

SHADOWLAND

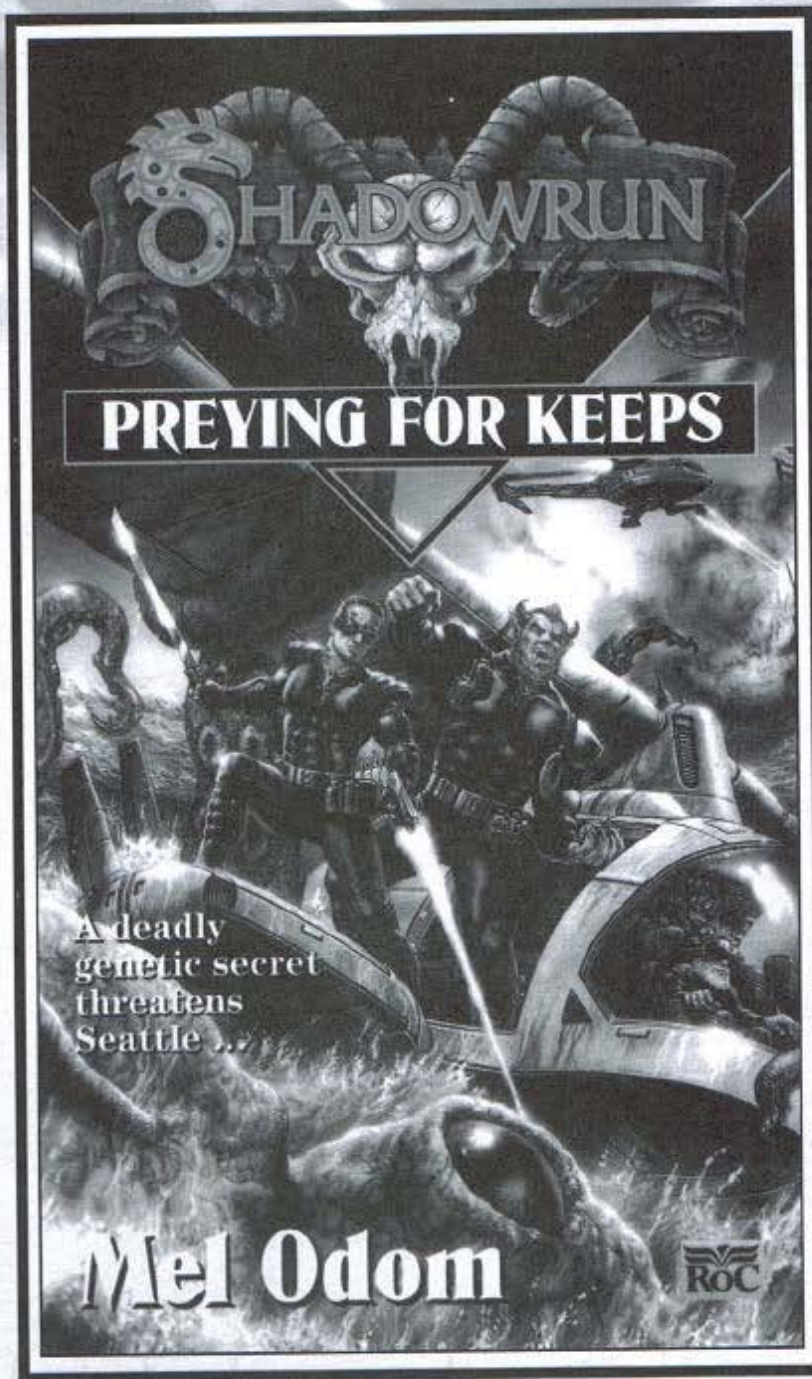
\$6.50 U.S.



VOL. 3

Artwork by Jeff Laubenstein

A DEADLY GENETIC SECRET THREATENS SEATTLE...



When ace shadowrunner Jack Skater leads his team of commandos in a raid on an elven ocean freighter, things get a little sticky. Yakuza hitmen crash the party, and a Japanese shaman whips up a titanic sea creature just to insure that nobody no gets out alive. Now, having narrowly escaped, Skater wants to find out who set him up.

It isn't going to be easy. The runners quickly find themselves wrapped up in a sinister scheme involving Skater's ex-wife, elven gene corporations, a ruthless mafioso named McKenzie, and stolen data disks containing secrets worth killing for. It's a high-tech mega-mess with no way out. Then a ghastly virus hits Seattle, unleashing hordes of homicidal cannibals into the streets...and Skater and company have to fight to just stay alive! ON SALE IN MAY!

FASA

SHADOWLAND

**An Official
Publication Devoted
to FASA's
Shadowrun
Roleplaying Game**

Volume #3 \$6.50US

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Sword of the Knight
Publications, Inc.
2820 Sunset Lane #116
Henderson, KY 42420 USA
Voice/Fax: 502-826-1218
Net: SwdKnght@aol.com

Editor

Kevin D. Knight

Associate Editor

Brenda K. Knight

Macintosh Guru

Richard Biever

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The Editor Speaks...

Greetings and welcome to the third issue of Shadowland, the Shadowrun support magazine brought your way by Sword of the Knight Publications! We hope you enjoy and come back for more!

Sorry for this issue being a little late, but various events conspired to bring this about.

Kevin Knight

Comments from our readers...

Keep up the good work. I enjoy the support. It makes my job as GM so much easier.

Lee DeBoer

I want to see some exotic cyberware, like nose cyberware!

John Garrison

Nose cyberware?!

KK

Great piece of work. I hope we'll see more of Pariah Dane in the future.

David van Nederveen Meerkerk

Yes, hopefully Phillip will come up with some more soon...

KK

In both issues I enjoyed the Magic & Matrix sections out of everything else. I hope to see more of the same in upcoming issues.

Joe M. Cluts, Jr.

We can only publish what we are sent in. We don't commission articles. So if anyone has any cool ideas for Shadowrun, send them our way!

KK

Absolutely superb! Keep up the good work.

Todd Amick

Excellent fiction. Keep up the good work.

Brad Patty

See the next comment...

You need less fiction and more useful information.

Aaron C. Lucck

Well, we can't have it both ways, can we :-)? We just publish what we are sent by our loyal readers!

KK

Great Volume! Loved all the magic and the artwork was terrific. Keep up the good work!

Darcy Glawine

Tiger reminds me of one or two REAL people I know and kung fu flicks. I love the "twisted" kind of stories!

Trinlay Khadro

Thanks! Glad you liked!

KK

How Are We Doing???

Thanks to the 55 (odd, same as with issue #1...) people who sent in their response cards from Volume #2! Please keep sending in your response cards, we really like to know what you think of our magazine! Winners of free copies of Volume #3 are Ben Zitterkopf, James Hash, and Ken Prejean! Congrats!

Each issue we'll draw out three response cards and send free copies of the next issue to those people! So send your response cards in!!!

Responses from Volume #2...

Article	Rating
Lunatic Fringe	3.78
Drak's Drek	2.87
McKissack's Chameleon	3.13
Gift Horse	4.00
A 'Runner's Guide to Magic	3.74
Gross-Frankfurt Sprawl	3.28
Learning & Improving Skills	3.38
Path of the Tiger	3.89
Headaches: Social Animals	3.67
The Hermetic Lodge	3.81

Artist	Rating
John Zeleznik	4.07
Kevin Montanaro	3.87
Bradley McDevitt	3.41
Christian Royse	3.17
Overall Rating of SDL 2	3.95

Get rid of the new critter section. This is not D&D. Gabriel Salazar obviously know nothing about tigers or the mythologies associated with them. Stop using old art for covers.

Robert Hemedes

No, it's not D&D, but new critters are cool, especially Andrew's; and what does Gabriel's knowledge of tiger mythologies have to do with his article. He wrote an article for a fictional game, not a thesis on tiger mythology. Lastly, we use the old FASA art because it's the only way we can afford to have full color covers. If someone wants to do an original cover for us for what FASA's charges us to reprint their old covers (ZIP!), then we'll gladly run it...

KK

I'd like to see sights (Locations for meets, shopping, etc.) plus NPCs. Fiction is fine if art is relevant. "Social Animals" needed more info on Ghoul motives. Unfortunately, I did not feel the 'zine was worth \$6.00.

Sebastian Wiers

Well, subscribe, then it's only \$4.50 :-).

KK

Amethysts

by Jennifer Baker and Christopher Maley

<<all clear>>

Kyte turned and nodded to the other two. "Let's do it."

The door in front of the elves slid open. Kess went in first, then, at her nod, Titania followed. Kyte, the third elf, continued to cover the hallway. As soon as they were through, Kyte backed into the room, watching as the electronic door slid shut. He quickly panned the room with his Ingram Smartgun: two doors, no windows.

"Classy," Kess said, sarcasm mixed with genuine respect. The room was classy, with plush burgundy carpet, teak paneling along the walls, and old world furniture.

"Ohhhh... is that a real Monet?" Titania asked, looking up at a gorgeous painting on the near wall.

"Could be," Kess said, shrugging and rolling reflective silver eyes at the tall and almost painfully thin elf in front of her. Titania brushed back her black hair and stared admiringly at the picture in front of her.

"I've always wanted one of those --"

"That's not what we're here for." Kyte interrupted, impatient as always. "Titania, can you scan astrally and see if we have any unwanted company?" Titania raised a black eyebrow at the impatient elf.

"I can't see through real wood walls. They're organic." Titania replied. Kyte frowned, narrowing light blue eyes.

"Narcissus, what can you see?" He asked, apparently to thin air.

<<door to your left goes to a hallway, and from there to a set of stairs>> said a languid voice into the comlinks in their ears.

"Is it clear?" Kess asked curtly, running her hand through spiky white hair.

<<yes>>

"Where's our destination?"

Kyte asked.

<<a room at the bottom of the stairs>>

"Is it there?" Titania asked.

<<of course>>

"Are you sure?" Kess said, her voice mocking.

<<you doubt me?>> He feigned dismay. Kess rolled her silver eyes again.

<<I saw that>>

"Come on, let's move it." Kyte broke in

with impatience. "You two will have plenty of time for that when we get back to Portland." Kess, her full lips set in a pout, followed as Kyte went silently through



the door and down the empty hallway.

"Does anyone else think it strange we have yet to meet anyone?" Titania asked, looking over her shoulder with worried black eyes.

"I'm trying not to think about that," Kyte said, tense. Something felt strange about this whole run, but he couldn't put his finger on it.

"Maybe they're all in the bathroom." Kess said, snidely. She caught Titania's sidelong glance and shrugged, the only one not worried.

The door at the end of the hall electronically slid open. Kyte motioned them through quickly and they silently descended the stairs. Yet another door at the bottom. They waited for it to open.

<<guys... try the handle. It's one of those old-fashioned manual doors>>

Kyte shrugged and grabbed the ornate brass handle, just as Titania yelled: "Wait!" A loud explosion blew Kyte up the stairs. He slid back down, landing in a crumpled heap. Kess slid her katana out and covered the body at her feet.

"Frag!" Kess coughed, as the smell of ozone and burnt hair filled the narrow passageway. Titania rushed to the moaning Kyte.

"Are you ok?" She asked, although she could see the red burns on his skin. He just moaned in reply. "Hold on," she said, frowning in concentration. She could feel the arcane energy began to form around her thin hands as she moved them fluidly in a complex motion. The tension grew until she finally laid her hands on Kyte's chest. She clenched her teeth with the effort, inwardly cursing the invention of cyberware. The flow of astral energy grew painful before fading away. Titania slumped back on her heels as Kyte slowly sat up, rubbing his short red hair, the burns gone.

"What the frag was that?" Kyte asked. Titania wiped away sweat.

"It was an anchored spell, Mr. Swift. Next time, wait for me to clear it first." Titania answered as Kess helped both of them up.

"Ah, drek!" He began tracking his gun around the corridor. "My smartgun link is fritzing out." Kyte blinked his pale blue eyes, worry lines creasing his forehead.

"Now that you've just attracted everyone's attention, I think it'd be a good idea to get moving." Kess said, her voice heavy with irony as she used a common phrase of Kyte's. She smugly waited for Titania's nod before opening the door. Narce's voice echoed in their ears.

<<I think Kess is right. I'm going to go check-->> He suddenly cut out.

"Narce?" Kess asked, tapping her ear as she stepped into the room. The other two followed and the door swung shut before they realized the room was completely empty.

"Narce? Narce... Narcissus!?" Kess looked at

the other two. They returned her annoyed look, then glanced around the circular room. Bare white walls and floor gave the room a sterile feel.

"Where's the library?" Asked Titania.

"Narcissus, where are you?" Kess said one more time, annoyance quickly changing to alarm.

<<sorry, had an unexpected guest. Didn't think my little Kestrel would be so worried>> His voice taunted her, then paused. <<hey, wait, where are you?>>

"We're in a round room, Princeling, but nothing else is." Kess snapped, narrowing her silver eyes in anger.

<<I told you not to call me that. And according to what I see here, you should be in a library>> He snapped back.

"Well, we're not, so you better figure it out."

"Kess, give it a rest." Kyte interrupted, his light eyes chiding her. "Narce, where do you see us?"

<<that's the problem. I don't see you at all>>

Kess was about to say something again when the floor suddenly gave a shudder. Then, a bit slower than a normal elevator, the room began to drop. Kyte was at the door immediately, but the room began to spin clockwise and the door slid away.

"Frag it all!" Kyte said, moving to catch up with the door. He grabbed the door, yanked it open, and found himself backing away from a snarling gargoyle. With a roar, the gargoyle quickly swung one massive grey arm around. The gargoyle's arm barely missed Kyte's head as he fell to his knees, bringing his gun to bear. The Smartgun bucked in his hand as the silenced rounds ricocheted off the gargoyle's torso. With a booming laugh, the gargoyle reached down, picked up the elf, and threw him against the far wall.

In a blur of motion, Kess spun up to the gargoyle and slashed her katana clean through its arm. Howling in pain, the gargoyle turned to confront her. Kess danced back, her sword ready to parry, as a ball of shimmering blue light erupted from Titania's hands and slammed into the gargoyle. It flew back against the wall, landing next to Kyte. Kyte rolled away frantically as Kess moved in again with her katana. The gargoyle stood, streaks of blue light still dancing across his body. Kess hissed a challenge as she swung her katana in a deadly arc. The gargoyle never had time to answer.

<<hey, what's all the noise about? I thought we were trying to keep this one quiet>>

"Shut up, Princeling." Kess panted, looking down at the decapitated form of the gargoyle.

<<I told you not to call me that. And for your information, I still can't find you>> By this time, the room had stopped moving. The door was back in its original place.

"Well, then, where the hell are we?" Kyte said, getting up slowly. He grimaced and stretched tentatively, then smiled. "Thank god for titanium."

<<as far as I can tell, the door from the stairs

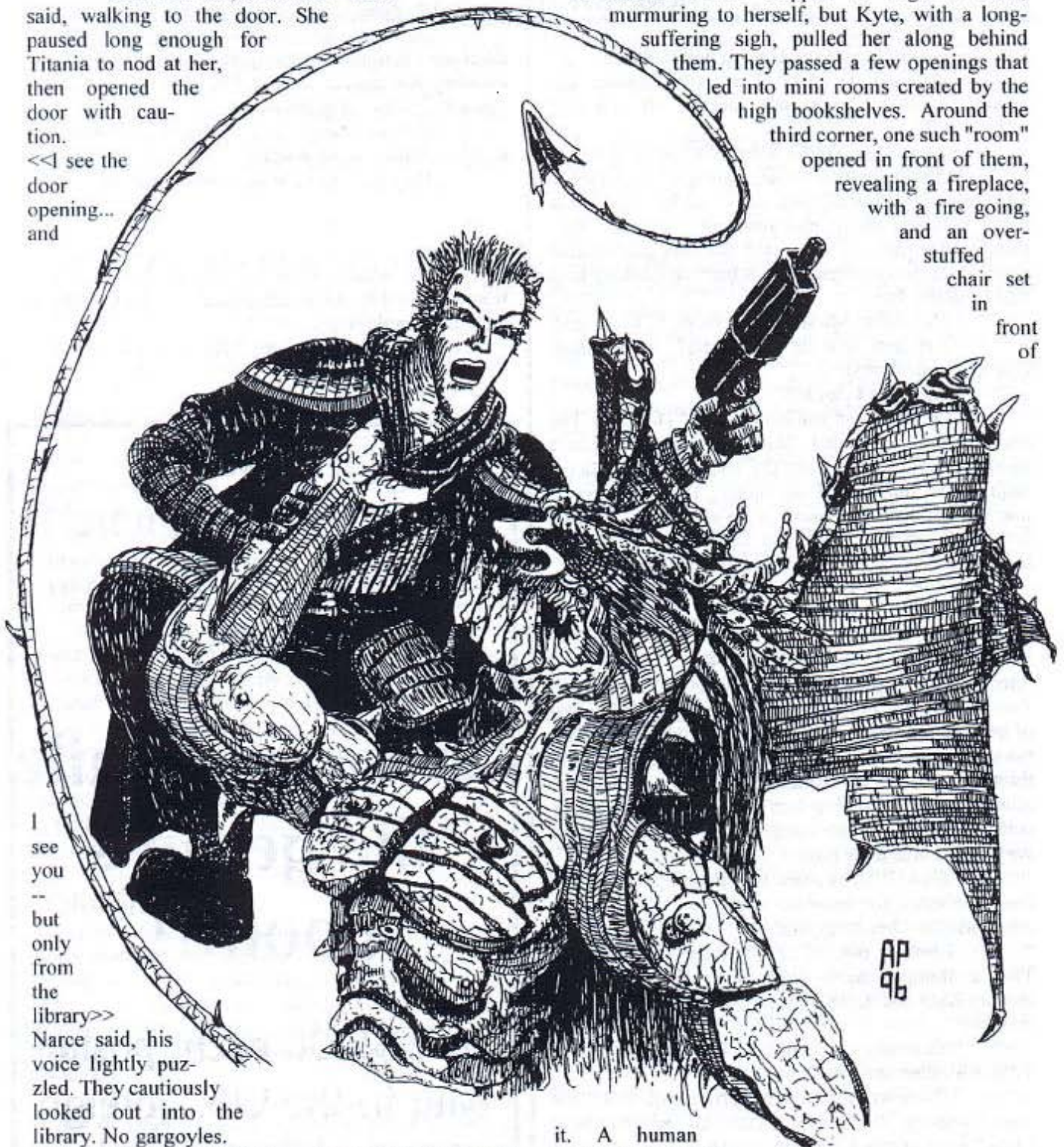
leads directly into a library. The library is empty. The stairs are empty. Where the hell do you think you are?>>

"Let's find out, shall we?" Kess said, walking to the door. She paused long enough for Titania to nod at her, then opened the door with caution.

<<I see the door opening... and

asked, also in an undertone, his muscular body tense.

<<you don't have to whisper, there's no one here>> Narcissus verbally led them through the maze of books. Titania stopped to finger a book, murmuring to herself, but Kyte, with a long-suffering sigh, pulled her along behind them. They passed a few openings that led into mini rooms created by the high bookshelves. Around the third corner, one such "room" opened in front of them, revealing a fireplace, with a fire going, and an overstuffed chair set in front of



I see you -- but only from the library>>

Narce said, his voice lightly puzzled. They cautiously looked out into the library. No gargoyles.

"Um, where did that come from?" Titania whispered, looking over her shoulder at the gargoyle. "And where did the stairs go?"

"Oh, drek, this place just gets weirder." Kess swore under her breath. The scent of old musty books pervaded the air.

"Ok, Narce, you're my eyes. Where to?" Kyte

it. A human male, dressed all in white, sat reading in the chair. They ducked back around the corner.

"I thought you said this place was empty," Kess said through gritted teeth, audible only through the comlinks.

<<it is>> Narce replied, impatient.

"No... It's... Not." Kess said, pushing a frustrated hand through her white hair. "There's a man sitting in there."

<<what?>> Narcissus paused. <<no there isn't>>

"Oh, yes, there is."

<<well, I can't see him, so deal with it>>

"Damned deckers!" Kess swore under her breath. "Why don't you stop jacking off and start jacking in?"

<<but Kess, I'm so bored without you>>

Kyte cleared his throat, glaring with icy eyes at Kess, who glared back, then motioned to Titania. She nodded, sitting down and relaxing. Her thin body slumped forward, an indication that she had entered astral space. In a moment, she sat back up, shaking long hair from her face.

"He's there. Mundane, but there." Titania said.

"Are you sure he's mundane?" Kyte asked, blue eyes calculating.

"As far as I can tell."

"Ok, then, can you help us out?" He asked. The black haired elf nodded. She moved her hands in a complex motion, centering the silence spell. After a small thrust outward of her hands, Titania motioned that the spell was finished. Kyte replied by looking around the corner. He turned back and motioned to them. The three elves snuck past the opening.

<<ok, I got you. Go straight and turn left at the statue of Atlas. There should be a door a little ways past>>

"Another damned door." Kess muttered. "I think someone's playing with our minds."

"I agree. Let's get the item and get the frag out of here." Kyte said, eyeing Atlas. He could have sworn the statue blinked. They walked around the corner and through the door, into a museum like room. Items of all shapes and sizes, all colors and ages, were scattered eclectically around the octagon shaped room. In the very center was their goal.

"There it is." Titania whispered, pointing to a black pedestal, for once not even looking at all the other priceless treasures near-by.

"Check it out." Kyte said, studying the room. Titania slumped again into her relaxed position, leaving Kess and Kyte waiting. A minute passed, and then two.

"It's taking too long," Kess said, right before Titania blinked and shook her head.

"There was a powerful barrier around it," she began, wearily. "It's gone, but it took almost everything I had." Kess grabbed her thin arm to steady her as she stood.

"Well, go get it, Kyte, and let's get the hell out of here." Kess said, holding the mage up. Kyte darted across the room to the pedestal, only to stop, awe-struck. On the pedestal lay the most beautiful amethyst he had ever seen. It was perfectly cut into the shape

of a star, with a black rose etched into the center. He hesitated before pulling out a silk bag. It took all his willpower to take his eyes off the gem and put it in the sack. Then a quick motion and the bag was inside his armor jacket and he was back with the others.

"All right, let's haul," he said gruffly. It took them only a minute to navigate the library, this time avoiding the man in white. The door in the library opened directly on to the stairs.

<<congratulations, you didn't disappear this time!>> Narcissus said wryly.

They all looked at each other and ran.

* * *

The man in white looked out a window and watched the three elves disappear into the crowds on the busy Seattle street.

"Now the fun begins." He said, and smiled.

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Arabian Magic in the Sixth World

by Stephen Kenson

The magic of the mysterious East was the subject of many legends in Middle Ages Europe. Moorish alchemists sought the secret of eternal life, Arabian astrologers used the stars to predict the future and frightful djinn and ifrit roamed the desert sands. Now, after the Awakening, many of the legends and magical tales of the Middle East have come to life in new and startling ways.

THE ARABIAN MAGICIAN

Magic has become a generally accepted fact of life in Islamic culture, as it has in other parts of the world. It is a tool, a natural gift of Allah, which can be used by men for good or evil. Only the most fundamentalist Shiite sects see magical ability as inherently evil. Magicians in those areas are persecuted and killed as devil-spawn.

The magician in Islamic culture is a figure of intellect and learning, a scholar of the same status as a holy man or scientist. Magicians study the secrets of the universe and have been granted special gifts and responsibilities by Allah.

The first is the magician's gift of clear sight. Wizards are able to see through illusions and perceive the true form of a thing, no matter what its outward appearance. Disguises and deceptions are of little use against them.

Aura reading is commonly used as a means of diving the truth in the courts of many Islamic nations and the advice of a respected magician is held in high esteem. Mages are also known for their skill in prophecy, using astrology, sand-reading and dream interpretation to gain some clue of the divine plan. This skill is not quite as reliable as the true Sight, but divination spells are often quite useful.

SORCERY

Arabian magic focuses more on information and transformation than Western sorcery. Combat spells are very rare—most Islamic wizards shun them in favor of less direct methods such as Petrify and Transform. Sleep is a fairly common spell, but most other combat spells are virtually unknown by any but military magicians.

Illusion magic abounds, and the walled gardens and homes of Islamic mages are often wonderlands of fantastically crafted images. Some have shown concern that the magical creation of images may be considered blasphemy, since it impinges on Allah's role as the sole Creator, but most mages do not concern themselves.

Magicians are as skilled at disguise and deception as they are at seeing through it. Around a mage, all may

not be what it appears. This control over appearance also extends to form and Transformation spells are quite common, especially shapeshift.

The Shapeshifter's Duel

A tradition among Islamic mages is a duel using the shapeshift spell. While the duel is in effect, each magician assumes a series of shapes, trying to use superior knowledge and cunning to overcome his opponent. Each participant cast shapeshift normally at the start of the duel. During the duel, the magician may not use other magic, but may assume a new shape as a Simple Action. Each form change requires a new Force Success Test, but does not require an additional Drain Resistance Test. Remember that the magician is limited to forms within two Body points of his own Body Attribute.

This sort of combat exists in numerous traditions. At the gamemaster's discretion, any magician who knows the shapeshift spell may participate in such a duel. Indeed, it would be interesting to see such a conflict played out between two magicians of different traditions.

Spell Breaking

Islamic legends are full of tales of difficult and heroic quests to throw off a curse cast by some evil sorcerer. In the Sixth World, someone troubled by such magic would normally seek out another magician to dispel it, but Arabian sorcery is not so easily dealt with.

When an Arabian mage Quickens a spell on another place or person (not himself or his own possessions), he must specify a condition that will break the spell. This condition should be difficult, but not impossible (such as going to a particular holy place and keeping vigil there for 24 hours). If the condition is fulfilled, the spell ends immediately. No test is required.

Such spells are difficult to Dispel normally; double the amount of Karma spent to quicken the spell to determine the Target Number for dispelling tests and the effective Force of the spell in astral combat. A successful astral perception test against a target number equal to the Karma spent to quicken the spell will allow a magician to determine what the breaking condition of the spell is.

CONJURING

Dealing with spirits is a difficult and dangerous business in Arabian magic. Even more liberal Muslims are troubled by the theological and moral dimensions of conjuring. Arabian mages only rarely conjure elementals, following the Aristotelian tradition they

inherited from the Greeks. They generally reserve the Conjuring skill for exorcism, banishing and defense against hostile spirits. In fact, many mages Concentrate or Specialize in such things.

