Sub-ether Zero, zero

WRETCHED HIVES OF MALETH NOIR

DREAMING GYNOID STUDIO

Sub-ether Zero, zero:
Transmissions from the space punk renaissance

COMPATIBLE WITH
DCC RPG

This product is compatible with the Dungeon Crawl Classics Role Playing Game.

SCAN YOUR SECTORS

Pharos
Body Clinic

In the Future, everything will be Recycled!

Wisdom from the Noosphere – Welcome to the Future

Welcome to the inaugural issue of Sub-ether Zero, zero supporting Galaxy Black and all manner of DCC weird star adventures!

As we lead into the release of Galaxy Black there will be a *few* preview articles (mostly classes and that sort of thing) but for the most part something's inclusion herein is because I think it adds to or plays well with the other elements in that particular issue. Additionally, each issue should have a few repeat columns that will appear each issue. So far that's

Wisdom from the Noosphere – This intro bit

A worlds of the imperium article – a setting, small or large, with story hooks and ways to use

The Space Alphabet – small strongly themed little doodads for your game covering a classic SF archetype or trope.

Further each issue has a theme – either a detailed setting /adventure location (like this one) or a complete adventure, replete with support documentation, accessory articles, and the like (like next issue).

This issue we turn first to the wretched hives of scum, fear, and villainy – in particular we discuss the planet of Maleth Noir, the armpit of the Imperial Core[1]. A world so rotten it required a double length issue to handle the whole pit. Future issues will – probably – be a bit more varied. And a lot shorter.   But in the main each one will be as long as it needs to be.

Grab your sword and blaster, it's time to hit the Zero.

Special thanks as usual, go out to the usual suspects
Osiris White, Jodi Breeden, and Chris Dunlap

Additional gratitudes Evlyn Moreau

And two of the best Cyberpunk referees that ever did be:

T.R. Williams, & Mike Williams

Next issue – bring a fresh slate of Zeros wanting to leave home, there will be violence, there will be maenads, and there will be angry dead.   Try to join the crew of the ICSS Serendipity, if you survive *the maenad attack*. Raid on Planetoid P-4710a, a full funnel adventure for DCC and Galaxy Black. Look for it later in 2020!

---

[1] All murder victims depicted in this work are 18+ as required by imperial law. Hail the Empress.

The Space Alphabet

O is for Omega, the ending of things
P is for Parasite
Q is for Quantum
R is for Radiation
S is for Saucers
T is for Them<<<<<<<SELECTION MADE
U is for the Unknown
V is for the Visitors

T is for Them – *Who are **they**? Where do **They** come from? What do **They** want?*
*Careful. They are watching. **Always.***

Who are **They**?
They could be anyone? Could be everyone.   Public eyes are always **Them**.   Sometimes Ansibles are **Them** as well.   In the late second empire, all telescreens were **Them** and telescreens were **Their** work.
They hear and say a lot.
In Space, fear is among the commonest reactions to things, often even across biological types; it seems that the fight or flight reflex, or some variation of it, is common. At least in this galaxy.   As a point of commonality, alongside mathematics and esoteric sciences (often including Mind), these make up the bulk of initial interspecies and interstellar reactions. Perhaps this is why so many first contacts become shooting wars?

Who is watching?
Tiny drone   *Lord Televisor*
Sex crazed spice fiends   *THE NAVIGATORS*
Surveillance dork, trading vid files with other surveillance dorks

What is their purpose
Laughing at you   Exploiting all that you know
Bringing about your downfall   Alien Fluid Sabotage
Watching your every move   making note of your every mistake

Who is at the door or hatch?
Mistaken delivery (*MISTAKEN?)*   *SPIES!* I tell you
Undercover SecFor trying to get a look around *the Secret Invaders*

<u>What are **they** afraid of?</u>
Small fuzzy animals   the colour yellow
old time rock and roll   the power of love
Untreated sea water   blood

*How do **they** curb or control their fear?*
Advanced biofeedback and self-mind control techniques
Cybernetic implants that override the fear impulse
Relinquishing sense of self to a higher authority or higher officer
Drugs drugs drugs

*Why are **They** frightening*
They don't sound like me
        Foreign Language, Hypersonic Pulses,
They don't treat me like a person
They keep wanting to touch me.
You secretly find **THEM** strangely compelling. Thoughts of surrender
THEY will change you.

