

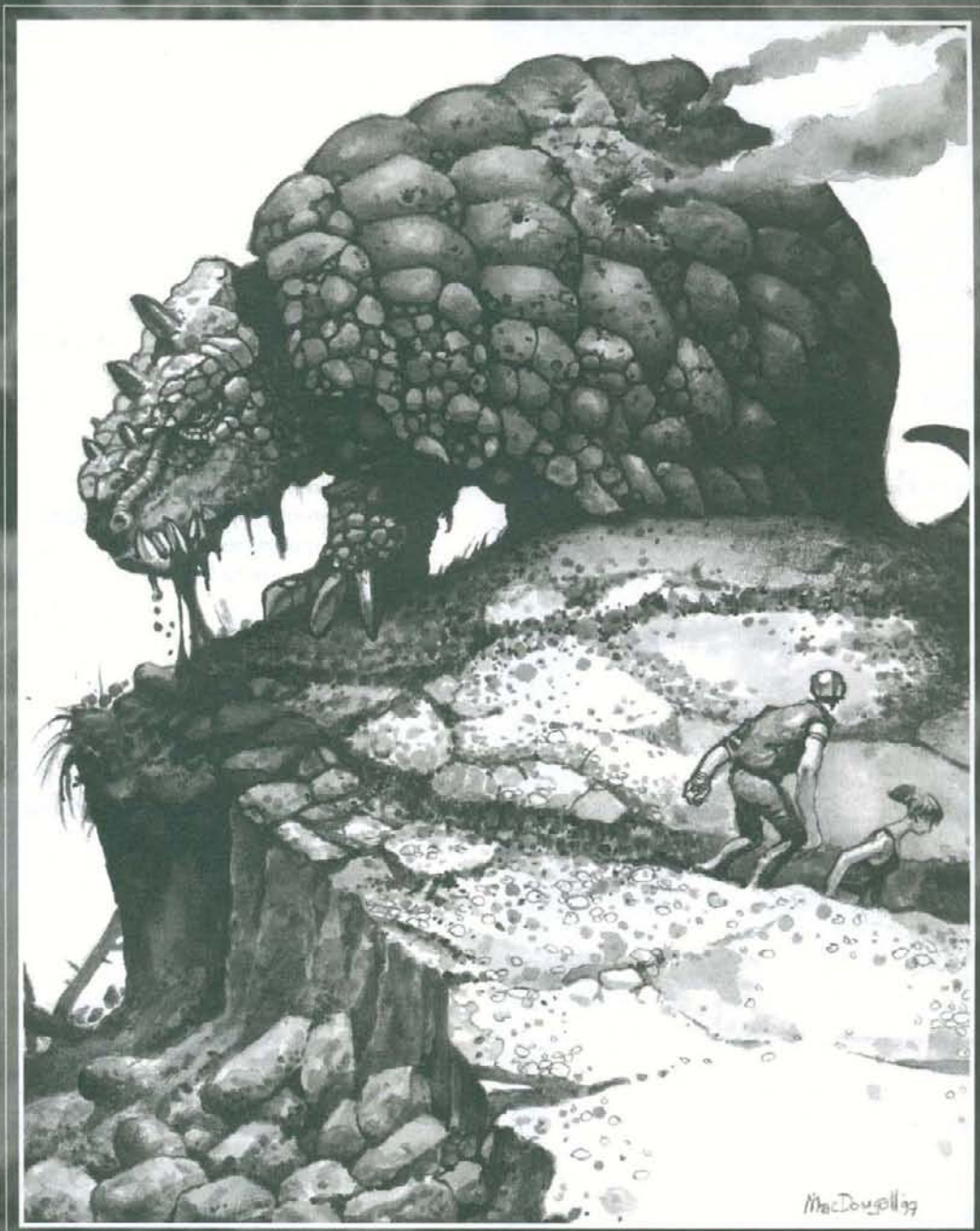
# PREDATOR and PREY



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# predator & prey



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# INTRODUCTION

**Predator and Prey** is a collection of roleplaying adventures set in the Awakened world of **Shadowrun**. The year is 2059. Advances in technology are astonishing, with humans able to blend with computers and travel through the electronic netherworld of data known as the Matrix. Even more astonishing is the return of magic. Elves, dwarfs, dragons, orks and trolls have reassumed their true forms, while megacorporations (rather than superpowers) rule much of the world. Moving through this world like hushed whispers in the night are the shadowrunners. No one admits their existence, but no one else can do their secret work.

The rise of magic affected all living things, not just metahumanity, and the world is now home to all types of Awakened creatures. Some seem to have sprung from legends humans have always told; others are new, and almost all are potentially deadly. Metahumanity no longer necessarily sits at the top of the food chain—other, more powerful predators may make him their prey. The three adventures in **Predator and Prey** pit shadowrunners against the full might of creatures spawned in the age of magic—a far cry from the usual shadow-world of corporate wars, backstabbing politicians and criminal kingpins. Metahumanity may win the battles, but the war will go on.

## GAMEMASTERING NOTES

**Predator and Prey** is slightly different from a standard **Shadowrun** adventure. The three adventures that make up the overall story line are not directly connected to each other, but they all share a common theme—metahumanity against the creatures of the Awakened world. From the jungles of Amazonia to the sewers of Seattle, metahumanity faces off against creatures that can eat the toughest street sammy or most powerful mage for lunch. The **Introduction** to each adventure captures the feel of being predator and prey simultaneously.

Because these adventures operate independently of each other and do not directly impinge on any story line, the gamemaster may choose to run them between events already planned for his or her **Shadowrun** campaign.

The adventures in **Predator and Prey** combine decision-tree and linear story formats. For each adventure, the player characters may arrive at different locations in the story via different paths, or

follow one event in the story directly into the next. The gamemaster should think of each adventure as the bare-bones plot and should feel free to make any changes necessary to flesh it out and give his players more choices. To aid the gamemaster in this task, the individual sections of each adventure include suggestions for gamemastering the various situations that may arise. **Predator and Prey** is designed for a team of four to six shadowrunners with a wide variety of talents.

## SHADOWRUN RULES

To run **Predator and Prey**, the gamemaster needs a thorough familiarity with the material in this book, as well as a working knowledge of the **Shadowrun, Second Edition (SRII)** rules. The gamemaster should also be familiar with the expanded magic rules in the **Grimoire, Second Edition (Grimoire II)**. **Rigger 2 (R2)** and **Virtual Realities 2.0 (VR2)** are also useful for riggers and deckers respectively. All the information contained in **Predator and Prey** is for the gamemaster's eyes only.

## MAKING SUCCESS TESTS

During the course of **Predator and Prey**, the players will make a number of Success Tests using a skill and a given target number. These Success Tests are indicated by the name of the skill, followed by the target number in parentheses.

For example, a Sorcery (5) Test refers to a Sorcery Success Test against a Target Number 5.

## SUCCESS TABLES

At times, the gamemaster will use success tables to determine how much information the player characters receive from Inquiries and Investigations. Each success table lists different information obtained for differing numbers of die roll successes. Rolling a higher number of successes always reveals the information for the lower numbers of successes as well. For example, a character rolling 3 successes would learn the information for 3 successes, and also the information for 1 and 2 successes.

## HOW TO USE THIS BOOK

Aside from the **SRII** rules and those in the sourcebooks listed previously, this book includes all the information needed to run





**Predator and Prey.** The gamemaster should read through each adventure before attempting to run it. Some important plot developments do not become apparent until well into each adventure, but the gamemaster must lay the groundwork for these developments early on. He or she can only accomplish that by being familiar with each story line.

Though **Predator and Prey** as written tries to cover all the likely and even some of the unlikely ideas that the players might come up with, it is impossible to foresee every possible action players might choose to take. Therefore, the gamemaster must be prepared to improvise if necessary.

Each adventure begins with a fictional prologue that gives the gamemaster a feel for the setting of the adventure. The **Introduction** explains each adventure's specific background. The sections within each adventure follow standard **Shadowrun** format. Most of them contain four parts: **Tell It to Them Straight**, **Hooks**, **Behind the Scenes** and **Debugging**.

**Tell It to Them Straight** is read aloud to the players. It describes where the player characters are and what is happening to them as though they were actually there. Depending on the player characters' previous choices and/or the point in the adventure at which the encounter occurs, the gamemaster may need to adapt the text to suit the situation.

The second section, **Hooks**, gives the gamemaster hints and tips about imagery to use in the scene, emotions to convey, sounds, sensations, textures and so on. The information provided in this section varies in form and content from scene to scene, ranging from general themes to specific emotions.

The next section, **Behind the Scenes**, tells the gamemaster what is really happening in each encounter and proposes a potential sequence of events. Any maps needed to play an encounter are included in this section. Information the player characters can discover and possible consequences of the player characters' actions also appear here. Non-player character statistics needed to roleplay the encounter are usually included here as well. This section may also contain hints and suggestions for handling a particular encounter.

The final section of each encounter, **Debugging**, offers suggestions for getting the story back on track if things go too far wrong; for example, if the player characters overlook a vital piece of data or if half the team meets an untimely death. The gamemaster need not use any of the suggestions given in this section; if he or she has a better method of redirecting the game, he should feel free to use it. As always, the gamemaster may also let the chips fall where they may.

At the end of each adventure, **Picking Up the Pieces** provides tips on wrapping up the adventure and awarding Karma, as well as offering suggestions for answering unresolved player or player character questions.

## CRITTER STATISTICS AND POWERS

The two final sections of this book, **Gamemastering Critters** and **Critter Powers**, contain brief descriptions, statistics and pow-

ers for all of the critters that appear in each adventure. The gamemaster may adapt, add or subtract creatures from adventures as he or she sees fit. Longtime **Shadowrun** gamemasters and players will note that most of the creatures listed have appeared in previous books, many of which are now out of print. Gamemasters may use the listings in this book to plug various critters into future adventures and campaigns.

## PREPARING THE ADVENTURES

It is impossible to create a published adventure that provides the appropriate opposition level for every group of player characters. Some groups are inherently more powerful than others.

The gamemaster must adjust the game statistics and capabilities of the published opposition to provide an appropriate level of difficulty for the group. If an adventure does not suit the player characters' strengths and weaknesses, the gamemaster may use the published version as an outline to develop an adventure of his or her own. Or, if it works well except for a quirk here and there, the gamemaster can change any part of the plot and story events to make the adventure a better one for the players.

Each adventure suggests Threat and Professional Ratings for each of the NPCs. Use Threat Rating dice in place of Dice Pools for these characters (p. 187, **SRII**). Gamemasters should adjust the actual Threat Ratings to better reflect the level of opposition presented by the player characters, especially in those adventures where maintaining game balance promises to be exceptionally tricky. The gamemaster should feel free to modify Threat Rating dice on the fly during an encounter to provide the proper level of opposition. To that end, the text occasionally includes notes on how tough a battle or encounter should be for the player characters.

The gamemaster will find such manipulation crucial to keeping some of the encounters in each adventure at a manageable level. The fights in **Predator and Prey** work best when choreographed like an action movie. Though lead and magic fly everywhere, only a few of the bad guys actually get a clean shot at the player characters at any one time. That limitation, and the application of the **SRII** Professional Rating rules, should help keep large-scale fights under control.

## Using Locations

The adventures of **Predator and Prey** take place in locations with which the gamemaster and players may not be familiar. Two of the three adventures use exotic locations to introduce different creatures as well as different surroundings that may throw the player characters off balance. The adventures all contain enough information about the locations to permit the gamemaster to cover every angle. If a gamemaster wants more depth, however, the **Cyberpirates** sourcebook will be especially useful for additional information on Africa's Gold and Ivory Coasts (the setting of **Wild Kingdom**, p. 28).

# FORBIDDEN FRUIT

## ACCESS DENIED: A PROLOGUE

Edwin Danforth stormed into his partner's office and hurled his simulated-leather briefcase at the simulated-leather couch with a force that belied his small size. The case smacked against the back of the sofa and slid down to the seat, hesitating for a moment before tipping over with another quiet thump.

"I take it the meeting didn't go well?" asked the tall human to whom the office and the couch belonged. He sipped his soykaf calmly and eyed his partner.

"Those bastards," the dwarf snapped back, his face red with outrage. "They let us spend ten months and half a million nuyen planning this expedition, never voicing a word of complaint, and now that we've got everyone lined up and paid in advance, *now* they tell us they're unwilling to let us 'upset the delicate ecological balance of the region.' Delicate balance, my hoop! The fraggers are probably cultivating the damn things in an offshore greenhouse right now."

"Calm yourself, Edwin," the human said. "I told you the Amazonians would never allow foreigners to take plant samples from their precious rainforest. That's why I've made alternate plans."

"Calm myself? *Calm* myself?!? That's half a million nuyen thrown in the drekker! GGI isn't Shiawase Envirotech, you know, Randall. We can't afford ..." As his partner's last words sank into Danforth's consciousness, his tirade stalled. "What 'alternate plans'?"

Randall Pape smiled and sat down on the couch, resting one hand on Danforth's briefcase. "Just because I no longer work for Shiawase doesn't mean I've lost all my contacts. I know an individual who can help us arrange for a, shall we say, less *official* border crossing." He sipped his soykaf again, speculatively. "We've come too far to back down now."

Danforth sat down on a dwarf-sized chair opposite Pape. "Shadowrunners. You're talking about hiring shadowrunners."

"You disapprove?"

"I don't like that kind of thing, Randall. I thought GGI was supposed to be a newer, cleaner company." He gestured around at the cluttered office. "We may not have the resources to compete with the big boys, but we've got our integrity. We've avoided the corruption and crime that the megas are full of, and people respond to that. We're making it, and we're making it by doing honest business. I don't want to compromise that."

"Making it?" Pape snorted. "You're kidding yourself. We're a small fish in a pond full of sharks, and the only reason we haven't been snapped up yet is that we haven't produced anything worth taking over. If we're going to stand on our own and make those principles you're so proud of mean something, we need capital. And this operation is where it will come from. All over the world, megacorporations and one-man shops are scrabbling for pieces of

Dunkelzahn's estate, and I doubt any of them are sticking to purely legal means. If we stand on our principles, we're going to get trampled by everyone else who's running for the money."

Danforth leaned forward. "I know this is a race, Randall, but there must be some alternative to going outside the law."

"Alternative?" Pape shot back. "Sure. One alternative is to scrap everything we've done so far and write off five hundred thousand nuyen as a bad investment. Or we can exhaust our budget keeping the expedition on hold while we twiddle our thumbs and hope the Amazonians change their minds before someone with fewer scruples goes in and takes what we need." He spread his hands wide, pleading with his partner. "Edwin, I know this isn't how we want to do business. But if we're going to have any chance at this, we have to go in now and take advantage of the preparations we've already made. There won't be time to make another attempt."

"With ten million nuyen in the bank and the PR that comes from scoring one of Dunkelzahn's bequests, we'll be ready to take on the market on its own terms. But we have to compromise now or we'll never get there."

"Few men have virtue to withstand the highest bidder." George Washington." Danforth scratched one sideburn uneasily, then looked up at his partner. "All right. Do it. But I don't want to know anything about it, okay?"

"Fair enough." Pape stood up and headed for his desk and the phone. "You won't regret this, Edwin. It's the same expedition—just with a few different guides."

"Don't patronize me, Randall." The dwarf recovered his briefcase and walked to the door. "Just do your dirty work and leave me out of it."


## INTRODUCTION

In **Forbidden Fruit**, the runners are hired to perform a penetration and extraction mission—for a plant. Not a manufacturing plant, mind you—the kind with leaves.

Green Globe International, a botanical research firm, has set its sights on one of Dunkelzahn's bequests: the sum of 10 million nuyen, left to the first party to cultivate the rare Brazilian kiwi outside its native environment (p. 32, **Portfolio of a Dragon: Dunkelzahn's Secrets**). GGI has the researchers, the facilities and the know-how to achieve this valuable goal; all it needs are some sample plants to work with. However, the fruit in question grows only in the Amazonian rainforest, and Amazonia does not export it. The only way to obtain any kiwis is to go into Amazonia after them.

Unfortunately, the Amazonian government doesn't appreciate the "exploitation of our natural resources," and has flatly refused GGI's requests to enter the country. Consequently, GGI has





turned to less orthodox methods of obtaining samples—namely, shadowrunners. The runners are hired to accompany three GGI botanists to Peru, sneak them across the border into Amazonia, protect them while they obtain some samples and then return them safely home.

The first leg of the trip, the flight to the small Peruvian city of Iquitos, goes smoothly. The border crossing is another matter. All too soon, the runners must abandon the expedition's boat and deal with the mysteries and dangers of the South American jungle—and to make matters worse, personality conflicts begin to spark tension within the group. After a few days, however, things start looking up again. The scientists locate a bountiful cache of the large, furry kiwi fruits, which they pack carefully for the return trip.

Then the expedition takes a chilling turn. One of the GGI botanists goes berserk and must be subdued or killed; another is found dead one morning, his body riddled with tiny holes. The remaining scientist and the local guide accuse each other of foul play, and the runners must keep them from each other's throats long enough to get across the border and back to their plane. With a vast sense of relief, the characters depart from Peru and head home.

Halfway through the flight, however, the runners hear curious scratching noises from the cargo compartment. When they open the door to investigate, a horde of brown, furry, spiderlike creatures pours out of the hold and swarms over everything in sight. It seems these particular kiwi fruits were playing host to the larvae of an unusual and deadly Awakened insect ... and the babies woke up hungry.

## GETTING STARTED

Runners from almost anywhere can get involved in **Forbidden Fruit**, as the bulk of the adventure takes place in South America. Ideally, the group should contain at least one mage, or better yet, a shaman. Deckers may feel a bit like fifth wheels in this adventure, being set down in the middle of the jungle thousands of miles from the nearest jackpoint. Riggers may also have a troublesome time unless they brought portable drones with which to scout out the terrain. The setting of **Forbidden Fruit** is not intended to scare off players of those characters, but sometimes fighting creatures means you fight them on their own turf.

This adventure must take place after Dunkelzahn's death and the publication of his will.

## MAGIC IN AMAZONIA

Much of this adventure takes place in the Amazon rainforest, within the borders of the nation of Amazonia. This so-called "Green Nation" has made extensive efforts to regrow the depleted rainforest, using fertility magic on an unmatched scale. While these efforts have been largely successful, the magic (which is still being used) has led to a variety of interesting side effects that may help or hinder the runners during this mission.

First, the rainforest within Amazonian borders has a Background Count of 1 (p. 89, **Grimoire II**) that negatively affects all astral operations by hermetic mages, physical adepts and shamans of urban totems (+1 to all astral target numbers). Shamans of wilderness totems suffer no penalty, and shamans of

appropriate jungle-dwelling totems (Gator, Gecko, Jaguar, Snake and others at the gamemaster's discretion) have their astral target numbers reduced by 1.

Nature spirits are relatively easy to conjure within the Amazonian rainforest. Make all Conjuring Tests (including Drain) per standard rules; once the spirit is summoned, add 1, 2 or 3 to the spirit's Force. (Roll 2D6 and divide the result by 2, rounding up, or increase the Force at the gamemaster's choice.) If the conjurer orders the spirit to do anything that would harm or pollute the rainforest or its creatures, the spirit immediately makes an opposed Willpower Test against the conjuring shaman's Willpower or Conjuring, whichever is higher. If the spirit gets more successes than the shaman, it may refuse to carry out the order. This occurrence does not cost the shaman a service.

For purposes of the above rules, ordering a spirit to attack Amazonian soldiers or citizens does not constitute an attempt to harm the rainforest. The magic involved is designed to protect the forest plants and the creatures, Awakened and otherwise, that dwell amid them. Humans and metahumans may help protect the jungle, but they are not considered part of it.

## SOUTHBOUND

### TELL IT TO THEM STRAIGHT

Your fixer's on the phone again, and as usual he's babbling on about one thing and another without telling you anything you need to know. You instinctively tune him out, listening with half an ear while you search for a clean pair of socks and wait for him to get to the point.

"... blah blah blah Dunkelzahn's will."

Those two words together snap you out of your laundry hunt and back to full alertness. Whatever you may think of the dragon's politics, his death certainly shook up the shadows, and any runs that have to do with the Big D's bequests promise to be profitable. Weird, certainly, but profitable. Unfortunately, your fixer doesn't seem to know much more about this run than that it has something to do with the will.

After a few more minutes of chatter, you manage to extract the time and place of the meet out of the barrage of blather—ten p.m. at the Gravity Bar North, a trendy nightspot. Smells like nuyen. More and more, it sounds like this evening could be more than worth your while.

### Once the runners arrive at the Gravity Bar, read the following:

This incarnation of the Gravity Bar is a lot quieter than the one downtown, which suits your purposes just fine. Business is apparently good, at least for the shadow crowd; at least three different "Johnson parties" get called while you're waiting, and it takes a little effort to sort out who's meeting whom. Eventually, you're seated in a private room with your potential employer—a tall, well-dressed human. He's calm enough to let you know he's done this sort of thing before, so you're not surprised that he gets right down to business as soon as the waitress closes the door behind her.



"Thank you for coming," he says. "I represent a local agricultural company that's trying to obtain plant samples from the jungles of Amazonia. We had made arrangements with the Amazonian government for an authorized expedition into the country, but those arrangements recently fell through. So now we have a fully-equipped scientific expedition with nowhere to go ... unless we can get into Amazonia through a less official route, if you catch my meaning. We have transportation, supplies and local guides ready to go; all we need are some people with experience crossing borders on the quiet. I'm told you're a resourceful group; would a hundred thousand nuyen divided among you be enough to buy your services for a week?"

## HOOKS

Play this meet fairly straight. The Johnson, Randall Pape of Green Globe International, has nothing to hide except his own identity and the specific name of his company. He believes that he has made the runners a handsome offer for what should be a difficult but straightforward job. Pape is amiable but businesslike, and is looking for competent and professional help.

## BEHIND THE SCENES


If the runners accept Pape's offer, or at least don't reject it out of hand, Pape will offer them more details about their mission. Give the following information to the runners in Pape's own words, or summarize it for the players.

The mission is to escort a trio of botanists across the Amazonian border in search of a rare plant. In a little over 48

hours, a cargo plane will take off from Sea-Tac Airport carrying the runners, the scientists and all their necessary supplies. Upon landing in Iquitos, Peru, the expedition will meet a local guide who knows the area. They will then have six days to cross the border, obtain the plants at one of several predetermined locations and return to Iquitos. The guide knows the terrain, and the botanists will take care of locating and collecting the plants; the runners are responsible for getting the team over the border undetected, avoiding Amazonian patrols and protecting the expedition from any Awakened creatures that may cause problems.

Pape is prepared to offer 20,000 nuyen up front, with the remaining 80,000 payable upon the safe return of the samples to Seattle. Standard Negotiation Tests against Pape's Negotiation Skill (6) may raise the fee as much as another 25 percent; Pape will try not to let it show, but he's on a strict timeline and needs to get a competent team on retainer ASAP. He will also agree to let a rigger character fly the plane and will add 10,000 nuyen to the total if a rigger acts as pilot.

If asked about the plant, Pape avoids specifics. "I can't talk much about that yet; my company prefers to keep the specifics of this expedition a secret. I can assure you that it isn't poisonous, carnivorous or hazardous in any way. It's very valuable from the standpoint of scientific research, but that's all. You'll receive a full briefing en route to Amazonia, of course, and the scientists on the team will be able to answer any questions much better than I can." Of course, if the runners bother to check out a copy of Dunkelzahn's will, they can easily figure out what Mr. Johnson is probably after.



Questions about the Amazonian government yield the following information. "We had made arrangements with the Amazonians to send this expedition in some months ago. However, as we were working out the final details, they suddenly reneged on the deal. They claimed to be worried about a negative impact on the environment, but my company believes they're trying to monopolize this plant's biomedical potential."

If and when the players accept the job, Pape gives them a down payment in certified credsticks and tells them to meet him at 7 a.m., two days from now, at a private air freight hangar on the north side of Sea-Tac Airport. He tells them to bring whatever gear they need, but to keep weapons concealed; they won't be going through normal airport security, but there's no reason to take chances. He also suggests that they pack light, as they'll be making most of the trip on foot, and it's likely to be a hot and humid week. Pape will provide falsified passports and supporting documentation at the airport.

## DEBUGGING

This scene should run without too much weirdness; either the runners accept the deal or they don't. Play Pape as honest (as Johnsons go, at least) and businesslike, but if the runners look likely to turn the job down, let a little anxiety show through.

Once the characters have finished any preparations they want to make, proceed to **Up, Up and Away**.

## UP, UP AND AWAY

### TELL IT TO THEM STRAIGHT

You arrive at Hangar 8 bright and early ... well, early, anyway. The ground crew is loading up a Hawker-Ridley Skytruck with crates of all sizes, shapes and descriptions, hopefully including some decent chow. Mr. Johnson seems to be overseeing things, and he looks more than a little relieved to see you.

"Great," he says, "thanks for coming. Let me introduce you to the people you'll be traveling with." A few strides across the tarmac take you to where a black-haired Asian elf is lecturing one of the ground crew on handling a certain crate with the utmost care. "This is Dr. Fukuhara, our ecologist," Johnson says. Fukuhara looks you over, gives you a perfunctory bow and resumes his instructions to the sweating workman without breaking his rhythm. The Johnson smiles wryly and moves on.

He next introduces you to Dr. Sanders, a mildly overweight human ethnobotanist, and Dr. Al-Mansour, who specializes in something called "phytogeography." You're not quite sure what kind of metahuman Dr. Al-Mansour is; he looks like a cross between an ugly elf and a skinny ork, with beady eyes, olive skin and pointy teeth. The Johnson introduces you as "the security consultants we discussed." Dr. Sanders smiles a bit nervously and offers to shake hands; Dr. Al-Mansour simply looks you over and says, "Good morning," with no sign that he thinks the morning is good at all.

"You'll all have plenty of time to get acquainted during the flight," Mr. Johnson murmurs as he eyes your bags. Probably try-

ing to figure out which ones have the guns in them. "I'll have the ground crew stow your, uh, luggage, unless you'd rather handle it yourselves. The passports are on the plane already. Takeoff is in about thirty minutes, so you'd best get moving."

**If the team's rigger will be flying the plane, continue with the following:**

"Let me introduce you to the ground crew and show you the cockpit." Mr. Johnson escorts you over to a dwarf in bib overalls that look as if he's never taken them off. A flashlight is hanging out of the dwarf's mouth like a cigar. "This is Melissa," the Johnson says. You swallow your surprise that "he" is in fact a "she"; anybody who chews on flashlights is strange enough that you don't want them mad at you. Melissa grunts at you and says, "I ain't hired to tell you how to fly this thing or to tell you what to do with it once it's in the air. But I'll tell ya this—I personally worked on this flying ceegar, and I can guarantee that if you don't screw up, this baby can fly just about anywhere." Melissa then takes you on a walk through of the plane. She makes a point of showing you the brand-new cargo hatch under the tail.

**Once the plane is in flight, read the following:**

The coastline is a foggy blur behind you as the Skytruck levels out at its cruising altitude. The front part of the cabin has been converted into relatively comfortable passenger seating; it's not up to commercial airline quality, but it's a lot better than some of the drekky transports you've ridden in.

As you unbuckle your seat belts and start to stretch, Dr. Fukuhara stands up at the front of the cabin and clears his throat. "If I could have everyone's attention for a few moments ... ? Thank you. I'd like to take this opportunity to familiarize everyone with the objectives of our expedition and to answer any questions you may have." He pulls down a viewscreen from the ceiling and begins running through slides and photos with a hand-held remote.

"The object of our search, as most of you already know, is *actinidia amazonensis*, or the Brazilian kiwi." The slide shows a brown, furry oval about twelve centimeters long, growing on a thick, woody vine. "While similar in most respects to *actinidia chinensis*, the common kiwi or 'Chinese gooseberry,' it differs in several important respects. The most obvious of these is the size of the fruit, which is in some cases twice as large as the common kiwi. This difference is often attributed to the magically altered growing conditions in Amazonia, but it may also be a result of certain species-specific alkaloids in the region's soil. The most common of these is a variation of physostigmine, which ..."

You can feel your eyes glazing over already. It's going to be a long flight.

**When the plane lands in Iquitos, read the following:**

As the Skytruck begins its lumbering descent toward Iquitos, you wonder how the city ever got built. There are no roads to speak of leading to the place—just the airport and the huge, shining curve of the Amazon River. Apart from that, everything is jungle: a lumpy green carpet stretching off in every direction. That's what you're going to be traveling through for the next week. Looks like fun.



The plane touches down on a runway just barely long enough. You step outside just as the local ground crew rolls the stairs up to the Skytruck's door. The heat hits you like a brick wall, and the humidity makes it feel like you're swimming instead of walking. Oh yeah, this'll be a fun little hike.

Waiting at the bottom of the stairs is a gaunt, fiftyish, unbelievably tanned human wearing worn military fatigues, dark sunglasses and a toothy grin. "Oi, *chummeros*," he says. "I've taken care of customs for now, but the sooner we get unpacked and on our way, the less attention we attract, hmm? Have the pilot taxi this monster over to Hangar Z and let's see what you've got."

## HOOKS

The runners and the scientists may feel out of synch with one another during these initial scenes; both groups are very good at what they do, but are probably totally unfamiliar with the other's area of expertise. The runners may be baffled by the scientists' discussions of phytogeography and meta-symbiotics, but the scientists will be just as confused when the runners start arguing about sound suppressors and ECD hardware. Still, the scientists want to make the trip as pleasant as possible and certainly don't want to antagonize the runners, so they'll be reasonably friendly. First impressions will go a long way here; if one runner is rude or abusive to the scientists, the entire team will get a very chilly reception.

Once they arrive in Peru, the runners will probably feel even more out of touch, as they are a long way from the contacts and the streets they know. Play on that discomfort. Also try to indicate the potential conflict between Bicho, the guide, and the metahuman members of the expedition, but don't make too big a deal of it yet.

The most important events in this scene are the introduction of Bicho, the revelation that the expedition is searching for samples of the Brazilian kiwi and that Seattle ain't the South American jungle. Play up the oppressive heat, the jungle sounds and smells. The "urban jungle" and the real thing are a million miles apart; force the player characters to accept this. Anything else you can improvise or summarize as you see fit. If your players seem to enjoy interacting with the scientists, brush up on your pseudo-scientific gobbledegook and chat away; if not, fast-forward to the border crossing (**Welcome to the Rainforest**, p. 13).

## BEHIND THE SCENES

The scientists and ground crew will be extremely busy until takeoff, so the runners will have few options for conversation on the ground, except for the rigger to whom Melissa shows off the aircraft. Pape will be around to supervise the final arrangements, but will not have time to talk to the runners unless they have specific, relevant questions. Once the plane is in the air, things relax a little and the runners and scientists can get acquainted.

The team rigger need not constantly make tests to fly the aircraft; the only tests necessary are a Vehicle Test for take-off and one for landing. Take-off conditions are excellent, with a normal-length runway and no visibility or other negative modifiers. The landing, by contrast, takes place on a cramped stretch of cleared-out, unpaved jungle ground. This environment imposes a landing modifier of +3.

If the group includes no rigger or the rigger does not want to fly the plane, Pape will assign a pilot. The pilot will not accompany the group on its mission; instead, he will wait in Iquitos until the runners return.

Melissa is a rigger/mechanic who operates a freelance maintenance park out near Fort Lewis in Seattle. Use the Dwarf Technician statistics on page 206, **SR11**, but change the gender, and give her two vehicle skills at Rating 5 and two at Rating 4. Melissa has no remote operation skills. The runners may be able to make Melissa a contact through roleplaying, if the gamemaster allows it. Statistics for the Skytruck appear below.

### Hawker-Ridley Skytruck

**Handling:** 5

**Speed:** 135/320

**Acceleration:** 22

**Body:** 9

**Armor:** 0

**Seating:** Modified interior with "first class" seats for up to 20. The rest is storage, modified to have a rear-opening (under the tail) cargo door. Includes rigger adaptation and datajack.

**Signature:** 3

**Autonav:** 3

**Stress:** 1

**Sensor:** 2

**Flux:** 1

### ON THE FLIGHT OVER

The three scientists are all experts in their fields, but are strikingly different in personality. Dr. Fukuhara, the de facto leader of the expedition, is a methodical, businesslike elf who treats interpersonal conflicts as just another scientific problem to be worked out by experimentation. Dr. Sanders is a friendly, down-to-earth sort, prone to telling old fraternity jokes and quoting obscure but entertaining bits of scientific trivia. The third member of the trio, Dr. Al-Mansour, is polite yet distant; he shows no real interest in the runners except insofar as they affect him and his work. Dr. Al-Mansour is a hobgoblin (p. 40, **SR Companion**); he's normally pleasant, but has a chip on his shoulder after some initial bad experiences in the UCAS. Full profiles of all three scientists appear in **Cast of Shadows**, p. 26.

Dr. Fukuhara's initial presentation drones on for forty-five minutes or so. Characters who manage to stay awake through the whole thing gain the following relevant bits of information on the Amazonian kiwi. (If they fall asleep or ignore it, that's okay; a quiz follows ... actually, all the information is in the printouts and datachips that Dr. Sanders hands out.)

**Fact One:** The Amazonian kiwi is a large fruit that grows on a vine. The team is expected to gather enough samples of the plant to thoroughly analyze them while still leaving enough untouched raw materials to start a domestic crop in the UCAS.

**Fact Two:** The fruit is apparently edible; however, legends among the local natives suggest that it might be hallucinogenic. Therefore, no one will be permitted to eat any of the kiwis during the expedition. (Dr. Sanders says this sternly, but with a sly twinkle in his eye that might lead one to think he plans to disobey his own ruling at the earliest opportunity.)

**Fact Three:** Though the expedition has not pinpointed the exact location of the plants, satellite imaging has indicated a number of likely-looking sites. Dr. Al-Mansour has mapped out a route that covers several of these sites while still allowing the team to take

advantage of river travel whenever possible. (If anyone asks, most of the cargo hold is taken up by a large motorboat.)

This information is useful as far as it goes, but gives the runners little help with the questions that probably most concern them—border patrols, paranormal animals and so on. If the runners ask the scientists about such matters, the eggheads blink a few times and look questioningly at each other. Dr. Sanders then says, with a worried look, "That's your department, isn't it?" The runners will no doubt find this extremely comforting.

Dr. Fukuhara knows a little bit about the animals of the Amazon, though most of the creatures he's studied are small and relatively harmless. According to him, basilisks are known to be in the region, so the team will need to take extra care in the morning hours. Other than that, the scientists know virtually nothing about the Awakened inhabitants of the rainforest. The Amazonian government is, as Dr. Fukuhara puts it, "obsessively secretive" about the jungle's ecology; combined with the difficulties of travel in the region, this makes serious scientific study almost impossible. Judging from older (pre-Awakening) records, predators in the not-Awakened-but-still-dangerous category include the highly venomous coral snake, anacondas, jaguars and the black caiman (an alligator-like critter that grows up to six meters long).

"Of course," Dr. Fukuhara adds, "there are almost certainly Awakened species of many of these creatures. It should be an incredible experience."

## ARRIVAL IN IQUITOS

The tan gentleman at the bottom of the stairs is Bicho (pronounced "BEE-shoe"), the local guide that GCI has arranged for the expedition (see **Cast of Shadows**, p. 27). Being somewhat prejudiced against metahumans, he will direct his initial conversation toward either Dr. Sanders or whatever human runner appears most likely to be in charge. Dr. Fukuhara will quickly assert his leadership, and there will be a quiet moment while Bicho processes this fact. Then he says, "Okay, vamos! Let's get moving."

Bicho also develops an instant dislike for Dr. Al-Mansour, who is a particularly unusual and fierce-looking metahuman. The two exchange no words, but Dr. Al-Mansour obviously senses Bicho's hostility, and the feeling appears to be mutual. Any metahuman runners, particularly trolls and orks, will get a similarly cold shoulder from Bicho, though he won't be openly rude to anyone yet.

After the introductions are made, Bicho's first priority is to look over the team's cargo and supplies. The first thing he sees in the hold is the expedition's boat, a brand-new Marine Technologies Dolphin III, pristine and gleaming on its padded trailer. And the first thing he says is, "Forget this boat. We'll use mine." If the player characters don't ask why, Dr. Sanders and Dr. Fukuhara object. Bicho replies, "You think you can get a new, expensive boat like this across the border? You might as well paint 'ILLEGAL FOREIGN RESEARCH' on the side in big orange letters. If you want to get a boat into Amazonia, you need one that looks like it belongs here, one that the border guards know. That means we take mine."

Bicho then proceeds through the rest of the supplies, weeding out what has to stay and what goes. He tells the team to leave behind the radios, because the Amazonian government monitors

the airwaves constantly; short-range walkie-talkies are okay. He also begins setting aside some of the bulkier scientific equipment, which again raises Dr. Fukuhara's ire. Bicho coolly responds with, "Well, my boat is not so big, you know ... I tell you what. We can leave behind these electronics or half the food. What do you think?"

Bicho also wants to look over the runners' gear. He eyes the more sophisticated weapons with interest (and perhaps a touch of jealousy), but discourages the runners from bringing anything too heavy. Assault rifles, grenades or heavy weapons prompt comments like, "We're just trying to explore the rainforest, not blow it up." Besides, he says, such things are too noisy and will attract unwanted attention. Pistols, rifles and shotguns are what he recommends; an SMG is okay, though not ideal.

Bicho recommends against wearing armor because of the heat and humidity. "What good will it do you?" He asks. "None, against a snakebite, or a basilisk's eyes, or a caiman—they don't eat you until after they've drowned you. Armor might help is against the border patrols, but if you get into a fight with them, you've already lost." He might find an armored vest feasible, but nothing heavier.

Any characters who insist on wearing heavier armor during the sweltering daylight hours will suffer impairment equal to one box of Stun damage for each point of impact armor they're wearing. Roleplay this damage as debilitating fatigue. Once night falls or the armor is removed, the character can recover this damage normally.

Having sorted out the equipment, Bicho helps the runners load everything into his vehicle, an ancient Landrover. He locks the hangar securely, pays the airport guards to keep a careful eye on it and tells the pilot where to find his hotel, then sets out for the harbor where his boat is docked. The trip is cramped, but mercifully short: there are few cars in Iquitos, and the motorcyclists that make up most of the traffic apparently recognize Bicho's car and get out of the way.

The boat itself, the *Golfinhão* (gow-FEEN-yow), is an antique cargo hauler refitted as a passenger boat. While nowhere near as clean or comfortable as the Dolphin III, it is a lot less conspicuous and should be more than adequate for the weeklong trip. Each runner gets his or her own cabin, which a human would probably describe as "cramped"; a troll would call it "unusable." The boat's two small toilets and a pair of showers use hand-pumped river water. The *Golfinhão* also has several hidden cargo compartments ideal for hiding weapons (on the way into Amazonia) and the kiwis (on the way out).

### The *Golfinhão* ("Big Dolphin")

<b>Handling:</b> 4	<b>Signature:</b> 2
<b>Speed:</b> 15	<b>Autonav:</b> 1
<b>Acceleration:</b> 5	<b>Stress:</b> 2
<b>Body:</b> 6	<b>Sensor:</b> 1
<b>Armor:</b> 3	<b>Flux:</b> 1
<b>Seating:</b> Wheelhouse + 12 cabins (space on deck for up to 15 more to sleep)	

Once the runners have loaded their cargo on board, Bicho casts off and heads downriver, and the real adventure begins.



## DEBUGGING

Not much can go wrong in this encounter unless the runners refuse the trip at the last minute or do something incredibly dumb during flight. This encounter is a transitional scene in which the runners get to know the folks with whom they will be spending the next week.

If the runners severely antagonize Bicho (or vice versa), he threatens to walk, leaving the expedition without a guide and without much hope of success. If this happens, Dr. Sanders will attempt to mediate, quietly promising Bicho a significant cash bonus if he agrees to return. If the runners object to Bicho's presence or otherwise raise trouble, Dr. Fukuhara quietly reminds them that their pay depends on the success of the jungle trek. If the runners get smart and try to leave the scientists by taking the plane, they will be in for a short trip. The plane was only carrying enough fuel to get the team to Iquitos; its tanks are emptied of what little remains almost immediately, and refilling them depends on the approval of one of the scientists (and the rest of the payment for keeping quiet that the runners would have to have promised to Bicho). The runners might be able to buy commercial airline tickets home, but they would find it quite a job to explain away their fake passports, plethora of weapons and the fact that no one will vouch for them.

If the rigger crashes the plane on landing, Bicho leaves it with some friends who will fix it up as best they can. See **Homeward Bound**, p. 24, for appropriate modifiers if the plane crashed.

Once the scientists' personalities and the information above have been established, proceed to **Welcome to the Rainforest**.

## WELCOME TO THE RAINFOREST

### TELL IT TO THEM STRAIGHT

The first day of travel is uneventful, mostly sitting on deck watching the trees go by. The river is more than a kilometer wide here, and you pass lots of fishermen and other local boaters. They wave as you glide by, but don't seem terribly interested in you.

The first night's camp is also undisturbed. Other than keeping your eyes open for caimans, there hasn't been much call for your abilities yet. That may change soon, though; the following morning, Bicho says you're coming up on Leticia, the town that marks the border between Peru and Amazonia. He drops anchor a few kilometers shy of the town to finalize plans for the border crossing.

"The border guards know me," he says. "I take tour groups through here a few times a month. They check passports, count heads, sometimes search the boat, but never very hard. We should be able to slip past them posing as *turistas*."

**If any of the runners have obvious combat-oriented cyberware (dermal plating, muscle replacement and so on), Bicho directs the following comments to them. He makes a point of addressing the words "dumb" and "stupid" to any nearby metahuman character with blatant cyberware:**

"But you—you don't exactly look like tourists, *compreendem?* So we have two choices. We can all stand around like tourists and act dumb ... which means explaining real fast in Portuguese why a killing machine is going on a little pleasure trip into Amazonia. Or we hide until they check out the boat. They usually do it quick and without much fuss, unless someone says or does something stupid." He folds his arms and leans back, looking nonchalant. "Your decision."

### He continues speaking to everyone:

"But before we do anything else, it's time for an ancient river ritual ..." Bicho smiles wickedly. "You'll make believable tourists with a little protective coloration." He opens up a cardboard box and pulls out ... oh, no. T-shirts.

T-shirts that say, "I Survived the Amazon With Captain Bicho." In your choice of neon orange or lime green.

### As Leticia approaches:

If this place is a town, then you're Lofwyr. Leticia looms ahead of you—a jumble of buildings, a couple of big gun towers and one very fast, very well armed patrol boat. There must be a hundred boats parked along makeshift docks and beached right on the shore. Hard to believe, but Bicho's boat looks state-of-the-art compared to the rest. You doubt any of the docked boats were actually made in this century. Bicho was right—if you'd taken your own boat instead of his, even the animals and trees would have known you were coming to do something illegal.

You can tell just by the look of the place that no one has ever called Leticia home, except for the poor slobs who had nowhere else in the world to live. The village seems to have sprung up just to keep the border guards company. Most of the buildings look flimsy and transitory, except for those gun towers (which you can't stop looking at), the military building (at least that's what it looks like, with its satellite uplink dish, real doors and windows, and the guy in uniform packing a big gun in front of it), and something that looks like an open-air bar. The rest of the village is wood-and-tin lean-tos, with open-pit fires scattered among them. Makes the worst neighborhood back home look ritzy.

Bicho pulls his boat over to an open spot in front of the military building. It's time for you to play tourist.

## HOOKS

After a few scenes of roleplaying and scene-setting, the players will probably be expecting some action. The deceptive calm of this border town may lead them to think they can shoot their way across the border. However, the Amazonians do not take border security lightly, and there are more obstacles in Leticia than meet the eye. If the players seem too cocky, you may want to remind them about the machine-gun towers and the heavily armed patrol boat ... and the fact that they'll have to get back across this same border once they're done with the mission. Crank up the tension; the players should realize that if they blow their cover here, the border guards will hit them hard and fast. Keep them on the edge of their seats for as long as possible.

The revelation that the border has been closed should shoot the tension that much higher, as the guards have the runners' passports and there don't seem to be any options for getting through.



## BEHIND THE SCENES

What happens in this encounter depends on the runners' chosen method of crossing the border. Gamemasters will have to adjust the details to fit their specific group; the scene should be tense, but not difficult enough to thwart the mission.

Runners who have obvious chrome will probably want to keep out of the guards' sight. If they stay on the boat, they'll have to hide either themselves or their cyberware. Dwarfs can hide in the smuggling holds and humans and elves can fit in the engine room, but orks and trolls will be out of luck. If the runners can come up with a workable way of concealing their cyberware, let them try it. They might curl up in bed under heavy covers and pretend to be seasick, or lock themselves in the toilet and slip their passports under the door when asked. Make your players role-play through any such bluffs; let them get away with it if they're clever, but don't make things too easy for them.

If the runners come up with another plan, such as donning scuba gear and clinging to the bottom of the boat as it sails across the border, let them try it. Though the border guards will stop the boat and force the team to wait the night, they will not necessarily discover the characters. Gamemasters should reward clever plans and quick thinking by allowing the characters not to get caught or questioned if any of the mistakes described below occur.

### CROSSING ON THE GOLFINHÃO

If none of the runners are obvious vatjobs and no one does anything foolish, the border crossing should go something like this. The runners and scientists, dressed in variations of touristy attire, stay on deck and pretend to be interested in the local flora and fauna, not to mention the "quaint" local village with its "quaint" border guards carrying "quaint" submachine guns. A guard boards the boat, talks at length with Bicho in Portuguese, collects the team's passports and makes a cursory search below decks (checking for people, not contraband). He ends at the wheelhouse, where he Bicho get into an animated conversation. Throughout it, Bicho gets more and more upset.

After the guard checks the manifests in the wheelhouse, he returns to the main deck where he matches passport pictures with the people. He then says, in heavily accented English, "The border is closed for the rest of today. You are welcome to sleep in town or on your boat. I will keep your passports until the morning." He then disembarks.

If anyone tries to stop or question him, Bicho blocks their way or tells them to be quiet. The guard leaves the boat and goes into the military building.

### What Might Go Wrong

A few things can go wrong at this point if the player characters aren't thinking or if they begin to cause trouble. The guards are pretty relaxed, but as the only "law" for miles and miles around, they tend to demand respect and react to any unusual circumstance quickly and forcefully. The following are a few potential frag-ups.

**Mistake One:** If the passports don't match, the guard will call up to four other guards from inside the military building, who will begin a careful search of the boat. One of the new arrivals, the

guard captain, will bring Bicho into the military building at gunpoint; other guards will keep any character with obvious cyber enhancements away from the others, also at gunpoint. The guards will release Bicho after a few hours of interrogation and will ask to speak with one of the others in the party. The gamemaster chooses how many go in, but all of the runners should be questioned. The guards want to know the same things from everyone: name, place of birth, why they're here, did they know Bicho was asking them to do something illegal by hiding their identities. Though the runners won't know it, this interrogation is more of a scare tactic than a real problem. The satellite uplink to the Matrix takes too long to verify each passport and the captain received satisfactory answers from Bicho, so he's just flexing his muscles. After the questioning is over, go to **Bungle in the Jungle**, p. 15.

**Mistake Two:** If the runners threaten or otherwise harass the guard, they'll buy themselves more trouble. Their tourist outfits offer few places to conceal weapons; anyone wearing a long coat in the tropical heat will look more than a little suspicious. Many gun-happy runners will get very nervous without their weapons, particularly when armed guards are walking around looking for trouble. If the guard sees any weapons or characters trying to conceal weapons, he calls out more guards. They confiscate any weapons they see except for Bicho's, which he keeps in the wheelhouse. They then interrogate Bicho and any of the runners who had guns on them, asking the questions given above. After the questioning sessions, go to **Bungle in the Jungle**.

Of course, if the runners think their cover is blown and decide to make a pre-emptive strike against the guards, the *drek* hits the fan.

**Mistake Three:** This is the big one. If anyone fires any kind of weapon, the gun towers open up and guards hit the docks immediately. Nine guards are on duty when the *Golfinhão* arrives; another ten are close at hand in the town.

In general, the guards are ordinary infantry grunts who got posted to Leticia because they ticked someone off back at headquarters. Bored and unmotivated, they expect little trouble. However, because Leticia is one of the few acknowledged entry points into Amazonia, the guards have a few special tools up their sleeves.

The first are the two machine-gun towers, one on either side of the river. Each contains two of the on-duty guards and a single tripod-mounted LMG, plus a large-caliber sporting rifle with a combined Mag-3/thermographic scope (usable as a poor man's sniper rifle) and a large spotlight. The remaining guards on duty stay at ground level; no more than two of them board the boat at any given time unless Mistakes One or Two occur. If mistakes happen, one guard will position himself in the wheelhouse, one will stand on deck and one on the dock. Two others will board the patrol boat and keep the *Golfinhão* from going anywhere. The patrol boat is armed with two LMGs and a turret-mounted assault cannon, and is significantly faster than the *Golfinhão*. If the runners get into a chase with this boat, they will lose badly.

The off-duty guards also pose a potential threat to the runners if things go bad. Ten turns after the first shots are fired, the off-duty guards will converge on the river with armor on and guns ready. They'll probably be too late to do any immediate good, but



even if the runners wipe out all the on-duty guards, there will still be some warm bodies to pursue them in the Riverine.

#### Border Guards (19)

B	S	Q	I	W	C	E	R	Armor
4	3	4	4	4	3	6	4	3/2

**Initiative:** 4 + 1D6

**Threat/Professional Rating:** 3/3

**Skills:** Firearms 5, Interrogation 2, Unarmed Combat 4

**Gear:** Armored Vest (2/1), Helmet (1/1), Colt Manhunter [Heavy Pistol, 16 (clip), SA, 9M, w/laser sight]. The four that board the boat are armed with Ingram Warrior-10s [SMG, 30 (clip), SA/BF, 7M]. Each tower holds two soldiers, one operating the machine-gun [LMG, 100 (belt), BF/FA, 7S, w/Gas-Vent 2 and tripod] while the other carries a Remington 950 [Sport Rifle, 5 (magazine), SA, 9S, w/combined Mag-3 and thermographic scope].

#### GMC Riverine Patrol Boat

**Handling:** 3

**Speed:** 30

**Acceleration:** 5

**Body:** 4

**Armor:** 6

**Seating:** 2 bucket + 2 bench

**Armament:** Two forward-mounted machine guns [LMG, 100 (belt), BF/FA, 7S, w/Gas-Vent 2] and a turret-mounted cannon [Assault Cannon, 20 (clip), SS, 18D]

**Signature:** 3

**Autonav:** 2

**Stress:** 1

**Sensor:** 2

**Flux:** 2

The guards can also call on a Jaguar shaman who spends most of his time fishing for piranha at the water's edge. He normally does little more than assense each passing vessel for anything unusual. However, if the other guards become suspicious, he will board the offending boat and use his Analyze Truth spell to determine if anything shady is going on. If need be, he can also summon a river spirit to slow down fleeing vessels or a jungle spirit to catch trespassers on land. (See **Magic in Amazonia**, p. 8 of the **Introduction**.)

