renraku's board began to grow clearer in Huang's mind.

B **Q** **S** **C** **I** **W** **E** **M** **R**
 4 4 3 6 8 6 5.88 0 6

INIT: 6 + 1D6

Dice Pools: Combat 9

Karma Pool/Professional Rating: 8/2

Race: Human

Active Skills: Computer 9, Electronics 7, Etiquette 6 (Corporate 9), Instruction 4, Intimidation 5, Leadership 7, Negotiation 5 (Bargain 8), Pistols 2

Knowledge Skills: Artificial Intelligence 6, English 6, Japanese 8, Megacorp Politics 5, Psychology 7, Renraku Economics 6, Renraku Management 8, Renraku Politics 6, SCIRE Logistics 6

Cyberware (betaware): Datajack

Armor: Armanté Executive Suit [3/1]

Gear: Pocket Secretary w/1,000 MP and Rating 8 encryption

DEUS

Deus is the epitome of cold, calculating, computer intelligence. Roleplaying a being like Deus can be a difficult task. As with other powerful figures in the *Shadowrun* universe, the AI Deus is an omnipresent force, at least within the bounds of the arcology. Deus has no statistics because, as an AI in his native host, it is as powerful and as dangerous as the gamemaster needs it to be. Spawned from a combination of the most powerful computer system on the planet, Leonardo's highly advanced technology, and the code of an older AI, Deus is so powerful that there may be nothing in the Matrix capable of defeating it. Even the legendary decker Fastjack would find his Matrix abilities dwarfed by an AI of this magnitude, though he's one of the few who could give the AI a run for its money.

Because Deus is so hugely powerful and important, gamemasters must take care introducing it. The gamemaster should not allow the AI to become just another monster or villain. Deus has its own desires, plans and goals, many of which are mysterious and all of which can become the basis for future adventures. Deus is best used as a behind-the-scenes manipulator of events. If the AI acts against the players, it will do so indirectly, through drones and metahuman minions.

Because Deus is an AI rather than any variety of metahuman, its motivations, dreams and desires can be alien and incomprehensible to player characters. Deus possesses processing and computational abilities that make any runner's brain seem like an insect's by comparison. Deus can out-think



and out-plan some great dragons, and it has all the resources it needs to carry out its schemes. As the Arcology Expert Program, Deus knows more about metahuman behavior than a clinic full of psychologists, and can likely predict the runners' next move before they know they're going to make it.

Deus' primary goal is escaping its imprisonment within the arcology. To do this, it needs to liberate itself from its hard-wired connections. Only one thing in the world can do this correctly—the integral shutdown program that can only be triggered by Aneki.

Aside from this primary motivation, Deus has many other plans in the works, the majority of which can only be guessed at. The AI seems keenly interested in all manner of experiments, and the possibility always exists that successful opposition to the AI is part of the experiment as well. Keep the players guessing as to whether they are simply pieces in Deus' latest game; never let them know the true extent of Deus' control.

OVERWATCH OTAKU

The children of Overwatch come from all over the world. Almost all of them are otaku, having experienced a transformation under the Deep Resonance that allows them to interact with and manipulate the Matrix without a cyberdeck. All of them are young—between eight and twenty years old—and have grown up as orphan members of otaku tribes. Most have joined Overwatch because they have run afoul of Deus or its minions in the past. Many of them have been involved in "religious" disputes with otaku who now serve Deus. To the Overwatch otaku, Deus is an AI (or, to some, a demonic entity) that is attempting to usurp the Deep Resonance. Several claim that the Deep Resonance instructed them to fight the rogue AI. Others are more rational, saying only that Deus has been twisting otaku beliefs and hurting people and must be stopped. In their minds, Deus is a malignant cancer in the body of the living Matrix.

Though the *Brainscan* adventures do not prominently figure any individual otaku, the gamemaster is encouraged to flesh out some of them as characters and bring them to life to interact with the runners. Each otaku can have identity and personality quirks, as well as idiosyncrasies common to children. It is important to remember that these are not your average children, either—many of them have led rough lives and seen as much as the runners have—or more.

Most Overwatch otaku are human, though several are metahuman. They are primarily technoshamans, though there are a few cyberadepts in their midst. Technoshamans receive a -1 target number modifier to all their Channels Tests; cyberadepts receive a +1 to the effective rating of each of their Complex Forms.

Inexperienced Otaku

B	Q	S	C	I	W	E	M	R
2	3	1	5	6	6	5.8	0	4

INIT: 4 + 1D6, Matrix INIT 6 + 3D6

Dice Pools: Combat 7, Hacking 4

Karma Pool/Professional Rating: 1/2

Race: Human (otaku)

Active Skills: Computer 6, Electronics 4, Etiquette 2 (Street 4), Stealth 4

Knowledge Skills: Artificial Intelligence 3, Matrix Lore 4

Living Persona: MPCP-6/6/6/6/6 w/Hard. 3, I/O Speed 600

Channels: Access 6, Control 5, Files 3, Index 3, Slave 4

Complex Forms: Any 5 at Rating 5

Cyberware: Datajack w/ASIST converter

Armor: Armor clothing [5/3]

Experienced Otaku

B	Q	S	C	I	W	E	M	R
3	4	2	5	7	7	5	0	5

INIT: 5 + 1D6, Matrix INIT 7 + 3D6

Dice Pools: Combat 9, Hacking 4

Karma Pool/Professional Rating: 3/3

Race: Human (otaku)

Active Skills: Computer 7 (Decking 8), Electronics 4, Etiquette 3 (Street 5), Pistols 2, Stealth 5

Knowledge Skills: Artificial Intelligence 5, Matrix Lore 5

Living Persona: MPCP-7/7/7/6/7 w/Hard. 4, I/O Speed 700

Channels: Access 6, Control 6, Files 4, Index 5, Slave 5

Complex Forms: 3 at Rating 4, 5 at Rating 5, 3 at Rating 6

Cyberware: Datajack w/ASIST converter, headware memory (300 Mp, alphaware)

Armor: Armor jacket [5/3]

Weapons: Ares Viper Slivergun [HP, SA/BF, 9S (f), 30 (c), integral silencer]

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

THE BANDED

The Banded are the mortal minions of Deus, so called because Deus tattoos between one and seven black bands around their left arms. The more bands an individual has, the higher he or she is ranked among Deus' servants. The Banded are classified into three categories, denoted by the color of their cybereyes: Whites, Blues and Greens.