Djinn

One type of spirit that the Middle East has in abundance is the djinn or ifrit. They are described as "creatures of smokeless fire," often terrible in aspect and possessing great magical powers. They can be bargained with, and powerful mages may even bend them to their will, but they are deceitful and dangerous servants.

Djinn are Free Elemental Spirits (see Grimoire, p.76). Most are native to the Metaplanes of Fire and Air, although Earth and Water djinn are known. While some may have developed from Free Elementals, most djinn appear to have originated as Free Spirits.

An Islamic mage using conjuring can call a djinn to appear before him. Make a Conjuring success test against the Force of the spirit the mages wishes to call. Roll 1D6 to determine the djinn's Spirit Energy value. One success on the Conjuring test is sufficient for the spirit to appear and there is no drain. However, when the spirit appears it is under no bond to obey its summoner. The mage may attempt to bargain for the djinn's services by offering something (usually Karma) in return. The summoner might also attempt to force the spirit to obey, but this is a very dangerous practice.

If a magician knows a djinn's True Name (Grimoire, p.77), he may attempt to enslave the spirit through the use of Conjuring. Magicians with djinn servants are powerful and feared, but there are many tales of such slaves turning against their masters.

ENCHANTING

The art of sihr (enchantment) is one that Arabian mages excel at. In medieval Europe, Arabian alchemical texts were highly prized additions to a scholar's library and Moorish wizards were often consulted for their legendary alchemical skill.

Arabian mages have great skill in all facets of the Enchanting process. They gain a -1 to all of their Enchanting target numbers as long as they work within restrictions of time and materials laid down in alchemical texts and the pattern of astrological forecasts (and as determined by the gamemaster).

There are rumors that some powerful Arabian mages, sponsored by wealthy princes and corporations, are seeking to duplicate other legendary feats of alchemy, such as the Philosopher's Stone, which could turn lead into gold or the Elixir of Life, which might grant immortality. Who knows? Perhaps one of them has even succeeded.

Talismans

Arabian magi are also experts in using their

knowledge of astrology to create talismans, small objects such as amulets which have numbers and symbols on them corresponding to the influence of particular planets. Verses from the Qur'an are also common. These talismans are used for a variety of purposes.

Some simple talismans are used as spell locks. The talisman is given to a mundane and the mage casts a (generally beneficial) spell upon him. Mages are cautious about this practice because their talismans retain an astral link back to them.

Other talismans are used as spell focuses or fetish focuses. The talisman will reflect the planetary and astrological influences that will enhance the spell or class of spells the talisman is for. Another Arabian mage can tell what such a talisman was designed for by making a Magic Theory (4) Test. Any other Hermetic magician can make such a determination, with +2 to target number. A shaman needs a Magic Theory (8) Test to make such a determination.

Talismans which are constructed in accordance with the proper astrological alignments gain the -1 TN bonus to Enchanting mentioned above.

Astrology

Magi make much use of the position of the stars and planets in their magic. Although modern astronomy has long since invalidated the astrological model of the cosmos as literal truth, the geocentric "universe" of astrology still has great magical significance.

Arabian magicians use astrology to study the influences of the heavenly bodies on their many magical activities such as rituals and enchantments. Astrological charts and talismans are often used as fetishes or focuses, especially for detection (divination) spells of all kinds.

For some Initiate magi astrology serves as a centering skill to focus the magician's attention upon the influence of the right planets and stars for the magical work at hand.

DERVISHES

The Dervishes are a mystical sect that seeks to achieve gnostic union with Allah. They do so through the performance of unique whirling dances of great energy and complexity that build the dervish up into a state of spiritual ecstasy, where the barriers to the Divine dissolve and the dervish may receive revelations or holy visions.

After the Awakening, many dervishes proved to be capable of performing shamanic-style magic. Their intense religious fervor serves them in much the same manner as a totem. Dervishes always use their dancing ability as a means of Centering and it is always a first choice for a Geas.

ARCHETYPE: ISLAMIC MAGE

All glory to Allah, the Compassionate and the Merciful. The Creator is infinite in his wisdom and has chosen to bless me with a special Gift. I work my Art and study the secrets of the Universe as my sacred duty to learn more of what the True God has given us. I also use my humble skills to aid the worthy against the power of the Art used against the will of Allah. Are you worthy, stranger?

Commentary: The Islamic mage is the inheritor of the Arabian magical tradition of old, and is a scholar of considerable magical learning, if not a great deal of street-schooling. His magic is a complex art that he has devoted his whole life to mastering.

Attributes:

Body: 2
Quickness: 2
Strength: 2
Charisma: 4
Intelligence: 5
Willpower: 5
Essence: 6
Magic: 6
Reaction: 6 (+1D6)

Skills:

Astrology: 5
Conjuring: 6
Enchanting: 5
Etiquette (Islamic): 4
Magical Theory: 6
Sorcery: 6

Contacts:

Choose (2) Contacts

Gear:

Hermetic library (2)
Streetline Special
Curved dagger

Spells: Choose one orientation from the following:

Deceiver:

Chaos: 4
Entertainment: 3
Invisibility: 5
Mask: 3

Healer:

Antidote Toxin: 3
Heal: 5
Hibernate: 3
Stabilize: 4

Diviner:

Analyze Magic: 4

Analyze Truth: 5
Clairvoyance
Detect Enemies: 3

Shaper:

Influence: 4
Fashion: 1
Mask: 3
Shapeshift: 3
Transform: 4



Another Good Run...

by Wesley Tester

Colin looked around again, switching to thermal. As he passed over the waste container he saw the tell-tale glow, too big for an animal, but just right for a guard... a well-armed guard, an uncomfortable guard.

Waiting and watching he saw the inevitable shift, and slipped up to the base of the container. Colin reached into his pocket and pulled out his little buddy, setting it on the lid and releasing the key so that it began hopping. A slight smile touched his lips when he heard the hatch crack open as the guard peered out at the egg hopping on two orange legs.

Double-checking the 'strap' Colin laid it on the guard's arm as he reached out. The strap instantly adhered to the armor surface and by the time the guard realized what had happened the drug had penetrated the small breach it created and he softly drifted into dreamland.

Taking a stroll on along the alley he reviewed the datamap again. He hadn't missed a thing and everything was going as expected, but he NEVER took anything for granted. And he was still alive to show for it.

Leaving the map superimposed in one eye so he could keep his optics active he eased up to the edge of the view on the next camera. He looked carefully and scanned for any other observation. Scanner showed negative and this camera was at the end of its cycle so it's now or never. It would be no more than [checking timer] 7 minutes until someone noted the loss of the guards Colin had visited, and things would start getting hot.

As Colin slid under the camera and waited for it to pan away, he checked his equipment and recalled the chain of events that had led him into this alley in the first place...

"...Hmmm Chummer?" Mr. Johnson softly toned. It was a feeble attempt at the street-talk of the region, and Burger couldn't understand why the suit even tried to use it. But he was getting distracted again and screwed up his face as if he was giving the matter plenty of thought.

"Well, you ain't slotted me much data to crunch on, but as long as you can adequately compensate it should be a can-do-op." Jarvos had long since decided to take the run, he couldn't afford otherwise, but as always he would try to up his take on this one.

Mr. Johnson sat impassively for a moment, no emotion (except perhaps a certain disdain for his surroundings), and carefully said "I'm not authorized to negotiate further, I can get back to you or you can take what I have offered to date... Chummer."

Hah...there's that word again, man those rooty-tooty suits love slumming, but I guess that's all I can squeeze

outta this guy, thought Burger. "I need a moment to mind work with my team. Have a drink and relax (smile), I'll be right back." Colin was watching from the side and gave him an affirmative sign. Jarvos went to the bar for a few moments, and returned to the table giving Mr. Johnson his answer.

That set the chain of events in motion, and now Colin was trying to sneak along an alley where a stray piece of paper looked out of place. And according to his map overlay, there should be a concealed door right about.... here!

Out comes the 'influencer'... plug in here, push this button, blink-blink, smudge-smudge, click-click! Ahhhh, thought Colin, technology is so fine. Sliding into the crystal-clean hallway, it looked as if he had hit the jackpot: right number of doors, vent just there, should be a pressure plate there, walk here and here and here, now in front of the door.

Hmmmm, time for some more technology. Time to see if this new maglock passkey is worth the hefty price. Inserting and activating the key was simple enough, but Colin didn't trust not having control. A passkey either worked or didn't, good if it did, bad if it didn't, and still left too many tell-tales for his piece of mind.

Checking his timer he noticed 3 minutes and counting when the passkey beeped and the door hissed its release. Easing the door open he peeked in and saw two techs in Mitsuhara corporate whites, and nonchalantly walked right up behind one. Dropping a 'strap' on the man's shoulder he turned to see the other tech turning to look at him.

"Greetings my fine fellow" Colin said, "could you direct me to the restroom please?" The tech he had strapped sank to the ground, much to the surprise of the remaining tech. Colin asked the tech to hold onto his remaining strap; and the surprise came again to his face as he too sank to the floor. AH.... wage-slaves, thought Colin.

Colin bumped his overlay and pulled up the ops schematic for the monitoring equipment on the experiment at hand. Downloading the program shouldn't take long.... Suddenly an alarm rang out as he was typing in the commands that would end this run. Colin hoped there was enough time for the program to finish before security locked up the databanks...

But no time for worry, nothing to do about it now but get the hell outta here, stat. As he quickstepped out into the hallway he heard the lift whirring to a stop at the opposite end. (Uh-oh) Tossing a P-11 in that direction he made it to the exit as the lift door hissed open, setting off the explosive in a flash of light and sound.

Committed now, Colin rolled out of the exit into a hail storm of gunfire. Hope my team is on the ball, he thought. About that time a breeze blew up around him and he knew Kim'sel was working his magic to give him a little cover. Colin swapped the overlay in his right eye and started running full out thru the smoke, headed for his planned exit route deeper into the alley.

Another 20 feet and he felt a sharp pain in his arm, but no time to frag with petty details. As soon as he reached the wall the shaped-charge went off as expected and he dove thru what he hoped was now a large hole. When he didn't smash his brain to mush, and ended up rolling across a floor he let himself relax just a bit. He turned and watched Burger place a LARGE panel to block the hole (trolls are so handy), and then both proceeded down to the underground parking.

Cutting thru the parking level they didn't head for a vehicle, but rather headed back up the stairwell into the next building. Planning is the key to success, and survival too, thought Colin. They were joined by Jarvos and Buzz on the way and soon stopped by a door on the 17th floor. Entering the room with keys and codes well practiced they saw Kim'sel lying still in the corner.

Colin wondered where her guardian was, as Jade stepped out from the shadow. Colin jumped, "Frag! I hate it when you do that." Jade just walked over to Kim'sel and touched a broach pinned in her hair. Moments later her still form stirred and she groaned slightly.

"Well, we've made the run. Burger will meet Mr. Johnson tomorrow to get the rest of the payday. Let's meet at Bishop's place after that for a PARTY!" With that the group got kinda rowdy, and went their separate ways. Colin caught Jade's eye, and indicated he wanted her to hold back a sec.

"Jade," he asked, "did you scan for narcs?"

"Yes," she said, "and I'll take care of it. He won't be showing up for the party."

Colin sighed; he hated traitors, especially when he'd grown dependent on them. He had suspected someone was taking a little side-biz and it really pissed him off. Nuyen isn't everything...well...

He looked around to ask Jade which one it was and she was gone, that annoying habit of hers. No need calling her, she won't answer until it's done. He may not know all about her, but he trusts her to be true to her nature and her "friends", of which he feels lucky to be one.

Jade forced the lift doors open and reached out for the riser on the grappel line she set up there when she first arrived. Releasing the catch she rose to the top of the shaft as silent as a night wind. At the top she triggered the catch on the cover and slipped onto the roof.

De-activating the shade camo on her nightglider Jade

set off over the street where the car she wanted was just entering. The phos-4 marks she made on its roof certainly show well with the right filters. The car seemed to meander about at random for about half an hour, and finally stopped at a Kori steakhouse.

Scanning the rooftops surrounding it she selected a quiet one and touched down. She kept an eye on the virtua-gardens until her target was seated along with another person dressed very well in an Armani-Grunwald suit, controlled perfection.

She wanted to hear what they were saying, but they were probably using white noise anyway, so it's a good thing I can read lips, she thought. All I need is to see the traitor commit himself.

Jade reached into her longcoat and started pulling out several parts she had removed from her nightglider along the way. After a few moments the parts became a sophisticated rifle, which she sighted in carefully. She examined the table and the two seated there, considering where to be the most effective.

Taking notice of what they were being served she had an idea. It's a bit dangerous getting creative, but this would certainly provide the proper distraction to maximize effort. Sighting in on the portable stove the cook was using she went thru the steps she would follow once she started her actions. No room for error, and she certainly didn't allow her efforts to be in error if at all possible.

Shot 1: into the control yoke for the stove, causing a flame up. They all looked up in alarm and never noticed the next shot.

Shot 2: along and behind the left shoulder in line with the heart. Right along the seam if he was wearing a secure suit, which from the lack of a more graphic exit wound exactly the call to make. No more corp leak there.

Shot 3: right into the temple, and quite messy too. End of traitor.

Shot 4: an easy shot into the wrist phone/doc wagon device would inhibit their response time.

Another shot into each body for presence of mind and she was done. She snapped the gun into three main pieces as she walked back to her glider and dropped them into a ready-made pouch. Dropping off the roof on the opposite side she silently moved thru the air until she reached the edge of the barrens. Some folks were petrified of entering there, but she saw it as a place of no questions where she had built up a few layers of 'respect', hard earned.

She had been listening to select radio broadcasts, with descrambler of course, and aside from the usual response to a "disturbance" there were no indications of who, target or perp was involved. Good run. She would page Colin tomorrow with an account number into which he would transfer her funds, and he would have his comfort, and his answer once everyone but 'one' showed up for their celebration.

>>>>[So THEY say.]<<<<
Echo Sieben (18:24:16/15-NOV-55)

committing apostasy and actually attacked the Jungfrau kult during their Autumnal Equinox ritual. Tensions have been running high in Bensheim since then.]<<<<

Bösen Friedrich
(01:11:30/18-NOV-55)

>>>>[Incidentally, both Liebfrauen kult and Jungfrau kult translate into English as "the Virgin Cult."]
<<<<

Idle Savant (10:14:32
/18-NOV-55)

The other notable features of this area are the high peaks so close to its vicinity. The casual traveler can spot at least a half dozen castles or their ruins, and just as many radio/television transmission towers and Matrix relay stations, occupying the peaks of many hills.

>>>>[Including amongst them the ruins of the infamous Castle Frankenstein.]<<<<
Echo Sieben
(00:12:11/21-NOV-55)

>>>>[Wait a minute. According to Shelley's novel, Victor von Frankenstein came from Geneva and did his "research" in Ingolstadt, deep in Bavaria. Just where the hell does the lower Rheinland fit in?]<<<<

Gray Fox (16:13:27/
21-NOV-55)

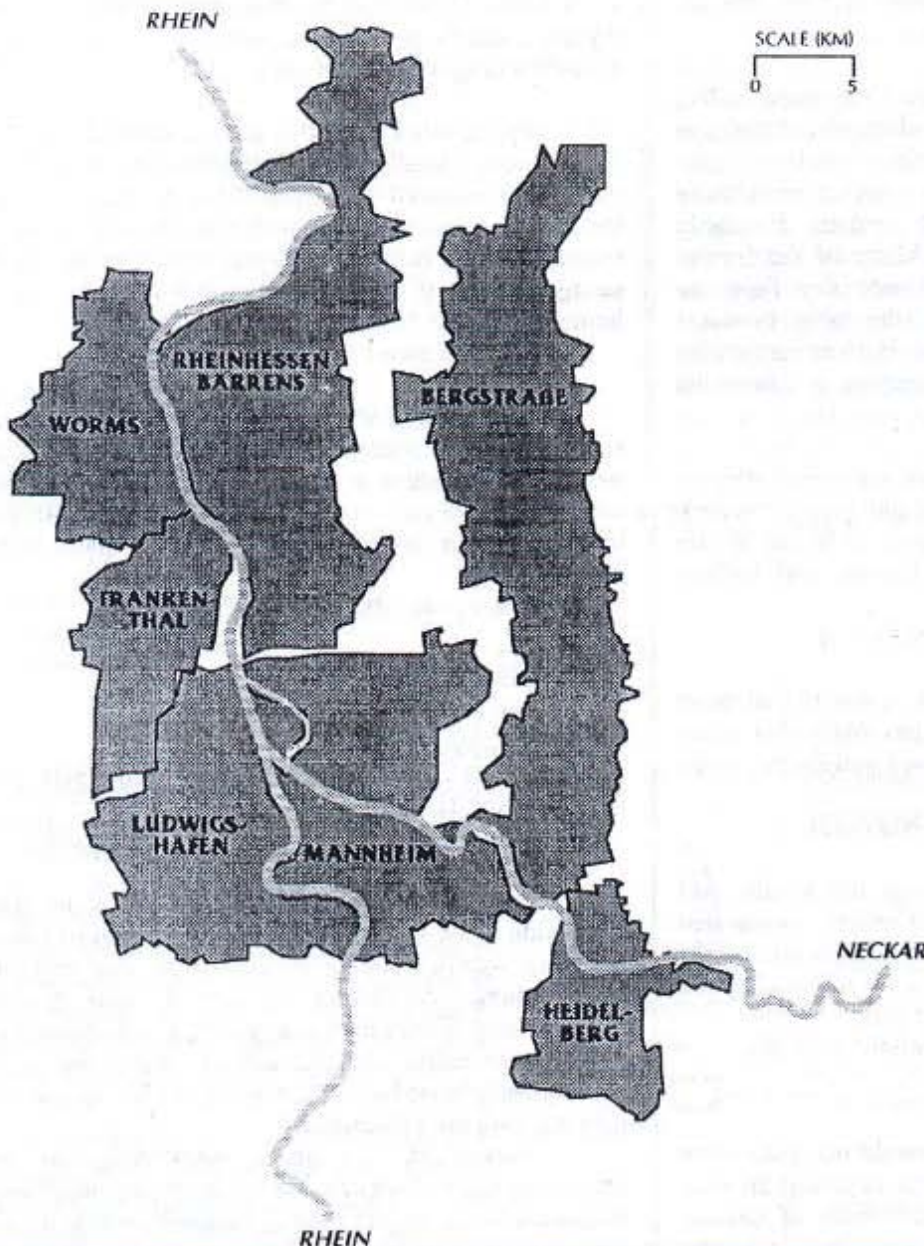
>>>>[True, Mary Shelley did set the creation of Frankenstein's monster in Ingolstadt, but she had gotten the inspiration for the story while traveling through

Darmstadt. The Burg Frankenstein was the residence of an 18th century wacko by the name of Konrad Dippel, who dabbled in alchemy and robbed graves for his ingredients.]<<<<

Idle Savant (09:14:24/22-NOV-55)

>>>>[I guess that explains why I found a reference to the castle in a file I lifted from the Heidelberg

THE RHEIN-NECKAR-REGION



>>>>[Lately the Liebfrauen kult have been feuding with a magical circle who have call themselves the Jungfrau kult. The Jungfrau kult (which are predominantly Hexen by philosophy) have occupied the Heiligenberg Castle as their Coven, and they practice their monthly rituals at the peak of the Marienberg hilltop. It's believed that the Jungfrau kult follow the Moon Maiden Idol.

The Liebfrauen kult accuse the Jungfrau kult of

database.]<<<<<<

Hermann (keine/Spuren)

>>>>>[Care to give a few more details, alter?]
<<<<<<

Gray Fox (00:15:22/23-NOV-55)

>>>>>[Sorry, the file got eaten by some Scramble IC on my way out. The only intelligible text I was able to retrieve was "Burgruine Frankenstein."]<<<<<<

Hermann (keine/Spuren)

The southern region of the Bergstraße, unlike the north, has become heavily industrialized by food processing plants and genetic breeding labs. Unfortunately the by-products generated from these industries has ruined the soil, making it highly unsuitable for growing grapes. Many of the former vineyards have been converted into soy fields or underground mushroom farms, the only products which can grow on the tainted soil. Both crops are also primary ingredients in the production of numerous ersatz foodstuffs.

>>>>>[The transition from wine valley/suburbia to industrial hellscape is as sudden as plunging into a dark tunnel. Funny how this also happens to be the border between the former states of Hessen and Baden-Württemberg.]<<<<<<

OdinWall (23:13:32/06-NOV-55)

>>>>>[Hasn't anyone stopped to consider that those "by-products" that soured the grapes might also create some unpleasant additives in the soy and fungus crops as well?]<<<<<<

Poison Ivy (01:16:48/09-NOV-55)

>>>>>[Sssshhhh. Don't say that too loudly, AG Chemie's been squelching investigations along that line for years. And while you're at it, don't question if the former farmlands in the region are suitable for the housing projects now built over them.]<<<<<<

Bösen Friedrich (14:26:14/09-NOV-55)

The Odenwald

The area called the Odenwald occupies more than 1,500 square kilometers in area, as part of the state of Franconia. It neighbors the city-state of Greater Frankfurt, with Dieburg lying to its north, the Bergstraße to its west and Heidelberg to its south.

In German legends, the Odenwald is known as the enchanted forest of the Norse god Odin. It is the hunting ground of the Niebelungs and the site of Siegfried's demise at the hands of Hagen. Since the Awakening, the Odenwald has become a site of low-level magical activity, with numerous low-level sites being found throughout the area.

Most of the sites have heavy nature influences,

and almost all are occupied by nature magicians. Exceptions, of course, exist, though most of the non-nature-oriented sites usually cluster around the city of Erbach-Michelstadt, the largest city in the Odenwald.

On the other hand, the Odenwald is also the home for many Awakened creatures and has a strong Awakened ecosystem living in it. Sightings of paranormal creatures are common; the greatest danger comes from random attacks by Fenrir wolves and blood kites. There have been occasional sightings of wyverns, and there is at least one confirmed report of a western dragon living in the area.

>>>>>[One other thing that isn't mentioned at all is that the area literally exudes a feeling of strangeness in the air. I ventured once into the Odenwald on a hunt for a wagemage in Heidelberg, and the one thing I remember most is that really eerie feeling of untamed savageness, as if I were the hunted instead of the hunter.]<<<<<<

Bundes-weird (05:26:43/12-NOV-55)

>>>>>[The Weise sometimes refer to this feeling of strangeness as Tollheit. Tollheit, so I've heard, is a sense of raw nature in the full, absent of humanity whatsoever. On one or two occasions it was rumored to have driven several hermetic mages maniacally insane.]<<<<<<

Hierophant (00:17:05/15-NOV-55)

Der Felsenmeer

Location: Franconia, Odenwald district

Accessibility: B-C

Magic: (2) for conjuring earth elementals or mountain spirits

Background Count: 2 (nature cult and ritual site)

The best-known of magical sites in the Odenwald is the Felsenmeer, a hill composed of giant boulders, approximately 4.5 kilometers due east of Zwingenberg. According to legend, two giants standing atop distant hills engaged in a rock-throwing battle. Eventually, one ran out of ammo and was consequently buried under the assault of his opponent, thus creating the Felsenmeer.

Nowadays, just about every magician or magical group in Greater Frankfurt and Franconia have attempted to lay claim to the Felsenmeer. While it has been visited by many, none have managed to lay any lasting claim to the area; those that try to do so are usually driven away by the wild creatures that inhabit the Odenwald (which accounts for the slightly higher accessibility rating).

Rumors that a Wild Hunt congregation guard the Felsenmeer have been largely unconfirmed and are regarded as nothing more than rumors.

STADTTEIL Security Rating

Nord

Seeheim-Jugenheim: Lower Middle Class B/C
Bickenbach: Lower/Middle Class C
Alsbach-Hähnlein: Lower Middle Class B
Zwingenberg: Lower Middle Class B
Bensheim: Middle Class A/B
Einhausen: Lower Class D
Lorsch: Middle Class A/B
Heppenheim: Middle Class A/B

Süd

Laudenbach: Lower Class D
Hemsbach: Lower Class C/D
Weinheim: Middle Class A
Heddesheim: Lower/Middle Class C
Hirschberg: Lower Middle Class B
Ladenburg: Middle Class A/AA
Sriesheim: Middle/Upper Class AA

FRANKENTHAL

FACTS IN BRIEF

Population: 123,000

Human: 82%

Methuman: 18%

Per Capita Income: EC 42,000

Below Poverty Level: 16%

Telekom: 0494-31

Sandwiched between the industrial cities of Worms and Ludwigshafen is the city of Frankenthal. Unlike its neighbors to the north and south, Frankenthal is mostly a white-collar city; although there are a few manufacturing centers scattered to the north, they are small and scattered throughout the city, unlike the massive Chemiewerk in Ludwigshafen, or the industrial cluster along the Rhein in north Worms.

