

CITY of MIST

INDEPENDENCE

A DISTRICT OF AFRICAN-AMERICAN FOLK HEROES FIGHTING OPPRESSION

CITY of MIST

“Stop, don’t dial 911. Independence doesn’t work like that. When there’s trouble, we don’t call the cops or ring up the ‘Man’ to come save us. That leads to more trouble, and some innocent people could get killed because some trigger-happy mook with a gun and a badge didn’t like your darker skin tone. Around here, it’s all a risk, it’s always a hard choice. So, my question for you, friend, is, ‘Is it worth it?’”

– Isaiah William Bishop

HOW TO USE THIS DISTRICT IN YOUR GAME

This PDF describes a new district in the City setting for the **City of Mist RPG**: the welcoming family of **Independence**, which is under siege by the Gatekeepers. Here are some examples of how to use the included locations, NPCs, and Dangers:

- **Enhancing themes of freedom vs. oppression.** The people of Independence face systematic oppression on a daily basis by the clone army and Gatekeepers of Ward 9, making this district the ideal setting for stories and characters that revolve around freedom fighting.
- **Playing Independence’s story arc.** Independence features a formidable enemy – Ward 9 – whose impregnable headquarters is impossible to storm without additional support. The crew must first complete missions to gain the trust of the local crew – Bishop’s Crew, represented as Ally themes – and together mount an attack to take down Ward 9.
- **Finding support, in more ways than one.** Crew members who are in need of help can find a home in the welcoming community of Independence. The members of Bishop’s Crew are accomplished, honest, and helpful Rifts that can be recruited to help with the lead characters’ problems (especially if the crew can help with theirs) and many of the district’s people act with the same spirit of hospitality.
- **Uncovering the origins of the Mist.** It could be that the Town Hall of Independence is nothing less than the birthplace of the Mist, or at least of the Gatekeepers’ organization. The Mist’s original secrets might also be lost in the Old Fort’s endless battles, although venturing into the Mist-less Fort grounds may prove to be a psychedelic, life-changing experience.

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Independence isn't just a district. It's friends, it's family, it's community. You can't walk down a street without running into at least one person you know, and just around the corner you'll see another friend coming to you with the local gossip about someone else they just saw. You don't get to choose your neighborhood family, and may not even like them, but you can rely on them to have your back against the rest of the world. Then they may cheat you out of a ten spot for their trouble. Family, right?

Independence is a micro city inside of the City with a suburban vibe running throughout it. Down any street in the district, one can find an intermingling of small shops, residential houses, a few monolithic apartment buildings, and groups of retirees on the sidewalk playing cards or checkers. You may also run across a large green park with a smattering of trees, flowers, domestic wildlife, and the sounds of kids playing ball. Moving inward from there, there are modern streets and architecture, eventually arriving at the ocean.

Broiling underneath the warm and open community is a struggle for freedom. Since the early days of the City, Independence has been the testing grounds of a Gatekeeper experiment in social oppression and a home for movements trying to resist it. This social atrocity has been managed by an autonomous and covert division of the Gatekeepers titled Ward 9. At the same time, locals try to get by using any means necessary, some running criminal operations and some even collaborating with the Gatekeepers.

The face of Ward 9, Imogen Waite, says they will stop the criminals soon, but rumors swirl around about Ward 9 and some of the criminals being in bed together. Recently the body of Robin Wiser, a journalist for the local newspaper the *Independence Press* and the source of these rumors, was found washed ashore. The murderers meant this as a sign for everyone to understand who is in charge, but much to their chagrin, Independence did what it always does when faced with threats, violence, and intolerance; it stood up and continued to fight back.

BEYOND THE MIST

Independence is a place of struggle, a place for those who don't accept what has been foisted upon them. People from all walks of life looking to explore their dream come here to make a home for themselves, to find a place to belong, and to be able to define themselves. The community is always open to people of meager means. Those kicked out by their folks, wanderers, and visionaries call the district home, inviting Mythoi of related nature to find their Rifts here.