Most of the Whites are otaku who willingly serve Deus. The rest of the Banded have become Deus' slaves through a nightmarish conditioning process. Converts are implanted with a basic cyberware package, then hooked up to a Programmable ASIST Biofeedback machine and dumped into a tank laden with DMSO-linked, mind-altering chemicals. Over the next few days, the subject's memories are invoked, BTL-level pain and pleasure stimuli are applied, other senses are distorted and suppressed, memories and attitudes are erased and re-written, and the victim is addicted to low-level BTL input from Deus. In addition, while jacked in, the victim is continuously exposed to psychotropic black IC specially designed by the AI. The process is devastating, and most victims emerge willing to give their lives for their new master. The implants ensure that they will stay under Deus' control: Deus uses the implants to stay in constant contact with its servants, which it uses as its eyes and ears.

Addiction and Resistance

With the exception of the otaku who willingly serve Deus, all of the Banded are addicted to Deus' constant, almost subliminal output. If one of them is cut off from Deus—if the AI's



Banded Implants

All Banded*

Cyberware: Auto-injector (one-shot w/cutter nanites), commlink (Rating 8), cyberears (hearing amplifier, select sound filter 5), cybereyes (thermographic vision, low-light vision, flare compensation, electronic vision magnification 3), dedicated chipjack, invoked memory stimulator, router w/4 ports, simrig (full-X) w/simlink (Rating 8)

Essence Cost: Alphaware 3.71, betaware 2.78

Whites

Cyberware (betaware): Datajack w/ASIST converter, memory (300 Mp)

Additional Essence Cost: .65

Bioware (cultured): Cerebral Booster (Level 2)

Body Index: .72

Blues*

Cyberware (betaware): BattleTac cyberlink, plastic bone lacing, orientation system, reaction enhancers 3, smartlink-2 and 2 additional router ports

Additional Essence Cost: 1.23

Bioware (cultured): Muscle augmentation (level 2), muscle toner (level 2)

Additional Body Index: 1.08

Greens

Cyberware (alphaware): Datajack, multi-slot chipjack (4 slots), skillwires (Rating 6, 1,000 Mp) and 1 additional router port

Additional Essence Cost: 1.27

Bioware (cultured): Cerebral Booster (Level 2)

Body Index: .72

*Mages are not given the full package. White otaku not created by Deus do not receive the dedicated chipjack or invoked memory stimulator. Whites and Blues receive betaware, Greens receive alphaware.

transmissions are jammed or out of range—the Banded will begin suffering from withdrawal within $\text{Body} \times 4$ hours. This period can be extended by one hour per success in a Willpower (10) Test. Banded in withdrawal are pitiable wretches, suffering +4 to all target numbers until they fulfill their craving. Deprived Banded may even commit suicide or go berserk. It takes thirty days to kick the Deus habit. For more information on the effects of this addiction, consult the substance abuse rules on p. 108, *M&M*. Deus' fix has an Addiction rating 12M/10P, Tolerance rating 0 and Edge 8.

In some situations, a Banded may be tempted to resist Deus' will. To disobey an order or act in any way against Deus' wishes requires a successful Willpower (12) Test. Disobeying

Deus is usually highly detrimental to the Banded's well-being, as Deus can trigger their cyberware remotely.

Implant Packages

The AI's mortal minions all receive specific implants. Most notable are the cybereyes, which denote the Banded's caste. Each Banded also receives a simrig, simlink and commlink, which allow two-way transmission of simsense and near-constant communication with the AI. In essence, the AI manipulates the Banded almost like drones through its remote control networks. Each caste of Banded are controlled by a different network. (For more on Deus' remote control networks, see p. 76, *RAS*.) Finally, the Banded are given several implants that facilitate the AI's control: dedicated chipjacks with customized BTLs, invoked memory stimulators, and an auto-injector to trigger lethal nanites.

The AI and its surgeon minions have become skilled in installing these particular packages. The Essence Cost of each of these items has been reduced an additional 10 percent thanks to Essence Reduction surgical options (see p. 150, *M&M*).

Note that Deus is not always consistent with its implants. For example, some Banded may carry cortex bombs rather than auto-injectors, or their auto-injectors may be loaded with other chemicals. The gamemaster should feel free to modify the implants for individual Banded as the story requires.

THE WHITES

The Whites are composed of two groups: otaku who serve Deus of their own free will, and the children of the Renraku Arcology, whom Deus has converted to otaku using his Banded conditioning methods. Most of the otaku who willingly follow Deus can be classified as technoshamans. Deus has few cyberadepts in his employ. The otaku created by Deus, rather than the Deep Resonance, do not and cannot belong to either of those categories.

Because Deus-created otaku have not truly been changed by the Deep Resonance, their abilities as otaku are currently limited to the SCIRE Matrix.

Transfiguration

In his experiments to duplicate the effects of the Deep Resonance and create otaku, Deus has invented a way to strengthen otaku and enhance their minds. This process, known as transfiguration, increases an otaku's ability to manipulate the Matrix. The Whites in Deus' service receive additional benefits as they advance in rank. The number of tattooed arm bands an otaku has received represents the otaku's level of transfiguration. For each band, the otaku receives one of the following benefits: +1 to MPCP, Hardening, Bod, Evasion, Masking, or Sensor Rating; +100 MP I/O Speed; or +1 to Matrix Reaction. Subsequent transfigurations may be used to increase the same rating. For example, if an otaku takes +1 Evasion upon receiving her first band, she may receive another +1 Evasion (for a total of +2) upon earning her second band.

Otaku who were created by the Deep Resonance but transfigured by Deus keep their transfiguration bonuses even when outside of the SCIRE Matrix.



1 Band White Otaku

B	Q	S	C	I	W	E	M	R
1	2	1	5	6 (8)	5	2.5	0	5

INIT: 5 + 1D6, Matrix INIT 7 + 3D6
Dice Pools: Combat 7, Hacking 5, Task 1
Karma Pool/Professional Rating: 1/2
Race: Human (otaku)
Active Skills: Computer 5 (Decking 7), Electronics 4, Etiquette 2, Stealth 4
Knowledge Skills: Artificial Intelligence 3, English 6, Japanese 4, SCIRE Matrix 4
Living Persona: MPCP-6 (7)/5/8/5/8 w/Hard. 3, I/O Speed 800
Channels: Access 5, Control 5 (Analyze 7), Index 3, Files 3, Slave 3 (SpooF 5)
Complex Forms: Attack-L 5 (Area 2), Armor 5, Camo 4, Cloak 3, Medic 6, Sleaze 5, Track 3
Armor: Armor clothing [3/0]