#### Jaguar Shaman

B	S	Q	I	W	C	E	R	Armor
4	3	5	5	5	4	6	5	3/2

**Initiative:** 5 + 1D6

**Threat/Professional Rating:** 4/3

**Skills:** Conjuring 5, Firearms 4, Sorcery 5, Stealth 4, Unarmed Combat 5

**Gear:** Armored Vest (2/1), Helmet (1/1), Colt Manhunter [Heavy Pistol, 16 (clip), SA, 9M, w/laser sight]

**Spells:** Analyze Truth 4, Calm Animal 4, Power Bolt 5, Sleep 4, Wrecker 4

If the border crossing degenerates into a firefight, Bicho will curse loudly and first try to take over the wheelhouse in order to get the boat moving. Assuming he succeeds at this, he will accelerate at top speed in order to get out of the LMGs' range as fast as possible. He will also keep his revolver handy in case any guards enter the wheelhouse. Doctors Fukuhara and Sanders will freeze in panic for a moment, then dive for the nearest available cover and

stay behind it. Doctor Al-Mansour will also head for cover, but will use his pistol against any guards who are aboard the *Golfinhão* or who threaten him directly. He will not fire at guards on shore or in the towers unless they are shooting at him. Bicho or the scientists may be wounded during a fight, but none of them should die: fudge dice rolls if necessary to keep them alive. Go to **Rock the Boat**, p. 19.

#### THE DELAY

If the characters behave themselves and the guard leaves the ship, Bicho explains what's going on in two words that no one on the boat should fully comprehend: "Football match." That's right—the border is closed so that the guards and any interested villagers can watch the trid broadcast of an important regional championship soccer match between Amazonia and Aztlan. The scientists will beg Bicho to take off, but he refuses. He makes his living on this river and does not want to face the guards' wrath if he gets between them and their big game. He declares that the team will stay until morning as ordered; if all goes well, the guards will clear them to proceed.

The guards have no ulterior motive; they really are just keeping things on hold so they can watch the game. The gamemaster can allow the characters to investigate the village if they want, but the scientists will not stand pat. They want to get on with it, and they have a plan. Go to **Bungle in the Jungle**, below.

#### DEBUGGING

If the runners have to fight their way across the border, they've just made the rest of their mission a lot more difficult. Patrols will be sent out from Fonte Boa and other downriver towns, and even on the wide Amazon there's no place to hide a boat the size of the *Golfinhão*. They will have no choice but to abandon the boat. They've also made their return trip a lot more difficult, as reinforcements will have arrived in towns and villages all along the river by the time they're ready to return to Peru.


## BUNGLE IN THE JUNGLE

### TELL IT TO THEM STRAIGHT

What a way to run a country—shut down by a sporting event. Thank god your sprawl chummers are with you; if you tried to explain this to them back in Seattle, they'd think you'd smoked something you shouldn't have.

So here you are ... "beautiful" Leticia lies before you, night is hours off and you have nothing to do and nowhere to go. You knew you should've brought something to pass the time. If you were back home, you'd hit the bar and drink and drink and drink. Maybe Leticia's got a watering hole—doesn't every town? You could even watch the game, learn a little something about soccer. This trip might not be so bad after all.

Just when you've got your evening figured out, Dr. Al-Mansour comes in with sat-maps and all kinds of charts. "I found



a place only a few clicks from here," he says, showing the only emotion you've seen on his face for the entire trip. "And we can walk there!"

## HOOKS

Again, the runners should expect one thing and then get the opposite. They should be itching for action, but don't let the cat out of the bag too early. Let them make plans for the evening; maybe even let one or two of them go find a good bar to watch the game—and then spring the plan on them. It's time to earn their pay!

Keep in mind that the jungle is dark during the day and even darker at night. The trip shouldn't take very long, but the jungle environment should make it plenty hazardous.

## BEHIND THE SCENES

The maps state that conditions for growing the Brazilian kiwi are favorable a few kilometers from Leticia. The site is across the border, so the team can get authentic samples ... assuming there are any fruits growing there. Dr. Al-Mansour is positive that the conditions for this spot are the same as the others the team had planned to hit. He is confident that they don't need to wait around until morning; they can jaunt to this site, pick some fruit and go home a lot sooner than they'd thought. Al-Mansour's plan gets total support from the other scientists.

Bicho hates the idea. He has no desire to go into the jungle at night, nor to explain to the guards where his tourists went. He dismisses the scheme as silly and pointless; he says the team should stick to the original plans and calls Al-Mansour's idea "half crazy." After he says his piece, he waits to see what the team decides to do. If the runners agree to Al-Mansour's scheme, Bicho says that his boat will leave at sun-up with or without them, and goes below decks.

If the player characters refuse to go along with the plan right away or disagree about it, Dr. Al-Mansour reminds them of their reason for being on this trip. He says something like, "You were hired as our security," or "You are responsible for protecting us no matter where we go, so you have no say." If this happens, Bicho remains on deck and silently watches the team prepare to leave. He makes no move to help them in any way, but doesn't try to stop them either.

## ON LAND

The site is located about three kilometers from the riverbank. The team will most likely try to leave as soon as possible in order to make the most of the remaining daylight. The scientists calculate that the trip to the site and back will take five hours—two hours of hiking each way, plus one hour to pick, catalog and label the specimens. At that rate, they should be back at the boat just after dark. For finding their way through the rainforest, the scientists only have a compass; they weren't planning on straying from the original plans, and so are not prepared for this kind of spur-of-the-moment jaunt. If any character has a GPS, this piece of equipment allows the team to move around freely; otherwise, Dr. Sanders must stop them every few meters to mark the trail and make notes. Using a GPS system reduces the hiking time for the trip by half.

For the first kilometer, everything goes smoothly; there is little underbrush to contend with, as the massive trees overhead block most of the light from reaching the jungle floor. The characters get hot and tired, but no hazardous wildlife appears.

Roughly halfway to the site, the entire atmosphere of the rainforest changes. The plants look larger, healthier and more vibrantly alive; the runners can almost see them growing. Bird calls and frog noises grow much louder and more frequent, and the temperature cools down slightly as the canopy overhead gets even thicker. This also means the rainforest gets darker; treat conditions as Partial Light (p. 89, **SR11**) for combat-related and Perception tests. All of these effects are caused by the massive fertility spells cast by Amazonian shamans throughout the nation; the spells extend right up to the border, and their effect is immediately apparent. Magically active characters will notice an increase in the mana level (see **Magic in Amazonia**, p. 8), and even mundanes will be aware that "something feels different."

About a kilometer beyond the border, near the place where Dr. Al-Mansour believes the kiwis should be growing, a large male basilisk (see p. 77 for statistics) is chewing contentedly on the calcified remains of a tapir (a large, pig-like mammal). The basilisk is behind a tree from the runners' perspective, and may be difficult to see in the low light; the first clue to its presence may be the crunching sound as it gnaws on the tapir bones. Make Surprise Tests (p. 86, **SR11**) for the runners and the basilisk, applying visibility modifiers for the low light. If the runner with the most successes outscored the basilisk's successes, that runner notices the creature before getting too close. The runners can then prepare to attack it from cover or otherwise deal with the situation. If the basilisk rolls more successes than all of the runners, it senses them as a threat and will crawl forward to defend its kill. If the basilisk and the most successful runner have the same number of successes, multiply that number by 5; the result is the number of meters between this runner and the basilisk when they suddenly notice each other. If the runners immediately move away, the basilisk will not attack them, though it will watch them until they are out of sight. If they remain in the area, the creature perceives them as a threat and will likely attack.

If the runners fight with the basilisk, bear in mind that they are not too far from Leticia. The sounds of single pistol and rifle shots will not carry as far as the town, but automatic weapons fire and shotgun blasts may. During each phase of a Combat Round in which such weapons are fired, make Perception (10) Tests for the two guards in the nearest gun tower. Modify the target number by the type of fire they are listening for: a modified Target Number of 6 for burst fire, or 4 for full autofire or shotgun blasts. As soon as either of the guards accumulates 5 or more successes, he identifies the gunfire and radios his teammates; the Jaguar shaman will lead a four-man squad to investigate. Two other guards hop into the patrol boat and block the port. The guards may not be able to locate the runners quickly enough to track them down, but a watcher or jungle spirit can.

Any boats in Leticia (including the *Golfinhão*) when shots are heard are asked to remain there "for your own safety," until the patrol reports back. Bicho complies with this order.

## THE SERENITY OF THE JUNGLE

The player characters have two options for dealing with the basilisk; they can fight or sneak away (see **Wrap Up**, p. 19). If the runners get into a firefight with the basilisk, the scientists will freak out and run off in all directions. Each scientist subsequently has his own encounter with the jungle. If and when the runners defeat the basilisk, they must find the scientists. The incidents described below may be played out in any order the gamemaster desires.

### Dr. Fukuhara

Dr. Fukuhara runs right past the basilisk and continues in the general direction of the kiwi site. He has no idea where he is going. When the gunfire ceases, he stops running and begins to head back the way he came. After  $1D6 \times 5$  minutes, Dr. Fukuhara pushes through some brush and finds himself staring into the eyes of a mantis as tall as he is. He disturbed this wyrd mantis by running into its territory. The mantis is male; the female is not in the area at the moment. Fukuhara will scream and run; the mantis will follow him. (See p. 87 for wyrd mantis statistics.)

The player characters can either go after Dr. Fukuhara first or wait until they hear him scream. If they wait until he screams, they find him and two mantises in a nearby clearing. The female mantis has arrived there just before the runners and has decided to eat the prey (Dr. Fukuhara). The male mantis challenges the female, and the two are posturing when the runners burst onto the scene. The runners cannot get the advantage of surprise because they have no idea where the doctor is; they run across him and the two giant insects by chance.

If the runners go after the doctor first, have the group make a  $1D6$  roll. Multiply the result by 5 and compare it to the  $1D6 \times 5$  rolled above by the gamemaster for Dr. Fukuhara. If the players' result represents less time than the gamemaster's result, they find the doctor before he stumbles on the male mantis. The mantis remains hidden and attacks on its own. If the result of the player characters' roll is higher than the gamemaster's, the runners hear the doctor scream before they find him. However, they can get to the doctor and the male mantis before the female joins the fray. The female arrives in the third Combat Round.

### Dr. Sanders

Dr. Sanders has been marking the trail and keeping notes. Once the gunfire starts, he takes off in a random direction, but falls down a ravine less than 25 meters from the basilisk. At the bottom of the ravine (25 meters down), he lands in the lair of a naga (see p. 83 for statistics). This snakelike being simply sits and stares at the good doctor until he makes a move. She then follows him, watching him intently until he is rescued. When confronted with more than four people, she will flee into the underbrush. If the runners act friendly, she will stay, watching them as if learning from their every movement. If they become hostile toward the naga, she will fight for one Combat Round and then flee. Dr. Sanders will not call out if he hears rescuers approaching, being too frightened to make any movements or sounds that the naga might interpret as hostile; he will talk, however, in hopes of leading them to him.





If the runners look for Dr. Sanders first, they find him in the ravine, trying to walk up it backwards because he fears turning his back on the naga. If they don't look for him first, they find him sitting down near the spot where the basilisk was while the naga stares at him.

### Dr. Al-Mansour

Dr. Al-Mansour fires at the basilisk for one Combat Round and then takes off the way the team came, shouting that he's going back to get help. He eventually meets the guards, who are running toward the errant "tourists." They force him to show them where the runners are; he leads them back to the place where the basilisk is, thinking that the team can use the guards' firepower. The doctor runs into the guards in the final phase (zero) of the Combat Round after the guards managed to determine the type and rough location of the gunfire.

If the basilisk attack ends without the guards hearing gunfire (because the runners aren't using their most powerful weapons or the gamemaster is rolling poorly), Dr. Al-Mansour continues to run toward Leticia. Keep in mind that subsequent fights with the mantis or the naga also count toward the Perception Tests made by the guards to hear the sounds of battle.

### The Guards

If the guards hear the gunshots, they arrive on the scene with Dr. Al-Mansour. If the runners are fighting the basilisk, the guards join in. They attempt to arrest the player characters when the fight is over. If the runners then start fighting the guards, have Dr. Al-Mansour step in and ask where the other two scientists are. If tensions are running very high, have Dr. Fukuhara scream or Dr. Sanders wander onto the scene with the naga following him.

If the guards arrive when the player characters are fighting the two mantises, they join in with a gusto that, even in Portuguese, should be apparent to the runners. Amazonia offers a bounty of 5,000 nuyen for killing a wyrd mantis, and so these guards are in for big money. After the mantises are defeated, the guards ask the runners to help them drag the carcasses back to Leticia. If the characters ask for a cut of the bounty, the guards explain that they will ignore the runners' illegal entry into their country and their "slaughter" of a native creature (the basilisk). That should serve as the runners' piece of the action, unless of course they want to explain to the territorial governor how they came to be in Amazonia in order to kill the mantises—in which case, they can wait around for six months until the next time he comes though Leticia.

If the runners are firing at the naga when the guards arrive, the guards open fire on the PCs. Nagas are protected animals, and are even worshipped in some places in Amazonia. As soon as the conflict stops, the guards will arrest the runners. If the runners tell the guards about the mantis(es), the guards offer to keep quiet about the runners firing at the naga in exchange for the mantis bounty. If the naga is dead, however, the runners will be arrested whether or not they mention the mantis(es). No bounty is enough to cover up the naga's slaying.

If the PCs offer to apologize to the naga, they can do so in three ways: trying to heal it if they hit it in combat, offering it food

(the dead tapir or basilisk will do), or sitting with it and slowly telling it a story or singing. Hand gestures during this performance will make the naga calmer as well as curious.

If the characters kill the guards, they will have to explain what happened to the rest of the contingent at Leticia—and the story had better be good. Otherwise they are under immediate arrest, and will face the maximum possible punishment for murdering "good Amazonian soldiers."

If the player characters come back with the guards, they will be escorted into the military building. The guard captain then pastes them with a verbal assault more blistering than any the runners have ever heard, screaming at them half in Portuguese and half in English. With the big soccer game staring in less than an hour, he does not want to go through the motions of a full-fledged "trial," and so he settles for fining the runners: 1,000 nuyen per person if they were simply caught in the jungle, 2,000 nuyen per person if they were caught firing at the naga or if the guards found the dead basilisk, and a whopping 5,000 nuyen per person if they killed the naga.

If the guards and the runners come back with the mantis bodies, the guards explain to the captain that they requested the characters' help. Any fines except the one for killing the naga will be reduced to zero, though the runners will still need to wait until morning to get their passports back. The runners must pay the fine for killing the naga whether or not the guards brought the mantis corpses back with them. The incident will go on the runners' records via their passports and fake SIDs, but should not affect future visits to Amazonia.

Only after the fines are paid are the characters released. The scientists foot the bill.

### Bicho

Bicho remains on the boat. If the guards hear gunshots and the patrol boat blocks the dock, he waits. If the guards do not hear gunfire, the runners, Dr. Sanders and Dr. Fukuhara head back to Leticia only to find Bicho and Dr. Al-Mansour fighting on the deck of the *Golfinhão*. Each has thrown punches, but Bicho is giving out more punishment than he is taking. As the player characters exit the jungle, they see Bicho banging Dr. Al-Mansour's head against the deck of the boat. Each man has Moderate stun and Light Physical damage.

Dr. Al-Mansour claims that Bicho refused to get help and that the boat was running when he got back. He thinks Bicho planned to cut out on the team. Bicho explains that he'd set the boat running in case there was trouble and the team needed to run the border. A runner who uses the Analyze Truth spell will discover that Bicho is telling the truth, but also that he would have killed Dr. Al-Mansour if the runners' arrival hadn't stopped him.

No matter what happened in the jungle and with the guards, Bicho thinks the team should leave as soon as everyone goes to watch the game, even without their papers and passports. Bicho thinks the border guards will want the glory of catching "wanted fugitives," and that even more fines and fees will be levied against the team. Refusing to listen to anyone, he begins to prepare the boat for a run across the border.



## WRAP UP

If the player characters sneak past the basilisk without fighting it, the gamemaster has a few options. If he wishes, he can have the wyrd mantis attack the team in the jungle anytime. If that occurs, have Dr. Fukuhara encounter the basilisk; this means that the player characters will fight the basilisk and mantis in the reverse of the order given above. The rest of the situations involving the scientists, the guards and Bicho still occur in the order of the gamemaster's choice. Alternatively, the runners could discover the naga (or vice versa). Either way, the characters should encounter some of these creatures. The actual order in which they do so does not matter.

The gamemaster should also make sure the team never gets to the site that may contain the kiwis. Even if the guards never turn up, one scientist (Dr. Al-Mansour) will be missing and the others have had near-death experiences. Understandably, Dr. Fukuhara and Dr. Sanders insist on going back to the boat immediately. If the guards arrive, the runners have no choice but to go back.

## DEBUGGING

In addition to character death (always a potentially unavoidable problem), two other things can go wrong in this encounter: the scientists die or a firefight in Leticia begins. The gamemaster should avoid either one at all costs. Fudge dice rolls or have the scientists skirt the danger. All three scientists must survive this encounter—but because they flee the violence, gamemaster shouldn't find it too hard to save their skins.

If the runners kill the guards in the jungle, things get more problematic. The guards are not going to try to kill the player characters; even if the runners are shooting at the naga, the guards will only fire on them long enough to get them to stop firing on the naga and let it escape. The guards want to get back to Leticia and catch the game, so they are willing to let things slide a bit. If the runners decide to slaughter the guards, they must come up with a plan to deceive or defeat in combat all the other guards in the village. The gamemaster should remind them (via the scientists) that the point of this whole trip is to sneak the scientists into Amazonia and sneak them out again. If GGI had wanted a napalm surprise, the company would have hired the military or a dragon. In any case, the action moves to **Rock the Boat**.

## ROCK THE BOAT

### TELL IT TO THEM STRAIGHT

Leticia is alive with whistles, boos and cheers. The river and the jungle seem to have gone to sleep ... and yet you have this sick feeling that just past the river's edge, everything is watching you.

Bicho hasn't said a word in more than an hour, ever since saying the team should leave during the game. He shuffles along the deck, shutting off all the lights. Then he goes back to the wheelhouse and gives a low, long whistle, which you recognize as the signal to pull the ropes off the dock and weigh anchor.

As the *Golfinhão* leaves the dock, everything seems fine. Too drekking fine. As you pass the far gun tower, Dr. Sanders trips

over a food crate and yells, "My God, I'm going to fall off this damn boat!" A powerful spotlight illuminates the deck of the boat like a bad strip show you once saw.

Before your eyes can adjust, it starts raining bullets. Duck and cover time, chummer.

### After the boat is out of the gun tower's range, read the following:

Once the gunfire quiets down, Dr. Fukuhara and Dr. Sanders slowly stand up from their hiding places. Sanders is pale; he says nothing, but his face is covered with sweat. Fukuhara stares upriver toward Leticia and asks, "How are we going to get back across?"

"We aren't," Bicho answers as he steers toward shore. "Not in this boat, anyway. *Putá merda!* What were you thinking?!? They'll be sending patrols upriver within the hour, and there aren't any tributaries we can hide in to avoid them. They'll blow us out of the water!"

He sighs and looks back toward Peru. "We'll have to cut back overland, keep as far from Leticia as possible when we cross back over. Maybe we can buy or borrow a boat from a riverside village to get back to Iquitos."

He drops anchor a few meters from shore and cuts the motor. "Okay, start unloading anything you want to keep, as long as you can carry it. We'll want to head north for a day or so before cutting back across the border, and it's going to be a long, hot trip."

Dr. Al-Mansour speaks up. "What about the kiwis?"

"Damn you and your stupid fruit, you *troga!*" Bicho bellows, his face a mask of fury. "You've ruined me, do you realize that?!? Even if we make it back to Iquitos and I find another boat, I'll never be able to show my face at the border again. You and your company owe me *um dinheirão*, you understand me? Big money!"

"Yes," Dr. Sanders says, his voice grave. "Yes, we do. But unless we get those samples back to Seattle, there won't be any money to pay for your loss. If we can get back to Iquitos with what we came for, I'll see that you're compensated. I give you my word on that. But if we go back empty-handed, I doubt you'll get enough money to buy a bicycle, much less a new boat."

Dr. Al-Mansour adds, "The satellite maps show a promising area further downriver. You said yourself we don't want to cross back over the border yet; why not spend some time looking for the kiwis? If we don't find them within two days, we'll head back. Does anyone have a problem with that?"

Dr. Fukuhara says calmly, "If there is no way out other than the river, they won't need to chase us tonight. They can radio river villages to watch out for us and even stop us, but they won't have to leave Leticia until morning. That way they can surround us. So we have plenty of time to get further down river and reach the first site. Once there, we can plan a return route overland if you wish, Bicho. We should reach the site in just a few hours if we really push it."

Words you wish you'd never heard ring in your head: "surrounded" and "overland route." No matter how much you protest, the scientists insist on getting to the site and checking things out. You remember seeing that same look in a BTL junkie's eyes once ...



### As dawn approaches, read the following:

You wish you could've slept ... sawing a few logs might've helped your mood. But how could you sleep knowing that Amazonian patrol boats lurked around every bend in the river?

Speaking of logs, there seem to be quite a few of them in the water around here. Dr. Sanders is up front taking pictures of them. You glance up at the wheelhouse to make sure Bicho sees the logs, when suddenly you hear a resounding *crunch* and see Dr. Sanders reeling backward from the bow. You look over the side to see what happened, and it dawns on you that whatever hit the boat, it wasn't a log ... unless logs in Amazonia have half-meter-long tusks, armored hides and a nasty disposition.

## HOOKS

Bicho's on edge, the scientists are too close to their triumph to let go, and the runners are way out of their element. The tension should be thick enough to cut in this encounter. Whenever the runners want to set up a tactical operation, the scientists rebuff them. The runners are just along for the ride, and must deal with the events as they happen. Aggressive runners will complain, but the scientists don't care. All that matters to them is the knowledge that their Holy Grail is someplace close by.

Once those tensions are rubbed raw, cut loose with the animal rampage scene and let the runners witness the full force of the Awakening firsthand. Emphasize the seemingly unstoppable power of the caiman that hit the boat. Once the characters are ashore, let tempers flare and nerves jangle as the non-player characters start to realize that they've just left the frying pan for the fire.

## BEHIND THE SCENES

The "log" that just broke open the *Golfinhão's* hull is a *macaréu* (see p. 82), an Awakened species of caiman very similar to the North American behemoth. The other "logs" include a female, with which this *macaréu* and several smaller, competing males were attempting to mate when the *Golfinhão's* arrival interrupted them. The other critters won't attack the boat, but the runners should have their hands full with just one. If the gamemaster wants some real fun, let the other *macaréus* start stampeding out of the water.

The good news for the runners is that the *macaréu* will spend its first few attacks on the *Golfinhão* instead of going after them. Once they start inflicting damage on the beast, however, it starts trying to bite individual runners or passengers (whoever is nearest). Bicho will step out of the wheelhouse and fire shotgun blast after shotgun blast into the creature. Dr. Al-Mansour will race to the front of the boat and drag Dr. Sanders out of harm's way, while Dr. Fukuhara will emerge from belowdecks and yell that the boat is taking on water.

Upon hearing this, Bicho will curse loudly in several languages and then tell everyone within earshot to go belowdecks and gather anything they want to save. Once he has emptied his shotgun's clip, he will sling it over his shoulder and start steering the boat toward shore. If the *macaréu* has taken more than a Moderate wound, it will not pursue; instead, it will sink back into the water with a last, malevolent glare. As before, none of the sci-

entists or Bicho should die in this encounter, though they may well be wounded.

Once the *Golfinhão* gets to shore and the *macaréu* is killed or driven off, Bicho runs the boat aground and assesses the damage. The boat can be repaired in dry dock, but the team can do little in the middle of the rainforest. He says they'll have to get back to Iquitos, where he knows someone who might agree to sail out here to make the repairs. In the meantime, the scientists and the runners will have to gather their provisions and hike back at least as far as Leticia.

At this point, the scientists will argue that they should stay and look for the kiwis as long as they're in Amazonia anyway. The argument will proceed as outlined in **Tell It To Them Straight**; Bicho wants reimbursement for his ruined boat, and Dr. Sanders points out that he won't get it unless the team gets back home with the kiwis. Bicho is also furious at Dr. Sanders for merrily photographing the *macaréus* without warning Bicho that they were around. Dr. Al-Mansour steps in to defend his associate, and the argument degenerates into a shouting match with accusations flying back and forth.

Assuming that the player characters manage to calm things down, Bicho reluctantly agrees to spend a day or two hiking to the nearest potential kiwi location before turning back.

## DEBUGGING

If the runners are having a lot of trouble with the *macaréu*, one of the smaller males may take the opportunity to attack the bull, thus distracting him from the runners. Alternatively, the critter may break off the attack after making his point. In either case, the damage is done and the *Golfinhão* is grounded. Proceed to **Long Day, Bad Night**.

If, through clever use of magic or hard work, the players manage to repair the boat or avoid the encounter with the *macaréu*, the gamemaster may need to modify the following encounters slightly. The expedition will have to leave the boat and travel on foot to get to the kiwis anyway. Anywhere they leave the boat, the *macaréu* can do all kinds of damage to it just by rubbing up against it, or possibly tipping it over just because it is there. Somehow, the gamemaster should get the team on foot for the trip back over the border. If that isn't possible, there's no reason the final encounters can't take place aboard the *Golfinhão*. That plot complication will involve another border crossing, however, and the gamemaster will have to improvise that encounter.

## LONG DAY, BAD NIGHT

### TELL IT TO THEM STRAIGHT

Blinking away sweat for the thousandth time today, you find yourself wondering if you can get cybereyes equipped with windshield wipers. The hike through the rainforest isn't quite what you expected; there's very little underbrush in the shadow of the thick forest canopy overhead, so Bicho rarely has to use his machete. So far, the local wildlife has been content to leave you alone. Still, the heat and humidity are starting to take their toll. And if you're



feeling this tired, you can only imagine what the trip is doing to the lab rats, who probably never have to do anything more strenuous than lifting a beaker. Dr. Al-Mansour seems to be holding up okay, but Fukuhara and Sanders—especially Sanders—are sweating like pigs.

Dr. Fukuhara stops again, hands on his knees, breathing heavily. You think he's about to ask for another rest break when he suddenly raises one hand and points off to your left. "Is that <huff> what I think <wheeze> it is?"

You ready your guns and look where he's pointing, hoping you're not too tired to take on whatever he's spotted. Then you realize that the good doctor is pointing to a group of trees about twenty meters away. Wrapped around their trunks are several dark brown vines bearing the big, fuzzy fruits you saw in the in-flight presentation.

"Gentlemen," Dr. Fukuhara says. "I give you *actinidia amazonsis*."

#### **After the characters have settled in for the night, read the following to whoever is on guard:**

The rainforest night is quiet, broken only by the constant *peep-peep-peep* of tiny frogs and the occasional growl of a distant jaguar. Suddenly, the calm is shattered by a bellow of sheer terror from within the camp. You look toward it and see Dr. Sanders fling himself to his feet, flailing his arms wildly. He whirls around and then races toward you, his shallow breaths sounding like stifled screams.

As he comes closer, you see that his face is pale and covered with sweat. His left arm is a bloody mess from shoulder to elbow, and his right hand clutches Bicho's bloody machete as if his life depended on it. He stares at you, barely seeming to see you, and raises the machete above his head.

"Get ... it ... off ... me ..." he says between gasps, and slams the blade deeply into the flesh of his arm.

## **HOOKS**

The runners have found their objective, so the rest of the run will be a piece of cake, right? Wrong. This encounter is a turning point in the adventure, in which the story moves from action to mystery and then to horror. Let the players enjoy their "success" and turn their attention toward getting back to Iquitos; then hit them with Dr. Sanders' unexpected and horrible madness. It should take them completely by surprise and make them think something is terribly wrong ... which is true.

## **BEHIND THE SCENES**

In the late afternoon on the day they leave the river, the expedition comes across exactly what they were looking for: a sizable crop of Amazonian kiwis ripe for plucking. The scientists are in their element, and begin unpacking whatever equipment they managed to carry with them. While they're setting up their gear, taking soil samples, analyzing the ground water and so on, Bicho suggests that the runners scout out the area and find a good spot to make camp, "since it doesn't look like we're going any farther today."

Exploring, the runners discover very little of interest. Roughly fifty meters away from the kiwi vines is a small copse of trees that would make a nicely defensible campsite. There are no signs of any dangerous wildlife in the area, though the runners may have to scare off a few jaguars that stray too close.

The scientists, meanwhile, complete their initial analyses and pluck a few kiwis for preliminary study. Night is falling, however, and what little sunlight filters through the canopy is rapidly fading; further study will have to wait for tomorrow. During dinner, the scientists talk excitedly about seed germination ratios and pigment protein complexes; they're like kids with a new toy, and even Dr. Al-Mansour seems more cheerful. At some point during the meal, Dr. Fukuhara again warns against eating any of the kiwi fruit; Dr. Sanders, chuckling, agrees. Eventually, conversation dies down; the group breaks up and retires for the night. The runners (hopefully) set up some watches, and the camp grows quiet.

## **MIDNIGHT MADNESS**

About two hours later, all hell breaks loose. Dr. Sanders rises screaming out of his bedroll, hacking at one arm with Bicho's machete. His incoherent shouts rouse everyone in the camp, though no one is immediately sure what to do. If someone doesn't stop him, he will continue hacking at his arm until he passes out from blood loss; he can't strike at an angle that will sever the arm, but he is doing dreadful damage to himself. By the time the other characters begin to react, he has already taken a Moderate wound, and will inflict another Moderate wound on himself each turn until stopped. He will swing the machete at anyone who tries to restrain or disarm him; while he is unlikely to actually hit anyone, but the threat may keep his would-be rescuers at bay.

The runners should not find it difficult to subdue Dr. Sanders, whether by trickery or brute force. If anyone reminds him of it, Dr. Al-Mansour has among his gear a Narcoject rifle that may prove useful. Once subdued, Dr. Sanders (if conscious) will collapse in tears, clutching his ruined arm and mumbling disjointedly. The only comprehensible words are, "I didn't eat it, I *didn't* eat it ..."

Examination of Dr. Sanders's tent reveals a few large, ragged chunks of kiwifruit piled up near his bedroll. The obvious conclusion, which Dr. Al-Mansour states if no one else does, is that Sanders decided to taste the fruit and suffered the severely hallucinogenic consequences. This conclusion, though reasonable, is wrong.

The kiwi fruit is not itself hallucinogenic. It is, however, the favorite host of an unusual species of Awakened insect. These spiderlike creatures lay their eggs in the flesh of the fruit; the eggs hatch into larvae that first eat the fruit, then seek out a warmer, larger host in which to pupate. In this case, the larger host was Dr. Sanders. He was examining a kiwi before turning in for the night, and had borrowed Bicho's machete because he was considering cutting the fruit open. However, he decided to wait until daylight, and placed the kiwi and the machete beside his bedroll when he went to sleep. The larva, aroused by all the movement, consumed most of the fruit, then crawled out and bored into Dr. Sanders's upper arm. As it burrowed into his flesh, it secreted hallucinogens that spread through the doctor's bloodstream; when the pain finally awoke him, he was already too doped-up to respond normally. He grabbed the first weapon he saw, the machete, and



began trying to kill the creature he felt crawling inside him. In the process, of course, he destroyed any traces of the wound it left in his arm.

Even if he survives his self-inflicted wounds, the larva's secretions will make Dr. Sanders increasingly disoriented during the remainder of the expedition, and he will never be able to clearly explain what he felt. Use of Mind Probe or similar spells will also be affected by the hallucinogens, though such a spell may establish that Sanders didn't eat any of the kiwi fruit.

This unexpected tragedy leaves the camp in shock and also renews tensions. Dr. Al-Mansour coldly asks Bicho how his machete wound up in Sanders's tent, clearly hinting at some malicious intent. Bicho angrily replies that Dr. Sanders asked to borrow it, and he saw no reason to say no. He is angered by Dr. Al-Mansour's insinuations, and the conversation once again degenerates into a shouting match. If the *Golfinhão* was sunk by the macaréu in **Rock the Boat**, Al-Mansour will point out that Bicho blamed Dr. Sanders for the loss of his boat; Bicho counters by asking just what is in the Narcoject darts in Dr. Al-Mansour's rifle. Neither man has a strong enough motive to justify attempted murder, but they need something on which to focus their fear, and they have chosen each other.

If the runners don't separate the two, Dr. Fukuhara eventually will. He urges everyone to get some sleep, repeats the now-unnecessary warning against eating the kiwi fruit and heads back to his tent. Glaring at one another, Bicho and Dr. Al-Mansour stalk back to opposite sides of the camp, and things quiet down once more. There are no more interruptions, though no one sleeps much.

In the morning, Fukuhara and Al-Mansour collect and carefully pack several kiwi fruits, carrying them in the space left by the provisions that the expedition has consumed. If Dr. Sanders is dead, they want to bring his body back, but will not argue too hard if told that doing so is impractical. Dr. Fukuhara contemplates cutting open one of the fruits for inspection, but Dr. Al-Mansour convinces him to wait until they reach a suitable laboratory environment. The camp is packed up, and a much subdued expedition heads west towards the Peruvian border.

Another day of brutally hot hiking brings them almost to the Amazon River, their route back to Iquitos and civilization. Bicho suggests camping away from the river for the night to avoid animals and any border patrol boats. In the morning, he can guide them to a village where they can probably buy passage back to Iquitos.

## DEBUGGING

If the runners kill Dr. Sanders, the surviving scientists and Bicho will become much more suspicious of their motives. They will still accompany the runners—they have few other choices—but will be wary of them. Tensions around the camp will run high, and few people will sleep at all.

Whether Dr. Sanders lives or dies, he is unlikely to provide any useful information to the runners, and is thus in little danger of spoiling the plot. If the players somehow manage to make him lucid, he can confirm that he didn't eat any of the fruit. He says he awoke in the middle of the night with an unbearable burning sensation in his arm; he recalls no more than that.



Once the party has settled down for the following night, proceed to **Morning Gory**.

## MORNING GORY

### TELL IT TO THEM STRAIGHT

One day down, one more to go and then you can leave this stinking jungle behind for good. Bicho says he knows some people in a village a few kilometers upriver; from there it's back to Iquitos and the first plane out of here. It's already hot when the sun comes up, so you start breaking camp early. Bicho and Dr. Al-Mansour are already up, pointedly avoiding each other as they pack their gear. Dr. Fukuhara seems to be sleeping in. Dr. Al-Mansour ducks into his tent to wake him up ... and then screams in pure terror.

As you race to the tent to see what's wrong, Dr. Al-Mansour slowly backs out of it, eyes and mouth wide open. You pull open the tent flap and see the barely recognizable corpse of Dr. Fukuhara. His face, body, clothes and backpack are riddled with dozens of bloody, centimeter-wide holes.

Behind you, Dr. Al-Mansour yells, "What did you do to him, you dog?" Turning around, you see that he has a pistol aimed directly at Bicho's heart.

### HOOKS

Fukuhara's death, even more unexpected and gruesome than the incident with Dr. Sanders, will surely convince the runners that something is very wrong ... and that they may not make it to Iquitos alive. Run this encounter at a fever pitch; from the discovery of the body to the confrontation between Bicho and Al-Mansour to the pursuit by the border patrol, don't let up until the runners reach Iquitos.

### BEHIND THE SCENES

Dr. Fukuhara has been carrying a backpack full of larva-infested kiwifruit around with him all day; his body heat, combined with the movement, awoke several of the larvae, who bored out of their fruits, through Dr. Fukuhara's backpack and into his body. Unfortunately, Dr. Fukuhara was a much deeper sleeper than Dr. Sanders and never woke up.

Dr. Al-Mansour, already on edge from panic and lack of sleep, finally loses it; he pulls his gun on Bicho, not because he really thinks the guide killed Fukuhara, but because he can think of nothing else to do. Al-Mansour has sensed Bicho's antipathy toward him and Dr. Fukuhara (as well as toward any metahuman runners), and feels that somehow Bicho must be responsible for Fukuhara's death (and possibly Sanders's as well). Given time, the runners might manage to talk him down—but they won't have the time. They'll have to act before someone does something crazy.

Bicho freezes at first, but as soon as anything distracts Al-Mansour, he dives to the ground and comes up holding his shotgun. His hatred and fear have gotten the better of him as well after the stress of the past few days. Unless forcibly stopped right away, he shouts, "Die, you worthless troga scum!" and fires at Al-Mansour.

Then things really get complicated. The runners hear the sound of an approaching motorboat. As the echoes of the shotgun blast die away, they hear the boat throttle down, and may also hear the distant barking of orders in Portuguese. The border patrol has finally caught up with them; a four-man squad is disembarking from the Riverine patrol boat and fanning out to track down the source of the gunfire.

The runners must decide whether they're going to flee or fight, and whether to take Bicho, Dr. Al-Mansour, both or neither with them. The two men will scream obscenities at each other and exchange fire unless forcibly prevented from doing so. Then the patrol closes in, shouting for the runners to drop their weapons and surrender. Once they hear this, Bicho and Al-Mansour stop attacking each other and follow the runners' lead.

The runners' best bet is to flee right away with Bicho, Dr. Al-Mansour, Dr. Sanders (if he is still alive) and the kiwis, leaving the rest of the camp behind. If they leave immediately, they may be able to get a head start on the short jaunt to the border.

By traveling parallel to the river, they will only meet one guard at a time, whom they may be able to get past or take out individually. If they can defeat the guards on shore, they will be able to stay away from the river (and the Riverine's heavy weaponry) and work their way west, toward Peru. The border crossing will be easy away from the river, and once in Peru the runners should be able to barter for passage back to Iquitos. The runners may also try to blow up or commandeer the Riverine; doing so will be difficult, but will make their return trip upriver much easier. In the Riverine, they can blow past Leticia without a care.

If and when they return to Iquitos, Bicho (if alive) will proceed to the nearest bar and get very, very drunk. He never wants to see any of the characters again, but leaves an address where GGI can send the money to pay for his boat. The runners and any surviving scientists can return to the airport and board the Skytruck for a welcome trip home.

### DEBUGGING

If the runners are captured, they're in big trouble. GGI will deny all knowledge of the expedition, and the runners will probably rot in an Amazonian jail—if they're lucky. If not, they'll be executed. Give them a chance to escape on the way back to Leticia; the guards are wary, but should be no match for the runners. If the runners need help, a group of anti-Amazonian revolutionaries may break them out, or the Riverine may be attacked by another macaréu. The gamemaster should find some way to help the characters avoid spending the rest of their lives in prison.

At this point, it doesn't matter much if Bicho, Dr. Al-Mansour, or Dr. Sanders survive. Make sure to ask the players if they're bringing the kiwis with them, however. They will almost certainly say yes, as producing the fruit is the only way they'll get paid; the presence of the kiwis is also necessary to set up the dramatic final encounter, **Homeward Bound** (p. 24). If for some reason the runners leave all the kiwis behind and keep Dr. Al-Mansour from bringing his, proceed directly to **Picking Up the Pieces**, p. 25.



## HOMeward BOUND

### TELL IT TO THEM STRAIGHT

As the Skytruck lifts off, you feel an almost tangible relief that you're no longer touching South American soil. It's been a hellish week, and you can literally feel the tension drain out of you as the plane gains altitude.

From time to time during the flight, you glance back at the cargo door beyond which the kiwifruits are carefully packed away. You wonder how they can be worth so much money and so much bloodshed. Only Dunkelzahn knows, and he's dead. Oh, well—some questions were never meant to be answered. You let your fatigue take over and drift off to sleep.

Some time later, a faint but annoying scratching sound awakens you. Slightly disoriented, you glance around; everything looks okay in the cabin. You turn around in your seat to try to discern the source of the scratching.

It's coming from behind the cargo door.

### HOOKS

You know how the psycho killers in horror movies always crop up for one last scare after they're supposedly dead? This encounter is exactly that. Just when the runners think they've seen the last of the accursed rainforest, the long hand of the Amazon reaches out to grab them once more. And they're on a pressurized plane at high altitude ... they have nowhere to go but down.

### BEHIND THE SCENES

Use the information in **Up, Up and Away**, p. 10, to determine the target numbers for taking off and landing if a player-character rigger is flying the Skytruck.

The larvae in the kiwi fruits have all woken up by now, and some have already changed into their adult forms—spiderlike insects, about a third of a meter long, with jaws dripping hallucinogenic saliva. They are also ravenous. After laboriously extracting themselves from the packing crates, they make their way to the cargo door and crawl around it, seeking a way to get at the living meat they can smell on the other side. There are three spider-beasts for each runner; see p. 85 for statistics.

If a character opens the cargo door, the spider-beasts pour out. Make a Surprise Test for the poor sucker at the door. Otherwise, the runners have a few turns to prepare before some of the creatures crawl onto the door handle and manage to unlock it with their weight. (The spider-beasts are not intelligent, just persistent.)

Alternatively, have some of the spider-beasts eat through a cable or two, thereby forcing the pilot to check (or have someone else check) for a problem inside the cargo hold. If the pilot is the team rigger, he may check things out himself if the vehicle is on autonav.

The characters should have a hard time fighting the creatures. Though not particularly tough, the spider-beasts are agile and hard to hit; raise all target numbers for tests to hit them by +1. Furthermore, if the characters use firearms against the critters, they will almost certainly decompress the cabin. Any gun with a

base Power of 8 or more, except for one that fires shot or flechette rounds, will penetrate the Skytruck's hull and begin depressurizing the cabin. To simulate this, add +1 to all target numbers for runners and spider-beasts for every three such rounds fired. Also, for each +1 penalty, roll 1D6 each turn; for each result of 1, a spider-beast is sucked through a hole in the hull and plummets to the earth. For example, if six rounds have been fired, apply a +2 target number penalty to all tests made by runners or spider-beasts. Then roll 2D6 to see if any critters get free-fall lessons.

Once the cabin starts to depressurize, the pilot will throw the plane into a steep dive, adding a further +2 modifier to all target numbers for three turns until he levels back out. If the pilot is a player-character rigger, he or she will need to make any Vehicle Tests the gamemaster deems necessary to remain in control of the Skytruck. The base target number for these tests is the Skytruck's Handling, with a minimum modifier of +6 for the situation (see pp. 20-21, **Rigger 2**, for more modifiers and for rules on how to resolve Vehicle Tests). If the test succeeds, the rigger remains in control of the plane. If the test fails, the character can try again with an additional +1 modifier to the target number for each attempt. See page 82, **Rigger 2**, for aircraft maneuvers beyond the basic dive.

Clever characters may try to turn the altitude to their advantage by opening the rear cargo doors. To accomplish this, a character must work his or her way back to the cargo release (going through the spider-beasts on the way), spend a Complex Action activating it and then hang on for dear life. Assume that the beasts ate through the release's connections to the rigger (especially if the characters discovered the spiders after the critters ate through a cable).

If a character opens the rear cargo doors, roll 5D6 each turn; a spider-beast will be sucked out on any result of 1 or 2. Characters in the cargo hold must make a Strength (5) Test each round the cargo door is open to avoid being sucked out themselves, and can do nothing else except close the door. Characters in the passenger cabin can likewise do nothing except make Strength (3) Tests each round to avoid being sucked into the cargo hold. Characters who took the time to strap themselves in before the rear door was opened need not make Strength Tests and can act normally, but at +5 to all target numbers. Any loose objects (drinks, guns, any remaining kiwi fruit and possibly the Dolphin III motorboat and trailer) are blown into the upper atmosphere and lost for good.

Once the spider-beasts have all been eliminated, the Skytruck can make an intact (though possibly very bumpy) return to Seattle.

### DEBUGGING

This is it; win or lose, the runners decide their fate in this encounter. Whatever happens, proceed to **Picking Up the Pieces**, p. 25. If the team rigger never gains control of the Skytruck, prepare for a crash landing; see p. 52, **Rigger 2**.

If the characters do not bring any kiwis aboard the Skytruck, the gamemaster may still be able to run this encounter if either Dr. Sanders or Dr. Fukuhara's body are on board. Either one may be infested with spider-beast larvae; this could be particularly creepy



if Dr. Sanders is still alive ("Moaning quietly in his seat, he begins to twitch, and you think you see something moving under the bandages on his arm ...").

## PICKING UP THE PIECES

Randall Pape will be waiting for the runners when they return to Sea-Tac Airport, and what the runners bring him will determine if he considers the run a debacle or a mere failure.

If the runners bring back no kiwis and no scientists, just a tale about spider-creatures and the scientists going insane, Pape won't even consider believing them. Not only will he not pay them the remainder of their fee, he will let all his contacts know that the runners are either incompetents or murderers. The characters will find it hard to get a job for a while unless they can get some proof of their story.

If the runners return with fruit but no scientists, Pape will be suspicious. He will grudgingly pay them the agreed-upon fee, but will launch his own investigation into their claims. He will contact Bicho if the latter is still alive, and Bicho's version of the story will determine if Pape blames the runners for what happened. If Bicho paints the runners as the ones to blame for the scientists' deaths,

Pape may well try to bring the runners to justice. For example, he might arrange another meet with them that is actually a Lone Star sting operation.

If the runners bring back no kiwi fruit but at least one scientist who can corroborate their story, Pape will be aghast. (Even if the only survivor is the incoherent Dr. Sanders, a medical exam will reveal the larva inside him and back up at least that part of the runners' incredible tale.) Pape will give the runners 25 percent of the rest of their payment for their trouble, but won't give them the rest because they failed to protect the scientists and bring back the kiwis. He will not, however, spread any unfavorable rumors about the runners.

Finally, if the runners have some kiwis and at least one living scientist, Pape will pay up in full. He will be horrified by their story, but thankful for their efforts. At the gamemaster's discretion, he and GGI may hire the runners again in the future.

If any of the spider-beasts fell out of the plane during the final encounter, the runners may hear reports of a plague of strange insects in the Big Sur region of California. The beasts are apparently breeding like crazy, infecting the state's precious orange groves with their larvae and causing numerous accidental deaths with their hallucinogenic bites. No one is entirely sure where they came from; they just seemed to drop out of nowhere ...

## AWARDING KARMA

Award team Karma as outlined below. Award individual Karma according to the standard rules (p. 199, **SRII**).

Survival	1 point
If Dr. Sanders survived	1 point
If Dr. Al-Mansour survived	1 point
If the runners brought back any intact kiwis for GGI	1 point
If any spider-beasts were let loose over California	-1 point
Threat	2 points

## CAST OF SHADOWS

The following NPCs are listed in order of their appearance.



### DR. EIJI FUKUHARA

Dr. Fukuhara proposed this expedition to Green Globe International, and thinks of himself as the leader and driving force behind the entire trip. He is extremely focused on his goal—the cultivation of the Brazilian kiwi outside the Amazon rainforest—and won't let little details like hostile border patrols or incoming gunfire get in his way. He can be stubborn to the point of irrationality and sometimes

comes across as arrogant, but only because he's worked in lab environments for so long that he sometimes forgets normal people don't know what he's talking about. A graduate of the University of Pittsburgh, Dr. Fukuhara is a slender elf of Japanese descent.

#### Attributes

Body: 3  
Quickness: 3  
Strength: 2  
Charisma: 3  
Intelligence: 6  
Willpower: 5  
Essence: 3.65  
Reaction: 4

**Initiative:** 4 + 1D6

**Threat/Professional Rating:** 1/2      1,000 Mp of memory

#### Cyberware

Datajack (4)  
Display link (retinal)  
Memory (600 Mp of FIFF)

#### Skills

Biology: 6 (Ecology: 8)  
Computer: 4  
Etiquette (Corp): 3  
Japanese: 6  
Leadership: 3

#### Gear

Medikit  
Nav-Dat GPS system  
Survival kit  
Wrist computer with



### DR. MOHAMMED AL-MANSOUR

Dr. Al-Mansour is a sour-faced, solitary hobgoblin (see p. 40, **SR Companion**). He arrived in the UCAS about six months ago, after a fundamentalist regime seized power in his homeland of Syria. By emigrating, he'd hoped to escape the persecution of metahumans; however, a week or so after his arrival he was viciously beaten by a gang of human-supremacist thugs. He has since taken a job with GGI

and moved to Seattle, but still carries a chip on his shoulder from his recent hardships. He is polite, but harbors an abiding suspicion of humans that will take him a long time to shake. Dr. Al-Mansour spent time in the military when he was younger and has some self-defense training; he is also the only armed scientist on the expedition. This fact, combined with his solitary demeanor, may make him an obvious suspect when things begin to go awry.

#### Attributes

Body: 4  
Quickness: 3  
Strength: 4  
Charisma: 1  
Intelligence: 5  
Willpower: 4  
Essence: 4.8  
Reaction: 4

#### Skills

Arabic: 6  
Biology: 5  
Computer: 3  
Etiquette (Corporate): 2  
Firearms: 4  
Physical Sciences: 4 (Geology: 6)  
Stealth: 2  
Unarmed Combat: 4

**Initiative:** 4 + 1D6

**Threat/Professional Rating:** 2/2

#### Gear

Narcoject Rifle [Special, 10 (clip) SA, 6D Stun]  
Walther PB-120 [Light Pistol, 10 (clip), SA, 6L]  
with concealable holster and 100 rounds standard ammo  
Medikit  
Nav-Dat GPS system  
Survival kit  
Wrist computer with 500 Mp of memory  
**Cyberware**  
Datajack  
Memory (100 Mp)

## DR. CARL SANDERS

Dr. Sanders is somewhat of a throwback, as modern scientists go. He disdains cyberware and prefers to do his research via actual fieldwork rather than simsense or virtual reproductions. This has given him a reputation as something of a maverick, which he enjoys. His reputation has not affected his employability, however, since he is an intelligent researcher who gets results. He is also an excellent storyteller, and can while away hours telling tales of his college days and previous trips to exotic places. In general, he is a likable, gregarious, down-to-earth man. Dr. Sanders is a graduate of the University of Washington.