*What about **Them** is so unnerving?*
They don't look like me   They only give commands
They are expressionless   You feel examined
Will they see?   **THEY KNOW**

*What would make **Them** seem more familiar?*
Weird Alien Flatulence   If **they** smelled different
Seeing **them** eat noodles   hitting **them** a little

Weird paranoid outburst generator[2] 1d8
You (wheeze) can't (wheeze) DOOOOO THAAAAAAAAT! (points compulsively)
You don't even SQUIDSH LIKE WE DO
I just I just can't I just … I can't wrap my head around that. What?
What the holy dregg-breed? Hells no!
If they try to come over the wall, we'll be ready
WHAT. IS. WRONG. WITH. YOU. PEOPLE.
WHY IS THIS PARTICULAR THING NOT LIKE THIS OTHER PARTICULAR THING FROM WHEN I WAS A JUVE?
(just heavy breathing noises and garbled violent gestures, more sad than intimidating)

What is their purpose   They want to go through my stuff, clearly.
What do they REALLY WANT?
They are
(Ghosts, the Federation, the Imperium, Robots, Shapeshifters) ,
(experimenting on us, extracting our vital essence, killing us and stealing
our identities, making us look like FOOLs, Stealing from us,)
I mean *obviously*

---

[2] *Creeping Paranoid Xenophobia* (***Xenoshock*** or, as the ancients called it**, Future Shock***, syndrome*)
-A theorized psychiatric reaction to an overabundance of information, and an inadequate sense of agency in an often overwhelming universe.
(RESTRICTED) A theoretical Noosphere Meme and Class II Info Hazard. A theorized explanation for random outbursts of violence known to plague certain urban areas of the sprawl.

In a society with effective mass surveillance, drug pacification, and brainwashing and personality manipulation advanced enough to permit actual 're-education' and such conditioning, the paranoid view displayed herein often lurks underneath the surface, hidden beneath a civilized demeanor. When space madness hits, **THEY** just seem to come out of the woodwork.

Body impersonating freaks
Skin thieves glide down from the sky at night and slip into your home, covering you completely in your sleep; as they digest your skin, they slowly insinuate into your nervous system and eventually can drive you around like a puppet. They of course still look like the victim for as long as they remain upon them.
Skinthieves (1): Init +1; Atk smothering attack +2 melee (1d4, + 1d6 on failed save); AC 17; HD 3d6; hp 14; MV 45; Act 1d20; SP smother, dermal digestion, puppeteering; SV Fort +1, Ref +1, Will +3; AL C.
Smother attack – on a successful melee hit, the skinthief surrounds their intended victim and envelops them completely. This smother attack does 1d4 each round after the first in which the hit was scored.
Dermal digestion – each round the victim is being subjected to the smother attack, they must complete a DC 18 Fortitude save or take an additional 1d6 damage as caustic digestive acids adhere to, break down, and being to digest the victim's skin.
Puppeteering – any victim brought to zero hit points has functionally been taken over. The victim's body, muscle memories and mannerisms are now under the influence of the Skinthief, but it does not have access to the victim's memories or knowledge. There is little that can be done for the victim by this stage, possibly a Neutralize poison or Disease may allow for the Skinthief's removal but this will not heal the victim's injuries.

Whispers of the White Sun
Some say the Imperium did not wipe out the Saurids of the White Crown, several suns near Alpha Draconis, but instead their remnant has just gone into hiding. Some say this has always been the way. Bursts of furious activities and then long periods of conspiracy. Nevertheless, the shapeshifting blood drinking serpent folk of that crusade yet live, it seems, and are slowly insinuating their way into your society.
Reptoid (1–6): Init +1; Atk bite +3 melee (1d4 + blood drain) and/or needler +3 missile fire (2d4 + drug load or poison, 3/6/12'); AC 12; HD 1d10; hp 7 or hp 9, 7, 7, 6, 4, 4; MV 30; Act 1d20; SP shapeshifting, haemovore; SV Fort +2, Ref +1, Will +2; AL C.
Shapeshifting – as a people in hiding, shapeshifting is a must. Once a day they may alter their appearance to resemble any member of any species, gens, or clade and may (with some effort) duplicate the appearance of specific individuals. Some achieve this through sorcery, others through psychic powers, innate mutation or genetic graft. A rare few use technology.
Haemovore – the children of the White sun have never tried to escape their haemorous nature. Their bite attack inflicts 1d4 as it punctures the skin and flesh; each round subsequent they may drink, consuming up to 1d3 hp /round.
Spacer legends – maintain that they cannot lie about their true nature if asked a direct question, that they all have green eyes no matter their form, and that .