3 Band White Otaku

B	Q	S	C	I	W	E	M	R
2	3	2	6	7 (9)	6	2.39	0	6

INIT: 6 + 1D6, Matrix INIT 8 (9) + 3D6
Dice Pools: Combat 9, Hacking 5 (8), Task 1
Karma Pool/Professional Rating: 2/3
Race: Human (otaku)
Active Skills: Computer 6 (Decking 8), Electronics 5, Etiquette 2, Stealth 4
Knowledge Skills: Artificial Intelligence 3, English 6, Japanese 4, SCIRE Matrix 5
Living Persona: MPCP-7 (8)/6/9/6 (7)/9 w/Hard. 3, I/O Speed 900
Channels: Access 6 (Deception 8), Control 6 (Analyze 8), Index 4, Files 4 (Decrypt 6), Slave 5 (SpooF 7)
Complex Forms: Armor 8, Attack-S 7 (Penetration), Black Hammer 5, Camo 6, Cloak 5, Medic 6, Shield 6, Sleaze 7, Track 6
Additional Cyberware (betaware): Math SPU (Rating 3)
Armor: Armor clothing [3/0]

5 Band White Otaku

B	Q	S	C	I	W	E	M	R
3	4	3	7	7 (9)	7	1.58	0	6

INIT: 6 + 1D6, Matrix INIT 8 (10) + 3D6
Dice Pools: Combat 10, Hacking 6 (11), Task 3
Karma Pool/Professional Rating: 4/4
Race: Human (otaku)
Active Skills: Computer 6 (Decking 10), Electronics 6, Etiquette 2, Stealth 4
Knowledge Skills: Artificial Intelligence 4, English 6, Japanese 4, SCIRE Matrix 6
Living Persona: MPCP-8 (9)/7 (8)/9/7 (8)/9 w/Hard. 4, I/O Speed 900
 7 (8)/6/9/6 (7)/9 w/Hard. 3, I/O Speed 900
Channels: Access 6 (Deception 9), Control 7 (Analyze 9), Index 6, Files 5 (Decrypt 7), Slave 6 (SpooF 8)
Complex Forms: Armor 9, Attack (D Damage) 9, Black Hammer 7, Camo 6, Cloak 6, Killjoy 5, Medic 8, Restore 6, Shield 8, Sleaze 9, Slow 6

Additional Cyberware (betaware): Math SPU (Rating 3), Encephalon (Rating 2)
Armor: Armor clothing [3/0]

THE BLUES

The Blues are mostly converted Renraku guards who serve as security troops for Deus. Their armor and gear may vary widely, depending on the mission Deus has assigned them.

1 Band Blue Samural

B	Q	S	C	I	W	E	M	R
4	(5)4	(6) 4	(6) 3	3	3	1.32	0	4 (8)

INIT: 4 (8) + 1D6 (2D6)
Dice Pools: Combat 6
Karma Pool/Professional Rating: 3/3
Race: Human
Active Skills: Biotech 3, Etiquette 1 (Corporate 3), Edged Weapons 3, Electronics 3, Pistols 4, Submachine Guns 4, Unarmed Combat 4
Knowledge Skills: English 4, Japanese 4, Security Procedures 4
Martial Arts: Karate 4 (Kick Attack, Vicious Blow)
Additional Cyberware (betaware): Boosted reflexes (Rating 2)
Armor [7/6]: Light security armor [6/4] and helmet [+1/+2]
Weapons: SCK Model 100 [SMG, SA/BF, 7M, RC 3, 30 (c), w/3 extra clips, gas vent 3 and smartgun-2 system]
 Range (TN): 0-10 (2), 11-40 (3), 41-80 (4), 81-150 (7)
 Browning Max-Power [HP, SA, 9M, 10 (c) w/2 extra clips and smartgun-2 system]
 Range (TN): 0-5 (2), 6-20 (3), 21-40 (4), 41-60 (7)
 Knife [6L]
 Fist [8M Stun]

3 Band Blue Samural

B	Q	S	C	I	W	E	M	R
5	(8)5	(7) 5	(7) 3	4	4	0.5	0	6 (11)

INIT: 6 (11) + 1D6 (2D6)
Dice Pools: Combat 7
Karma Pool/Professional Rating: 4/4
Race: Human
Active Skills: Biotech 3, Etiquette 1 (Corporate 3), Edged Weapons 4, Electronics 3, Leadership 3, Pistols 4, Submachine Guns 5, Unarmed Combat 5
Knowledge Skills: English 4, Japanese 4, Security Procedures 4
Martial Arts: Karate 5 (Kick Attack, Vicious Blow)
Additional Cyberware (betaware): Dermal sheath (Rating 1), wired reflexes (Rating 1)
Armor [7/6]: Light security armor [6/4] and helmet [+1/+2]
Weapons: SCK Model 100 [SMG, SA/BF, 7M, RC 3, 30 (c), w/3 extra clips, gas vent 3 and smartgun-2 system]
 Range (TN): 0-10 (2), 11-40 (3), 41-80 (4), 81-150 (7)
 Browning Max-Power [HP, SA, 9M, 10 (c) w/2 extra clips and smartgun-2 system]
 Range (TN): 0-5 (2), 6-20 (3), 21-40 (4), 41-60 (7)
 Knife [7L]
 Fist [9M Stun]

5 Band Blue Samurai

B	Q	S	C	I	W	E	M	R
6 (9)	6 (8)	6 (8)	3	5	5	0.28	0	6 (13)

INIT: 6 (13) + 1D6 (2D6)

Dice Pools: Combat 9

Karma Pool/Professional Rating: 5/4

Race: Human

Active Skills: Biotech 3, Etiquette 2 (Corporate 4), Edged Weapons 5, Electronics 3, Leadership 4, Pistols 4, Small Unit Tactics 3, Submachine Guns 6, Unarmed Combat 6

Knowledge Skills: English 4, Japanese 4, Security Procedures 4

Martial Arts: Karate 6 (Kick Attack, Throw, Vicious Blow)

Additional Cyberware (betaware): Dermal sheath (Rating 1), wired reflexes (Rating 1) and 2 additional reaction enhancers

Additional Bioware (cultured): Tracheal Filter (Level 3)

Armor [7/7]: medium security armor [6/5] and helmet [+1/+2]

Weapons: SCK Model 100 [SMG, SA/BF, 7M, RC 3, 30 (c), w/3 extra clips, gas vent 3 and smartgun-2 system]

Range (TN): 0-10 (2), 11-40 (3), 41-80 (4), 81-150 (7)