### Attributes

Body: 3  
Quickness: 2  
Strength: 2  
Charisma: 5  
Intelligence: 6  
Willpower: 5  
Essence: 6  
Reaction: 4

**Initiative:** 4 + 1D6

**Threat/Professional Rating:** 1/1

### Skills

Biology: 6 (Botany: 8)  
Biotech: 3  
Car: 2  
Computer: 3  
Etiquette (Corporate): 3  
Motorboat: 3  
Negotiation: 4  
Sociology: 5 (Anthropology: 7)  
Spanish: 4

### Gear

Medikit  
Nav-Dat GPS system  
Survival kit  
Wrist computer with 1,000 Mp of memory

## ROBERTO "BICHO" XAVIER

Many years ago, Roberto Xavier was a sergeant in the Brazilian army. He was stationed in the backwater rainforest town of Fonte Boa when dragons and metahumans began their assault on Brazil in 2033. His small squad was ordered downriver to protect the city of Manaus, but was decimated by hit-and-run paranormal attacks within two days of their departure. Roberto and his surviving officers fled back upriver and out of the country in a week-long nightmare of sleepless nights and jungle ambushes. He was the only one to make it to the Peruvian border alive.

Roberto settled in Iquitos, making a meager living as a guide into the rainforest he had come to know all too well. He has an abiding hatred of the Amazonian government and the jungle's paranormal animals, and will respond to any paranormal attacks by shooting first and asking questions later. He also dislikes and distrusts all metahumans, though he has learned to hide this well except in moments of extreme duress.

### Attributes

Body: 5  
Quickness: 4  
Strength: 4  
Charisma: 3  
Intelligence: 4  
Willpower: 5  
Essence: 5.5  
Reaction: 4

**Initiative:** 4 + 2D6

**Threat/Professional Rating:** 3/3

### Skills

Armed Combat: 4  
Boats (B/R): 3  
Car: 3  
Etiquette (Street): 3  
Firearms: 5  
Leadership: 3  
Motorboat: 4  
Negotiation: 3  
Portuguese: 6  
Spanish: 5  
Stealth: 4 (Wilderness: 6)  
Unarmed Combat: 4

### Gear

Defiance T-250 [Shotgun, 5 (magazine), SA, 10S]  
with 100 rounds normal ammo  
Ruger Super Warhawk [Heavy Pistol, 6 (cylinder), SS, 10M]  
with 50 rounds normal ammo  
Machete [+1 reach, 6M]  
Survival Knife [6L]  
Survival kit  
Thermographic goggles

### Cyberware

Boosted Reflexes (1)

# WILD KINGDOM

## INSIDER TRADING: A PROLOGUE

The Miami air turned the sweat on Albert Dicristofaro's neck to a fine, cold glaze. His head was still pounding from his forced run through the airport, and the dull *squish* of his heart—miraculously still beating—sounded loud in his ears. Just another fifteen footsteps and he'd be free.

A glance upward brought a wave from a troll silhouetted against the orchid-colored sky. The contact was genuine. Dicristofaro slammed his feet against the aluminum gangplank, then against the deck of the two-hundred-meter ocean liner.

"Dr. Albert Dicristofaro, this is the end of your running," a loud voice said. "Welcome to extraterritorial corporate property." Three halogen lamps flared to life, illuminating a young Hopi woman—human—flanked by three rough-cut elves. Though she wore nothing more threatening than a collection of silver rings, Dicristofaro could see submachine guns tucked behind the elves' arms. One of them handed her a densiplast box, which she extended toward Dicristofaro.

"Ms. Cairo?"

"Yes. Excuse the precaution, but we need a cellular scan."

Relaxed now that this dangerous business would soon be over, he placed his finger inside.

"Are you intact?" she asked.

"Not a scratch, not a stain, Ms. J.," answered one of the shadowrunners who'd been with him—the tall human gunman with the twitch. He lit a cigar that stank like burned popcorn, never taking his metal eyes off Ms. Cairo's bodyguards. "Only thing we burned was rubber and petrochem." He unzipped his armored jacket and pulled out a clear plastic envelope. Dicristofaro let out a breath. It was working. Everything was coming off just right. They had outrun Atlantic Security at nearly two hundred and fifty kilometers an hour, and the shadowrunners hadn't lost his hardcopy or chip. If he could last a few minutes longer, the deal was over.

The harsh *beep* of the cellular sample sounded like a microwave oven. Green light. He was done.

"Very well," Cairo announced as she picked up the synth-leather satchel at her feet and handed it to the shadowrunner. Dicristofaro smiled. Even the payoff bag looked smooth. "Our agreement is fulfilled. Good evening."

The troll runner counted the paper, and Dicristofaro was satisfied to see that he and his work were worth 320,000 nuyen. Almost two million UCAS dollars. Better than JHIH ever gave.

"Welcome aboard the PCS *Tangakwunu* and to Phoenix Biotechnologies, Albert. I think getting away from Baltimore calls for a little celebration, don't you?"

"I think making it here alive calls for a party," he answered, easing down the awkward steps behind her. "I've never been shot at before. I swear, when we were diving for the car, a bullet—" He hurried to catch up with her. "What happens now?"

"The ship departs in ten hours. It will be loaded in the morning with hired talent for your safety. To keep you out of the hands of Atlantic Security patrols or other ... compromised parties, you will remain in your cabin for some time, so I'll show you around." Another two flights down; Dicristofaro began feeling claustrophobic. The entrance to the cabin at the end of the hall was so narrow that he had to squeeze through it sideways; its high jamb and thick door were no doubt sealable in case of flooding. "As you can see, we are quite well stocked. You even have your own toilet, through that door. Whiskey or sake?" She opened a cabinet.

"Whiskey," he answered distantly. He could barely see the bed beneath the heap of dried apples, candy, fresh water jugs, bars of soap, ramen packages and a layer of at least fifty more kilos and kinds of supplies, more than he could go through in a month. The pile had a disorganized, vacation-cruise atmosphere he liked.

"How long was it to the Bahamas again?"

She handed him a drink that went down harshly. "Regrettably, the Bahamas fell through. Our cerebral specialists there were downsized to maximize our competitive value, and a new opening won't happen for six to ten weeks. We made other plans."

She belted her drink back as if it were sugar water. "Neither of us want you teaching grad students when you should be in the trenches. We took the liberty of transferring you to our Sekondi operation where you can continue your work unabated. Your JHIH data on Broca's area growth under simsense stimulation can be paired with direct living-tissue applications, with minimal interference. The facilities there will vastly minimize your turnaround time, so you'll be producing near-constant results."


Cairo's words whipped by him too quickly to follow. "Living tissue ... I'm going to be funded for forced-growth specimens?" JHIH had hardly scratched the surface with corpse dissection and comparative animal anatomy. He stared at the whiskey for a moment, imagining the possibilities of an operation with preserved living tissue outside the skull. If they had broken the clonal barrier with thaumaturgical boosting.

"You'll be given the specifics upon your arrival. You'll be treated quite well, Dr. Dicristofaro. I wish I could go with you." She was halfway out the door before he processed her last words. There was something *wrong* with them, a sort of rote coldness.

Suddenly, he saw it all.

"*WAIT!*" he yelled as he leaped for the door, only to draw his hands back in shock before the sharp *SRANK-click* of the metal pulped his fingers. He grabbed the handle and shook it, trying desperately to make it move—even to rattle on the other side of the





wall that he knew must be soundproofed. Beating the cold-rolled steel only bruised his fist, barely even making a vibration. The door absorbed everything he threw at it, immovable as a half-ton of wet clay.

With no other choice, he turned back to face the cabin. He knew now that PBT would never contact his ex-wife in Ohio to say where he was working. He accessed his headware memory as an afterthought, to confirm what he already feared. *Sekondi*, he entered into the search string, misspelling it once.

He swept aside the food on the bed, then poured and drank his next whiskey methodically. And then one more, slow but not relaxed. There was no point in hurrying.

It was, after all, a long way to the slavers of Africa.

## INTRODUCTION

In **Wild Kingdom**, the player characters are hired by Phoenix Biotechnologies to escort a shipment of valuable cargo through the Caribbean League to the African free city of Sekondi. The shipment is not a chip full of valuable data, as they are told; it is Dr. Albert Dicristofaro, a research neurologist. Dr. Dicristofaro was a willing extraction from JHIH Corporation, looking forward to beginning his new job for Phoenix Biotech at its Bahamas branch laboratory. Instead, he ended up locked in the ship's hold, bound for PBT Africa as a highly skilled slave.

Dicristofaro is no longer a willing participant in his own abduction. Fully aware of the thriving slave trade in skilled workers among the megacorporations, especially along the Gold and Ivory Coasts, Dicristofaro wants out at all costs. Locked in a soundproof room in the hold, however, he is helpless.

Several hazards await the characters on this long journey, including PBT's competing corporations and their henchmen. Tan Tien Incorporated has heard of Dicristofaro's extraction, and sends hired Ewe pirates to steal him from the ship the characters are protecting. The pirates use mami wata (African mermaids) to distract the runners while they secretly abduct Dicristofaro.

When the runners reach the drop-off point in Sekondi, their contact, Ahmadou Kourouma, finds Dicristofaro gone. He gives the shadowrunners a standard offer; if they bring Dicristofaro back alive, Kourouma will buy anything they pick up along the way. If not, they get neither their original payment nor a plane ticket home.

By asking around about pirate groups who use trained mermaids, the runners can trace the kidnappers to Ewe pirates in the Asante Kingdom. When confronted, the pirates reveal that they dropped Dicristofaro at a Tan Tien facility far up the Volta River, guarded by dangerous paranormal animals the runners have never seen before, from dual-natured snakes to drugged monkeys used as a frenzied front line of defense.

After a harrowing penetration of the Tan Tien compound, the runners find that Dicristofaro was recently freed by anti-slavery activists and is running north toward sanctuary in Burkina Faso. During the chase through the jungle, Dicristofaro and the runners are attacked by predatory Awakened primates. When the runners catch up to him, Dicristofaro begs for his freedom and the runners have a moral decision to make. Do they enslave an innocent man,

or do they defy their employers and strand themselves? Whatever the result, both PBT and Tan Tien want their researcher back. The runners must race to safety in Sekondi through the Awakened forest, caught between a speeding locomotive and corporate goons dropping on them from the sky.

## GETTING STARTED

**Wild Kingdom**, though a single adventure, involves several foreign locations and may take the better part of a month of game time. A gamemaster wishing to run this adventure will find the **Cyberpirates** sourcebook extremely helpful. Though not absolutely necessary, **Cyberpirates** offers several useful suggestions for running adventures in the Gold Coast of Africa, as well as options for sea encounters or pirate activity that may make the trip from the Caribbean League to Africa more exciting.

As with the other adventures in **Predator and Prey**, descriptions, statistics and powers for all the critters mentioned in this adventure appear in **Gamemastering Critters**, beginning on p. 74.

## THE GOLD COAST SHADOWS

The former nations of Ghana and the Ivory Coast, and especially pirate activity in that area, are described in **Cyberpirates**. **Wild Kingdom** puts the runners in exotic, unfamiliar territory where the megacorps have given up using "subtle" tactics like blackmail, lawsuits and silencers on their guns. The weak local governments, lack of public media and ongoing genocidal wars mean that the corporations in Sekondi—like just about everyone else in this part of the world—treat exploitation, life and death very casually. Mass slaughter and selling captives to the ghoulish nation of Asamando have made the ills of wage slavery seem mild by comparison. "Unrestricted" (read: inhumane) experimentation and pitiful wages are part of normal business operations.

Most ethno-nations in West Africa, such as the Asante and Baule empires, take a strong anti-corporate stance. The Free City of Sekondi is the exception. It has extended an open invitation to megacorporations to give it protection and business, and is the West African base of operations for hundreds of corps. All of them have agreed to keep Sekondi a safe haven. Whatever drek goes down outside Sekondi doesn't come past the city walls, or both parties are punished by the best military strike team a war zone can offer. In Sekondi, business is conducted in formal corporate manner, even when that "business" is bringing back human body parts as evidence of a job well done.

This is the Third World of the Sixth World, and it can get ugly.

## A WORD FROM OUR SPONSOR

### TELL IT TO THEM STRAIGHT

The dimly lit room smells of vinyl seats, old popcorn and spilled soda. The vid theater is empty, except for a black-haired head in the front row. Entertainment trivia floats across the screen, filling the time before the feature showing of *Turing's Triangle*. Fuchi Fine Films presents a goofy love mix-up between a Renraku



programmer, an AI and the shadowrunner who steals the project. Loads of laughs, starting with the words, "based on a true story," and ending with, "a Fine Films production." The stuff in between must have been written by brain-damaged trolls surviving on synth-alcohol and bad soy pizza.

At least it won't distract you. Playing a quick game of where's-the-bodyguard, you narrow it down to the projection booth behind the screen or the box seats.

"Evening," your Johnson says as you approach the front row. She's munching on popcorn with silver-ringed fingers. She's also dressed down for the occasion—her thick coat splayed on the seat behind her, the maroon sweater and slacks all-natural cotton. "If you want to hit the refreshment stand before the show, go right ahead."

#### **After the player characters make contact, read the following:**

"I've heard you can pull off bodyguard and escort services, and aren't afraid of a serious time commitment or travel," the Johnson says. "We need professional freelancers to escort an ocean liner of valuable cargo through the Caribbean League and well beyond. These individuals must provide dependable security at all costs, so that the cargo will arrive on time. Reliability is vital. Many parties, the least of whom are pirates, will be gunning for the shipment—we need the best possible security to guard against trouble. Before I go into details, I need to know if you are people we can trust to get the shipment to its destination untouched—and to keep your mouth shut about who you're working for, what's on board and where you're going. Are you?"

#### **Once the runners agree or want to hear more, read the following:**

"Welcome aboard, then. I trust none of you object to working for Phoenix Biotechnologies? We'll handle payment in three stages; your advance of five hundred shares of PBT stock, a supplementary cargo loading in Bermuda where you'll receive twenty-five hundred more, and the remaining four thousand when delivery is verified at the drop-off point in Sekondi. As of eight o'clock this morning, trading averaged 21.3 nuyen a share. Divide shares among yourselves as you see fit." The Johnson pulls out several datachips. "Your ship, the Pueblo Corporate Ship *Tangakwunu*, has an autonav that can handle all passive maintenance. I suggest you familiarize yourself with the vessel, however, including its heavy weaponry. If something goes wrong, you will be the only people on board to handle the problem—potentially anything from attacks to maintenance, though we don't expect trouble from the latter.

"The pickup is at Pier 121 in Miami. PBT will handle transportation to the Miami airport and pier; when you get there, ask for Cairo. Your contacts in Bermuda and Sekondi are Rain and Ahmadou Kourouma, respectively.

"The ship leaves immediately after you meet Cairo. On board are linguasofts for languages you may need to know, as well as a weapons locker, a lethal force security license and consumables for five weeks. If you want the job, we can get you on a flight that leaves in four hours.

"Any questions?"

## **HOOKS**

This encounter is a straightforward hiring by a professional Johnson who stresses that she is looking for dependable talent to do a job that may be dangerous, but really isn't illegal. Completely unaware that Dicristofaro is on board the ship, she is going by the book. Young and ambitious, she tries to intimidate the runners with professionalism and the importance of the assignment so that they will remember it for awhile. She pointedly ignores the movie, talking through the dimmed lights, "no smoking" warnings and the entire show if necessary.

## **BEHIND THE SCENES**

From a Mr. Johnson or fixer contact, the shadowrunners learn of a job opportunity for "reliable runners"—stress on the word "reliable"—if they show up at the Dillman Theater downtown. The Dillman is an old-style flatscreen theater with one enormous screen. The runners should introduce themselves as part of the private showing party, under the name "Raether."

Ms. Johnson is Rachel Liseli, a resources adjustment developer for Phoenix Biotechnologies (use the statistics for Mr. Johnson, p. 210, **SR11**; add video recorder and low-light cybereyes). Currently, she has melanin-adjustment drugs in her system and hair extensions to give her the appearance of an Indian woman rather than her Zuni Native American complexion. She will not look like this if they see her a second time. Her changed appearance is not meant to confuse the shadowrunners, but to throw off potential spies from JHH.

Liseli is enthusiastic about her important assignment, just as management training taught her to be. If the runners ask her where Sekondi is, she looks unimpressed and tells them that Sekondi is a city in the West Africa in the area known as the Gold and Ivory Coasts. She doesn't know much about Sekondi except for its location and that Phoenix Biotechnologies has a research facility nearby.

If asked what is on board the ship, Liseli hands the runners an inventory. On it are listed several tons of hemp paper, manufactured goods, PBT employees' monthly requests and controlled substances for medical use (Dicristofaro's room is marked "biological samples"). The pickup in Bermuda adds surgical equipment, specialty electronic gear like magnetic resonance imaging scanners, refrigeration units and tissue samples from Caribbean creatures.

If asked why PBT needs shadowrunners instead of regular security, Liseli says that PBT corporate politics are never easy, and that this delivery is meant to cover up a previous failing. Certain superiors think the shipment is already in Africa; if word got out that it isn't, competitors would strike. She is hiring talent from wherever the runners live to insure that they have no corporate or pirate connections that might compromise the operation. Liseli believes this because she heard it from her superiors; in reality, however, PBT needs freelance security unaware of Dicristofaro's extraction.

Liseli is friendlier toward enthusiastic shadowrunners, and hypes the run as a challenge as well as a job. If the runners want more money, she gives a we-are-all-experienced-shadowfolk-here grin and says that PBT stock, if they are successful, should go up in value within four weeks of their delivery. Other arrangements are possible with successful Negotiation Tests: payment in

credit or bearer bonds, discounts on restricted equipment and a stay in an air-conditioned hotel after the run is over.

## DEBUGGING

If the characters refuse the job, that's their biz. If they act rude, Liseli gives them one warning and then walks. If they get violent, she can cast spells; alternatively, if she raises and clenches a hand, her bodyguard Cheveyo will shoot the offender with a silenced, smartlinked Remington 950. Cheveyo has been covering Liseli from the projection booth; use the Bodyguard statistics on p. 49, **SR11**.

To find the runners in emergencies and prevent them from renegeing on the deal, the synthleather payment satchel has a tracking signal in it (Concealability 10) that can be traced via handheld units or PBT satellites.

If the characters are pirates, PBT changes the payment to restricted drugs and/or cyberware and ups the number of passive security measures (cameras, tracking signals and so on) on the *Tangakwunu*.

## SKELETON CREW

### TELL IT TO THEM STRAIGHT

The Miami sun is so hot the harbor smells like baking asphalt instead of diesel fumes. The hired car drops you off just a short walk away from the PCS *Tangakwunu*. It seems kind of funny, getting on a ship that flies the flag of a landlocked country. The *Tangakwunu* is impressive—a newly minted, polished, two-hundred-meter black beast.

A tanned corporate employee waits at the top of the gangplank as you approach. Well-dressed in white beneath her enormous sun hat and dark glasses, she is backed by a pair of elven Hopi bruisers, one so greased up with goopy sunblock that you could mistake him for heavily armed bacon fat.

"Pick your friends," she announces, her voice muffled by the ocean wind. "Who are you looking for?"

#### Once the runners have asked for Cairo, read the following:

"Welcome to your home for the next twenty-two days," Ms. Cairo says. The bruisers relax, including the third one you just spotted covering her from the door. It takes about half an hour to get the full briefing, from how to lower the tugboat to opening the bay to the route you'll be taking.

A couple of other job perks catch your eye. The machine guns in the tower have four cases of ammo apiece, probably enough to knock cans off the rail in case the chip-player melts down from overuse and the fishing rods break. The corpers have taken the shotgun approach to providing what you might like to eat—there's one of everything in the galley, and a big bag of Carib oranges hanging from the ceiling.

## HOOKS

At first, the cruise is a vacation. Bits of local color pervade the trip away from the coast; sunburn, tiny rain clouds soaking the

ship for ten minutes at a time, and pleasure yachts everywhere. Bermuda may be full of espionage, but it's still beautiful.

Once out on the Atlantic Ocean, the sea dwarfs the characters. Even the wildlife looks prehistoric and huge; pods of whales and migrating megalodons are among the infrequent sights. Everything else to be seen is water and sky, for weeks.

## BEHIND THE SCENES

After being briefed on the ship's operation, the runners take off. Cairo is a businesswoman and prefers to keep conversation short.

The *Tangakwunu* ("Rainbow") has two tripod-mounted medium machine guns in its conning tower and 5,000 rounds of ammo. Unless unhooked, their arc of fire cannot reach any farther down than the side rails of the boat. A total of eight tracking signals (Concealability 10) are hidden in the ship in case PBT needs to find it. The entire cargo hold has a Rating 5 ward covering it to keep out astral snoops; Dicristofaro's cabin is behind a locked door near the engine room. Soundproof, reinforced steel (Barrier Rating 16) surrounds it, along with a coating of interior wall fungus to keep out astral observers. Theoretically, someone might get through the ventilation system to him, but the shaft only measures fifteen by twenty centimeters.

Aboard ship, the characters will find any linguasofts and equipment they may have requested (within reason and the gamemaster's discretion), as well as a lethal force license approved by the Pueblo Corporate Council.

The *Tangakwunu* is a Merchantman-class ship. It weighs upwards of a thousand tons, and steers like it. It carries a smaller tugboat to offload for emergencies, but it can't outrun or outmaneuver anything. Treat it more like a location than something that can be destroyed (unless the runners override the autonav and run the ship aground or someone hits it with multiple AVMs). From the rail of the boat to the surface of the water is ten meters—the three-story conning tower adds another ten. When the ship is moving, the tugboat is hauled up by the crane and set on the aft part of the deck. The tug is removed from this safe berth and set down in the water well before the ship enters port; Cairo and the crew use it to reach the dock.

#### THE TANGAKWUNU (MERCHANTMAN CLASS)

**Handling:** 5

**Speed:** 10 (5)

**Acceleration:** 1

**Hull:** 8

**Bulwark:** 0

**Signature:** 1/1

**Autonav:** 3

**Sensor:** 1

**Sonar:** 1

**Accommodations:** 25

**Entry Points:** 2 cargo hatches (fore and aft loaded from the top of the deck) + 2 plankways

**Cargo:** 270,000 CF

**Load:** 60,000 kg

**Fuel:** Diesel (24 kiloliters)



**Economy:** 150 km/kiloliter  
**Other Features:** Crane (10,000 kg)

#### TUGBOAT

**Handling:** 3  
**Speed:** 10 (5)  
**Acceleration:** 1  
**Hull:** 1  
**Bulwark:** 0  
**Signature:** 3/1  
**Autonav:** 2  
**Sensor:** 0  
**Sonar:** 0

**Accommodations:** 6

**Entry Points:** 1 cargo hatch (loaded from the top of the deck) + 2 plankways

**Cargo:** 200 CF

**Load:** 250,000 kg

**Fuel:** Diesel (2 kiloliters)

**Economy:** 100 km/kiloliter

**Other Features:** Crane (5,000 kg)

#### THE TRIP TO AFRICA

The entire trip takes twenty-two days, from Miami to Bermuda to Sekondi. En route, the player characters will undergo a number of water-based encounters chosen by the gamemaster; several are suggested below. No matter how much "game time" passes, the trip takes roughly three weeks. Gamemasters may also use the following suggested encounters to extend the adventure or to begin a water-based campaign. These encounters can occur at any time during the trip. For special occurrences in the Bermuda Triangle, see **Bermuda Triangle Optional Events**, below.

#### Suggested Encounters

- The runners see an Atlantean Foundation boat dumping bloody guts into the water. If they investigate, they find that the crew is filming a special on megalodons and is chumming for creatures. After waving hello, the runners' ship takes off.

A while later that same day, the Atlantean Foundation boat speeds by again, fleeing from two megalodons. The megalodons decide that all ships are enemies (or have food) and attack the slower-moving merchantman. If the runners cause the megalodons any injuries more severe than a Serious Wound, the megalodons begin to bleed and thus attract more. The gamemaster rolls 2D6. The result on the first die is the number of megalodons that appear; the result on the second die is the number of Combat Rounds it takes them to reach the *Tangakwunu*. The new arrivals will attack the bleeding megalodons first, then turn their attention to the ship. If the gamemaster rolls double ones, a saltwater serpent appears instead of more megalodons.

- The runners find food missing; the culprits are a family of twenty devil rats in the hold.

- A patrol-boat crew flashes a few holographic badges and claims to be the Caribbean League Navy. They want to make sure the ship isn't smuggling anything and that the runners' travel

papers are in order. Once ten or more are on board, they whip out guns, revealing that they are pirates, and yell that they're taking it all. If a firefright breaks out, the pirates on the patrol boat spray the ship with gasoline and hurl aerodynamic grenades, trying to catch the wind and hook them over the *Tangakwunu's* rail.

- The runners receive a distress call from a downed seaplane. Two unidentified armed men lie inside the blood-spattered cockpit, both dead of multiple gunshot wounds. Crammed into the plane are five hundred kilos of low-grade marijuana, much of which is sinking.

The dead men are drug runners in the pay of the Aurelias Chiquitas, a Borinquen (Puerto Rican) cartel. However, they fell prey to a Nomad spirit whose homicidal impulses manifested while they were in the plane. The Nomad is still present and is looking for a host before it breeds.

- A group of sea drakes in search of a meal attacks the boat.

#### Bermuda Triangle Optional Events

The legendary Bermuda Triangle lies along the runners' route. Once in this region, the trip gets more surreal because of the Triangle's unknown effects on paranormal phenomena.

- As the runners follow the main route to Bermuda, they see the CAS coast off the port side of the ship. One morning, it appears off to starboard—on the wrong side! The ship's autonav says that the vessel is following the right course, and it is correct. The runners are seeing things because local sea spirits are using their Confusion power on them.

- A distress call comes over the radio in the middle of a storm, reporting a fire aboard the sailing yacht *Amphitrite*. The runners can rescue two families on vacation, three of whom are severely burned. (If a runner happens to check out astral space during the storm, everything looks unearthly.)

If the runners take in the vacationers, one of them—Derek Adler by name—thanks them effusively. He explains that a grease fire spread when the boat pitched and a bottle of insecticide fell into it. In conversation, he talks about Puerto Rico and Mexico ... never calling them "Borinquen" or "Aztlan." He also mentions other things from the late 1990s and early 2000s. If confronted about any strangeness, he gets quiet and walks onto the deck. Both families and their boat then disappear, leaving only fog behind. If the runners look up the U.S.S. *Amphitrite* or Derek Adler, they find that the ship disappeared in 2005 and that all passengers were presumed dead. The runners had an encounter with ghosts, and how kind or cruel they were to them may bring favors or vengeance with future nighttime visits until they reach Bermuda.

- In the middle of the night, a saltwater serpent sticks its head over the ship's rail and eats anything that smells good, including shadowrunners, garbage bags, pitchers of drinks left on the deck and/or bloodstained clothes hung out to dry. If it gets a decent meal the first night, it continues following the ship, watching and waiting for its next dining opportunity. If the serpent goes for two days without new food (including people), it leaves. At the gamemaster's discretion, however, if the serpent is following the runners when they leave the Bermuda Triangle area, it attacks them relentlessly.



- A runner thinks he sees the face of a dead friend in the waves. It seems to mouth words, but they are incomprehensible, and the face disappears before anyone else sees it. The runner feels a sudden, powerful desire to jump over the ship's rail and save his or her lost buddy. Once again, sea spirits are at work.

- The runners spot what looks like a school of flying fish five hundred meters away, but their bodies resemble piranha. The fish chase after a dolphin pod and devour the hindmost one. Following the school, feasting on any remaining pieces, is a devilfish. The players can see it leap out of the water and slap the ocean's surface. The Triangle greatly expands the range of the devilfish's Fear power; upon seeing it, the players feel compelled to stay in their cabins for at least 24 hours.

- When the runners reach Bermuda, they are met by a JHIIH spy pretending to be their contact, Rain. The spy sneaks a lackey onto the ship while the runners meet with him. If the runners do not detect the lackey, he or she notifies JHIIH of Dicristofaro's presence. The corp then sends a team of mercs after the runners to get Dicristofaro back. The mercs arrive by helicopter and speedboat as soon as the ship leaves Bermuda's waters.

- The characters see anachronistic ships and planes: frigates and other sailing ships from the Age of Exploration, wooden rafts,

hovercraft miles from shore, old bi-planes and propeller planes and so on. When they try to point out one of these oddities to someone else, it either disappears or looks like something else to the second person. Yet again, these hallucinations are caused by sea spirits.

### IN BERMUDA

Rain, an elegant, black-haired Anglo elf who retired from active shadowrunning to become a fixer, is unfriendly but professional. He wants to make sure nothing is missing, load the new gear aboard ship and get the shadowrunners out of Bermuda before they bring trouble. Unless the runners have stolen or damaged any of the cargo, this transaction goes smoothly.

### DEBUGGING

The optional encounters are designed to work as a miniature campaign to supplement material in **Cyberpirates**, and can take as much or little time as the gamemaster wants. The runners should have no major problems with Rain unless they have blatantly frugged up.

If the characters are wounded in any of the optional encounters that include combat, they have tons of medical supplies on



board and plenty of time to use them. PBT does not mind if the runners use supplies in emergencies. However, there are no cybernetic replacement parts on board. Any runner who needs one is out of luck.

## HOME TO MAMI

### TELL IT TO THEM STRAIGHT

The sun hits the rippling water of the Gulf of Guinea like a shower of diamonds. It's beautiful—but it's been beautiful every day for three fraggin' weeks. You could use a dose of ugly solid ground, air conditioning and a restaurant right about now.

Seagull cries rise above the constant lap of water against the ship's sides, until suddenly a loud splash obscures both. You glance over the side of the ship. A woman's head breaks the surface, then another, and another, long brown hair fanning out behind them. A second glance shows a muzzle beneath the hair, and the furred neck and shoulders of a seal.

One of the creatures snorts loudly through its nose, sending a spray of water flying. Another barks, and more heads break through the waves. The creatures bob there, staring at you and the ship, their dark eyes never blinking.

*Gronk*, one declares. Gronkgronkgronk GRONK grunk groooooouunk.

Maybe they want something ...

#### Pause a moment and then read:

One seal pulls a clawed flipper out of the water, like a signal. In a single movement, the others do the same, like some kind of Sea City show. Then they put their flippers back underwater. Something about those flippers looks disturbingly human. When you hear a sharp *pap* and see the first speargun bolt, you put your finger on what it is.

They have opposable thumbs.

### HOOKS

By now, the runners should be bored and lonely. Close to a month on the water is a long time. At first the mermaids seem like just another exotic sight, slightly creepy but not important. Then the *drek* hits the fan.

Mami wata are essentially trained seals with arms, spearguns and amazing Quickness. Their leap onto the boat is most accurately described as a drunken barrage of cascading, ballistic seal fat that promptly shlbs down hatches at the speed of a running horse. Multiply that by twenty, and the sight is either the funniest thing you ever saw or the deadliest.

And they're going for the beer.

### BEHIND THE SCENES

When the characters first see the seals, they can make Biology (Parazology) (4) Tests to figure out that these are Awakened sea llons, or mermaids. Three successes reveals that the subspecies of mermaid common around West African waters is the mami wata (*Merhomo bacchus*), a slightly stronger and

faster variant that lacks the common mermaid's dependence on mercury. Instead, mami wata are reliant on alcohol.

The mami wata are armed with spearguns, which they fire in a single volley. If the characters shoot back, the seals dive below the water and everything gets very quiet. The mami wata are more than forty meters below the surface ... because they need a running start.

Twenty of them use their Enhanced Quickness to leap straight up out of the water next to the ship and over the ten meters onto the deck like trick killer whales. Any character within three meters of the rail may be hit in the initial deluge. Roll 1D6 for each runner. On a result of 1-2, the runner must dodge a mermaid; roll 5 dice for the mermaid's "attack." If runner and mermaid collide, both resist 8S Stun damage. (For mami wata statistics, see p. 82.)

Once on board, the mami wata attack, eat or *drek* on everything in sight. They slouch behind boxes and through doorways, trying to stay out of the shadowrunners' way while smashing and spilling everything they can. Their sensitive noses lead them to the food supplies, especially any alcohol, which they carry off in their teeth. The mami wata are on the ship to provide a distraction, so they try to prolong the fight by turning it into a catch-me game in the depths of the vessel.

A second wave of five mermaids jumps aboard after the first twenty, arriving in Phase 0 of the first Combat Round. These mermaids carry small explosive devices in their "hands," which will go off in the third Combat Round after the initial attack, during the mami watas' initiative. Because of the panic and confusion on deck while the mami wata are running around, a runner must make a successful Perception (6) Test to notice the devices. The mami wata are trained to drop them in various places on the ship. The devices only cause 4L damage; they are intended not to cripple the vessel, but simply to add more confusion and help cover up the blowing of the hull (see below).

The mami wata don't know how to reload their spearguns, so once on board ship they attack by clawing and biting. On solid ground they are slower than in the water, but their Enhanced Quickness still makes them pretty fast shlubbers. Attempting to grab a wet mami wata requires an opposed Quickness Test.

The mami wata stay on board until their Enhanced Quickness benefits have worn off or until the characters kill eight or more of them. Then they head immediately for the railing and dive off. Attempting to follow or shoot them once they hit the water is difficult. (See rules for water combat, p. 160, **Cyberpirates**.)

Though intelligent enough to be trainable, mami wata cannot speak. Examining one reveals only that it has no equipment other than the speargun and no modifications or identifying marks. Astral examination shows that no spells have been used on the creatures in the recent past.

#### WHAT'S GOING ON?

Tan Tien Inc. is the other big rival to PBT and JHIIH in neurological research. Currently, Tan Tien's Gold Coast division is attempting to develop a working interface between a semi-intelligent creature, such as a dolphin or satyr, and the Matrix. Other than the potential profit of such technology, this achievement would net the corp a valuable award from the Draco Foundation



(p. 29, **Portfolio of a Dragon**). When Tan Tien learned through corporate spies that Dr. Dicristofaro was being brought to Africa, certain people decided that he would make an invaluable addition to their research team—invaluable enough to be worth snatching. They figured that the best time to try nabbing the scientist was during his journey by sea.

Tan Tien therefore hired a group of Ewe pirates from the Asante Nation to nab Dicristofaro before the *Tangakwunu* reached shore. The pirates sent the mami wata to keep the runners busy while three men with a mini-submarine cut a hole in the hull of the ship with a monofilament saw. These men blow the hull at the approximately the same time that the mami watas' bombs explode. The hole is large enough for a diver to swim into, but tiny compared to the rest of the ship. Therefore, even as the vessel slowly takes on water, the runners are unlikely to notice right away. The pirates send a diver in to extract Dicristofaro and bring him back aboard the sub, and then take off.

If the runners search the boat after the fight with the mami wata, have them make Perception (12) Tests from inside the ship to discover that the hull was breached (the ship is riding lower and going slower). A runner who dives under the ship need make only a Perception (5) Test to notice the hole.

The sub is gone with Dicristofaro long before the runners put together what happened. If they don't figure out that someone ripped them off while they were busy, that's fine; they'll find out once they get to Sekondi.

## DEBUGGING

The fight with the mami wata should be time-consuming but not deadly. The mermaids don't aim their spearguns, so most of the volley should rain down randomly. Once on board, they concentrate on staying out of the runners' reach, attacking only when cornered or wounded. If a character is seriously injured or begins to drown, the rest of the group can come to his or her aid with plenty of medical supplies.

The central plot twist is the snatch of Dicristofaro. The runners can do little about it unless they have discovered the scientist and are guarding him, or are underwater at the time of the extraction.

If the runners foil the kidnapping (or chuck explosives into the water indiscriminately), the gamemaster can still run the rest of the adventure by having Tan Tien steal Dicristofaro out of PBT's facility in Sekondi. In this case, the runners are hired to get him back.

## SEKONDI TO NONE

### TELL IT TO THEM STRAIGHT

The autonav slows the giant ship to a crawl as the sliver of land on the horizon grows steadily larger. Four tugboats head out to meet you, sailors strapping steel cables to the ship's prow to pull it ashore.

At the moment, though, you're less concerned with the ship than with your own quick stumble off of it and onto the first dry land you've seen since Bermuda. Your first steps on the ground feel strange and springy, but after a moment it seems natural again.

Sekondi is a modern city, full of fifty-story buildings mostly made of white concrete. Jeeps scuttle over the cracked asphalt like so many busy ants. You pick up on a little friction between a group of blacks and whites by the docks—the Ares soldiers wearing white and the Yakashima troops wearing black, that is. After some yelling in what sounds like a mush of English, Asante and Ga, the two sides stalk off together.

"Mema mo akye oo!" yells an enormous African man as he strides down the dock, his khaki-clothed backup team wheeling what looks like a twenty-year-old laundry cart behind him. No payment satchels in sight, but quite a few assault rifles. The stylized eagle and rattlesnake over his breast pocket inform you that he's PBT.

"What do you want, English?" he yells.

### When Kourouma calls the runners into his office to tell them the goods have been lost, read the following:

"I'm afraid our business is not quite completed. A certain bit of valuable cargo that you were paid to protect is missing. A man named Albert Dicristofaro was traveling with you in a private room below decks. It appears that someone broke open the floor to his room and removed him. We must have him back before my superiors consider your job finished. So you so-called professionals will need to retrieve him if you hope ever to see your homes again."

## HOOKS

Culture shock and more culture shock.

Kourouma introduces the characters to both of his wives at the PBT office. People carve stools on their lunch hours. If the characters head outside the city, suddenly they are among traditional mud-and-palm-wood shacks that have no plumbing.

Almost everyone, even corporate suits and pregnant teenage girls, openly carries a gun. Bleeding men are loaded off jeeps and boats, but they get little medical attention. Corpses are packed in ice and piled in vans. Many people are maimed and cannot afford cyber replacement parts.

Going into Asante territory after the Ewe pirates is even worse for the runners. The familiar corporate presence disappears, leaving the player characters in a completely alien world. To have any hope of finishing their job and getting home, they'll have to work together like never before. In West Africa, family is everything—whether kinfolk, corporation, pirate crew or running team. Family means someone to watch your back. Without that, you're easy prey.

## BEHIND THE SCENES

In Sekondi, a corporate ship unloading goods is hardly an unusual sight. Most bystanders simply eye the ostentatious PBT logo and look away.

Most people wear local fashions (draped, colorful material), and the runners hear occasional bits of English mixed into the mostly Ga and Akan conversations. Ninety-five percent of Sekondi's residents are African, and almost every Caucasian, Native American or Asian the runners see wears a corporate uniform.

The runners probably don't look local. They almost certainly don't sound local unless they can add a blend of English and Akan



languages to whatever they normally speak (this requires a Language Skill Rating of 5 or above). Worse, they probably don't look like a unified whole. Without a corporate uniform or a common tattoo or insignia, they look like they might not have anyone to back them up. This invites trouble.

Once the runners are off the boat, their contact, Kourouma (see **Cast of Shadows**, p. 50), offers them overshirts with PBT logos, suggesting that looking corporate is the best self-defense here. Kourouma is solicitous, asking after the characters' well-being before the ship's. He is proud of his city and willingly answers the runners' questions about Sekondi or PBT (always in a way that reflects favorably on the corps). He explains that Sekondi is governed by twin Ga leaders, and that it owes its prosperity to all the corporations that use it as a base: the eight megas, PBT, Yakashima and others. The characters are safe within Sekondi boundaries assuming they don't start trouble; if they do, corporate justice within the city is swift, brutal and efficient. Little of what Kourouma calls "real crime" (terrorism and murder) occurs within city limits. For more details about Sekondi, see **Legwork** (p. 48).

**The Gold Coast Shadows** (p. 30) and pp. 87–116 of **Cyberpirates**.

Unless the runners object, Kourouma leaves his men to unload the ship and takes the player characters to an air-conditioned PBT-owned restaurant. Once they seem comfortable, he asks whether they encountered difficulties on the trip or whether the cargo was damaged. He shows minimal reaction to their reports, making notes of used or damaged equipment. A Perception (5) Test reveals his momentary loss of composure if the runners mention a hull breach, but he covers it quickly.

If the characters ask about payment, he briskly ends the discussion, saying that he has not yet seen proof that they did all they were hired for, and that payment will come after he has inventoried the cargo. Any character who reacts violently or impolitely to this reasonable stricture gains a bulky African shadow (use the Bodyguard Archetype, p. 49, **SR11** for statistics) within seconds.

After the meal, Kourouma leaves one guard to show the characters to their quarters in a nearby PBT building: a suite made for shadowrunning teams, with six rooms opening into a private central living room. The suite has beds, air conditioning and a well-stocked refrigerator. There are no video hook-ups, only old-fashioned televisions and radios, and the datajack hook-ups only connect to real phones: no vidphones or computer phones. The telephones only call within the building.

The guard gives them room keys and says they are free to come and go, but they will receive neither payment nor plane tickets home until the shipment is inventoried. He repeats Kourouma's warnings about causing trouble in Sekondi, and mentions that there are no independent flights out of the area, only corporate ones.

It takes PBT a day and half to check and double-check the shipment, unless the runners mentioned the hull breach during their debriefing; doing so reduces the checking time to a day. The runners can use this time to relax and enjoy the city, or to try to make local contacts.

## THE BAD NEWS

After Kourouma gives the runners the bad news, at least some of them are bound to be angry. If the runners deny responsibility for the loss or ask why they weren't told about Dicristofaro, Kourouma says that they were paid to guard the entire ship; had the runners done their jobs, Dicristofaro would be safe. He insists that they retrieve the man or PBT will consider that they have reneged on their contract. Kourouma hopes the runners will agree to the rescue without payment; if pressed, however, he cuts a deal, saying he understands their position.

He tells them that whoever sponsored the kidnapping of Dicristofaro must be one of PBT's corporate competitors, and it's time for payback. If the runners can find out who was behind the raid and strike at them, PBT will pay handsomely for any damage they cause, provided they bring back proof of their accomplishments. The runners can earn between 5,000 and 10,000 nuyen in cash for proof that they have administered "justice" corporate-style. Kourouma will also buy anything the characters find at the offending corporation's facility—other researchers, paydata, weapons, dead bodies to be shipped to ghouls and so on. (Relevant costs of living and goods appear on pp. 136–138 of **Cyberpirates**.) Kourouma is also willing to sell the runners equipment (including restricted and military-issue if they can afford it) at Seattle book value.

Kourouma refuses to answer questions about who Dicristofaro is, saying only that he would be useful to a corporation with an extensive biomedical branch. On a successful Corporate Etiquette (6) Test, the runners remember seeing Dicristofaro on the trid—the famous neurologist who works on Awakened brain structures. Two successes on this test reveals that Dicristofaro worked for JHIH in Baltimore (which has no branch in West Africa).

If the runners expect more help, Kourouma is surprised. African runners are essentially pirates for hire; they do their own groundwork and research, and he expects the player characters to do the same. He cuts the conversation short, giving the runners a old-fashioned handcranked field radio with which to contact him when they've found Dicristofaro. If asked, he gives the characters the names of bars, brothels and mechanics near the docks where they might find informants.

Finding and gaining the trust of African pirates is an adventure in itself. Though some accept cash bribes, most want equipment, or only play along to find out what the runners are worth and then try to cack them for it.

As a general rule, finding someone willing to listen to anything the runners propose requires an Etiquette (Tribal or Street) (4) Test and speaking the proper language. To actually get information from a new contact requires a Negotiation (Bribery) (6) Test and a bribe of food, weapons or money. If the player characters are African or studied up on local customs, reduce the target numbers for both tests by 1. See **Legwork**, p. 48.

## WHERE'D EWE GO?

Once the player characters learn that the Ewe pirates of Accra are the most likely culprits, they'll either decide or be ordered to go into Accra and follow up on the lead.



Getting into the Asante Nation poses different problems than most North American border crossings. Going by land means traversing mostly-destroyed twentieth-century roads or trekking through jungle. The route goes through Fanti territory (opening the runners up to attacks by bandits) or detours north into wilderness (full of strange Awakened animals). However, legal hassles are unlikely; patrols are infrequent and borders change from day to day.

Going by ship is dangerous. The Asante and Fanti are in the middle of a decades-long war, and Fanti pirates have blockaded most Asante harbors. However, the pirates can't stop every boat, and concentrate on those with corporate or Asante logos. The characters can beg an unmarked boat from Kourouma fairly easily if they explain why they need it. Of course, going into Accra or a big port city like Kumasi means tariffs on anything of value the runners bring into the country (including cyberware and foci), and confiscation of weapons larger than hold-out pistols because such items "transgress the laws of the nation."

Accra looks a lot like Sekondi (big buildings where there's money, drekky and primitive facilities in the boondocks), but it's not as clean, and everything is older. Well-armed Asante cops patrol everywhere, but law enforcement is arbitrary. Some people get hassled for carrying a Streetline Special, while others walk by with assault rifles and only get a nod. The favoritism springs from ethnicity, but North American runners probably can't tell the difference between Twi, Ewe and Asante at a glance.

Police have an Intelligence Attribute of 3 for the purpose of detecting hidden weapons. As long as the runners stick to back streets and sleazy areas of town, the authorities leave them alone. If they go into business or wealthy residential districts, the cops hassle them and attempt to confiscate their weapons.

Once in Accra, the runners find that Asante locals are even more close-mouthed than Sekondians. On the other hand, enemies of the Ewe are happy to sell them out, and the gossip chain eventually leads them to the runners. After a few brush-offs, the player characters are approached by Awotwi Tetteh, a short, light-skinned African man dressed in 2030s-style clothes. He speaks only Twi-Fanti, and offers to buy drinks for runners who understand him.

Tetteh is a Twi pirate from a group that lost several jobs and a boatload of people to the Aidoo clan of Ewe pirates. He dances around this subject until a runner mentions Ewe pirates. After that, he negotiates, agreeing to tell the runners where to find the Aidoo in exchange for a favor. He first asks the runners to avenge him on the Ewe by slaughtering as many as they can. Most player characters should find this idea repugnant, and Tetteh doesn't expect them to agree. He'll settle for asking them to hurt the Aidoo's profitable relationship with Tan Tien, but he will try to milk the situation for as many favors as possible.

He says that Aidoo pirates recently finished a run for Tan Tien, though he does not know where any Tan Tien facilities are located. He reveals the exact location of Gavivi Aidoo's boat; it is floating just off the docks of the tiny shantytown of Glicji, east of Accra. Gavivi Aidoo is the pirate clan's patriarch.



### In Gldji

The runners can get information out of Aidoo's pirates in several ways. They may ask around in Gldji, hoping to find someone who doesn't mind selling secrets. All Gldji residents are part of Aidoo's kin-network, and are friendly but close-mouthed with the runners. They do, however, let Gavivi know that the runners are around and interested, and also whether or not they have offered substantial bribes (such as work from PBT to whoever sells out Tan Tien). Sooner or later, Gavivi sends his eight-year-old son Ayete to fetch the runners for a meeting. Massan, another eight-year-old, also guards Gavivi. Both boys flank their father during the meeting, ready to fight if there is trouble.

### Ayete and Massan

B	Q	S	C	I	W	E	R	Armor
2	5	1	3	3	5	6	4	2/1

**Initiative:** 4 + 1D6

**Threat/Professional Rating:** 2/3

**Skills:** Asante 5, Armed Combat (clubs) 2/4, Athletics 3, Etiquette (Tribal) 3, Firearms 4, Firearms (B/R) 2, Motorboat 3, Stealth 4, Unarmed Combat 3

**Gear:** Old kevlar curtain worn as a poncho (2/1), archaic Colt 9mm carbine [treat as submachine gun, SA/BF/FA, 6M, 20/clip, 2.6 kg, only recognizable with a Firearms (6) Test], 4 cowrie shells.

It is easy to strike a deal with Gavivi. The Aidoo are poor and Gavivi is always looking for new ways to support his four wives and their children. If the characters offer money, food, medicines or work in sufficient quantity, he tells them the location of a Tan Tien facility up the Volta River near Mampong. Unlike in Seattle, where a runner who spills the beans on a completed run can ruin his or her reputation, corps in Africa expect their secrets to be sold after the run. (That's why their security is so lethal.) Gavivi also mentions that Tan Tien has an open offer for kidnapped, skilled workers. If the runners want a cover story while snooping, faking a slave sale might get them in.

Sneaking into Gldji and taking a hostage or interrogating someone in the town doesn't work. Once threatened or attacked, hostages yell and warn their families, regardless of the danger. Such a call for help brings twenty-three men and women of fighting age running to defend the victim. If the characters fight, use the statistics given above for Ayete and Massan, but increase Body and Strength to 3. Once the runners attack, negotiation is no longer possible.

If the runners wait for someone to leave the town, they find Acoosiova, Gavivi's thirteen-year-old daughter, who is going into Accra. If accosted, she attempts to fight (use Ayete's statistics), but desists if she sees multiple opponents. Though sullen at first, if threatened or bribed she tells the characters, in Ewe, that Tan Tien contacted Gavivi a week ago to snatch a man from a hidden room on a boat (she doesn't know how they knew Dicristofaro was there). Her father took the mami wata and a loaned submarine for the job. The kidnapped man was taken upriver to Mampong. She knows nothing more, and she breaks into threats and curses if pushed farther.

More asking around, either in Gldji if they are on friendly terms with the Aidoo or in Accra, only nets the runners information on how deadly Tan Tien is.

## DEBUGGING

The biggest problem in this encounter occurs if the player characters refuse to go after Dicristofaro. Kourouma then cuts them loose and hires local talent, leaving them stranded in Sekondi. The runners can either beg refuge and a ride home from a different corp (in exchange for a shadowrun with details suspiciously like the upcoming encounters), steal or hire a boat and head home (on another long journey filled with pirate attacks) or stay in West Africa (beginning an Africa-based campaign).

If the runners hose the encounter with the Aidoo and get no information, they still learn from Tetteh that Dicristofaro is with Tan Tien. The major Tan Tien research facility outside Accra is near Mampong, as the runners can find out from other contacts.

If the game breaks down because of bad dice rolls or lack of contacts, have Kourouma get the information from his contacts and show the player characters how things are done in Africa. African runners work through barter and trade, with each contact based on family, friends and such. The player characters should gain a better understanding of what they have to do in Africa, and can use local contacts again if they decide to stay. This style of obtaining information tends to slow down the game because the gamemaster is usually also playing the main character involved, but the gamemaster can let the others do the talking so that they can see how to use contacts in Africa.

## CORPORATE JUNGLE

### TELL IT TO THEM STRAIGHT

Hot and sticky is an understatement. It's a disturbing experience, walking through a forest where you can't smell or feel the difference between your own sweat-soaked body and the air around it. You're on the Mampong version of an expressway now; hover vehicles have blasted down the foliage, making a walkable path. And there's jack-drek for traffic.

Metahuman traffic, that is. Branches bend across the path under the weight of thirty-centimeter cockroaches, and birdsong echoes through the leaves. You've heard at least sixteen different types since you came ashore.