Colonizing aliens – sometimes when a world is settled, the colonizing life form finds it easier to invade the bodies of those already living there rather than adapt themselves.   Infowar and conspiracy memes remaining from the Second Empire's fall suggest that the Martian houses were invaded from within, possibly twice, by aliens from without.   The ancient "great race" seized bodies en masse as they broadcast their civilization across time.

These statistics are for an early agent, part of an advanced vanguard, moving in secret in your society, preparing.

Microcellular Invaders (1–6): Init +2; Atk fist +1 melee (1d3 damage), or concealable autoinjector +2 melee (1d3 + DC 14 Fort save or be invaded) and/or other weapons; AC 12; HD 2d8; hp 12 or hp 12, 11, 9, 6, 3; MV 35; Act 1d20; SP x; SV Fort +3, Ref +0, Will +5; AL N.

You shouldn't be here – Always seeming a little 'off,' with any amount of interaction it becomes obvious. The alien mind inside often has difficulty contextualizing what it knows of your society and makes mistakes, or possibly speaks with a tell – a buzzing sort of burr within its voice, or a facial tic perhaps? Nonetheless it's mind is strong, pliant, and foreign enough to resist most mind attacks, saving on all will tests at +2.

Unusual internal biology – often their disguise only holds up on the exterior of their victims; as they become more adroit at piloting the invaded lifeform, they bring more of their own biology – or analogs – into play. This allows them 1 hp/regeneration per hour and affords a +3 bonus to all fortitude saves. In some cases, their internal fluids become caustic or toxic when exposed to the air or a foreign biology. In which case there should be a DC 14 Fortitude save required to avoid an additional 1d6 damage from any spilled blood etc.

Secret Agent Surogation – Imperial intelligence uses a dedicated brainwashing process whereby undercover operatives functionally become other people.   Combine with people who can rearrange their face and bodies and you have a recipe for nightmare fuel....or a conspiracy.

Deep Cover Mind crime Agent (1 or 2): Init +3; Atk trained commando strike +3 melee (1d4+3) and/or weapon (conceivably anything used at +3); AC 14; HD 2d10; hp 19 or hp 19, 17; MV 40'; Act 1d20+; SP x; SV Fort +3, Ref +2, Will +3; AL any (Law).

You are not Quaid! – so deeply buried under layers of powerful, psionically boosted conditioning that you could in theory be anyone under there. Attempts to learn their identity through telepathic or other mind invasive means begin at DC 25 and attempting to catch them in a lie is impossible – they believe they are who they say they are.   Whatever their mission is exists only in some abstract form in their head as a hobby or brain exercise. They carry out any such activity purely unconsciously. They may secretly have up to 2d8 variation in HD in either direction, and this extends to additional action dice in some situations. Finally, whatever alignment they present may of course be a lie. These deep cover agents are invariably Lawful, by desire or by sleep teacher.

Flip out and Kill People – It seems that an annoying number of these 'undercover' agents are quite prone to having psychotic fits where they just....kill everything they see. Are you among their targets?   (some have secret capabilities equal to, at most, a Thief, Gunfighter, or Warrior up to level 2)   Add relevant HD and BAB to the above stat block and go from there. Thankfully for the PCs, such trained individuals

invariably Work Alone.   They are considered proficient in all manner of killing folk. When they score a critical hit, they do so at +4 on the critical result. Many use Warrior Crit tables (Judge's option)

MIND – Machine Induced Neural Deviance
An idea from the novel Afterlife by Tony Attwood, these are functionally the imperial version of that most ancient of Dero technologies, the Air Loom.   A complicated Sub-etheric and Noosphere Instrument that when correctly 'played' can induce hallucinations, schizophrenia-like symptoms, and madness on anyone within range of its broadcast.
Feelings about them can stem from being targeted by MIND, or maybe MIND is programming them to kill or worse. Proving the existence of such a device without the technology itself would be a most challenging investigation[3].   One does wonder why the Impys (probably the intelligence establishment) would have something like this.
Functionally (and for some semblance of fairness for game balance but nothing, NOTHING, about the Air Loom, called MIND or anything else, is fair. Agency violating and horrific but not fair…
Range – probably about 70km, maybe half that if it has to reach through rock (say from a deep subterranean cavern a la the Dero)
Effect – the strength of the signal determines, and the skill of the operator(s) to a lesser extent determine 'success' or 'failure' with this device. Manipulations must be specified in clear language – the more the instructions carried on the signal contradict the victim's basic nature, the easier it is for them to resist per round. However, provided the signal is maintained, this save must be made every round.