>>>>>[Despite the white-collar facade, Frankenthal is also a center of activity for organized crime. Of all the districts in the Gross-Frankfurt Sprawl, the yakuza has firm control in this district. Although they clash occasionally with many small-time hoods, the yakuza does not receive any opposition from the German or Slavic mafia.]<<<<<<

De-kanter (00:05:25/07-NOV-55)

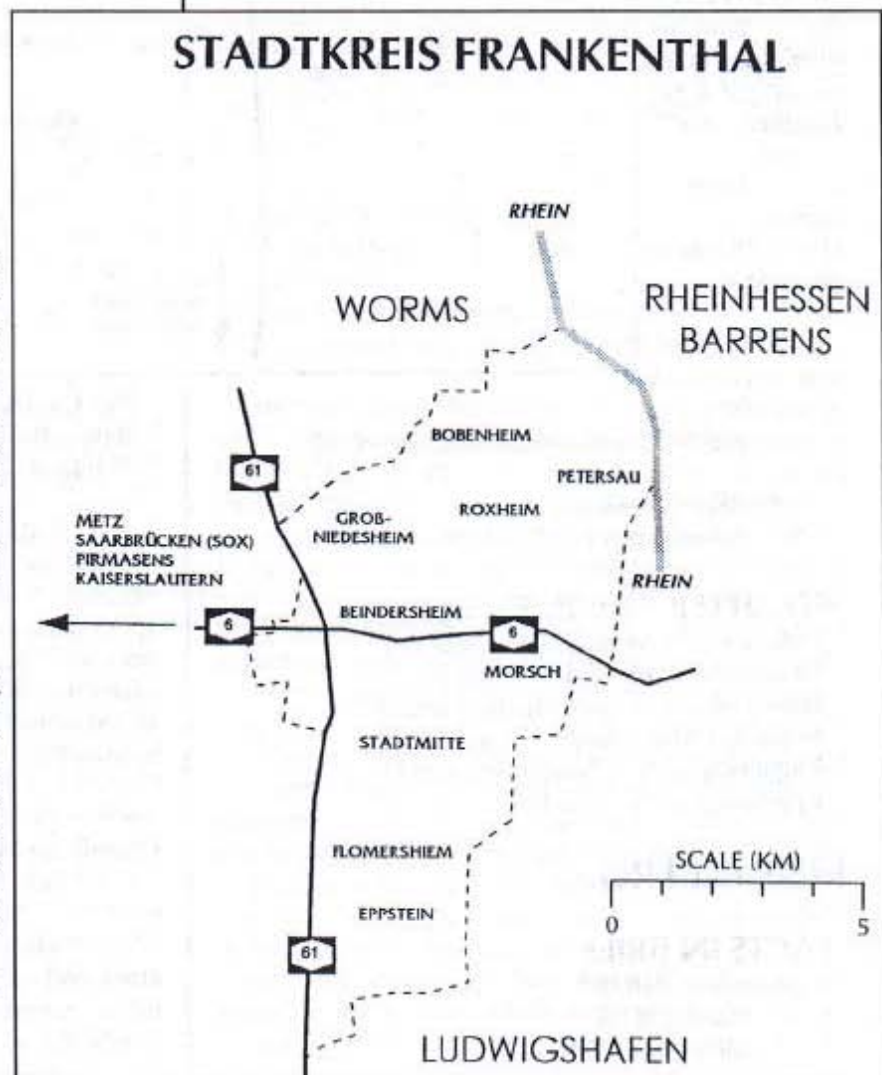
>>>>>[Probably because both gangs don't see anything worth out of it. Frankenthal is an out-of-the-way district, far from the big money in Frankfurt, Wiesbaden, Mannheim or Heidelberg. The yaks may not be happy about it, but Frankenthal is about all they can get, so they have little choice but to make do with it.]<<<<<<

Drachen Watch (20:43:12/10-NOV-55)

Roxheim (B)

Due to the environmental upheavals of the past half-century, particularly the flooding that wiped out Koblenz and washed out Mainz, the agricultural fields to the east of this region were devastated, as fertile farmland was transformed by the waters of the Rhein into barren moors. What proved to be ruin for Roxheim's farmers, though, became opportunity for MET 2000, who saw the moors and lakes as a suitable training site for their water commandos.

Nowadays Roxheim is a garrison town for MET 2000. Lying east of the neighborhood are two lakes, the oval-shaped Silbersee and the crescent-shaped Roxheimer Altrhein. The lakes serve as the main training areas for waterborne and underwater



operations. Between those two lakes lies MET 2000's central training facility. Scattered throughout the moors are the remains of several farming villages, which now serve as training sites for urban operations. To the north by Worms is an airstrip which MET 2000 uses to practice airborne operations.

>>>>[Jeez! Do they invite the Wildcats over every other month for a get together, too?]<<<<<

Echo Sieben (19:55:09/19-NOV-55)

>>>>[Since you mentioned it, yes.]<<<<<

Richter Dredd (00:20:30/20-NOV-55)

>>>>[Sorry I asked.]<<<<<

Echo Sieben (18:41:21/20-NOV-55)

STADTTEIL Security Rating

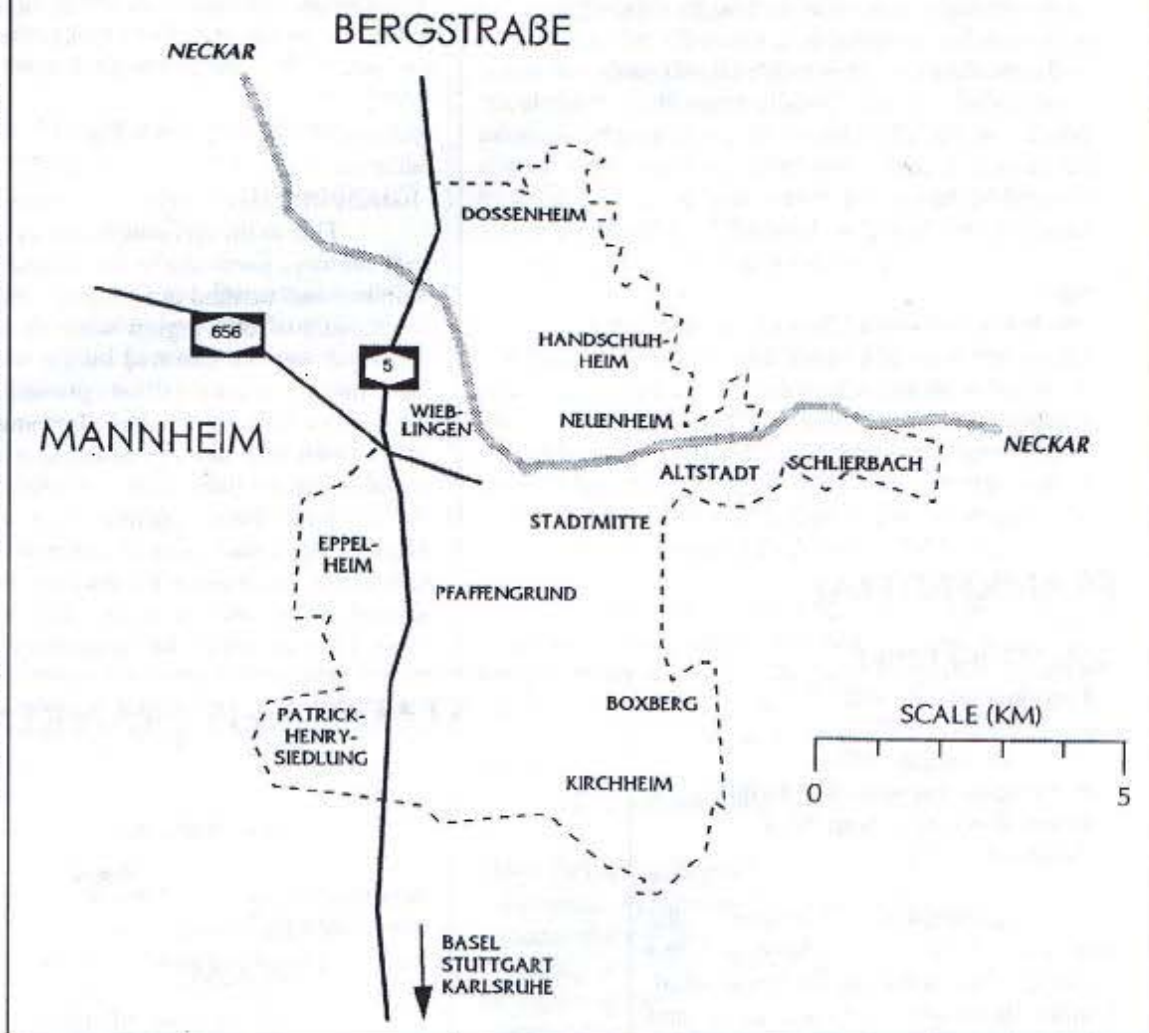
- Bobenheim: Lower Middle Class B/C
- Großneidesheim: Middle Class B
- Beindersheim: Lower Middle Class B/C
- Mörsch: Lower/Middle Class C
- Flomersheim: Lower/Middle Class C
- Eppstein: Lower Class D

HEIDELBERG

FACTS IN BRIEF

- Population: 240,000
- Human: 87%
- Methuman: 22%

STADTKREIS HEIDELBERG



Per Capita Income: EC 125,000
 Below Poverty Level: 6%
 Telekom: 0494-32

Little needs to be said about this city that has not been mentioned elsewhere >>[Deutschland in den Schatten: SysOp]<<. Primarily a university city, with approximately a fifth of its population composed of students, Heidelberg is also the retreat for many executives in the southern half of Frankfurt who can afford to live away from the proletariat masses who toil in Mannheim and Ludwigshafen.

>>>>[Who almost all just happen to work for AG Chemie Europa....]<<<<<
 Bösen Friedrich (00:21:50/12-NOV-55)

>>>>[Hey, count your blessings. They may be cruel and vicious, but they've got flair! Unlike the killjoy drones of the Frankfurter Bankenverein who live in Wiesbaden and Bad Homburg....]<<<<<
 The Hessian (12:16:35/12-NOV-55)

As it is a part of the Gross-Frankfurt megasprawl, Heidelberg cannot avoid the encroachment of heavy urbanization and industrialization. Most of this, however, is limited to the neighborhoods on the western fringes of the city-district. Most of these are populated by middle class office workers, who insulate the heart of the city from the massive sprawl around it.

>>>>>[Isn't THAT nice....]<<<<<<
Roland von Bremen (08:15:26/18-NOV-55)

Although the best-known part of the city is the Altstadt, the center of activity revolves around the downtown core, from the commercial center of the Bismarckplatz to the business offices surrounding the Heidelberg Hauptbahnhof. The glittering lights of the skyscrapers and shopping malls of the new city contrast with the quaint tranquility of the neighboring Old Town.

Altstadt (AAA)

Sitting in the heart of the city, the Old Town is the neighborhood that gives Heidelberg its fame. Most of the old city serves as host for the Ruprecht-Karl-Universität (Heidelberg University). Overlooking the city is the Heidelberg Schloß, the ruins of Heidelberg's most visible landmark.

>>>>>[Due to the dense student population, Heidelberg has an active nightlife, with dozens of bars, beerhalls and nightclubs to cater to the students. Almost anything can be found to cater to any taste, and Friday nights are almost as lively as a typical night at Sachsenhausen.]<<<<<<
Nacht-verkehr (02:42:36/19-NOV-55)

>>>>>[Pretty heavy magic emanates from both the university and the castle itself. Both sites are described below in detail, but the emanations given off by these places raises the general Background Count in the Altstadt overall to 1.]<<<<<<
Schwarzauberer (03:16:22/24-NOV-55)

Patrick-Henry-Siedlung (AA)

Formerly known as Patrick Henry Village, this former US settlement used to be the headquarters for the US Army in Europe (USAREUR), as well as the command group of V Corps, following its move out of Frankfurt am Main in 1994. Although the American forces departed Europe almost thirty years ago, many Americans still remained in Europe, either soldiers who chose to remain in Europe after leaving the service, or civilians who ran businesses supporting American troops. It was one group of Americans who organized the resettlement of Patrick Henry Village, as an island of Americana within Europe.

Nowadays, Patrick Henry Siedlung is mostly an academic colony, reminiscent of the Lost Generation

in Paris during the 1920s. The village serves as a kontakt club between German students at Heidelberg University and exchange students from both the UCAS and the CAS. English is the language spoken in the village. Some American universities maintain offices in Patrick Henry Siedlung, including Georgia Tech, the University of Connecticut and MITM.

>>>>>[Not to mention a few American corporate recruitment offices....]<<<<<<
Cross-decker (04:13:51/25-NOV-55)

Ruprecht-Karl-Universität (Heidelberg University)

Location: Heidelberg, Greater Frankfurt
Accessibility: C-CC
Magic: Hermetic Library (8)
Background Count: 2 (Site of magical research)

As Germany's premiere university for magic, Heidelberg University has an average enrollment that approaches 50,000, of which nearly 10,000 are active or mundane students of magic.

Two of the university's landmarks attract significant magical attention. The first is the University Library, which contains numerous arcane writings, including those from medieval times. The other is the Hexenturm (Witches' Tower), located in the midst of the new university.

Heidelberg Schloß

Location: Heidelberg, Greater Frankfurt
Accessibility: B
Magic: (2) for conjuring storm spirits
Background Count: 2 (Site of lightning storm)

The ruins of the Heidelberg Castle are probably the city's most visible landmarks. Built sometime during the twelfth and thirteenth century, the castle was burned numerous times, at least three times by fire from foreign invaders, and twice by lightning. The last lightning in storm in 1764 destroyed most of the castle and left it in ruins to the current day. Nowadays the main courtyard and surrounding gardens are tourist attractions open to the public; however, much of the castle remains closed to tourists.

Near the eastern end of the castle lies the Apothecary's Tower. This site has been the location of a joint research project between Heidelberg's departments of Archaeology and Alchemy, who recently unearthed a previously undiscovered chamber of alchemical research. The alchemy department hopes that the artifacts unearthed from there can assist them in their alchemical researches.

Now and then there have been sightings of the castle's resident spirit, which manifests itself as Perkeo, a red-haired dwarf who was the court fool and primary

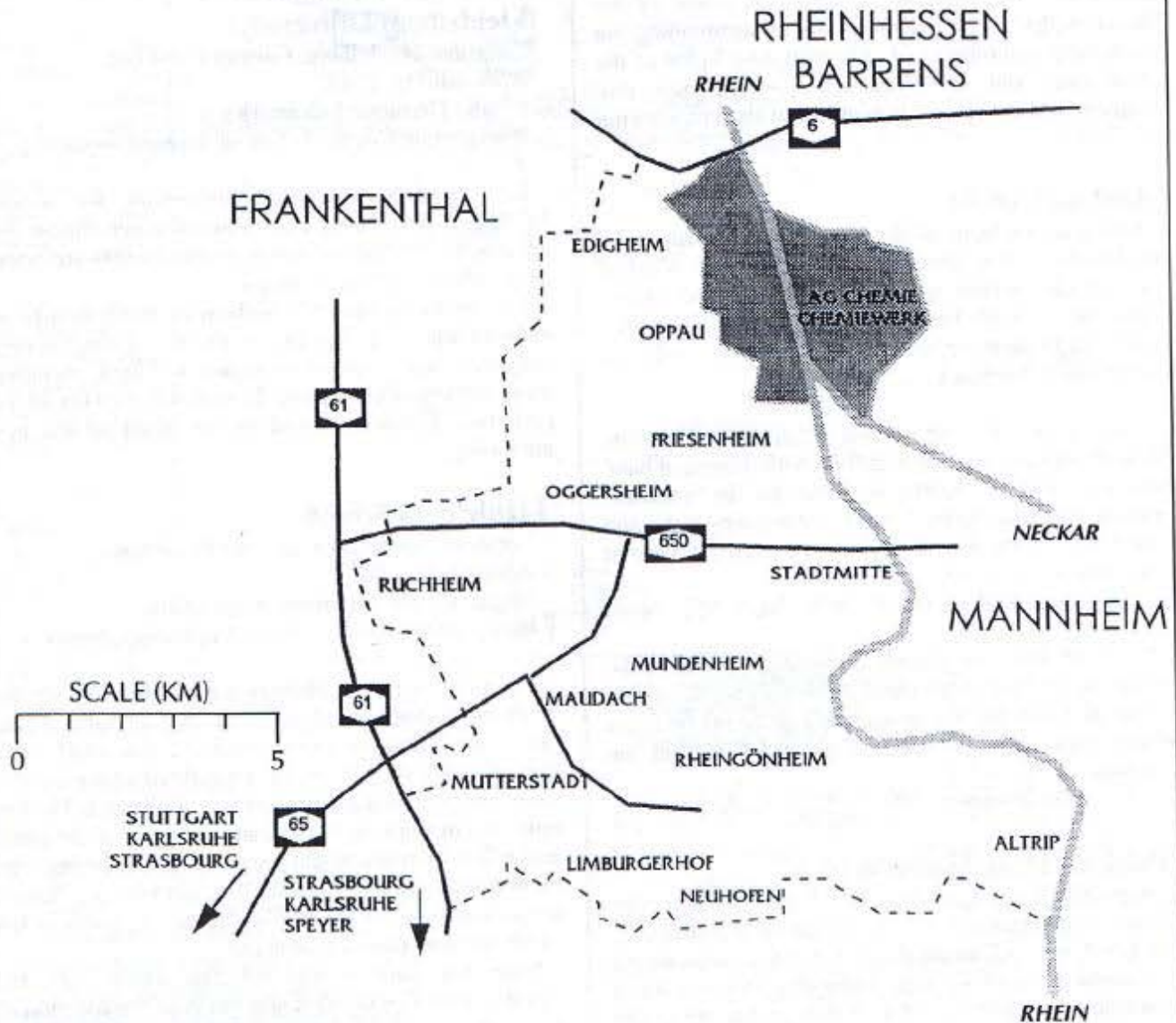
winedrinker during the 17th century. Mostly seen in the cellars around the Great Vat, the spirit has lived up to its namesake, often causing mischief by inducing drunken foolishness in random people.

>>>>>[Sounds like my kinda guy....]<<<<<
Gurtel (15:24:25/21-NOV-55)

Below Poverty Level: 28%
Telekom: 0494-301

Sitting on the west bank of Rhein is the city of Ludwigshafen. Though part of the Gross-Frankfurt Sprawl, Ludwigshafen, like its twin Mannheim on the opposite shore, is a virtual fiefdom of the German

STADTKREIS LUDWIGSHAFEN



LUDWIGSHAFEN

FACTS IN BRIEF

Population: 288,000

Human: 73%

Methuman: 26%

Per Capita Income: EC 22,500

conglomerate AG Chemie Europa, demonstrated most significantly by the massive, ten-thousand acre Chemiewerk sprawling across the north shore.

>>>>>[Massive, hah! What an understatement. There are cities smaller than the AG Chemiewerk site. Hell, the entire works is even larger than the downtown

sector of Frankfurt.]<<<<<

Ammonia Euphoria (17;26:03/05-NOV-55)

>>>>>[While it is huge (even the Stammwerk in Frankfurt-Höchst can't hold a toxic drum next to it), that great size does pose a few problems. Can you imagine the security of that place?]<<<<<

Bischof (06:59:22/06-NOV-55)

>>>>>[Security IS a major problem. A.E. is right, the Chemiewerk occupies more area than downtown Frankfurt (and we all know how heavy security is there, boys and girls and others). Also, it's neighbored to the north by the Rheinhessen Barrens, and both the Rhein River and Autobahn 66 run through it, making it a prime target for go-gangs and river raiders. The perimeter is over ten kilometers long altogether, with over 100 road and rail gates.

AG Chemie, of course, approaches this obstacle with a classic solution: massive overkill. AG Chemie has assigned a full security brigade (yes, folks, brigade) solely for the purpose of protecting this one plant. The kaserne itself is a virtual township.

A thousand ground pounders. Over 20 Saab-Thyssen Kriegpferd APCs. A full troop of combat helicopters, an equivalent number of utility copters, and both those numbers combined in RPVs. One fully alert combat counterstrike team on call at all times. And at least half a dozen wage mages on the security staff alone.]<<<<<

Bundes-weird (22:59:44/08-NOV-55)

>>>>>[While the numbers ARE intimidating, it still has some big flaws, namely too many holes to fill. Even though it has a full combat brigade located on site, that doesn't mean that it has a full combat brigade at its disposal. On a typical day, less than a quarter of all available forces are up, with all the others down doing maintenance (usually trying to catch up with the growing number of broken vehicles) or garrison details. The Chemiewerk is lucky if it has more than one combat chopper up during the night.

Overseeing the entire security network is a nightmare. Because of its massive size alone, the security system is divided up over four different subprocessor systems. Although linked to each other, rarely to the systems cross-talk. Add to this mess connections to the maintenance, disaster control and administrative systems themselves subdivided to handle the work, and no two system subdivided over the same areas you end up with a veritable Matrix Mystery Machine.

That's not all. Pulling security on the Ludwigshafen Chemiewerk is not a fun job. During any one particular evening, there will be enough events going on to keep the troops occupied, anything from a small skirmish with go-gangs on Autobahn 66, to a small fire in one of the refinery stations, to a systems

glitch that raises a false alarm. They're certainly ready for you, but they probably may not be expecting you.]<<<<<

Crazy Ollie (03:07:18/12-NOV-55)

Aside from the AG Chemiewerk, there is little of significance within the city itself. Most of the residents of this sprawl are working-class grunts employed in or supporting the Chemiewerk.

Friesenheim (B)

This neighborhood is the site of a former oxbow lake is now the location of the Ludwigshafen Aquagarten, the largest hydroponics plant in southern Germany. The Aquagarten, operated by Wasserbauern AG, a subsidiary of AG Chemie Europa, occupies over a dozen hectares of the land surrounding the lake, and it also covers most of the lake's surface is covered with floating columns of hydroponic greenhouse. The produce of the Aquagarten, consisting mostly of vegetables and ersatz vegetable matter, provides mostly enough food for the residents of the Rhein-Neckar and southern Rhein-Main areas.

STADTTEIL Security Rating

Edigheim: Lower Class B/C

Oppau: Lower Class C

Oggersheim: Lower Middle Class B

Mundenheim: Lower/Middle Class B

Maudach: Lower/Middle Class B/C

Rheingönheim: Lower/Middle Class B/C

Mutterstadt: Middle Class A

Limburgerhof: Lower Middle Class A/B

Neuhofen: Lower Class C

MANNHEIM

FACTS IN BRIEF

Population: 553,000

Human: 78%

Methuman: 21%

Per Capita Income: EC 29,000

Below Poverty Level: 24%

Telekom: 0494-30

The largest city in the region, the city district of Mannheim is second in population only to the main city of Frankfurt am Main. Here in Mannheim sits the regional headquarters and offices of AG Chemie Europa, which directs operations in southern Germany from its castle overlooking the downtown ring.

Like its twin across the Rhein, Ludwigshafen, the city of Mannheim is a virtual fiefdom of AG Chemie Europa. The residents of this city either work for AG Chemie, or run the shops supporting AG Chemie Europa workers.

>>>>[It's said that the corp even controls the underworld in Mannheim.]<<<<<

De-kanter (05:01:44/07-NOV-55)

>>>>[Ah, that's just so much drek. Yeah, the company has its hand in the pie, but they're only one

Handelshafen (A)

Sitting west of downtown Mannheim are the main docks of Handelshafen. Sitting at the junction of the Rhein and Neckar rivers, this dock stands as an important traffic control point for river and rail traffic.



of the fish in the pond. I've dealt under they're noses for three years, and they still ain't going to catch me yet!]<<<<<

Lucky Louie (21:16:32/08-NOV-55)

>>>>[Five days ago river patrols in Worms fished out the decapitated and mutilated body of un-Lucky Louie. However, they weren't able to positively ID the body until today.]<<<<<

Drachen Watch (17:15:13/24-NOV-55)

AG Chemie guards Handelshafen tightly, partly because of its proximity to downtown.

Käfertal (AA)

Lying on the north bank of the Neckar River, this neighborhood lies at the entrance of the highway network that leads into downtown. More significantly, though, located in Käfertal is the Benjamin Franklin Village, the site of US forces stationed in Mannheim. Of all US stations in Germany, the Mannheim barracks

is most infamously known for the confinement facility, where soldiers were held, either awaiting general court martial, or en route back to the states for a one-way ticket to Fort Leavenworth.

Although the American army is gone from Europe, Mannheim barracks still continues to fulfill its notorious role, used as a maximum security confinement area for state criminals.

Neckarau (B)

Three quarters of this industrial district along the southeastern flank of Mannheim is an extended railyard, over a dozen kilometers long and almost a kilometer wide. The Neckarau railyards are a major nexus of freight and mail traffic, as well as a maintenance center for Deutsche Bundesbahn. Scattered across the wide plain of iron rails and overhead electrical cables are dozens of maintenance stations, and many of the side tracks contain empty passenger and freight cars awaiting service.

>>>>>[However, more than a few of these cars have never rolled a kilometer in the last ten years. In fact, the southeastern corner of the railyards is a virtual camp-town of squatters and shadow-types who set up shop in the abandoned cars. I know of at least one fixer who deals out of the railyards.]<<<<<<

Drachen Watch (19:08:21/15-NOV-55)

Neuostheim (A)

Sitting on the south banks of the Neckar River east of the downtown district, Neuostheim contains the Mannheim Flugplatz airstrip. Though only capable of handling small aircraft, the airstrip is also a training academy for MET 2000. Here student pilots and air traffic controllers learn and practice their skills in aviation and avionics.

>>>>>[And of course, right next to the MET 2000 training academy is where the Mannheim Stadtwerk department chose to build their main fire station.]<<<<<<

D-Rock (02:51:34/10-NOV-55)

STADTTEIL Security Rating

- Sandhofen: Lower Class C
- Schönau: Lower Class C
- Gartenstadt: Middle Class A
- Waldhof: Lower Class C
- Neckarstadt: Lower Middle Class B
- Vogelstang: Middle Class A
- Wohlgelegen: Lower Middle Class B
- Feudenheim: Lower Middle Class B/C
- Seckenheim: Lower/Middle Class C
- Ilvesheim: Middle Class A
- Neckarhausen: Middle Class A
- Friedrichsfeld: Lower Class C

- Casterfeld: Lower Class C
- Pflingstberg: Lower Class C
- Rheinau: Lower Class C
- Viernheim: Middle/Lower Class B/C

RHEINHESSEN BARRENS

FACTS IN BRIEF

- Population:** 118,000
 - Human: 66%
 - Methuman: 32%
- Per Capita Income:** EC 9,000
- Below Poverty Level:** 88%
- Telekom:** 0494-35

The Rheinhessen Barrens is a sprawling strip of flatland east of the Rhein River. Neighbored by Rüsselsheim in the north, the Bergstraße to the east, Worms to the west and Mannheim to the south, the place has become a dump for all unwanted human and methuman refuse.

The history's region has not been a pleasant one. Up until the turn of the century most of this area had been farmlands, forests and pasture, populated only by small towns, clustered around the major roads and railways running through the area. Even as early as the year 1997, though, refugees began streaming in, first from the impoverished East, then from Eastern Europe, as democracy collapsed under the strain of famine. To the anger of many environmentalists, the Hessen Landtag legislature reversed its policy on land and forestry management; immediately building contractors and industries began scooping up hundreds of acres of previously reserved farmland, at cut-rate prices.

>>>>>[Horrific as it sounds, a lot of people in the state actually applauded the Hessen Landtag decision. Under previous policies, protectionist measures to keep European agriculture prices in competition with the rest of the world, the European Union paid farmers handsomely NOT to grow crops on their land. And as the millenium came to an end, many people looked on in anger as the price for developable land skyrocketed through the roof, while thousands of acres of farmland lay fallow with disuse.]<<<<<<

Prof. M (15:26:13/14-NOV-55)

Within a few years this sprawling plain of pasture was soon transformed into an urban sprawl, as hundreds of factories arose, primarily producing construction materials for new buildings, plus many more resident blocks to house the factory workers.