At one time, literal giants walked in the place that would be called Independence. The draw of Independence to empower the dreamers is rooted in the district's origins; it once existed without the Mist, a town predating the machinations of the Gatekeepers. Then the Gatekeepers and the Mist came, turning the land into the first battleground of the City. The Mist is stronger here than anywhere else, likely due to the Town Hall, which serves as a Gatekeeper foothold against the Mythoi. Some Rifts who have studied the evolution of Gatekeepers believe Town Hall to be the first Gatekeeper fortress, perhaps even where the Mist was born. This could be why Ward 9 is given such a free hand in oppressing the district. Could Independence be the key to freeing the City from the Mist?

PLACES OF INTEREST

THE ROWS

The Rows are what every other district wants. The businesses that run through the middle of Independence have been a part of the district since its inception. The Rows were born of a simple idea: a place for black business, where black people and those oft-overlooked and oppressed walk with pride, able to feel part of something greater and not live under heel. A street of businesses ranging from mom-and-pops to fully-incorporated business chains, operating unfettered. Every single business is black-owned and black-operated, and the money is spent in the district and goes back into the district. For the residents of Independence, the Rows represent economic freedom and a chance at equality.

The Rows feels like a warm handshake to anyone walking down the street. The shop owners seem to offer just the right amount of help but are hands off and never overstay their welcome. The buildings appear slightly worn but lovingly cared for, comfortably lived in, with decades of life left in them. That warm feeling of acceptance and potential has people from all over

the City flocking to the Rows. The money flows into Independence and tourism is always high. The heavy Mist protects the Sleepers from perceiving the sprawling street battles playing out in the Rows by the Niners trying to break the folks of the district and crews of Rifts stopping them.

THE CHURCH

The Church (Virtue of Hospitality) was the first building to be constructed in Independence, predating Town Hall. Back in the old days, religion was a daily part of life and used as a safeguard against the unknown. Its role in the community changed over the passing of years but it never lost its prominence; every service is packed to the hilt with congregants. While primarily a Christian church, the pastor has opened the doors to anyone needing a safe haven and frequently invites other religious leaders to visit.

The impossibly tall, brick building seems to be under constant renovation, expanding with additional rooms and space. Every few years a new room just appears, matching whatever needs the community has. The church currently encompasses an entire city block without casting a shadow over any other buildings. The holy woman, Olivia (Sleeper), has been praised for her diplomatic skills but she claims she is merely a facilitator of a higher power. Every treaty, agreement, or deal signed at the Church has proven successful and it is now viewed as the neutral ground

by members of all factions in the district, and beyond. No one remembers when Olivia arrived but they feel like she has been there forever. Perhaps it has something to do with the spirit of the place more than the presiding clergy.

FREEPORT

While The Rows keep the lights on and The Church serves as the heart of Independence, Freeport keeps the spirits high and the people happy. A retro 1920s-style speakeasy-turned-modern-day-cafe and club, Freeport sits on a slightly elevated piece of land close to the Rows, providing the best view of the district and other distant parts of the City. The central location and view have made it a favorite hangout, keeping the local business going. Every evening between 6pm and 9:30pm a different community event takes place. Then at 10pm, every underage person is sent home, with the band hitting the stage before 11pm, and the music and booze flowing freely.

Visiting Freeport is the easiest way to meet new people or relax a bit from the stress of the world. It serves the best bourbon (without a doubt) and coffee (arguably) in the entire City. Louis (Sleeper) took over the place a decade ago, and since then, he removed the 60s aesthetics to take it back to its original look. Walking inside feels like stepping back in time, and within minutes you're already forgetting your cares.



FREEPORT ★

Something about Freeport is distracting and guests easily lose hours of time unless they are actively and repeatedly watching the time. On the upside, Freeport makes you forget not just yourself, but also your troubles. The local vibe also interferes with electrical devices; cell phones receive no signals and recording devices don't work.

- **Forget Yourself:** When you spend a scene relaxing and enjoying yourself in Freeport, the MC can make one hard move to represent the consequences of being late.
- **Restorative:** When you spend a scene relaxing and enjoying yourself in Freeport, you may remove any single negative emotional status of tier 5 or lower.
- **Deadzone:** When you try to use an electrical device in Freeport, it takes *dead-5*. Remove the status when you leave Freeport.