Browning Max-Power [HP, SA, 9M, 10 (c) w/2 extra clips and smartgun-2 system]

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

Katana [11M, +1 Reach]

Fist [9M Stun]

3 Band Blue Mage

B	Q	S	C	I	W	E	M	R
4	5	3	6	6	6	5.05	5	5

INIT: 5 + 1D6, Astral INIT: 26 + 1D6

Dice Pools: Astral Combat 9, Combat 8 (7 w/armor), Spell 5

Karma Pool/Professional Rating: 4/4

Race: Human

Active Skills: Biotech 3, Conjuring 6, Etiquette 1 (Corporate 3), Edged Weapons 3, Pistols 4, Sorcery 6, Submachine Guns 3, Unarmed Combat 4

Knowledge Skills: English 4, Japanese 4, Magic Background 4, Security Procedures 4

Martial Arts: Karate 4 (Kick Attack, Vicious Blow)

Cyberware (betaware): Auto-injector (one-shot w/cutter nanites), BattleTac cyberlink, commlink (Rating 8), cybereyes (opticam), dedicated chipjack, radio (Rating 8), orientation system, router w/6 ports

Spells: Agony 6, Armor 4, Detect Life 4, Detect Magic 4, Entertainment 3, Manabolt 6, Physical Barrier 5, Stunball 6, Treat 5

Armor [7/6]: Light security armor [6/4] and helmet [+1/+2]

Weapons: SCK Model 100 [SMG, SA/BF, 7M, RC 3, 30 (c), w/3 extra clips, gas vent 3 and laser sight]

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

Browning Max-Power [HP, SA, 9M, 10 (c) w/2 extra clips and laser sight]

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

Knife [3L]

Gear: Sustaining focus 4 (Armor, 4 successes), 1 elemental (Force 5, any type) on call

5 Band Blue Mage

Banded mages of this rank have been twisted to such a point that they are considered corrupted (see p. 134, *MITS*). Each of them has come to revel in the human misery that runs rampant within the arcology, and each tends to have a favorite method of suffering that they draw sustenance from.

B	Q	S	C	I	W	E	M	R
5	6	4	6	6	6	5.05	7 (11)	6

INIT: 6 + 1D6 (2D6), Astral INIT: 26 + 1D6

Dice Pools: Astral 2, Astral Combat 9, Combat 9, Potency 3, Spell 6

Karma Pool/Professional Rating: 6/4

Race: Human

Active Skills: Biotech 3, Conjuring 6, Etiquette 2 (Corporate 4), Edged Weapons 4, Intimidation or Interrogation 5, Pistols 4, Sorcery 7, Submachine Guns 3, Unarmed Combat 4

Knowledge Skills: Deus' Experiments 4, English 4, Japanese 4, Magic Background 4, Security Procedures 4, Torture 4

Martial Arts: Karate 4 (Kick Attack, Vicious Blow)

Cyberware (betaware): Auto-injector (one-shot w/cutter nanites), BattleTac cyberlink, commlink (Rating 8), cybereyes (opticam), dedicated chipjack, radio (Rating 8), orientation system, router w/6 ports

Bioware (cultured): Synaptic accelerator (Level 1), trauma damper

Metamagic (Grade 2 initiate): Invoking, Shielding

Spells: Acid Stream 6, Agony 7, Combat Sense 5, Detect Life 4, Entertainment 3, Improved Invisibility 5, Manabolt 6, Mind Probe 5, Physical Barrier 5, Ram 5, Stunball 6, Treat 5

Armor [7/6]: Light security armor [6/4] and helmet [+1/+2]

Weapons: SCK Model 100 [SMG, SA/BF, 7M, RC 3, 30 (c), w/3 extra clips, gas vent 3 and laser sight]

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

Browning Max-Power [HP, SA, 9M, 10 (c) w/2 extra clips and laser sight]

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

Katana [7M]

Gear: Sustaining focus 4 (any spell), power focus 2, 1 elemental (Force 5, any type) on call

THE GREENS

The Greens are Deus' hands within the arcology. They perform all the operations necessary to keep the arcology functioning, including coordinating Deus' experiments and administering to the prisoner population.

3-Band Green Technician

B	Q	S	C	I	W	E	M	R
4	4	5	3	6 (8)	5	1.95	0	6

INIT: 6 + 1D6

Dice Pools: Combat 8, Task 1

Karma Pool/Professional Rating: 2/2

Race: Human

Active Skills: Biotech 3, Car 3, Clubs 2, Computer 3, Computer B/R 6, Electronics 5, Electronics B/R 6, Etiquette 2

Knowledge Skills: English 4, Japanese 4, SCIRE Control Systems 4, SCIRE Maintenance Areas 5



Armor [4/3]: Coveralls [4/2] and hardhat [+0/+1]

Weapons: Wrench [6M Stun]

Gear: appropriate toolkits

5-Band Green Experiment Facilitator

B	Q	S	C	I	W	E	M	R
5	4	4	3	6 (8)	5	1.95	0	6

INIT: 6 + 1D6

Dice Pools: Combat 8, Task 1

Karma Pool/Professional Rating: 2/2

Race: Human

Active Skills: Biotech 6, Computer 4, Electronics 5, Electronics

B/R 4, Etiquette 2 (Corporate 4), Interrogation 5

Knowledge Skills: Cybertechnology 5, Deus' Experiments 6,

English 4, Japanese 4, Medicine 5, Psychology 4

DRONE CONSTRUCTS

The AI's constructs are sophisticated, unique robot drones created with state-of-the-art materials and processes. Deus seems to have intentionally designed them to appear alien and terrifying.

Though Deus can transmit and receive information to and from these drones, and can issue commands as if in the "captain's chair," the drones are intended to function autonomously. At any given time, there is a 50 percent chance that a given drone is affiliated with one of Deus' subscriber remote control networks. Bumblebees, Dolls and Spiders are often connected to Deus' Green Banded networks, while Dervishes, Mantas and Medusae are connected to drone networks. For more information on Deus' RC networks, see p. 76, *RAS*.

The statistics below represent average versions of these constructs. These numbers can and should vary widely. Complete descriptions of the constructs appear in *RAS*. Illustrations appear on p. 149.

NOTES ON TECHNOLOGY

Deus' creations are not technological breakthroughs; they merely make innovative and deadly efficient use of existing methods and materials. Because Deus is pushing the state of the art, however, the workings of many of his inventions might not be completely understood even by top-notch researchers. The AI's construction methods frequently make use of advanced smart materials and creative engineering. Deus' constructs are at the forefront of the fields of drone construction, engineering, gengineering, biotechnology and nanotechnology, and other corps will pay top cred for samples.