>>>>>[That's a bit of exaggeration. True, the small villages, that existed around the main roadway between Gross-Gerau and Mannheim, soon erupted into bloated industrial blocs. However, there was still a significant

amount of land left untouched. Even accelerated construction can only defoliate so much.]<<<<<<
Bad Krotchrot (06:37:15/16-NOV-55)

Then, without warning, disaster struck. In the town of Biblis, halfway between Darmstadt and Mannheim, the resident nuclear reactor experienced spontaneous failure. As workers hurriedly attempted to prevent the reactor from melting down, several rads of radioactive gas were accidentally released into the atmosphere, forcing an evacuation of the Rheinhessen region, as well as placing US and Bundeswehr forces on alert in Darmstadt and Mannheim.

Thankfully, the engineers were able to prevent the meltdown, but not before the damage was done. Though not enough to warrant a nuclear emergency, the radiation leakage was enough to kill any interest in development in the area. The construction factories which boosted the local economy soon closed up quickly from the lack of business. This triggered a massive downward spiral, plunging the Rheinhessen into deep poverty, from which it has not emerged.

Nowadays the Rheinhessen Barrens is a wasteland of toxic, nuclear and human wastes, rivalling its namesakes in North America. While a few industries continue to produce within the region, for the most part they are highly automated and protected with extreme security measures.

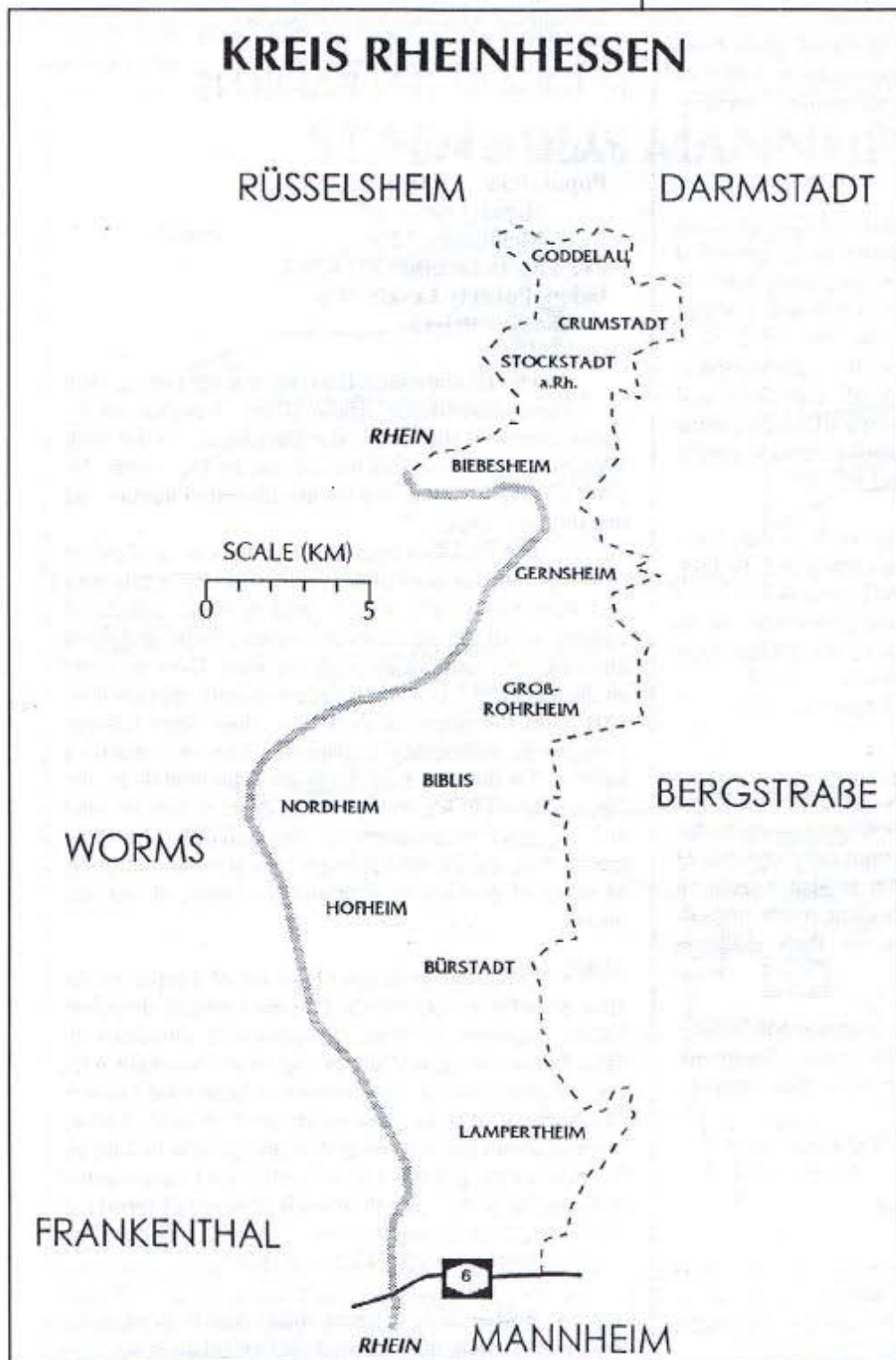
>>>>>[Quite a few are completely sealed off from land access, totally dependent on helicopter flights to deliver supplies in and out.]<<<<<<

Bundes-weird
(05:41:59/21-NOV-55)

>>>>>[Make a note on what was said above: most of the industry in this area was dedicated to producing construction materials. While this was good in the short term, it only lasts as long as there's land and interest available. Keep that in mind when you read the next section.]<<<<<<

Prof. M (13:27:46/19-NOV-55)

>>>>>[Lately, however, several plants have been under seige by gangers armed with surface-to-air missiles, which have shot down in- and outgoing traffic. Zeta ImpChem, which owns a few automated plants in the region, has responded by arming their



facilities with Firefinder radar and light howitzers.]

<<<<<<

Crocodile (15:30:01/23-NOV-55)

>>>>>>[Light howitzers?!? That's crazy!]<<<<<<

Sachsen-squatter (02:53:12/24-NOV-55)

>>>>>>[No. That's counterfire operations.]<<<<<<

Crocodile (27:44:31/25-NOV-55)

Most of the urbanization still coalesces around the two major roadways crossing the region. The first runs west to east, from Worms to Bensheim in the Bergstrasse. The second runs north to south, from the neighborhood of Gross-Gerau in Rüsselsheim to the northern reaches of Mannheim along the Rhein. Most of the remaining land is barren, toxic ground, populated primarily by large makeshift shanty towns.

Running parallel to the north-south roadway is the Frankfurt-Rüsselsheim-Mannheim rail line. As this line is a major link between Frankfurt and Zürich, Switzerland, security along this line is extremely tight. A three meter reinforced wall surrounds the railroad, preventing interlopers from attacking the train, while sparing passengers a view of the toxic landscape.

>>>>>>[Don't forget also the fifty-meter "neutral zone" on either side of the rail lines, seeded with anti-personnel mines and patrolled by automated hunter-killer drones armed with light- and medium-machine guns.]<<<<<<

Bundes-weird (00:34:15/15-NOV-55)

>>>>>>[Jeez, kind of sounds like the Berlin Wall!]

<<<<<<

Bischof (23:15:42/16-NOV-55)

>>>>>>[The old or new one?]<<<<<<

Jeder (14:16:25/18-NOV-55)

>>>>>>[Yes.]<<<<<<

Bischof (03:27:14/19-NOV-55)

STADTTEIL Security Rating

Dornheim: Lower Class E

Wolfskehlen: Lower Class E

Riedstadt: Lower Class D/E

Leeheim: Lower Class E

Crumstadt: Lower Class E

Stockstadt am Rhein: Lower Class D

Biebesheim: Squatter E/Z

Gernsheim: Lower Class/Squatter E

Groß-Rohrheim: Lower Class/Squatter E

Biblis: Squatter Z

Nordrhein: Lower Class/Squatter E/Z

Hofheim: Squatter Z

Bürstadt: Lower Class D

Lampertheim: Lower Class D

WORMS

>>>>>>[The city, not what you get from drinking its water.]<<<<<<

Bachusohn (05:29:23/08-NOV-55)

FACTS IN BRIEF

Population: 126,000

Human: 76%

Methuman: 24%

Per Capita Income: EC 29,000

Below Poverty Level: 23%

Telekom: 0494-34

Despite the rapid industrialization of the last half-century, the medieval city of Worms still retains the Gothic flavor it had when Martin Luther first faced down the Catholic Church in open trial.

>>>>>>[Neo-Gothic Industrial architecture... And you thought Darmstadt was ugly...]<<<<<<

Century 22 (21:41:06/05-NOV-55)

Neighboring the Rheinhessen wine valley on its north and west, most of Worms' industry has turned towards heavy industry and chemicals. Unlike its neighbors to the south, not one square foot of land in Worms is occupied by AG Chemie Europa. Instead, dozens of competing chemical/industrial corporations—some German, but mostly foreign—occupy this city. The largest are the chemical plants belonging to Zeta ImpChem along the north banks of the Rhein.

Racial relations within the city of Worms are unusually peaceful. Of course, there are always extremist elements to be found in any Sprawl, but the human and methuman races get along fairly well enough with each other. Additionally, the city of Worms has a significant Jewish population, who have been gradually returning to the area since many of their numbers were lost in the Holocaust of the last century.

>>>>>>[Speaking of Jews, Worms is gaining a bit of recognition in the magic community as a focal point for the study of Kabbalah. Though it is discussed little and studied less outside the synagogues, a few noteworthy mages from this area have raised more than a few eyebrows.]<<<<<<

Schwarzzauberer (01:28:55/13-NOV-55)

>>>>>>[There is already a Kabbalistic circle in existence in the area. Called the Sons of Isaiah, little is known about them, save that they practice secretly in the city. Best guess at membership places their numbers somewhere between a dozen and a dozen and a half.]<<<<<<

Janik (09:33:52/15-NOV-55)

Osthofen (E)

In a city already gray with smog and

erupted in the center of the main building, causing it to implode. Mysterious fires emerged from the building and soon spread to nearby buildings. A night of celebration soon turned to terror as hundreds died in the mysterious conflagration.

To this day, even the most desperate squatters and hardened ganger avoids the Scherist-Manngold Arkologie. Ghouls and ghosts frequently haunt the place, and rumors have abounded witnessing a wraith in the area. Of the ghosts that haunt the place, while some resemble the victims of the blaze, others take on the gaunt, striped visages of those who died at the death camp here.

>>>>>[Which leads a lot of folks to speculate that the arcology was built right on top of the former death camp. Hard to believe, but possibly true, since a lot of records were destroyed during the apocalyptic years after the turn of the century, not to mention during the Crash and the core raids in the Eurowars.]<<<<<

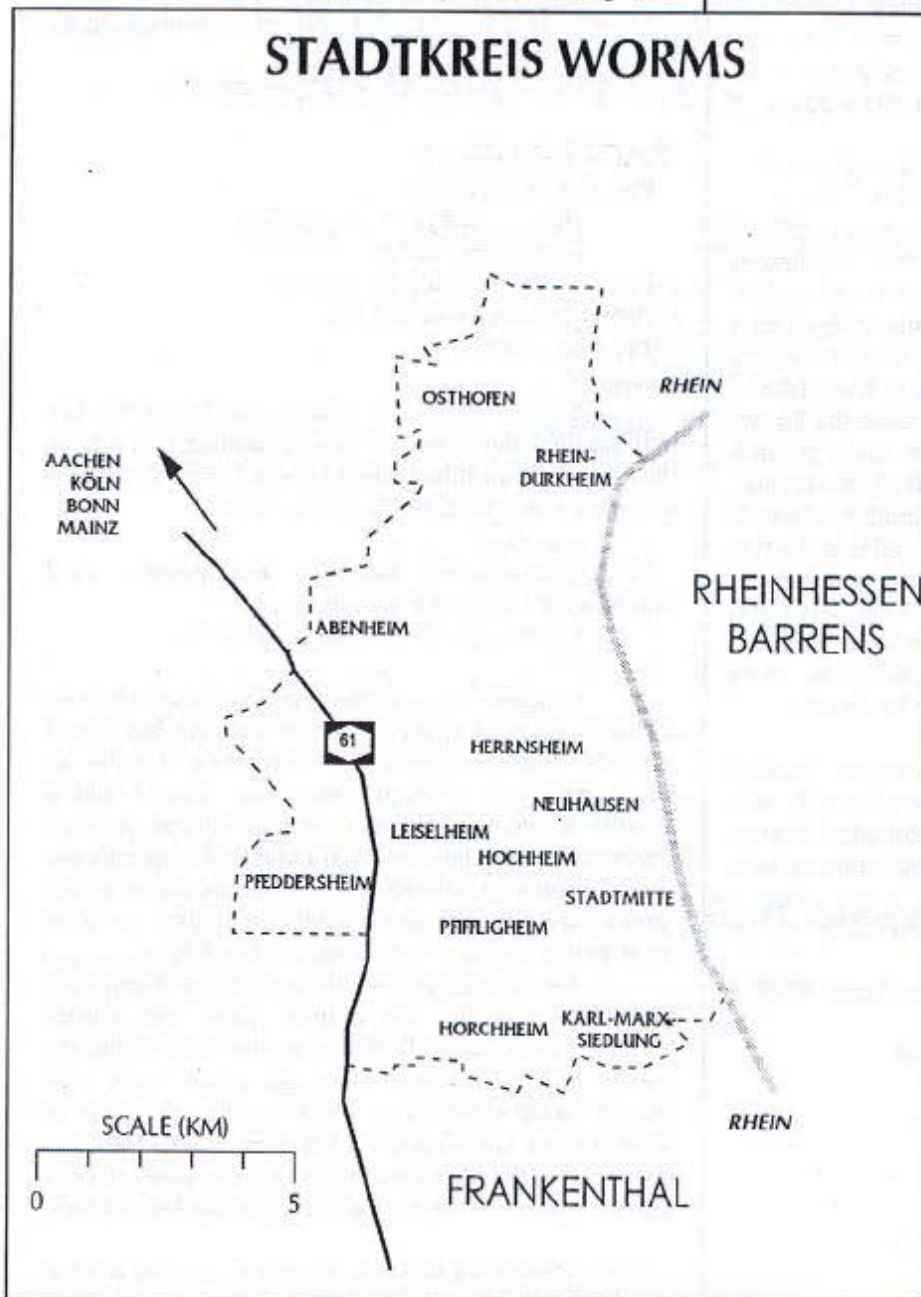
Herzog von Nieland
(22:56:24/16-NOV-55)

>>>>>[There's a nasty rumor going around as well, that Zeta ImpChem DID know where the old death camp was located and misled Scherist-Manngold into building there. Obviously it's inconclusive whether or not ZIC had planted a bomb, but speculations by forensic mages think that it may have been the cause of something else. Some weird mumbo-jumbo, involving

spirits and toxic waste....]<<<<<

Knightshade (18:20:00/21-NOV-55)

STADTKREIS WORMS



dreariness, the neighborhood of Osthofen stands out as a distinctively black mark. As the site of a former death camp during the world wars, Osthofen has been plagued by numerous occult events since the Awakening, the most infamous of which was the collapse of the Scherist-Manngold Arkologie.

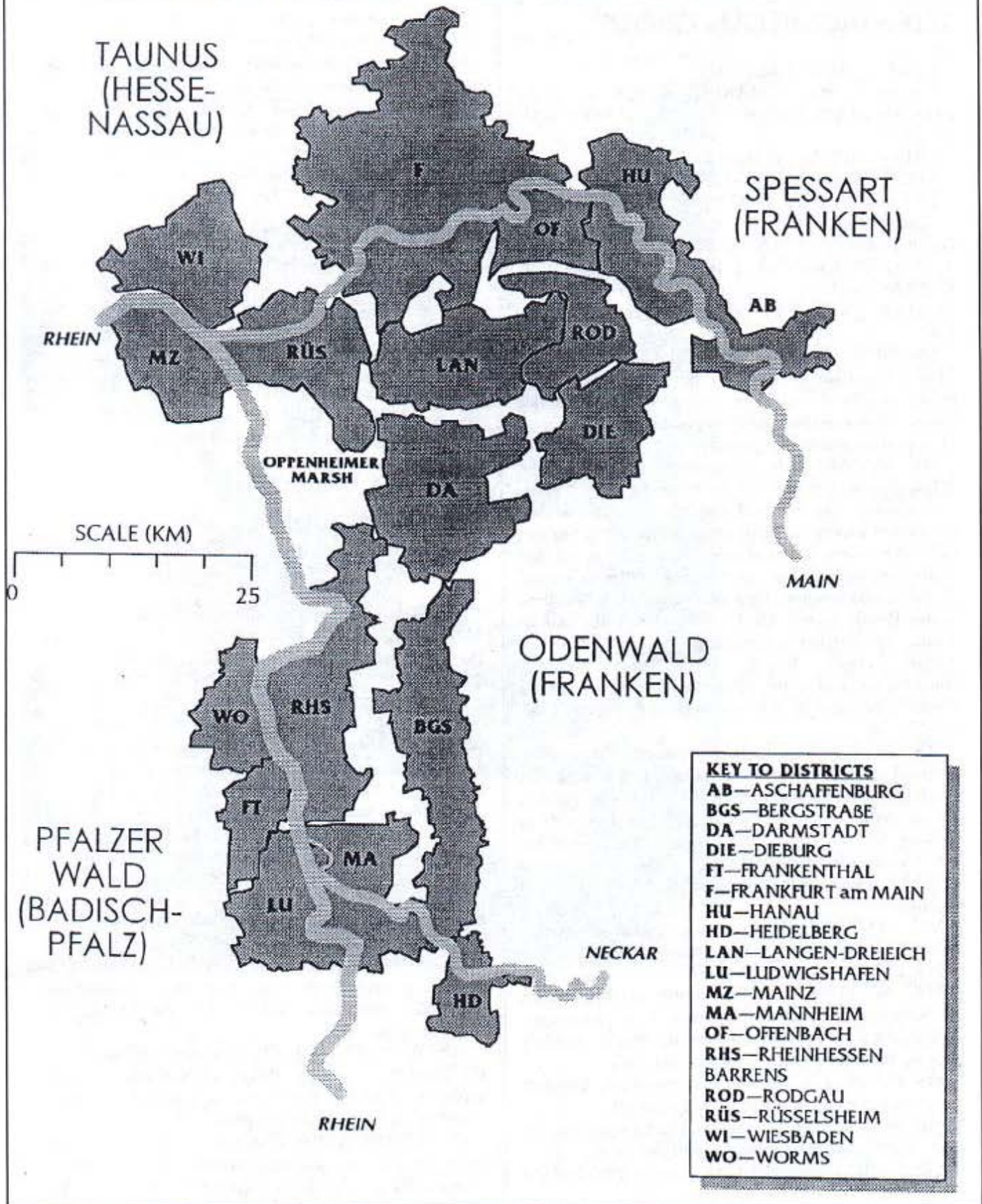
In 2041, Scherist-Manngold AG had announced their plans to build an arcology in Osthofen. No sooner had the project been announced, numerous problems, from unexpected financial crises to improbable, and sometimes fatal, accidents. Despite all these setbacks, the project continued, eventually opening on schedule on 13 October 2047.

On the night of the grand opening, while all the festivities were going on, a mysterious explosion

STADTTEIL Security Rating

- Rhein-Dürkheim: Lower Class D/E
- Abenheim: Lower Class D
- Herrnsheim: Lower/Middle Class C/D
- Pfieddersheim: Lower Middle Class B/C
- Neuhausen: Lower/Middle Class C
- Hochheim: Lower/Middle Class C
- Pfifflicheim: Middle Class B
- Horchheim: Middle Class B
- Karl-Marx-Siedlung: Middle Class A
- Weinsheim: Lower Middle Class B/C

LANDSTADT GROß-FRANKFURT (CITY-STATE OF GREATER FRANKFURT)



Super Tuesday: A Preview

THE MACMILLAN GROUP

HOST: TOM MACMILLAN

JOINED BY: MARIA CHEN, MATT CHRISTOPHER, CAROLYN AGASI AND ALVIN WATERS

TAPED FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 10, 2057

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ANNOUNCER: From Atlanta, the nation's Capitol, "The Macmillan Group," an unrehearsed program, presenting inside opinions and forecasts on major issues. Sponsored by Fuchi Corporation. Fuchi - for all of your life's needs, we provide.

MR. MACMILLAN: Issue two: the road to the White House. The new UCAS presidential race is off and running, but it's still too close to call as the candidates jockey for position in the hearts and minds of UCAS voters. Six candidates have come to the fore as front runners and are racing neck and neck toward Pennsylvania Avenue. They are former Vice President James Booth, former UCAS Army General Franklin Yeats, Dr. Rozilyn Hernandez, ecological attorney Arthur Vogel, Seattle businessman Kenneth Brackhaven, and none other than the great dragon Dunkelzahn himself. What to make of this mess? I ask you, Maria.

MS. CHEN: I think the fragmentation of the UCAS political scene means that the most successful candidate will be the one who manages to build a strong coalition between several factions. Everyone is looking for the broad-based appeal that can bring different people together in support. I think the people of the UCAS are really calling out for change with this election.

MR. MACMILLAN: How big a change are we talking? Big enough to get the dragon elected?

MS. CHEN: I don't think so. I-

MR. WATERS: I think Maria underestimates Dunkelzahn's popularity in this race, Tom. The dragon is drawing a lot of attention from the media, and he's playing the whole political game very well.

MS. CHEN: Yes, but will that popularity translate into votes at election time? I don't think so.

MR. WATERS: I agree that the UCAS is looking for real change, and Dunkelzahn might just be it.

MR. CHRISTOPHER: UCAS citizens aren't looking

for radical change. They've had quite enough of that for about the past fifty years. Now they want a stable place to stand when it seems like their country is falling apart. The election scandal was just the final straw in a long series of bad breaks for the UCAS, and I think things have reached a critical point. People are scared; they're looking for some way to get back to the safe, traditional values that their grandparents knew.

MR. MACMILLAN: Do you see anti-Awakened feeling in this, Matt?

MR. CHRISTOPHER: Hints of that, sure. There's still a lot of public concern about and distrust of the Awakened, which means the so-called "normal" candidates like Yeats and Brackhaven have the best chance to draw the majority of voters. If they play their cards right, that is.

MR. WATERS: Don't overlook the power of the Awakened vote, Matt.

MR. CHRISTOPHER: I'm not overlooking it, I'm just saying that it's too marginal to make much of a difference.

MS. CHEN: I'd hardly call millions of metahumans "marginal."

MR. CHRISTOPHER: I don't think you can break it down that way.

MS. CHEN: How else would you? The metahuman vote-

MS. CHRISTOPHER: Is marginal at best. C'mon, Maria, let's step back to reality here! The metahuman population of the UCAS amounts to less than a third of the entire country, and a lot of them aren't even registered voters. I don't think any candidate can win based on a pro-metahuman or Awakened platform. It's too narrow. The winning candidate has to appeal to the average citizen, which means the average human.

MR. MACMILLAN: All right. On the one side of the Awakened fence we have Yeats, Brackhaven and Booth. On the other side we have Dunkelzahn, Hernandez and Vogel. Who has the best chance of successfully straddling the fence? Carolyn.

MS. AGASI: I think Yeats will come out as the candidate of choice. His sterling career with the UCAS Army gives him a lot of appeal, and he's already picked up a lot of popular support. He's pro-metahuman enough to capture the meta vote as a compromise candidate, especially with Anne Penchyk as his running mate.

MR. WATERS: And with Kenneth Brackhaven on the other side of him. Plenty of metahumans will probably vote for any likely winner just to keep Brackhaven from taking the prize.

MS. AGASI: At the same time, Yeats is cautious about metahumans and magic-cautious enough not to alienate the average human voter who may feel a bit

"intimidated" by the Awakened races.

MS. CHEN: I disagree. Yeats is a warmonger; he's threatening to drag his country back into conflict with the other nations of North America. I'm betting on Roz Hernandez and her New Century Party-their message of integration really appeals to voters who are tired of ugly rhetoric and divisiveness. I think they're going to

compromise candidate at all. I think the average UCAS voter is through with compromise; he's looking to get back into a position of strength. I think people feel a strong desire to put traditional values back in their lives and pull their country out of the quagmire it's been sinking into since 2011. And I think Ken Brackhaven can rally the public behind him because he stands for exactly those values. He's a-

MR. WATERS: No way, Matt! Give up these conservative fantasies! Brackhaven's a racist, for pete's sake!

MR. CHRISTOPHER: - a skilled businessman with a proven track record. He stands for strong, honest values and he's a no-nonsense kind of guy. He's solid and dependable, and I think that'll get noticed once the media smoke clears.

MR. MACMILLAN: Let's take a look at what one of the other candidates has to say about Mr. Brackhaven.

ARTHUR VOGEL (From recording): I respect Mr. Brackhaven's skill and success in the business world, but running a government involves more than an understanding of sound business principles. It takes a feel for the needs of the citizens and the nation, not just the bottom line. It takes a willingness to balance the rights of the minority and the majority so that everybody comes out a little ahead. It takes genuine compassion for the plight of the people - all people - which Mr. Brackhaven clearly doesn't

gain a lot of popular support for trying to reconcile both sides of this issue.

MR. CHRISTOPHER: Maria, people don't want the issue reconciled. The UCAS isn't ready to put a mage or a metahuman in the White House-there's still too much public concern over the Awakened and magic, especially after recent events in Chicago. There are just too many unknowns.

MR. MACMILLAN: Matt, who's your best pick?

MR. CHRISTOPHER: I don't think it'll be a

have.