MIND Control	Base Will save DC
Induce target toward desired action	25
Induce target toward conscience violating action	10
Induce target into something they would never do.	5

Judge's notes: Such a player agency destroying device should not, ideally, ever ever actually be used on a PC and certainly not wit surprise. No amount of "method role playing" is worth the kind of asshattery this can present to the unexpected player. Don't do it. It is provided here as a story element, and something to be interacted with as a McGuffin and likely ultimately fought and destroyed.   It is a terrible thing used by terrible people "for the good of the imperium." Only you and your players can decide what that means. It's your game.

---

[3] Doubly so as, with the literal touch of a button, they can make you lose interest in the investigation.

"We must be as stealthy as rats in the wainscoting of their society. It was easier in the old days, of course, and society had more rats when the rules were looser, just as old wooden buildings have more rats than concrete buildings. But there are rats in the building now as well. Now that society is all ferrocrete and stainless steel there are fewer gaps in the joints. It takes a very smart rat indeed to find these openings. Only a stainless steel rat can be at home in this environment..."
— **Harry Harrison, <u>The Stainless Steel Rat</u>**

Citizens of the Imperium – Urban Confiscators
Burglars, Grifters, Hackers, Hucksters, Investigators, 'networking specialists,' Scam artists,
The Urban Confiscator is a variant thief class, adapted to high tech, urban surveillance worlds where lethal violence will get you killed. This is what it takes to get by as a thief or other criminal on a crowded, high-tech imperial world.
HD d4 or d8 HP/level
Armor proficiencies - light
Weapon proficiencies - needler, vibragun
Alignment: In most cases Law abiding imperial subjects do not take up this class but there are always exceptions. Most are neutral or Chaotic.
Electronic Warfare Value As befits such consummate computer criminals, Confiscators add their full class level when determining their Electronic Warfare Value.
Non-lethal takedown facilitates crime and violence on worlds of perpetual constant surveillance where basic forensic analysis would track down a murderer in hours. Armed or unarmed.
Confiscators strike (from stealth or surprise) with this at +4
On a successful hit, the target must succeed at a DC (10+ confiscator CL + str modifier) Fortitude save or be rendered semi- or unconscious and unable to act for d3+CL minutes. On a successful save the attack damage is applied as temporary damage to their stamina score. If the target's stamina is reduced to zero in this way (be it in a single round or several rounds) they are also rendered unconscious as above.
Nonlethal takedown attacks are restricted in what type of weapons may be used
Garrote, blackjack, club, sap, truncheon, staff, open fist, bare hand, most nonlethal weapons systems qualify.
If bare handed, the damage inflicted on stamina (as above) is 1d4+str modifier
Critical Hits
Further, when striking an unarmored, lightly or moderately armored opponent with a critical hit, the Urban confiscator can declare that critical a non-lethal takedown (see below) instead.
Luck can be applied to a single Urban Confiscator ability of the character's choice though this must be declared at first level.
Action Dice can be used for attacks and any normal activity including appropriate skill checks.

Class abilities

Networking Dice – represents the number of zeros that the confiscator can pull together in a prog's time for a job.   The number represents the number of candidates that turn up to be part of the character's 'crew.'   These zeros are functionally retainers for the duration of the job and possibly (if treated well) the long term.   The parenthetical number represents the max. number that can accompany the PC 'into the field' at any given time, modified by their Personality modifier.

Remember they are just zeros.

Table Urban Confiscator

Level	attack	Action Dice	Crit die & table	Fort save	Ref save	Will save	Networking dice
1	+0	1d20	D4/CI	+0	+1	+1	1d3 (2)
2	+1	1d20	D4/CI	+0	+1	+1	1d4 (3)
3	+2	1d20	D6/CI	+1	+1	+2	1d6 (5)
4	+2	1d20	D8/CI	+1	+2	+2	1d8 (6)
5	+3	1d20 + 1d14	1d10/CI	+1	+2	+3	1d10 (7)
6	+2	1d20 + 1d16	1d10/II	+2	+2	+4	1d12 (8)
7	+3	1d20 + 1d20	1d10/III	+2	+3	+4	1d14 (9)
8	+3	1d20 + 1d20	1d10/III	+2	+3	+5	1d16 (10)
9	+4	1d20 + 1d20	1d12/III	+3	+3	+5	1d20 (11)
10	+4	1d20 + 1d20 + 1d14	1d12/II	+3	+4	+6	1d24 (12)

<u>Thief Abilities</u> – these function identically to the thief abilities of the same name, save for minor differences of background. See DCC RPG pp34-38.