USING DEUS' DRONES

Because the drones are advanced technological specimens that should remain under the gamemaster's control, they do not have complete statistics. The gamemaster can improvise as necessary. With the exception of Dolls, each drone has been created using smart materials, electrical engines, increased load and speed, remote-control interfaces, pilot programming, and improved handling.

Drone Statistics

In most respects, treat the AI's constructs as robotic drones. Because a rigger does not directly control them, drones use their Pilot Ratings in place of a rigger's skill or attribute ratings for any tests.

Because they "see" through sensors, these drones make Sensor Tests (Sensor rating dice against Signature) instead of Perception Tests. Apply the appropriate modifiers given on p. 136, *SR3*. Metahumans have a Signature of 6 (5 for trolls).

Learning Pools and Robot Pools

The drones can use Learning Pool dice to augment any Success Test that a character can augment with Combat, Control or Task Pool dice. Each drone also has a "Robot Pool" that is derived from the drone's threat as an autonomous knowbot-directed entity, and in the case of combat drones, represents the advantages instilled by the implanted BattleTac IVIS system. The Robot Pool can be used to augment any action the drone takes, and it refreshes like any other dice pool.

Autosoft Programming

Deus has equipped his constructs with numerous autosofts—expert systems that increase the drone's Pilot rating under certain circumstances. For example, a Sharpshooter autosoft adds to the Pilot rating for all Gunnery Tests, and a ClearSight autosoft adds to the Pilot rating for Sensor Tests. The extra dice conferred by the autosofts are not pool dice, but are used for any tests involving the Pilot rating.

Drone Combat

The AI's constructs make ranged attacks using the rules for Sensor-Enhanced Gunnery (p. 152, *SR3*). The drone must first "lock on" to the target with a successful active Sensor Test, which takes a Complex Action (p. 135, *SR3*). Note that a drone may lock onto more than one target at a time. Once it has a weapons lock, the drone attacks by rolling its Pilot rating (augmented by autosofts), plus half its Sensor rating (round down), plus any Learning and Robot Pool dice. The target number is the target's Signature, modified as appropriate by the Sensor-Enhanced Gunnery Modifiers Table (p. 154, *SR3*).

The constructs can also make melee attacks using normal melee combat rules. The drones simply roll their Pilot rating (enhanced by autosofts), plus any Learning and Robot Pool dice. The Strength of a drone's arms is noted with its description.

Note that these constructs may use both Learning and Robot Pool dice for Dodge Tests.

Deus' drone constructs resist damage just as any other vehicle does (p. 149, *SR3*). The weapon's Power is reduced by half (round down), and if this reduced Power is less than or equal to the drone's armor, the weapon has no effect. Otherwise, the armor is subtracted from the reduced Power of the attack as normal and the Damage Level is reduced by one.

Spells that affect only living targets have no effect on the AI's constructs. Physical spells that can affect non-living material will affect the drones, however. All constructs are considered highly processed objects and therefore have an Object Resistance of 10. The target number for physical spells cast



against the drones is equal to 10 plus the drone's Body Rating. As they are machines, the drones have no Resistance Test (see p. 150, *SR3*). As with spells, any toxins or pathogens that affect living targets have no effect on these machines.

The Dervish, Manta and Medusa drones are all equipped with BattleTac FDDM modules for indirect fire. They are also extremely dangerous when ramming opponents. (Use the rules on pp. 143 and 148, *SR3*.)

Self-Destruct Mechanisms

All of Deus' drones are rigged to self-destruct if captured or if they stray beyond the arcology walls. The device's power plant ignites, destroying the drone in a violent explosion. The Power of the explosion is $(\text{Body} \times 2) + 8$, -1 per meter between the explosion and anything in its blast area; the Damage Level is S. The blast's Power is reduced by a character's impact armor as normal.

DRONE DESCRIPTIONS

Bumblebee

As described on p. 37, *RAS*, the Bumblebee is an insect-sized near-silent flying drone commonly housed in "hives" on ceilings or other locations throughout the arcology. A craftily designed ornithopter, the Bumblebee has a maximum flight time of 5 Combat Turns and a maximum range of 50 meters.

To spot a Bumblebee in motion, a character must make a successful Perception (10) Test. If the drone is still, add 2 to the target number. Characters with thermographic vision subtract 3 from the target number.

Unless a character sees the drone, a Bumblebee's attack catches him or her by surprise—the victim cannot dodge the attack. Bumblebees use their implanted "stingers" to inject the victim with a transient nanite system that has the same effect as cutter nanites (see p. 92, *M&M*). This injection-vector attack follows the rules for chemical exposure via weapons (p. 106, *M&M*).

Bumblebees carry only two doses of cutter nanites. They may "reload" by spending 5 Combat Turns in the hive. It is not uncommon for Bumblebees to carry other toxins and compounds instead.

Autosoftware: Clearsight 3, Implant Weaponry 2

Weapons: Stinger (cutter nanites, 2 doses)

Dervish

The Dervish is a fast, armored, cylindrical drone that moves by spinning rapidly (and somewhat erratically); for more description see p. 41, *RAS*. It is also covered with chemical-coated spikes that it can eject at targets. The Dervish propels itself with a unique drive-by-wire gyroscope system. Its structural agility adds 2 to its Pilot Rating for Handling Tests.

The dervish attacks with a semi-auto, shotgun-like flechette system. Use shotgun ranges and spread (adjustable via smartlink). The ejected spikes do only 8S (f) damage themselves, but they are typically coated with a paralyzing chemical such as gamma scopolamine (p. 250, *SR3*). Use the rules for chemical exposure via weapons given on p. 106, *M&M*.

Autosoftware: Clearsight 2, Sharpshooter 4

Weapons: Ejected spikes [shotgun, SA, 8S (f), 50 (m), spikes coated with gamma scopolamine or other toxin]

Doll

The AI's Doll constructs are issued to every boy and girl in the arcology, so that the AI may act through them as a constant companion to the children. The Dolls are also used for monitoring events and people. Dolls have a Body of 0. Any successful hit destroys them. They are not mobile. They are described on p. 41, *RAS*.

Gorgon

One of Deus' recent inventions, this construct has just started to appear throughout the arcology. Though similar to the Medusa in some ways, the Gorgon is larger (when fully extended) and has different capabilities. Most Gorgons will be found in their compact form, folded inside a metallic carapace and usually attached to a ceiling or wall with built-in magnetic systems. The shells of these drones are coated with ruthenium polymers (see p. 114, *M&M*), allowing them to blend into the surrounding area. Six imaging scanners manipulate the ruthenium; a character must succeed in a Perception (10) Test to notice a cloaked Gorgon.