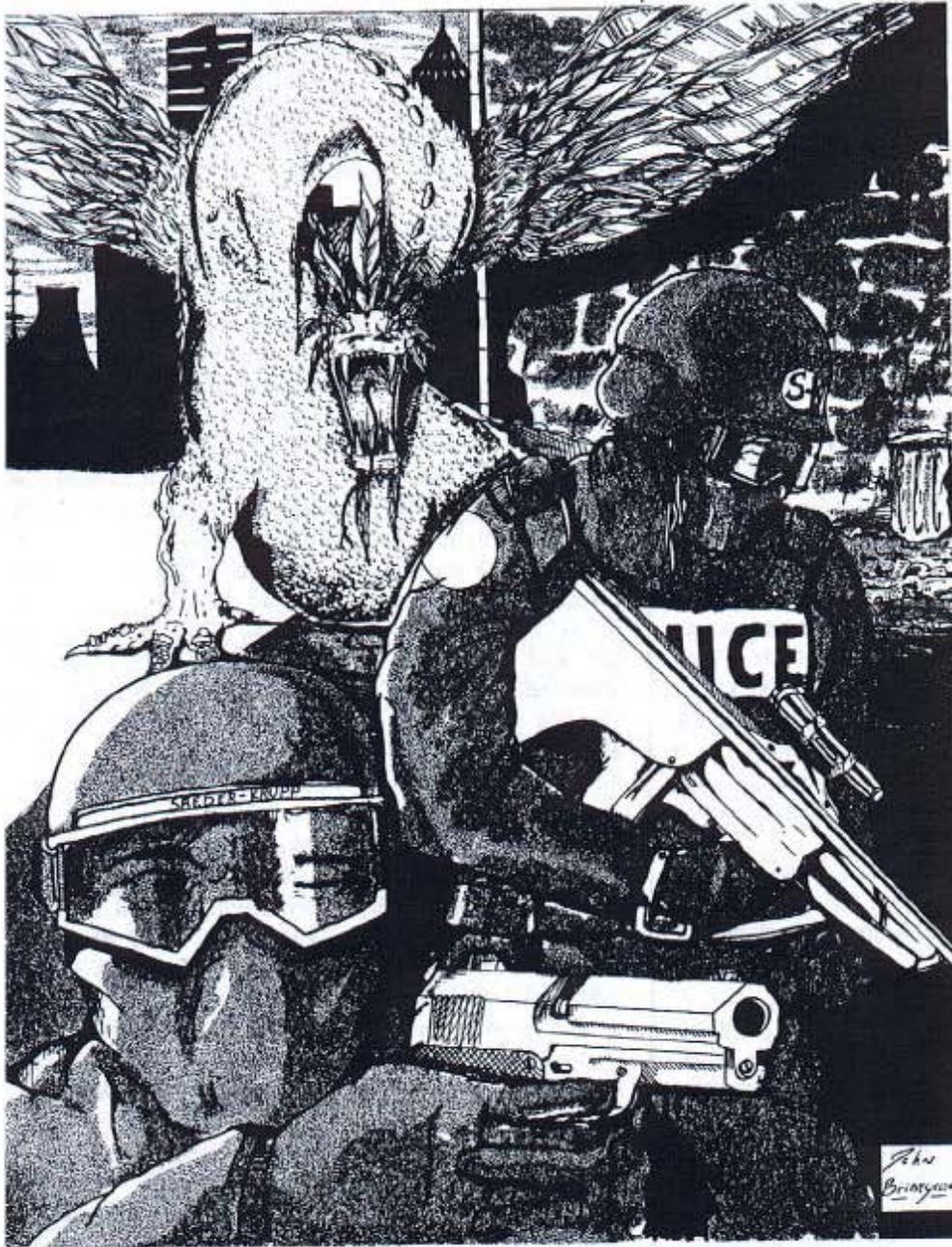
MR. MACMILLAN: What does Mr. Vogel's opinion tell you?

MR. CHRISTOPHER: He's scared. He sounds like a whiner.

MR. MACMILLAN: Do you also think-

MR. CHRISTOPHER: Why is he bothering to run?

MR. MACMILLAN: -that we're going to see a primarily a negative campaign?



MS. AGASI: Vogel's making a real mistake in going after Brackhaven on this. A negative campaign just won't win. Too many candidates are running to make any one person the bad guy. Whoever wins has to do it by appealing to voters, not tearing the other guy down. Vogel just doesn't have enough popular appeal to cut it.

MS. CHEN: We're going to have a protracted-

MS. AGASI: His big weakness is his focus on environmental issues.

MR. WATERS: No, that's his strength.

MS. AGASI: He's making a mistake-

MR. WATERS: That's his strength.

MS. AGASI: -by focusing on his pet issues and not looking at the big picture. The people of the UCAS don't care about cleaning up toxic dumps in Podunk or safeguarding some endangered species they've never heard of when they can't bring home enough money to put food on the table and the dollar's value keeps dropping.

MR. WATERS: I'm telling you, the environment is his strength. There's an ideological vacuum for a principled Green candidate, and Vogel can fill it.

MR. CHRISTOPHER: Al, you have to remember, Vogel doesn't need your vote in the election.

MR. WATERS: No, but-

MR. CHRISTOPHER: He needs UCAS votes.

MS. CHEN: The environment is still a strong issue-

MR. WATERS: You want to take this outside, Matt?

MR. MACMILLAN: All right, all right, we've got to move on. James Booth, former Vice President of the UCAS and lame-duck candidate extraordinary. In a press conference following the declaration of new elections in the UCAS, Mr. Booth had this to say to the public.

JAMES BOOTH (From recording): I believe my record of service to our nation speaks for itself, and I invite any other candidate who wishes to debate the real issues of this campaign to join me in a constructive dialogue with our fellow citizens.

MR. MACMILLAN: Is Booth's challenge a winning strategy, or is he just blowing smoke? I ask you, Matt.

MR. CHRISTOPHER: (Snort of laughter) The only candidate poor Booth has a prayer of standing up to on stage is Vogel, and that's only because Booth is taller. I don't think Booth can overcome the stigma of this election scandal in time to make a comeback-not with the other candidates already dividing up the voters between them.

MS. CHEN: For once I agree with Matt. I don't think Booth can get enough support to win, but I do think he can affect things depending on which of the other candidates he pulls support away from.

MR. MACMILLAN: Exit question. Who's the front-runner of the race right now? Matt.

MR. CHRISTOPHER: Too close to call, but I think we'll see either Brackhaven or Yeats emerge as a clear front-runner in the next few weeks.

MR. WATERS: Dunkelzahn. The dragon's got the whole world's attention, and he's got the media savvy to keep it. But I think Vogel may give him a run for his money in the coming weeks.

MS. AGASI: Yeats. He has a solid background and enough broad-based appeal to stay ahead.

MS. CHEN: I think Hernandez will pull off a coalition and swing massive support over to the New Century Party. She has the vision that will pull people together.

MR. MACMILLAN: I think they're all competitive, but it's going to be an uphill battle to get the top seat. That's all for today. Bye-bye!

>>>>>[And that's just how they're arguing about it in the CAS, chummers. Closer to home, things are getting even more fun - and there's no prospect of it calming down any time soon. The new election is getting to be big news all over the place, so by popular demand I've set up this file full of data on the UCAS presidential brawl game. Yup-the whole thing under one roof. We at Shadowland aim to please.

For those of you who've been living in a cave out in tribal territory for the past several months, you should have heard by now that the 2056 Presidential Election in the UCAS went down in flames when the FedGov discovered that the results had been rigged. They decided to start the whole process over again from the top, and the public reaction to the whole mess has spawned dozens of political splinter groups and brought all the policlubbers, weirdoes, fringe goons and fanatics out from whatever rocks they were lurking under. Hell, even fraggin Dunkelzahn has gotten into the act.

So here you'll find the skinny on the half-dozen viable candidates for prez-what they say and (more importantly) what they're not saying. Right off, I'm stating for the record that this file is not a place for political debate-we're not trying to make everyone an informed voter, since most of you SINless slags couldn't vote if you wanted to. Nor is this the place to spout off your half-baked (or overcooked) opinions about Issue X or Candidate Y's parentage. What we want is whatever inside information you readers might have on the back-room deals and behind-the-scenes action. Not only is the election turning out to be a gold mine of opportunity for those of us in the shadows-or at least, those who're paying attention-but whoever wins it can affect whether it'll be feast or famine time in the UCAS shadows long after the dust clears.

Because a lot of the documents I've dug up are so short and so many of them are transcripts of speeches, I've set up most of the files so that comments will appear at the end. Tamper and you answer to me.

As the Chinese curse says, we live in interesting times, children. Post well and often.]<<<<<Captain Chaos (09:43:22/02-22-57)

THE HERMETIC LODGE

The area for all that's magic, both of a Shamanic and Hermetic nature
by Chris Hussey

>>>>>[Welcome all to our little corner of Shadowland. Hope you like the new graphics. The boys who spend too much time with their decks rather than their magical endeavours made them up for you. Anyway, you've got your choice of areas to pursue. Just pick up the right grimoire, and you'll be flying...]

<<<<<

-Henning's Boy (14:34:59/10-3-56)

>>You have chosen Only New Spells. Do you wish to proceed? Y/N

>>Y

>>Spells logged in last __ days? (enter days)

>>7

>>Read on, oh great and powerful magician!!!

MANIPULATION SPELLS

Meal

This spell creates an average meal, including drink, for one person. The number of successes indicates the overall taste of the meal. Successes may be traded off to make a larger, poorer tasting dish.

Type: Physical

Range: Limited

Target: 4 **Duranton:** Permanent (10 turns)

Drain: [(F/2)+1]M

Feast

This larger version of the Meal spell creates a meal for a number of people equal to half the casting magician's Magic Rating, rounded down. Like the Meal spell, successes may be traded off to make more food, but with less taste.

Type: Physical

Range: Limited

Target: 4 **Duranton:** Permanent (15 turns)

Drain: [(F/2)+1]S

>>>>>>[Both these spells can come in real handy on those extended missions. Particulary if you need to bring lots of gear.]<<<<<<

-Mercmage (10:25:33/01-10-57)

>>>>>[Brings new meaning to the words "Magic Chef"]<<<<<<

-Splitlip (01:45:21/01-13-57)

>>>>>[Be careful trying to create quick, large, meals. You may get something that fills the void, but tastes like drek mixed with gas, smegma, and troll underwear. And any nutritional value goes right down

the crapper.]<<<<<<

-Connie Connoisseur (15:56:13/01-13-57)

Claws

This spell requires a voluntary subject. This spell transforms the target's hands into long, sharp claws, which can be used in melee combat. Base damage for the claws is (Str)M Physical damage. Every 2 extra successes the caster generates allows the power level to be increased by one.

Type: Physical

Range: Touch

Target: Body

Duranton: Sustained

Drain: [(F/2)+2]M

>>>>>[Nasty! Nasty! Nasty! This spell can carve up most razors in real short time. Doesn't work the best on orks or trolls though.]<<<<<<

-Filene's Attic (19:22:44/01-07-57)

>>>>>[I don't know... ever been hit by a troll with this spell active?]<<<<<<

-Trog-in-the-wind (09:37:10/01-08-57)

Carbon Copy

This spell must be cast twice to be fully complete. When the spell is first cast, the magician touches any printed page or other surface. All the words or images on that surface, are then stored in the magician's mind. The magician can then recast the spell touching any blank surface, such as paper, and transfer the words or images to that surface. The transfer is verbatim, and no words or portions of an image can be lost. The magician can hold a number of pages of information up to one-half his Magic Attribute, rounded down. The spell must be cast seperately for each page, however. The magician cannot recall any of the contents of the page from memory while storing a copy. This spell can only be used on printed items. Anything of a technological means (such as data on a computer screen) will not work with the spell.

Type: Physical

Range: Touch

Target: Object Resistance Table

Duranton: Permanent (10 turns) **Drain:** [(F/2)+2]M

>>>>>[Perfect for those stealth runs.]<<<<<<

-Taylor (16:34:45/01-14-57)

>>>>>[Damn straight! Use this with 'Catalogue' and you won't miss a beat.]<<<<<<

-Backpine Bob (16:45:29/01-14-57)

A Speculative Theory on the Wave-Form Nature of Magic

by Erik S. Jameson

According to the Mayan calendar, a new world, the Sixth world, was predicted to occur on December 24, 2011. The day we now say the world was "Awakened." Previous to that date, there was no magic in our world, at least none that we could freely utilize. Is the nature of magic to gradually increase, perhaps infinitely? Or is the nature of magic more akin to a sinusoidal wave, with a distinct up and down motion?

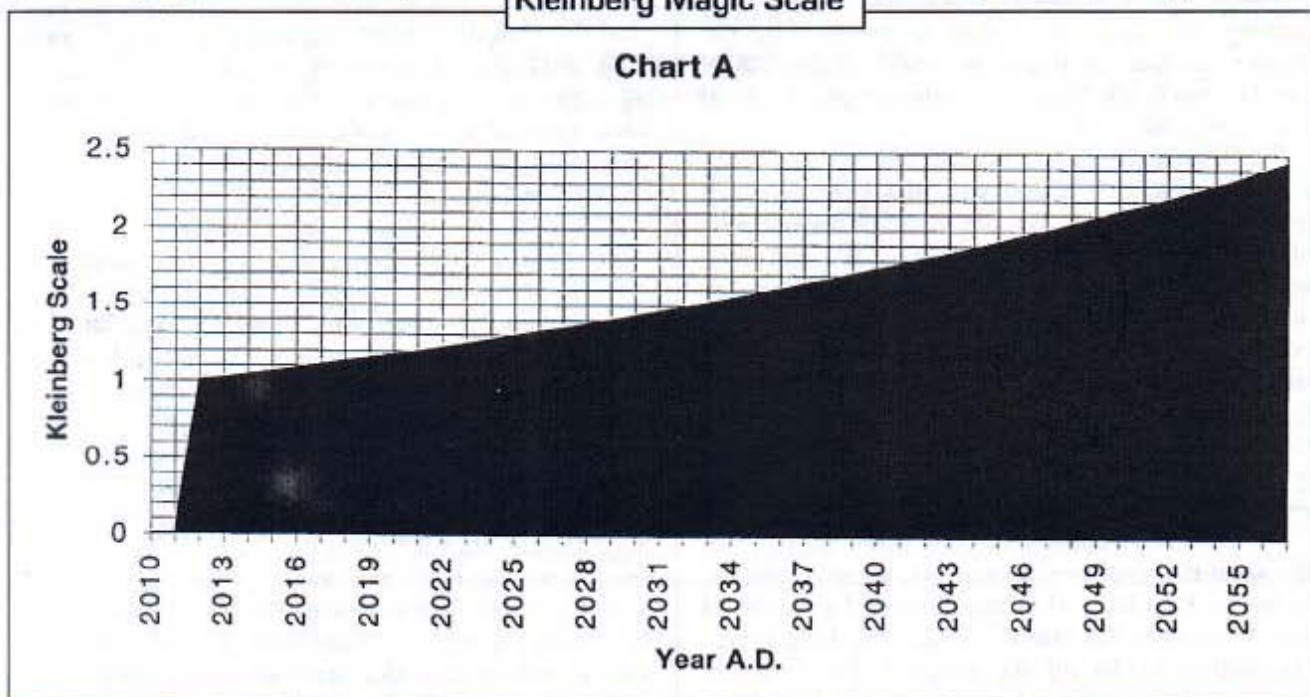
Most theorists agree that it is "life" itself that powers magic, that the "mana" energy that magicians draw upon to cast magic is a by-product, if you will, of life. If this is the case, then as populations grow, the power of magic shall grow too. Dr. Kleinford of the University of Munich theorized that on December 24, 2011, the earth, or "Gaia-sphere" as he referred to it, reached a sort of "critical mass" in which there was now enough "life energy" that magic suddenly became possible (see chart A). It should reasonable follow, then, that high-population areas should have a greater incidence of magically capable individuals. We know this is not the case however. Cairo has one of the world's most dense cities in terms of population, but has the lowest incidence of magically active individuals of cities of similar population. Tir na nOg, on the other hand, is a relatively small nation, but has an unusually high incidence of magicians.

According to Dr. Kleinford's theory, if again reasonably extrapolated, areas such as the Gobi desert, which is largely devoid of any life, should have relatively little in the way of available mana on the astral plane. Again, we know this not to be the case.

Using the Beacham-Davis Mana Scale, we can see a pattern that may tell us what the level of ambient mana really is. Dr. Clarissa Beacham and hermetic mage Michael Davis created this scale back in 2019 to give an accurate means of measuring available mana per cubic physical meter. To reflect the fact there was no mana available before 2012, it was decided that the scale should start at a positive whole integer, 1.0000, which was assigned to the year 2020, the first year measurements were taken in this fashion. Most scientists, even Dr. Beacham, acknowledge that the scale is relative, as they could not measure the amount of available mana on December 24, 2011. This fact has not kept most magicians and scientists from using the scale as a helpful tool.

On the Beacham-Davis Mana Scale, magic has been in a steady climb upwards (see chart B). Given that 2020 has a value of 1.0000, the 2057 measurement found available mana to be at 1.064 on the scale. And the increase has not been as even as once thought. The increase in ambient mana jumped during 2023 (1.0013), 2036 (1.0126), and 2050

Kleinberg Magic Scale



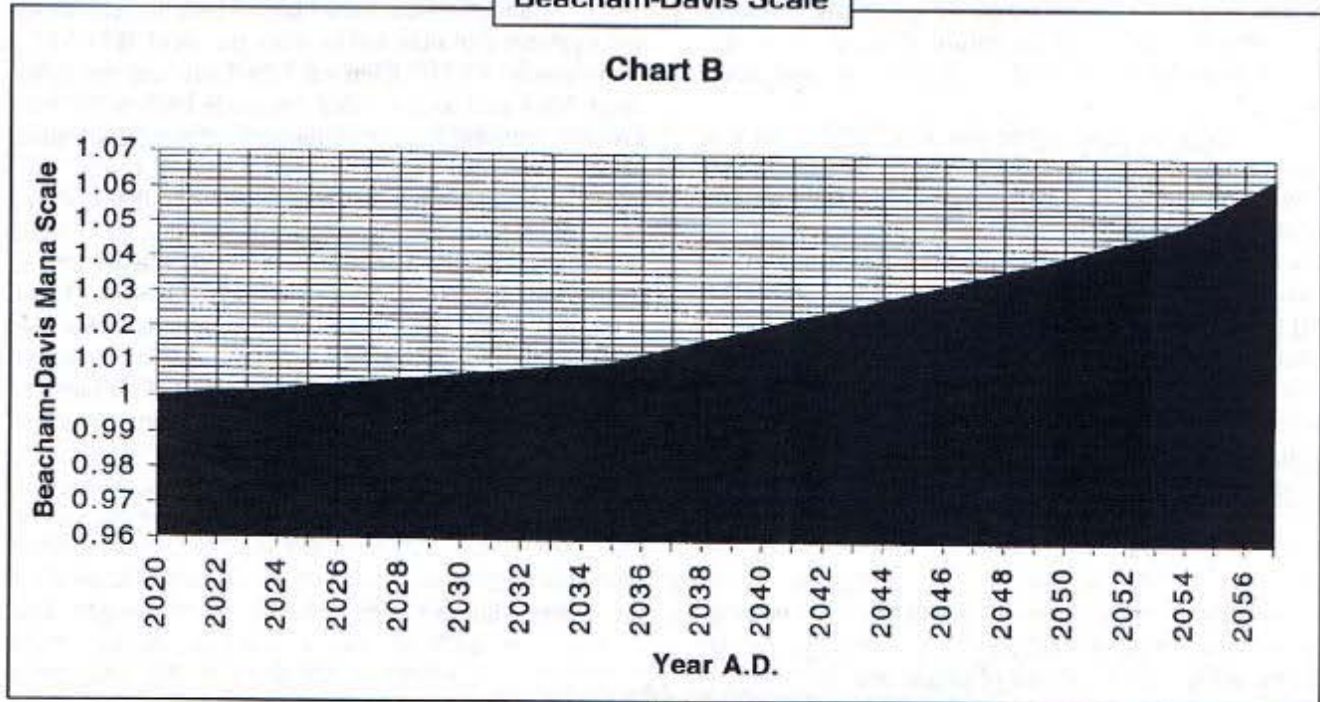
(1.0413), and again in 2055 (1.055). As can be seen on the graph A, the ambient mana increase is an curve, with an increasing angle. With that in mind, it should be possible to calculate the amount of mana at the "Awakening." At this preliminary stage, however, there is simply not enough data to accurately predict what the "true" start point would be, or how the curve would slope. The existence of theorized "mana spikes" such as the Great Ghost Dance have further complicated matters, possibly accelerating the growth of mana, with unforeseen complications.

We might also look at the Mayan Calendar. According to Mayan long count, the "Sixth World," which was accurately predicted to start

our progeny may create feats with magic that we cannot even dream of. Perhaps magic will become so common place that everyone will be able to wield it's power. But it also means that, just as it started, magic will come to an end. It also brings a question to the table, perhaps the question with the most implications: What happened the last time the mana wave was positive?

--an address by Arthur Ruane, Thaumaturgical graduate student and research assistant, to the faculty of the Thaumaturgy Department of the University of Seattle.

Beacham-Davis Scale



December 24, 2011. According to research by Dr. Johann Grunewald of Bonn University on the Mayan Calendar, the "Sixth World" is expected to end April 4, 7137.

If we assume for a moment that in 7137, when the cycle ends, that magic will disappear, a rough answer becomes clear. We can roughly predict how ambient mana will flow and change. We can even guess that during the year 4574, or close therein, the ambient mana level will peak. This also gives some credence to the anecdotal stories of magic being possible before the Awakening. It is entirely likely, if not possible, that the mana levels on December 24, 2011 simply reached a level where the majority of the expression of the Awakening were displayed, if we accept this sinusoidal wave nature of mana.

Given all the unknowns and variables, it would still appear that the nature of mana flow, and of magic, is at least similar to the flow and motion of a sinusoidal wave. What does this mean? For us, very little except as theoretical fodder for arguments. It does however hold several implications. A thousand years from now,

>>>>>[*sniff* *sniff* Oh, that's bulldrek I smell! How could these fraggers, Beacham and Davis, come up with this scale when terms like mana hadn't even been defined yet? I mean, Kano and White Eagle coined that term, among others, in 2035!]<<<<<<

--Steam Train<11:34:02/2-11-57>

>>>>>[The only drek you're smelling is your own. Time to clarify a few things for those of you without formal magical training. First of all, Dr. Beacham was actually a chaos theorist, not to mention mundane. She had some theories, and brought hermetic mage Micheal Davis in to test them. And, I hasten to add, it was all done out of her shallow pocket. The University of Cal-Berkeley wasn't too happy about her freelance research, but as long as she kept up with official assignments, they let her play. Now, in her original studies, she didn't use terms like "mana." She called it something like "ambient trans-dimensional energies," or something equally forgettable. In 2041, Micheal Davis, now with a Doctorate in Thaumaturgy from UCLA, rewrote Dr. Beacham's original theory with

modern terms and modern knowledge, and added his name to the scale. And Dr. Kleinford of Munich, despite still being a darling there, has a terrible rep outside Germany.]<<<<<<

--the Dark Stranger<13:24:12/2-11-57>

>>>>>[I'll buy that. But humor this mundane for a minute. How do they come up with these numbers? It's not like they can just pour some mana into test tube and measure it.]<<<<<<

--St. Stan<15:03:42/2-11-57>

>>>>>[I'll field this one. It's really rather simple, but time-consuming. Part of it involves a uninitiated mage casting a whole slew of spells, and checking the mage's body for signs of drain. Then there are tests involving the physical affect of spells, and a number of tests involving spirits. Repeat. Repeat again. And at least one more time. It usually takes about a week to do all the tests. And since there aren't "mana-o-meters," All these tests try to give a scientific measurement to something that defies exacting measurement. And it all seems to work; they get pretty good numbers. I personally don't agree with the method, or the theory espoused by Ruane, but it's as good as any of the other crackpot ideas floating around out there.]<<<<<<

--Devil's Lawyer<17:22:56/2-11-57>

>>>>>[Dr. Davis can still be found at UCLA. He's an old codger now, but Dean Garret lets him tinker and toy with all sorts of experimental magics. Every now and again, he comes up with something too.]<<<<<<

--PJ<20:44:30/2-11-57>

>>>>>[I heard rumors, only rumors mind you, that the elves have know this "sinoidal wave" stuff for years now. Can't prove it, but I don't doubt it.]<<<<<<

--Anonymous<21:30:23/2-11-57>

>>>>>[Yeah, whatever Anon.]<<<<<<

--Krispy<23:38:02/2-11-57>

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Now I Lay Me Down To Sleep

by Jay Fugiel

The gun looked unreal and far away as Jack let the slide snap forward, sending a teflon-jacketed round into the chamber. He couldn't take his eyes off the blued steel as he tumbled around the unmade bed for another handful of blue capsules. They rolled around in his hand like greasy marbles before he popped them down. He reached for the bottle, his eyes still on the gun, almost knocking it over. He recovered, spilling some, and then his mouth filled with the harsh, sour, bite of Kentucky whiskey. It was a finer brand of poison than he could usually afford, but this was no time to be pinching pennies.

You can't take it with you.

The gun started to waver like a mirage as the first burn of Mephisteprene filled his head. He pressed the balls of his hands to his eyes, then reached around again until he found his cigarettes. His eyes hurt, his throat was raw from too much whiskey and too many cigarettes, his head was fuzzy from too little sleep, and someone was coming to kill him.

It's gonna be a long ride.

Yeah.

The rest of my life.

His eyes ran down to the slab of iron clutched in his bony right hand. This, at least, was a serious piece of ordnance. It had been Dizzy's, only Dizzy wouldn't be needing it anymore.

Screw him.

He swung his thin legs over the edge of the bed and stared down at the floor until his vision cleared. The gun hung down between his naked legs. He was still in his boxer shorts.

He straightened up, took a deep breath, and raised the Colt Manhunter up to eye level. He had to brace his gun hand with his left to do it. He squinted down the line where the laser sight used to be. He had to pawn that off to get the Blues.

Get the Blues. Heh, Heh.

I get it.

Cars were going by three floors below. He could feel their far-off buzzing, like the thrum of subway cars going by twenty feet under the asphalt. They threw their cruciform shapes across his small, tight, body, sitting on the edge of an unmade bed in some nameless doss in his underwear, smoking cigarettes.

Always wanted to die in bed.

Sure, he'd done drugs before. Who hadn't? Torch up a joint of cheap vat-grown to take the edge off after another day in the mean streets, score some reds or maybe a couple of 'ludes, for variety. Cops didn't even try to stop it anymore, at least not here in the bad part of the city, the forgotten lands, the Barrrens.