Sneak silently
Pick pocket
Climb sheer surface

Special Urban Confiscator abilities
EC (*Electronic Circumvention*) which is disable device, pick locks, and find/disable traps all in one. This ability does not aid electronic warfare attempts. (see below)
Blending with Crowd – far more useful than hiding in shadows on a city world. This represents the character's ability to remain anonymous in a crowd, even (especially) when being sought.

Special Urban Confiscator Abilities by Level (check instantly)

Skill	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Nonlethal	+1	3	5	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
Sneak Silently	+1	3	5	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
Pick Pocket	+1	3	5	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
Climb sheer surface	+0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
E.C.	+3	5	7	8	9	11	12	13	14	15
Blend with Crowd	+3	5	7	8	9	11	12	13	14	15

Progression abilities
Computer crime
Fence
Maintain Anonymity
Criminal specialties

Urban Confiscator abilities, Progressive - Progressive abilities are passive, they are presumed to be going on constantly in the background. They are checked for once a week (or once a session for pick-up games).
Computer crime (checked once a week) - each check represents the chance of successful computer crime. Such benefits include (table) Basic Computer crimes
At third level, the Confiscator gains the ability to choose between the Basic Computer Crimes table or the Mid-level table when they wish. And at 5th level and thereafter, the Confiscator is entitled to roll on the basic, intermediate, or high level Computer crimes table
*Fence (*checked once weekly) - this check represents the chance of successfully fencing some of your stolen goods and at what percentage of value (so expressed 10%/5)
Maintain anonymity is also checked weekly. If import if you are being sought. Don't be sought. This is also why having backup IDs is so important All confiscators know and learn means by which they can fool the resplendency of sensors on an imperial world.

Criminal specialties – are checked once a Prog but must be declared; they are not assumed to be occurring.   Each represents some serious risk – that of being caught or

ruining an original (with media manip) or getting shoddy goods or arrested, in the case of Scavenging.

Physical Media Manipulation – physical arts skill; "Replications & duplications" – counterfeiting and forgery, media reproduction and piracy; possibly art imitation.

Scavenge rules can also be used, whereby again weekly one checks to see what manner of trickle down, dumpster diving, *'you-going to-use-that?'* tech has found its way to the PC.

Progressive Urban Confiscator Abilities by Level (check weekly)

Skill	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Computer Crime	25%	30	40	45	50	55	60	65	70	75
Fence	10%/5%	20% /10%	40%/ 25%	50% / 30%	55%/ 35	60/ 60	66 / 60	72 / 70	76 / 80	89 / 90
Maintain anonymity	40%	40	45	50	55	60	65	70	75	80
Media Manip	3%	13%	23%	28%	33%	39%	51%	69%	83%	91%
Scavenge	5%	10%	15%	23%	26%	29%	32%	35%	38%	42%

<u>Basic Computer Crimes table</u>
identity/papers
1d6x100 Quantis
New job data
Easy scam; begin collecting 1d4x10 g (see above) for the next 1d10 weeks
Opportunities

<u>Definitions</u>
identity/papers - you have scored or created a new set of IDs, either good quality fake carrys or an ID somewhere electronic for you to fall back on.

Payout represents a decent but monotonous (e.g. non adventure worthy) score, backpay for a job, money you are owed, or some other source of uneven, unexpected income.

New job data - you have a lead on a new target of wealth and opportunity.

Easy Scams - "Dear loyal imperial subject. You are likely unaware of me, but I am the assistant undersecretary to the exchequer of the colonial world of Vauth........."

Opportunities - aka Venture seeds; the rare collectors' items, the object d'art, the fabulously sophisticated prototypes, the sorts of things one grabs one's partners and plans for.

Mid-level Computer Crimes table

Serious opportunity – career making stuff; industrial espionage, military theft, commercial sabotage, theft and distribution of maker codes, breaking of emancipation bolts or grand theft living cargo (aka chain breaking aka slave 'theft' aka freeing the slaves)

Obvious entrapment – the local SecFor think they are being clever and have sent you an undercover to become your new best friend. You know from having looked that they have nothing on you personally. Think hard about how to handle this situation, just remember you have the upper hand.