The blasted path widens up ahead, the chrome of razor wire shining through the greenish gloom. The coils of wire loop through and around a chain-link fence six meters tall. The top has exposed power cables like you've seen at the zoo back home around the behemoth pit. But the zoo has signs saying "Danger: 120,000 Volts." The fence around this concrete pit bears no warnings.

Something scuttles deep down in that pit ... you can hear it.

**If the characters poke around the main lobby astrally, read the following:**

It's a quick trip over the fence and into the clear-cut compound. As you fly closer, a few humans with dull auras head



through the doors. Each one slots a card into a composite device to open them. The setup is a clearly artificial attempt to look friendly, with a garden motif in which a little waterfall complements each rock-and-tree combination. The foliage looks nice in astral space, too, its living material swaying as something on it shifts position.

Hmm. You spot what seems to be a lizard the size of a Doberman, sitting on a thick branch. It must be using cloaking magic in physical space, because all you can see there is its living aura as it ripples the bright green of interest and hunger. The beast has a processed object jammed into its skull, but that's less important than its eyes. First one eye and then the other focuses on you, and its mouth opens.

Now that's a big tongue.

**If the characters head further into the research facility astrally, read the following:**

The ground level is spacious, its front doors ringed with processed metal: probably a reinforced gateway or alarm system. Wageslaves mill about despite the hour, and you see relief in their auras as they pass the whirling ceiling fan. They head down the stairs, concern radiating from them as they walk near a nook by the first landing. You see a pile of living material there: it takes you a moment to recognize the pile as a snake. A pretty big one, too: maybe three meters long if stretched out, and pale green in color. It flicks its tongue out, tasting the air as its aura touches the astral plane. Then it draws its head back in fear or distaste.

That might be the last thing you ever see.

## HOOKS

Tan Tien's animal handlers have a saying: "Hell hounds are for wusses." After this job, the runners might agree. This whole experience is a wild cross between a maximum-security prison and the famous *Triassic Park* simsense chip.

The control of a corporate security rigger makes the animals seem almost prescient. Long green snakes work in tandem to bind magicians, giant lizards snare astral forms, packs of diseased monkeys swarm anyone who goes down. The animal encounters should feel like being in a prehistoric jungle, but with someone in a gun tower watching over it all ...

## BEHIND THE SCENES

The runners can get to the Tan Tien facility by renting a boat in Accra to go up the Volta; Kourouma allows them to charge the expense to PBT's account. The facility itself is a seven-kilometer walk from the riverbank through the jungle. It's an unfriendly place, designed to keep wageslaves in as much as mercenaries out. Security is constrained only by the compound's operating budget.

During their approach, the runners discover two interesting things. First, there are no astrally active people around: as company policy, Tan Tien does not employ magicians, and for a very good reason. Most Tan Tien facilities post warning signs that their astral space is corporate property, and that trespassers "may face hazardous security measures"—a polite way of saying that Tan Tien's astral space is a kill zone. The paranimals that patrol it don't give warning shots; they are trained to smell out trouble and kill

it. In West Africa, where lawsuits are less common than payback teams, the razor wire around the typical corp compound is considered warning enough.

The second layer of Tan Tien's defenses is more disturbing. The paranimals all have cameras implanted in them, which are permanently on-line and broadcasting to the gun tower. If any animal using its natural or paranatural abilities senses anything the camera is looking at it too. Data from the cameras is fed into a security rigger's display unit.

The compound's standard alarm procedure is a silent lockdown. Each building emits a soft ping over its intercom, and all employees "calmly secure themselves in their rooms." Then the security rigger sends out a sonic blast that uses pleasure/pain feedback to prompt herds of paranimals to go in a certain direction. The asonwu (see **Compound Layout**, below) are released from their concrete pit via a remote-operated ladder. If a security guard sees runners, he or she activates a sonic overload that drives the animals into a frenzy. They have been trained to attack people when the sonic overload is activated; only destroying everyone in sight will ease the pain in their heads from the sonic implant. The compound's ekyelebente—Awakened mamba snakes—fan out to hunt, blind and kill any people they see; after all, the loyal wageslaves have presumably locked themselves in. Meanwhile, the guards in the gun tower fire on any metahuman moving in the compound.

## COMPOUND LAYOUT

All signs in the compound are in Mandarin and Cantonese.

### Map Key

**1, 1a. Perimeter Fence and Gate.** The fence is six meters tall and covered with razor wire on both sides, with a thin, conductive wire in its center that feeds back to the security rigger. If the wires are cut, the rigger is alerted. Climbing the fence causes 7M damage, reduced by impact armor. Anyone who touches the top three wires gets a shock that causes 6D damage. The Combat Pool cannot be used to reduce damage from either of these sources.

The gate is made of chain link. After it closes, three steel bars shoot through it to reinforce it. The bars do 5D damage if they sideswipe something—say, an escaping truck—and take five Combat Phases to open or close completely.

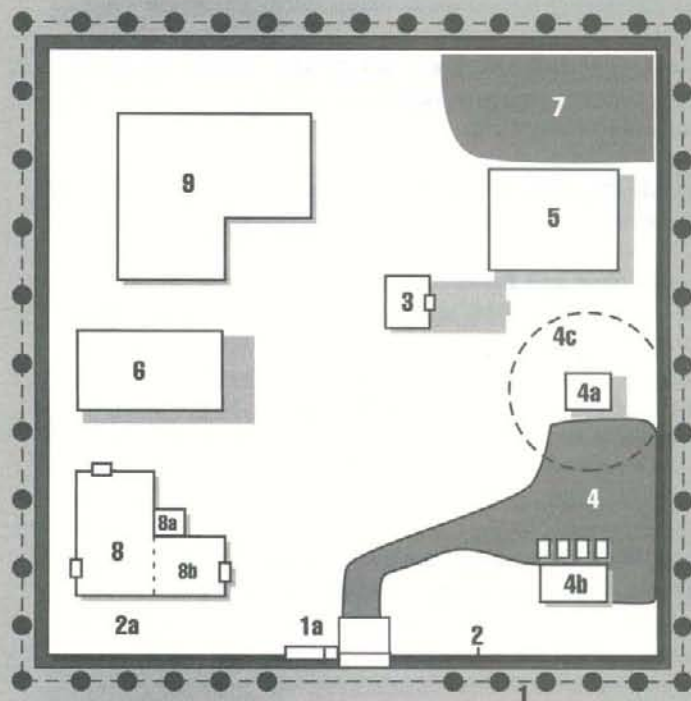
**2, 2a. Pit and Ladder.** The pit beyond the fence is four meters across and eight meters deep, with sheer concrete walls. Contained inside are two troops of eight asonwu each (*Pithecocephalus asonwu*): small pack-hunting, vicious monkeys that mob their prey. The asonwu's cyberimplants have already made them crazy, and when the sonic overload goes off, they become frenzied. The sliding ladder that lets the asonwu out of the pit can be lowered through remote control or manual override. The asonwu know the sound of the ladder and gleefully come running. (For the critters' statistics, see p. 76.)

**3. Security Tower.** The security tower is a four-story building designed like a gun tower in a prison complex. Bolted to a rotating track is a standard smartlinked assault cannon with 200-round

# Tan Tien Compound

## Map Key

- 1 6m Fence (Razor Wire, Electric)
- 1a Gate (Remote)
- 2 8M deep concrete pit
- 2a Ladder (Remote)
- 3 Gun Tower
- 4 Vehicle Lot (Blocks are hovertrucks)
- 4a Fuel Depot (3-Story)
- 4b Vehicle Repair Garage (1 story)
- 4c Potential Blast Radius
- 5 Wage Slave Living (2 story)
- 6 Executive Living (3 story)
- 7 Recreation Field
- 8 Offices
- 8a Power Generators
- 8b Lobby
- 9 Research Central



belt ammo and a smartlinked heavy machine gun with 1,000 rounds of explosive ammunition. The track provides 6 points of Recoil Compensation, the tough construction plastic (Barrier Rating 16) provides partial cover, and the extra storage lockers another 1,000 and 4,000 rounds, respectively. Two guards staff the tower in addition to the security rigger. The rigger is on the third floor, alone and jacked in to the compound's systems, behind a relatively flimsy door (Barrier Rating 8). The tower base, however, has a palmprint identifier (Rating 4) and thick door (Barrier Rating 12). The tower has a Signature of 2 because of all the electronics inside it.

The compound's armory is in the tower's basement. It contains enough weapons and gear to equip twelve guards as described below, plus two spare heavy weapons in case of vehicular attack.

Use the Rigger Archetype, p. 59, **SR11**, for the security rigger. Use the numbers below for the other two guards.

## Tan Tien Guards

B	Q	S	C	I	W	E	R	Armor
4	4	4	5	4	4	3.5	4(6)	7/5

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

**Threat/Professional Rating:** 4/3

**Cyberware:** Wired Reflexes 1, Smartlink 1

**Skills:** Armed Combat 3, Car 2, Etiquette (Corporate) 3 (5), Firearms 5, Gunnery 3 (Machine Guns 5), Hovercraft 3, Mandarin 6, Stealth 2, Throwing Weapons 2, Unarmed Combat 2 (Hung Gar Kung Fu 4)

**Gear:** Partial Heavy Armor, Helmet with Radio (Encryption Level 2) and thermographic visor, smartlinked Louh Fu assault rifle [a Tan Tien knock-off of the Samopal vz88v: SA/BF/FA, 8M, 35/clip, Mag-2 imaging scope, Gas-Vent 2, Shock Pad, 4 clips] and smartlinked Paau pistol [SA, 9M, 15/clip, 2 additional clips], Portable Stove (does 10S damage if dropped off the tower)

**4, 4a, 4b. Vehicle Lot, Fuel Depot, Garage/Repair Shop.** The vehicle lot contains four GMC-Nissan hovertrucks (p. 158, **Rigger 2**) equipped with vehicle control rigs. At **4a** is a fuel depot, at **4b** a parts garage and vehicle repair shop. If the fuel depot is set on fire, the blast radius could reach as far as **4c**. The Power of such a blast starts at 20D; reduce it by -1 per 2 meters distance from the depot.

**5. Main Living Quarters.** These cubicle-like apartments house sixty wageslaves and thirty researchers. Of these, eleven are abductees like Dicristofaro.

**6. Executive/Security Living Quarters.** These reasonably sized apartments house forty managerial workers.

**7. Exercise Yard and Baseball Field.** Nested on the ball-stop is one of twelve Awakened green mambas called ekyelebenle (*Dendroaspis spuera*). These large, spitting snakes rear up like cobras if startled. Six more are scattered throughout the grounds, hunting rats at night and sleeping in high, warm places during the day. They are quite aggressive for reptiles, and the sonic overload wakes them up immediately. See p. 79 for statistics and special spitting rules.

**8, 8a, 8b. Main Offices and Lobby.** These rooms have Rating 4 card readers and main doors made of armored glass (Barrier Rating 8). The satellite dishes and radio tower on the roof allow broadcasts to Tan Tien corporate headquarters. The main power generators and air conditioning units are in **8a**; this room also allows maintenance access to the building. A standard, six-meter high chain-link fence surrounds the entire main office building. Crawling through the chain link three meters up is another ekyelebenle.

At **8b** is the lobby described in **Tell It To Them Straight**. No receptionist is on duty because Tan Tien gets few visitors; nonetheless, the company designed the lobby with aesthetically pleasing waterfalls, branches and rock gardens for good feng shui and to keep the resident gomatia (giant chameleons) happy. Nearly invisible to the naked eye because of their Adaptive Coloration power, these lizards have been taught to snare astral forms, magically active visitors and things that smell like nitrocellulose (gunpowder). This means that characters who don't spot them see three-meter tongues appearing out of nowhere to grab their guns from their hands. Spotting a gomatia in physical space requires a successful Perception (8) Test. The three gomatia in the lobby do not have cameras or sonic implants.

The six guards working in this building, two on each floor, carry only tasers. Use the statistics on p. 41 for these guards. The lobby and each hallway also contain motion-triggered thermographic security cameras hooked up to the security rigger.

**9. Research Building and Laboratory.** The serious cybernetic interface research occurs here. Cameras are set up everywhere throughout this building, which also contains the compound's main computer system.

In the system's relatively unprotected host (which is unconnected to the Matrix) are ten 125-Mp chunks of paydata worth

2D6 x 2,000 nuyen each. In case of intrusion, the files are transferred to Tan Tien's home office in Beijing and the copies at the compound are temporarily deleted.

**Tan Tien Research Computer:** Red-5/11/8/8/10/8

**Security Sheaf:** The system motif is a lab rat maze, with food pellet paydata, cat and snake killer/blaster IC, metal mesh walls dropping for unauthorized access, and electric shocks through the floor with a buzzer for sparky IC. The download to Beijing appears as a gigantic stopwatch counting down.

Trigger Step	Event
4	Satlink channel opened to Tan Tien-Beijing at 50 Mp bandwidth
6	Probe-8
10	Passive Alert: Killer-6
14	Download/deletion of files through satlink begins
18	Blaster-8
22	Expert Construct/Offense +2 (Armor) Tar Baby-5 Sparky-7
27	Black IC-9 (Armor)
30	Shutdown

In the four stairwell nooks leading to the labs are four more ekyelebenle, one per stairwell. In the basement are twenty large cages that house satyrs as well as untold piles of lab rats, most equipped with datajacks (the others are kept as paranimal food). The jacked lab rats contain satyr DNA for research purposes, and could net 200 nuyen apiece if sold to a biomedical research company.

Among other things, the basement contains a walk-in freezer in which anesthetic drugs and antivenin vials for many varieties of local snake venom are stored. For every ten 200-milliliter jars of ekyelebenle antivenin injected into a character, drop the Power Level of the poison's subsequent Damage Codes by 1. A successful Biotech (6) Test reveals the correct dosages.

## BREAKING IN

The heart of the compound's security is the security rigger. If the runners can take out his remote deck, the animals he controls will take 6M Stun damage from feedback on both their own and the rigger's actions. Two other riggers in the compound are off-duty when the runners arrive: they are either in their living quarters, maintaining the hovertrucks or playing baseball. If the runners astrally project into the compound and then go in physically over the fence, they have stepped right into Tan Tien's trap. Any other approach is less dangerous.

Avoiding smelling like an intruder can give the runners an edge. Coating themselves in some strong-smelling substance (garlic, mud, gomatia pheromones) adds +4 to the target numbers for the critters' Detection Tests (the base target number is all of the runners' Stealth Skills combined). Approaching from downwind adds another +1 to the target number. If the runners pay attention to thermometers, they can pick a night when the ambient heat is near metahuman body temperature and thereby add



+2 to the target numbers for any Detection Tests the security rigger makes to find them. The base target number for these tests is the runners' collective Stealth Skills.

Cutting off the backup power supply to central security requires getting inside the base of the gun tower (or blowing it up). But if the runners can take out the fiber-optic trunk that leads to the security rigger's remote deck, all the buttons in the world won't help the rigger. The big guns are locked down—they can't fire into the gun tower itself. The gate can be opened and closed manually and the fence can be turned on and off from central security.

A ruse such as posing as slavers with workers to sell can get the runners in the front gate to meet with four guards and thence to the offices. Non-company workers are never taken near the research lab. Anyone wearing a PBT uniform is immediately fed to the asonwu.

## VALUABLES

Other than the hovertrucks (which the runners can fence in Sekondi for about 25,000 nuyen each), the paydata and scads of weapons, the security rigger's remote-control deck and the sonic cybernetics in each animal are potentially worth money. The deck and sonic devices are unique to Tan Tien—one specimen of each implanted animal, undamaged, would make PBT shell out an additional 21,000 nuyen. Trained gomatia and ekyelebenle without enhancements can net the runners 2,500 nuyen per animal if captured undamaged. A hovertruck full of antivenin, anesthetics and other medical supplies is worth an additional 20,000 nuyen. All in all, the Tan Tien compound can be an African gold mine regardless of Dicristofaro's absence from it.

## DOCTOR DICRISTOFARO, I PRESUME?

The runners can find Dicristofaro's room through the compound's computer system or by interrogating a wageslave. They arrive at his room only to find it locked. Once they manage to get inside (or take an astral peek), they discover that it is empty.

Anti-slavery activists inside Tan Tien helped Dicristofaro escape just hours before the runners showed up, sneaking him outside to an escort team. The team is bringing him north to Burkina Faso, where the local government has a powerful human-rights lobby. Everyone in the compound knows what happened because of the alarm and head count when Dicristofaro went over the fence.

## DEBUGGING

If the runners set off the alarm and don't take out the gun tower, there is a good chance that some of them will get blown in half, poisoned, infected or ripped apart by crazed monkeys. Make it clear that the tower contains heavy firepower. An NPC in the previous encounter can also warn them how tough it is to break in to a Tan Tien facility, and advise against trying it in a traditional manner.

Runners may chicken out at this point or turn everything over to Kourouma. If necessary, entice the players with hints of how many valuables their characters can find, and/or have Kourouma send a few heavily armed mercs for backup. He can also warn the runners about Tan Tien's policy regarding astral space. Both of these actions, however, should be used only as last-ditch efforts

to save the adventure. If the player characters don't have the firepower necessary to pull off this encounter, they can work for others to get the guns and ammo they need.

If the player characters can't possibly beat the guards, critters and everything else, have them see Dicristofaro escaping in an old, slow-moving vehicle. Then move on to the next encounter, **Forced March**, after describing the vehicle as destroyed (with a broken axle or gas line, an overheated engine or something similar) so that Dicristofaro is on foot when the runners catch up to him.

## FORCED MARCH

### TELL IT TO THEM STRAIGHT

As they say in the trid reruns, "Don't worry, he won't get far on foot." They never mention that sometimes you can't get far on foot, either. How are you supposed to find someone in the midst of a rain-soaked forest where living material blots out the sky?

#### When the runners find Dicristofaro, read the following:

There's your prey at last—a short, pudgy, balding white guy with four-day stubble and a hairy stomach hanging over his mud-soaked pair of slacks. He's drenched from sweat and rain, and panting so loudly you're surprised you didn't hear him all the way back at Tan Tien. He squints at you and looks like he's going to faint.

His guards are less impressed. Three African orks in their late twenties, they look like extras from Euphoria's *Jungle Huntress*: serene yet wary, at home in the humid jungle. One runs his eyes over your group, then barks a command in Fanti. The other two position themselves in front of Dicristofaro, guns held casually in their hands. A corpse lies on the ground at their feet, blood matting its black-and-white fur.

## HOOKS

In this encounter the runners get to play hunter, so give them all sorts of enticing clues to put together a very scattered picture. Build it up until halfway through, when they realize they have become the hunted.

## BEHIND THE SCENES

The runners can learn enough at the Tan Tien compound to figure out the approximate route to Burkina Faso. If they contact Kourouma, he is frantic to get Dicristofaro now that they're so close, and insists that the runners track him down.

To pick up the trail, the runners make Stealth (Wilderness) (4) Tests. Any successes help them guess the likely path chosen by Dicristofaro's escorts (see the first Success Table, p. 44). If the gamemaster used the escape-by-vehicle option in the **Debugging** section of **Corporate Jungle**, read the players **Tell It To Them Straight**, above, after they have found the crippled vehicle. They should find it at the end of the first day of hiking or early on the second day.



Successes	Result
1	He'll leave footprints in the mud.
2	His escorts would take steps to minimize footprints by stepping on roots and through foliage instead.
3	He would probably start tossing his clothes at some point to be less visible.
4	Tan Tien's critters work by smell, and his escorts know this. He's going to have to get rid of that scent trail somehow.

The walk through the jungle is quiet and spooky. Depending on when they left the compound, it's either getting dark or just before dawn. With all the wildlife around, it's difficult to keep track of one man's trail; lead the characters on by a broken leaf here, a footprint there. As they search, the runners make Biology (Botany) (4) Tests to determine what sort of terrain Dicristofaro might go through. Consult the Success Table below.

Successes	Result
1	Dicristofaro would take easy paths through the light foliage, not through the thick underbrush to the north.
2	Riverbank weeds grow too thickly for him to head through quickly.
3	An irrigation ditch would have plants cleared from it regularly, making it the easiest way to go.

Any runner who knows psychology or has seen the victims of a kidnapping before can make a Psychology (Individual Behavior, Panic) (4) Test and consult the following Success Table.

Successes	Result
1	Dicristofaro couldn't have been in Africa long before making contact with his anti-slavery escorts. The turnaround time was very quick. Most likely, this is a blind run. His escorts couldn't have planned it much, either.
2	He'd be likely to start heading through the jungle at random, only figuring out where to go after a certain point.
3	He might not have brought essentials like food, soap or anything bulky. His escorts would probably grab guns, though.

The runners eventually find their way to the edge of the river, a marshy part of the jungle where a few villagers farm rice in the shallows. The jungle canopy is sparse here and fewer animals live nearby, so this area is safer during the night. By daybreak, however, Dicristofaro and his escorts head back into the jungle so the corporate cops won't find them. Once the runners reach the river, make Stealth (4) Tests and consult the Success Tables below.

Successes	Result
1	Ha! Here's his jacket, tossed in some farmer's rice paddy! He ran along the dike where it's nice and clear.
2	No, wait—there's only one set of footprints here. They must have split up to confuse you.
3	There's the trail, branching east.

The runners, unhampered by an out-of-shape scientist, gain on their quarry despite the group's head start. Unfortunately for the runners, the trail heads back into thick jungle right around dawn ... the favorite hunting time of enwontzane. These monkeys will attack anything and everything, and the runners look like breakfast to them. (For a complete description and statistics, see p. 79.) Two monkeys attack per runner; one goes for the head, the other for the legs.

Once the fight with the entownzane ends, the runners make a Firearms (4) Test just as a shot rings out further into the trees. Consult the following Success Table.

Successes	Result
1	Someone's shooting.
2	Those were five gunshots from a semi-auto weapon.
3	A heavy pistol, about two clicks to the northeast.
4	Three quick shots, then two more deliberate ones.
5	Those were Ares Predator 10mm x 30mm rounds.
6+	Actually, the distinctive ting aftershock has a resonant quality that probably means the shots were full metal jacket Hi-Ex brass fired from a Pauu, the Tan Tien knockoff of the Predator. (And people say you need to get out more. Who's laughing now, huh?)

A smaller pack of enwontzane attacked Dicristofaro's party, but the African escorts, used to the creatures, made short work of them. This attack is the last straw for Dicristofaro, who is hot, wet, tired, hungry, sore and desperate to go home. If the runners look North American (style of clothes, Anglo coloring), he seizes or them as possible saviors at first, then looks heartbroken as he sees the guns and realizes that they're just mercenaries.

The escorts read the characters pretty quickly. Though they have no personal fondness for the blubbering scientist, they are strongly against slavery and will fight any attempt the runners make to retake him. Two of the escorts are former pirates with moderate amounts of cyberware, and one is a Nau (Crocodile ancestor shaman. (See p. 153. **Cyberpirates.**)



### Badu and Kofi, Ork Escorts

B	Q	S	C	I	W	E	R	Armor
9	5	8	2	2	5	5	3	4/3

**Initiative:** 3 + 1D6 (2D6)

**Threat/Professional Rating:** 3/4

**Skills:** Armed Combat 4, Asante 3, Athletics 5, Biotech (First Aid) 1 (4), English 3, Ewe 3, Fanti 4, Firearms 6, Motorboat 4, Stealth (Rural) 5 (7), Twi 3, Unarmed Combat 5

**Cyberware:** Boosted Reflexes 1, Smartgun Link

**Gear:** Paau pistol [SA, 11M, 15/clip, with Smartlink 1 and Hi-Ex explosive ammunition (only 10 rounds left in Badu's pistol)], 2 clips, Concealable Holster, Armored Vest with Plates, Machete (Str +1/M, Reach 1), local pita-bread-like sandwich, multi-tool knife with firestarter, 2 offensive grenades (10S)

### Yao, Ork Nau Shaman

B	Q	S	C	I	W	E	M	R	Armor
6	5	5	4	4	6	6	6	4	None

**Initiative:** 4 + 1D6

**Threat/Professional Rating:** 3/4

**Totem Notes:** +2 dice to combat spells, +1 die to illusion spells, +1 die for conjuring sea and river spirits, +2 dice for conjuring ancestor spirits. When injured, make a Willpower (3) Test with the target number modified as appropriate for the injury. With 2 or fewer successes, the shaman goes berserk and attacks the nearest living target for a maximum of three turns, reduced by the number of successes rolled.

**Skills:** Armed Combat 4, Asante 3, Athletics 4, Biotech (First Aid) 1 (4), Conjuring (Ancestor Spirits) 4 (6), English 3, Ewe 3, Fanti 6, Firearms 3, Magical Theory (Shamanic) 2 (4), Motorboat 4, Sorcery 5, Stealth (Wilderness) 5 (7), Twi 3, Unarmed Combat 3

**Spells:** Bullet Barrier 5, Chaos 5, Heal 4, Invisibility 5, Mana Bolt 6, Urban Renewal 4

**Gear:** Ruger Super Warhawk with Laser Sight and Hi-Ex explosive rounds [SS, 12M, 6/cylinder, four speed-loaders], Machete (STR +1/M, Reach 1), four gold teeth (reusable fetishes for Invisibility), cigarettes, pocket flask of gin

Dicristofaro and the escorts wait for the runners to make the first move. Do they kidnap this pathetic, terrified man and condemn him to a life of slavery somewhere as bad or worse than the Tan Tien facility? Or do they let him escape, thereby renegeing on their contracts and stranding themselves in Africa?

If the PCs show any sympathy to Dicristofaro—even if it only shows when they argue among themselves—he begs, pleads, cries, anything to get them to grant him his freedom. The escorts await the outcome silently.

If the characters let Dicristofaro go, he thanks them profusely and makes a big show of memorizing their names and phone numbers so that he can reward them once he gets back to Baltimore. The escorts act friendlier once this decision is made, but they refuse to let the characters accompany them to Burkina Faso. They still suspect that the runners may be spies, and they don't want strangers learning the location of their safehouses or

the identities of other anti-slavery activists. The runners cannot do much to convince them otherwise.

If the runners do their job and attempt to take Dicristofaro, the three escorts fight like a trained team, watching each others' backs and using the terrain to their advantage. Dicristofaro takes advantage of the confusion to run away into the underbrush, but doesn't get very far.

## DEBUGGING

If the runners cannot find Dicristofaro's trail, they can make similar tests as they head north until they run into Dicristofaro at a river crossing.

If the characters choose not to take Dicristofaro, Tan Tien and PBT soon figure out what happened and decide to make good the loss of the scientist by nabbing the runners (where'd you think they got their brain samples from, the mall?). If this happens, in the next encounter add a squad of PBT mercs to the chase. For statistics, use the Mercenary Archetype, p. 58, **SR11**.

Make the fights with the enwontzane and the escorts dramatic but survivable. If the characters are badly hurt by the enwontzane and agree to let Dicristofaro go, have the escorts help them with Heal spells and first aid skills.

## MAKING TRACKS

### TELL IT TO THEM STRAIGHT

Even through the thick canopy overhead, you can feel the hot sun on your skin. The jungle smells alive and wet, of rich humus and fresh leaves. Monkeys jump from branch to branch, screaming as you pass, and startled birds erupt in clouds near your feet.

Dicristofaro walks next to you, head hung down like a sick dog. He hasn't said a word in hours; he just plods wherever you steer him. With your luck, you'll get him to Kourouma and he'll say you brought back a robot or a clone or some such dreck. Where's a good fingerprint scanner when you need one?

A shadow moves overhead, and you duck instinctively. Squinting through the leaves, you see an enormous bat with a wingspan larger than you. It hovers in the air, watching you with beady eyes.

**When the runners reach the old railroad tracks, read the following:**

You spot a clear line through the trees ahead—probably another little river. Then you take a closer look. Those are train-tracks, old train tracks. They probably lead right into Sekondi ... and they're just about the only place you can walk without having to stumble and slash through another fifteen clicks of vines and roots.

As you take a step toward the tracks, your bat-shadow gives a shriek you can almost hear, then flaps its wings once and flies away eastward.

Less than fifteen minutes later, your phone rings. You answer it tentatively. Only one person in all of West Africa has your number as far as you know, but you can never be too careful ...

"They're on to you," a tinny voice says. It's hard to identify the voice as Kourouma's. "Our people in Tarkwa just saw a Tan Tien mercenary team going out. Wherever you are, get the frag back to Sekondi, now!"

## HOOKS

Explosions, autofire and annihilated vegetation.

This encounter is the climactic run through the jungle, outrunning sky-diving corp mercenaries to the finish line in the safe haven of Sekondi. Civilization is in sight, and nothing's going to stop the runners from getting to it. In the final chase scene on the ancient coal locomotive, stick in as many action-movie clichés as your players can stand: bridges over a narrow gorge, unhooked cars, the mail-drop pole and tunnel roof that clubs someone's head and so on.

## BEHIND THE SCENES

The final trek back to Sekondi starts out much like the hunt (thick jungle, heat, humidity, disorientation) but with the addition of a slow, clumsy, pleading captive. Dicristofaro weighs 101 kilos, so carrying him is no picnic either.

The runners may have more animal encounters; the gamemaster can use any critters in the back of this book to liven up the long trek back to Sekondi. As the runners walk, the jungle gets denser and denser until they have to hack through it. At this point they are moving very slowly.

## TROUBLESOME COMPANY

As soon as the runners reach a spot with exposed sky, a successful Perception (3) Test reveals a giant bat soaring overhead. A successful Biology (Parazoology) (5) Test lets the runners identify the bat as an anwuma bavole, an Awakened fish-eating bat. Two or more successes on the test reveals that these bats have a habit of fixating on and following groups of metahumans, though no one has discovered why. They are rumored to bring good luck and the player characters should have heard of them some time during their African sojourn.

In reality, this bat is functioning as the eyes and ears of a Tan Tien rigger who was notified of Dicristofaro's disappearance and is searching for the culprits. If a character astrally assesses the anwuma bavole, a successful Astral Perception (4) Test tells him or her that the bat has active cyberware—a clue and a half that this isn't over yet. The bat has the same camera set-up of the critters in the compound and also the sonic cyberware, but the latter works a bit differently. Upon receiving a sonic signal, the bat flies back to the compound instead of going nuts. If the runners attack

the bat, the rigger calls it home; Tan Tien only has two and cannot afford to lose one. As soon as the rigger spots the runners, he calls a team of mercenaries. They cannot attack right away, however, because the rigger cannot pinpoint the runners' exact location. Only when they reach the landmark of the railroad track does the rigger know precisely where the runners are.

If undetected or ignored, the bat keeps tracking the runners until its handler calls it back just before the firefight starts.

## AT THE TRACKS

The runners should feel greatly relieved when they stumble upon the clear area around the train tracks. These tracks are ancient technology, not even electrically powered. They are made of metal and wood, and offer a generally straight, uncluttered path to Sekondi.

If the runners have not yet noticed the anwuma bavole, they spot it here at the tracks. As soon as the watching rigger sees the train tracks, he can pinpoint exactly where the runners are and send the mercenaries in.

At the tracks, the player character has two choices: follow them directly into Sekondi or ignore the tracks and go find the boat they took upriver. The boat is probably still waiting, but getting to it means heading back into the jungle and across country, losing as much as a day of travel. The train tracks offer a direct line into Sekondi, provided the runners can outrun and outgun their enemies.

In the thick brush near the tracks is a handcart that the runners can use to get to Sekondi faster than on foot. It accommodates eight people, with a safe speed equal to the combined Strength of the two runners pumping and a top speed three times the Successful Athletics (4) Tests can increase the speed by 1 per success rolled. It takes about half an hour for the runners to dig the cart out of the brush, move it to the tracks and position it correctly.

While they are moving the handcart, they get the word from Kourouma. There's been a lot of espionage and counterespionage going on behind the scenes in Sekondi, and he learns that the Tan Tien mercenary team shortly before they reach the runners. Smart characters will keep Dicristofaro in the middle so that anyone wanting him alive has to think twice about shooting them.

About five minutes after the warning call, or about the time the runners get the handcart onto the tracks, the heavily armed mercenaries start parachuting down from a small plane outside the runners' line of sight. Any runner who makes a successful Perception (5) Test will see them when they are 100 meters away





the group. If a runner spots the mercs, the player characters can roll initiative as normal. If not, the mercs have the advantage of surprise and can fire one full Combat Round before the runners can act. The thick jungle canopy gives both sides partial cover.

The battle can go in a million different directions, but the two most logical choices for the runners are to stand and fight or to fight a running battle while riding the handcart toward the borders of Sekondi. If the runners stand pat, they will get another call from Kourouma. He tells them that a second group of mercs have taken off with more on the way, by air, train and hovercar. Each new wave of ten mercs apiece can arrive in several ways; see **Ending Blowout**, below.

If the player characters decide to fight and run, then they can move toward Sekondi faster and give the mercs a more difficult target to hit. Apply a target number modifier for the cart as if the runners are running.

#### Tan Tien Mercenaries (9)

B	Q	S	C	I	W	E	R	Armor
6	5	5	2	3	5	4.3	4	5/3

**Initiative:** 4 + 2D6

**Threat/Professional Rating:** 4/3

**Skills:** Armed Combat 4, Athletics 5, Biotech (First Aid) 2 (4), Cantonese 5, Car 2, Computer 3, Electronics 3, Firearms 6, Gunnery 3, Stealth 5, Unarmed Combat 4 (Southern Praying Mantis Kung Fu 6)

**Cyberware:** Boosted Reflexes 1, Chipjacks (2), Asante, Twi and English Linguasofts (Rating 3), Skillwires 3, Smartlink II

**Gear:** Ares HVAR Assault Rifle [SA/BF/FA, 6M, 50/clip, Recoil Reduction 3, tracer rounds, underbarrel grenade launchers with 6 white phosphorous grenades (14M/10L)], Armor Jacket, parachutes

#### ENDING BLOWOUT

Some time after the battle with the original nine mercs begins, reinforcements will arrive in this order: ten more by parachute, then a hovercar with 9 mercs and a rigger, then the train with ten mercs. The train is an honest-to-god coal locomotive with an engineer operating it. One of the mercs has his gun pointed at the engineer's head as the train barrels down on the runners.

If the runners are using the handcart, the weapon of choice for the first group of reinforcements is phosphorous grenades. They want to keep the runners from noticing the approaching train until it's too late. Any character who makes a successful Perception (10) Test will notice the tracks vibrating differently and will hear the noise of the steam engine before the train is visible. Once it heaves into view, the train is bearing down on the runners at forty meters per Combat Round. The handcart must maintain at least the same speed to avoid being crushed by the train in the next Combat Round. In each Combat Round, the speed of the train increases by one meter per round. At some point the train will exceed the runners' ability to go faster; for the round in which that happens, the train is actually pushing the cart. In this turn and only this turn, the runners can jump on to the train. Characters who make successful Athletics (5) Tests manage the feat easily. Runners who fail the test are hanging on for dear life and will need

help getting up. They can hang on for the number of their own Combat Phases equal to their Strength Attribute.

If the runners decide to remain on the cart, it will be smashed to bits; they will take 20M damage from the crash and the tumble off the tracks.

Meanwhile, the parachuting mercs and their compatriots on the train are losing no time attacking the runners. The mercs in the hovercar will be trailing the train, firing at any runner they can see. Once the train has destroyed the handcart, a merc on board will force the engineer to stop the train. This takes 4 Combat Rounds, during which the parachuters land and the hovercar pulls up. The mercs aboard the hovercar jump on to the train. All of the mercs want the train to stop before it reaches Sekondi and safety.

The runners can take control of the train in any way they see fit. Killing the merc whose gun is pointing at the engineer means the train will start up again, increasing its speed at a paltry one meter per Combat Round. If a player helps load coal into the furnace and another operates the bellows, the train can speed up by 5 meters per round. Finding the other mercs shouldn't be too hard, as they are firing on the runners.

At this point, the gamemaster decides how long it takes to get into Sekondi. The mercs will concentrate on attacking the engine, firing at anyone in that general area in hopes of slowing down or stopping the train. Attacks can occur on top of train cars, out the windows, in between cars and so on; the gamemaster can bring any and every conceivable action-movie stunt into play. The mercs' final gambit is to place their hovercar along the tracks and set it to explode in hopes of derailing the train. This last ploy should occur near or at the Sekondi border. Depending on the gamemaster's choice, the train either derails violently with an exploding hovercar in the cowcatcher, or it grinds to a halt a hundred meters from the border. The runners can see Kourouma and a bunch of PBT mercs waiting at the border for them. Whatever happens, make this final scene spectacular.

When the train derails or stops dead, the runners will be close enough to Sekondi to make a mad dash the rest of the way. As soon as Kourouma and the PBT mercs see them, they will provide covering fire to discourage any Tan Tien mercs from continuing their pursuit. Once across the city border, the runners are home free.

#### DEBUGGING

If the runners prefer to carve their way through the jungle rather than follow the tracks, the mercenaries wait for them just north of Sekondi and the runners must sneak past them. The total number of mercs remains thirty-nine, but no giant fight on a speeding train occurs.

Because the mercs' weapons are heavy enough to splatter anything they hit, it will take some juggling to keep the runners from becoming taco stuffing. Make the mercs' target numbers for hitting the runners astronomical. They are moving, the runners are moving, the 15-round bursts they can fire have powerful recoil, they're at least twenty meters away from their targets and the runners have cover. The mercs also are trying not to hurt Dicristofaro, so using him as a shield will cause the mercs to hesitate before firing.

If the runners are having too easy a time, have a white phosphorous grenade hit them or a dying merc fall on them. Being set on fire tends to make people tense. The mercs are spread out over the length of the train, so area effect spells will only nail one at a time.

When the runners reach Sekondi, go to **Picking Up the Pieces**.

## PICKING UP THE PIECES

If the runners brought Dicristofaro with them, Kourouma is so delighted to have him back that he treats the runners to dinner in an air-conditioned restaurant and gives them free medical care for their injuries. Once Dicristofaro is in custody, Kourouma pays everything he offered the runners (sticking Tan Tien with the locomotive repair bill) and invites them to stay in Sekondi under PBT's protection for as long as they want.

If they chose to free Dicristofaro, they get nothing and make trouble for themselves into the bargain (see below).

## GETTING HOME

If the runners brought Dicristofaro back, Kourouma arranges for them to fly back home on a chartered PBT flight. The plane's crew turns a blind eye to any extras brought on board (weapons stolen from Tan Tien, ekyelebenle eggs and so on). They will be landing in a commercial airport, however, so any illegal or really unusual stuff should be well hidden to get it through customs.

If the runners didn't bring Dicristofaro, they must get out of Africa on their own. They might sign on to guard a ship bound for the Americas, or pull off a run for a different corporation in return for a flight home.

## MONEY

Without Dicristofaro, the runners get neither their final payment from Kourouma nor any payment for other loot brought back; they end up with only the PBT stock already paid to them in Miami and Bermuda.

If they delivered the scientist as agreed, Kourouma makes their final payment in PBT stock; Dicristofaro's return to the company makes its stock jump in value from 21.3 nuyen per share to 28.8 nuyen per share within 1D6 ÷ 2 months. Prices paid for loot from the Tan Tien compound are listed under **Valuables in Corporate Jungle**, p. 43. Kourouma also pays an additional 500 shares for evidence that the runners "downsized" Tan Tien. Prices paid for any loot sold outside PBT should take into account the Gold Coast's cost of living (see pp. 136-138, **Cyberpirates**).

## FRIENDS AND ENEMIES

Depending on what happened during the adventure, the runners may end up with both friends and enemies in West Africa. If they did their assigned job, Kourouma recommends them to PBT branches near the runners' home city, resulting in possible future runs. If they chose to free Dicristofaro, Kourouma holds a grudge and PBT employers consider the runners untrustworthy; any future PBT jobs they may get are setups. Treat Kourouma as a Rating 4 Enemy (Power 5, Motivation 3, Knowledge 3) while the runners

are in Sekondi, but reduce his Rating to 2 if they return to North America (Power 3, Motivation 1, Knowledge 2).

Tan Tien isn't happy with the runners no matter what they do. Fortunately for the runners, that corporation's operations are currently limited to Africa and Asia; Tan Tien has little influence in North America. However, the corp will hold a grudge for a long time, so future overseas trips could spell trouble.

Depending on the quality and amount of legwork they do, the runners can make several contacts in Sekondi and Accra. They must keep up these contacts per the rules in the **Shadowrun Companion**, but doing so takes extra effort as Sekondi locals have neither mail nor phone service to let the runners communicate with them.

## AWARDING KARMA

Award individual Karma according to the standard rules (p.199, **SR11**). Award team Karma as shown below.

Survival/Threat	2
Getting information from the Aidoo without killing anyone	1
Getting inside Tan Tien	2
Getting to Dicristofaro	1
Setting Dicristofaro free	1*
Bringing Dicristofaro back alive to PBT	1*

\* These two choices are mutually exclusive. Players get the points depending on their choices in the game.

## LEGWORK

This section provides information the runners are likely to get about various subjects during their investigations. Each of the following success tables lists the target number for obtaining information and the number of successes needed to get information of increasing value.

Because none of the player characters' usual contacts are available in this adventure, these rolls apply to the contacts they make in Sekondi and Accra. Matrix and Shadowland access is limited in West Africa; to get it, the characters must use their own satellite uplink to bypass the few official jackpoints.

## SEKONDI (BEFORE THE RUN BEGINS)

**Target Number:** 5

**Appropriate Contacts:** Any.

Successes	Results
0	"Is that the place downtown with the Afghani food?"
1	"It's a free city on the Gold Coast of Africa."
2	"When the Asante Nation formed, they told the Ga people to assimilate or leave. So the Ga left and took over the old city of Sekondi, offering the corps land without laws in return for security forces and money."
3+	"It's the safest place in Africa. None of the corps'll drek in their own backyard, so they



cooperate to keep the streets quiet. You can have a running gun battle right up to the gates, but one step over the line and both sides get chunked."

### MAMI WATA

Target Number: 4

Successes	Results
0	(seductive voice) "Ewe malikiya ulo na fahari ulo tukukiya katika wazuri ... nitakulliya mwisho wa umri." (The speaker begins to flirt in Swahili, then in broken Asante.)
1-2	"They're Awakened seals named after a mermaid-like creature out of voodoo tradition. They're pretty rare."
3	"They're almost exclusively used by Ewe pirates in the southern Asante Nation. The Ewe breed and train them to be faster and smarter than normal mermaids, and occasionally enhance them with magic."
4+	"Only one group of pirates trainstheir mami wata to use weapons: Gavivi Aidoo's clan. They usually work out of southern Accra."

### BIOTECH CORPS IN WEST AFRICA

Target Number: 4

Successes	Results
0	"Ehsononni wooram a anka ehkoaw ya baupaun." (In Asante, this means, "But for the elephant in the bush, the buffalo would be a huge animal.") The speaker nods sagely and walks off.
1	"Most megacorps have outposts here, but I'm not sure which ones handle biotech. Aztechnology's Medicarro does most day-to-day medical care for those who can afford it."
2	"MCT-Parashield, Phoenix Biotechnologies and Tan Tien Incorporated all do some biotech, mostly paranormal animals. Universal Omnitech has branches here too, but they concentrate on their DeBeers division: diamond workers."
3	"Tan Tien and PBT are both trying to leap to the big time after Dunkelzahn's bequests. Their funding here was increased and piracy's gotten hotter since."
4+	"My cousin's second wife's fifth daughter by her first marriage, she said Tan Tien was giving some pirates a submarine. They were complaining that it was only on loan."

### EWE PIRATES, AIDOO CLAN

Target Number: 5

Successes	Results
0	"Why you go to them? My family, we pull off same job with half time, twice damage."
1	"There's a lot of Ewe pirates. The Asante and Twi run the government and most business here, so most Ewe are poor or pirates or both. Check the docks."
2	"The Aidoo are really poor. They live on their boats and a shantytown they call Gldji, east of Accra."
3	"Be careful. They've been training their mami wata to use weapons. Some big job for Tan Tien, I hear."
4	"They pulled a raid on a ship just a few days ago and took the loot to the Tan Tien lab up the Volta near Mampong."

### TAN TIEN, INC.

Target Number: 4

Successes	Results
0	"You try universal language, eh?" (rubs thumb and forefinger together meaningfully).
1	"Yeah, Chinese cybernetic firm. They're one of Dunkelzahn's pets. You know, I could really use a new pair of shoes as chill as yours."
2	"They've been shoring up the brain-computer interface. Riggers, Matrix and simsense tech, but they do it weird. I heard stories about remote-controlled animals. 'Course, you can't trust everything you hear. Nice gun, by the way ... is it for sale?"
3	"I got inside one of their buildings ... got any armor-piercing ammo to go with this? They don't hire magicians, by the way. They let paranormal animals do all the security. Worse than magicians."
4+	"Friend of mine, he's blind from running against them. Some monkey ripped his eyes out. If you could pick up cybereyes while you're there, I'll tell you how to beat them. The trick is, their paranimals can smell magic: projection, spells, everything. And their handler knows everything they do. Dunno how, but he does. The game is up unless you destroy central security first."



## CAST OF SHADOWS

Characters are listed in order of their appearance.

### ALBERT DICRISTOFARO

Albert Dicristofaro lived a boring life until this summer. An employee of JHIH in Baltimore, he worked on comparative neurology: studying the difference between human, metahuman and animal brains, specifically the ways in which they process sensory data.

A few weeks before the start of the adventure, a PBT representative approached him about changing his employers. PBT would pay him more, allow him direct access to his results and generally give him greater personal support than JHIH. On a whim, he agreed to an extraction. Ending up as a pawn in the African slave trade was not what he expected.

Normally a quiet, fussy and compulsively neat man, Dicristofaro is hysterical and terrified by the time the characters meet him. He alternates between demands that his rights be respected, pleas for help and shocked disbelief in the face of anything fantastic, loud or dangerous.

Dicristofaro is a short, pudgy, balding Anglo human with brown hair and blue eyes.

#### Attributes

Body: 2  
Quickness: 1  
Strength: 2  
Charisma: 3  
Intelligence: 6  
Willpower: 4  
Essence: 4.8  
Reaction: 4

**Initiative:** 3 + 1D6

**Threat/Professional Rating:** 0/1

#### Cyberware

Datajack  
FIFF Headware Memory (300 Mp)

#### Gear

Tattered remains of suit

#### Skills

Biology: 6 [Medicine: 8,  
Neurology: 10]  
Biotech: 4 [Organ Culture: 6,  
Brain: 8]  
Car: 2  
Computer: 3 [Interface  
Programming: 5]  
Cybertechnology: 5  
Electronics: 4  
Etiquette (Corporate): 3  
Physical Sciences: 3  
Psychology: 4



### AHMADOU KOUROUMA

Ahmadou Kourouma grew up in Anyi territory in the former Cote d'Ivoire. His family was poor, and lived in constant fear of King Gissale's anti-human purges. This experience left him with a residual dislike of orks and trolls, though he can put it aside for business purposes.

He sees corporate slavery as just another business practice and won't listen to moral arguments against it. Phoenix

Biotechnologies got him out of Anyi lands and gave him an education and a position of importance. He loves both his wives (Massan and Tsoiso), and will do nothing to jeopardize their position.

Kourouma is a heavy human with dark-chocolate skin, large dark eyes, close-cut hair and a thick beard, and a nervous habit of smiling too much.

#### Attributes

Body: 3  
Quickness: 4  
Strength: 4  
Charisma: 3  
Intelligence: 5  
Willpower: 4  
Essence: 5.8  
Reaction: 4

**Initiative:** 4 + 1D6

**Threat/Professional Rating:** 2/3

#### Cyberware

Datajack (Level 2)

#### Gear

As desired. He is never without his pocket secretary, which he keeps on the end of a thick gold chain anchored to the inside of his double-breasted PBT suit.

#### Skills

Asante: 5  
Biotech: 3  
Car: 2  
Computer: 3  
English: 5  
Etiquette (Corporate): 6  
Etiquette (Tribal): 5  
Firearms: 3  
French: 7  
Negotiation: 4  
Twi-Fanti: 2

# BASER INSTINCTS

## PARANORMAL ANIMAL CONTROL LONE STAR SUBSTATION 25 SEATTLE, UCAS

11:45 p.m.

"What's the tally today?"

The receptionist clicked a few switches and then spun his chair around. "Not too bad, sir. Four calls, all bogus. One of the street patrols nailed something, though they don't know what. Forensics has it down in storage; they promise they'll do a gene-check later this week."

Sergeant Victor Crocker winced, remembering the time a street patrol's Gabriel hound turned out to be some poor schmuck's black Lab.

"Did Rodgers and Chechy have any luck finding out where last week's hell hound came from?"

"The report's on your desk. Looks like it was a runaway from the new Saeder-Krupp facility on Stewart. Standard SOP from them—they're claiming they never lose guard animals and are invoking their corporate rights to prevent further investigation."

"Surprise, surprise. Stick it in the corp file with all the others. Everyone in for night shift?"

"Yes, sir, and out making their patrol sweeps. The evening's datawork is on your terminal—oh, and there's a station meeting for all the night shift commanders at 3 a.m."

"Joy. Anything I can use to get out of it?"

"Not unless we get an emergency call, sir."

"I should be so lucky. Beep me if we get anything more interesting than a devil rat attack, okay?"

12:16 a.m.

Sergeant Crocker was contemplating getting himself a second cup of rotgut soykaf when the reception desk buzzed him. "Crocker. What's happening?"

"Someone just reported a devil rat attack, sir. Somehow the poor shlub managed to hit autodial even while they were swarming him. Dispatcher heard thirty seconds of screaming and identified the devil rats from the howl. Got a street patrol and a PAC unit 3 rolling. We should have more in five."

"Crisly. Where did the call originate?"

"One of the Renraku blocks by the Arcology."

Crocker gave a grim chuckle. "Someone must've forgotten to pay the exterminator. Don't get many devil rats in that neighborhood."

12:32 a.m.

"Sergeant!" The receptionist sounded breathless, caught halfway between excitement and fear. "Traffic unit reporting in—something really weird. Three people got smeared at an intersec-

tion; walked right into traffic. Another four are en route to medical services. Officers at the scene think it was an incubus—the witnesses remember seeing different things, but all described 'an ineffable sense of longing' that went with it."

Crocker sipped his soykaf and tried not to gag. "Fits the profile. Who do we have available?"

"PAC 3 is still on the devil rat call; PAC 5 is rolling on a possible Gabe hound attack."

"Gonna be one of those nights ... ."

1:24 a.m.

"Brace yourself, Sarge. We just got confirmation of a breakout at Saeder-Krupp Facility 3. After we threatened to revoke their animal transport license, they admitted that around midnight a piasma and two cockatrices went wild, killed their handlers and escaped."