Like, you're trying to bag the Proteus killer, not to

mention all the crazies and rogue sam's and just plain old criminals... so you're gonna look twice at some kid smoking a joint? Yeah, right.

But all that was kid stuff compared to Mephisteprene. This was something they would definitely take an interest in, because those little blue pills were what the guys who were crazy and fast took to get faster and crazier.

His eyes were still leaking but he guessed that would pass. This stuff didn't come with an owners manual and the kind of guys who used it regularly never seemed to hang around very long. That could mean lots of things.

Sure, he knew guys who'd dropped a blue here and there. It was like speed, they said, only the hangover was worse. The street finds it's own uses for things. Mephisteprene was originally intended to give corporate hit-teams that extra edge in the days before you could get it hard-wired into your skull.

A little, you get a nice trip. Three, maybe four hours. Funnel them down by the handful and you are in for a different ride. Mephisteprene acted on the fast-twitch muscle fibers, the ones that governed quick reaction and response... especially in danger situations. Some guys still used it, mostly hot young talent just cutting their teeth. Guys with no contacts, no contracts, and very short money.

Pop a handful and kick some serious ass, but then better find someplace safe to crash because pulled muscles and a bad headache are going to be the least of your problems. Guaranteed. Dizzy'd told him stories. Like about how the worst part was that the crash could come at any time, without warning. Which meant that one guy could drop and by a jack-rabbit for six hours and his buddy crashes after a fifteen minute headache. And then your body's going to want to get all that speed-time back, in spades.

Funny thing... before the big crash landed on you like a sack of anvils you slowed down, way down.

And while you were still up and running? Minor hallucinations. Maybe. Paranoia. Dizzy'd mentioned that. Jack laughed softly to himself, burying his chin in the white tufts of hair on his thin chest because holding his head up was starting to feel like work.

How would I be able to tell?

Jack the Rabbit thumbed the magazine catch on the gun that was too big for him and let the clip drop onto the bed. He worked the slide and a fat dollop of lead wrapped in teflon clattered to the floor and skidded away toward the corner. That sound echoed and reverberated inside the small room, or maybe it was just inside his own head. Whatever, it sounded really

loud and Jack's head snapped up with feral quickness.

The shell was about halfway to the wall when it stopped moving. It had been making a high, scratching sound as it wheeled across the cheap tile floor and that sound was still there, hung in the air, suspended. It sounded like the static on a radio stuck in between stations. For a second he could hear, low and incomprehensible, the sing-song of a mad language which he could suddenly, magically, understand floating on the stuffy air of his cheap room.

Oh, boy. Gonna get some now.

His lips curled back over his broken teeth.

Screw Fade. Get some. Get some...

He didn't forget why he was there, sitting on a sprung mattress, or who was trying to kill him, but it seemed indistinct in his mind and somehow unimportant. There was no more fear wrapped up in those thoughts, even though they'd already gotten Dizzy.

Screw Diz. He got me into this.

It was just going to be a little job. Not the kind of thing anyone would want to kill you over. With remarkable clarity, Jack could remember

Dizzy saying just that. Just those exact words. Now they seared their way across his brain in magnesium yellow letters a thousand feet high and he could hear Dizzy saying them over and over and over again, and when he'd listened to that for about half of what he figured might be his remaining time on Earth he thought to look over in the corner after the shell that he had dropped during another lifetime and it still hadn't made it and it still wasn't moving.

Cool.

Just a little warehouse job, grab some trid's and maybe a couple microwave ovens. Little rathole of a storage warehouse down in the Redmond Barrens but, hell, it wasn't even near the Burn Zone. You'd probably have to go better than twenty or thirty blocks before you even hit the edge of Raven turf. The neighborhood

wasn't even that bad. Regular folks, maybe even a few shabby suits. Not too far from the city proper. All of this Dizzy had made very clear because it was bad enough that the Raven's were a bad-ass gang of psychos who dressed in black leather and sported flying wings of lacquered black hair. Bad enough that their leader, Po, had two-inch hand razors which he would gleefully employ in turning anyone who crossed him Raven-pale by draining them of all their blood...

All in all a very bad scene. Hard to see how it could get any worse than tangling with these guys. Only it could. There was a burned-out factory complex right smack in the middle of Raven territory, the Burn Zone by name. So named because one very bad night a crazy pyro mage burned it down, himself with it. Maybe he

was afraid of the dark. About a year and a half later a newcomer, some damned limping cripple for chrissakes, moves in. Goes by the name of Fade. Also a mage. Specialized in making himself disappear. Wasn't too bad at making other people disappear, either. Hires the gang.

The whole frigging gang.

That's

where things really start to get bad because, as things turned out, it wasn't just a run-down little warehouse in a medium bad part of town.

It was a run-down little warehouse that the Ravens were using to move stolen merchandise. To make a long story short, Jack the Rabbit and his ill-informed partner in crime drop in on this little party, needless to say uninvited. The Ravens make their displeasure known but before things can get too hot they manage to make it out and away with just one slightly sticky complication.

See, when the Ravens twig tat a couple of boosters are inside they turn all nasty, but Jack does not plan to stick around long enough to see how pissed off a gang of sociopaths can become when you try to steal things from them that they have already much time and



energy to steal in the first place. So, they make tracks firing wildly behind them to discourage any zealous pursuers and, through no fault of their own, one of the Ravens steps in front of a two-inch, teflon-jacketed freight train going straight to Hell at in excess of eighteen hundred feet per second. No more Raven.

Po is not happy. If someone gets away with chopping out one of his boys he looks weak. Other gangs start taking liberty with his people and his property. The delicate balance of weak versus strong is gently, almost imperceptibly, shifted out of his favor and the sharks start circling. When that happens Fade begins to take an interest, because he lives in Raven territory and the Ravens provide his home security and keeping his home secure is Fade's first and last priority. He does not want a war on Raven turf. What he wants is to be left alone.

So one night at Israfel's, where the tension is so thick you could butter it, the Raven's shooting pool and trying to act nonchalant, enters Fade. The flock seems as strong as ever. They only lost one guy, after all, and he was just some jerk pulling guard. This is not the point. The point is that appearance is every bit as important as reality, because once other gangs start chipping away at you they can only go so far before there isn't much left to chip away at. That's why Fade's here asking Po in his best west Texas drawl if there's anything he can do.

Fourteen hours and change later he hands them Dizzy. By dawn there's a new watchdog at the corner of what used to be Fifth and Broadway, right in front of the jumble of wrecked cars that mark the East entrance to Raven territory. They set two old railroad ties together and then strung him up there with barbed wire. Po picked the spot so Dizzy could see the dawn of his last day on Earth.

That was this morning. He had no idea how far gone the night was. He didn't own a watch that worked. He was dirt-scratching poor. So was everyone in the Barrens. So were the Ravens. Not Fade, though. Fade was rich. Fade was rich before he even started running the shadows, or that's the way it seemed to Jack. Poor little rich college boy. Nobody he knew would think twice about selling themselves to get the hell out of the Barrens. They sold themselves every day just to stay alive. Then this rich guy comes down because he can feel more like a big-shot by slumming with the poor folks. Uptown he's just another wage-mage making it in the financial district every day. Down here he's like a god, unfathomable and untouchable. Since day one it was mess with Fade, disturb Fade, and the Raven's will mail you home to momma. Now, it was Fade's turn.

Not that the prey was all that difficult. Two half-starved, luckless street punks who couldn't even shoot straight. A mage with money could find anybody in a hurry. If you won't listen to the rustle of his money then you'll listen to the crack of your arms breaking as a

couple of Ravens do a little dance on you. Still don't want to come across? Maybe just don't know anything? Fade'll make sure. He'll open up your skull and root around with an uncaring hand. When he's done sifting your thoughts like grains of sand he'll pour them back in again, not gently. At least you're a person to the Ravens. Yeah, sure, a person they can push around, but still one of them. Born under a bad sign on the wrong side of the tracks, the side that's a hard dollar for them and for you. To Fade you're just street-trash and the only thing he's going to be thinking as he screws around with your dreams and desires and hopes is that they weren't all that interesting, anyway.

I'm gonna take that bastard. Not for me, not for Dizzy, not for anything but the pleasure of seeing the look on his face when he realizes a street-rat just punched his ticket.

He let the slide snap forward. The sound startled him. It seemed too loud, the echo going on for a very long time. He looked for the bullet but couldn't see where it ended up because of the glare from the tiny rooms only window. He was beginning to find that light annoying but he didn't want to pull the down the ragged window shade. It would be worse in the dark. The hazy twilight seemed to be a bright fog that covered the floor of the room.

His head hurt and he didn't want to think anymore, but he knew that if he stayed sitting on the edge of the bed, watching another cigarette burn down, he wouldn't be able to help it. He thought about putting the gun up against his own head, letting the cool barrel rest on his temple... that would feel nice. At least he would go quick. Not like Dizzy.

Instead, he hoisted himself up and went to look for his bullet.

He wanted to put some music on, something to maybe serve as a counterpoint to the fine high buzz that had settled in somewhere in back of his eyeballs, but there was no radio here. No trid, either. Nothing, except for an unmade bed and an ashtray half-filled with spent cigarette butts. One window and one bed and one unconvincingly secured door. Everything right out in the open, not even a closet, which was all right with Jack because a looking at a closet door would make him think about all the things that might be hiding inside. When the Fear came he didn't want to have to deal with any more than he had to.

He slipped down onto the cool, peeling linoleum of the floor, running his hands in front of himself like a blind man. He was getting a crazy kind of tunnel vision, his concentration becoming mightily focused like a narrow searchlight that was incredibly bright over a confined area, like maybe the beam from a lighthouse. He cast that lighthouse beacon in front of himself, over the cracked floor, totally absorbed. Searching the floor was like a meditation exercise with everything else just fading into the background as pleasant noise.

He could feel every bump and crease in the floor, smell the gun oil on his hands, tasted brass in his throat. He couldn't see into the corner behind the curtain of light that was pouring in through the window, but when he got there he didn't find anything. He moved like a crab, scuttling over the floor with a smooth, surreal gait, feral and over-quick and not at all human. He moved back and forth across the room, his hands

lined up with the notch on the side of the gun. He lifted out the slide-stop and eased the slide forward again, and then the gun was in two pieces in his hands. He put the slide down on the floor next to the clip and continued breaking down the Manhunter. There wasn't much more to it so, when he finished, he did it over again. It gave him something to do.

"Guess one lil' 'ol bullet ain't gonna make any difference, anyway." He started at the sound of his own voice. It seemed to boom back at him from every wall.

Don't like that.

He pulled the slide back just a little and looked into the chamber. It was like looking into a big, dark cave. He picked up the clip from the floor, slapping it into the butt of the gun, rapping it home with a click that didn't sound quite right to Jack, but he figured that if he had left out any parts the slide wouldn't work at all. Just to test this he worked the slide with a cowboy flourish. Sharp clack echoing, softer this time, like waves rolling lazily up against the concrete bunkers out at Devil's Lake.

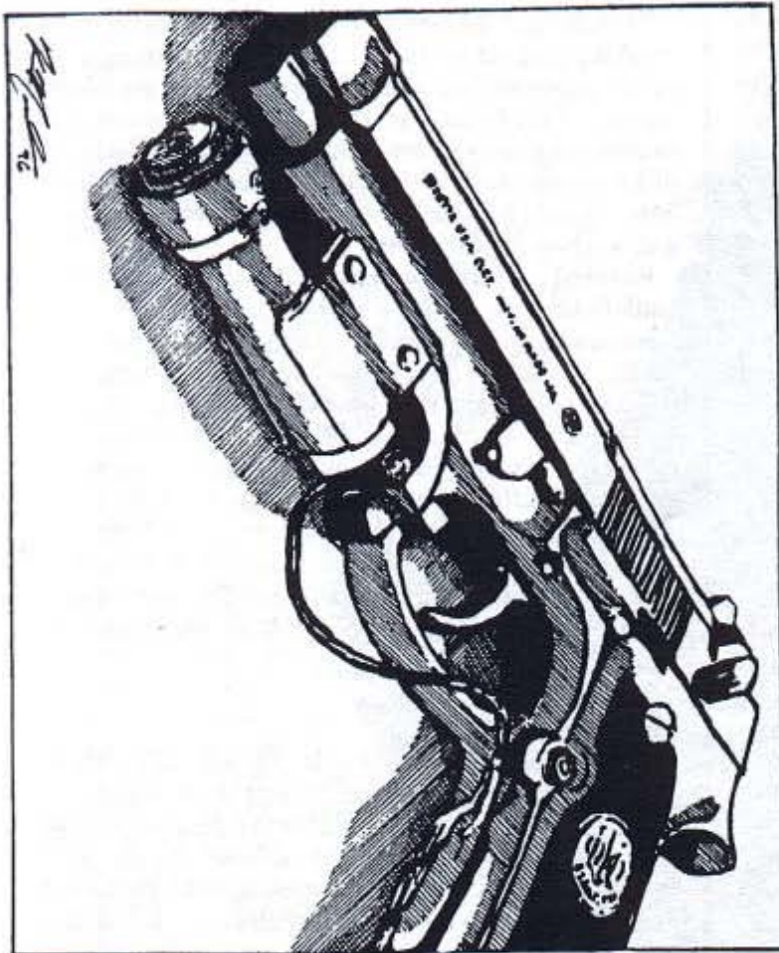
Jack popped the clip, holding it in his closed palm for a time before looking at it. All his frantic energy seemed to have drained out of him, and now he felt happy just to sit there in the corner and watch the wall across from him brighten as the sun rose up over the tired city. Everything had been black and white all night long and now color was flowing back into the room. He sat with the window at his back, just watching that wall brighten up. After a while he looked down at the magazine that he held in his left hand.

It was empty.

He heard the sound before he saw anything. Soft, far off, jangling bits of metal striking high, clear notes as they clinked off each other. The colors on the wall grew brighter and more

distinct, but now he could see that it was happening just in one particular area. He tried to turn his focus there but found that difficult, like he was looking around something. He realized that what he was trying to focus on wasn't on the wall at all. It was just hanging there, like a faded water-color painted on the air. His eyes were watering again and he raised a weary hand to wipe them. When his sight cleared there was a man standing in front of him, leaning heavily on a cane. The morning sun played over the bright colors of his flowered vest. Jack saw that his boots had silver spurs on them, realizing that was where the sound was coming from. Fade held out his right hand and, for a second, Jack thought he was being offered a hand up. He tried to sit up, weakly reaching out, and then Fade opened his hand.

A rain of bullets poured out over the floor and, this time, they didn't make any sound at all.



always shuttling out in front of him. When he reached the bed he crawled in under the coarse blanket, still moving, hands probing, and then he was out the other side and back on the floor. Absently, he picked up the ejected clip and put it between his teeth, like an egg.

He ended up in the corner by the window where it was cool and dark and he could get his back up against a wall. He had been a little nervous up until now because, after all, someone was trying to kill him, but that was okay because he had a gun, but then it wasn't okay because to shoot the gun he needed bullets and he couldn't find his bullet...

He took the clip out of his mouth and put it on the floor next to him. The room seemed to be getting brighter but the light didn't bother him as much now. His heightened focus was back again and he decided that he needed something to focus it on. He moved the slide back about a quarter of an inch, until the stop was

CELTIC TOTEMS

New Options for Druids

by Stephen Kenson

The Celtic Druid tradition in the United Kingdom recognizes various animal totems much like the shamanistic traditions in North America. The London Sourcebook and *Tir na nOg*, describe several of the totems followed by English, Scottish and Irish druids. This article rounds out those totems with several more animals from Celtic myth and tradition. These totems can be followed by Celtic druids from any of the UK nations, but they, like the druids who follow them, are rarely seen outside of their homeland.

Blackbird (Lon Dubn)

Celtic legend says that Blackbird perches in the high branches of the tree in the depths of the Otherworld (the metaplanes) singing a mystic song that imparts sleep and the secrets of the Otherworld. Blackbird is not a powerful fighter or cunning thief, but he knows many secrets and sings powerful songs. He is a powerful guide on the roads in the Otherworld.

Favored Environment: Forest

Advantages: +2 dice for Detection Spells. Decrease the Target Number for Astral Quests by Blackbird initiates by 1.

Disadvantages: -1 die from all Combat Spells. Blackbird druids must make their intentions clear to whomever they are dealing with. They do not like subterfuge or lying, preferring to be as straightforward and direct as possible.

Crane

With its colors of white, black and red, Crane is a sacred bird that represents the three stages of Youth, Maturity and Age, the three faces of the Moon and the great Earth Mother. She is the keeper of secrets who looks into her reflecting pool and sees the wisdom that the Moon whispers to her across the waters in the night. The beat of her wings may speed travel through the mysterious depths of the Otherworld.

Favored Environment: Wetlands

Advantages: +2 dice for Detection Spells and Enchanting Tests, +2 dice for summoning Swamp or River Spirits (druid's choice).

Disadvantages: Crane druids cannot simply give away their hard-earned magic to others, but must require some kind of testing in exchange for their knowledge and enchanting skill. This may be as simple as speaking magical knowledge in parables and riddles instead of clear language or as difficult as requiring some kind of Ordeal of worthiness for a valuable piece of information or magical item that the druid may have.

Crow (Badb)

Death and ill-omen, battlefield scavenger, the croaking prophet of danger, Crow is the harbinger of doom and death. She is skillful and cunning, the Black Mother of the North who rides the chill winds of war to reap the profits of the slain. Crow is also a bringer of knowledge and wisdom that comes from sacrifice. Many rightly fear her presence, but respect her power and wisdom for what it is.

Favored Environment: Fields, especially battlefields

Advantages: +2 dice for Combat and Detection spells, +2 dice for Summoning Spirits of the Sky.

Disadvantages: Crow druids are generally shunned by others, being considered bringers of ill fortune and disaster. They themselves are attracted to areas of death and suffering, where they may work to bring about change or merely attempt to profit from the suffering of others. The toxic zones of Britain and Scotland as well as urban war zones like Belfast and the Lambeth Containment Zone have their share of Crow druids.

Eel (As-chu)

Slippery and quick, Eel is highly adaptable. He is a clever master shape-shifter, skilled at squirming out of the most difficult spots. He also has great inspiration and wisdom to call to his own defense. He can be a fierce fighter, but only when forced to fight. He would much prefer to use his own cleverness to trick and fool an enemy rather than fight things out.

Favored Environment: Rivers

Advantages: +2 dice for Manipulation spells, +2 dice for summoning River Spirits.

Disadvantages: -1 die with Combat spells. Eel shamans never fight unless they absolutely have to.

Otter (Balgair)

Wise and gentle Otter is a happy and playful protector. She has great wisdom, inner strength, faithfulness and hopefulness. Otter prefers to live in the moment and enjoy life to its fullest whenever possible. She is carefree and hopeful, confident in that all things are as they should be and that the great plan of things will all work out.

Favored Environment: Rivers

Advantages: +2 dice for Illusion spells, +2 dice to resist fear effects and +2 dice for summoning River or Field spirits (druid's choice).

Disadvantages: Otter does not give in to hopelessness or defeat. Otter druids are bright and hopeful (sometimes sickeningly so) and will always try and lift the spirits of their companions.

Advantages: +2 dice for Illusion spells, +2 dice for summoning Lake spirits

Disadvantages: -1 die with Manipulation spells. Swan shamans are always proud and elegant in speech and manner. They dislike crude or unpleasant situations and prefer to be surrounded with beautiful things and people.

Salmon (Brionnfhionn)

Salmon is a very wise and magical creature, said to be as old as time and to know the past, present and future. It was Salmon who granted the Irish hero Finn his magical

wisdom and Salmon who taught many ancient druids their mystic secrets. He has great wisdom and ancestral knowledge. Salmon is also a sign of initiation, of getting in touch with the Old Ways and learning the secrets of the Otherworld.

Favored Environment:
River or Sea

Advantages: +2 dice for Detection and Manipulation spells, +2 dice for summoning Spirits of the Waters.

Disadvantages: -1 die with Combat and Illusion Spells. Salmon shamans are ardent pursuers of knowledge and will often go to great lengths to learn some new or fascinating bit of trivia.

Swan (Eala)

Beautiful Swan is the great spirit of Music. She is the elegant patroness of song and bards. Swan also flies gracefully through the world of dreams and symbols, transitions and spiritual evolution. She is the guide for the process of transformation that druids who follow her all learn as they make their journey through life.

Favored Environment: Lake



Get Out of the Water!

by Stephen Kenson

The adventure begins when the runners are contacted by a Mr. Johnson about a smuggling job offshore. This can be Puget Sound in Seattle or just about any other coastal area in the world that the gamemaster wishes to use.

The runners are told to meet their contact at a prearranged site along the shore where a boat will put ashore briefly to load the runners aboard and then head out before it can be spotted by the coastal patrols. The boat (an Aztech Nightrunner or equivalent) will make another stop at a concealed and abandoned dock or other shoreside area to load up on the contraband that is being carried, then will set out for the open sea.

Close Call: On their way out, the runners' boat will be hailed by a coast guard vessel. It might belong to the NAN, UCAS or another local government. They will approach the boat and use a loudspeaker or radio to hail the characters. They realize that if their boat is boarded, the contraband will likely be discovered. The characters must decide if they want to talk with the coast guard or attempt to outrun them.

If the runner talk their way out of trouble, call for some Charisma or Etiquette tests and some appropriate role-playing. If they make a break for it, a chase ensues.

Complication: After a couple of hours, the runners boat will rendezvous with a larger ship, a private yacht, and the contraband will be loaded on board. When the runners reach the rendezvous point, all they find is some floating wreckage and bodies where the yacht was supposed to be. The carnage is terrible and should spook the runners into wanted to get out of there as soon as possible.

Da-Dum, Da-Dum, Da-Dum: The cause of the wreck of the yacht is a military experiment gone bad. Years ago, the UCAS (or other) Navy experimented with using cyberware to alter and enhance sea creatures to make them into biological weapons of a sort that could track and destroy enemy submarines and divers. One of those experiments involved created a cybernetic megalodon (an awakened shark described in Paranormal Animals of North America, p.108). The modifications were made at an offshore site that was damaged during a storm and the partially-modified shark escaped, equipped with its programming to destroy certain targets only partially completed and complimenting its natural hunting instincts.

The numerous implants have all but driven the dumb creature mad with pain, and it viciously attacks anything that gets in its way. It encountered and

destroyed the yacht not long before the runners arrived.

The CyberShark

B	Q	S	C	I	W	E	R
15/4	5x4	13	-	1/3	3	1.5	7

Initiative: 7 + 2d6

Powers: Enhanced Senses, Regeneration

Cyberware: Carbon-enhanced teeth (13D bite damage), Enhanced Movement, Hardened Armor 4, Sonar, Wired Reflexes 1

The carnage caused by the CyberShark has also attracted several normal Sharks (SR11, p.233) to feed on and fight over the remains.

Sharks

B	Q	S	C	I	W	E	R
5/1	5x4	4	-	2/3	1	6	5

Initiative: 5 + 2d6

Let the runners deal with one or two smaller sharks before springing the CyberShark on them. Put on the theme music from Jaws if you like to make everyone nervous. The creature surges out of the water and attacks the characters' boat. Its first pass should cripple the boat and give the runners a few seconds to get off some shots or spells in its direction. Then it disappears under the water. Give the character a few moments to panic and make preparations before having the critter come at them again. The shark will try to wreck their boat and throw characters into the water. Strength and Athletics tests should be required to stay in the boat.

The runners might think that they've killed the creature if they hit it with enough damage or a powerful mana spell (the 'shark's Willpower is fairly low), but remember that the critter's Regeneration power can keep it coming back for more in just a few minutes. Let the runners think they've killed the beast only to have one of them pick up movement on the ship's sonar a few moments later.

Eventually, military patrol boats are going to show up looking for the CyberShark. If the runners haven't managed to kill it, they will be rescued by the Navy before things get too bloody. Of course, then they may have to explain what they're smuggling to the authorities....

Magical Groups

by Stephen Kenson

Magical initiatory groups are the source of initiation into the higher mysteries of magic in Shadowrun. These groups often hold considerable power and guard their magical secrets jealously. Presented here are a half-dozen magical groups that Shadowrun gamemasters can use in their own campaigns.

Resources/Dues: 50x per month. The group also receives tributes and gifts from the community, giving them a Middle Resources level. They have a Rating 8 Medicine Honfour as a headquarters.

Description: The Bizango is one of the numerous Voudoun secret societies in the Carribean League (for more on Voudoun, see p.58-69 of Awakenings). They are the "secret masters of the land" and dispense justice, protect the populace and act as judges, doctors and spiritual advisors for their people. There are dozens of similar secret societies and they all respect each others' territories and boundaries.

Adventure Hook: The secret society contacts the shadowrunners through dreams to tell them that they want their help. Secrets of zombie-making (see Awakenings, p.67) have fallen into the hands of a megacorporate research group. The initiate society wants to prevent the corp from abusing their rituals, but corporate security is prepared against them. They need some inside help that can only come from a group of shadowrunners and are willing to pay



THE BIZANGO

Type: Initiatory
Limitations: Houngans Only
Strictures: Exclusive Ritual. Fraternity. Oath. Moral Obligations (Rada Rite).
Members: Unknown

handsomely (in nuyen or magical lore).

BROTHERHOOD OF THE DIAMOND THUNDERBOLT

Type: Initiatory

Limitations: Ninjas (Physical Adepts) Only.

Strictures: Fraternity. Moral Obligations (Code of Honor). Oath. Secrecy.

Members: 10

Resources/Dues: 20% of the ninja's fees. The group has a High Resources headquarters, arsenal and dojo in a secret location.

Description: The Brotherhood is a secret group made up of practioners of ninjutsu. All of the members are physical adepts who seek to perfect their skills through the Art of Invisibility. The ninjas are not connected to any other group, although their services are for hire. While they are mercenary, they are not as amoral as some potential employers would like to believe. They uphold their own code of honor that calls for forthrightness with an employer, completion of the mission to the best of one's abilities, secrecy, confidentiality and no harm to innocents not involved in the assignment. Rumors abound that the Brotherhood also works on developing the legendary magical powers of the ancient ninjas such as invisibility or the ability to walk through walls. Some of them may in fact be physical magicians (Awakenings, p.119).

Adventure Hook: One or more members of the Brotherhood are hired to gather information and spy on the runners, perhaps by a former employer. The runners will need to avoid the ninjas and discover who is poking into their affairs. If they play their cards right and expose their employer as dishonorable, they might even get some silent assistance from the Brotherhood.