THE OLD FORT

On the edge of Independence overlooking the water is the Old Fort. This coastal fort was constructed centuries ago to serve the people as a harbor defense facility. It survived enemy shellings, assaults, and provided safe housing for early Independence folks during hurricanes. Then, over a hundred years ago, a massacre occurred within, and the place hasn't been used since. Most of the details are lost, and no one talks about it, but at night, screams and sounds of a battle can occasionally be heard from inside. Those entering feel an otherworldly-cold inside.

The Old Fort is one of the rare locations in the City that have remained unaffected by the Gatekeepers and the Mist. The entire building seems to repel the Mist to the point some Sleepers awaken minutes after being inside. The Old Fort acts as a conduit, allowing Rifts to move into the realms of other Mythoi, the land of the dead, an eternal battlefield, and on occasions, allowing Conjurations to emerge and escape into the City. It is haunted by the spirits of those who died during the massacre, one of the early battles between Gatekeeper supporters and their opposers. At night, armies of Mythoi amass and relive their battle. Only the strongest of Rifts can witness the battle and live to tell the tale, as coming near it holds the risk being drawn into the endless struggle. A few unfortunate Rifts over the century have become part of the battle and can be distinguished in the fray by their clashing clothing and fashion.

TOWN HALL

The Town Hall is only partially in the district; it's rumored to exist in all districts to a minor extent but nowhere else like it is in Independence. To all outward appearances and Sleepers, the Town Hall is a building of the Neo-Renaissance style that drew its distinctive look from many other styles: Gothic, Italian Renaissance, Classical, to name a few. The five-story building hides underneath it at least two sub-basement level jails and multiple unknown sub-offices. The building appears fully staffed with people constantly moving, working, and too busy to be bothered. Any time someone garners their attention, the employee redirects them to some obscure division and down an endless bureaucracy trail.

Ward 9 has given public announcements about plans to reinvigorate business as well as rezoning opportunities, and has issued announcements to all local business owners to resubmit their paperwork. A number of local protests have sparked up outside of the building, calling for an investigation into the real agenda behind this new, skewed policy, suspecting Ward 9 is trying to use it to perpetuate redlining in and around Independence.

In reality, the Town Hall is the Gatekeepers' stronghold, generating the Mist for the district to suppress Rifts, keep Sleepers in a state of acceptance, and help hide vanishing locals, visitors, and troublemakers. The building itself is covered by an extremely thick layer of Mist. It serves to hide the horror which awaits at the bowels of the building, an efficient and tireless process for the production of an army of identical Niners, the private security force for the district. These identical-looking, obedient enforcers carry out the will of the Gatekeepers, and sometimes kidnap prisoners into the Town Hall's sub-levels, to be processed. Outside, the fate of these victims remains unknown.

The only Rift to ever have entered the building and come out alive is B (see page 10), who has witnessed the cloning process with their own eyes. In the deep sub-levels, massive vats are connected to a terminal that controls the Niners' fabrication. The process requires raw living material – people – to be converted into the drones in the gray suits. Is this a new devilry devised by Gatekeeper command or is it a horrific bid for survival made by Ward 9 because their funding was cut? Only the commanding Gatekeeper knows.

TOWN HALL GATEKEEPER SECURITY MEASURES ★★★★★

ALARM 3 / DISPEL 5

- **Reinforced Mist:** When you hang around Town Hall, take *forgetful-5*. When you make a move against Town Hall, first take *forgetful-5*.
- **Red Alert:** When *alarm:3* is maxed out, create a new Danger: Niners (see page 11) and give *locked-in/out-5* and *knocked-out-5* (gas) to unauthorized personnel in the perimeter.
- Increase its internal threat level (give itself *threat-1* on the *alarm* spectrum)
- Make anyone trying to override it *nervous-2* or give them *sweaty-hands-2*
- Present a new security countermeasure that must be overcome, such as a restrictive magical field, illegible shifting runes, multiple wards across an area, etc.

LOCALS

Independence poses an opportunity to take on a heavily-fortified, outlying, and possibly rogue Gatekeeper outpost. This could be the crew's first step in unravelling the Gatekeepers' working throughout the City. But taking on Town Hall without first teaming up with those who have been fighting it for years would be foolish, not to mention dangerous.

There is already a crew operating in Independence: **Bishop's Crew**, which consists of **Isaiah William Bishop** (High John de Conqueror), **Professor Myrna Walker** (John Henry), **Captain Jacob Reeves** (Lone Ranger), and **B** (Harriet Tubman). Any other crew trying to set up here would be wise to earn their favor or get the hell out of their way (that is, out of Independence).