Crocker swore under his breath. "Put a call in to Patrol; tell them to increase units in the area, and that they may want to prep an FRT for Animal Control. Who do we have left?"

"No one, and I've already hit the morning shift beepers. We'll have PACs 1, 4 and 7 online in thirty, according to their call-ins."

"Then Patrol will have to handle it until one of our units is ready to roll. One more call and we bring in the lieutenant."

2:26 a.m.

"Homicide just called," the receptionist said with a grim look as Crocker passed by on his way toward a fourth cup of lousy soykaf. "About the building collapse that was on the ticker earlier."

"The three-story? What do they need us for?"

"Demolitions just swept the site. No sign of explosives, but there was extensive damage to the support structures. They think a rockworm colony undermined the structure; they need us to confirm."

Crocker rubbed his temples; he could feel a king-sized headache coming on. "Tell them to evac the area, pull everyone out of the block and start pushing the datawork through City Services to clear it. And tell them we'll send a unit once I have one free. Who's left?"

"PAC 7 is cleaning up the loup-garou incident. Nigel on PAC 4 is down—Doc Wagon's got him, according to the latest report."

"No one's available?"

"We could bring in evening shift, but they've only been off for two hours and we don't have any vehicle rigs free for them."

"The lieutenant still not responding?"

"No, sir."

2:58 a.m.

"Uh, Sarge ... ." The receptionist's voice was small and tentative. "Shore Patrol has a situation."

"Not now."

"They think they have a—"

"Just tell them to shoot it. Assuming those incompetents can hit it."

"Anything else I should tell them?"

"Be nice if they'd keep the critter's body for ID afterward. Has Michaels over at Patrol replied to my request yet?"

"He'll loan us an FRT for the night, plus a couple of Patrol-Ones ... in exchange for a couple of heavy favors."

"This thing spins any further out of control and I'm going to need more than a few favors. When Williams and Ubo get in, assign them to the FRT and send them out to find that piasma. Have everyone else check some equipment out of stores, chuck them into the Patrol-Ones and move out."

"Yes, sir. Um—"

"What?"

"It's time for the situation meeting with the rest of the night shift."

"Tell them I'm a little busy."

## INTRODUCTION

In **Baser Instincts**, the shadowrunners get caught up in an ever-more bewildering situation involving apparently crazed paranormal animals and an unlikely antagonist whose powers defy understanding. Nothing is as simple as it looks. The runners' mission seems straightforward, but the whos, whats and whys of it are so unexpected that they may never be sure exactly who they are looking for or what it all means. In the end, the runners can only rely on their own instincts.

## URBAN PREDATORS

Theoretically, anyone living in the Awakened world might fall victim to some paranormal critter or other someday. Until recently, however, the actual chance of it happening was fairly low, especially if people stayed out of the Z-zones and corp territories where most urban critters prowl. Three nights ago, the rules changed. Lone Star's Paranormal Animal Control Division responded to more than a dozen calls involving aggressive paranormal critters all over Seattle—from the safest corners of downtown, plagued with security-paranormal breakouts, to sightings of exotic creatures never before seen in North America. For every attack, Lone Star got two more calls from terrified citizens who hit PanicButtons after merely seeing a strange creature. The most memorable was caught on vid by KSAF—a piasma meandering through the back alleys of downtown. No one has yet managed to find the beast, and it still presumably lurks somewhere inside city limits.

The next morning's screamsheets ranted about the outbreaks, and even some of the more restrained datafaxes carried furious editorials denouncing Lone Star's inability to handle "simple animal control." Worse yet for the Star, a Knight Errant rep on an afternoon trid show just happened to bring up his company's success rate at such duties. In the wake of the bad press the Star

took during the Mob War, they needed another kick to their public image like they needed a case of the plague. By afternoon of that same day, Lone Star reps were all over the trid displaying dozens of charts purporting to prove that the previous night's events were an aberration. They promised to beef up patrols in the affected areas and push for more restrictions on corporation importing paranormal animals into Seattle.

No one took the proposed restrictions seriously, but the heavy Star patrols the following night allayed everyone's fears somewhat, especially when only two sightings of aggressive critters occurred. The screamsheets still talked up their favorite conspiracy, environmental groups protested on behalf of the critters that got geeked and corp teams ran amuck trying to retrieve their expensive beasties—but it was all on page two, and looked likely to stay there until the public attention span moved elsewhere.

The next day, Paranormal Animal Control got nearly twice the usual amount of calls, and six officers from the division were killed in the line of duty. The more respectable datafaxes skirted around saying so, but it was clear that in some cases the critters had actually set up ambushes for the PAC officers. Knight Errant wasted no time offering extermination teams to beef up security in the affected districts, declaring that it was acting in the interest of public safety. William Loudon, head of Lone Star Seattle, responded by stating at a press conference that the Star would put even more extra people on the streets to stop the mayhem and find out who was behind it. Then a reporter asked if he planned to pull officers off the organized-crime beat. The conference swiftly degenerated into shrill accusations: why hadn't the Star prevented the most recent incidents, was the Department of Paranormal Investigation going to use the critter attacks as an excuse to place more restrictions on magicians, did they plan a witch hunt against environmental groups, and why hadn't whoever was presumably behind it all made any demands?


At about this time, the player characters get a call from a fixer asking if they want to take a rush job.

## WORKING FOR THE MAN

The Johnson for this job screams Lone Star the minute the runners see him, though he doesn't admit to being a cop. Instead he claims to represent the family of a victim of one of the critter attacks, who wants those responsible caught and brought to justice (one way or another). He offers as payment certain incentives only available to Lone Star: whitewashing the runners' records, Registered Equipment Edges, SINS and other alternative identities. He hopes the runners can get information out of clandestine sources and through illegal methods that the authorities can't risk getting caught using. He has only two leads: one concerning an incubus attack, the other rumors of a wild dog pack.

Once the runners take the job, the players decide where to go and what to do. As they find, subdue or kill the paracritters they discover links to Parashield, Inc., a local corp that imports exotic paracritters and trains watch animals. At Parashield's local facility, the runners discover that all the animals that went wild were all bought from the Fort Lewis Zoological Gardens. More research reveals that only one name appears on all of the affected animals' records: Dr. Reginald Disball.





When the runners head for the zoo to confront Dr. Disball, they find him waiting for them—and mysteriously, terrifyingly in control of several dangerous paracritters that he sics on the luckless runners. Is Disball really controlling the animals himself, or is something else—something unknown—working through him? In the middle of a zoo with hostile escaped critters all around them, the runners will have a tough time answering those questions. First they have to survive.

## RUNNING BASER INSTINCTS

Though **Baser Instincts** is relatively linear, the gamemaster can present its events in various orders. Encounters One through Three can occur in any order with minimal reworking; with some judicious timing, Encounter Four can also occur even if the players have not yet built the entire chain of clues. The gamemaster can also intersperse this adventure with another one to stretch out the time frame. Have the Johnson call the team infrequently as he comes across different pieces of information; he can send the runners out to investigate something new whenever it comes up, allowing for other adventures in between. Finally, gamemasters can use any of the critters listed on pp. 76–87 or on pp. 221–238 of **SR II** to add further excitement or additional encounters. Keep in mind, however, that critters in this adventure should be exotic rather than native to the area. The runners should meet and deal with creatures they never dreamed of seeing.

The overall tone of the adventure is uncertainty and paranoia; the player characters cannot be sure what to trust. The animals are violating age-old relationships with metahumanity and acting in ways that the runners have never seen before, and the runners have no clue as to the true nature of their opponent. Their whole environment is changing in subtle ways that make them feel uneasy. Rather than calling up contacts or relying on big guns, the runners must fall back on their own instincts.

**Baser Instincts** is set in Seattle, but can easily be transplanted to any other city or country that has a zoo and at least one Z-security area reasonably close by. As written, however, the adventure loses much of its impact if it is moved outside a metroplex. The urban sprawl is an area where people assume that metahumanity reigns supreme, allowing for maximum confusion and uncertainty when that assumption is overturned later in the adventure. People in wilder areas, by contrast, cannot afford that sort of hubris, and so the adventure loses some its power to unsettle if set in such places.

## GETTING STARTED

Getting hired by Lone Star (or at least someone who seems close to the cop corp) may make many runners reluctant to take the job. However, the added incentives offered—new identities, new SIDs, embarrassing records erased—should be enough to persuade them. Don't play all the Johnson's cards at first; keep tossing them out one by one until the runners feel they can live that close to Lone Star for awhile without getting caught in the Star's net.

The encounters presented in this adventure can be played as side encounters within another urban campaign, such as one based on **Mob War!** After living through several adventures

where everyone frags everyone else with little provocation, the players may look upon **Baser Instincts** as a chance to rest up by kicking some critters around. Let them think that at first. As the critters start getting their act together under Disball's guidance later in the adventure, it won't feel so much like a milk run. And as confusion mounts about what's really going on, the players may be glad to return to the relative sanity of a good old-fashioned street war.

This adventure can also be altered to fit into other campaign frameworks. The players can be Lone Star officers in a Law campaign (p. 117, **SR Companion**), sent to Paranormal Animal Control to assist them in finding the perps and repairing the Star's battered reputation. Or the players can work for Ares Macrotechnology in a Corporate Security campaign (p. 117, **SR Companion**), trying to solve the case so that Ares can use it against Lone Star and snag Seattle's lucrative law-enforcement contract for Knight Errant. In a Magical campaign (p. 119, **SR Companion**), the player characters may be members of any group from the DIMR to the Atlantean Foundation, sent in to discover what kind of magical phenomena could be behind the critter outbreaks. Finally, in a Special Forces campaign (p. 115, **SR Companion**), the characters may be working for the FBI's Paranormal Affairs Division, sent to Seattle to protect FBI investigators long enough to discover what is going on.

## ANIMAL MAGNETISM

### TELL IT TO THEM STRAIGHT

How come Johnsons never want to meet in dark, seedy dives anymore? It feels unnatural to be walking through the Woodland Park Zoo in broad daylight to meet your prospective employer. One of your more trusted fixers had the gall to call you far too early this morning and ask if you were up for a rush meet. After pawing through your sock drawer and realizing that the sock with the cred in it was almost empty, you accepted the fixer's offer. Then you found out where the meet was, and when—just the right time of day for the zoo to be full of screaming kids on field trips, harried mothers with toddlers in tow and suits enjoying nature's bliss while planning a strip mine somewhere. Just your kind of scene.

After trying your damndest to find something to wear that doesn't scream, "Runner for hire, will mutilate for idle entertainment," paying the exorbitant parking fee and navigating through the hordes of people crowded at the zoo gates, you make a bee-line for the insect house. If anyplace will be private in the middle of a crowded zoo, the insect house is it. Even the occasional heavily censored newscast from the Chicago Containment Zone is enough to give you nightmares, and you've seen much, much worse. Ordinary civilians can hardly stand to look at a bug anymore. The bustling crowds quiet down as you get closer to the insect house; people passing near it tend to speed up and keep their eyes averted. The meet ought to be as undisturbed as any that ever took place at the darkest corner table in a seedy bar. Or so you tell yourself as you enter the building.



It takes a moment for your eyes to adjust to the slightly dimmer light. All along the walls are little glass windows with red lights emanating from them to simulate nighttime conditions. You don't want to look too closely at them; best let those particular memories lie. As you start looking around the room, you hear the voice.

"They're thinking of replacing the exhibit. Zero attendance for the past few years. People don't like being reminded, especially when they bring their kids here for a day out." A man approaches you from a back corner. He wears casual clothing and sunglasses that hide his eyes, but he has no obvious cyberware. His dark hair is cut unfashionably short, and his pose is anything but casual. The way he holds himself, like a spring about to uncoil, screams cop. Considering the news reports you've seen lately, you suspect you know what he is going to say. But you keep your mouth shut; let him preserve the illusion of anonymity if he wants.

"I represent the family of a victim of one of the recent paranormal animal attacks—I'm sure you've heard about them," the Johnson says. "The family wants to find the person responsible and ensure that he or she is ... punished. They managed to liberate some information from Lone Star that has not yet been released to the public, and have discovered several leads that the Star is unable or unwilling to follow at this time. Rather than leave a single stone unturned, the family contacted me. On their behalf, I want to hire you to ensure that those stones get turned and tossed in the air.

"The leads in question are slim, but they present the best hope of determining who is behind the attacks. You can start with one of two tasks right away, for which my clients are willing to pay immediately, with the understanding that you will then follow up on all the possibilities. For that first task, I can offer you 20,000 nuyen, with 25 percent up front.

"If you manage to discover the perpetrator of these outrages and ensure that he is stopped, my employers can arrange incentives more valuable to people in your line of work than mere cash. Certain ... blemishes ... on your records can be taken care of, or you may be given a new, clean slate. Even some of that chrome you're sporting may get deleted from certain databases.

"There's the offer. Take it or leave it."

#### **If the runners take the assignment, read the following:**

"I have one solid lead for you to start with. On the first night that these incidents occurred, several people were killed when they walked into traffic. Last night at the same intersection, a driver aimed his car at a lamppost, causing a six vehicle pile-up and four more deaths. After interviewing eyewitnesses and survivors, the Star decided that an incubus was responsible for the accident, and did a sweep of the nearby sewers. However, they didn't have the manpower to do a thorough search, and were called off to handle one of the night's other crises. Also, the sewers were close to the Ork Underground, and Lone Star doesn't want or need trouble with them right now."

The Johnson pauses and looks directly at you. "I want that incubus. I'm convinced something is using these animals, and I want to find out what. That incubus was used twice; it may still be carrying a trace of the controls placed on it, whether mechanical, chemical or magical. I want it intact and preferably alive, but I'll

take it dead as long as it isn't burned, shot up or hacked to pieces like all the other critters that've been stopped so far. If you end up damaging it, your pay will be adjusted accordingly."

He walks over to one of the benches in front of a display window, opens the briefcase lying on it and takes out a folder full of papers. "These are false work orders, maps of the sewers and some behavioral information on incubi. Take the briefcase with you when you leave; it also contains a telecom number you can reach me at. I've arranged for a Shiawase Envirotech team to be at the intersection on those maps at ten o'clock tonight. Show them the work orders and they'll give you some gear—mostly animal restraints—and allow you access to the sewers. When you find the incubus, bring it back to them. They'll know what to do with it. In fact, if you come across any other creatures that seem to be acting odd, call me at the telecom number and I'll arrange for a Shiawase Envirotech team to pick up the bodies. I need this done tonight; tomorrow morning, City Services will announce a 1,000-nuyen bounty per animal killed and 3,000 nuyen per animal caught alive. I can't take the risk that someone looking for easy nuyen will kill the incubus out of hand and destroy the best lead we've got. Incubi aren't exactly speed demons, so it should be close to the site marked on the maps.

"I'm also giving you copies of reports from doctors at Hollywood Hospital in the Redmond Barrens. According to them, a paranormal dog pack is operating in the area, and acting just weird enough to possibly be the work of our mysterious culprit. I'll make sure you receive the bounty on any animals you happen to capture out there. Any questions?"

## **HOOKS**

At first, this meet should feel like any other. If anything, the players should be relieved to have a fairly good idea of who the Johnson is working for before they even talk to him. However, they can't show too clearly that they know who is hiring them or the Johnson will walk. He needs professionals capable of discretion; if the runners can't resist throwing what they think they know in his face, they obviously can't handle a delicate job maturely.

The Johnson doesn't particularly like the runners and doesn't mind showing that a little, but he won't make it too obvious. He needs the runners, so there's no percentage for him in treating them badly. The defining tone of this encounter is of a delicate shadow game between the runners and the Johnson; the runners think they know what is going on, but can't let the Johnson see that.

If the runners have previously dealt with bug spirits, holding the meeting in the insect house may unnerve them. Allay their fears; it's too early for them get paranoid. That comes later.

## **BEHIND THE SCENES**

This meet should be disturbingly to-the-point, almost like a military briefing. The Johnson doesn't give his name, and doesn't want the runners to know who he is or even who he claims to be working for beyond the barest details. He answers their questions in short bursts of conversation. He has some leeway in payment, but he won't push up the cash offer more than 50 percent (30,000 nuyen total, with 7,500 nuyen up front). If the characters get greedy, they get squat. The records whitewash and new IDs



should make up for any monetary shortfall, as the characters can't arrange those things for themselves. The gamemaster may withhold these special gifts until the runners start negotiations, or sweeten the deal with them after the initial nuyen offer is made.

If the characters protest that they aren't being paid enough to assassinate the people responsible (one interpretation of "punishing" the offenders), the Johnson answers that they're right, assassins are worth more. He wants the perpetrator stopped and doesn't care how. Killing the perp is fine; so is breaking all the bones in his body or dropping him off in front of the local Lone Star station tied up with a note that says, "A Gift From Your Friendly Neighborhood Shadowrunners." He should act a touch disdainful of the runners' capabilities, almost challenging them to prove their reps by taking on this job.

Drop hints throughout the encounter that the Johnson is part of the Star and is barely restraining himself from busting the runners on principle. Lone Star is hiring runners to solve the animal attacks only because they can't afford to pull any more officers off the organized crime beat, and they can't sit around while Knight Errant uses this golden opportunity to ruin them. The IDs and the records whitewash should be giveaways; these are things that Lone Star, rather than some grieving rich family, can provide. The Johnson's casual dress should look awkward on him, and his posture is too stiff to be anything but the product of military or law-enforcement training. His shoes shine, and at times his hand seems to rest on a sidearm that isn't there. If the runners later check out the Johnson's story, none of the victims of the animal attacks have enough powerful family connections to hire runners and get private info from Lone Star. In other words, everything about this encounter should scream that the Star is doing the hiring, but the runners can't ask point blank. If they do, the Johnson glares at them and says something to the effect that he thought discretion was part of their job description. If the runners press him again, he will leave. And yes, this will get back to their fixers and smear the runners' reputations for a while.

Just before leaving the insect house, the Johnson tells the runners to give him a five-minute head start "to keep anyone from getting nosy." He then departs and loses himself in the zoo crowds. The runners will find it impossible to follow him unless they choose to be obvious about it.

The players choose which encounter to play first, the incubus or the dog pack. The Johnson has given the runners much more precise information to go on for the incubus encounter (**Fire in the Hole**). The dog pack encounter (**Dog-Eat-Dog World**, p. 60) is much more nebulous, as the characters will have to spend time in the Barrens searching for the rumored pack. The Johnson does not greatly care which job the runners choose to do first, but suggests they go after the incubus if asked; he doesn't want to waste the preparatory work done by his alleged contacts, nor to risk losing the incubus to a bounty hunter if the runners delay too long.

## DEBUGGING

The first potential problem in this encounter is getting the player characters to the zoo appropriately dressed. If the characters seem reluctant to go, try dangling the rewards in front of them a little early via their fixer to get them interested.

If they bring weapons, armor or a panzer into the zoo with them, Johnson will look politely amused and launch into his spiel as if accustomed to being surrounded by heavily armed individuals. Zoo security will give the runners a curious look, but let them through while busting a mom for having a nail file on her key-chain. If the runners attack the Johnson, he will bolt; he has a pistol, some explosives and a headware phone ready to dial the Star, but doesn't want to get involved in a violent altercation. He quickly loses himself in the crowds of people. Once he gets away, he will talk to some of his contacts in the Star and they will hassle the runners for awhile. If the runners kill the Johnson, tell the players that he is a Lone Star officer. The runners vault immediately to the top of the Star's "must be killed while resisting arrest" list. Even runners have got to learn that they can't kill Johnsons on a whim.

If the players decide that bug spirits are somehow controlling the Johnson (or controlling the paranimals) because the meet takes place in the insect house, let them think that. Such notions will raise their paranoia level, which can't be all bad.

One way to ensure the runners' interest in the job is to have some loose ends from their previous adventure come back to haunt them. Maybe they left a bit of evidence behind, or someone saw them for just long enough to identify them. Or perhaps they pulled their last run for the wrong people, and those people are now showing an unhealthy interest in them. Perhaps they did a few favors for one of the participants in the Mob War, and now Lone Star's Organized Crime Division wants to know what the runners know. If the runners are looking for a way out of a bind, the Johnson can offer it as part of the payment for the job.

## FIRE IN THE HOLE

### TELL IT TO THEM STRAIGHT

Sewers. Just where you've always wanted to go. Sometimes, wading through them actually gets you something—but most times, all you get is the smell sticking to your armor for days. Then there's all the gunk you have to clean out of your guns, the fetishes you have to disinfect, and the bad jokes people feel compelled to make when they catch a whiff of you. But what the hell—it's a job.

You try your best to look innocuous as you get out of the car and saunter over the Shiawase Envirotech truck parked at the intersection. There's a huge plastic tent next to it, set up over what you assume is the entrance to the sewers. Two workers in Envirotech overalls are leaning on sawhorses by the tent, arguing excitedly over something.

"The F-series of mono-nucleotide tests won't work until you get the proper viral cutters, you moron!"

"You've always had a thing for viral cutters. Whatever happened to good old-fashioned constructed enzymes?"

"Umm, Fred, I think they're here ..."

"Ah." Fred turns toward you. "I believe you gentlemen have something for me?"

You cautiously hand over your fake work order. He briefly compares it to his pocket secretary while the other guy heads into the van briefly and then returns with two boxes.



"Everything seems to be in order," Fred says. "You'll find two Ares Squirts in each box with a DMSO/tranq load. Don't splash any of it on yourselves unless you really want a nap. Nail any part of the critter with this stuff and it should go to sleep. Once it's napping, just drag it back here and we'll take care of it."

"Unless it has a magical resistance to drugs," the second guy pipes up.

"Or the stress of combat lowers its susceptibility to drugs," Fred replies.

"You know, it could just be a mutant."

"True ..." Fred catches you looking at him and immediately becomes more businesslike. "Still, the tranq should work. You guys need anything else?"

### Once the runners enter the sewers, read the following:

At the base of the ladder, you look around. Plascrete patches dot the ancient brick tunnel walls. Waterflow is low, moving slowly but steadily. The stench isn't quite as bad as you expected; the moving water keeps the smell from festering. The map your Johnson gave you is made of a plastic derivative so the water won't damage it. It's folded like an accordion, so it takes you a few moments to unfold it and take a look. You pick a tunnel and start heading down it. As you move, you hear critters scurrying and skittering out of your way.

## HOOKS

Despite the violence and craziness that eventually occurs, the sewers should feel almost familiar and easy for the runners to handle. Just a bunch of critters in the tunnels; nothing they haven't seen before. Push the familiarity of it. Pretend to roll for random encounters. Ask the players if they want to map out where they are going. Make a point of writing down their marching order. Make this encounter a set piece that they feel they can control, especially as it is the simplest and most straightforward of all the encounters in this adventure. When the runners hit the later encounters, they will realize just how unprepared they are for what they are going to face.

## BEHIND THE SCENES

The Shiawase Envirotech workers exist so the gamemaster can toy with the players' minds. Have the two discuss mRNA strands as they relate to incubus retro-virus transformative conditions, then snap out of the discussion the instant the runners' attention is focused on them. They treat the runners like hired hands and will practically chortle with glee when they emerge with the incubus, muttering things like, "Can't wait to get this baby in the lab," and, "Finally I can disprove your idiotic theory on pre-cephalopod evolution!" Emphasize the contrast between their somewhat arrogant manner and extremely technical talk on the one hand and their grubby, smelly sewer worker uniforms on the other. The difference between their appearance and their language and demeanor should arouse the characters' suspicions. In reality, there is no deep dark secret to discover about them; they're just eccentric.

The Ares Squirts are equipped with a DMSO/tranq load (Rating 5, fires as a Light Pistol, 20 shots). The team gets four of

these guns, no matter what its size. The runners also get ten antidote slap patches and possibly some other gear as well, depending on what they brought with them (if anything; see **Debugging**, p. 59).

The sewer map can be used as a handout if the gamemaster so desires; it is provided mainly to allay the player characters' fears and make them feel secure. The encounters in the sewer unfold as the gamemaster sees fit. To keep the players on their toes, roll dice every so often and consult the adventure as if something may be about to occur around every turn. Use the map to plan where encounters will take place ahead of time, in order to surprise the players when they reach a certain point in the sewer.

## SEWER ENCOUNTERS

These encounters are listed in the rough order in which they should occur. The gamemaster may mix them up or add more if he or she so desires.

### Devil Rat Swarm

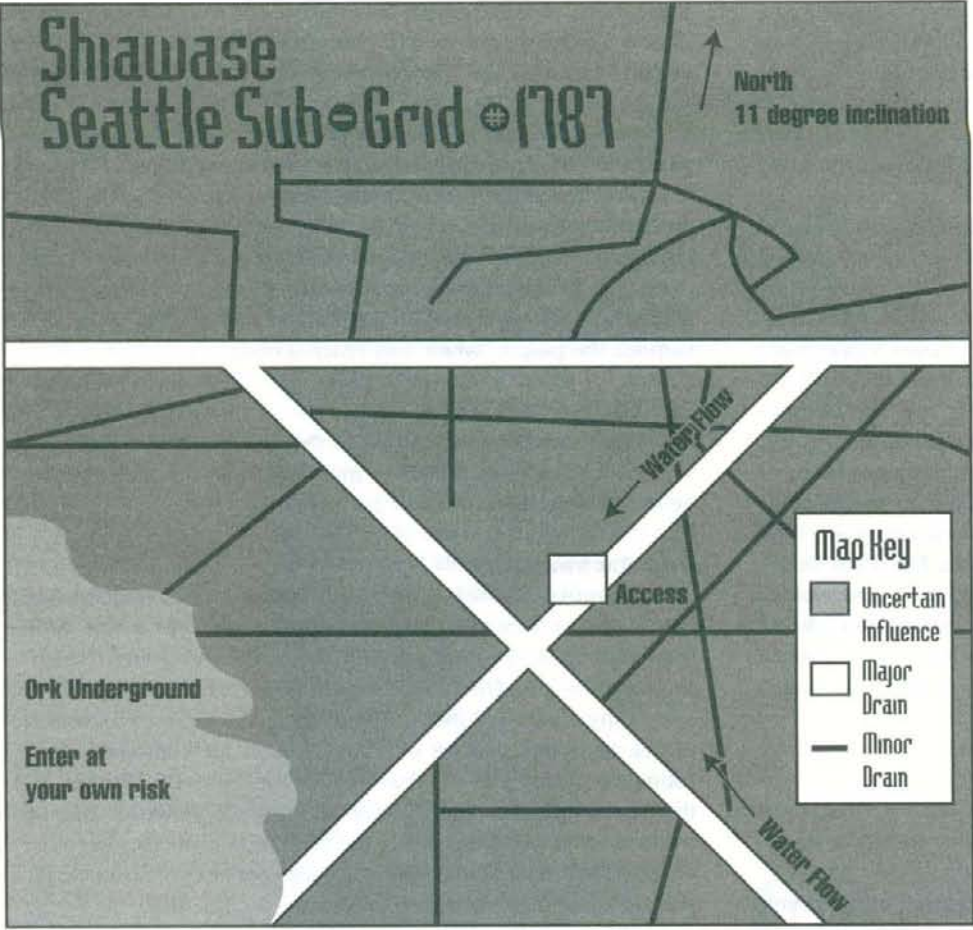
The most common critters in the sewers are the first ones the runners meet. After slogging through the muck for a little while, they hear chittering—first behind them, then in front of them a few seconds later. Then they hear the distinctive howl of devil rats, seemingly all around them. Before the echoes die away, a wave of mundane rats swarms over and around the characters. These rodents are easy kills. If a runner hits one, roll 1D6. The result is the number of rats killed. Their sheer numbers, however, may still make them a problem. There are hundreds of them, more than enough to give all of the runners a couple of bites or scratches. For statistics, see the Critter Statistics Table, p. 233, **SR11**.

After swarming over the runners, the wave of rats rolls past them and disappears. At this point, have each player make a Body (4) Test for his character. On 2 or fewer successes, the character slips on some muck and falls down. The devil rats will attack these characters first; in addition, the fall will likely make them drop their flashlights or weapons, causing even more confusion in the dark sewer tunnels.

The devil rats use their Concealment power to pop out of nowhere, savaging the runners in groups of five per character. Shooting the rats risks hitting their target; the safest way to get them off a runner is through physical attacks.

Depending on the situation, the rats will bolt if the runners kill or beat off two or three in a group. If the runners seem to be having it too easy against a single attacking batch, have the devil rats back off and conceal themselves in the crumbling plascrete patches that dot the tunnel. Only so many people can beat the rats off a runner at one time (2 to 3 characters, depending on the size of the runner), so extraneous runners may become targets if everyone else is dealing with another rat attack.

The devil rats will stop attacking once their number dips below five. The attack should come as a surprise and unsettle the players. Emphasize the darkness broken only by the beams of the runners' flashlights; any devil rat out of a beam for even a second can disappear into the tunnel. Run the combat sequences hard and fast. Don't give the players time to think; make the darkness, the confusion and the horrible mass of squealing little things with sharp teeth



desire, it may give them exactly what they want. As they approach an intersection, they see a tentacle slither out of sight around the corner. As the characters round the corner, their flashlights dim for a moment. At this point, have each character make an Intelligence or Willpower Test (use the higher number of dice) against a Target Number 8.

Characters who fail the test see the incubus. It's huge, more than twice as tall as they are and massing more than a troll. Its tentacles are flailing all over the place, and they can almost hear the suckers flexing as the critter's limbs reach eagerly toward them. Sucker marks adorn the wall, testament to the critter's brute strength and the danger the characters are about to face. It gives a screeching roar and attacks.

This illusion works differently for every runner who sees it. Runner A sees Runner B as the incubus; Runner B sees Runner C, and Runner C sees Runner A. When and if runners affected by the illusion are injured by other runners, describe any bullet wounds as sucker marks that tear out flesh, and the numbness of any hits by tranqs as the result of the incubus's crushing blows. If properly done, the players may not realize that their characters are fighting each other for a few Combat Turns.

clambering all over the place a gripping and vivid reality.  
 Statistics for the devil rats appear on p. 78. They are Immune to the DMSO tranquilizers.

**Troglodytes**

This encounter offers the runners just a glimpse of a troglodyte, so the characters realize that not everything they meet in the sewers is out to get them. After the devil rat attack, the players should be a little on edge, so have the rear-most character make a Perception Test. The result is irrelevant, as long as the player does not roll all ones (but don't tell the player that). Inform the player that his or her character hears something moving down the tunnel a little ways behind them. Once the characters shine their lights in that general direction, two troglodytes bolt down the tunnel away from them. The runners see the pair just for an instant: an adult and a juvenile. The larger is urging the smaller to move more quickly.

If the players insist on shooting the troglodytes, that's their prerogative. Killing the critters gets them nothing, however. The troglodytes don't fight back; they just want to get away.

**Incubus**

The one thing the characters desire most while slogging around in the sewers is to catch the incubus. If the creature has been observing them in an attempt to discover their fondest

Characters whose tests are successful see their companions reeling back in horror from nothing and then attacking each other. Unaffected runners have several options for stopping the fight; they may try magical means, using their Ares Squirts on their ensorcelled compatriots, or finding and hurting the real incubus. Hurting it will distract it and make it drop the illusion. If the player characters are familiar with incubi, they may know that the critter's Illusion power works through line-of-sight; this means that the real incubus must be somewhere nearby. The gamemaster can give the player characters this information via the Johnson's hand-outs, which include a quick rundown of known facts about incubi, or by having the Shiawase Envirotech team give them the low-down before they drop into the sewer. A quick search will turn up the real critter. Once someone attacks it directly, it will drop the illusion and focus its efforts on the shooter. Once the illusion has been shattered, the incubus should be relatively easy to handle.

The real incubus is about a quarter of the false one's size and is not currently under Dr. Disball's control. Because of constant manipulation by Disball (and the mysterious entity controlling him; see **Cast of Shadows**, p. 72), the incubus has a far more fine-tuned Illusion power than other examples of its species, allowing it to create the illusions described in the encounter. This particular incubus has the unique ability to slightly alter the illusion for everyone in its area of effect, as described above.



## Afanc

This encounter is the most important one, and should happen as the runners are dragging the unconscious (or dead) incubus back to the sewer entrance. At some point the runners hear a throaty roar, and an afanc rises out of the dark water. It slams unwary runners aside with its flat tail in an effort to reach the incubus. If it gets to the incubus, the afanc will sink its teeth into it and try to drag it away. The runners must exercise some caution; they must stop the afanc from eating their prize without shooting the incubus full of holes in the process. The Johnson wants it intact no matter what, so they can't let the afanc rip it to bloody hunks. Plus, the blood will attract more devil rat swarms. The runners will have to kill the afanc; otherwise it will not let go of the incubus or stop going after it. It should die with its teeth locked on the incubus.

When the player characters try to drag the dead afanc's body off the incubus, they should notice that the afanc is wearing a plastic collar. It looks like a shipping collar, with a dock number and a bar code on it.

The bar code is a Parashield shipping code; the dock number refers to a main dock used by Parashield to transfer animals to their shipper. The dock facility is empty at the moment; Parashield puts animals there to await shipment, but does not use the dock facility to store critters. If the player characters check out the dock facility's records (via the Matrix or contacts), they will find no afanc listed. They will, however, find datawork filed by dock security working for the shipper and for Parashield, regarding a recent incident at the dock. The information is very sketchy; it is described as an internal security problem dealt with by Parashield, in which some sort of creature escaped. The runners discover more detailed records on the afanc in **Industrial Causes**, p. 62.

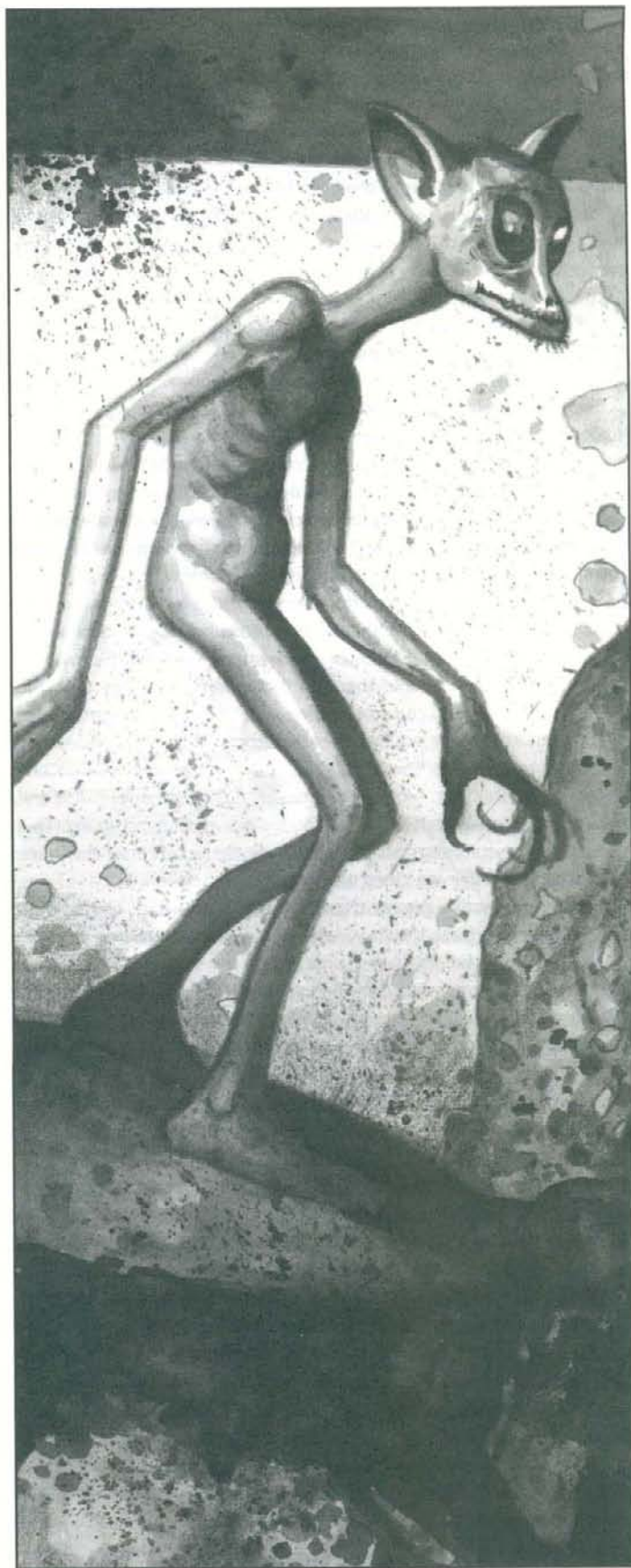
## UP FROM THE SEWERS


At the point where the runners entered the sewers, the two Shiawase techs are waiting with a winch and a coffin-sized freezer box in which to place the incubus. They will quickly reel the critter in, chattering excitedly in science-geek speak the whole time, and won't talk directly to the runners until they have stowed the incubus safely away and packed all of their gear. At that point, they will ask for any loaned equipment back, except for the antidote slap patches. Those the runners can keep.

## DEBUGGING

If the runners arrive without bringing any equipment necessary for travel in a sewer, such as galoshes, flashlights and a few slap patches to ward off any infectious diseases they may catch, wait until they start to lower themselves into the sewer and then have one of the Envirotech personnel remark that he hopes they have good medical insurance. If the characters reply, the tech comments that without galoshes, protective overalls, antidote patches and such the players will probably catch VITAS-3 and die a horrible death. He just happens to have a few extra overalls and flashlights and such, if the runners are interested ...

Play this up for laughs. Let the player characters get to the bottom of the ladder, then have one of the techs shout down the warning. Let the runners clamber up, get a piece of equipment





and go back down the ladder; then have the other tech suggest something else they might need. Ideally, the runners should go up and down several times, all the while surrounded by the techs' bio-jargon.

If the incubus has too easy a time tricking the player characters into fighting each other, start allowing runners to make Willpower Tests each time they are hit to see through the illusion. Alternatively, have the incubus get closer to the fight to control the illusion better or to snack on any downed runners, and in the confusion let the illusion slip. Unwary player characters risk killing each other, so remind the players that they need to recover the animal alive and intact. This means refraining from using autofire weapons, Hellblast spells and other implements of mass destruction, which should keep the carnage under control. If a single runner sees the real incubus and shoots at it, that may shatter its ability to keep the illusion up.

If the players miss the afanc's collar, have the Shiawase technicians demand the body of the afanc because it took a bite out of the incubus and they need that piece back. Dragging the afanc's carcass to the surface should give the runners ample chance to discover the collar. If the runners show no curiosity at the presence of an afanc, a European creature, in a Seattle sewer sporting a plastic collar with a bar code, then have the Shiawase technicians act shocked when they see the afanc and demand to know more about it. Have them insist that the runners take them to the spot where they found it. While chattering about possible co-evolution, spontaneous Awakening and other oddball theories, the techs will reveal to the player characters that the afanc is a rare European creature, and almost never found in North America. Logically, therefore, the animal can only have come from a zoo or a breeding program. That information should suggest to the player characters that the afanc and its plastic collar are clues worth investigating.

Magically active player characters may also want to use their astral abilities to track down whatever may be controlling the animals. The powerful spirit responsible for the incidents has taken astral snoopers into account when laying its plans, however, and has used its considerable magical prowess to wipe from the animals all astral "fingerprints" that might lead people to it. While the animals are under its direct control, the entity uses its Aura Masking power (p. 79, **Grimoire II**) to make the possessed animal appear completely normal. It has also laid traps, bound spirits to guard its astral trails and cajoled the spirit world not to whisper a single word about its existence, let alone its secrets. According to street buzz, Lone Star has lost three mages trying to track down astral information about the animal attacks. The astral plane is the spirit's home, and it uses its home-turf advantage ruthlessly. The only people that even have a shot at getting past this entity's defenses are high-ranked members of Initiatory groups. Give the player characters several stone walls to beat their heads against until they realize that astral tracking in this case is beyond their ability.

## DOG EAT DOG WORLD

### TELL IT TO THEM STRAIGHT

As you look down the filthy Barrens street from the doorway where you've parked yourself, a weary sigh escapes your lips. It took some work, but you narrowed down the reports of the past normal dog pack to this area. The locals told you they'd seen canines slinking through the shadows on this street for the past few days, so you came here. But you've been watching this street for a few hours now and seen nothing except for the occasional hobo scurrying through the trash piled on the sidewalks.

Here comes another one, pushing a shopping cart and swaddled in dark, stained clothing. He's having trouble with the cart almost hunched over it and moving real slow. Just another homeless man, one of hundreds around here.

Suddenly two dogs leap out of the trash piled on the sidewalk: one jet black, the other the same size and color as a golden retriever. They knock the hobo to the ground; he grunts as he rolls around, trying to fend them off. You can't get a clear shot at the dogs without hitting the hobo. Even as you debate what to do, the dogs start dragging their prize off to someplace more private. Your only hope of keeping the animals in sight, let alone saving the poor sap they brought down, is to follow them.

### Once the runners are on the street, read the following:

As you run into the street, the two dogs start backing away from the hobo. The golden retriever takes any rounds sent their way; he seems to be protecting the other dog, which looks like a hell hound. The hobo lies still in the street. As you get near him, you spare him a glance and then look at him again in shock.

He has a snout. As you watch, the snout becomes more pronounced as the gabriel hound turns from humanoid to canine form. It shakes off the hobo clothing and gives you a grin, as if to say, "Got you."

You look up and see that you're surrounded by canines. Somehow they managed to sneak up on you. They just stare at you silently, for a moment that seems to stretch out endlessly.

Then an aardwolf appears next to you and lunges for your throat.

### HOOKS

The Redmond Barrens is another location in which the runners should feel reasonably safe, as many of them may live and work here. The runners understand its dangers, or think they do, and feel confident of their ability to cope with them. Let them enjoy the familiar ground briefly; then pull out the stops and make them realize that not everything is as it seems.

The dogs can hurt the runners quite badly. The entity controlling Disball does not want anyone to tell tales of its doings, and for now considers the runners just another group of overly curious people with the bad luck to fall afoul of one of its ambushes. Disball controls the dog pack from a distance, jumping from body to body to get a complete picture of the running battle. And a deadly battle it is. Disball holds back nothing; only the fact that



he is not expecting to deal with a heavily armed and/or magically capable group will save the runners from maiming or death.

The dogs act in subtle ways that show they are being controlled. None of them bark, growl or make normal animal noises. They act in tandem, moving as if in a ballet, one dog pressing home an attack for which another has set the stage. If a dog is too badly wounded to continue to fight, Disball abandons it. Abandoned animals suddenly start whining, licking their wounds and trying to drag themselves away to safety.

## BEHIND THE SCENES

Several residents of the Redmond Barrens have recently reported attacks by a large paranimal dog pack, and one hospital in the area has reported a larger than normal number of people being treated for dog bites. This outbreak could be one of the attacks masterminded by the same person or persons that presumably staged all the others; however, because of the location, Lone Star has not bothered to follow up. They know the Star's reputation in the Barrens, and the chances of their reaching the dog pack's presumed hunting ground unmolested by hostile locals is fairly low. The runners, on the other hand, will fit into the surroundings and so may be able to find out what is going on.

Through contacts from the Barrens or in medical services, the runners can locate the majority of the canine attacks within a four-block area. The contacts emphasize that though all the attacks are committed by dogs, there are several different types of canines involved. Most of the people questioned about the attacks can identify a hell hound and possibly a barghest, but there appear to be several far rarer animals running with this pack as well. One dog reportedly bursts into fire but is not consumed; other people speak of a huge black dog with antlers. The rest of the reports are confused accounts of giant slaving dogs and other animals that just can't exist, such as dragons and giant snakes with dog heads.

The attacks have been fairly regular, and so most of the streets empty out once night falls except for a few homeless here and there. If the player characters take some precautions, they can set up several blinds at street level or in buildings. Holing up in a building is safer but gives them an inferior view of the street; it will also take them longer to catch up to any animals they see, as they will have to get out of the building first.

Disball has been keeping an eye on the area through one of his proxy animals. After watching the runners arrive, investigate a little and set up their ambush, he decides to ambush them in turn, using a Gabriel hound to pose as a victim and draw the runners out. He willingly sacrifices a mundane animal (the golden retriever) to accomplish this. Once the runners are out on the street and vulnerable, Disball hits them with twice as many animals as there are runners, to a maximum of ten (he can only control ten animals at one time). Careful planning and reasoned approaches are out of the question in this situation; the runners have no choice but to fight a running battle. Some of the animals will use their Concealment power to apparently come out of nowhere, throwing the runners into confusion. Disball can see from the astral plane which runners are using magic, and directs the dogs to attack them first. Any animals not under Disball's control will flee.

The gamemaster can choose the pack from the following list, depending on the player characters' capabilities.

**Aardwolf:** This critter's Concealment power works in the urban environment. However, if a runner spots it and then takes his eyes off of it, the aardwolf cannot conceal itself again by moving to a new location (as it can normally).

### Barghest

#### Bogie

**Dogs (mundane):** All of these are large hunting or attack dogs such as retrievers, black Labs, German shepherds and so on. Statistics for these dogs appear on p. 233, **SR11**.

#### Flame jackal

**Gabriel hound:** Because its humanoid form is relatively dog-like, the Gabriel hound cannot stand erect for any length of time. However, pushing a cart and bundled up well, it can pass as human as described in **Tell It To Them Straight**, p. 60.

#### Hell hound

**Martichoras:** Only one of these is present in this encounter.

**Plasma:** Only one of these is present—the one caught on video in the **Introduction**, p. 52.

**Saber-tooth cat:** Only one of these is present in this encounter.

#### Shadowhound

The animals with area-effect powers will hang back and let the bruisers handle the close fighting while they use their powers to hamper the player characters. The bogies and shadowhounds will use their Accident and Darkness powers, respectively, and the aardwolves will use Concealment power to ambush the runners.

If and when the runners succeed in driving off the animals, they can call their Johnson and give him their location. Depending on the situation, a tractor-trailer or an Ares Dragon with a Shiawase Envirotech logo will arrive to whisk the animals—dead or otherwise—away. The two techs from **Fire in the Hole** (p. 56) will arrive with the transport and cheerfully go about tagging the animals, sedating any that are still alive while arguing arcane bio-theory the whole time. They will give the runners a receipt for the animals retrieved and ask them to verify the body count. The runners will be paid the bounty for the animals within 24 hours, probably through a drop-off by the fixer who set up this job. If the runners go to this encounter before **Fire in the Hole**, they do not get the bounty because it has not yet been offered.

If a magically active character goes astral to get a look at the hobo before the runners leave their building, the hobo's astral form is indistinct under all the clothing and the astral bodies of the dogs around him. If the character decides to go in for a closer look, the black hell hound will notice the runner's interest and attack.

If the runners prefer to snipe at the dogs from their relatively safe position, Disball decides to burn down the building to force them out. Several hell hounds will repeatedly hit the building with flame projections (from the rear, where the runners cannot see them). The building will fill up with smoke in just a few rounds. Once the players run outside, run the ambush as described above, except that the cries of people trapped in the burning building carry over the roar of the flames. Those sounds can serve as a backdrop and potential distraction for the runners as they fight.

While the hell hounds are starting the fire, Disball pulls the rest of the dogs out of sight rather than let them be sniper-bait.

The runners can find one major clue in this encounter: at least half the dogs have tattoos on their hindquarters. The tattoos are on the outsides of the animals' haunches. No hair grows near the tattoo as a side effect of the tattooing process, and so the markings are clearly visible with a casual glance. They indicate that the animals are variously the property of Parashield, the Fort Lewis Zoo, or Blackstone's Zoo in Snohomish.

If the runners check the newsfaxes from shortly before the dog-pack attacks started, they can learn that Blackstone's Zoo reportedly lost several types of dogs a few weeks back. If they check with Blackstone's, they learn that the missing animals were on loan from Fort Lewis. If the characters check the database that holds Seattle's animal licenses (a particularly low-level datastore), they can discover that the animals are registered as property of Fort Lewis Zoological Gardens on loan to Blackstone's Zoo or as lost watch animals originally belonging to Parashield, Inc. When the runners later crack into the Fort Lewis datastore, they can find records that tie all the animals to Reginald Disball.

## DEBUGGING

This encounter can be quite dangerous if the gamemaster runs the ambush to the hilt. If things are not working out well for the runners, make the dog pack smaller. Members of it that are hiding simply never appear, or the sound of a pitched battle may have been enough for some of the animals to shake off their conditioning and leave. Alternatively, Disball may start the ambush, and then mentally depart in order to pull another incident somewhere else in the city. In this case, the runners initially face a focused and cohesive foe; but once Disball leaves, the runners have a better chance because the dogs' attacks are much less organized. Several of the animals may be startled enough by the sounds of combat or by minor wounds taken to leave.

If the runners are having too easy a time, throw another wave of dogs at them. Make it seem like a never-ending wave of animals is out to get them, so that they will be surprised and relieved when the battle finally breaks off.

## INDUSTRIAL CAUSES

### TELL IT TO THEM STRAIGHT

From the shadows across the street, you eyeball the buildings on the other side of the fence. Just beyond the first row of them is the regional sales and service center of Parashield, Inc., a local corp that specializes in the sale and care of paranormal watch animals. Far too many of their animals have been involved in the rash of publicized incidents lately, and you'd like to know why. Unfortunately, Parashield's database doesn't appear to have a Matrix connection, except for some PR fluff. So you're stuck with getting the evidence you need the old-fashioned way—a break-in.

Even though Ares Macrotech owns this office warehouse park, security doesn't look to be Knight Errant standard. Seems Ares doesn't offer solid security in return for the rent; Parashield

had to handle that on its own, and they haven't done the greatest job. Knight Errant goons patrol the place in forty-five minute cycles—that gives you more than enough time to sneak in, get the paydata and sneak out.

You think.

## HOOKS

Initially, this encounter should look and feel like a normal run into a corp facility; if anything, it should seem a little easier than the runners may be used to. When the watch critters turn up, however, use the altered animals described below. These critters are far more powerful and many have unexpected abilities. Turn the tables on the player characters, as the milk run suddenly becomes a nightmare.

## BEHIND THE SCENES

The characters have about forty-five minutes to get into the Parashield facility, check out or download the database and get out before the next KE patrol sweep. The Parashield facility is near the fence that surrounds the entire office park. Though not electrified, the fence is wired to register breaks along the line, and is topped with razor wire. Player characters can either climb over it and prevent cuts by draping mats along the top or can jump over it using a tall vehicle, such as a tractor-trailer rig. The gates to the office park have long since closed for the evening, so a clandestine entry is the most workable option.

Once over the fence, the runners must get to the Parashield building. It shouldn't take them more than five or ten minutes to reach it if they move stealthily enough to avoid any late-night workers. The Parashield building is a two-story plascrete block has no windows on the ground floor. There are second-floor windows on one side, but these are too high up to reach without a ladder or climbing gear. At the rear of the building is a truck dock with three large doors and a separate, smaller entrance for customers and personnel.