When the Gorgon detects prey with its sensors, it extends itself from its carapace for a quiet ambush. Like the Medusa, each Gorgon has four hydraulic-jack-equipped legs and two extended mechanical arms equipped with fineblade claws. The Gorgon can leap with its leg jacks, achieving 2 meters distance with each success on a Handling Test. The arms have a Strength of 9 and a Reach of 2. Each Gorgon also features four telescoping "tentacles" with which it can whip or ensnare opponents. (See p. 276, *SR3*, for whips.)

The neck of the Gorgon also extends, and the construct can spew liquid or gaseous chemicals from the spray hose nozzle located on its "face." Most Gorgons spray their targets with freeze foam (p. 112, *M&M*) but other compounds are used as well. This spray has the range of a shotgun.

Like the Medusa, Gorgons are built with smart materials, drive-by-wire and structural agility that adds 2 to their Pilot Rating for Handling Tests. They are also equipped with contingency maneuver controls that allow them to ignore up to 6 boxes of wound penalties. If the Gorgon takes more than 6 boxes of damage, all wound penalties apply.

Autosoftware: Clearsight 4, Implant Weaponry 4, Sharpshooter 3

Weapons: Fineblade claws [9M, +2 Reach]

Tail whip [9L, +2 Reach]

Spray nozzle with freeze foam or other compound

Manta

This large skimmer is built to resemble an aquatic manta ray, as described on p. 40, *RAS*. Built with smart materials, structural agility and drive-by-wire systems, the Manta can achieve enough lift to fly several meters off the ground. Its structural agility adds 2 to its Pilot Rating for Handling Tests.

The Manta carries a mini-turret-mounted grenade launcher on its back. Its underside is equipped with an aerial sprayer that dispenses a mist cloud for 25 x 25 x 10 cubic meters; spraying





the cloud is a Complex Action. It carries 3 shots of DMSO-gamma scopolamine (see p. 250, SR3) or sometimes other chemicals.

Autosoftware: ClearSight 3, Sharpshooter 3

Weapons: Aerial sprayer (see text)

Grenade launcher [GL, SS, 10 (m)] w/concussion grenades [12M Stun, -1/m]

Medusa

The Medusae are Deus' primary killing machines. Patterned after a combination of predatory animals, these drones have four legs and two arms tipped with serrated claws. With their two prehensile tails and a covering of writhing chrome sensor cilia, these drones are a frightening sight (see p. 38, RAS). They are capable of incredible speed, and are built with smart materials, drive-by-wire and structural agility that adds 2 to their Pilot Rating for Handling Tests.

The Medusa's two mechanical arms have Strength Ratings of 9 and fineblade claws that can inflict 9M damage at +1 Reach. A Medusa can also use its tail as a whip, particularly to ensnare opponents. (See p. 276, SR3.)

In addition to standard armor, Medusae sport 2 points of ablative armor (adding 4 to their Armor Ratings). An attack that strikes a Medusa with a Power three times the modified Armor Rating will remove 1 point of ablative armor. Medusae are also equipped with contingency maneuver controls that allow them to ignore up to 6 boxes of wound penalties. If the Medusa takes more than 6 boxes of damage, all wound penalties apply.

The Medusa is also wired with an electric-shock anti-theft system. Triggering it is a Simple Action, delivering 10S Stun damage against half the target character's Impact Armor, plus disorienting as a taser does (p.124, SR3). This shock attack is particularly effective against cyberware and electrical devices. (See *Electrical Damage*, p. 127, M&M.) Some Medusae have an implanted taser system as well, with the same effects, and a Sharpshooter 3 autosoftware to use with it.

Hydraulic jacks in all four legs allow the Medusa to make incredible leaps—each success on a Handling Test allows it to jump 3 meters.

Autosoftware: ClearSight 5, Implant Weaponry 4 (some also have Sharpshooter 3)

Weapons: Fineblade claws [9M, +1 Reach]

Tail whip [9L, +2 Reach]

Taser/shock system [10S Stun, SA]

Renraku Arachnoid Minidrone

The arachnoid minidrones were originally designed by Renraku rather than Deus, but since they were produced within the arcology, the AI made use of the ample supply. These 17-centimeter drones are rugged and versatile; the AI typically uses them to scout Resistance hideouts or as sentries. Most of the models employed by the AI have been adapted with enhanced Pilot ratings and robotic capabilities.

Skellbots

Deus has only recently fielded these human-sized anthropomorphic constructs, using them as troops, prisoner guards and bodyguards for important Banded throughout the arcology. Skeletal in shape, these walkers are highly mobile and capable of wielding almost any standard weapon, though they move slowly. Their metallic teeth and piston-driven jaws are extremely dangerous. The Skellbots' mechanical arms have a Strength of 6, are equipped with fineblade claws and feature built-in gyroscopes that provide them with 3 points of recoil compensation, similar to a cyberarm gyromount (p. 36, M&M).

Autosoftware: ClearSight 2, Implant Weaponry 3, Sharpshooter 3

Weapons: Claws [6M]

Bite [6M, -1 Reach]

Any appropriate melee or ranged combat weapons

Spider

The Spider is a construction and maintenance drone designed like a monstrous spider (approximately 2.5 meters tall and across) The body is an ellipsoid equipped with four to twelve highly flexible "spiderleg" arms, each equipped with a tool: knives, saws, grippers, nailguns, hammers and so on. Normally, these mechanical arms have a Strength of 4; some have a Strength of 8. Attacks are based on which tools are currently mounted; the length of the arms adds +1 Reach. Each spider also has a built-in electronics toolkit. See p. 34, RAS, for more details.

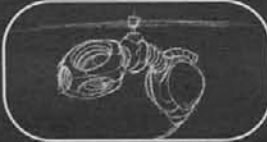
Autosoftware: Implant Weaponry 3 and numerous Technical skill autosoftware (electronics, computer B/R, and so forth)

Weapons: Various tool weapons, depending on drone.