Offer of partnership – someone midlevel in a big outfit, be it a "less than ethical lab group" or more traditional organized crime, has decided they either like the cut of your jib or want you not competing with them; either way they start sending you work from time to time. *So's you have an understanding yah?*

New Minion - someone from your past comes to you and says that someone, the SecFor, a mob, a corp, some alien power bloc, approached them to set you up / betray you. They will follow your lead on how to handle this.

High level computer crimes table

Major opportunity – score of a lifetime type stuff the location of a mostly intact starship hull or hulk, information about one of the Lords of Space, grand theft starship, knock over mint of tiny shite polity beyond the imperial border

And now some notes on successfully using your existing DCC characters (and their classes) on Noir

YES! Your Warrior, Wizard, or Elf can find a home among the myriad sentients of Noir's crumbling City-states as quickly as any other – in fact they are all highly specialized with melee weapons, a trait that will serve them well anywhere in imperial space. Import characters from your DCC game or make Galaxy Black characters using the DCC classes. As time, playtesting, and lots of writing has progressed, a few points have emerged. Also new character types and (as you'll see) classes.

Clerics (Agents) - While the existence of such people as Clerics is known it is not something that happens commonly. Certainly, it is not in any way representative of the imperial priesthood or any other priesthood for that matter. The relationship a cleric has with their god is special even in the wide galaxy. Maybe more so.

It is customary for one who has been so chosen to take on a new name to recognize the new life they begin dedicated to the service of their Deity. Sometimes these names come to them (sometimes they are, or are claimed to have, given by Deity themselves). In imperial society, both socially and legally, they are known as Agents. (Form: generally speaking, church title, if any, name, Agent of (deity) or such) Agents of those Gods that make up the imperial church each bear a specific item, church forged, an amulet that identifies them as such and will sometimes serve as a focal point for their divine channeling.

(The relationship between an Agent and their Church, if their Church is part of the Imperial Cult is complicated and somewhat depending both on who the Agent is and which God they serve. It is perhaps better thought of as, classically, a paladin rather than the life of a cleric. And in some senses, more Jedi Knight than Paladin. They can expect some mild cooperation from the church (they are generally obligated to put the agent up and feed/ clothe them provided they do not press their luck)

Many imported clerics do not take up imperial arms and armor, but they can learn proficiency with any of either, one at a time per level gained.

Wizards and elves – will find that they must, aside from their starting magics at first level find ALL SPELLS in setting; ALL OF THEM. They do not gain a new spell on leveling unless it's a thing they are already researching.

Allow imported characters to learn one new (light) weapon per level gained.

Thieves work fine for anyone of a criminal bent from a considerably lower tech world. For those from high tech urban environments, the criminal landscape is a bit different. For those, we have the Urban Confiscator class

Allow imported characters to learn two new (light or nonlethal) weapon per level gained.

Warriors will thrive in this environment; those native to imperial space will have all of the weapons and armors from Galaxy Black to choose from as well. Those warriors imported from a standard DCC game or other low tech survival environment can pick up new weapons and armor tech as they go; the Judge should allow two weapons and one class or item of armor to become familiar/proficient with each level, at the very minimum.

Dwarves and halflings Can model particular ethnic groups of Imperial Humanoids. Dwarves from the Forgeworlds start (as Warriors) with proficiency with all modern weapons and armors of course.   Some however, swap out their Mighty Deeds for a field Scientist's Build Die (see below); using their deed die as the Build die. In all other cases this functions as the Scientist ability.

Halflings from the Federated Neutral Zone have been swarming across imperial borders for centuries, chatting up the locals and trying to sell them things.   One of them seems always to be in charge of the local Space Trader Nick's and they are commonly accused of working together against a potential customer or rube. Irritatingly some of them claim to be the Chosen People of Nikas Liet.

Change nothing in chargen but realize there is not power armor designed for them. Allow the use of any weapon they can feasibly carry and wield without consequence. Dwarves and Halflings imported from a core DCC game should be allowed to pick up proficiency with new high tech weapons and armor as encountered, three at a time per level. (Note that they cannot become proficient with armor they cannot wear).