Bishop's Crew is always happy to lend a hand to a passerby or visitor on an occasional basis, but in order to be accepted as part of the district one needs to find folks that'll speak for one's good character. Gaining that level of respect rivals that of the Labors of Hercules. Gaining the favor of Bishop and his crew is a good start, but they'll expect you to prove yourself by helping some of the other folks too.

EARNING FAVOR

Crew members who want to earn the favor of the Independence Crew members will have to surmount the following challenges and prove their worth to the cause:

- **Bishop's** family business is now gone but Bishop knows that commerce is the lifeblood of Independence, and the impressive amount of money switching hands in The Rows rivals that of Downtown and keeps the community going. If someone could help keep the machinations of Ward 9 out of the affairs of local businesses, they would earn his respect.
- **Prof. Walker** has figured out that the Mist is the key to greater understanding of Ward 9 and their powers and she needs samples of people and things created by the Gatekeepers' magical arts. If someone could get her usable samples of the Lurker (page 12), she would back their play.
- **Captain Reeves** still remembers the odd feeling from being at the Old Fort and does not talk about it much. Anyone who can uncover the truth about the Old Fort and convince him of it will earn his good will.
- **B** needs more information about the inner workings of the Town Hall (they're cooking up a plan to break out those jailed there, or worse). If someone provides a copy of the building plans and proves their authenticity, they'll gain their favor.

Finally, **the people of Independence** want to see their allies actively resisting the oppression of Ward 9. This could manifest in a number of ways:

- Legally outmaneuver Ward 9 and have one of their prisoners released.
- Successfully expose a local company trying to oust other companies through illegal practices, and organize a protest against it.
- Provide help to John and Willow, who are looking to start their own business and need help navigating it from start to finish.
- Do away with a powerful rival Rift from another district who is trying to start up a crime ring in Independence.
- Banish a local gang has been harassing businesses; the gang members are materialized spirits (Conjurations) and need to be literally banished.

As long as the crew has not proven themselves to Bishop's Crew and the people of Independence, Bishop's Crew may view them as a threat or nuisance; if the players' crew does not start any trouble, they won't be bothered, just monitored.

Whenever the crew is acknowledged as allies by one of the Bishop's Crew members, you can represent that support as a temporary Ally extra theme for your crew – see the templates below for suggestions for power tags, weakness tags, Mysteries/Identities, and special improvements. That member of Bishop's Crew then becomes a Secondary Character (see Player's Guide, page 236) and uses player moves rather than Danger moves in all interactions.

ISAIAH WILLIAM BISHOP

High John de Conqueror, African trickster-prince turned reluctant folk hero

Isaiah Bishop III, or Zeke to his friends, is Independence royalty. The Bishops were one of the founding families of the City and Independence, and have been around since before anyone can properly remember. Their status is generally a given, and the family has exemplified black royalty since. The latest Bishop and scion of Independence, Isaiah finds himself the center of attention for any room he is in. He grew up with money and privilege, bouncing through life with a string of interests, and became a master generalist. A strikingly handsome and charming man, he always wears linen suits, frequently of a lighter blue color. Isaiah has always seemed to have a knack, and some would say magic, to perform any task with grace and style. His words seem to sway crowds and turn enemies into friends. This was an ability used mainly in the pursuit of pleasure and amusement, making him more of a wastrel than anything else.

That is how it would have remained if not for Ward 9. Isaiah and his whole family were killed in a car bombing, with Ward 9 claiming all of the family's assets and businesses. Isaiah saw the hordes of faceless Niners scouring the wreckage for something. His knack, his magic for performing impossible tasks allowed him to cheat death and walk back into Independence, unharmed. The family's business and assets are gone but Isaiah was undaunted. He finally came to understand how the real world works and his vision was clear. He took to the streets, becoming an activist against Ward 9, protecting those he could with his crew and always looking to help even more. He knows he has an impossible task before him, only doable by a trusted crew, friends, and the community at his back.

ISAIAH WILLIAM BISHOP ★★★

Carrying within him the Mythos of an African prince who has tricked the Devil himself, Bishop has already died three times but keeps coming back. He is not sure how or why it happens but it hurts like hell and he is not keen to have it happen again.