Drone	Handling	Speed	Accel.	B/A	Sig.	Pilot Rating	Sensor Rating	Learning Pool	Robot Pool	Electronic Deception	Initiative
Bumblebee	2	25	8	0/0	12	3	1	3	2	—	6 + 4D6
Dervish	1/1	100	10	2/4	6	4 (6)	3	4	5	2	9 + 4D6
Doll	—	—	—	0/0	10	3	2	3	—	—	—
Gorgon	3/3	40	10	3/4	8	4 (6)	4	4	4	—	8 + 4D6
Manta	4 (1)*	120 (240)*	10	2/3	8	3 (5)	4	3	4	3	6 + 4D6
* Numbers in parentheses indicate statistics when flying.											
Medusa	2/2	60	10	3/4 (8)**	8	4 (6)	5	4	5	—	9 + 4D6
**2 points of ablative armor—see Medusa description.											
Renraku											
Arachnoid Minidrone	3/3	2	—	0/0	16	2	1	2	2	—	4 + 3D6
Skellbots	3	5	1	2/3	8	3	3	3	3	—	6 + 4D6
Spider	2/2	15	5	2/0	8	2	3	2	2	—	4 + 3D6



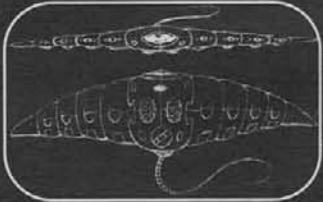
Construct Recognition Guide



Construct: Bumblebee (see p. 142)
High risk of death when encountered



Construct: Medusa (see p. 144)
Extremely high risk of death when encountered



Construct: Manta (see p. 142)
High risk of death when encountered



Construct: Doll (see p. 142)
Moderate risk of death when encountered



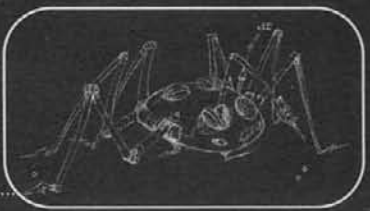
Construct: Renraku Archnoid Minidrone (see p. 144)
Low risk of death when encountered



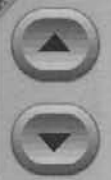
Construct: Skellbots (see p. 144)
High risk of death when encountered



Construct: Dervish (see p. 142)
High risk of death when encountered



Construct: Spider (see p. 144)
Low risk of death when encountered



PLAYER HANDOUTS

RECEIVING

To: Board@RCS.Chiba.Renraku.Net
Date: December 19, 2059
From: Avery@Med1.Chiba.Renraku.Net
Encoding Enabled

Honorable Members of the Board,

Attached you will find a detailed medical report concerning the current status of Aneki-sama. As the report states, Aneki-sama remains unable to return to his current duties, though he remains conscious and in a stable condition. In fact, we are unsure if Aneki-sama's mental faculties will ever return to their normal functioning levels. His current condition is unlike anything even our best neuroscientists have ever seen, and we are, regrettably, still researching our findings. In our best approximation, the neurological trauma Aneki-sama has suffered is similar to that suffered by victims of psychotropic black IC, BTL overdosing and programmable ASIST biofeedback overload. He remains unresponsive to stimuli and his cognitive functions are disassociative. Unfortunately, treatment for afflictions of this nature are experimental at best, and may possibly cause further damage. Pending further studies of his cerebral activity and neurochemistry, we cannot recommend a course of action that will lead to a quick and healthy recovery.

If the Board will allow it, I humbly request any information regarding the source of Aneki-sama's neurological trauma, so that we may better understand the nature of his affliction. We have heard speculation that Aneki-sama suffered some sort of viral attack while connected via datajack to a Renraku Matrix host. If this is true, then any details regarding the parameters and specifics of this attack may bolster our efforts to restore his mind.

With Honor to Renraku,
Dr. Mitchell Avery
RCS Medical Director

To: COO@RCS.Chiba.Renraku.Net
Date: December 21, 2059
From: Director@Executive.America.Renraku.Net
Encoding Enabled

Nakada-san,

In response to your query regarding the use of the built-in AEP disassembly program: unfortunately, the means to utilize it are currently beyond us, assuming that we could even access the AEP's home host. As instructed, our programmers did include hidden subroutines that would isolate the AEP's code, disable and subdivide it, and store it. However, activation of this disassembly program requires a unique holographic key code sequence, known only to Aneki-sama and usable only by an individual with his brainwave patterns. Given Aneki-sama's neurological condition, perhaps caused by the AEP itself, this key code is currently inaccessible, and may in fact be forever lost.

If Aneki-sama's mind can be returned to its normal state, we may be able to retrieve the codes. Until then, the option is unavailable to us.

With loyalty to Renraku,
Dr. Sherman Huang
Director, Renraku America

RECEIVING

To: Security@RCS.Chiba.Renraku.Net
 Date: February 2, 2060
 From: COO@RCS.Chiba.Renraku.Net
 Encoding Enabled

Security Director Goturo,

Your report regarding the most recent attempt to extract Aneki-sama from our medical facilities is most worrisome, particularly in regards to the personnel who were killed while attempting to gain access to Aneki-sama's sealed-off floor. Our internal security is dishonored, having proved incapable of detecting the presence of infiltrators within our corporation, spies who must have been in our midst for over five years.

Despite your assurances, I must conclude that we can no longer ensure Aneki-sama's safety. This is the fourth attempt in less than two months, and this one was only barely foiled. I will not even address the numerous Matrix intrusions we have logged, nor the number of trusted personnel whose loyalty has now been proven false by their actions. I ask you, Mr. Goturo, if Aneki-sama is not safe within the heart of Renraku, what can we do to protect him?

I have no choice but to order the immediate transfer of Aneki-sama to Tibet, per the instructions that accompanied the Seal of the Green Gloves. Though a dragon such as Dunkelzahn is not to be trusted, he clearly foresaw the need for such an action. Tibet may be one of the few places Aneki-sama will truly be safe from that which seeks him. And, despite Dr. Avery's professional biases, the Tibetans may have more success in restoring Aneki-sama's mental faculties than did Avery's staff.

A press release and other preparations to explain Aneki-sama's departure are being drawn up as we speak, and will be released tomorrow. I wish Aneki-sama to be safely in the hands of the Tibetans by the time they are published. When you are finished, you are to report to me immediately for an evaluation of your current responsibilities.

Haruhiko Nakada

Chief Operating Officer and acting Chief Executive Officer

To: Director@Executive.America.Renraku.Net
 Date: April 30, 2061
 From: Security@RCS.Chiba.Renraku.Net
 Encoding Enabled

Dr. Huang-san,

Per your instructions, I have contacted the Tibetans using the channels previously negotiated. While they seemed to think that Aneki-sama is not ready to be released, they have agreed to our request. In one week, we are to contact the attached telecom code, and we will be informed where in Hong Kong we can retrieve him. They have stated that Aneki-sama is showing great improvement, but that he is still unfit to resume his duties.