Article 𝔚𝔢𝔞𝔭𝔬𝔫𝔰 𝔬𝔣 ℕ𝔬𝔦𝔯

Maleth Noir was designated an Imperil Demilitarized zone at the end of the Reconquista, when the world was forcibly integrated into the new Imperium. As a core world and a particularly stubborn one – and one with a history of civil war and sedition to boot – it was decided by Vaena Martel to make an example of the world. And so, it remains a DMZ even today.

As a consequence, most weapons are homemade and bluntly are precisely the sort of things you find in the DCC core book. Barbarians and warlocks, time lost, dumped by a curse scroll or blown in by the Walk-In phenomena common to the lower levels, will soon find they are … uniquely qualified to survive in this strange environment of darkened & impoverished corridors.

But there ARE other weapons on world. *Especially in the hands of the (*equally gun free*) Security Forces*

Weapon tables – nonlethal (melee)[4]

Item	Dmg & Effects	Type/Range	additional	build dc	EWV	
Pain stick	1d5 + fort save (DC 15) or take 1d6 more (temp)	melee	Criticals on the Neuronic Crits table (p 146)			**175**
Antipersonnel Tasp	1d4 + 1d8 STA and 1d12 pers	3/6/9 (short range weapon) Useless v. AC 18+	Reduction to 0 STA = reduced to drooling giggling moron Reduction to 0 Pers = restraint and bladder control go out the window. You wet yourself and come on to everything.			
Neuronic Whip	1d6 + 1d3 AGIL damage (dc 12 fort save to resist localized paralysis)	Melee + 5 feet	Reduction to 0 Agil means unconsciousness for 1d6 hours.		**n/a**	**500**
Sick Stick	Organics must save v. Fort (DC 20) or power puke	Melee Useless v. AC 15 or higher	Those power puking can do nothing but convulsively vomit; all			**320**

---

[4] The Build DC is the target for a Field Scientist to jury rig the device up in the field or engineer it properly in a lab (or program it into a maker).   The Electronic Warfare Value is the DC for someone to hack the electronics of the device in a round. The final column is how much it would take for an above board transaction to purchase such a device. Criminal and illegal sales of course will deviate from this price, often wildly.

			actions are at–3 steps on the dice chain			
Sticky Rope	REF save DC 20 or be enmeshed in glue like colloid that tightens as they struggle for d5 minutes or broken down by spray				**n/a**	**100**
Sticky Net	REF save DC 20 or be enmeshed in glue like colloidal net that expands as it tightens, trapping as many as 4 human sized sentients; that tightens as they struggle for d16 minutes or broken down by spray				**n/a**	**200**
Slaver Whip	DC 20 Fort save or blisses out for 1d5+pers bonus unable to violently resist.	Melee (1H)	Not illegal but very frowned upon in Imperial space Class C weapon (Coercion)		**n/a**	**450**

Antipersonnel Tasp – Standard Imperial Security Nonlethal Loadout (v. citizens and above) – directly stimulates brain's pleasure centers to an overwhelming degree.

Sick sticks – touch contact weapons which induce total nausea and vomiting with contact; up to six settings for different varieties of organic creatures and their relevant neuro-gastromic interface

The **slaver whip** is a wicked black and green bio-construct design-grown for the control of imperial humanoids. While the technology pre-dates the current regime, it is not in common use. (Also, of note – the slaver whip does not inflict pain. It is a contact reliant tasp. Being hit by one of these things is, in addition to everything else, probably embarrassing.)

Undercrawl: Maleth Noir
An urban noir of the far future for DCC and Galaxy Black

A mad golden age SF space opera empire in the far future

It is well over 50,000 years after the mythical Golden Age of Space. The Green & Black Starship & Planet symbol of the Third Empire enforces the Empress' will overtly, and her secret police, less so amidst the oldest, most civilized sector of the galaxy. An interstellar dystopia of super-science, psionics, the paranormal, and backstabbing intrigue.

Maleth Noir – noteworthy core world and center of the Imperial entertainment industry; a former Second Empire capital;

Maleth Noir, second world of the Maleth system, and one-time capital of the Second Empire. A run down ecumenopolis forcibly reabsorbed by a newer vigorous Empire shaking off the weight of history and making itself felt again.   A dark corner of a brighter, but no less dangerous, future.

Almost a dozen vast world cities, teeming with the inhabitants of a hundred worlds, vying over the long wasted radioactive wastelands that are all that remain of one of the first planned Ecologies.