HURT OR SUBDUE 3 / BREAK SPIRIT -

- **Cheat Death:** When Bishop dies, his body goes mysteriously missing. At the end of the next downtime, he shows up in Independence again. Next time he dies, he returns after two downtime moves, then after three, and so on.
 - **Magic Man:** Once per scene, Bishop can conjure *a magical axe*, *a lucky root*, or *the Devil's horses*. He may repeat this trick in the same scene as an intrusion, taking *strained-1*.
 - **Know the Devil's Tricks:** Tags related to magic or trickery cannot be invoked in actions against Bishop (although he can be harmed by collateral damage). Dangers cannot use magical or trickery abilities against him.
-
- Speak in a way that makes people listen and either help (*inspired-3*) or step back (*threatened-3*), affecting anyone who can hear him
 - Break into rolling laughter, lifting his crew's spirits even in the most hopeless situations (remove up to three tiers of negative emotional statuses from each crew member)
 - Steal an object right under someone's nose (burn a tag and give it to Bishop)
-
- Jaunt into the scene, all smiles and beaming eyes
 - Speak to the people, rallying them to the cause

ISAIAH WILLIAM BISHOP



Ally

MYSTERY

How can hope endure despite hardship?

POWER TAGS

inspire hope, relentless trickster, unbreakable spirit, faith in Independence, rally the people, cheat death, knows what goes down in Independence, a magical axe, the Devil's horses, can't trick the trickster

WEAKNESS TAGS

occasional kleptomania, exhausted by working magic, takes nothing seriously, hunted by Ward 9

THEME IMPROVEMENT

○ **One Spirit:** When you use tags from this theme to **Face Danger** against an emotional status affecting you and your allies, allies who can benefit from Bishop's protection don't **Face Danger** but use your result instead.

PROFESSOR MYRNA WALKER

John Henry, legendary folk hero with the power of a steam train

Professor Myrna Walker graduated top of her class from the City University with multiple degrees in physics, mathematics, and chemistry. The university swept her up, gave her tenure, and she's since been teaching to the masses in the Old Quarter. However, she has never forgotten her roots, the family business, or the community. She never felt at home outside of Independence, but for some reason, she did feel stronger. A brief tussle with a squad of goons trying to rob the lab ended with her being shot multiple times but suffering only minor scratches before disposing of the lot.

Myrna's folks own and operate an auto shop called "Walkers". She first began to understand her connection to the Mist when a forklift failed and dropped a van onto her father as he was working beneath it. She caught it with one hand and held it aloft for him to escape, and was surprised to discover she had hurt herself more than the bullets did. She deduced that the reason for this must be the presence of a force which negates her powers, and that this force is more voluminous in Independence. Since then, she has been trying to understand how the Mist works.

Myrna is naturally brilliant and gifted with the superhuman strength and durability of John Henry, making her a one-woman army. She is a wall of a woman with a steely gaze that could quell a charging rhinoceros, and her punches hit with the power of a speeding steam train.

PROFESSOR MYRNA WALKER ★★★★★

HURT OR SUBDUE 4

- **Invincible:** When Myrna takes physical or subdual status, reduce its tier by 3.
- Punch with immense strength or hurl an object as a weapon (*broken-bones-4*)
- Recover from injury or fatigue much faster than normal (remove up to two tiers of physical harm or fatigue statuses)
- Use applied science to counter someone's powers or equipment after analysing them (burn two related tags or *depowered-2*)
- Carefully examine a Mythos- or Mist-related phenomenon she just witnessed
- Pick up a trash can or break off a parking meter and use it as a club

PROF. MYRNA WALKER



Ally

MYSTERY

How can I break free of the Mist?

POWER TAGS

invincible, science professor, the strength of a steam engine, scientific curiosity, packs a punch like a locomotive, shelter someone, research & analysis, use heavy objects as weapons, contacts in the scientific community, loyal to the cause

WEAKNESS TAGS

experiment gone wrong, takes too long to ponder, bull in a china shop, dependent parents

THEME IMPROVEMENT

○ **Fateful Moment:** You can burn the *invincible* tag for a hit.