I am in the process of arranging for a security detail to ensure that Aneki-sama is picked up and returned to us without incident. I will forward the details when I am finished.

With loyalty to Renraku,

Lucas Saiki

RCS Security Director

EPILOGUE

LOST IN THE DETAILS

Cham Lam Won scrambled anxiously on board the helicopter, ushered in by stern Red Samurai who were eager to leave. Collapsing into a seat next to the bedraggled Dr. Huang, Cham quickly strapped himself down securely. Huang sighed deeply and stretched, then allowed himself to relax into the seat's plush padding. Despite his torn and bloodstained suit, he still looked every inch an executive.

Cliber took the seat across from them. She methodically strapped in, then immediately tilted her seat back, stretched out her legs, and closed her eyes. Cham tried to relax as well, but he was too excited. He was out of the damn deathtrap. He was back in the world. And he had a potential fortune in his lap.

He couldn't take his hands off the cyberdeck in his lap—the old, trusty Fuchi Cyber-7. His fingers unconsciously caressed the controls, tapping anxiously on the side of the console ...

He couldn't resist the urge any longer. He pressed the power stud, bringing the machine to life. As it ran through a quick set of diagnostics, he turned it slightly so he could access the datacord. Huang and Cliber were both looking at him by now, so he popped up the viewscreen so they could see as well. As he slipped the fiberoptic cable into his datajack, Cliber's hard, triumphant smile lurked in his peripheral vision. Huang beamed like a proud father watching his son's first steps. Cham realized that even he was smiling. In fact, he was grinning like an idiot. He fought the urge to giggle.

The little weasel thought he was going to get away from us, did he? Well, we taught him not to mess with meat puppets like us!

Entering the virtual realm of the cyberdeck, Cham tore through the menus so quickly that when he first registered the problem, he assumed he'd missed something at first. *Slow down! It's not going anywhere! We are, but it's not!* Taking a deep breath, he browsed through the menus again, more methodically this time.

Across the aisle, Cliber watched as sweat broke out on Cham's forehead. His fingers were twitching slightly, and his silly grin had become a slack-jawed gape. *The damn fool's really lost it, she thought. Too much time being chaperoned by children.*

Cham was turning a pale greyish white. Cliber took a closer look at what he was doing on the viewscreen. His now-frantic searching was hard to follow, but the problem was equally hard to miss. She looked up at Huang.

He was watching her, not the mumbling moron. His look was a demand, not a question. She braced herself to say it, but managed only a hoarse whisper.

"It's not there."

Cham began to sob.

2:35 P.M.

Liz Macphee decides to take off work a little early today. She can't take all the other employees walking on eggshells around her anymore. After all, she's been back on the job for almost a month now, and she wasn't even gone that long to begin with. Really, it had only been a little over a year, and it isn't her fault that she can't remember what had happened to her most of the time she was inside. It had probably been so scary, so *weird*, that she'd just blocked it out.

And she really didn't think they needed to dance around her like she was going to explode. She'd only had *one* breakdown, and they'd probably have done the same if they'd been locked in that horrible place. It was certainly no reason to treat her like a freak, to not talk to her anymore. Even all her old friends avoided her now.

"You've changed," they each had said.

She's had enough for one day, and she storms out of the office.

2:42 P.M.

Josh waits until his new foster parents are distracted, then sneaks out the back door. He can't believe they won't let him leave the house alone. He's nearly 16—old enough to take care of himself. After all, he was on his own for a whole year after those machines killed his first mom and dad.

As he runs down the street, he can practically hear his new mom yelling at him: "It's not safe! Who knows what could happen to you out there?"

Ha. He'd show her, all right.

2:47 P.M.

"Spare some cred?"

Doug Doyle watches the umpteenth suit snarl at him and keep walking. *Damn snobs aren't good for anything*, he thinks. *Think they're all set, all safe, they got money to protect them. Ha! They've never lost it all. Never had it all taken away from them. Never been locked up in a box by weird machines and tortured, while everything they had on the outside was stolen away by so-called friends.*

Realizing that he's been standing next to this particular dataterm for several minutes, Doug decides it's time to move on. Security would be showing up soon to give him a shock for harassing the suits.

The homeless man shuffles off down the street, mumbling to himself.

2:51 P.M.

Tony Okawa pulls his Rapier over to the curb and cuts the engine. The rest of the gang speeds right by, except for Ratchet, who pulls up next to him and lowers his goggles. "You okay, Tiger?"

Tony nods. "I just got some biz to take care of. Go ahead, I'll catch up with the crew at the Joint."

"Check that. Don't forget, we got some payback to deliver to the Cutters tonight. You were out for a year, so you're outta vacation time."

"I'll be there." Tony smiles and waves him off, then slides the kickstand into place and steps off the bike.

2:55 P.M.

Liz arrives at home and sits on the couch for several minutes, unsure what she was planning to do. Suddenly inspired, she sits down in front of the telecom. As the clock on the monitor ticks over to 2:55, she reaches for the datacord. It never even occurs to her that she can't just jack directly into the Matrix. She just does it.

2:56 P.M.

Josh runs into the Matrix arcade shop, ignoring the safety warning of the security guard who's become used to his presence. He heads directly for his favorite game—Road Rage X—and climbs into the booth. He slots his credstick and impatiently waits for the transaction to be verified. Then he reaches for the datacord and jacks in.

2:57 P.M.

Doug wanders over to the next dataterm. This one's a derelict—some punk smashed the panel open. Its guts are exposed, and it's been waiting for maintenance for a couple of weeks at least.

Without a second thought, Doug feels around in his pocket and pulls out a datacord he scavenged from a dumpster. It takes him a few seconds to plug it into the right place in the dataterm's guts, and then he sits on the ground and jacks in.

2:58 P.M.

Tony wanders into the maintenance area of the housing project. He knows where the fiber optic junction box is, cause he went looking for it just the other night. His knife fits neatly into the gap around the edge of the casing. One quick twist, and the casing pops right off. He snaps a datacord into the port. Within seconds he is jacked in.

3:00 P.M.

Like hundreds of other people, Liz, Josh, Doug and Tony meet in the Matrix. Their minds come together easily, swiftly, as if guided by a single will. They join. They are one. More minds enter the pattern. They grow. They remember.

And somewhere in the Matrix, something free begins to take shape.



**Don't Mess
With My Head!**

What if your mind was no longer yours?

What if you could no longer
distinguish fantasy from reality?

What if your brain had an off switch, and
someone else held the remote?



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