THE COVEN OF THE CRIMSON MOON

Type: Conspiratorial

Limitations: Vampires only.

Strictures: Exclusive Membership. Oath. Obedience (to the Coven leader). Secrecy.

Members: 5

Resources/Dues: High resources. Dues are currently 1,500 nuyen per month. The group meets in a secret room of a nightclub called the Styx, which is owned by the leader of the Coven.

Description: The Coven of the Crimson Moon is an organization of vampires who have banded together for their mutual protection and amusement. The group provides safety from daylight and the authorities as well as a "herd" of regular blood suppliers. The Coven members are all power hungry, and the group is characterized by complex politics, power plays, alliances and betrayal.

Adventure Hook: The Coven members use their nightclub as a cover for their feeding activities. When a friend of one of the runners becomes a club regular and a victim of one of the vampires, it sends the runners to investigate. They should have a difficult time bringing a member of the Coven to justice, given the vampires' extensive connections and influence.

THE RHINE INSTITUTE

Type: Dedicated

Limitations: Psionics only

Strictures: Belief (Magic is really psi). Exclusive Membership.

Members: 5

Patron: The Rhine Institute

Resources/Dues: No dues.

Description: The Rhine Institute is a non-profit research organization devoted to the idea that magic following the Awakening is really just a manifestation of humanity's latent psionic abilities (for more on this view see Awakenings, p.21). The Institute funds research into "psionic phenomena" and publishes regular papers that claim to prove that magic doesn't really exist outside of the user's own imagination. The Institute has gathered a small group of "test subjects" who are all firmly convinced that their abilities are psionic in origin rather than magical. They are often used as spokespersons for the institute's cause and as a means to recruit other young and impressionable magicians.

Adventure Hook: When a young magician first developing her abilities runs away to the Institute, the runners are hired to find her and get her back before the brainwashing that the RI quacks feed to their "subjects" ruins her potential to be a successful magician. The runners will find the Institute (and the girl) opposed to this, and several of the girl's "psychic friends" will back her up with their abilities if need be.

THE ORDER OF EXORCISTS AND WARDERS, SEATTLE LOCAL 324

Type: Initiatory

Limitations: None

Strictures: Oath. Exclusive Ritual. Fraternity

Members: 18

Resources/Dues: Presently 150x per month. The group has a High resource headquarters in a storefront downtown. The HQ also contains a small talismongery where members receive a 20% discount.

Description: The Order is a loose "union" organization of magicians and magical adepts who specialize in magical security and dealing with magical threats, with local groups throughout the UCAS. Members hire out as consultants on such matters to various security companies and private clients. Fees from numerous satisfied customers has led to the group's current resources level.

Adventure Hook: The runners might need to break into the Order's downtown headquarters to get information on one of its members that is in charge of some of the magical security the runners need to overcome on the new corporate R&D facility. This will mean circumventing some of the Order's best magical protections to get at their records.

All Gear, No Guns

by Erik Jameson

SmartCore Software Designs "Mindlock"

Want an extra level of security above and beyond what a maglock can give you? Need your home to be ultra-secure against street thugs? Then the "Mindlock" from SmartCore is the answer.

The Mindlock makes maglock passkeys obsolete. Instead of using a physical, and therefore stealable, key, the Mindlock relies on your own mind. Simply plug the coiled datacord into your own datajack and think out your own entry code, which can be any combination of alphanumeric (up to 24 letters and/or numbers). While it does take slightly longer than standard maglocks, the level of security is unparalleled.

Cost: 19,700¥

>>>>>[An unparalleled level of security? Don't make me yarf! All I gotta do is pound the codes out of someone, and I'm in!]<<<<<<

--Animal Cracker<12:00:00/2-19-57>

>>>>>[True, for the standard version. SmartCore doesn't advertise it (I'm not sure why), but they have a version that is designed to read the basic brain waves of up to three users, in addition to the required code. And each user can have a different code. Costs 61,100', and isn't practical in most corporate environments. But it is out there, and high muckity-mucks everywhere are buying all they can for personal use.]<<<<<<

--The Marketier<14:29:00/2-29-57>

>>>>>[Hmmm. And I imagine these can be hooked up to CCSS for security riggers too. Would make for a fun nut to crack.]<<<<<<

--Wildsmasher<15:50:26/2-19-57>

SmartCore Enviroscanner

Worried about the air you breath? Worry no more!

The SmartCore Enviroscanner is a small hand-held device capable of detecting the level of biological and chemical contamination within 7 meters (Rating 4). The Enviroscanner displays how "breathable" the air is, and even has an auditory alarm to alert users of danger.

The Enviroscanner has a battery life of 12 hours.

Note: The SmartCore Enviroscanner does not identify contaminants, only relative "breathability" of the air in it's range.

Cost	Weight	Availability	Legality
1,750¥	1 kg	always	legal

>>>>>[Kinda worthless, don't you think? Seems like it could be spoofed pretty easy.]<<<<<<

--Red Card<17:23:36/2-19-57>

>>>>>[Hey, it's better than nothing. I carry one with me on every run now. Don't want a repeat of that Aztechnology gas disaster...]<<<<<<

--SupraMax<21:00:26/2-19-57>

The Cygnus Group PCS-2055 Window Trembler

The size of an old matchbox, the PCS-2055 will defeat almost any laser microphone attempting to illicitly listen to your conversations.

When placed onto any glass or similar substance (using a re-usable adhesive patch) it begins vibrating, causing tiny vibrations even in armored plexi-glass, that effectively scrambles the vibrations used by laser microphones.

The PCS-2055 has a battery life of 2 hours, and performs as a Rating 5 white noise generator versus laser microphones

Cost	Weight	Availability	Legality
6,700¥	-	6/ 7 days	8-E1(P)

>>>>>[Nice little toy. Surprised it hasn't been on the market before.]<<<<<<

--Mycenean Merc<00:12:34/2-20-57>

>>>>>[Actually, versions of this have been on the executive market for a few years now. It's just now someone is bringing it out for public consumption.]<<<<<<

--The Marketier<09:54:18/2-20-57>

The Cygnus Group GS-78 "Achilles" Phone Tap System

The Achilles is a revolutionary new product on the surveillance market. Instead of tapping into an individual phone line, it is plugged into a building's switching box. It is capable of monitoring up to 10 separate lines simultaneously, and record up to 24 hours of audio, or 6 hours of video phone or data transmissions. Best of all, because the unit draws power from the building's own power supply (with 2 hour back-up battery), it is more difficult to detect than other phone taps, which must draw power from those lines.

Recorded data is sent in compressed packets every 12 hours on a selected phone line to any dedicated



receiver, which avoids easily detected radio transmissions. For purposes of detection, the Achilles is a Rating 10 phone tap. However, if anyone checks the phone switching box, the Walkman sized device will be found easily.

Cost	Weight	Availability	Legality
34,200¥	3 kg	12/ 1 month	2-E2

>>>>>[Excuse me, I need to go downstairs for a

Armor: 3
 Signature: 4
 AutoPilot: 4
 Seating: 2+2 bucket
 Access: 4 gull-wing
 Economy: 23km/liter
 Fuel: 250 liters
 Cargo: 8 CF trunk
 Accessories: APPS, full communications suite/stereo with satellite link, EnviroSeal (30 man hours), Runflat

moment to check to box...]

<<<<<<

--Krispy<12:53:29/2-20-57>

>>>>>[That's the beauty of the Achilles. How often is a phone switching box physically checked? Not too often. Most people are more concerned with traditional bugs.]<<<<<<

--The Cube<14:19:00/2-20-57>

>>>>>[Here's a thought that should frighten you. What if this little goody was built right into the box, making it almost impossible to find? Even taking a look-see at your local phone switching box won't help.]<<<<<<

--Nick Not-So-Quick<19:22:17/2-20-57>

>>>>>[You just caught on? How do you think megas keep tabs on the people living in corp housing? Every damn phone in the Arcology is tapped with these type of things; have been since day one!]<<<<<<

--Paranoid in Seattle<22:44:42/2-20-57>

VEHICLES

A.R.C. "Peregrine" luxury sedan

Cost: 185,000¥

Handling: 2/8

Speed: 70/160

Body: 4

Performance tires, full leather upholstery, anti-theft rating 10, full climate control

The Peregrine is what a luxury sedan should be. More like a small limousine than a sedan, this sleek styled vehicle offers enough amenities for any desire the discerning executive could want. And of course, the fantastic reputation of Abercrombie, Richards, & Crawford stands behind every Peregrine.

>>>>>[Got a friend who owns one of these. The most beautiful vehicle I have ever ridden in. The Peregrine isolates you from the world outside, creating a joyously smooth and quiet ride!]<<<<<<

--Curves<10:36:19/2-21-57>

>>>>>[What, does this girl work for A.R.C.?]<<<<<<

--Grumble<13:17:55/2-21-57>

A.R.C. "Apex 1000i"

Cost: 280,000¥

Handling: 2/8

Speed: 120/310

Body: 2

Armor: 3

Signature: 2

AutoPilot: 3

Seating: 2 bucket

Access: 2 gull-wing

Economy: 42 km/liter

Fuel: 175 liters

Cargo: 4 CF trunk

Accessories: APPS, full holo-stereo, integrated controls, full climate control, EnviroSeal (10 man hours), anti-theft rating 10, full leather upholstery, Runflat Performance tires

Finally, a sports coupe that knocks the vaunted Dynamit off it's throne! The sexy and sleek Apex has the most powerful production high performance engine in it's class, fast enough to blow the doors off it's competitors. But speed isn't all; it also has the luxuries of limousines and luxury sedans.

The most intriguing part of the Apex 1000i is it's Counter-momentum Jet Brakes. Activated by the driver in emergencies, it doubles the normal braking capabilities, while using only 10 liters of IC fuel (drawn from the tank).

Put together, the Apex 1000i is clearly the best sports coupe on the market, bar none!

>>>>>[Sweetness...]<<<<<<

--Drooler<17:18:34/2-21-57>

>>>>>[A damn fine car, which lives up to expectations (so rare these days). But you like the Apex? Check out the DaVinci...]<<<<<<

--Jackhammer<18:26:01/2-21-57>

A.R.C. "DaVinci" hand crafted sports coupe

Cost: 365,000¥

Handling: 2/10

Speed: 120/360

Body: 3

Armor: 3

Signature: 2

AutoPilot: 4

Seating: twin bucket

Access: 2 gullwing

Economy: 30km/liter

Fuel: 175 liters

Cargo: 2 CF trunk

Accessories: APPS, integrated controls, passive aural masking rating 4, full climate control, EnviroSeal (10 man hours), full holo-stereo, anti-theft rating 10, Performance Runflat tires, full leather upholstery

Options: Rigger control (+6000¥)

The DaVinci is the height of automotive craftsmanship. Over one million individual pieces are assembled by discerning hands, creating a sports coupe like no other in the world.

To help keep tabs on this complex vehicle, A.R.C. invented the Trouble Shooter Self Diagnostic System. This system monitors every single piece, even the cup-holder, and alerts the driver to every problem, as it appears. Repairs can be made in less than half the time normally needed. The Trouble Shooter even tunes the engine, helping to keep it within A.R.C.'s high standards. The Trouble Shooter also works with the optional rigger system, allowing unheard of control over all aspects of the vehicle.

Note that no other modifications can be made to the car except at the A.R.C. factory itself. Options such as passive thermal masking, performance suspension, and supercharging have all ready been added.

>>>>>[Oh man! Oh man! Oh man! Oh man!]<<<<<<

--Drooler<20:37:02/2-21-57>

>>>>>[Snap out of it man! It is the most beautiful thing I've ever seen though...]<<<<<<

--Nazdack<21:02:34/2-21-57>

>>>>>[Men and their toys...right now the Trouble Shooter Self Diagnostic System is closely guarded by A.R.C., and isn't on the open market, despite the best efforts of the Big 8. I figure, however, that every luxury car will have something like it within 5 years or so.]<<<<<<

--Half-and-Halfer<23:05:38/2-21-57>

>>>>>[Can't customize it? I don't know if I like that. Might be better to go with the Apex 1000i.]<<<<<<

--Styrofoam Man<23:55:12/2-21-57>

Second Tier Solutions

by Erik Jameson

ALCAN BIOTECHNICS

Profile

Home Office Location: Seattle, UCAS
President/CEO: Michael Mullen
Chairman of the Board: Damian Powell
Corporate Status: Public
Major Shareholders: Yamatetsu Seattle (53%)
Trans-Latveria Enterprises (19%)

Net Rating: 42

Major Interests

Aerospace: -
Agriculture: 2
Biotechnology: 4
Chemicals: 1
Computer Engineering: -
Computer Science: -
Consumer Goods: -
Cybernetics: 1
Entertainment: -
Financial: -
Heavy Industry: -
Military Technology: 1
Mystical: -
Service: -

Operations

Fiscal: 4
Intelligence: 2
Management: 3
Reputation: 4
Security: 5
Magical: 3
Matrix: 5
Physical: 7

Military

none

Primary Business: Alcan Biotechnics is a small biotechnology research company. Alcan specializes in experimental bioware and so-called "exotics." Few, if any of the bioware products on the market today are actual Alcan products; instead, some of the features and advances taken for granted in bioware were created by Alcan. In addition, Alcan is one of the only corporations doing any research into the field of "exotics."

>>>>>[Okay, query. What are "exotics"?]<<<<<<
--Confused in Seattle<14:09:34/2-19-57>

>>>>>[You know about gene splicing, right? Similar idea, except with humans. Some cosmetic surgery, a little gene tweaking, and you have a human-tiger crossbreed, complete with fur, claws, and tail. Of course, it usually dies within a few hours or so.]<<<<<<
--My Mother Says<18:35:36/2-19-57>

>>>>>[But not always though. I was part of a group hired to test, in combat, one of the longer lasting versions. Human intelligence, animal cunning, and vicious claws made for an interesting combat experience. As yet, however, this is an area the corps only play around in. Not yet enough profit in getting serious, doncha know.]<<<<<<
--The Cube<04:26:52/2-20-57>

Corporate Structure: While Yamatetsu only owns 53% outright, it is believed to control, or own through shell companies, much of the remaining 28% not owned by Trans-Latveria Enterprises, a non-aligned Singapore based holding company

>>>>>[A non-aligned holding company? Who are they trying to drek?]<<<<<<
--Seattle's Least Wanted<11:53:24/2-20-57>

>>>>>[No one drekhead. Trans-Latveria Enterprises is believed to be owned by a private individual, unaligned with any of the Big-8. Rumors I hear is that it's a runner behind them. Of course, being a holding company, nobody is real sure.]<<<<<<
--Rage<17:12:46/2-20-57>

>>>>>[Would be a great way to conceal your wealth...]<<<<<<
--Golden Exec<21:43:35/2-20-57>

Being such a small corporation, Alcan has no major divisions. All research labs report to the central office in downtown Seattle. Alcan has research labs in Renton, Showhomish, Ft. Lewis, and one within Salish-Sidhe lands. It is believed that each lab has a different area of research to focus on.

>>>>>[Yeppers, they're an auxillary branch, sort of an extra think-tank that augments Yama's own biotech divisions. There's very little exchange of data, maybe even a little competition. I've even heard of Alcan execs staging runs against Yama. How's that for goofy?]<<<<<<
--Rumormonger<23:12:00/2-20-57>

Execs: Michael Mullen is the President of Alcan Biotechnics, and is believed to be the largest individual stock holder. Mullen knows very little of the research being done, being only concerned with turning a profit.

On the other hand, Damian Powell, the Chairman of the Board, knows almost as much about the research as do the scientists. A brilliant mind without out an ounce of compassion, Powell is credited with granting the green light for the research into exotics.

>>>>>[Powell will die. He took my brother and turned him into one of those freaks! He will pay dearly for what he has done!]<<<<<<

--MonsterMasher<00:53:36/2-21-57>

>>>>>[While I cannot confirm the veracity of the above statement, Powell is not well liked. He is, however, brilliant and ruthless, two qualities that make him valuable to corporations. I am somewhat surprised that he hasn't yet been tapped for Yamatetsu itself.]<<<<<<

--Spirit Watcher<07:25:15/2-21-57>

>>>>>[Sadistic bugger from what I hear. The world probably wouldn't be worse off without him.]<<<<<<

--Rumormonger<09:15:44/2-21-57>

Security: Being a small company, Alcan doesn't have the heavy security common among the Big-8, but is still has good security, mainly focusing on physical intrusion.

Physical and Magical Security: Alcan provides excellent security for it's research labs. Most, perhaps all of the security guards have been provided with at least some bioware. Reflex and strength enhancements are the most common. And since the public doesn't visit these research labs, these enhanced guards normally wear security armor and carry assault rifles.

>>>>>[Lots o' the guns face in, though, chumskis. Wouldn't look good if one of their experiments got out, ya know?]<<<<<<

--Ammofiend<12:23:00/2-21-57>

Magical security is at a minimum, given the nature of the research.

Matrix Security: Middle of the road, normal and uneventful describes Matrix security at Alcan. Good enough to fry beginners or the careless, but careful and established deckers should have no problems. However, since most of the research data is held off-line, matrix security doesn't need to be formidable.

Extended Security: Due to the normally good relations with the "shadow community," Alcan has little trouble hiring independent security consultants

when needed.

>>>>>[Those good relations mean that Alcan uses us for guinea pigs. We fight the exotics (the ones that last long enough) to test their combat worth, for decent cred. They say to us, hey, we have a new bioware reflex enhancement. We'll install it for free. Just tell us how it works. And of course, they usually don't work, and occasionally fail with spectacular and bizarre results. No cred off their stick though.]<<<<<<

--Hamster<13:54:42/2-21-57>

>>>>>[And they manage to keep decent relations because they are up front about it. They may give you free reflex enhancements, but they also tell you, hey, you are the first human to try it out. It might not work. And if it doesn't, well, here's a contract saying you won't sue us over it. An interesting way of conducting business.]<<<<<<

--Krispy<15:12:39/2-21-57>

A.R.C **(Abercrombie, Richards, & Crawford)**

Profile

Home Office Location: Seattle, UCAS

President/CEO: Daniel Abercrombie

Chairman of the Board: Miles Richards

Corporate Status: Private

Major Shareholders: Daniel Abercrombie (37%)

Miles Richards (32%)

Paul Crawford (29%)

A. R. C. (2%)

Net Rating: 63

Major Interests

Aerospace: 1

Agriculture: -

Biotechnology: -

Chemicals: 2

Computer Engineering: 2

Computer Science: 1

Consumer Goods: -

Cybernetics: 3

Entertainment: -

Financial: 2

Heavy Industry: 1

Military Technology: 3

Mystical: -

Service: -

Operations

Fiscal: 6

Intelligence: 4

Management: 6

Reputation: 8

Security: 6
Magical: 4
Matrix: 6
Physical: 8

Military
none

Primary Business: Abercrombie, Richards, and Crawford build cars. Plain and simple. There is nothing simple about their cars however. These are the sorts of vehicles that don't have a "sticker price"; if you have to ask how much the car is, you obviously can't afford it.



>>>>>[For those of you that don't get it, A.R.C., the corporation, has a 2% hold in itself. Now check this for weirdness: the workers get to vote that 2%. Doesn't mean a whole lot, but the workers at least have a voice in the company they work for.]<<<<<

--Vox Populi<20:25:19/2-21-57>

>>>>>[Which means about exactly zero.]<<<<<

--Wingless Butterfly<01:18:36/2-22-57>

>>>>>[Their cars are insanely expensive, but also generations ahead of anyone else on the market. Their new toy? A diagnostics rig that tells you exactly where the problem is, even if it's just your seat warmer. Developed especially for the "DaVinci," a car with over 1 million separate parts. And get this, it's hand made!]<<<<<

--Art Critic<08:37:51/2-22-57>

>>>>>[Ouch!!]<<<<<<

--Mechanic's Nightmare<12:34:28/2-22-57>

>>>>>[Hell, notice that MilTech rating? Anybody know why?]<<<<<<

--Armorfest<15:00:34/2-22-57>

>>>>>[My contacts say: personal luxury LAV.]<<<<<<

--Rumormonger<16:16:16/2-22-57>

Corporate Structure: A.R.C. runs much like any other private corporation of similar size. Daniel Abercrombie has nominal control, but power is shared almost equally.

A.R.C. has only two construction plants. The first is operated in Seattle, and is linked to the research department. The corporate headquarters is also part of the large Seattle complex. The second plant is in Pittsburgh. Both plants build the same cars, except for the "DaVinci," which is built by hand in Seattle. In addition, there are only a few dealerships across the world. London, Los Angeles, Seattle, Tokyo, and Philadelphia all have dealerships.

>>>>>[Go into a dealership, and you won't be able to walk away with a car. They have a few floor models, but you tell them what you want and they get it for you. Shipped direct to your door. And the owner's manual is hand delivered by a rep who will explain everything about your car. He will even teach you how to drive your new toy so that you won't wreck it. Service, service, service.]<<<<<<

--Satisfied Customer<19:36:53/2-22-57>

Execs: All three individuals for whom the company is named work together reasonably well. All three reside in Seattle. There are three departments, Manufacturing, Research, and Sales. All three departments fall under the direct control of the board however.

Security: A.R.C. has a reputation for good, friendly security. Security guards often lack heavy armor and gear, but are all exceptionally well trained. A.R.C. frequently contracts with Knight Errant when circumstances dictate.

Physical and Magical Security: A.R.C. tends to rely on heavily trained guards using the latest technology. This means that security guards tend to be relatively few in number. However, each site, particularly the Seattle complex, feature rigged security. The Seattle complex in fact uses multiple riggers.

>>>>>[Multiple security riggers? I thought only one could operate per ICC module.]<<<<<<

--Confused in Seattle<16:36:56/2-22-57>

>>>>>[Still true. A.R.C. just uses several modules, all overlapping to a degree. Which means a whole lot more coverage than you might expect. This is a big reason why they have such good security.]<<<<<<

--Rigged For Life<22:12:42/2-22-57>

Company mages tend to stay within the ICC security modules, using fiber-optics heavily.

>>>>>[Which has it's good and it's bad points...]<<<<<<

--Devil's Lawyer<22:58:21/2-22-57>

Matrix Security: A.R.C. has normal defenses for a small independent corporation.

Extended Security: A.R.C. has a reputation for hiring top-notch shadowrunners for "payback" runs. It might be assumed that they use shadowrunners for other purposes also, but this cannot be confirmed.

>>>>>[What, no one willing to fess up?]<<<<<<

--Sniffer<03:32:18/2-23-57>

CORPORATE ASSISTANCE SPECIALTIES

Profile

Home Office Location: Sacramento, California Free State

President/CEO: Douglas Stone

Chairman of the Board: Ramona Rodrigues

Corporate Status: Private

Major Shareholders: not available

Net Rating: 45

Major Interests

Aerospace: -

Agriculture: -

Biotechnology: -

Chemicals: -

Computer Engineering: -

Computer Science: -

Consumer Goods: -

Cybernetics: -

Entertainment: -

Financial: 2

Heavy Industry: -

Military Technology: -

Mystical: -

Service: 6

Operations

Fiscal: 6

Intelligence: 6

Management: 6

Reputation: 3
Security: 4
Magical: 2
Matrix: 7
Physical: 3

Military
none

Primary Business: Corporate Assistance Specialties is a management and information clearinghouse. They provide, for a fee of course, managers and teach management classes. They also have an information gathering department that is as good as any of the majors. When given a topic to research, they access 99% of published materials and their intelligence agents and prepare a report, giving a very detailed report on the information requested.

>>>>>[If you've seen the "Edge Runners" compilation, you've seen their handiwork. Very professional, they condense information better than anyone. Of course, the version we all saw was corrupted by me and my friends...]<<<<<<
--St. Stan<10:26:26/2-23-57>

>>>>>[Honks me off that I didn't make the cut, too. If you want to see some wild pics of Ramona doin' the nasty with a coupla dwarfs, just drop me a line.]<<<<<<
--Rumormonger<12:22:56/2-23-57>

>>>>>[So they're like a big temp agency, with an intelligence arm?]<<<<<<
--Job Hunter<12:35:24/2-23-57>

>>>>>[I think they might take offense to that analogy, but that's close enough to the mark.]<<<<<<
--Horseshoe<16:17:33/2-23-57>

Corporate Structure: CAS is a privately owned corporation with only two distinct divisions. The first, Managerial Assistance, is the arm that teaches management skills and loans out managers for companies. The second division is the Marketing wing, which is actually the division that handles all intelligence gathering and analyzing.

Over a dozen offices are scattered through out CalFree, but each office, regardless of function, reports back to the headquarters in Sacramento.

>>>>>[And to think I thought Marketing was all about selling your product...]<<<<<<
--The Marketier<22:15:44/2-23-57>

>>>>>[Don't think the offices weren't scattered for a reason. This sort of decentralized paradigm means that information is scattered also. And no two

"Marketing" offices normally share data. They all have the same sources, so why would they?]<<<<<<
--Scatter<23:57:11/2-23-57>

Execs: Douglas Stone, President and CEO, takes very little interest in the day to day operations of CAS. Ramona Rodrigues, the Chairman of the Board, handles these details, but even she lets the office managers handle their own offices, for the most part.

>>>>>[Stone is one of those executive debutantes. He can brag he owns a company, earns a big paycheck, and attends all sorts of wizzer social galas. But he probably doesn't even know what last year's net profit was. Rodrigues on the other hand, she earned her spot.]<<<<<<

--Party Shagger<00:47:43/2-24-57>

Security: Security overall is rather lax. The current board sees very little profit in heavily armed guards.

Physical and Magical Security: As stated, security is rather poor. Most sites only have a single mundane guard. The headquarters has better security, but not by much. Magicians are on off-site contract.

>>>>>[Don't let this totally fool you. Because office managers have some independence, they are free to upgrade security at a moment's notice. Especially if they feel threatened. So don't take this as an open invitation to stroll in.]<<<<<<
--Red Card<06:53:35/2-24-57>

Matrix Security: Matrix security is far superior to it's physical counterpart. Given the fact that magazines, newsletter, faxes, news wires, fanzines, and nearly everything else being published today is being continually send in, careful measures are taken to insure nothing unwanted slips in.