JACOB REEVES, CAPTAIN (RET)

The Lone Ranger, the true spirit of the Western Frontier

Jacob Reeves, Captain (Ret.), remembers growing up playing army with other kids throughout Independence. They would run through the streets, dodging through the Rows, staying far away from the Town Hall, and on the brave days, venture down to The Old Fort. Even then, he had a knack for finding the other kids regardless of where they hid, capturing them, and with his eagle eye always making the shot in basketball or striking the batter out at baseball.

Once old enough, Reeves joined the military, skyrocketed through the ranks, and returned home with honors after several tours of duty. He discovered that his service did not change the City nor did it make life easier. All it did was make him distant, cursed with flashes that sent him straight back to the war. Getting home found him on the outs; his natural talent with guns and finding hidden things got him far in the service but was of little use back home. He turned down offers to work for the local mob as well as Ward 9's recruitment efforts. A lot of folks in the community needed help, they needed a person they could count on, and as Jonny law is always looking out for everyone else, Reeves was it.

He stumbled into the role of a shamus, a gumshoe, a private dick. It's dirty work but cleaner than being someone else's boy and it allows him to give back to all of those people who took care of him when he was down. Reeves can now be found on the streets, always dressed in a cheap black suit, black trench coat, handcuffs, and a pair of pearl-handled six shooters at his sides.



CAPTAIN REEVES ★★★★★

HURT OR SUBDUE 4 / CATCH 4

- **Powers of Deduction:** When Cpt. Reeves surveys the scene for the first time or as a hard move, the MC will ask you one question. You must reply with a straight answer or a solid lead. Cpt. Reeves knows your answer, even if your character didn't speak it.
- **Deadeye:** Reeves is an exceptional trick shot capable of even bending bullets around corners. When you **Face Danger** against Cpt. Reeves' shots, you cannot invoke tags or statuses related to cover or armor unless they provide fail-proof protection.
- **Gunfight Survival:** When Reeves enters the scene, give him *bulletproof vest*. When shots are fired, he first takes *dodging-bullets-2*, renewable as a soft move.
- Shoot both pistols simultaneously at one or multiple targets (*riddled-with-bullets-4* or *alive-but-just-barely-5*)
- Physically subdue a target with rope or handcuffs (*restrained-3*)
- Trick-shoot a weapon out of a target's hand or disable a device with a well-placed shot (burn one tag)
- Gently brush the pearl-handles of his six shooters with his thumbs
- Broodingly study a crime scene

CAPTAIN REEVES



Ally

IDENTITY

I shall live each day with courage.

POWER TAGS

spot overlooked details, washed-out gumshoe, expert marksman and gunslinger, after the truth, trickshots, bulletproof vest, tracking, pearl-handled six-shooters, Independence underworld, keeps to the straight and narrow path

WEAKNESS TAGS

can't lie very well, PTSD flashbacks, slob, disgruntled ex-clients

THEME IMPROVEMENT

□ **Deadeye:** Once per session, before Cpt. Reeves shoots a target, you get a 2-Juice batch. Use it to remove tags or statuses representing his target's cover or armor or to give Cpt. Reeves an *aiming* status.

B

Harriet Tubman, boundless freedom fighter and legendary Underground Railroad infiltrator

B grew up with a loving father, Alistair, a semi-successful middleweight boxer with questionable mob ties. When the mob said to throw a fight, he did; when they said to win, he did; and when they said, "We need you for a little muscle gig," he reported in. It kept the money coming in and the lights on in their tiny apartment. Every few months, their mother, Barbara, would drop in with promises of a better life, raising B's hopes, only to vanish just as quickly as she turned up. Every time, Alistair was there making excuses for Barbara and saying maybe next time she can stay. All of B's free time as a kid was spent in the gym training, boxing, doing martial arts, and whatever else people would teach them.

Realizing that at the end of the day you can only count on yourself, B got a part-time gig at Freeport and opened their own small dojo, teaching to fund the dream of being a painter. Their first show will open soon at a local gallery in the Rows. Everyone knows B, and many come to them for advice, a friendly ear, or help.

B is the only person ever to come back from the Town Hall building. No one knows how and B is not sharing. They are the toughest member of Bishop's Crew and unbeatable in a dust-up, capable of finding a way into any secured facility. B is always dressed in loose gym clothes, steel-toed boots, and small go-bag with their dreads pulled into a tight bundle.