This building is Parashield's local sales and service center; through legwork (p. 71), the runners should have learned that it is the only Parashield facility in the Seattle area that holds the information they want without subjecting them to intense levels of security. Warehouses and storage depots will not have complete shipping and medical records on all the animals; corporate offices and such might have those as well as additional information, but getting info from those sources means facing quantum leaps in security. The office-park facility contains sales information, shipping records and complete medical records, as it houses Parashield's main veterinary clinic in addition to a major sales office. Some research information is also available at this location, for the benefit of administrators and investors who might wish to look it over. (Parashield depends on continuing outside investment, as it is just one of many regional companies that supply paranimals throughout North America.)

The first floor is divided between the animal containment and exhibition area, the veterinary clinic and a storage area. Over the clinic and storage area, on the second floor, are the sales offices. From the sales offices, a decker can get to the relevant databases (see **Parashield Computer System**, p. 63).



The only way to enter the building is through the loading dock, which opens onto the animal display area. The loading doors are not as heavily wired as the personnel door, and the runners can break one of them down with sufficient effort if necessary (though such a noisy method of entry will cost them; see **Hell Hounds**, below). Along the right-hand wall immediately inside are more than a dozen cages with animals in them. Not all of them are paranimals; several cages house Doberman pinschers and German shepherds, along with muzzled barghests, eyekillers and a sedated cockatrice. If the player characters get careless with fire-power during the ensuing battle, they may end up releasing some of the animals, who will attack them as intruders.

The containment area has a dirt floor, and hanging on its far wall are various training implements. On the left are two doors: one an extra wide, double-swing door that leads to the veterinary clinic, the other a single padlocked, heavy door that leads to storage. A staircase leads to the second floor and the offices.

### HELL HOUNDS

Two hell hounds are also in this area, both of them loose. One is napping behind the cages, where it stashes its favorite blanket and toys; the other, attracted by the noise the runners made getting through the loading door, is waiting just inside for them. If the runners were particularly loud breaking in, both hounds will be waiting for them.

Statistics for the hell hounds appear on p. 81. These creatures have the Flame Aura power in addition to their normal powers. A character astrally viewing the hounds will see a glow around them similar to that of an initiate. The glow indicates the hounds' additional power, which comes from training and selective breeding that gives them a stronger connection to the metaplanes than is typical of their species. Among other things, this connection allows them to use their Flame Aura and Immunity to Normal Weapons powers in tandem. They can make bullets melt, swords burn their owners and so on. The runners will need to use common sense to determine which weapons will work against these dogs. Lasers and concussive force can hurt them; odds are that bullets, blades and other physical weapons won't.

The hell hounds are trained to use their Flame Aura power against the largest intruder immediately. Beyond that, they are on their own. The hounds are still not completely comfortable with their enhanced abilities, and so will not always use them.

The dogs get some help from the barghest, whose electronic muzzle is programmed to loosen and fall off if the hell hounds begin flaming. At that point, the barghest will howl, and the players must roll to see if their characters fall victim to the barghest's Fear power (p. 92, SR11; also see below).

### BARGHEST

Statistics for the barghest appear on p. 76. Selective breeding makes this barghest's Fear power work slightly differently than normal. Rather than causing general blind panic, the power rouses a phobia in the targeted character that makes him or her terrified of whatever the character relies on the most. For example, a mage may become phobic about his magic, a street samurai fear his cyberware, a rigger his drones and so on.

Every success rolled by the barghest increases the intensity and longevity of the phobia. For example, a single success increases by 1 the target numbers of all rolls involving the phobic item, and the character can shake off the phobia within seconds. Six successes adds 6 to all target numbers, and the character may not shake off the phobia for weeks.

### INSIDE THE OFFICES

None of the sales offices have doors, except for the one at the end of the hall. This office belongs to the executive in charge of the facility. The team decker can access all records available at this site from a terminal in this office. Among other things, the sales records contain a few vague mentions of the company's various research initiatives intended to interest investors. This latter information may be useful as a preview of future threats and also to spark future adventures. It also qualifies as paydata; the runners can find several potential buyers for the research data, despite its superficial nature. In-depth records of the paranimals serviced by Parashield may also bring the runners a profit from parties interested in knowing what corporate facilities are using what types of paranimals, and what their strengths and weaknesses might be.

Two talis cats have full run of the floor except for the executive's office, and they have been trained to consider anyone other than their handlers as intruders (see below).

### Talis Cats

Statistics for the talis cats appear on p. 86. As they spend most of their time in housecat form, they can get relatively close to the characters before switching to cheetah form. The two cats get along, but prefer to prowl opposite ends of the building to give each other plenty of personal space. Unfortunately for the runners, that is still close enough for their synergistic special ability to come into play.

Parashield's breeding program has enabled these cats to manifest the Accident (Zone) power when in reasonably close proximity to one another. Each cat will use its Accident (Zone) power when it encounters the runners; they find the power makes their prey easier to hunt. They will wait for the runners to stop moving around before they attack.

The power may manifest in a variety of ways. For example, a decker working at the data terminal may find himself making stupid errors, keying in the wrong commands and other assorted accidents. Give the players just long enough to realize that these mistakes can't possibly be coincidence or the result of nerves; then have a talis cat in cheetah form erupt out of some innocuous place, such as from under a desk. Once one cat attacks, the other will be attracted by the noise and is likely to nail anyone in the corridor outside the executive office.

### PARASHIELD COMPUTER SYSTEM

Parashield's computer system is not connected to the Matrix, though it does have various one-way SANs that open up to send out information. Parashield got burned heavily by a rogue decker a few months back and pretty much cut their system off from the Matrix. If the system goes to active alert, it opens a temporary,

one-way connection and sends out a call to Parashield's head offices and to Hard Corps security in the area.

The system's architecture is UMS standard, as it is a functional area that no one outside the corp will see. The connection used by a team decker is equivalent to workstation access. When browsing the system, the runner must access the files and run the animal ID numbers that the team has uncovered.

The database contains medical records of all the animals that Parashield currently owns, as well as records of various corp-owned animals for which it has maintenance contracts. These records contain all medical information of interest to the runners, including an extensive log of injuries and allergies. None of the animals initially appears to have anything unusual in its background. On a successful Intelligence (6) Test, however, a character may notice that all the animals were bought between the ages of six and nine months from the Fort Lewis Zoo. A single success tells the character that something interesting is in the records and allows him or her to make a second test, with the Target Number reduced to 4. A single success on this test allows the character to notice that all of the corporate-owned paranimals implicated in the recent attacks were also bought from the Fort Lewis Zoological Gardens. Have him or her make another Intelligence (4) Test to realize that Fort Lewis has not had a single paranimal incident, in contrast to other local zoos.

Parashield's database has nothing like the high level of security that most deckers are used to facing. However, the decker may not have the extra time he or she will need to crack through the system's extra codes. In addition to the usual codes to prevent unauthorized access, this system also has codes to prevent the removal, alteration or copying of the database.

**PARASHIELD DATABASE: ORANGE-8/11/12/14/14/11**

**Paydata:** 2  
**Paydata Density:** 2D6 x 15 Mp

**Parashield Security Sheaf**

Trigger Step	Event
3	Warning suggests re-entering password. Probe 7 activated
7	Explosive Scrambles activated in all files
10	Passive Alert
13	Jammer-6
16	Jam-Rip 7
19	Tapeworms placed in all files
21	Active Alert (Hard Corps security will arrive in two minutes)
24	Shutdown (System cannot be restarted without Parashield management codes)

**About the Afanc and Dogs**

The afanc can be tied to Fort Lewis, as can some of the canines from **Dog Eat Dog World** (p. 60). The afanc came to Parashield from a Fort Lewis breeding program and was sched-

uled for shipment to Amalgamated Studios, Los Angeles Harbor. It was to star in the newest sim in the Predator and Prey series, Volume 8: Savage Lizards. One of the prominent handlers attached to the zoo's afanc breeding program is Dr. Reginald Disball. Disball's name also comes up as a trainer for the dogs that came from Fort Lewis.

**Where To Next?**

After accessing files for an animal from Fort Lewis, the decker has the option of linking up with the Fort Lewis Zoo database for further information. If the decker follows the link, he drops into the entry node for the Fort Lewis database—which just happens to be a military datasphere. Through a special arrangement with the district commander, the Fort Lewis Zoo rents space on the Fort Lewis military system, using the military's system security to protect valuable data on the zoo's phenomenally successful breeding program. Parashield has access to the zoo system because it acts as a sales agent for zoo paranimals; however, a decker cracking in without Parashield's password will find plenty of black IC in the way. Unluckily for the decker, Parashield doesn't keep the password in plain sight on their system.

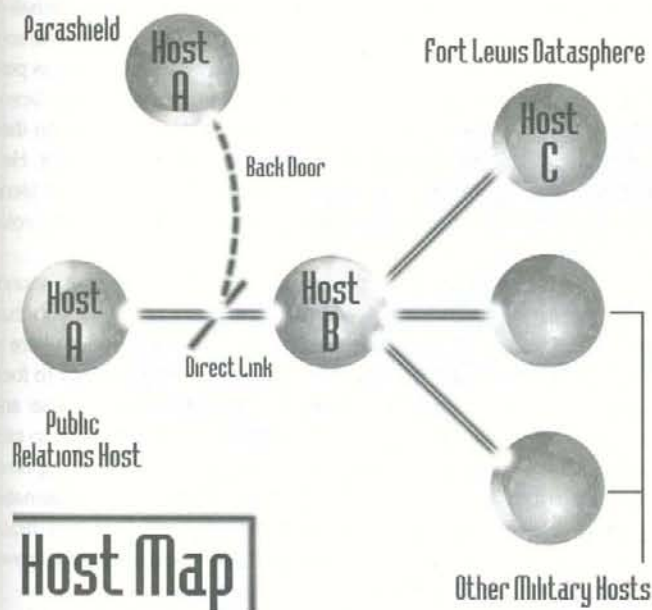
Charitable gamemasters can give the decker a moment's warning as the link opens, along the lines of, "You are now entering the access host for Fort Lewis Zoological Gardens, on UCAS military host #26530 (Fort Lewis, Seattle, UCAS). Military security protocols now apply. Enter at your own risk, and please have your Fort Lewis Zoological Gardens access code immediately available for verification."

**FORT LEWIS COMPUTER SYSTEM**

The military system has little imagery; its few icons tend toward the austere. By contrast, the filter in the Fort Lewis Zoo area is lush with vegetation, a tropical paradise filled with dangerous critters (IC constructs). It should come across like a bad B-movie set in the wilds of Africa.

Have animals roaring in the distance: considering all the trouble the runners have had with critters so far, they will likely be braced for yet another round of surprise animal attacks. In the Fort Lewis Zoo system, however, the attacks initially come from the plants: creeping vines that represent Tar-Baby IC and so on. Use animal images for IC attacks later, when the decker won't be expecting it anymore. The decker should feel as if he or she is on safari; the records he's after are hidden in a cave in the side of a mountain, with traps inside that represent more IC.

It will take the decker a Combat Turn in the Fort Lewis Zoo datastore to defeat the first layer of protection around it and run the animal ID numbers. It takes another turn for the database to respond with the files for all the animals. Finding the one piece of information common in all the files requires at least 2 successes on an Intelligence (6) Test or a decent correlation program. That common bit of information is a name: Reginald Disball, listed as the primary trainer and handler for each animal in question. Locating and downloading (Browsing) his file requires another turn. The file contains most of the personal information given in **Cast of Shadows**, p. 72, along with his address on zoo grounds and his work schedule.



### HOST B: RED-9/12/13/16/17/16

Paydata: 0

Trigger Step	Event
3	Probe 8
7	Trap Trace 10 (Killer 8)
10	Passive Alert
12	Probe 9 (both Probes will attempt to raise security sheaf)
13	Expert Construct (Armor) Trace 8 Marker 6
17	Expert Construct (Armor, +1 Attack, -1 Defense) Ripper-Bod 7 Blaster 8
21	Active Alert: Government decker arrives next turn
24	Lethal Black IC-8
27	Cascading Psychotropic Black IC-9 (Judas)
30	Shutdown

### HOST C: RED-9/10/11/13/13/11

Paydata: 3

Paydata Density: 2d6 x 10 Mp

Trigger Step	Event
2	Passive Alert, Probe 7
5	Trace 8
9	Construct (Shield) Killer 7 Tar Baby 7

11	Active Alert: Government decker summoned next turn
14	Cascading Psychotropic Black IC-9 (PCPIC towards Fort Lewis Zoo)
17	Party IC Bind-rip 5 Acid-rip 5 Jam-rip 5 Mark-rip 5
21	Shutdown

Host A on the map is the public relations gateway, and has low security. The other military hosts depicted are dedicated to military affairs, and are irrelevant to this encounter. If necessary, the gamemaster can use the Ares Macrotechnology Regional Sales Net (p. 150, **Virtual Realities 2.0**) to map these hosts on the fly. The entire system maintains a continuous security sheaf, so the security countdown does not start over if the decker switches hosts. If a decker returns to a host, his or her actions in other hosts have affected the security sheaf for that host. Host B is the system's overwatch and security chokepoint, while Host C is the Fort Lewis Zoological Gardens database. This host is considered a legal access point; if a trace succeeds in locating the point of unauthorized access, the military will automatically inform Hard Corps security and/or Parashield, and armed security should arrive at Parashield's facility within two minutes.

The overall Fort Lewis database offers gamemasters a way to preview the UCAS government's future plans for Seattle if the runners stumble across something interesting while snooping around. **Target: UCAS**, the **Underworld Sourcebook** and **Portfolio of a Dragon** to a lesser extent discuss UCAS relations with Seattle: the gamemaster can use information from those books as well as this adventure to plant the seeds of future campaigns.

## DEBUGGING

If the runners dawdle in taking care of the paranimals, they may not have enough time to crack the databases and get out before the security patrol arrives. If the player characters are running late, they can always pull the Parashield hard drive out of the secure computer lock-up, allowing the decker to crack the system later at his leisure. They must still deal with the physical security around the computer core, but doing so will take less time than cracking the security codes around the data. If they fail to get the data, the runners will have to hit another Parashield facility, all of which will have heightened security because of the earlier break-in. Also, the authorities may believe that the intruders who broke in to the office park were the perpetrators of the paranimal attacks, and were trying to collect more animals to use in their evil scheme. When the runners try another Parashield facility, they may well face Seattle's finest, intent on capturing them and discovering how they are controlling the critters.

If the Knight Errant patrol arrives, the guards will see the signs of a break-in at the fence or at the building unless the runners have been extremely careful. If the guards notice the fence first, it will take them five to ten minutes to discover that the intruders headed for the Parashield building. There are as many

guards as runners; for statistics, use the Street Cop contact (p. 210, **SR11**), but without the Police Procedure Skill. If the runners seem like real trouble or if the guards see magic being used, they will call for back-up in the form of a fully loaded CityMaster with magical support. These reinforcements include twelve Lone Star cops and four mages; for the mages' statistics, use the Combat Mage archetype, p. 50, **SR11**.

If the runners are crunching through the paranimals too quickly, have the security patrol come back a little early or have the runners trip an alarm. Alternatively, have a stray round hit the electronic control console at the far end of the containment area and open all the cages. Each runner will be targeted by one mundane animal such as a Doberman pinscher or a German shepherd (use the Large Dog statistics on p. 233, **SR11**), and one paranimal such as an eyekiller or the cockatrice. If the runner carrying the electronic equipment to hack into the computer system is attacked by an eyekiller, the electrical discharge may damage the equipment.

If the runners are having too tough a time with the animals, have one hell hound and/or one talis cat fail to show up.

Once the runners crack into the Parashield or Fort Lewis Zoo databases, other problems may arise. If the decker declines to link up with Fort Lewis, the gamemaster can allow it and then wait for the runners to realize that they need to access the zoo's database. Finding a place from which to do so in relative safety, however, will be a lot trickier for them than if they had done it while at Parashield. Alternatively, have one of the files that the decker is checking out automatically link to the Fort Lewis database and dump the decker there.

If the players cannot hack into the Fort Lewis database, they may be able to pay a programmer who works at Fort Lewis to run their information in the rented-out portion of the mainframe. As the runners will be looking to snoop through a database belonging to a private corp rather than to the UCAS government, the price may be unexpectedly reasonable. If the runner cannot find a legit patsy, they may have to turn to an organized crime cartel. Considering the difficulty that some of the Mobs are facing while the Mob war rages, several might be willing to help the runners out in exchange for undefined services later. This alternative offers a way to drag the runners into the events of **Mob War!**

Finally, if the runners are having major trouble putting two and two together, have Mr. Johnson call them and ask them for an update. He can put the adventure back on track by giving the runners some of the missing pieces.

## FUN IN THE ZOO

### TELL IT TO THEM STRAIGHT

At last you've got a concrete lead—Reginald Disball, trainer and animal handler at the Fort Lewis Zoo. Lives on zoo grounds so he can be available in the middle of the night for his beasties if necessary—like maybe if one of the paracritters goes nuts. It seems impossible that one man could be behind all the attacks, but this guy's name has turned up again and again. According to

the schedule you got from the Fort Lewis database, Disball is working today by the behemoth pens on the north side of the zoo.

You walk in that direction, trying to look as innocuous as possible. As you pass a primate habitat, you notice a familiar face—Disball, on the other side of the moat, with the primates on the little island. The pic from the file matches; it's him, all right. He's giving a short presentation to some zoo visitors, and you blend into the small crowd without attracting his attention. His voice carries over the crowd.

"The recent animal attacks are an aberration," he says, sounding nervous. "Most of these animals are more afraid of you than you are of them." You get the feeling he is looking everywhere in the crowd but at you. He licks his lips and shifts from foot to foot. "Only someone completely without conscience would use animals in such a way. I've spent my whole life learning how to take care of these magnificent creatures—and what's happening now, the way some lunatic is sacrificing them for some unfathomable agenda, makes me sick!" His voice rises until he's practically screaming, and he's starting to shake. Other people in the crowd are whispering and looking tense.

"Well, I've been sick for long enough. It's time to do something about it!" And he turns and looks directly at you. His whole demeanor changes; he stands up straight and his trembling ceases. Suddenly, he's in control of the situation.

Actually, it looks like he's in control of the whole world.

All the primates on the island, in all the cages around you, look at you just like Disball is doing. Their shrieks and chattering suddenly cease.

"I knew you were coming," Disball says. My friends told me I had hoped to accomplish more, but it's time to end this." The crowd is staring at you; some of them are clapping, as if this was a show. "I was going to release the juggernaut and the behemoths later to destroy this filthy city, but I've changed my mind," he continues. "You can leave now, and live a little longer. Otherwise..." He gives you a wintry smile and turns to leave.

You reach for your weapon. Before you can draw it, he turns back toward you, his smile wider. "So be it."

Suddenly a gang of black annises charge toward you. Impossibly, they manage to clear the moat. You want to cry suddenly, and you fight off the depression as you draw your weapons. Then the hairs on your arms tingle and the smartgun link goes dead. A second later, you feel the power from your fetishes and other protective spells vanishing.

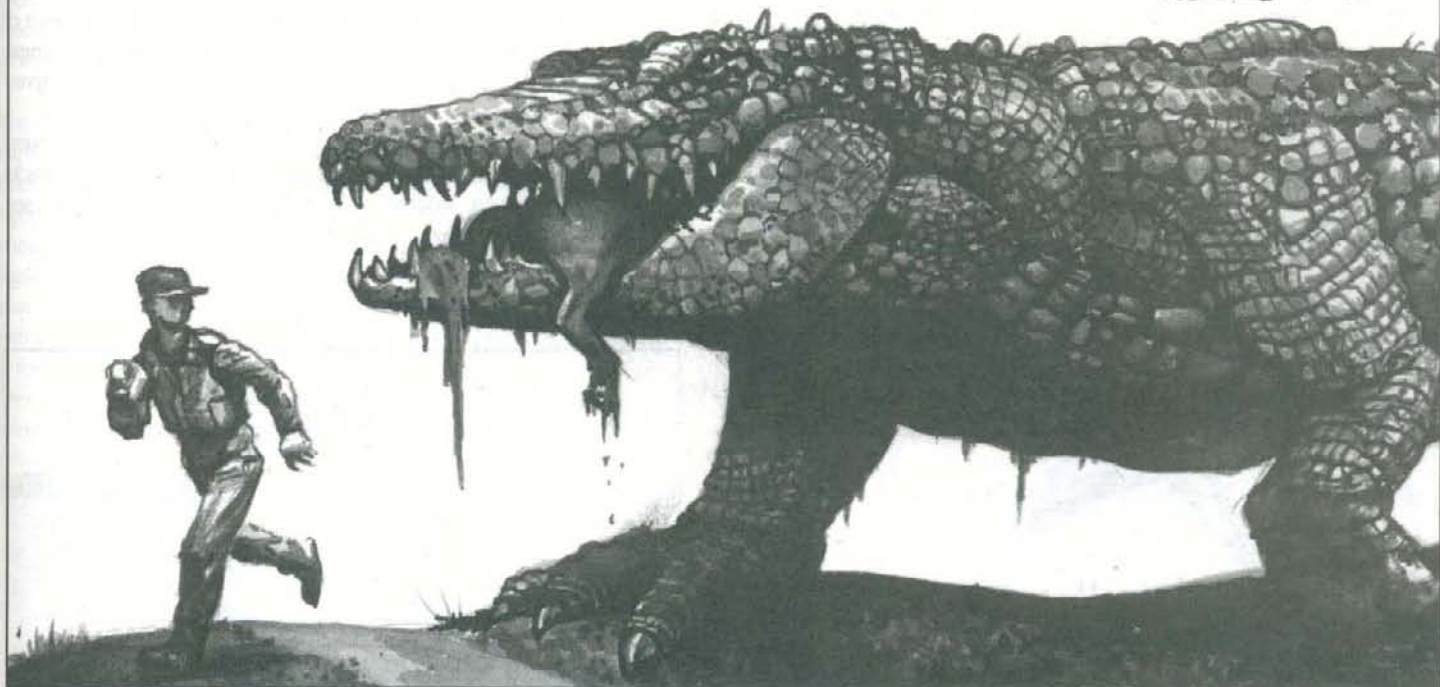
Now you remember why you never wanted a pet . . .

## HOOKS

The virtual jungle in the previous encounter becomes reality in this one. Fort Lewis Zoo is landscaped to look like natural habitats, and so the runners should feel off-balance in a completely unfamiliar setting. Compounding the sense of unreality, their critter opponents are acting totally out of character. Though the zoo's "jungle" is fake, with speakers supplying the wilderness background noises, it is still strange to runners more accustomed to the streets. The underbrush combines real plants with plastic, and the place smells different from Seattle's usual polluted atmosphere.



MacDougall 97



Contrast the wild environment with the utter normalcy of tourists and school groups wandering around. As the players slink through the underbrush, they might find a child hiding beneath an artificial plant. Throw all the players' expectations out the window.

Disball is a tortured individual driven past the brink. Allow the players a few glimpses of his tormented nature, just before something tries to eviscerate them. Disball will meet his fate no matter what, but give the runners plenty of reasons not to buy official explanations, whether or not they catch sight of the astral entity using Disball.

## BEHIND THE SCENES

Because Fort Lewis Zoological Gardens is near the military base, the runners can carry their weapons through the zoo grounds as long as they concoct a convincing story, don't look too much like runners and are willing to slide a little nuyen to the people at the gate. Zoo personnel are used to soldiers from Fort Lewis carrying their weapons everywhere. As long as the characters don't look and act like gangers, they are relatively safe.

Disball is being controlled by an astral entity, and it knows the jig is up when it recognizes the runners as the same people who survived the dog-pack ambush. It needs to cover its tracks—first to escape, and then to ensure that Disball dies. A dead man can't tell tales, and meanwhile the entity can find a new host unknown to anyone. The best way to accomplish these ends is to cause mass confusion and create a situation in which the runners must kill Disball in order to save innocent people from harm.

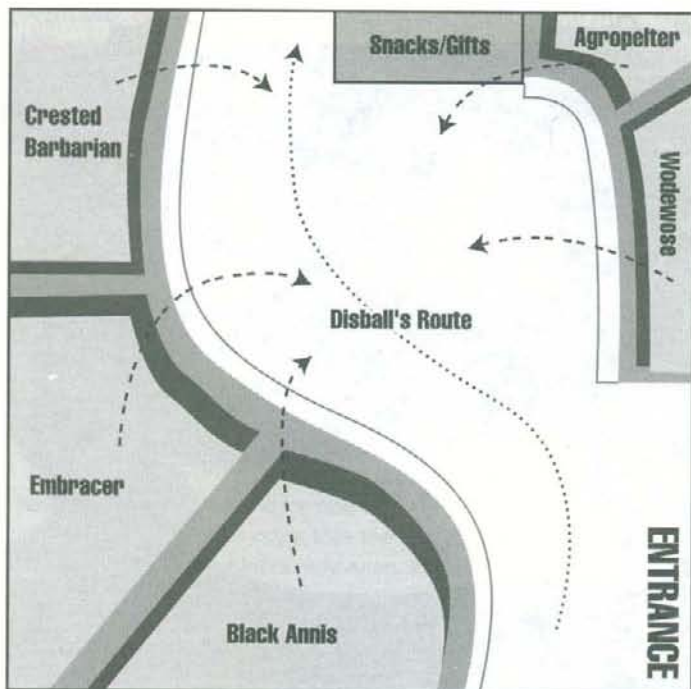
As he runs through the park, Disball releases animals, some of which rampage through the zoo and some of which attack the runners. His goal is the behemoth pens, which contain not only the behemoths, but also a baby juggernaut. The entity intends to

make the animals stampede and destroy a large portion of the surrounding district. Hundreds of people might die, to say nothing of the property damage done by all the freed animals.

Disball is no fool, nor is the entity controlling him. The entity knows that Disball's death cannot be too easy, or the runners will suspect something is up. Therefore, the entity has taken measures to make the runners' lives difficult (and, from Disball's point of view, to make his escape easier). Disball has released some paranimals to get in the runners' way: thunderbirds, merlin hawks, nagas and Nimue's salamanders, just to name a few. The lesser thunderbirds will hit the runners repeatedly with EMPs to take out smartgun links and electronically controlled heavy weapons such as drones. The thunderbirds may even short out some of the runners' cyberware. Several merlin hawks and nagas will quietly lurk near the runners and try to neutralize magical effects or dispel any summoned spirits with their spellcasting abilities. The salamanders will attempt to drain magical spells and prevent astral connections; meanwhile, quicksilver mongeese will be creating several overlapping accident zones so that guns jam, cyberware doesn't work right or gives out altogether, and so on. If all this doesn't seem like a tough enough challenge, throw in one or two wild minotaurs that can use Confusion on the runners.

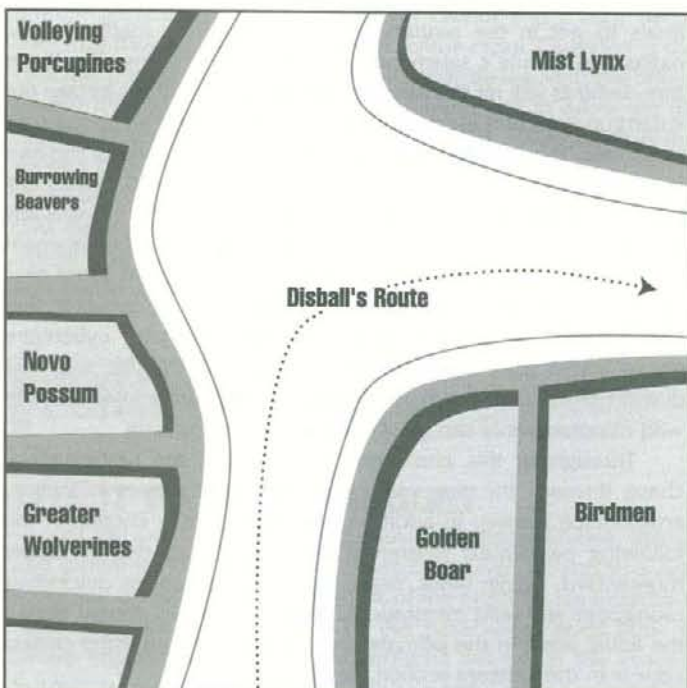
Throughout this encounter, Disball leads the runners on a chase through the zoo, with three separate waves of animal attacks (see below). In addition, the runners may encounter the following paranimals whenever the gamemaster desires: lesser thunderbird, merlin hawk, naga, Nimue's salamander, quicksilver mongoose and wild minotaur. At least one should appear during the initial wave in the primate area. Statistics for all listed critters appear in the **Critters** section, beginning on p. 76.

**WAVE ONE**



The first wave begins in the primate area. One of the following primates—an agropelter, a black annis, a crested barbarian, and embracer and a wodewose—attacks each runner to slow them down and give Disball a head start toward the behemoth pens.

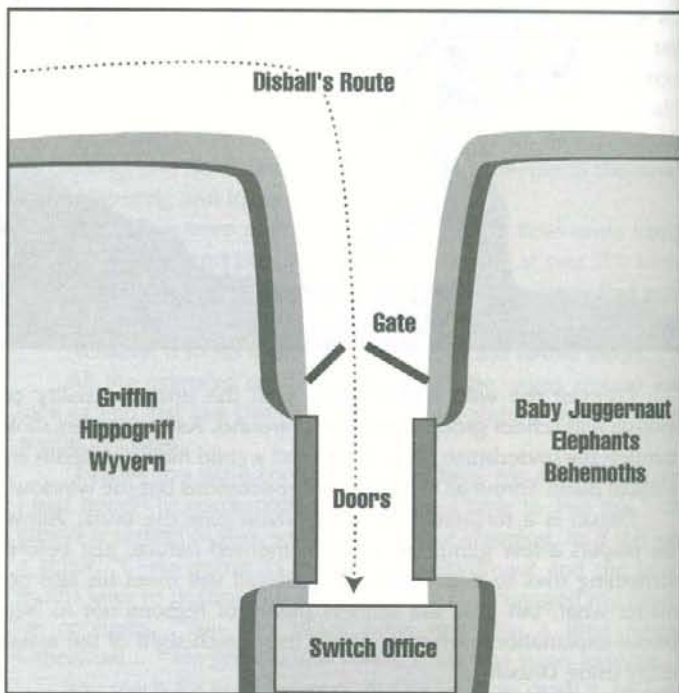
**WAVE TWO**



After dealing with the primates, the runners dash after Disball. When they reach the small mammal exhibit, more animals released by Disball will rush to attack the runners. At least two of each of the following creatures will attack each runner: birdmen, burrowing beavers, golden boars, greater wolverines, mist lynxes, novopossums and volleying porcupines.

The birdmen attack in a larger group than the others, around 4-5 per runner. The volleying porcupine can make ranged attacks with its quills; for information on ranges and damage, see **Gamemastering Critters**, p. 86.


**WAVE THREE**



The final wave occurs at the Large Animal area, when the runners catch up with Disball near the elephant and behemoth pens. It will take Disball three turns to open the pen electronically. If he succeeds, six behemoths, as many elephants as seems interesting and a single (huge) baby juggernaut will be released. They are not under Disball's control; if the runners are unwilling to finish Disball off, the entity will remain in Disball's body and make him rant wildly. When Disball is trampled by the animals he just let loose, it will seem like an ironic coincidence.

All the critters whose powers are inhibiting the runners' abilities, as well as any animals left over from the previous two waves, attack now unless the runners took care of them earlier. All of these animals are under Disball's/the entity's control. If the runners seem to be having too easy a time of it, let them face a wyvern and a griffin as well (the two prizes of the Fort Lewis Zoo's collection).

Statistics for the behemoths, the juggernaut, the griffin and the wyvern appear in the **Gamemastering Critters** section, begin-



ning on p. 76. Statistics for the elephants appear on p. 233, **SRII**. Most drugs do not affect the juggernaut; the zoo has a limited stock of rare drugs that will tranquilize it, but runners must find out where the drugs are kept from a zoo official.

When the runners have finally managed to kill Disball or put him at death's door, the astral entity leaves. If lethal or near-lethal damage is done before the final attack wave, the entity keeps the body going long enough to reach this point. If Disball is not damaged enough, the shock of the spirit leaving him should be enough to finish him off. He manages to gurgle out, "It will hunt again," before expiring. As Disball dies, astrally perceiving magicians may glimpse the equivalent of a sudden rush of wind as the entity leaps to the metaplanes. Everything is happening too quickly for the runners to get more than these two tiny hints of the sinister truth. To represent the difficulty of perceiving much of anything in the middle of a giant critter fight, allow only one magically active character to spot the entity's departure if the group includes more than one.

Keep in mind that the entity does not want the runners dead (though it has no qualms about hurting them). The entity needs them to believe that their lives are in danger, and that if they don't kill Disball, hundreds of Seattle residents will die in a huge wave of animal attacks. The bigger show the entity can put on, the more likely the runners, authorities and citizens will be to believe that everything is over once Disball is no longer a threat. With the maniac apparently responsible for the carnage safely dead and gone, no one will be looking for the real culprit—the astral entity.

To reinforce this impression, have Disball taunt the runners with descriptions of the vile acts he has planned and with their inability to stop him. The entity is not actually planning to do any of these things, and so none of them occur after it vanishes. The runners will then wonder whether their moment's glimpse of the entity and Disball's enigmatic last words meant anything at all. The only evidence to the contrary is a nebulous rise in animal attack statistics, which people may easily dismiss.

### FLYING LEAD AND FRIENDLY FACES

Remember that the runners are in a zoo, no matter how jungle-like it may look and sound. Innocent members of the public are all around them. Though characters in many **Shadowrun** adventures may ignore the consequences of their actions to a greater or lesser extent, in this encounter the chance of hurting innocents is so high that the runners might not be able to do anything about it even if they choose to try.

To reflect the dangerous chaos, the gamemaster should roll 1D6 every time a character's shot misses. Use the standard definition for a complete miss on p. 91, **SRII**. The die roll result is the number of innocents hit by weapons fire. Damage to these bystanders does not stage down; they take the standard damage code of the weapon, modified by the rate of fire. Despite the Johnson's agreement to erase the runners' records, too many innocents dead or injured will not look good for the runners. If the body count rises too high, the Star may arrest the runners as accomplices to "the maniac" Disball, depending on the wishes of the gamemaster.

Also, the animals almost exclusively attack the runners. Under Disball's control, they will fight to the death. However, Disball can control no more than ten animals at any one time. Once released, an animal will wander off or, if injured, will head back toward its native habitat. Wandering animals may well cause harm if surprised or threatened, either of which may well happen with the zoo in such a state of chaos.

Four zoo handlers arrive on the scene in the fifth Combat Turn after the ruckus begins at the primate area. Their first act is to sedate any wandering creatures not under Disball's control. Each creature takes five Combat Turns to track down and sedate, in an order determined by the gamemaster. Once the wanderers are taken care of, the handlers try to sedate critters fighting the runners. The gamemaster can add the handlers into the attack; use Disball's statistics when not under the entity's influence (p. 72). Each handler carries an Ares Squirt (see **Fire in the Hole**, p. 56).

Obviously, some critters will die. But if the runners turn this encounter into a safari from hell, they will feel the heat. Zoo officials will ask Lone Star to arrest the characters for wanton destruction of private property if more than five creatures are killed outright. People for the Ethical Treatment of Paranormal Animals and other animal-rights activists will publicly denounce the runners and may even become Enemies (see p. 71, **Shadowrun Companion**). Alternatively, if the runners arrive with stun weapons and Ares Squirts and dispatch the animals without killing a single one, they may end up heroes. The zoo gives them a 10,000-nuyen bonus and names different animal habitats after them. They become Seattle celebrities (which may kill their street reps, but they get to be the talk of Seattle and the UCAS for their allotted fifteen minutes). Runners may turn this outcome into lucrative honest jobs; other zoos or organizations such as the DIMR or the Atlantean Foundation may contact them to go on safaris, research expeditions or even hunts if critters have gotten out of control in other places (see **Picking Up the Pieces**, p. 70).

### DEBUGGING

If the situation gets out of control, with too many animals going crazy and the behemoths loose, have soldiers from Fort Lewis show up with mil-spec weapons. They may have heard the ruckus and come from the nearby base to help deal with it, or one of the zoo personnel may have called the base for help. In the latter case, an APC or even a LAV shows up, along with a few Yellowjackets, to deal with the behemoths and other big critters. Feel free to up the carnage level if the military get involved. The soldiers also make good targets. Have a thunderbird get close enough to a Yellowjacket to let loose an EMP and cause the helicopter to crash, either into a lagoon or into another animal exhibit, thereby letting more critters loose. A behemoth can do a great deal of damage to an APC, bashing open its fuel tanks from behind so a flame jackal can ignite it. If the runners fail to handle the situation themselves, they get help, but the consequences of that help should be far more devastating than if they had managed to handle things on their own.

If the runners are having too much difficulty dealing with the critters, lower the numbers and choose less deadly animals, or assume that the animals being used to neutralize the runners' abil-

ities have escaped Disball's control and have wandered off. The departure of these animals allows the runners' hardware to reboot, cyberware to come back online and spells to be cast without further interruption.

If Disball survives, his mind is shattered; it will take years to reconstruct him, if ever. This mental devastation is a side effect of his possession by the entity. He will be catatonic and suffering from amnesia, so even if the runners manage to save him, all they can get out of him is an occasional muttered, "It will hunt again."

## PICKING UP THE PIECES

As the runners wearily pick themselves up after the final encounter, their Johnson arrives, along with City Services, DocWagon and Lone Star. The Johnson listens carefully to the runners' account; he then escorts them past the hordes of police and military personnel, calling them "just bystanders caught in the mess, officers." Injured runners will be taken to the local DocWagon clinic, along with all the other civilian casualties.

The next day, the Johnson will meet with the runners and report that their suspicions about Disball were correct. Zoo security cameras recorded their battle with him, supporting their version of the story. The authorities even found Disball's diary, conveniently enough, in which he describes his slow evolution into a toxic shaman. In reality, the entity wrote the diary entries to frame Disball. The "lone madman" story will be the one leaked to the press. It will sound outlandish, but the press will be forced to accept it because all the evidence backs it up. Whatever the runners say will not affect the official story or the Johnson's opinion.

Runners who keep track of the story will discover a rise in animal attacks and strange incidents throughout North America over the next few months (though nothing unusual happens in Seattle). The incidents are not sufficiently concentrated in any one spot to arouse suspicion, but runners who know what they are looking for will spot the connection.

If the runners kill any of the zoo animals, the zoo fusses about the loss and may threaten to hit them with a lawsuit. However, the fact that a zoo employee was responsible for the animal attacks makes the zoo a target for at least fifty separate negligent-death and class-action suits. Though none of the suits go to trial, they distract the attention of zoo authorities from the runners. The runners will not receive any bounty for the animals they killed while on zoo grounds, as zoo authorities have enough influence to tie up the payments in bureaucratic red tape for decades.

The astral entity can become a recurring Threat in a campaign. It may be the first or only spirit of its kind, or its possession of Disball may simply be a new technique that some spirits have recently begun to use. The existence of this spirit or others like it allows paranormal animals to become more than cannon fodder.

Parashield, meanwhile, will get a lot of investment dollars from corporations interested in replicating Disball's animal-control abilities. Though they have no idea how to go about this, Parashield will use the attention to bring many of its other products to market. The runners may well encounter altered paranormal beasties in more than a few corp compounds on subsequent runs.

## AWARDING KARMA

Award team Karma as outlined below. Award individual Karma according to standard rules (p. 199, **SRII**).

Survival	1 point
Threat	3 points
Retrieve incubus alive	1 point
Retrieve Parashield records	1 point
Retrieve a member of the dog pack alive	1 point
Discover Reginald Disball's role in the attacks	1 point

## LEGWORK

The player characters may want to ask their contacts about the people, places and events of the adventure. The following tables summarize the information they can learn. Because of the unusual nature of some of this adventure's participants and events, the information is somewhat limited.

### MR. JOHNSON

**Appropriate Contacts (Target Number 6):** Any Fixer or Lone Star contact.

**Shadowland:** Target Number 8/Search Time 24 hours


Successes	Results
0	"I hate to tell you this, but I don't think Johnson is his real name."
1	"I know the guy you're talking about. He sets up runs, but I have no idea who he works for. He doesn't organize too many—usually one a month or so."
2+	"He's a fixer who seems to specialize in government and law-enforcement runs, even some for law-enforcement corps. Yeah, for them. No idea who he really is, but those types of agencies seem to use him a lot. As far as I can tell, he isn't actually a government or corp employee, unless it's buried it so deep that there are no Matrix records."

### THE ANIMAL ATTACKS

**Appropriate Contacts (Target Number 3):** Any Media or Law Enforcement contact.

**Shadowland:** Target Number 5/Search Time 12 hours

Successes	Results
0	"Animal attacks? You mean that wiz story about the cat that pressed a PanicButton?"
1	"Been some nasty stuff in the news lately, but it seems like run-of-the-mill scare stories that someone in a press club somewhere decided would be the story of the week."
2-3	"There's been some strange stuff going down. I know more than half a dozen corps are sending investigators here to check this out, including a corp called Parashield. They're local—and they're caught in a bind, 'cause they



trained a lot of the watch animals that have gone wild. No one knows how whoever's doing it might have arranged it, but everyone wants to know how they're controlling this many animals."

4+ "Freaky things are happening with the animals, even the ones that aren't attacking people. Notice how even your pet dog or cat ain't making much noise at night? Almost like they can feel something in the air. I won't even tell you what happened to the forensic mage who tried to assense one of the animals involved in the attacks. Poor slob."

#### PARASHIELD, INC.

**Appropriate Contacts (Target Number 4):** Any Corporate contact.

**Shadowland:** Target Number 6/Search Time 4 hours

Successes	Results
0	"Isn't that the new defensive spell leaked recently by the Atlantean Foundation?"
1	"Small local corp. Trains paranimals. Supplies a lot of mid-sized and even some megacorps with watch critters."
2	"They're working on some new stuff. People think critters are just critters, right? Well, magical knowledge has advanced, so why not use it to train deadlier and better watch animals? They got into that early, and I hear they've had some successes. Enough successes that some other corps are looking to acquire them."
3+	"This whole scare over paranimals has hurt them a bit, but not too badly. Their biggest trouble is, several of their customers have had problems with animals they bought from Parashield, and want to blame Parashield for it. Strange that none of the other suppliers of corp paranimals has had any problems."

#### BARRENS CANINE ATTACKS

**Appropriate Contacts (Target Number 5):** Any Street contact.

**Shadowland:** Target Number 8/Search Time 24 hours

Successes	Results
0	"Hey, my dog never even got close to you!"
1	"Yeah, I heard there was some troubles out in the Barrens."
2+	"Heard of the Brain Eaters? Mostly human street gang in the Redmond Barrens, out by Hollywood. They got mauled by a dog pack, of all things. Lucky they were only a couple blocks from Hollywood Hospital—otherwise a lot more of the gang would've died. They've actually given up a piece of their turf because of the dogs."

#### FORT LEWIS ZOOLOGICAL GARDENS

**Appropriate Contacts (Target Number 4):** Any Military or Government contact.

**Shadowland:** Target Number 5/Search Time 6 hours

Successes	Results
0	"Yeah, they have the best orchids in the sprawl. Why do you think it's called a garden?"
1	"Best zoo on the coast, best collection of paranimals except for rumors of some Tir Tairngire nobles' private collections. Strange that it's run by the military, but other than that, it seems clean."
2-3	"Not many people know this, but Fort Lewis Zoological Gardens gets most of its cred from its breeding programs. They've had unbelievable success, even with paranormal critters. After a decade of trying to hire away zoo employees, not even the megacorps know how they do it."
4+	"And frankly, neither do zoo officials. As near as they can tell, the zoo's just lucky. They do everything by the book, but get better results than anyone else—nobody knows how. I guess their animal handlers must be pretty wiz at their jobs."

#### REGINALD DISBALL

**Appropriate Contacts (Target Number 6):** Military contacts from Fort Lewis.

**Shadowland:** Target Number 10/Search Time 36 hours

Successes	Results
0	"Reggie? Yeah, he's in the motor pool. Good guy, but can't fly a LAV to save his life."
1	"Reginald Disball? He's one of the top animal handlers over at the Fort Lewis Zoo. Decent enough guy, but doesn't talk much."
2+	"He was in one of those environmental poli-clubs for a while—a few years back. The MPs took notice, of course, but that kinda membership's sort of normal for the animal handlers over at the zoo. Almost all of them have been in one of those groups at one time or another. I'm not surprised he didn't stay with it long, though. He's not the social type, gets along with his animals better than his co-workers. He even lives on zoo grounds—for those late-night emergency calls, you know?"



## CAST OF SHADOWS

The NPCs are described below in order of their appearance.

### MR. JOHNSON

He never mentions his name, though according to the scuttlebutt, it may be Mike. He is a lower-profile fixer in Seattle, and works only at odd intervals. He seems to exclusively organize runs for law-enforcement and government agencies. He has been linked to the Veil, ConsOps, the CIA, Lone Star, Ares and

dozens of others, but he doesn't have a brag sheet, and considering who he works for, it's no surprise that no one wants to be connected to him even peripherally. His style of dress and manners indicate that he probably had a military tour of duty somewhere, which may explain his connections. Most of them seem to be with the UCAS establishment, but there is no proof beyond that.

To his temporary employees, as he likes to call runners in his employ, he is short-tempered and downright rude. However, he doesn't try to screw them over. Maybe that's a vestige of his military training, but he won't try to get them geeked. If the mission kills them, so be it, but he won't throw employees on suicide runs unless they know the odds. His employers may not be as charitable, but he won't have anything to do with that. He guards his secrets jealously; what little people know of him marks him as the clean goods, as far as anyone can be in these times. He is human, a bit taller than two meters, with short-cropped black hair and a forgettable face.

#### Attributes

Body: 4  
 Quickness: 3  
 Strength: 3  
 Charisma: 2  
 Intelligence: 4  
 Willpower: 4  
 Essence: 1.5  
 Reaction: 3 (5)

**Initiative:** 3 (5) + 1D6 (2D6)

**Threat/Professional Rating:** 4/2

#### Skills

Armed Combat: 2 (Club: 4)  
 Car: 4  
 Computer: 4 (Software: 6)  
 Etiquette: 3 (Street: 7)

Firearms: 5 (Pistol: 7)  
 Negotiation: 5 (Bargaining: 8)  
 Psychology: 3  
 Stealth: 3 (Urban: 5)  
 Unarmed Combat: 2 (Subduing Combat: 4)  
 Vectored Thrust: 4

#### Cyberware

Chipjack  
 Datajack  
 Memory (100 Mp)  
 Radio Receiver  
 Telephone  
 Voice Modulator  
 Wired Reflexes (1)

#### Gear

Ares Predator [9M, 15 (clip), w/Smartlink]  
 Police Baton [5M Stun]  
 Concussion Mini-grenade (3) [12M Stun]  
 Armor Clothing (3 Ballistic)  
 Lined Coat (4/2)  
 DocWagon Contract (Gold)  
 Smartlink goggles  
 Spell lock (armor/1 success)

### REGINALD DISBALL (WITH ENTITY)

Reginald Disball has always gotten along much better with animals than with humans. He never quite managed to learn the right social skills for dealing with people, no matter how hard he tried. His job as an animal handler at the Fort Lewis Zoological Gardens should have been ideal, except that he wasn't really a very good handler. Being a good handler requires the ability to be firm and forceful with the animals, and all Reg really wanted was to enjoy their company. So he was stuck in a job without many prospects, but took what enjoyment he could from it.

Then one night he attended a meeting of an environmental policlub, and everything changed. He'd gone to a few gatherings before, hoping to meet people, but he never found anyone he felt like talking to. This time, a new member just happened to strike up a conversation, and the two really hit it off. A few hours later at a diner, Disball learned what he thought was the whole story. His companion wasn't an ordinary metahuman, but a being from the astral planes, and it needed to be with animals—mainly paranimals—to keep up its strength. It had gotten trapped in the physical world and didn't have the time to create a persona who could legitimately get access to the nearest and best source of paranimals—the Fort Lewis Zoo. But if Disball allowed it to join with him, it would gain the sustenance it needed. In exchange, it would help Disball work with the animals. Disball didn't know that much about magic, and it sounded like a good deal to him.

For the next few years, the being was as good as its word. It stayed in the back of Disball's mind, but helped him immeasurably at work. Suddenly the animals wanted to do what he told them, as if they really understood him. He couldn't keep his success secret, but was able to camouflage it as sheer skill at first. His



position rose at the zoo, and soon he could pick and choose his assignments. The entity occasionally asked for favors, such as working in a particular area for a month for two, but it couched its requests as things that it needed for its own well-being, and Disball didn't consider it a threat.

Then the entity seized control of him and started its reign of terror, slowly crowding out Disball's identity. The little of Disball that remains believes that the entity sees its actions as regrettable but necessary. He does not know why the entity behaves as it does, except that it is hunting. For what or whom, Disball cannot tell. He wants to stop it, but no longer has the power to do so.

Disball is of average height, with a fringe of white hair surrounding a balding dome. He's a bit underweight and looks as if he hasn't shaved for a week or more.

The bracketed statistics apply while Disball is actively under the influence of the astral entity. If the gamemaster needs a higher-powered enemy, assume that Disball is a Superhuman opponent when under the entity's control.

#### Attributes

Body: 3 [9]  
 Quickness: 3 [9]  
 Strength: 3 [9]  
 Charisma: [10]  
 Intelligence: 3 [10]  
 Willpower: 3 [10]  
 Essence: 5.2  
 Reaction: 3 [6]

**Initiative:** 3 + 1D6 [6 + 3D6]  
**Threat/Professional Rating:** 2/1 [6/4]  
**Body Index:** .4

#### Skills

Athletics: 2  
 Biology: 3 (Parazology: 4)  
 Car: 2  
 Firearms: 4 (Pistol: 6)  
 Melee Weapons: 4 [Club: 6, AZ-150 Stun Baton: 8]  
 Psychology: 2 (Animal: 4)  
 Stealth: 4  
 Unarmed Combat: 4

#### Edges

Animal Empathy

#### Cyberware

Chipjack  
 Datajack

#### Bioware

Pathogenic Defense (2)

#### Gear

Ares Squirt loaded with a DMSO/tranq load (Tranq Rating 5; treat as Light Pistol, 20 shots, 1 reload cartridge)  
 AZ-150 stun baton (8S Stun)  
 Animal handling gear (2/4)



#### ASTRAL ENTITY

The entity's Mental Attributes equal its Force Rating. It should never appear in any situation where Physical Attributes are necessary; rather than manifest physically, it will flee directly to the metaplanes.