>>>>>[It's a cast-iron bitch to get it, but once there, it's a breeze. They're more concerned with simply keeping people out. Or at least that was the case the time I snuck into the Modesto office.]<<<<<<
--Steam Train<11:54:23/2-24-57>

Extended Security: CAS has rather poor relations with shadowrunners. CAS does however have a surprisingly large number of paid informants and outright spies from which it gathers information.

>>>>>[Poor relations? They spilled the beans on a number of runners with Edge Runners! Not the sort of thing that would endear us to them.]<<<<<<
--SupraMax<16:44:12/2-24-57>

HOLY VENGEANCE MUNITIONS, INC.

Profile

Home Office Location: Tel Aviv, Isreal
President/CEO: Yitzak Ben-Gurion
Chairman of the Board: David Rubenstien
Corporate Status: Private
Major Shareholders: not available

Net Rating: 56

Major Interests

Aerospace: 1
Agriculture: -
Biotechnology: 1
Chemicals: 2
Computer Engineering: 1
Computer Science: 1
Consumer Goods: -
Cybernetics: 2
Entertainment: -
Financial: -
Heavy Industry: -
Military Technology: 6
Mystical: -
Service: -

Operations

Fiscal: 6
Intelligence: 6
Management: 5
Reputation: 4
Security: 5
Magical: 4
Matrix: 4
Physical: 8

Military

Platoon, Exceptional

>>>>>[Remember that Physec, chummers. Tel-Aviv's still a hotbed of terrorism, so HVM ain't takin' no chances, dig? They're dumping too much effort into physec, though. Ya gots yerself a good whiz-boy and a half-decent decker and yer in.]<<<<<<
--Flynn<21:11:11/2-24-57>

Primary Business: As the name should imply, Holy Vengeance Munitions is an arms manufacturer. While Holy Vengeance will make almost any military munitions or weapon, it's primary business lies in quality small arms.

>>>>>[These guys are small fry out here; barely even an office with their name on it in Seattle. But in the Middle East, they are as big as Ares. They have the exclusive small arms contract with Israel, and with a

few of the Greek city-states.]<<<<<<
--Desert Farmer<22:26:41/24-FEB-57>

>>>>>[So what's up with the fanatical name? Are they a bunch of fragged-off Israelis?]<<<<<<
--Z-Query<00:01:35/2-25-57>

>>>>>[An image they aren't adverse to, but no. Aside from their preference to deal with Israel, Holy Vengeance is rather religio-neutral. They have minor contracts with Egypt and Syria for example.]<<<<<<
--Desert Farmer<01:25:56/25-FEB-57>

Corporate Structure: Holy Vengeance Munitions has four primary divisions, all of which report directly to the corporate headquarters. Marketing handles sales, Research handles new weapons development and research, and Manufacturing handles the production of their weapons. The fourth division, Consulting is rather odd. This is where the Holy Vengeance military is listed, and where other weapons consultants and "end-user consultants" are kept. The Legal department is also a part of Consulting.

>>>>>[What's odd about it? You keep the boardroom warriors in the same department as the cybernetic warriors. It fits, in it's own twisted way.]<<<<<<
--Twisted Twister<07:16:55/2-25-57>

Execs: Unfortunately, very little concrete is known about the chief executives of Holy Vengeance. They all have a reputation for being rather reclusive, and all are believed to reside within Israel.

>>>>>[Here's a hot tip then. The CEO, Yitzak Ben-Gurion was a ranking member of Mossad a number of years ago. It seems that he keeps most of his old contacts; just check out their Consulting roster.]<<<<<<
--Desert Farmer<12:31:23/25-FEB-57>

Security: As might be expected of a munitions manufacturer in the Middle East, security is rather tight. All of the security guards are at least former military, and most of the "normal" employees have at least some military training.

>>>>>[Don't let that spook you too much. Israel still requires that every citizen put in at least two years of military service. It's not like the secretaries are issued assault rifles or anything.]<<<<<<
--Gun Biff<12:35:23/2-25-57>

>>>>>[Same kinda rulest he Star has, back in the States. And they're no sweat, so don't worry.]<<<<<<
--Ammofiend<13:42:22/2-25-57>

Physical and Magical Security: Holy Vengeance has

what is probably the toughest physical security of almost anyone in the Middle East. All security personnel cross train with the military wing, and receive only slightly less lethal weaponry. Holy Vengeance security also has the highest incidence of cyberware in the Middle East outside the Israeli military.

>>>>>["Slightly", that means they get issued stun-
ammo rarely, instead of never.]<<<<<<
--Ammofiend<23:45:51/2-25-57>

Magical security lags behind physical security only in numbers. There are few mages on the Holy Vengeance payroll, but they are extremely well-trained and very tough.

Matrix Security: Due to the fact that the Matrix is somewhat behind the curve in the Middle East, matrix security isn't very formidable.

>>>>>[Short-sighted thinking. There aren't many good deckers in the Middle East, but geography means next to squat on the Matrix. I can access it with no problem from my doss in Seattle.]<<<<<<
--Rage<08:22:25/2-26-57>

>>>>>[Look for improvement here. They just got a new programmer. His parents were Soviet Jews that went to England, then he immigrated to Isreal here a few months back. They might also be expanding into milspec IC-Breakers.]<<<<<<
--Rumormonger<10:22:38/2-26-57>

Military Security: The small military wing qualifies as a Special Forces unit, by most standards. Small, but very well equipped and extremely well trained.

>>>>>[And don't forget those weapons testers and end-use consultants...]<<<<<<
--Mighty Fright<15:52:25/2-26-57>

>>>>>[And throwest thou thy Holy Hand Grenade of Antioch at thy foe, who having been naughty in my sight, shall snuff it.]<<<<<<
--Rumormonger<00:24:33/2-27-57>

Extended Security: Holy Vengeance Munitions has no existing extended security. It does however maintain very positive relations with the Israeli and Greek shadowrunner communities.

>>>>>[I think the entire Israeli shadowrunning community was part of the Archangel SMG beta-test program. Of course we love Holy Vengeance; who else gives away wizzer guns for free?]<<<<<<
--WZO<17:25:55/27-FEB-57>

THE CYGNUS GROUP

Profile

Home Office Location: Seattle, UCAS
President/CEO: Andrew Pinafore
Chairman of the Board: Janet Waller
Corporate Status: Public
Major Shareholders: Andrew Pinafore (29%)
Janet Bergting (18%)
Maxwell Bryant (15%)
Hans Brackhaus (10%)
David Jordan (8%)

Net Rating: 68

Major Interests

Aerospace: 6
Agriculture: -
Biotechnology: 1
Chemicals: 4
Computer Engineering: 5
Computer Science: 5
Consumer Goods: -
Cybernetics: 2
Entertainment: -
Financial: 3
Heavy Industry: 2
Military Technology: 8
Mystical: 1
Service: -

Operations

Fiscal: 8
Intelligence: 3
Management: 6
Reputation: 7
Security: 7
Magical: 6
Matrix: 7
Physical: 8

Military

Company, Exceptional

>>>>>[I thought only people with 10% or more got listed as major shareholders. So why is this 'Jordan' guy listed?]<<<<<<
--Stew<03:21:15/2-28-57>

>>>>>[Mainly because he is a very influential part of the corporation. Rumor has it he is also a shadowrunner.]<<<<<<
--St. Stan<10:35:23/2-28-57>

>>>>>[Honto?!?! An executive shadowrunner? What's his street name?]<<<<<<
--Fad-man<16:10:19/2-28-57>

>>>>>[Even if I knew, I wouldn't tell you.]<<<<<<
--St. Stan<21:36:34/2-28-57>

Primary Business: This Seattle based company is primarily a weapons manufacturer, although it does have interests in other high-tech areas, such as cybernetics, aerospace, and computer science. It is large enough to have two subsidiaries, California Advanced Aerospace and Next Generation Biotechnics. The Cygnus Group makes a healthy profit in the military and paramilitary markets, providing top-quality armaments, equipment, and service. Borrowing a page from Ares Arms playbook, The Cygnus Group provides, for the asking, "end-user consultants" and various training for it's customers.

>>>>>[It's that service that keeps them afloat, and healthy. In some cases, they can even compete head-to-head with Ares Arms. Case in point? The Cygnus Group has the exclusive contract to provide weapons for the Baltic States of Estonia, Lithuania, and Latvia.]<<<<<<

--Boris Basher<22:23:33/2-28-57>

>>>>>[Wait'll you see 'em face of at the next Desert Wars with Ares Arms. Nova making their debut against the big boys. Platoon vs. Platoon, in the Stinkfens Toxic Zone. My money's on Cygnus.]<<<<<<

--Sportfiend<00:00:00/3-1-57>

Corporate Structure: The parent corporation is a public entity with 6 series of shares and 4 debentures trading on the global markets. Aside from the large portions of stock owned and named above, approximately 10% is owned by the employees, as part of a bonus program.

>>>>>[What kind of slot would be stupid as to do that? If your workers get ticked off about the latest raise they didn't get, you're out on your duff!]<<<<<<

--Wildsmasher<02:39:38/3-1-57>

>>>>>[Smart slots, that's what. 10% isn't enough to change the board. What it does do is reward employees rather handsomely for increasing profits. The company does well, the employees do well. And the opposite. I would imagine it also instills a fair amount of loyalty too.]<<<<<<

--Chrome Executive<06:11:36/3-1-57>

The Cygnus Group was originally a consortium of smaller companies that banded together in the late teens and early twenties of this century, in an attempt to survive UGE and the corporate rush to buy one another. Amazingly, they survived, even past the Crash of '29. This consortium soon discovered however, that they would never be able to go their independent ways

again, as they had originally hoped for. So in 2034, the Cygnus Group was officially formed, a corporation born of several dozen small companies. The largest of the companies, California Advanced Aerospace and Next Generation Biotechnics, remain as wholly owned subsidiaries. This diverse base has created a corporation with it's fingers in a large number of pies.

It has been claimed that the Cygnus Group is a corporation with a conscience, granting rich benefits to it's employees and never treating them poorly. Based on all reports, this appears to be true.

>>>>>[A paradox of the Awakened world: a corporation with a conscience. What'll they think up next?]<<<<<<

--Stunned<10:44:34/3-1-57>

>>>>>[It's all a bunch of drek. They have some monstrous goal or ulterior motive, just like any other corp. They just hide it better.]<<<<<<

--MagSlag<13:36:22/3-1-57>

>>>>>[I don't know Mags...]<<<<<<

--Shiver<17:36:36/3-1-57>

Currently the Cygnus Group is using it's California Advanced Aerospace subsidiary to expand into space, with the stated goal of eventual space exploration and travel. So far, the only result of this line of research is a top-notch aerospace fighter.

Major Divisions: In addition to it's two subsidiaries, the Cygnus Group splits into two primary divisions, Research and Production. The main office in Seattle provides the direction and parameters for these divisions, in addition to watching over California Advanced Aerospace and Next Generation Biotechnics..

Under this system, each area is allowed to function as it sees fit, creating a wide variety of managerial styles. This also gives the employees unusual freedom to work with each other without excessive "red tape." As projects are completed or problems develop, this information is run up the chain of command. This structure also give the head office more freedom to focus on corporate matters, while each division or subsidiary takes care of it's own responsibilities.

>>>>>[It also creates a bizarre corporate structure. With such different management styles, transfers are rare. It also creates a surprisingly low stress level among all employees.]<<<<<<

--Chavelle<20:33:29/3-1-57>

Execs: Officially, Andrew Pinafore oversees all aspects of the corporations day-to-day business. According to reports, he is a man of deep convictions, and is the one who set into place the bonus programs

and corporate structure in use today.

>>>>>[One rumor that refuses to die is that he's a free spirit of some sort. Nobody seems to be able to confirm or deny.]<<<<<<

--Styrofoam Man<23:36:39/3-1-57>

Janet Bergting used to be a ranking wage mage with Saeder-Krupp until a contract dispute. Originally the head of magical security with The Cygnus Group, Waller worked her way up the corporate ladder with good investments and a fair amount of luck.

>>>>>[Stock sense. Yeah, right.]<<<<<<

--Morg<02:55:26/3-2-57>

>>>>>[Ouch! I've met the woman, and I seriously doubt it. She's sharp as a dikoted tack, which is more than Norg can say.]<<<<<<

--Sine<05:59:27/3-2-57>

Maxwell Bryany is a retired captain from the UCAS Army Special Forces. The Cygnus Group hired him back 2047, and he's created their top notch security team himself.

>>>>>[It was Capt. Bryant that actually won that Baltics contract. Apparently the leaders of the Baltics were rather impressed with him.]<<<<<<

--Slavic Slave<11:49:32/3-2-57>

>>>>>[True. Bryant is as nasty as that Fuchi slot, Miles Lanier. And look what Lanier has done for physical security for Fuchi.]<<<<<<

--MFK200<13:23:18/3-2-57>

Security: Within the Cygnus Group organization, the Internal Security Group (ISG) acts as the backbone for perimeter and internal defense. ISG reports directly to the head office, and answers to no other division or subsidiary.

>>>>>[Much like Fuchi, the Cygnus Group's ISG uses military precision and training to get the job done efficiently.]<<<<<<

--Half-and-Halfer<15:32:28/3-2-57>

Physical and Magical Security: As stated above, ISG provides physical security that is military in precision. Borrowing a page from Lone Star, every employee is trained to use a weapon, and all employees are issued a Cygnus Group light pistol.

>>>>>[Great. Secretaries packing heat. Just the thing to make me smile.]<<<<<<

--Unamused<17:29:24/3-2-57>

>>>>>[Hell, the Star used to do the same thing. No

big thing. Just cause they're packing heat, doesn't mean they can use it.]<<<<<<

--Heckler<20:02:20/3-2-57>

>>>>>[The Cygnus Group prefers to hire mercenary units over shadowrunners when supplementing security. And those mercs just love the Cygnus Group for that.]<<<<<<

--Mycenean Merc<21:13:48/3-2-57>

Magical Security is handled by a group within ISG called the "Swan Dancers." This collection of mages and shamans are powerful, but are woefully lacking in military experience.

>>>>>[The Swan Dancers are an initiatory group, kinda like MCT-12. A corporate trend I definitely don't like.]<<<<<<

--Party Timer<23:13:26/3-2-57>

Matrix Security: Generally, a weak point for the Cygnus Group. The level of IC is rather low within the Cygnus Group nodes. However, the Matrix system has been set up so that you have to penetrate right to the core of the system to gather any paydata. This generally gives more than ample time for any silent alerts to be responded to.

>>>>>[Just because the IC isn't glacial doesn't mean any slag can prance into their systems. Typically, within seconds of entry, a passive alarm is tripped, and by the time you reach the paydata, an active alarm is in affect and smart party IC is hunting your hoop down.]<<<<<<

--Matrix Muncher<00:45:23/3-3-57>

Military: Officially, the Cygnus Group has no military, only technical advisors and end-use consultants for it's weapons and vehicles. However, this units are heavily trained military men, that could double as standard military units.

>>>>>[Yeah, no military. Pull the other one. The rumor I hear is that they actually have a full squad of powered armor. What type, I don't know. That means some serious expenditures of nuyen.]<<<<<<

--Holiday Breaker<05:29:16/3-3-57>

Extended Security: Strangely enough, the Cygnus Group is rather open about the use of extended security, or shadowrunners. No public statements, but it is a well known, and accepted fact among corporate circles. The Cygnus Group has also shown no qualms about using these assets.

>>>>>[No, they don't. But they don't tend to start problems. They usually hire runners and mercs for reprisal runs.]<<<<<<

SMARTCORE SOFTWARE DESIGNS

Profile

Home Office Location: Seattle, UCAS
President/CEO: Gabriel Michelson
Chairman of the Board: David Rubens
Corporate Status: Public
Major Shareholders: Fuchi UCAS (37%)
Trans-Latveria Enterprises (19%)
Fuchi Corporate Services (12%)
Gabriel Michelson (11%)
David Rubens (10%)
Net Rating: 54

Major Interests

Aerospace: -
Agriculture: -
Biotechnology: 1
Chemicals: -
Computer Engineering: 4
Computer Science: 6
Consumer Goods: 2
Cybernetics: -
Entertainment: -
Financial: -
Heavy Industry: -
Military Technology: -
Mystical: -
Service: -

Operations

Fiscal: 6
Intelligence: 3
Management: 5
Reputation: 7
Security: 5
Magical: 3
Matrix: 8
Physical: 4

Military

none

>>>>>[I've heard that the Pueblo Corporate Council has about 6% of SmartCore, and has one of it's members on the board.]<<<<<<
--ITP<13:33:27/3-3-57>

>>>>>[Whoa, Fuchi and PCC both with heavy influence? Boy, what I wouldn't do to slip a couple of passive monitors in on a board meeting. Things might get ugly when they start discussing new 'wares..... The backstabbing's gotta be something fierce.]<<<<<<
--Rumormonger <14:12:22/3-3-57>

Primary Business: SmartCore Software Designs is a relatively small company with huge profits. SSD has created a specialized niche for itself by expanding on the concept of man-machine interface. In some areas, old "dumb" items are made "smart", such as the "Mindlock" Maglock device. In other areas, SSD creates software to upgrade existing "smarted" devices, such as the Smartgun Optimizer Software. And the SmartCore Conflict Resolution Gear is a combination of both design concepts.

>>>>>[Ah, their three big products. SmartCore, in essence, creates small little gadgets and programs that make someone else's toy work a lot better. Not a new concept, but SmartCore has designed dandy little gadgets.]<<<<<<
--PJ<14:55:14/3-3-57>

>>>>>[Okay, I swear by the Optimizer Software, but I've never heard of the "Mindlock." A smart Maglock?]
<<<<<<
--Animal Cracker<16:44:28/3-3-57>

>>>>>[Essentially, yes. You hook up to your Maglock with your datacord to your datajack. You think out your entry code. The Maglock pops open. It's not as quick as a regular Maglock, and at 20K a pop to add on to your old Maglock, it's not cheap. At least this Maglock can't be spoofed by some passkey.]<<<<<<
--PJ<17:01:44/3-3-57>

>>>>>[Yes, but it creates more potential for "human" problems, you know? My area of expertise.]<<<<<<
--HRM<20:35:03/3-3-57>

>>>>>[I hear SmartCore is trying out a beta-test of a totally rigged house. Plug a special radio unit into your jack, and you can think about making coffee, and the rigged house does it!]<<<<<<
--Radio Sloth<23:03:24/3-3-57>

>>>>>[Ah, that specialized niche where one creates products for people too rich to know any better...]
<<<<<<
--the Marketier<00:42:35/3-4-57>

Corporate Structure: SmartCore has only two offices, both of which are also research facilities. The first, which also house the headquarters, is in Seattle. The second building is in Santa Fe, Pueblo. The corporate structure is very loose, reminiscent of the 1980's Apple Corporation. While technically there is a Research Division, a Marketing Division, and an Administrative Division, these departments exist only on paper, with all employees freely mingling and actually sharing budgets.

>>>>>[How fraggin' weird! And they actually post insane profits with this drek-headed structure!]<<<<<<<
--Confused in Seattle<03:43:00/3-4-57>

>>>>>[At least for now...]<<<<<<<
--Professional Naysayer<06:30:23/3-4-57>

Execs: CEO Gabriel Michelson and Chairman David Rubens are boyhood friends that started SmartCore Software Designs a little over five years ago. Both take active roles in the management of their company, and are often seen working alongside their researchers and product testers.

>>>>>[Even weirder. Could you imagine Damien Knight jandering down to the local research plant and arguing ideas? Bizarre...]<<<<<<<
--Amused<10:34:39/3-4-57>

>>>>>[With SmartCore it seems to foster a certain amount of loyalty. When any pencil-neck is listened to by the CEO, it makes the employees feel important. Not the sort of feeling you get with the megacorps...]<<<<<<<
--Spike<12:08:32/3-4-57>

>>>>>[Heh. Just think of the sec nightmare.....]<<<<<<<
--Rumormonger<12:18:45/3-4-57>

>>>>>[What I want to know is how Michelson and Rubens, founders of SmartCore, aren't the primary stockholders? How are they even still on the board if Fuchi has, total, at least 49% of the stock?]<<<<<<<
--Oyster<13:01:23/3-4-57>

>>>>>[Mostly because they were willing partners, for the most part. Fuchi UCAS supplied a lot of the start-up capital, and got a 25% share, right of the bat. They've bought up another 24% since then. And Michelson and Rubens are great for SmartCore. Fuchi wouldn't dream of replacing them right now.]<<<<<<<
--Daydreamer<15:42:38/3-4-57>

>>>>>[Riiight. Just give them time. The first time Fuchi decides they're working preferentially for the PCC stockholders, there just might be a slight problem in the production facilities - if you know what I mean.]<<<<<<<
--Rumormonger<16:04:01/3-4-57>

>>>>>[And let's not forget that Fuchi UCAS and Fuchi Corporate Services are both squarely in the pocket of Richard Villiers. Yet another part of his kingdom...]<<<<<<<
--Nick Not-So-Quick<16:20:24/3-4-57>

Security: Security for such a successful corporation is rather low. Major moves are currently being made to upgrade security, but it will be several months before there is a noticeable change.

>>>>>[Won't be quick enough, if you ask me. They're just asking for trouble.]<<<<<<<
--Rumormonger<17:22:01/3-4-57>

Physical and Magical Security: Very mediocre. However, this isn't totally surprising, considering the company was founded by a couple of tech-heads. As noted above, this is changing. Each site is currently being outfitted with a security rigger control room, and all current security staff is being given heavy training and access to better weapons, armor, and cyberware.

>>>>>[Again, like the tech-heads they are, Michelson and Rubens are forgetting the magical edge. Don't expect too many magicians on site for quite a while.]<<<<<<<
--Magi Maker<17:35:53/3-4-57>

Matrix Security: As might be expected for a software company owned in major part by Fuchi, Matrix security is formidable. Each site is known to have semi-autonomous party ice.

>>>>>[Somehow, I think this is another of Fuchi's contributions.]<<<<<<<
--the Mega-Bite<17:55:37/3-4-57>

>>>>>[You're right. Fuchi is protecting it's investment...]<<<<<<<
--Clubster<19:01:55/3-4-57>

Extended Security: While there is no official department or division for this, SmartCore does use shadowrunners on occasion.

>>>>>[I should know, they hired me once. Except I did a hit on Fuchi...]<<<<<<<
--Shadowrock<20:44:38/3-4-57>

>>>>>[Are you sure you have your principals right?]<<<<<<<
--Desperately Seeking Truth<22:56:20/3-4-57>

>>>>>[Pretty sure, and it's been bugging me for fragging near a year now.]<<<<<<<
--Shadowrock<23:40:39/3-4-57>

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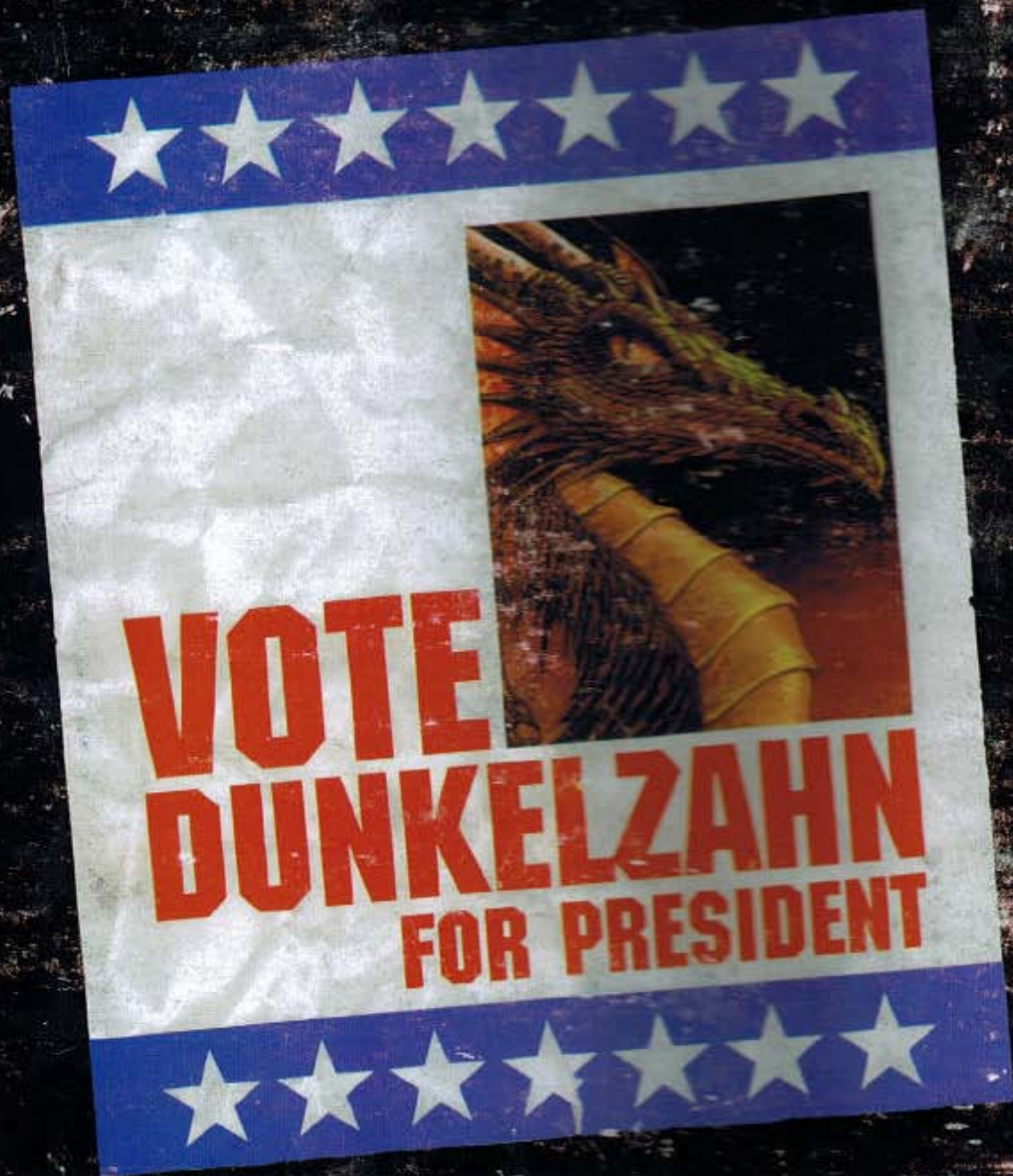
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