B

Ally

IDENTITY

Never leave anyone behind.

POWER TAGS

fugitive smuggler, master spy, miraculous escape, freedom fighter, expert martial artist, evasive maneuvers, sense escape routes, dojo in Independence, network of shepherds, "I'm your only way out of here"

WEAKNESS TAGS

ambitious rescuer, dead ends, can't sit still, wanted dead or alive

THEME IMPROVEMENT

○ **Underground Railroad:** When using **Sneak Around** or **Take the Risk** with tags from this theme, if B had time to plan an escape or a rescue, the move is *Dynamite!*

B ★★★★★

HURT OR SUBDUE 5 / CATCH 6

- **Top Eye Open:** When B enters the scene, give them *alert-3*.
- **Evasive Maneuvers:** When B enters a fight, give them *evasive-2*.
- **Moving Target:** When B takes physical harm or subdual status they can dodge, reduce its tier by 2.
- **Ticket to Liberty:** As an intrusion, B can remove any restrictive status from themselves or those they choose to liberate.
- **Underground Railroad:** B can break into and out of any area, with proper planning. When B is sneaking into a scene, give them and anyone with them *stealthy-4*.
- Take down an opponent with uncannily effective Jujutsu (*disabled-5* or *not-breathing-5*)
- Radiate inner peace, making others feel comfortable (*friendly-2*)
- Glance around fleetingly, marking potential escape routes
- Step back into the shadows, smiling

THE NINERS

The Niners appear as private security decked out in full police body armor with fully covered faceplates. These faceless, endless goons of Ward 9 carry out the orders coming out of Town Hall, act as a police force for the district, and rarely speak. When they do, their voices are cold and distant, as if they are speaking from the bottom of a well.

Town Hall's countless foot soldiers carry high-caliber military-grade weapons, drive converted Humvees to patrol the city streets, and use goonish tactics. A couple of times when a Rift spotted one out of armor, they were unnaturally white, with otherwise average, indistinct features, and nearly identical twins (Sleepers find it hard to notice these details).

The Niners operate in squads of ten to overrun their targets. They focus on maximising their advantage of numbers and mass, with little regard to themselves as individuals. They almost never attack to kill, instead preferring to subdue and then drag their victims alive into Town Hall, under some litany of trumped-up charges. Many of the kidnapped are never seen again, be they Sleepers or Rifts.

NINERS ★★

HURT OR SUBDUE 3 / COMMUNICATE -

- **Collective:** This Danger is a Collective with several members and a size factor of 2.
- **Riot Gear:** When Niners take a physical harm status, reduce its tier by one.
- Physically subdue a target with batons and restrained them with handcuffs, ziplocks, and tear gas (*restrained-3*; at tier 6, target is abducted to Town Hall)
- Quench revolutionary vibes with their mere presence (give all targets of their size factor or smaller *despaired-2* or reduce two tiers of the target's hope-related statuses)
- Set up a barricade (giving themselves *barricaded-1*)
- Call their endless legions for backup (increasing their size factor by one)
- Overrun an area, a building, or crowd of people

IMOGEN WAITE, TOWN HALL SPOKESMAN

Gatekeeper

For Sleepers, the loud-mouthed Imogen Waite is the representative of Town Hall and the voice that sugar-coats their oppressive policies. Rifts sense that he is part of something greater, a much more insidious and dangerous operation; the wise ones steer clear of him, while the brave or foolish are never seen again. In actuality, Imogen Waite is a mid-level Gatekeeper agent of Ward 9, an autonomous and purist Gatekeeper group that has control over Independence. His directive as an agent is to maintain the extreme Mist over Independence, focusing mostly on keeping the population at large asleep, busy with their policy-induced everyday struggles, and on taking out any Rifts who presume to threaten this status quo.

Imogen is a *Silver Soul*, a term coined by Gatekeeper purists for a Gatekeeper who was recruited before his awakening, and so has never known his Mythos (progressive Gatekeepers call them *Grey Souls*). He was groomed from childhood for the role of an agent by his father, Frederick Waite, a high-ranking Gatekeeper himself. Like his fellow Ward 9 bigwigs, Frederick used the Mist to his own gain, accumulating wealth and prestige. Learning at the foot of his father, but lacking his old man's talents, Imogen confused greed with hate towards those he viewed as inferior, an attitude which allows him to further his family and Gatekeeper goals with complete disregard to the cost of lives.