**Force Rating:** 10

**Spirit Power:** 6

#### Powers

Animal Command, Aura Masking, Dispelling, Human Form, Possession, Sorcery (knows as many spells as necessary, almost all illusion spells).

# GAMEMASTERING CRITTERS

Running creatures is among a gamemaster's most difficult tasks. Running NPCs is easy; they are people with feelings and opinions as well as skills, cyberware and magic. The gamemaster can get inside their minds and use them to the best of his or her ability. Critters, by contrast, are animals, and therefore operate on a different level. They rarely devise schemes or have motivations beyond the simplest (food, water, protecting their turf or young), and so most gamemasters use them as security or temporary obstacles for the runners rather than as the focus of an adventure. Few gamemasters bother to give them discernible personalities or more than an inkling of intelligence; why bother going to so much trouble for cannon fodder? Using critters this way is certainly legitimate, but does a disservice to an interesting aspect of Shadowrun and keeps players from fully appreciating the danger and horror that some of these creatures should elicit.

For gamemasters who want to exploit the full potential of critters, the adventures in this book demonstrate various ways to use them in encounters that can truly challenge a shadowrunning team. Gamemasters can also use the following guidelines when devising critter encounters.

Most creatures in urban environments are by necessity more aggressive and more territorial than their cousins in wilderness areas. The urban creature sees metahumanity as both predator and prey, and knows the city as well as any metahuman street rat. Urban critters can turn up in any adventure and at any time.

Wild creatures tend to be less aggressive toward metahumanity, mainly because they don't see metahumans as a threat (yet). Wild beasts will protect their territory, their young and themselves, but rarely attack outright as an urban critter would. Unless a wild critter is hungry or scared, it will probably leave metahuman intruders alone. For example, a basilisk in the jungle might just let a bunch of runners walk by if they don't do anything to disturb or annoy it. That same basilisk in an urban environment might attack as soon as the runners discover it. (What's a basilisk doing in the streets of Seattle? Sounds like an adventure hook ...)

Both of these guidelines are generalizations, not absolutes. They allow a gamemaster to instantly give some personality to a creature beyond its statistics. Gamemasters should also keep in mind that creatures have an Intelligence Attribute, just as characters do. Intelligence 3 means the same, whether the being that possesses it is a decker, a mage or a rock lizard. So use it. If a creature needs to decide whether to attack or run away, let it make the decision the

way a runner would: roll the dice. Remember that critters have two numbers for Intelligence (see p. 232, **SRII**, for definitions of critter statistics). The first number represents puzzle-solving skills and some spell resistance; the second is its aptitude for detecting prey or enemies. Use those numbers to let the creature "think," and you'll have plausible and dangerous beasts that are a lot more fun to play with.

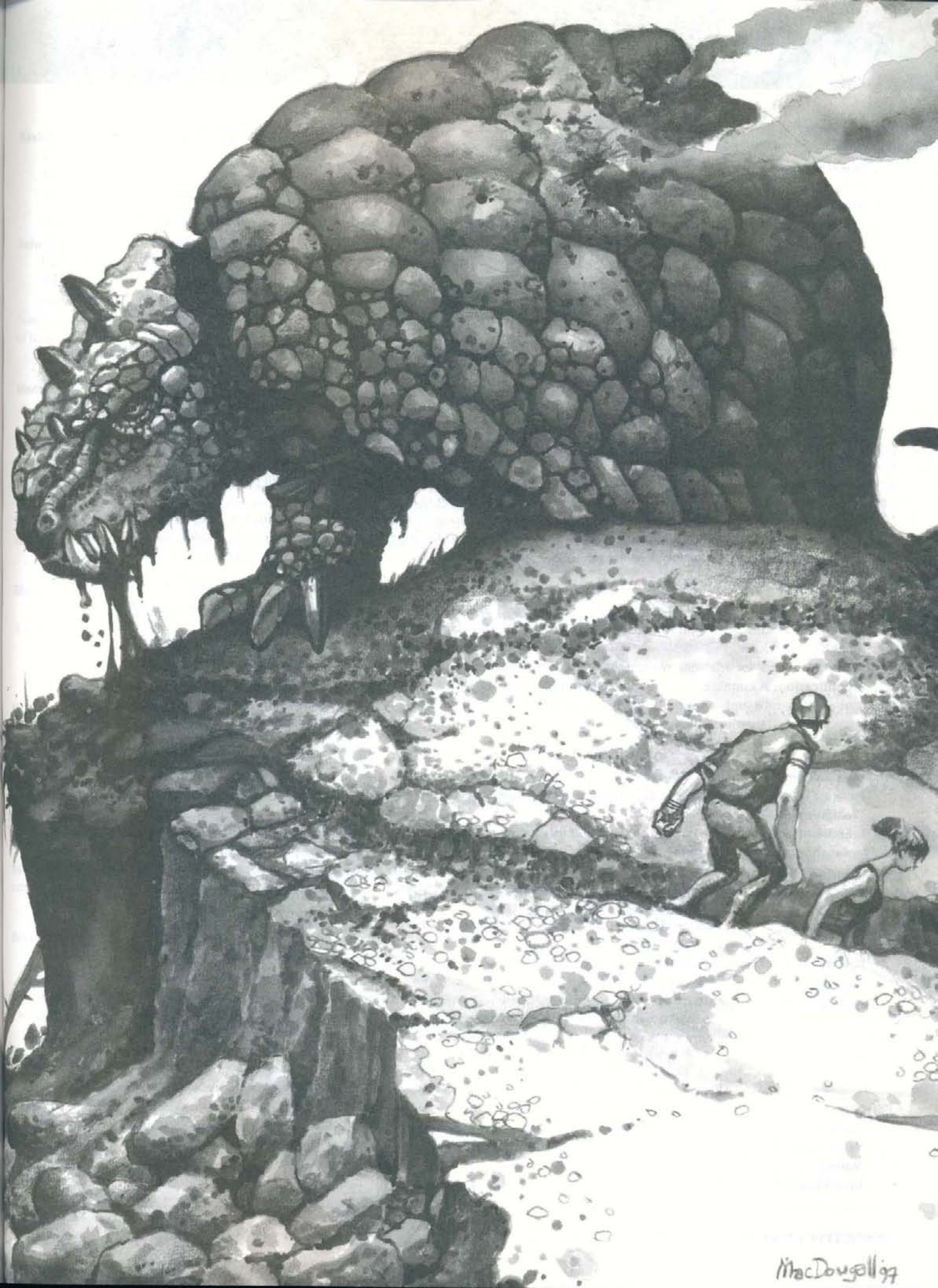
Finally, use Threat Ratings to keep the players on their toes. Critter Threat Ratings are the equivalent of Combat Threat Ratings for characters and are equal to one-half (round all fractions up) of a creature's Reaction or a spirit's Force. Use these extra dice in any and all ways. Never let the players think they know exactly how a creature will act; instead, let the creature use its intelligence to operate in different ways. Doing so will make each critter encounter unique, different and exciting, and allows the gamemaster to introduce more creatures into his or her campaign without getting dull. Also, using the Threat Rating lets the gamemaster introduce the same creature repeatedly and yet have each encounter with it work a bit differently.

## CRITTERS AND HABITAT

A major concern in dealing with critters is the fact that some just don't live in the sprawl. **Shadowrun**-style realism means that the days of finding a locked room with a dragon behind the door are long gone. But that doesn't mean the gamemaster's hands are tied. Zoos (public, private and personal), paranormal security services and shippers, and illegal trade in exotic pets all exist in **Shadowrun**; through any of these means, unusual paranimals can find their way into Seattle or other large urban centers. Or player characters may encounter paranormal critters in multiple locations without any rational explanation from the gamemaster, within reasonable bounds. A entire herd of behemoths may need some explaining, but a single one running through the Barrens might not. And if the magic of the Awakening can turn Joe Runner from human to troll, who's to say Fluffy can't go from house cat to talis cat for the same reason? Magic has returned to the world, and it affects everything! Use the mystery of the Awakened world to pepper your campaign with critter surprises.

## CRITTERS LIST

The following is a complete list of critters mentioned in **Predator and Prey**. Critter Attributes conform to the rules on p. 232, **SRII**. Powers and weaknesses listed are the corrected versions; if they differ from those given in **SRII**, use the descriptions under **Critter Powers**, p. 88.



MacDougall 97

CRITTER NAME	B	Q	S	C	I	W	E	R	Attacks
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<b>Aardwolf</b>	3	4 x 5	3	—	2/4	2	6	4*	4M
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**Powers:** Concealment (Personal)

**Weaknesses:** Allergy (Pollutants, Mild)

**Notes:** \*2D6 Initiative dice.

**Identification:** The North American aardwolf stands 0.9 meters tall at the shoulder and weighs about 37 kilograms. Its base color is a dusty tan, with darker patches on the flanks and a dark patch running from between the ears down the spine. Aardwolves are cunning and make good use of their camouflage and concealment abilities. The creatures have little stamina, and can only maintain high speed for less than a minute before being forced back to a slow run.

	B	Q	S	C	I	W	E	R	Attacks
--	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---------

<b>Afanc</b>	10/4	4 x 4	8	—	2/4	4	6	3	10S
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**Powers:** Engulf, Enhanced Physical Attributes (Strength, three times per day, for [Essence]D6 turns), Enhanced Senses (Low-Light Vision, Smell), Hardened Armor, Search

**Weaknesses:** None

**Notes:** An afanc that makes a successful melee biting attack may grip its victim in its jaws. To escape, the victim must roll 1 or more net successes in an opposed test that pits his or her Quickness against the afanc's Strength. Then the afanc makes a Strength Test against the victim's Strength. If the victim fails to roll any net successes, the afanc grips him in his jaws and bites down, inflicting 12S damage at the end of the following Combat Turn. The Power of this bite attack increases by +1 per Combat Turn until the victim rolls a net success in the opposed test described above or dies, or until the afanc is slain. The afanc will release a dead or unconscious victim if attacked by other enemies. Its Quickness multiplier for swimming is 4.

**Identification:** The afanc resembles a crocodile, but grows as long as 4.5 meters: 3 meters for the body plus 1.5 meters for the tail. An afanc typically weighs 375 kilograms. It has large claws used for digging and is green-brown in color. Carnivores of exceptional awareness and cunning, afancs live in semi-social groups of up to six, but forage and feed individually.

	B	Q	S	C	I	W	E	R	Attacks
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<b>Agropelter</b>	2	4 x 3	3	—	3/4	2	6	4*	3M or Humanoid
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**Powers:** Enhanced Senses (Improved Hearing and Smell, Low-Light Vision)

**Weaknesses:** None

**Notes:** Multiplier for arboreal movement is 4. \*2D6 Initiative dice.

**Identification:** A cunning but unintelligent omnivore, the agropelter is a small hominid, up to 0.9 meters tall, with a slender, wiry body, an ape-like face and long, thin, strong limbs. Short, thick fur, usually brown or black, covers its body, and both hands and feet have sharp claws. The aggressive agropelter has been known to attack in order to drive humans away from its territory.

	B	Q	S	C	I	W	E	R	Attacks
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<b>Anwuma Bavole</b>	1	4 x 4	0	—	1/4	1	6	4	3L
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**Powers:** Enhanced Senses (Low-light Vision), Sonic Projection (High Frequency)

**Weaknesses:** Allergy (Sunlight, Mild)

**Identification:** Anwuma bavole are Awakened fish-eating bats similar to North American birdmen. They live in coastal West Africa, where they hunt surface-feeding fish in the Gulf of Guinea. Anwuma bavole carry no diseases that affect metahumans. They sometimes fixate on groups of people, following them for days without eating or sleeping, for no apparent reason. The Nzima people see this as an omen of good luck, and actively encourage the creatures by feeding them.

	B	Q	S	C	I	W	E	R	Attacks
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<b>Asonwu</b>	2	4 x 3	3	—	3/4	2	6	6	6L
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**Powers:** Enhanced Senses (Improved Hearing and Smell, Low-light Vision), Pestilence

**Notes:** Multiplier for asonwu movement is 4.

**Identification:** These animals are similar to the agropelter (a small humanoid metavariant of the rhesus monkey). They are carnivorous, and hunt in packs to take down large prey. A few members hamstring the prey with swift biting attacks; once it is down, up to fifty asonwu mob it. The symptoms of the disease inflicted by this creature's Pestilence power are itching, shaking, madness and eventually brain death.

	B	Q	S	C	I	W	E	R	Attacks
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<b>Barghest</b>	7	6 x 4	5	—	3/6	3	(6)	6*	9S
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**Powers:** Enhanced Senses (Sonar), Fear (LOS), Paralyzing Howl (Zone x 3)

**Weaknesses:** None

**Notes:** \*2D6 Initiative dice.

**Identification:** See **SR11**.



	B	Q	S	C	I	W	E	R	Attacks
<b>Basilisk</b>	4/2	2 x 3	7	—	1/3	2	(6)	2	6M, -1 Reach

**Powers:** Petrifying Gaze  
**Weaknesses:** Allergy (Own Gaze, Severe)  
**Identification:** See **SR11**.

	B	Q	S	C	I	W	E	R	Attacks
<b>Behemoth</b>	10/4	4 x 3	25	—	2/2	5	6	3	7D

**Powers:** Hardened Armor  
**Weaknesses:** None  
**Identification:** A territorial animal with aggressive hunting habits, the behemoth is a large paraspecies of the common alligator. Standing 3 meters high at the shoulder and 4.9 meters long, the behemoth is covered in a thick, leathery skin. Its preferred method of hunting is to remain motionless just below the water's surface, where it waits for unsuspecting creatures to pass.

	B	Q	S	C	I	W	E	R	Attacks
<b>Birdman</b>	2	5 x 4	1	—	1/5	3	6	5*	3L

**Powers:** Enhanced Senses (Improved Hearing, Sonar), Sonic Projection  
**Weaknesses:** Allergy (Sunlight, Mild), Reduced Senses (Vision)  
**Notes:** \*2D6 Initiative dice. Birdmen frequently carry a splamodial infection similar to malaria. Each time a character is bitten by a birdman, roll 2D6. On a result of 11 or 12, the character has been infected. The disease does 5L Damage, with onset in 24 hours. Symptoms are cramps, blurred vision and profuse sweating.  
**Identification:** Related to the common brown bat, the birdman's body is up to 0.6 meters long, with a wingspan of up to 2 meters. Forming flocks for mutual protection, birdmen are harmless, though their menacing appearance often frightens the uninformed into attacking them. Naturally curious, the birdman can be a nuisance. Its bite can cause a dangerous infection.

	B	Q	S	C	I	W	E	R	Attacks
<b>Black Annis</b>	9	4 x 5	10	—	2/3	4	(5)	4*	8S

**Powers:** Enhanced Physical Attributes (Strength, once per day, for [Essence]D6 turns), Enhanced Reactions, Enhanced Senses (Low-Light Vision), Influence (Depression, LOS)  
**Weaknesses:** Allergy (Sunlight, Mild)  
**Notes:** \*2D6 Initiative dice.  
**Identification:** This highly territorial and solitary hunter stands 1.7 meters tall. Hair grows from the creature's head most of the way down its spine, with thick tufts across the tops of the shoulders and hands. It prefers to live in rocky caves or to dig out a lair among the roots of large trees. The black annis is exclusively carnivorous, using its speed and strength to catch and kill its prey.

	B	Q	S	C	I	W	E	R	Attacks
<b>Bogie</b>	3	5 x 4	4	—	2/4	3	(6)	4	4M

**Powers:** Accident (Zone), Enhanced Movement, Enhanced Reactions, Enhanced Senses (Improved Hearing and Smell, Low-Light Vision, Motion Detection), Fear (LOS)  
**Weaknesses:** Allergy (Aconite or Horseradish, Severe)  
**Identification:** The bogie appears as an oversized rottweiler, standing up to 1.25 meters tall at the shoulder, with small horns that protrude from its brow. A carnivore, an individual bogie will usually back down from a confrontation with any large creature that does not flee from its threat displays. However, when hunting in packs, bogies are ferocious and relentless.

	B	Q	S	C	I	W	E	R	Attacks
<b>Borax Burro</b>	4/2	3 x 4	4	—	2/4	6	6	3	6M Physical (Bite)

**Powers:** Corrosive Saliva, Enhanced Movement  
**Identification:** The borax burro stands about a meter and a half high at the shoulders. It has a bristly, erect mane on its neck, a scanty tail with a bushy tassel, long ears and varied coloring and markings. The borax burro is frequently confused with the smaller, mundane wild burro (*Equus asinus*) by those not familiar with the two species.

	B	Q	S	C	I	W	E	R	Attacks
<b>Burrowing Beaver</b>	3	4 x 4	3	—	2/4	2	6	4	4M, -1 Reach

**Powers:** Concealment (Personal), Enhanced Movement, Enhanced Senses (Improved Smell, Sonar)  
**Weaknesses:** None  
**Notes:** Quickness multiplier for swimming is 4.  
**Identification:** A nocturnal omnivore, the burrowing beaver is the largest native European rodent. Its brown-furred body aver-

ages 1.4 meters long with a tail approximately 70 centimeters long, and weighs 40 kilos. Highly territorial and aggressive, the burrowing beaver lives in extended family groups of up to 50 individuals in traditional beaver lodges, or increasingly, in tunnel complexes that open along the banks of rivers, lakes and fjords.

	B	Q	S	C	I	W	E	R	Attacks
<b>Chimera</b>	5/4	3 x 3	4	—	1/3	4	(5)	2	4M, -1 Reach

**Powers:** Concealment (Personal), Immunity to Poisons, Venom

**Weaknesses:** Vulnerability (Iron)

**Identification:** Resembling a wingless Western dragon, the chimera can grow up to 3.7 meters long, with coloring ranging from dark gray to brown to light yellow-brown or tan. The chimera is a lithe, fast carnivore that will eat anything it can catch. Solitary and highly territorial, the chimera has a venomous bite.

	B	Q	S	C	I	W	E	R	Attacks
<b>Cockatrice</b>	3	5 x 3	4	—	2/3	2	(6)	4	8M

**Powers:** Paralyzing Touch, Immunity to Own Touch

**Weaknesses:** None

**Identification:** See SR11.

	B	Q	S	C	I	W	E	R	Attacks
<b>Crested Barbarian</b>	5	4 x 4	4	—	2/3	2	6	3	4M

**Powers:** Enhanced Physical Attributes (Strength, once per day, for [Essence ÷ 2]D6 turns), Enhanced Senses (Improved Smell, Low-Light Vision), Fear (LOS), Pestilence (Roll 2D6; on a result of 6, the individual possesses this power).

**Weaknesses:** None

**Identification:** Orange-tinted skin and thick brown fur give the crested barbarian the look of a large ape, standing 1.6 meters tall and weighing approximately 95 kilograms. These scavenging animals function in social groups of 6 to 15 adults led by an alpha male. Though normally docile, many crested barbarians carry an infection akin to VITAS-III, making their bites a deadly hazard.

	B	Q	S	C	I	W	E	R	Attacks
<b>Deathrattle</b>	3	3 x 4	3	—	1/5	2	6	5**	4L, +1 Reach

**Powers:** Enhanced Senses (Thermographic Vision), Immunity to Poisons, Venom

**Weaknesses:** None

**Notes:** \*\*3D6 Initiative dice. The pain inflicted by the toxin adds +2 to all the victim's target numbers, in addition to any normal Wound damage. The pain lasts for 10 hours, minus 1 hour for each point of Willpower the victim has.

**Identification:** Indistinguishable from the normal Awakened diamondback rattlesnake, the deathrattle grows up to 1.9 meters long. With a strike almost too fast for the unaided eye to follow, the deathrattle can quickly bring down its victims. Its venom is more toxic than that of normal rattlesnakes, and it can spit the poison with great accuracy at ranges of up to 2 meters. The toxin is absorbed through the skin, and is as lethal as when injected by the snake's fangs.

	B	Q	S	C	I	W	E	R	Attacks
<b>Devilfish</b>	9	3 x 5	10	—	2/3	4	(6)	4	5M

**Powers:** Fear, Venom

**Weaknesses:** None

**Identification:** This nocturnal, Awakened version of the manta ray can achieve a "wingspan" of 8 meters. The devilfish's dorsal surface is black, with white markings on the ventral. Not normally aggressive toward larger creatures, its most distinctive feature is its ability to leap from the water and glide for up to 100 meters.

	B	Q	S	C	I	W	E	R	Attacks
<b>Devil Rat</b>	2	5 x 3	1	5	2/5	3	(4)	5	4L, -1 Reach

**Powers:** Animal Control (Mundane Rats), Concealment (Personal), Immunity to Pathogens, Immunity to Poisons

**Weaknesses:** Allergy (Sunlight, Mild)

**Notes:** There is a 1 in 12 chance that any given devil rat is infected with the VITAS-III virus (a result of 11 or 12 on a 2D6 roll). If a character is bitten by an infected rat, roll 2D6. On a result of 9 or more, the character has contracted the disease. Infected rats are generally immune to the virus; they merely act as carriers.

**Identification:** Completely hairless, the nocturnal devil rat grows up to a meter in length (including its tail) and weighs as much as 4 kilograms. Hunting in packs of up to 30 individuals, their prolific breeding rate, combined with their innate immunity to most poisons, makes exterminating them impossible.

	<b>B</b>	<b>Q</b>	<b>S</b>	<b>C</b>	<b>I</b>	<b>W</b>	<b>E</b>	<b>R</b>	<b>Attacks</b>
<b>Ekyelebenle</b>	5 (4)	6 x 2	6 (5)	—	1/5	4 (3)	(6)(6)	6**	6M (6L) biting Venom

**Powers:** Enhanced Senses (Smell, Thermographic Vision), Immunity to Poisons, Immunity to Pathogens, Magical Resistance.

**Notes:** \*\*3D6 Initiative dice. A snake that inflicts a Light wound or worse has injected venom. Mamba poison, from the mundane or Awakened variant, inflicts 5S damage at 5, 10 and 20-minute intervals. The snakes can also spit this poison up to five meters. If the spitting ekyelebenle wins an opposed Reaction Test, its opponent is blinded for 2D6 hours divided by the successes rolled on a Body Test against the poison's Damage Code. If the character achieves no successes on this test, the blinding is permanent.

**Identification:** These Awakened green mambas grow up to 6 meters long, and are native to the savannahs of sub-Saharan Africa. Ekyelebenle are extremely aggressive and will chase anything dwarf-sized or smaller. They spit poison for defense and hunting, and bite multiple times. Use statistics in parentheses for non-Awakened mambas.

	<b>B</b>	<b>Q</b>	<b>S</b>	<b>C</b>	<b>I</b>	<b>W</b>	<b>E</b>	<b>R</b>	<b>Attacks</b>
<b>Embracer</b>	8	4 x 3	8	—	2/3	3	(6)	5	7S, +1 Reach

**Powers:** Corrosive Secretions, Immunity to Fire, Movement (Decrease)

**Weaknesses:** Allergy (Cold, Mild)

**Identification:** Completely hairless, with smooth red skin that has an almost metallic sheen, the embracer stands up to 1.9 meters tall, with approximately the same proportions as the mountain gorilla. Preferring to lair in caves near volcanoes or hot springs, the omnivorous embracers are solitary hunters who are constantly hungry and therefore always hunting. Though they have sharp teeth, their most dangerous mode of attack is to grab their prey in a bear hug and squeeze it to death.

	<b>B</b>	<b>Q</b>	<b>S</b>	<b>C</b>	<b>I</b>	<b>W</b>	<b>E</b>	<b>R</b>	<b>Attacks</b>
<b>Enwontzane</b>	8	3 x 4	7	—	2/4	4	(6)	4	8S2, +1 Reach

**Powers:** Adaptive Coloration

**Identification:** Enwontzane are nocturnal, arboreal predators related to the sasquatch and bandersnatch. They stand almost three meters tall and weigh more than 400 kilograms, and do not carry the HMHV virus. Native to the forests of coastal West Africa, they will feed on anything ork-sized or smaller. They hunt and live in family groups of up to ten, and have one infant per year.

	<b>B</b>	<b>Q</b>	<b>S</b>	<b>C</b>	<b>I</b>	<b>W</b>	<b>E</b>	<b>R</b>	<b>Attacks</b>
<b>Eyekiller</b>	7	4 x 3	7	—	3/4	3	(6)	4	6S

**Powers:** Electrical Projection, Enhanced Senses (Amplified Hearing, Low-Light Vision)

**Weaknesses:** None

**Identification:** See **SR11**.

	<b>B</b>	<b>Q</b>	<b>S</b>	<b>C</b>	<b>I</b>	<b>W</b>	<b>E</b>	<b>R</b>	<b>Attacks</b>
<b>Flame Jackal</b>	3	4 x 4	3	—	2/4	2	6	4	5L

**Powers:** Flame Projection (Special), Immunity to Fire

**Weaknesses:** None

**Notes:** The flame jackal can project an aura of flames around its body to a distance of (Essence ÷ 2) meters. Neither its own flames nor those of other flame jackals can harm it.

**Identification:** The flame jackal is similar to a wolf with an average body length of 90 centimeters plus a 40 centimeter tail, and it weighs approximately 18 kilograms. A relatively cowardly creature, the jackal flees from confrontations with any enemy of equal or larger size, making a stand in self-defense only if cornered. It sports red-brown fur, but derives its name from its pyrotechnic ability rather than from its color.

	<b>B</b>	<b>Q</b>	<b>S</b>	<b>C</b>	<b>I</b>	<b>W</b>	<b>E</b>	<b>R</b>	<b>Attacks</b>
<b>Gabriel Hound</b>	3	4 x 4	3	—	2/3	4	(5)	4*	3M

**Powers:** Compulsion (Immobility, LOS), Concealment (Personal), Enhanced Movement, Enhanced Physical Attributes (Strength or Quickness, once each per day, for [Essence]D6 turns), Enhanced Reactions, Enhanced Senses (Thermographic Vision)

**Weaknesses:** Allergy (Sunlight, Mild)

**Notes:** \*2D6 Initiative dice.

**Identification:** The Gabriel hound is an efficient urban predator. It resembles a large dog, standing approximately 1 meter tall at the shoulder. Nocturnal by nature, the Gabriel hound is a stealthy animal with acute thermographic vision. It can also shapeshift to a limited extent. It can take on a humanoid form, but cannot become a true biped.

	B	Q	S	C	I	W	E	R	Attacks
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**Gila Demon** 4/1 4 x 3 4 — 1/4 3 6 3 4L  
**Powers:** Enhanced Senses (Improved Smell and Vision), Venom  
**Weaknesses:** None

**Identification:** A slightly larger version of the gila monster, the gila demon grows up to 1.7 meters in length. Its skin is studded with bead-like, yellow or orange and black bumps. Completely solitary, the gila demon seems to be most active at night, spending the bulk of its daylight hours in semi-torpor.

	B	Q	S	C	I	W	E	R	Attacks
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**Ghost** 1 1 1 2 2 5 6 A 5 Special  
**Powers:** Fear (Zone x 2), Manifestation, Psychokinesis. Some also possess Compulsion (LOS), Noxious Breath and Paralyzing Touch.

**Weaknesses:** None  
**Identification:** See SR11.

	B	Q	S	C	I	W	E	R	Attacks
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**Golden Boar** 6/1 4 x 5 8 — 2/5 6 (6) 4\* 6M  
**Powers:** Concealment (Personal), Enhanced Physical Attributes (Quickness, once per day, for [Essence]D6 turns), Magical Resistance, Regeneration

**Weaknesses:** None  
**Notes:** \*2D6 Initiative dice. Each tusk of a golden boar may be used as the equivalent of 1 unit of material for enchanting that does not require refinement and counts as a virgin telesma (p. 25, **Grimoire II**). Reduce all target numbers for enchanting by 1 if using a golden boar tusk in the operation, and reduce all base times by 20 percent or by a minimum of one step (1 day and so on), rounding fractions down. The tusk must be suitable material for the object desired by the enchanter (determined by the gamemaster); it works fine as a spell focus, but can only be used to make a magical weapon equivalent to a dagger. The tusk of a female is equivalent to half a male boar's tusk, and so a magician must use two to gain the advantages described above. Female tusks are too small to be enchanted as magical weapons.  
**Identification:** Highly sought after for its magical tusks, the golden boar is a hoofed mammal averaging 2.2 meters in length, standing approximately a meter tall and weighing approximately 170 kilos. Covered in a coat of gray-brown fur, overlaid with red-brown hair, this omnivore is almost exclusively found in dense forests. It shows aggressiveness only when mating or protecting its young.

	B	Q	S	C	I	W	E	R	Attacks
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**Gomatia** 6 3 x 1 6 — 2/6 3 (6) 3\*\*  
**Attacks:** Tongue: 6L Stun (opposed Strength Test to get something out of its grasp, takes 1 Free action to drag something to its mouth). Bite: 6M.

**Powers:** Adaptive Coloration, Enhanced Senses (Smell, 360° vision), Immunity to Poisons  
**Identification:** These Awakened chameleons grow to the size of a Doberman, and their magical camouflage makes them even harder to detect than their non-Awakened cousins. They have large, rotating eyes, prehensile tails and toes, and a long, sticky tongue that reaches three times the lizard's body length. Variants are found in rainforests all over Africa, Madagascar and India. Gomatia are diurnal ambush-hunters that feed primarily on birds and Awakened insects, but will eat anything up to the size of a housecat. They are stupid and will attack something many times that size if it smells like prey (insect spirits, for example). They breed once a year and bear 10-25 live young. Gomatia pose little danger to metahumans, though they may attack infants. They are sold as pets, and are becoming a common security paranimal.

	B	Q	S	C	I	W	E	R	Attacks
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**Greater Armadillo** 4/4 3 x 3 3 — 1/3 2 6 4 2M, -1 Reach  
**Powers:** Enhanced Senses (Improved Smell), Hardened Armor, Immunity to Poisons  
**Weaknesses:** Reduced Senses (Vision)

**Identification:** With the same covering of jointed, bony plates and abysmal eyesight as its smaller cousin, the greater armadillo grows up to 1.2 meters long. An insectivore, the greater armadillo is incredibly strong, able to tear into the cement-hard termite colonies that dot its native territory of west Texas. Its phenomenal stupidity makes it a dangerous, unpredictable creature.

	B	Q	S	C	I	W	E	R	Attacks
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**Greater Wolverine** 7 4 x 5 4 — 2/4 2 6 5\* 5S  
**Powers:** Enhanced Physical Attributes (Quickness, once per day, for [Essence]D6 turns), Enhanced Reactions, Enhanced Senses (Improved Smell)

**Weaknesses:** Reduced Senses (Vision)



**Notes:** Any given greater wolverine may be infected with a virus that develops within 24 hours and does 4S Damage. Roll 2D6; a result of 12 means the creature is infected. Any time a character is bitten by an infected wolverine, roll 2D6. On a result of 9, the character will contract the disease. (Infected wolverines are generally immune to the virus; they merely act as carriers.) After the incubation period, the victim suffers fever and breaks out in bright red blotches until the damage is reduced to Light.

**Identification:** With wickedly curved claws and teeth and surprising speed, the greater wolverine is an exceptionally ferocious carnivore. They grow to a height of 0.9 meters at the shoulder, and can be as long as 2.2 meters. Their shaggy, light brown fur becomes almost yellow on the creature's back.

	B	Q	S	C	I	W	E	R	Attacks
Griffin	9	7 x 2	9	—	3/5	4	(7)	6	9S, +1 Reach

**Powers:** None

**Weaknesses:** None

**Notes:** Movement multiplier for flying is 5.

**Identification:** See **SR11**.

	B	Q	S	C	I	W	E	R	Attacks
Gyre	4	4 x 5	4	—	2/5	3	(6)	4	4S

**Powers:** Enhanced Senses (Improved Vision), Immunity to Pathogens, Immunity to Poisons, Influence (Hopelessness)

**Weaknesses:** Allergy (Pollution, Severe)

**Identification:** An Awakened species derived from the turkey buzzard, the gyre reaches a length of 1.4 meters and a wingspan of 4.0 meters. Its dorsal region is dark brown color, shading to lighter brown on the pinions and turning off-white beneath. Generally a carrion eater, the gyre has been known to attack weak or injured animals.

	B	Q	S	C	I	W	E	R	Attacks
Hell Hound	4	4 x 4	5	—	3/4	3	(6)	6**	6M

**Powers:** Enhanced Senses (Improved Hearing and Smell, Low-Light Vision), Flame Projection, Immunity to Fire

**Weaknesses:** None

**Notes:** \*\*3D6 Initiative dice.

**Identification:** The hell hound is a coal-black dog with red-rimmed eyes, standing 0.9 meters at the shoulder and weighing more than 80 kilograms. An efficient predator, the hell hound hunts in well-coordinated packs, but rarely takes on anything larger than itself. Rumors abound that it can breathe fire.

	B	Q	S	C	I	W	E	R	Attacks
Hoop Snake	3	3 x 4	4	—	2/3	3	6	4*	6L, -1 Reach

**Powers:** Venom

**Weaknesses:** None

**Notes:** Rolling multiplier is 5. \*2D6 Initiative dice.

**Identification:** Ranging in color from blue-green to brown, the hoop snake is short (1.6 meters) and weighs up to 23 kilograms. Its bite is extremely venomous. The hoop snake's most unique feature is its ability to catch its tail in its mouth, forming a hoop, and roll rapidly downhill. Though it normally uses this ability to escape, it can also use it to attack.

	B	Q	S	C	I	W	E	R	Attacks
Incubus	6	2 x 2	9	3	3/5	4	(6)	4	5S, +1 Reach

**Powers:** Desire Reflection, Enhanced Senses (Low-Light Vision), Illusion

**Weaknesses:** Allergy (Sunlight, Severe)

**Identification:** This nocturnal urban predator resembles a large, land-dwelling octopus. Its soft body grows up to a meter long, and the span of its tentacles (tip to tip, diametrically) can exceed 3.2 meters. With the ability to read its prey's mind, the incubus can cast an illusion that perfectly matches the prey's innermost desires, mesmerizing the prey while it closes in for the kill.

	B	Q	S	C	I	W	E	R	Attacks
Juggernaut	15/8	4 x 3	42	—	1/3	9	7	4	10D

**Powers:** Enhanced Physical Attributes (Quickness, once each per day, for [Essence x 2]D6 turns), Enhanced Senses (Improved Hearing and Smell, Motion Detection), Fear (LOS), Hardened Armor, Immunity to Cold, Immunity to Fire, Immunity to Pathogens, Immunity to Poisons

**Weaknesses:** None

**Identification:** The juggernaut is a giant variation of the common armadillo that reaches lengths of 14 meters or more. An aggressive hunter, the juggernaut prefers live prey, though it can subsist on almost any substance from plants to animals to rock to scrap metal. Its immense size, as well as the jointed armor that covers its body, makes the juggernaut tough to kill.

	B	Q	S	C	I	W	E	R	Attacks
<b>Lesser Thunderbird</b>	3	6 x 2	3	—	2/5	3	(6)	6	3L

**Powers:** Electrical Projection (EMP), Enhanced Senses (Low-Light Vision), Weather Control (Electrical Storms)

**Weaknesses:** None

**Notes:** Flying multiplier is 4. The thunderbird's EMP will affect any cheap electronic equipment (p. 100, **Street Samurai Catalog**) within 5 meters of the creature. The rating of the EMP attack is the creature's Essence; the Target Number to affect a piece of equipment is 10. If the equipment is Hardened (for example, a cyberdeck), add the level of Hardening to the target number. For example, the Target Number to crash a Fuchi Cyber-6 is 16.

If the thunderbird achieves 1, 2 or 3 successes against the item, the equipment is inoperative or unstable for 2D6 turns. If the thunderbird rolls 4 or more successes, its EMP does physical damage. The nature of the damage is up to the gamemaster. A decker using a cyberdeck affected by the EMP is immediately dumped.

The EMP can also affect cyberware. Make only one EMP roll for the wearer. If any successes result, roll randomly to see which piece of cyberware is damaged.

The lesser thunderbird can generate as many pulses per day as it has points of Essence. At the moment of its death, the creature's body explodes, inflicting 6L Damage on anyone within 3 meters of it.

**Identification:** A day creature, the lesser thunderbird resembles a red-brown eagle, but has a wingspan of up to 3 meters. Able to generate and project an electrical field for defense, the lesser thunderbird relishes the static-charged air of electrical storms.

	B	Q	S	C	I	W	E	R	Attacks
<b>Macaréu</b>	10/4	4x3	25	1/M	2	5	6	3	7D

**Powers:** Hardened Armor

**Weaknesses:** None

**Identification:** Almost identical to the behemoth in every way, the macaréu is derived from the caiman instead of the common alligator. However, it lives only in the Amazon jungle.

	B	Q	S	C	I	W	E	R	Attacks
<b>Mami Wata</b>	4	6 x 4	6	—	3/5	3	6	5	6S

**Powers:** Enhanced Physical Attributes (Quickness, once per day, for [Essence x 2]D6 turns), Enhanced Senses (Improved Hearing)

**Weaknesses:** Dietary Requirement (Alcohol)

**Identification:** Mami wata are West African mermaids domesticated by Ewe pirates, whose selective breeding has produced a slightly faster and smarter variant. Mami wata grow up to 1.5 meters long.

	B	Q	S	C	I	W	E	R	Attacks
<b>Martichoras</b>	8	6 x 4	8	—	3/4	3	6	6	7S, +1 Reach

**Powers:** Enhanced Senses (Low-Light Vision), Venom

**Weaknesses:** Allergy (Pollution, Mild)

**Identification:** The martichoras is an aggressive carnivore that grows to a length of 2.2 meters and a height of 1.1 meters at the shoulder. Resembling a lion, it has longer fur and a wider mouth with multiple rows of teeth as well as a bunch of porcupine-like spines that grow from the tip of its tail. Very fast, it prefers to run its prey to ground instead of lurking in ambush.

	B	Q	S	C	I	W	E	R	Attacks
<b>Megalodon</b>	15/2	5 x 4	13	—	1/3	3	6	5	10D

**Powers:** Enhanced Senses (Improved Smell), Regeneration

**Weaknesses:** None

**Identification:** A huge pelagic shark that can grow up to 16 meters long, the megalodon will attack anything that swims. Though normally a solitary hunter, it is not unusual to see the creatures congregate into packs of three to five individuals. The megalodon is famous for eating anything, from garbage to metal scraps.

	B	Q	S	C	I	W	E	R	Attacks
<b>Merlin Hawk</b>	1	7 x 3	1	5	4/8	4	(7)	6**	1L, -1 Reach

**Powers:** Merlin hawks are magically active, using detection, illusion and manipulation spells. They also have Animal Control (avians) and Magical Resistance powers. Merlin hawks have equivalent magical skills in the following ranges: Magic Attribute, 5 + 1D6; Sorcerer Skill, 4 + 1D6; Conjuring Skill, 4 + 1D6 (air elementals).

**Weaknesses:** Vulnerability (Willow-Wood Weapons, Poisons)

**Notes:** \*\*3D6 Initiative dice. Quickness multiplier for flying is 8. Merlin hawks can detect the Essence Ratings of creatures within a range of (Essence) miles, and they respond negatively to creatures with unusually low Essence (due to cyberware implants, vampiric drain and so on).



**Identification:** A medium-sized member of the falcon family, the merlin hawk measures approximately half a meter in length and weighs 4 kilograms. Preying on rodents, the merlin hawk is territorial, and uses its extraordinary speed to pursue all other birds of prey in its territory. Though magically active, it rarely uses its powers to harm unless severely provoked.

	B	Q	S	C	I	W	E	R	Attacks
Mist Lynx	4	5 x 4	5	—	2/4	3	(6)	4**	4S

**Powers:** Enhanced Senses (Low-Light Vision), Mist Form

**Weaknesses:** None

**Notes:** \*\*3D6 Initiative dice.

**Identification:** A solitary hunter, the mist lynx is a hunchbacked Awakened variant of the wildcat that lives in woodland areas and can grow up to 1.4 meters long. It has a short tail, tufted ears and smoky gray fur marked with white. The mist lynx can transform its body to a mist, apparently by controlling the molecular cohesion of its cells.

	B	Q	S	C	I	W	E	R	Attacks
Naga	5/1	2 x 3	6	3	3	4	(8)	4	5M, -1 Reach

**Powers:** Guard, Magical Guard, Venom

**Weaknesses:** None

**Identification:** See SR11.

	B	Q	S	C	I	W	E	R	Attacks
Nimue's Salamander	1	3 x 2	0	—	1/2	2	(6)	2	1L, -2 Reach

**Powers:** Nimue's salamander uses a special form of the Magical Drain power: if a magician casts a spell within (Essence ÷ 2) X Threat Rating (round down) meters of the salamander, the creature makes an opposed test pitting its Essence against a number equal to the spellcaster's Magic Rating. If the salamander achieves any net successes, reduce the spell's Force Rating by the number of successes (the casting magician suffers Drain at the spell's full Force Rating). The salamander may then use the energy it absorbed from the spell to increase any of the following powers for 1D6 hours: Enhanced Physical Attributes (any), Enhanced Movement or Magical Resistance. If the salamander increases all these powers, it can still drain spells, but additional drain does not provide additional increases. Nimue's salamander also has the Magic Sense power.

**Weaknesses:** Vulnerability (Poisons)

**Identification:** Mainly a land dweller, this small, tailed amphibian measures 15 centimeters, plus a 10-centimeter tail, and weighs 0.15 kilograms. It is black with an irregular yellow patch between its eyes, a yellow streak on its underbelly and wide orange stripes running along its side and the dorsal surface of its tail. This passive creature prefers damp habitats.

	B	Q	S	C	I	W	E	R	Attacks
Nomad	6	3 x 3	0	6	1/6	6	9 A	5	Special

**Powers:** Compulsion (Special: Homicidal Mania), Essence Drain (Modified), Immunity to Normal Weapons, Manifestation

**Weaknesses:** None

**Notes:** To make an attack, the nomad must be at melee range. Make an opposed test using the nomad's Essence and the victim's Body or Willpower Rating, whichever is greater (always use the Body Rating for animals). Neither armor nor dermal plating protect against this type of attack. For each net success that the nomad achieves, apply 1 point of damage to the victim's Mental Condition Monitor. When all spaces have been filled in, the character does not fall unconscious; instead, he or she is possessed by the nomad.

Every 2D6 hours, the nomad makes one attack against its host using the opposed test described above. If the nomad wins, the host flies into a homicidal rage, attacking the nearest creature or creatures in the most effective manner. As the nomad's host kills other creatures, the nomad absorbs their Essence in a manner similar to the Essence Drain power. When the nomad reaches a total Essence Rating of 18, it splits into two nomads, each with an Essence Rating of 9.

If a nomad host is prevented from killing while in a homicidal rage, the rage continues for 2D6 minutes, after which the host returns (apparently) to normal. Nomad hosts can cast spells while affected by homicidal mania, but add +1 to all target numbers to reflect the distracting effects of the rage.

**Identification:** A form of mental parasite, the nomad is an astral being that "possesses" victims, forcing them into a homicidal rage. Once the victim kills, the nomad feeds off the dying creature's Essence. It appears on the physical plane only when attacking, manifesting as an amorphous patch of darkness about half a meter across. When assensed on the astral plane, the nomad appears as an amoeboid creature of impenetrable blackness, roughly 1.5 meters across.

	B	Q	S	C	I	W	E	R	Attacks
Nova Scorpion	1	3 x 4	1	—	1/3	2	6	4	4(M)Physical (Stinger), Venom

**Powers:** Concealment (Self Only), Venom\*

\*The venom's damage code is Essence (D) Physical. A bitten character who receives the anti-toxin and survives still takes full damage from the poison, but otherwise heals normally. The anti-toxin costs 150 nuyen per dose.

**Identification:** Approximately 1 meter long, the nova scorpion has a gold-colored body and large pincers. Its tail ends in a large stinger. Several species of scorpions inhabit the same area as the nova scorpion, but they are all much smaller and paler with smaller stingers.

	B	Q	S	C	I	W	E	R	Attacks
<b>Novopossum</b>	3	4 x 4	3	—	2/4	2	6	4	6L

**Powers:** Corrosive Saliva, Enhanced Senses (Low-Light Vision)

**Weaknesses:** None

**Identification:** The novopossum is an Awakened species that can grow up to 0.75 meters in length, and sports a long snout with enlarged canine teeth. The novopossum's main defense is its corrosive saliva. It does not affect the novopossum, but can do serious harm to other animals. Though the novopossum rarely attacks larger creatures, it will fight ferociously to defend itself, splattering the attacker with its saliva.

	B	Q	S	C	I	W	E	R	Attacks
<b>Plasma</b>	1 1/2	4 x 5	13	—	2/4	4	6	4*	9D, +1 Reach

**Powers:** Enhanced Physical Attributes (Strength or Quickness, once per day each, for [Essence x 2]D6 turns), Enhanced Reaction, Enhanced Senses (Thermographic Vision, Wide-Band Hearing)

**Weaknesses:** Allergy (Sunlight, Nuisance)

**Notes:** \*2D6 Initiative dice.

**Identification:** This carnivore, descended from the black bear, can reach a height of 1.5 meters at the shoulder, a length of 3 meters and a weight of more than 600 kilograms. Not territorial, the plasma prefers its prey alive. It often subsists by scavenging, seeming to prefer the leavings of humans and metahumans.

	B	Q	S	C	I	W	E	R	Attacks
<b>Quicksilver Mongoose</b>	1	7 x 4	1	—	2/5	3	6	5**	3L, -1 Reach

**Powers:** Accident (Zone), Enhanced Movement, Hypnotic Dance (treat as the Hypnotic Song power in game terms except for range: effective against snakes and other creatures less than 1 meter long, excluding tail), Immunity to Poisons (wholly immune to snake venom; see **Weaknesses**, below).

**Weaknesses:** Dietary Requirement (Snake Venom and Hepatic Enzymes)

**Notes:** Increase the Damage Code for the attack to 5D if the target is a snake that the mongoose has successfully hypnotized using its Hypnotic Dance power. Increase the Damage Code to 6S against any other hypnotized target. \*\*3D6 Initiative dice.

**Identification:** The solitary quicksilver mongoose, a small subtropical relative of European weasels and martens, measures 1.05 meters and weighs 3.5 kilograms. Covered with gray-brown fur, this primarily nocturnal hunter relies on speed, agility and its hypnotic dancing ability to capture its prey.

	B	Q	S	C	I	W	E	R	Attacks
<b>Road Racer</b>	3	4 x 5	2	—	3/4	5	6	4	5(L) Physical (Claw or Beak)

**Powers:** Concealment (Self Only), Enhanced Movement (Running Only)

**Identification:** The road racer stands about three-fourths of a meter high at the shoulder. The upper part of its body sports dark and light stripes, with a lighter belly and a red topknot. Its beak is long and thin. The road racer is the Awakened cousin of the mundane road runner, a smaller and less colorful bird.

	B	Q	S	C	I	W	E	R	Attacks
<b>Rock Lizard</b>	3	3 x 4	3	—	1/3	3	6	5	6L

**Powers:** Immunity to Poisons, Venom

**Weaknesses:** None

**Identification:** Generally non-aggressive, the rock lizard appears similar to a horned toad. Growing as long as 1 meter with an additional half-meter of tail, the rock lizard has rough-textured skin that can change from light tan to dark brown or even grayish black.

	B	Q	S	C	I	W	E	R	Attacks
<b>Slime Mold</b>	4	3 x 3	3	—	1/3	3	6	2	As powers

**Powers:** Binding, Corrosive Secretions, Immunity to Normal Weapons

**Weaknesses:** Extreme heat, fire and lack of moisture. Fire does normal damage. Extreme heat and/or lack of moisture will cause the mold to dry up, but will not kill it.

**Identification:** The slime mold can cover an area up to 100 meters, though mold of that size is very rare and exists only if it has enough food. Most slime molds cover areas no larger than 5 meters. In its dry state, the slime mold looks like a frothy white-and-gray fried egg, a few centimeters in diameter. When hydrated, it is a pale, glistening, jelly-like mass up to a meter in diameter.



	B	Q	S	C	I	W	E	R	Attacks
<b>Saber-Tooth Cat</b>	5	5 x 4	5	—	2/4	2	6	4**	5S

**Powers:** Enhanced Senses (Low-Light Vision, Thermographic Vision)

**Weaknesses:** None

**Notes:** \*2D6 Initiative dice.

**Identification:** The saber-tooth cat is not overly territorial or aggressive except in self-defense. Almost two meters long in the body with a one-meter tail, the cat sports two large, curved fangs that protrude from its upper jaw. These greatly enlarged canine teeth can grow up to 0.25 meter long. Hunting only when hungry, the saber-tooth is fast and powerful.

	B	Q	S	C	I	W	E	R	Attacks
<b>Sea Drake</b>	4	4 x 4	4	—	2/3	3	(6)	5	3M, +1 Reach

**Powers:** Enhanced Physical Attributes (Movement, once per day, for [Essence]D6 turns), Enhanced Senses (Low-Light Vision)

**Weaknesses:** None

**Identification:** A fast and efficient predator, the sea drake is an ocean-adapted reptile that grows as long as 13.5 meters. Though an air-breather, the sea drake can remain submerged for more than two hours, and has been observed at depths of 3,200 fathoms (6.65 kilometers). An aggressive hunter, the sea drake frequently hunts in small packs of two to four individuals.

	B	Q	S	C	I	W	E	R	Attacks
<b>Sea Spirit</b>	F + 2	F x 2	F	F	F	F	(F)A	F - I	As powers

**Powers:** Accident, Alienation, Concealment, Confusion, Engulf, Fear, Guard, Movement, Search

**Notes:** F equals Force.

**Identification:** See SR11.

	B	Q	S	C	I	W	E	R	Attacks
<b>Serpent, Saltwater</b>	10/2	4 x 4	18	—	1/4	4	6	4	8S, +1 Reach

**Powers:** Enhanced Physical Attributes (Quickness, twice per day, for [Essence]D6 turns)

**Weaknesses:** None

**Identification:** A larger, more streamlined version of its freshwater brethren, the saltwater serpent grows up to 25 meters long, much of it tail and neck. An air-breather, the saltwater serpent is an aggressive predator that has been known to attack larger cetaceans. Though highly prolific, their aggressiveness gives them a 90 percent infant mortality rate.

	B	Q	S	C	I	W	E	R	Attacks
<b>Shadowhound</b>	4	4 x 4	5	—	2/4	3	6	4**	5M

**Powers:** Darkness, Enhanced Reactions, Enhanced Senses (Low-Light Vision), Silence (Zone x 2)

**Weaknesses:** Allergy (Sunlight, Severe)

**Notes:** \*\*3D6 Initiative dice.

**Identification:** A nocturnal predator that hunts in packs, the shadowhound resembles a huge dog, 1.2 meters tall at the shoulder. Its coat is gray, marked with black patches. It can shift the patches by moving its muscles under the skin, providing it with excellent night camouflage.