Imogen wants the power, the praise, and the wealth his father has but loses it every time. Frederick bailed out his washed-up son time and time again. However, one talent Imogen undoubtedly possesses is the art of the spin: regardless of his actions, he could always amass enough fans that would believe him, accepting his views as facts. This proved valuable for a public-facing Gatekeeper position, and he has been stationed there ever since.

The decades have been kind to the man, considering how old he really is. When he's behind the podium, he usually wears an immaculate suit and projects an image of strength. For Rifts' eyes only, the skinny Imogen seems to fail to fill up the suit, and his face is covered with wrinkles of displeasure and spite.

IMOGEN WAITE ★★★

HURT OR SUBDUE 3 / ALERTED 3

- **Creepy Feeling:** Whenever you try to **Investigate** to learn more about Imogen Waite, you get a strange feeling that he is impenetrable. Imogen Waite first takes *mysterious-3*. This status cannot exceed tier 4.
- **Explosive Shrouding Ward:** Once per scene, as an intrusion, everyone around Imogen Waite takes *oblivious-5*. At his option, he may flee the scene.
- **Advanced Defensive Shrouding:** When you attack Imogen with Mythos powers, the MC first burns two power tags you used in your attack.
- **Bodyguards:** When Imogen Waite takes a status from which his Niners can protect him, the Niners takes the status instead (use Niners, above).
- **Spy Through the Mist:** As a hard move, the MC can give Imogen Waite *about-to-notice-1*, without naming him. When *alerted:3* maxes out, Imogen Waite knows what the PCs are up to, no matter where they are in Independence.
- **Town Hall Backing:** When Imogen Waite or anyone he is protecting takes a legal or financial status, reduce its tier by 4.
- Shroud a person or a crowd of any size so they can't focus on what matters (*preoccupied-4*)
- Announce a new oppressive policy, making it sound constructive or necessary (give Independence *oppressed-into-sleep-1*)
- Slyly convince someone of his point, even without shrouding (*trusting-3*)
- Blow on the microphone, commanding silence
- Expose his Gatekeeper tattoos

THE LURKER

The Knuckler, mythological Bigfoot-esque abomination from the woods of Pennsylvania

Before they crafted the Niners, Ward 9 created the Lurker to terrorize the residents of Independence in a move to force them to flee the district, to leave behind the wealth, the community, and the safe haven they had carved out for themselves. The 10-foot, 1,000-pound monstrosity is flesh and blood but beyond description. Its mere appearance paralyses to the bone, its maw shreds with venomous teeth. The abomination birthed from science and Mist carried out its missions relentlessly for years.

Eventually came a time when the creature interceded on a Gatekeeper Agent capturing a Rift, killing them both. That moment woke it from its own partial slumber and Ward 9's control. Now the Lurker feeds when it wants – on Independence folks, Niners, visitors, or whoever is at hand. The Horror of Independence, the beast that lives in the sewers below the district, has become a legend thanks to its elusivity and cruelty. Rifts are hunting it, as it hunts them. The Lurker's scaly hide deflects bullets, its teeth rend metal to shreds, and its speed matches any motorcycle. Fear and death are all it leaves in its wake.

THE LURKER ★★★★★

HURT OR SUBDUE 6 / THREATEN –

- **Gargantuan:** When the Lurker takes a physical harm status, reduce its tier by 4, unless it can affect all of the Lurker.
- **Fear Factor:** The first time in a scene you see the Lurker, take *terrified-3*.
- **Poisoned Maws and Claws:** If you take a physical status (after **Facing Danger**), take *poisoned-3* as well. Once per scene, The Lurker vomits poisonous liquid, giving *poisoned-2* to everyone around it as a soft move.
- Maul with steel-rending razor sharp claws and teeth (*bleeding-wound-3*, hard defenses up to steel strength cannot be used to Face Danger)
- Outrun anyone trying to escape, either on land or in the water (*outrun-5*)
- Pounce from the shadows, screeching through its venom-dripping maws