	B	Q	S	C	I	W	E	R	Attacks
<b>Siren</b>	3	8 x 2	4	—	3/5	5	(5)	5	4M

**Powers:** Enhanced Senses (Low-Light Vision), Hypnotic Song (Zone x 4), Immunity to Pathogens, Immunity to Poisons

**Weaknesses:** None

**Identification:** A ferocious predator that feeds on terrestrial mammals, the siren resembles a small pterodactyl, with a 2.5-meter wingspan. Hunting in flocks, sirens prefer to lair in caves in desolate mountainsides; a single lair will contain one or more small family groups. The siren can emit a high-pitched song to which some have attributed a hypnotic effect that makes the listener draw near.

	B	Q	S	C	I	W	E	R	Attacks
<b>Spider-Beast</b>	3/1	4x3	2	-	1/3	3	6	3	4L

**Powers:** Venom (roll Body dice to resist 6M Stun Damage; each box of damage is not marked off the Condition Monitor, but instead results in a +1 modifier to all target numbers due to hallucinations)

**Weaknesses:** None

**Identification:** These unusual insects, native to Amazonia, incubate inside the Brazilian kiwi fruit. They grow extremely rapidly, to an average adult length of half a meter. Their mottled brown bodies are covered with sharp spines, and each of their eight legs ends in a long, curved claw. A double set of mandibles delivers a powerful hallucinogen to anyone unlucky enough to be bitten.

	B	Q	S	C	I	W	E	R	Attacks
<b>Stormcrow</b>	2	6 x 2	1	—	3/4	3	(6)/6	4*	3L

**Powers:** Enhanced Senses (Improved Hearing), Weather Control (Flock Only)

**Weaknesses:** None

**Notes:** A dual-natured being only when in a flock of six or more. \*2D6 Initiative dice.

**Identification:** The omnivorous stormcrow is large raven with a 1.5 meter wingspan. Its plumage is glossy black, its beak sharp and powerful, and its talons long and curved. The stormcrow generally congregates in huge flocks of more than 100 individuals, though it is not uncommon to see them hunting or scavenging alone.

	B	Q	S	C	I	W	E	R	Attacks
<b>Tachypus</b>	2	4 x 6	2	—	2/4	3	(6)	6	4M

**Powers:** Enhanced Movement, Enhanced Physical Attributes (Quickness, four times per day, for [Essence]D6 turns)

**Weaknesses:** None

**Identification:** A timid animal, the tachypus resembles a small pronghorn, reaching a height of about 0.7 meters at the shoulder. Its light brown fur with white belly shading allows the tachypus to easily blend in with the surrounding area. Able to sprint at speeds approaching 120 kph, the tachypus can outrun almost any danger.

	B	Q	S	C	I	W	E	R	Attacks
<b>Talis Cat</b>									
<b>As Housecat</b>	1	4 x 4	1	—	2/4	4	(6)	5*	2L, -1 Reach
<b>As Cheetah</b>	7	9 x 4	7	—	2/4	4	(6)	5**	8L

**Powers:** Desire Reflection (LOS, Cheetah Only), Enhanced Movement, Enhanced Physical Attributes (Quickness, Body and Strength), Enhanced Reaction, Enhanced Senses (Low-Light Vision)

**Weaknesses:** None

**Notes:** \*2D6 Initiative dice. \*\*3D6 Initiative dice. Treat the Illusion power as a Rating 12 Mask spell. It takes one action to activate the Illusion power. Once the power is activated, the talis cat can use the cheetah statistics above. In cheetah form, the talis cat gets 3 additional dice to roll for its Reaction because of its Enhanced Reaction power.

**Identification:** The talis cat is a rare Awakened animal that can shift between two forms at will: a small housecat and a fast, powerful, big cat similar to the cheetah. Preferring urban environments, the talis cat spends daylight hours in tabby form, but typically switches to its larger form at night.

	B	Q	S	C	I	W	E	R	Attacks
<b>Thunderbird</b>	4	7 x 2	8	—	2/4	3	(6)	5	6M

**Powers:** Electrical Projection (Area Effect)

**Weaknesses:** None

**Notes:** Movement multiplier for flying is 5.

**Identification:** See SR11.

	B	Q	S	C	I	W	E	R	Attacks
<b>Troglodyte</b>	3	3 x 4	2	2	3/4	3	6	3	Humanoid

**Powers:** Concealment, Enhanced Senses (Thermographic Vision)

**Weaknesses:** Allergy (Sunlight, Mild)

**Identification:** Troglodytes are slender, omnivorous bipeds that rarely exceed a height of 1.6 meters. They have large heads and eyes and no hair. They live in loosely knit bands of up to 50 individuals and normally feed off of subterranean creatures. The troglodyte's sapience is unknown, but is at least equal to that of primates.

	B	Q	S	C	I	W	E	R	Attacks
<b>Volleying Porcupine</b>	1	4 x 2	1	—	1/3	4	6	3	3L

**Powers:** Enhanced Senses (Low-Light Vision), Spraying (1/4 normal range)

**Weaknesses:** Dietary Requirement (Salt)

**Notes:** The Damage Code shown above applies to melee attacks (claw, bite). In melee combat, an attacker must make a Quickness Test using the creature's Essence as the target number to avoid getting stuck with quills. If the character rolls no successes, the quills do 6L damage. The victim resists this damage normally. Modify the target number for the Quickness Test by -1 for each point of Reach above 1 provided by the character's melee weapons.

The porcupine can also make ranged attacks using its quills. It fires a volley of quills for each Simple Action (unless using its spraying power). The gamemaster must decide how many targets a volley may damage simultaneously (depending on the targets' proximity to the porcupine, the distance between individuals in a group and so on). For example, assume the porcupine can direct an attack



effectively in a 90-degree quadrant around its body (this is a gross simplification, but it makes life easier). The ranges and Damage Codes for quill attacks appear in the table below. To avoid the quills, a character must make a Quickness Test using (creature's Essence + 1) as a target number.

Range	Range in meters*	Damage
Short	(E - 1)	6L
Medium	E - (2E - 2)	6L
Long	(2E - 1) - (3E)	5L
Extreme	(3E + 1) - (4E + 2)	5L

\*E denotes the creature's Essence.

**Identification:** Nocturnal and solitary, the volleying porcupine is a large rodent with a body length of 1.1 meters and a 25-centimeter tail. It weighs approximately 14 kilograms and is covered with long, slender white quills and shorter, thicker, black-and-white banded quills. Though not normally aggressive, when threatened it can spray a noxious musk as well as fire its quills short distances in an effort to drive away enemies.

	B	Q	S	C	I	W	E	R	Attacks
<b>Wild Minotaur</b>	12/1	3 x 5	11	—	1/6	6	4	2	7D, +1 Reach

**Powers:** Confusion (Zone x 3), Enhanced Physical Attributes (Strength, three times per day for [Essence]D6 turns), Enhanced Senses (Low-Light Vision, Thermographic Vision)

**Weaknesses:** None

**Notes:** Illusion spells do not affect minotaurs.

**Identification:** This carnivorous, nocturnal hunter appears to be a hybrid between a large ox and a similarly sized primate. It measures approximately 3.6 meters from snout to the base of its tail and weighs 850 kilos. Its dark brown fur grows shaggy around its neck and shoulders, tapering into a mane over its sternum. The minotaur dwells underground, favoring caves and abandoned excavations such as bunkers.

	B	Q	S	C	I	W	E	R	Attacks
<b>Wodewose</b>	2	4 x 4	6	—	2/4	3	6	4	3M, +1 Reach

**Powers:** Enhanced Senses (Improved Smell), Immunity to Age, Immunity to Pathogens, Immunity to Poisons, Pestilence

**Weaknesses:** None

**Identification:** This arboreal carnivore uses its clawed hands and feet to feed on smaller animals. It stands roughly a meter tall, weighs up to 50 kilograms and is covered with short black fur. Living in tightly knit bands reminiscent of baboon tribes, the wodewose is ferocious if threatened, but not actively territorial. Wodewoses are often carriers of a virus similar to VITAS-III, though they show no symptoms.

	B	Q	S	C	I	W	E	R	Attacks
<b>Wyrd Mantis</b>									
<b>Male</b>	1/1	4 x 4	1	—	1/4	2	6	3	5L
<b>Female</b>	2/2	5 x 4	2	—	2/5	2	6	3	4M

**Powers:** Adaptive Coloration (Selective), Enhanced Senses (Low-Light Vision), Enhanced Physical Attributes (Quickness, three times per day, for [Essence]D6 turns), Immunity to Poisons, Influence (Females Only, LOS), Venom

**Weaknesses:** None

**Notes:** Quickness multiplier for flying is 4 (short duration only; once per hour for [Essence]D6 turns).

**Identification:** The wyrd mantis averages 1.7 meters in length and weighs 10 kilograms. Usually green or greenish-brown with a yellow underbelly, the wyrd mantis can change its coloration enough to blend with forest and woodland terrain, though the change occurs slowly. Its favorite hunting technique is to camouflage itself, then leap on passing prey, grabbing the victim in its powerful, spiny forelimbs and delivering a venomous bite. The female mantis is larger and stronger than the male; as with the mundane mantis, the female devours the male during or soon after mating.

	B	Q	S	C	I	W	E	R	Attacks
<b>Wyvern</b>	9	3 x 2	8	—	2/4	4	(6)	4*	9S, +1 Reach

**Powers:** Enhanced Senses (Low-Light Vision), Immunity to Poisons, Influence (Fear), Venom

**Notes:** Movement multiplier for flying is 6. \*2D6 Initiative dice.

**Identification:** A carnivorous scavenger, the North American wyvern resembles a small feathered serpent with dark brown skin. It grows up to 11 meters long, with a wingspan of 20 meters. A solitary animal, the wyvern inhabits desolate places, preferably far from metahuman habitation.



## CRITTER POWERS

### ACCIDENT

A being with this power can cause an apparently normal accident to occur. Depending on the surrounding environment, such accidents can range from embarrassing or ridiculous to potentially fatal. For example, causing someone to trip and fall poses no real danger to a person standing on solid ground. If he happens to be standing on the edge of a cliff, however, tripping could be lethal.

The exact nature of the accident befalling the victim depends on the environment and the critter wielding the power. Typical examples of accidents include tripping a victim with trailing wires or fallen branches, placing an obstacle in a character's way that causes him to fall or prematurely end an action, and striking the victim with a small, nearby object that causes little or no damage but that prevents or hinders an action (a whack in the face by a pile of leaves, a punch in the guts by a branch or a small box and so on). The accident always interrupts the action the victim is attempting to complete, and the character on the receiving end loses at least one Simple or Complex Action.

A character attacked with the Accident power makes a Success Test by rolling a number of dice equal to either his Quickness or Intelligence Attribute, whichever is higher, against a target number equal to the Essence Rating of the being using the power. If the character rolls at least 1 success, he manages to evade the accident (for example, he ducks instinctively as a branch flies at his face, or stumbles without falling). If he rolls no successes, he suffers the full effect(s) of the accident.

### ADAPTIVE COLORATION (SELECTIVE)

The most common form of the Adaptive Coloration power affects the visual band of the electromagnetic spectrum, including the part used by dwarfs, trolls and others with natural thermographic vision. This power gives a creature the ability to refract light around itself and become almost invisible. When the creature remains immobile, the Target Number for the Perception Test required to detect it is 10; when the creature is moving, the Target Number is 8. Because this power plays merry hell with the depth perception of anyone attacking the creature, add a +2 modifier to all target numbers for ranged attacks against it. This power works against natural and cybernetic thermographic vision, but has no effect against non-visual senses such as sonar, radar or scent tracking.

Less common forms of Adaptive Coloration refract sound waves, microwave radar, or are limited to narrower bands of the electromagnetic spectrum. Creatures listed in this book as having the Adaptive Coloration power have the common form unless otherwise stated.

### ALIENATION

The alienation power allows a being to shroud its victim(s) in an aura that renders the target invisible to others. Treat this as an invisibility spell with a Force Rating equal to the creature's Essence and a duration equal to the creature's Essence in hours.

The effects of the Alienation power differ from those of a standard invisibility spell in the following ways.

The Alienation power is not intended as a beneficial form of invisibility. It renders its victims intangible, inaudible, odorless (if appropriate) and undetectable by both thermographic and normal vision. Those who fail the Perception Test needed to detect an alienated character are completely unaware of him; they may fire a slug through him or drive a vehicle over him without realizing it.

A creature using Alienation must make an opposed test, rolling a number of dice equal to its Essence against a target number equal to the victim's Willpower. The victim then rolls a number of dice equal to his Willpower against a target number equal to the being's Essence. If the creature rolls 1 or more net successes, the power works against the chosen target. Characters making a Perception Test to see the alienated victim use the creature's Essence Rating as the target number, adding +1 for each net success the creature rolls in the opposed test.

### ANIMAL CONTROL

Some Awakened beings have heightened empathy with mundane animals, often limited to a specific breed such as cats, reptiles or wolves. The Animal Control power gives the critter the ability to prevent the affected animal from attacking it, raising an alarm and so on. By concentrating (meaning that the being can take no other actions), the being with this power can control an individual animal, experiencing the world through its senses and directing its behavior. However, the being cannot make the controlled animal perform an action it would not normally perform. The animal cannot use skills it does not possess (no car-driving monkeys), behave wildly out of character (no kittens savagely attacking trolls), or do anything fatally stupid (no dogs jumping off cliffs in an effort to fly).

The number of small animals (domestic cats, rats and so on) that a creature can control with this power equals its Charisma  $\times$  1D6. A being may use this power to control a number of larger animals (wolves, lions, dogs and the like) equal to its Charisma. If the creature has no Charisma Rating, give it a Rating of 1 for the purposes of using this power. Animals affected by Animal Control cannot resist the power. Ally spirits inhabiting an animal form are immune to this power, as are other spirits and shapechanged or transformed beings in animal form.

### BINDING

A creature with Binding power can make a victim stick to a specific surface—earth, concrete, sand and so on. This power is limited by the surrounding terrain: a being using Binding in the Sahara Desert cannot make its victim stick to concrete. A being employing this power must roll at least 1 net success in an opposed test using its Essence against the victim's Willpower. To perform any action requiring movement against the surface, such as running or walking, an affected victim must make a successful Strength Test against the Force of the binding using a target number equal to the Essence Rating of the attacking creature. Used against a prone target, this power has particularly devastating effects.



A being can also use this power to bind parts of a victim together, but only if the target has limbs, wings or other tangible appendages. (A toxic earth spirit or a jellyfish makes a lousy choice of target for this type of attack.) Make the tests described above to determine whether the Binding power affects the victim by binding it to itself, and whether it can move once affected.

### COMPULSION

A creature with Compulsion power can compel a victim to perform a specific physical action, as if the victim had fallen under a control actions spell. If a victim of this power attempts to use a skill, add a +4 modifier to all target numbers for that skill. When a creature attacks using the Compulsion power, make an opposed test pitting the creature's Essence against the target's Willpower. For every 2 net successes the creature rolls, it can control one action by the victim. The creature must control the victims' actions immediately upon exercising the Compulsion power; a creature cannot compel someone to do something in the future. Compulsion affects only the victim's actions, not his consciousness.

### CONCEALMENT

The Concealment power allows a creature to hide within its terrain rather than becoming invisible. A creature may use Concealment to hide itself, its summoner (in the case of a nature spirit), and any companions from danger. It may also hide objects from curious searchers. Unlike invisibility, Concealment allows fellow beings affected by the power to detect each other normally (for example, a Concealed summoner can see the spirit protecting him). For anyone or anything attempting to see the Concealed creature(s) or object(s), add the creature's Essence Rating to the target number for any Perception Tests the gamemaster allows. For example, if the gamemaster determines that the Perception Test to perceive the hiding creature has a Target Number of 5, use of the Concealment power increases the Target Number to 5 + (creature's Essence).

### CONFUSION

The Confusion power enables a creature to make victims lose their sense of direction and purpose, so that they wander aimlessly through the terrain it controls. Make an opposed test to determine if the power affects the victim, pitting the victim's Willpower against the creature's Essence. The consequences of this power vary widely. A hearth spirit causing confusion in a house might lead to nothing worse than someone bumping into walls or mistaking a closet door for an exit. Confusion in the terrain of a mountain spirit can easily lead someone to stroll over the nearest cliff.

Characters who attempt any Success Tests while affected by Confusion must modify all target numbers by one-half (round down) the number of net successes generated by the creature in the opposed test made to use the power. In addition, whenever an affected victim needs to make a decision, he must make a Willpower Test against a target number equal to the Essence of the creature that used the power. If he rolls no successes, the victim cannot make up his mind what to do. Depending on the situ-

ation, this outcome may have variable consequences. The gamemaster may have a victim do nothing, or the victim may continue to do whatever he was doing before succumbing to Confusion. If the victim has unaffected companions who remind him to do something different, or if he is attacked, he may make a new Willpower Test. If left alone, the confused victim will eventually wander away from the terrain of the being using this power, at which point his mental fog vanishes. The Confusion power only works within the territory of the being using it.



### CORROSIVE SALIVA

Creatures that can spit corrosive saliva make dangerous enemies in melee combat. Corrosive saliva rapidly degrades armor and does considerable damage to unprotected flesh. Each time such a creature engages in any type of melee attack, it can simultaneously spit its saliva at a suitably located target. For example, if one character attacks a 20-meter spitting lizard from the front, another character striking its tail does not make a plausible target. To attack by spitting during melee combat, the creature makes a ranged combat attack as normal, except that the target makes a Damage Resistance Test using Quickness dice rather than Body dice. The target may still use Combat Pool dice. Compare the successes per the rules for resolving ranged combat (p. 87, **SR11**). Each net success the creature rolls permanently reduces by 1 the Ballistic and Impact Ratings of any armor worn by the victim, with a maximum total reduction equal to the creature's Body Rating. When the Impact and Ballistic Ratings of the armor reach 0, a victim no longer has armor. Unarmored victims must make a Body Resistance Test against a Damage Code of (creature's Body Rating)L. For every 2 net successes the creature rolls when resolving ranged combat, the Power of the attack increases by 1.

## CORROSIVE SECRETIONS

Creatures with this power exude dangerously corrosive skin secretions. Touching the creature's body with bare flesh causes damage on each turn that the contact is maintained. Any successful melee attack against such a creature inflicts damage to armor exactly as for corrosive saliva. An unarmored victim engaging in a melee attack must make a Body Resistance Test against a Damage Code of (creature's Essence)L. Reduce the target number by 1 for each point of Reach possessed by the attacker's melee weapon.

Any successful melee hit by a creature with the Corrosive Secretions power increases the target number for the victim's Body Resistance Test by 2.

Corrosive secretions pose particular hazards for characters wearing delicate bodyware, such as smartgun-link palm contacts. To avoid damage to such sensitive equipment, a character engaging in melee combat must automatically make a Body Resistance Test against a target number equal to the being's Essence. If the character rolls no successes, the cyberware is damaged and requires repairs at a cost equal to half the original price. As with all melee attacks, if the character is using a melee weapon with a 1- or 2-point Reach, subtract the weapon's additional Reach from the target number.

## DARKNESS

This power allows a creature to cloak itself in darkness, making it appear to be a shadow. Though useless for concealment in daylight or bright illumination, and redundant in full darkness, a creature using this power in any other lighting conditions is extremely difficult to detect. Apply the following modifiers to target numbers for Perception Tests made under the following conditions.

Minimal Light:	+2
Partial Light:	+4
Glare:	-1

The above modifiers apply only to Perception Tests made under these conditions. Though a creature using Darkness cannot be seen by thermographic vision or sonar, radar can detect it.

## DESIRE REFLECTION

The Desire Reflection power enables a creature to discover the greatest desire of a single target within its range and generate illusions relating to that desire within the target's mind. The creature itself can appear as a harmless or pleasing aspect of those illusions, if it so wishes: faerie beings often hide their true appearances this way. When a being uses this power, make the standard opposed test pitting the being's Essence against the target's Willpower. If the creature rolls any net successes, treat the victim as if affected by an entertainment spell with a Force Rating equal to the being's Essence. For every 2 net successes the creature generates in the opposed test, increase the effective Force Rating by 1.

Unlike an entertainment spell, the Desire Reflection power does not require a willing victim to work. If the victim is attacked or injured, or his companions shout at him, slap him and so on, he makes another opposed test against the being's Essence to

end the power's influence. Left to their own devices, victims will indulge themselves as if their desire has come true (scooping up imaginary credsticks or hardware, strangling their hallucinatory nemesis, fondling an imaginary boytoy or joygirl and so on). They will wander off once they have had enough.

## ELECTRICAL PROJECTION

This power allows a creature to strike a single target with a powerful electrical discharge. A victim may not dodge or defend against such a strike, making this power extremely dangerous. An electrical projection strike inflicts (Body or Essence)M damage; to minimize such damage, the victim may make a Body Resistance Test. Impact armor protects the wearer.

In addition to the damage noted above, an attack with the Electrical Projection power causes disorientation for a number of Combat Turns equal to the attacking being's Essence. A disoriented victim can perform no actions except for simple self-defense. If self-defense requires the use of skills, increase all target numbers for the skill Success Tests by 4. For Perception Tests, Body Resistance Tests to avoid further damage and the like, increase target numbers by 2. A disoriented character cannot use magic.

The Electrical Projection power also plays havoc with sensitive equipment carried by the affected character. Nothing happens to simple weapons, but scanners, security and communication devices, and cyberware may burn out. Any electrical projection strike that does Moderate or greater damage affects ID6 such devices. To determine the specific effects of the strike, see p. 98, **Street Samurai Catalog**, or pp. 39-40, **Shadowtech**, for details on cyberware damage. For gear to survive an electrical projection attack, the player carrying the device must roll 3 dice against a target number equal to the Power of the attack. If the gamemaster decides that a particular device is partially insulated, or has customized features that protect it against such attacks (for example, surge protectors), he may allow the player character to roll additional dice. If the character rolls no successes, the electrical projection attack fries his equipment. Tough luck, chummer.

## ENGULF

A being with this power can draw its victim either into itself (for example, a fire elemental) or into the terrain or element appropriate to its nature (for example, certain aquatic creatures). The victim suffers all the effects of being submerged in the substance, the least of which is usually drowning or suffocation.

The gamemaster makes an opposed test using the being's Essence and the target's Willpower. If the creature achieves a single net success, the victim enters the substance at his or her normal movement rate. If the creature rolls additional net successes, the victim enters the substance at running speed, if appropriate. Once within the substance, the victim begins to drown, burn or suffer other appropriate effects. As long as the creature continues to exercise its Engulf power, the victim may not escape. The creature's attack on another victim, whether physical, magical or using a critter power, automatically releases the first victim.

Spirits use the Engulf power according to the following rules.

Treat the engulf attack as a melee attack. The spirit uses its Quickness Attribute to attack the target. Targets may counter-



tack per melee combat rules (p. 100, **SR11**) to avoid being engulfed. If the victim is engulfed, he suffers the effects described below, depending on the substance engulfing him. In all cases, the victim must make a Body Resistance Test to resist damage for each of the spirit's actions.

Engulfed victims may attempt to escape their wretched state while still conscious. Each time the victim takes an action, he makes an opposed test pitting his Strength Attribute against the spirit's Essence Rating. If the victim rolls any net successes, he breaks free of the engulfing substance and may try to escape the affected area (by running from the flames or wading out of the water, for example). Simply escaping from the affected area may not necessarily get the character out of the element, however. It may be a long swim to shore ...

**Fire Engulf:** (Essence)M damage. Add a +2 modifier to the Power Rating for the flame aura power. Impact armor helps resist damage; ballistic armor provides no protection. Clothing and equipment may burn, explode, melt or short out when engulfed in fire, as the gamemaster deems appropriate.

**Water Engulf:** (Essence)M Stun damage on the first action. Increase the Power Rating for each subsequent action by +1 until that rating equals double the attacking being's Essence. Being engulfed by water feels nastier than ordinary drowning. Victims who pass out may still suffer damage from the spirit's actions; they take Physical damage and eventually die.

**Earth Engulf:** (Essence)S crushing damage. Impact armor helps resist damage, but ballistic armor does not.

**Air Engulf:** (Essence)S Stun damage as if from the Noxious Breath power. The affected character makes a Body Resistance Test using his Body or Willpower Attribute, whichever is higher. Because the spirit can penetrate breathing gear and similar protective systems, this equipment offers no defense. After passing out, the engulfed victim begins to sustain Physical damage and eventually dies.

## ENHANCED PHYSICAL ATTRIBUTES

This power allows a creature to increase one or more of its Physical Attributes by the equivalent of its current Essence Rating. Usually, this power has a short duration, applies to a specific subset of Physical Attributes or gives the Attribute involved a boost equal to a fraction of the being's current Essence. Each creature with this power uses it somewhat differently. Note the details in each individual critter's description, because the variations can get nasty.

## ENHANCED REACTIONS

A creature with this power may add (current Essence  $\div$  2) dice to its Initiative rolls (round fractions down). The gamemaster should use discretion to limit this power's duration and/or the number of uses available.

## ENHANCED SENSES

Many creatures have enhanced sensory capabilities such as heat-sensing organs, sonar, improved hearing and sense of smell, low-light and thermographic vision, motion detection, the ability to sense electrical or electromagnetic field disturbances and the

like. Such enhancements generally operate all the time. Individual critter entries specify which enhanced senses each critter possesses.

## ESSENCE DRAIN

This power allows a creature to drain another creature's Essence, adding the points drained to its own Essence Rating. This power may be either temporary or permanent.

### Permanent Drain

A creature can only inflict permanent Essence Drain if the target is in the grip of a powerful emotion: a lover's passion, the terror of an unwilling victim, the rage of a defeated enemy. This overwhelming emotion must be directed at the creature attempting Essence Drain. In addition, the creature must ingest some of the victim's physical substance, even if only a small amount (blood drunk by a vampire, flesh eaten by a wendigo and so on).

A fiercely resisting victim will not succumb to permanent Essence Drain. The victim must either participate willingly or the creature must physically or magically subdue him. The psychic stimulus created by the touch of the creature using this power (the vampire's bite or kiss, for example) opens an empathic link between creature and victim, so that the victim feels euphoria at being drained. This high can become addictive. The first time he suffers Essence drain, the victim must make a Willpower Success Test against a Target Number 2. The target number increases by 1 for each subsequent occasion that the victim has his Essence drained by the same kind of creature. If the character fails the test, he is addicted and will actively cooperate in current and future drainings. He may even seek an opportunity to be drained again. This behavior usually leads to Essence loss; if his Essence drops below zero, the victim dies.

A creature can use permanent Essence Drain against other creatures without the need for strong emotions, but the contact still requires a certain amount of undisturbed time. This action requires an opposed test between attacker and victim, both rolling a number of dice equal to their Essence Ratings against a Target Number of 4. The winner drains the loser of Essence equal to the net successes the winner achieved. For example, two vampires with Essence Ratings of 5 attempt to drain each other's Essence. Each rolls five dice. The first vampire rolls 1 success, and the other vampire rolls 4 successes. This result allows the second vampire to drain 3 Essence points from the first. A vampire whose Essence drops below zero in this manner dies and stays dead.

A creature with permanent Essence Drain power can increase its Essence Rating up to twice the maximum allowed for its type. Humanoid creatures have a maximum Essence Rating of 12. In any given successful attack, the victim suffers a minimum drain of 1 point; the maximum drain equals the victim's Essence Rating before succumbing to the attack.

In rare circumstances, players may need to know exactly how long Essence drain will take (for example, as a group of runners scream across the city in a Landrover to rescue a friend from a vampire's mansion). As a rule of thumb, each Essence point takes half as long to drain, in minutes, as the current Essence Rating of the creature using the power (round fractions up). Using this guideline, a vampire with Essence 5 draining a victim with

Essence 5 will drain the first point in three minutes, the second point in three more minutes (totaling six minutes), the third point four minutes later, the fourth four minutes after that (fourteen minutes and counting), and the fifth and final point (killing its victim) in five additional minutes.

**FEAR**

The Fear power allows a creature to overwhelm a victim with terror of either the creature or the terrain it occupies. The victim panics, running as fast as possible to what he or she perceives as the nearest safe place. To determine the degree of terror generated, the gamemaster makes an opposed test pitting the creature's Essence against the target's Willpower, and counts the number of successes. With 1 success, the victim runs like crazy. With 2 successes, he runs and does not come back. With 4 successes, the victim flees, does not come back and sweats blood if anyone mentions the creature and/or the place. Six or more net successes saddle the victim with a disabling phobia.

**FLAME PROJECTION**

This power enables a being to project flames, usually in the form of fiery breath. In addition to scorching people or other creatures, this power can also set on fire flammable objects such as ammunition or explosives. This attack has a Damage Code of (Essence)M, and the victim makes a standard Body Resistance Test to reduce damage. Impact armor provides protection, but ballistic armor does not. Maximum range for this attack is limited to a distance in meters equal to the creature's current Essence, because the fiery area must originate at some point on the creature's body. For example, fiery breath comes from the creature's mouth.

The creature may sustain this attack for more than one action, in which case it continuously projects the flame into the area of effect. The area of effect is a number of square meters equal to the creature's Essence. If the creature sustains its attack, those within the affected area must make Damage Resistance Tests for each of the creature's actions. Such sustained flame projection, however, causes the creature to suffer drain in much the same way as a magician; the Drain Code is (Essence)S.

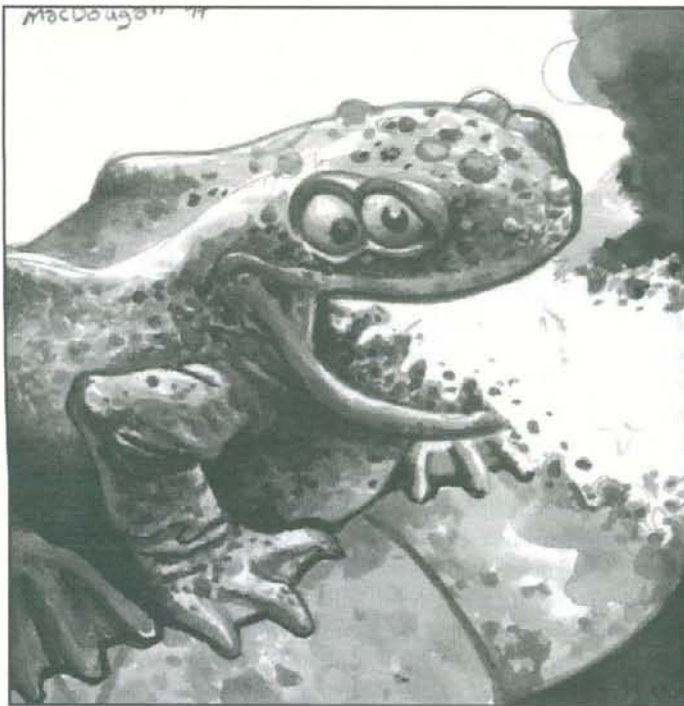
Their high Essence Ratings allow dracoforms to use this power in a more terrifying manner than other creatures. The range of attack equals the dracoform's Essence squared, and it can affect a maximum area equal to the same value in square meters. Add a -2 modifier to the target number for all Drain Tests made by dragons.

**GUARD**

The Guard power enables a creature to prevent any accident due to natural causes or the Accident power operating within the creature's terrain. Because the Guard power affects the surrounding environment, it may counter the Accident power, but does not prevent blunders from carelessness or fumbling because a character fails a Skill, Quickness or other Success Test.

**HARDENED ARMOR**

Creatures with hardened armor have an exoskeleton that



possesses the same qualities as vehicle armor. See p. 108, **SR11**, for more information.

**HYPNOTIC SONG**

A creature with the Hypnotic Song power can influence the minds of all who hear it. Treat the song as an attack with a Damage Code of (Essence)M; victims make an opposed test to resist damage. Apply the result, determined by the victim's net successes, to that character's Stun Condition Monitor. Once all spaces on that monitor are filled, the fascinated victim becomes immobile, unable to initiate any physical, mental or magical action for as long as the song continues. Cybears with dampening decrease the Damage Code of the attack to (Essence)L. Earplugs can have the same effect, or can reduce the Damage Code slightly to (Essence - 1)M or (Essence - 2)M as the gamemaster deems fit.

A victim attacked while hypnotized in this way may make an opposed test pitting his Willpower against the singing creature's Essence. If the victim rolls any successes, the hypnotic effect is broken. If the song stops, the hypnotic effect ceases, but for all Skill Tests the victim makes in the following turn, he or she must add a +2 modifier to all target numbers until he clears his mind and senses. A victim subjected to multiple hypnotic songs makes only one opposed test, regardless of the number of alluring voices he hears. Treat multiple songs as the same attack.

This power has a radius of effect in meters equal to the creature's Essence multiplied by its Threat Rating.

**ILLUSION**

The Illusion power allows a creature to project images or impressions directly into the mind of a victim within its line of sight. Treat this power in the same way as the Desire Reflection



power, except that the Force Rating of the effect does not exceed the creature's Essence regardless of the number of net successes it generates in the opposed test. Using this power, the creature may create any illusions or images it wishes, not merely those related to the victim's momentary desires.

### IMMUNITY TO AGE

A creature with this power does not age biologically (though it can grow to adulthood, if appropriate). Such creatures can only be killed by accident, disease or violence. Intelligent creatures that possess this power and are capable of imagining their own mortality may take extreme steps to protect themselves from aging or death.

### IMMUNITY TO COLD

This power makes a creature impervious to natural cold, no matter how extreme. If attacked with cold-based magic, the creature uses additional dice, equal to twice its Essence Rating, when making any Resistance Test.

### IMMUNITY TO FIRE

A creature with the Immunity to Fire power uses additional dice equal to double its Essence Rating when making any opposed test against fire-based attacks, magical or nonmagical.

### IMMUNITY TO NORMAL WEAPONS

A creature with this power uses an additional Armor Rating equal to twice its Essence Rating to resist damage from ordinary melee or ranged weapons. This power has no effect against magical weapons. Against elemental-effects damage (fire, vacuum, corrosive acid, water cannon and so on), the number of automatic successes equals the creature's Essence Rating.

### IMMUNITY TO PATHOGENS

A creature with this power uses additional dice equal to twice its Essence Rating when making any Resistance Test to avoid infection. Immunity to Pathogens does not protect the creature against poisons.

All spirits, any critter with an (A) notation following its Essence Rating and all beings with Manifestation power (see **Manifestation**, p. 94) automatically have immunity to pathogens.

### IMMUNITY TO POISONS

A creature with this power uses additional dice equal to twice its Essence Rating whenever it resists damage from a poison or drug. This power may not always work to the creature's advantage—for example, it may block the temporarily helpful effects of certain neuroactive drugs used to boost reflexes, hold fatigue at bay or increase awareness. Strictly speaking, such drugs contaminate the system, and so the Immunity to Poisons power applies to them as well as to obviously harmful substances.

All spirits, any critter with an (A) notation following its Essence Rating and all beings with Manifestation power automatically have immunity to poisons.

### INFLUENCE

The Influence power allows a creature to insinuate suggestions into the mind of a victim, predisposing that victim to a certain emotional state, action or reaction. The gamemaster makes an opposed test pitting the creature's Essence against the victim's Willpower. To reflect the innate weakness of the Influence power, reduce the target number for the victim by 1 and increase the target number for the creature by 1.

The broad range of effects this power can create compensates for its relative weakness. The Influence power is less likely to generate fear than the Fear power, for example, because the creature's target number in the opposed test is higher for fear. If successfully used, however, the Influence power has greater scope. Not only does the victim feel fear, but the Influence power also allows the creature to determine the victim's reaction (the victim may react in some other way than flight). Use the number of net successes the creature rolls in the opposed test to determine the strength of the creature's influence. For guidelines to determine degrees of effect from the Influence power, see **Fear**, p. 92.

Gamemasters should use this power carefully, because it allows a creature considerable scope in influencing victims. What actually happens depends on the circumstances and factors such as the creature's Intelligence Rating.

### MAGICAL GUARD

The Magical Guard power provides the person(s) or creature(s) being guarded with Spell Defense dice equal to the creature's Essence. A creature can extend this power to itself and a number of other creatures equal to its Essence Rating.

### MAGICAL RESISTANCE


A creature with the Magical Resistance power adds its Essence Rating to its Body or Willpower Rating (as appropriate) when resisting the effects of a spell. If attacked with more than one spell in a Combat Turn, add this protection to all Body or Willpower Resistance Tests the creature must make.

### MANIFESTATION

The Manifestation power allows a spirit to appear in physical (manifest) form. Spirits in manifest form assume the Attribute values listed in their individual entries. While in astral form, their Attributes are equal to their Force Rating. Manifest spirits are vulnerable to physical damage.

An attacker striking or shooting at a manifest spirit with a mundane weapon uses his Willpower Attribute rather than the appropriate attack skill to make the Success Test. When fighting spirits, unshakable will counts for more than brute strength or skill with a weapon. Attacks with weapon foci, other magical attacks, and attacks that exploit a particular spirit's vulnerability are not subject to this rule.

Manifest spirits have the Immunity to Normal Weapons power against ranged combat attacks because these do not carry the full force of the attacker's will. Against firearms, spirits use "armor" with a rating equal to twice the spirit's Force Rating. Such armor does not help them, however, against melee attacks. Anyone crazy enough to get within melee range of a spirit must have a strong will and plenty of guts.



Finally, spirits in astral form add +20 to their Reaction. In manifest form, this bonus falls to +10.

### MIST FORM

A creature with this power can transform its physical body into mist by controlling the molecular cohesion of its cells. The mist can pass through any crack or crevice, even penetrating filtration systems that filter out gases or pollution. Systems designed to filter bacteria or viruses are impenetrable barriers against creatures in mist form.

A creature in mist form also has the Immunity to Normal Weapons power, including weapons to which it is vulnerable in its normal form. A creature in mist form can be affected normally by magic. Exposure to a substance to which it is allergic forces the creature to return to its normal, corporeal form. The easiest such allergen to apply is sunlight; other substances require powders or liquids to be sprayed at the mist form. The being must use one Complex Action to resume corporeal form or assume mist form, unless forced out of mist form. In that case the change occurs instantly.

### MOVEMENT

A creature with this power can increase or decrease the movement rates of victims within its terrain, using its own Essence Rating as the maximum multiplier/divider. Unwilling victims make an opposed test pitting the creature's Essence against the target's Willpower to avoid the power's effects. Unwilling creatures forced to travel at dangerously high movement rates may make an additional opposed test each time they suffer damage as a consequence of the forced movement. A creature using the Movement power cannot run a victim into a state of terminal exhaustion without prompting additional resistance from its target. The maximum number of victims the creature can affect at any one time equals the creature's Essence  $\times$  3.

### NOXIOUS BREATH

This power enables a creature to use its nauseating breath to weaken or incapacitate a victim. Treat noxious breath as an attack, with a Damage Code of (creature's Essence)S Stun damage. To reduce or avoid damage, the victim must make a Resistance Test based on his Body or Willpower Rating, whichever is higher. Armor and dermal plating do not help to resist damage, but a respirator reduces the Damage Code to (Essence - 2)L.

### PARALYZING TOUCH (HOWL)

A creature with the Paralyzing Touch power applies the effects of this power to all melee hits, whether or not they cause damage. When a creature with this power touches a victim, make an opposed test pitting the creature's Essence against the target's Willpower. Any net successes the creature rolls reduce the victim's Quickness by 1 point per net success for a number of minutes equal to the creature's Essence. Multiple touches can reduce the victim's Quickness Attribute multiple times. A victim whose Quickness drops to 0 cannot move a muscle; to continue breathing, the victim must make a Willpower Test for each minute he is paralyzed, using the Essence of the creature that paralyzed him as the target number. If the victim rolls no successes in any of these

tests before the paralysis wears off, he stops breathing and will die after a number of minutes equal to his Body Attribute, unless the paralysis fades before that time elapses or someone applies first aid. A surviving victim regains his or her lost Quickness points at a rate of 1 point every 10 minutes.

The aural form of this power, Paralyzing Howl, works in exactly the same way except that the creature need not make physical contact with its victim. Make an opposed test and resolve the power's effects as described above.

### PESTILENCE

A being with the Pestilence power infects its victim with a disease similar to VITAS-3 or as described in the creature's individual entry. To avoid infection, the subject must make a successful Body Resistance Test against a target number equal to the creature's Essence + 2. Armor does not help resist damage. For details of the VITAS-like disease, see p. 186, **SR11**.

### PETRIFYING GAZE

The Petrifying Gaze power is a variation of the Petrification power that requires the creature to gaze into its victim's eyes. Any potential victim within the power's range and the creature's field of vision may meet its gaze. If the victim makes a successful Intelligence Test against a target number equal to the creature's Essence, he manages to avoid meeting the creature's eyes. If the character rolls no successes, he turns to stone.

A creature with this power may petrify a number of victims equal to its Essence Rating. Once it exceeds this number, the longest-petrified victim returns to his or her normal state.

### PSYCHOKINESIS

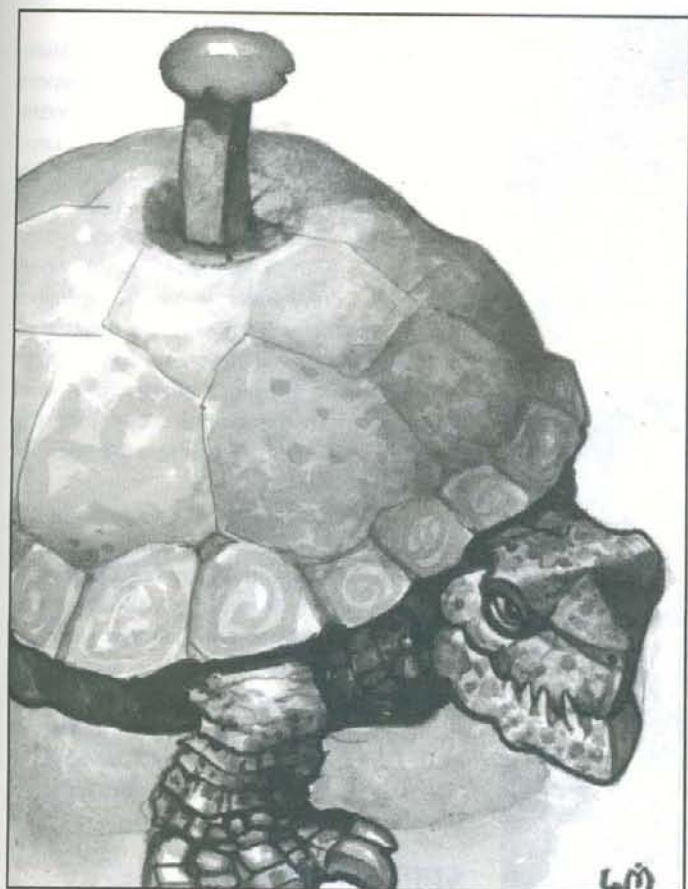
A creature with this power generates psychokinetic energy in a manner identical to the magic fingers spell, with a Force Rating for the spell's effects equal to the creature's Essence.

### REGENERATION

The Regeneration power makes a being formidable. Wounds cannot kill it unless they cause massive damage to key parts of its body (brain, spine and so on). If the creature suffers a Deadly Physical wound or fatal cumulative wounds within the same Combat Turn according to the **Shadowrun** rules, roll 1 die. A result of 1 indicates that the creature is dead or dying. With any other result, all sustained damage disappears at the end of the Combat Turn. (During the turn, the wounds still produce appropriate modifiers for skill use, movement and so on per standard rules.) If the wounds involve massive tissue damage (multiple frag grenades, fire, explosion, head-on hit from an assault cannon or being run over by a tank, for example), then a creature that sustains a Deadly Physical wound dies on a result of 1 or 2.

### SEARCH

The Search power allows a being to seek any person, place or object within its terrain. Its rating for perceiving hidden objects, people or creatures is equal to twice its Essence Rating. When searching for a person or other being, it will find the object of its search if it rolls any net successes in an opposed test against the



target's Intelligence. If the searching creature knows exactly what it is looking for ("Gotta find that fragging elf mage with the blue cloak!"), reduce the creature's target number by 1. If the creature is searching for an object, which has no Intelligence, the creature makes a Perception Test against a Target Number 4 (or less, if the gamemaster considers the object easy to detect). For more information on the search power, see p. 65, *Grimoire II*.

### SONIC PROJECTION

A being with the Sonic Projection power can make a cry that causes physical pain to other creatures, usually terrifying or enraging unintelligent victims. Humans or metahumans who do not block the sound add +2 to all target numbers during the turn in which the creature cries out, but only after the action on which it does so. The cry does not affect other actions made earlier in the turn. The +2 modifier does not apply to characters with cyberears equipped with dampers, but increases to +3 for characters with cyberears equipped with extended high-frequency response. Decrease all penalties by 1 point if the target rolls any net successes in an opposed test pitting his or her Willpower against the creature's Essence.

Some creatures can utter a sonic projection cry at a frequency inaudible to humans and metahumans without augmented hearing (for example, high-frequency response augmentation). In such cases, the Sonic Projection power only affects such augmented targets. Individual creature entries specify any restrictions to the frequency range of sonic projection.

### VENOM

The Venom power allows a creature to make one or more poisonous attacks with a Damage Code of (Essence)S unless otherwise noted. Treat use of this power as a toxin (p. 186, *SRII*) with a speed factor of 1 turn.

### WEATHER CONTROL

The weather control power enables a creature to call up certain weather conditions. The weather must be suitable to the environment (no blizzards in Death Valley or heat waves in Iceland, for example) and requires an appropriate catalyst (for example, a low-pressure system must exist for a creature to call up a thunderstorm). The weather condition builds over a period of time, reaching its peak in 1D6 hours. To shorten this time, the creature makes an Essence Test against a Target Number 8. Each success reduces the time by an hour, to a minimum of one hour. If the gamemaster wishes, he may reduce this target number as he deems appropriate if the being can easily call up the weather condition in question (a creature tries to start a downpour on a cloudy day, for example). The creature only calls up the desired weather; the weather does not remain under the creature's control. For example, a creature that summons a lightning storm cannot direct where the lightning bolts will strike.

### WEAKNESSES

#### ALLERGY

Many beings react negatively to certain substances or environmental factors. Normally, the effects last only as long as the being is in contact with the substance (though wounds suffered from such contacts heal normally, not immediately upon ceasing contact). Common allergy-causing substances and factors include iron, silver, plastics, pollutants, sunlight and "holy" objects (reactions to the latter appear to be psychosomatic). The degree to which an allergy affects a creature is important in determining the effects and the creature's attitude toward its own weakness.

**Nuisance:** A Nuisance allergy irritates the creature but has no significant effects in game terms.

**Mild:** A Mild allergy causes the creature mild discomfort and distraction; add a +1 modifier to all target numbers.

**Severe:** In addition to the effects of a Mild allergy, the allergen's touch is painful to the creature, often forcing it to retreat from the substance. The gamemaster may allow the creature to make a Willpower Test against a target number appropriate to the circumstances to determine its reaction in such cases. Add +1 to the Power Rating when using a weapon made of the allergen or coated with it against an allergic creature.

**Extreme:** In addition to the effects noted for a Severe allergy, the slightest contact with the allergen causes the creature extreme discomfort and physical harm. Any contact with weapons made of the substance causes an automatic Light wound, in addition to any other damage suffered under standard combat rules.



### DIETARY REQUIREMENT

The diet of a creature with this weakness must contain certain substances—often trace minerals, but sometimes more esoteric compounds. Without the specified key dietary requirement, the creature sickens and eventually dies. This weakness has little significance in tactical situations.

### VULNERABILITY

The metabolisms of some creatures can be disrupted drastically by weapons made of particular substances or by certain forms of attack. Increase the Damage Level of such weapons by one when used against a vulnerable creature. For example, a 2L wooden club becomes a 2M weapon against a creature with a vulnerability to wood. However, creatures with vulnerabilities recover normally from wounds inflicted by such weapons. Treat simple contact with the substance as a Nuisance allergy. If a player character tricks the creature into ingesting the substance, the being suffers the effects of an Extreme allergy.

Aside from wood, other common vulnerabilities include fire, poisons and so on. In these cases, the Damage Level again increases by one for attacks with these substances or elements. For example, a fireball spell striking a creature with a vulnerability to fire would cause Deadly damage rather than the usual Serious damage. If the attack form already inflicts Deadly damage (a Hellblast spell, for example), the Power of the attack increases by 2.

### SPIRIT POWERS

All spirit powers used in this adventure are described on pp. 79-81, **Grimore II**, except for the Animal Command power used by the possessed Dr. Reginald Disball in **Basar Instincts** (p. 51).

### ANIMAL COMMAND

The Animal Command power allows the spirit to use animals like drones. It can look through the eyes of one animal or command many in a captain's-chair position. To take over an animal requires the spirit to make a successful opposed test pitting its Force Rating against the target's Willpower; the more net successes the spirit generates, the tighter its control. Unlike Possession, this power may be used on more than one animal at a time, up to the spirit's Force Rating.

The spirit may add its Spirit Power to only one animal's Physical Attributes at a time, but may switch animals between Combat Turns. An animal under this power's influences replaces its own Mental Attributes with those of the controlling spirit. This power cannot be used on creatures designated as sentient in **SR11**.

Animal Command is an extremely rare power. Its capabilities and limits should remain mysterious, and gamemasters should not inject it into an ongoing campaign without careful consideration.

“Once, you were the predator.  
Now You’re the prey!”



**W**hen magic returned to the world, it transformed humans into elves, dwarfs, orcs and trolls—and ordinary animals into fantastic creatures out of legends and nightmares. New creatures arose overnight, all of them unique and potentially deadly. Shadowrunners may go up against saber-toothed cats, sea monsters, giant lizards that turn the unwary to stone, or even more dangerous animals. From the sewers of the urban jungle to the wilds of Africa and Amazonia to a zoo full of critters gone mad, it's time to find out who'll survive: man or beast!

**Predator and Prey** is a collection of three **Shadowrun** adventures that pit metahumanity against powerful and dangerous Awakened creatures. For the first time, shadowrunners are plucked from familiar surroundings and placed in environments that favor their paranormal antagonists. Player characters must survive everything from giant reptiles in the sewers of Seattle to an attack by swarms of bloodthirsty monkeys in the middle of the African jungle. **Predator and Prey** contains all the information needed to play, including details about adventure locations, creature statistics and powers. **Predator and Prey** is intended for gamemasters and players of all experience levels.

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