Worlds of the Imperium: Maleth Noir
A world of investigative pulp adventure for Galaxy Black

"All cities are mad: but the madness is gallant. All cities are beautiful, but the beauty is grim."
— Christopher Morley

What's in this mini-sourcebook?
Details the world of Maleth Noir and its star system and sundries. Noir is a far, far future space opera set on an old, civilized, and decadent city world merely one of millions of worlds in a sprawling multi-species Empire. ..... On (and in, and under) Noir, players portray characters in a science fantasy world of super science, psionics, and alien magic where investigators venture into deep shadows in search of often uncomfortable truths.

"'Ey.
"Welcome to Noir.
The armpit of the Imperial Core.
Though you will come to love our rich and stanky aroma outworlder.
Now Give us a hyperquid Gov'nor
Or you'll be taking a s sonic shower. Understanding?
Best hurry up. Tick, tock — the sky is running down."

*"Welcome and Salutations Imperial Voyager! Maleth Noir is the Gateway to the Outer Saurian Worlds – those planets that now comprise the (near) coreward frontier of the Empire. Be aware you are entering an Imperial Demilitarized Zone. No energy weapons, slug throwers, explosive devices, magnetic casters, force blades, no needlers, no p-pistols, no flechettes, no darts. In short, absolutely no firearms or weapons of warfare of any kind will be permitted. Please turn your prohibited items into the duty purser before entering security. If you wish to self-terminate, be conscientious - please do not take anyone else with you. Thank you. <**click**/whirr—> Welcome and Salutations Imperial Voyager! Maleth Noir is the Gateway to the Outer Saurian Worlds...."*
- The overly friendly recorded voice at the space dock

Peeking behind the Ray gun Gothic - Appendix Noir

The Third Man, Memento, When Gravity Fails, Blade Runner, Battle Angel Alita, Ghost in the Shell, and Chinatown.

Asimov, Isaac - fictional works (most. esp. The Foundation, Caves of Steel, the Naked Sun, and the Robots of Dawn)
Leiber, Fritz – Our Lady of Darkness,
Dick, Phil K. - fictional works, esp. those featuring themes of dystopian, totalitarian regimes, and space, drugs, and alteration of consciousness. All of it basically but esp. Radio Free Albumeth, Our Friends from Frolix 9,
Effinger, George Alec - When Gravity Fails
Herbert, Frank - Dune, Dune Messiah, Children of Dune, God Emperor of Dune.

Mass Effect
SLA Industries (!)
Warhammer 40,0000 Rogue Trader (first ed. 1987) and its predecessor Laserburn
Traveller
Any of the City states books, obviously. Judges Guild
Fading Suns 1st ed.
Top Secret (quite obviously Sprechenhalteshtale is a big influence on the undercity)

Graphic N
2000ad
Judge Dredd - the whole run of the comic, esp. the first ten years and the last 13 or so.
Transmetropolitan - Warren Ellis
The Long Tomorrow, the Incal, the Airtight Garage of Jerry Cornelius, et. Al. - Moebius
Akira – Katsuhiro Otomo

Cinematic N
lots of Japanese horror movies; which play up our ideas of lightless urban and subterranean environment. Most especially however Ambition and/or poss. the Grudge if Ambition is a bit much for you.(It is for most people.)
the Heavy Metal Movie (1981) Just go watch it now.
of course
Silent Moebius
Sol Bianca
District 13
THX-1138
Akira
A Clockwork Orange
Dark City

and of course
Casablanca
The Third Man 1946
North by Northwest
The Salton Sea
The Thin Man
the Maltese Falcon
Sin City
Flash Gordon (1980)
Battlestar Galactica (mostly 1978 but a bit of 2003) for weird newage space opera Fu
The Two Jakes 1990
LA Confidential

Video N
Blake's 7 - a must
Babylon 5 - especially in its depiction of the intrigues between races and between governments. A very good Noir show is snuck in there. Also check out the spinoff Crusade
Galaxy Express 999
The Prisoner, 1967
Orphan Black
Hardware, 1990
Wild Palms, 1993
Altered Carbon, 2018

"He imagined the rolling, low-slung cluster-complexes of domes he had never seen but knew to be there. And under them, for a mile underground and dozens of miles in every direction, would be the Cities.
The endless, hiving corridors of the Cities, he thought, alive with people; apartments, community kitchens, factories, Expressways, all comfortable and warm with the evidence of man."
- Isaac Asimov, **the Naked Sun**

WORLDS OF THE IMPERIUM: MALETH NOIR
An entire world slipping slowly into silent brilliant night

Maleth Noir was completely terraformed from the ground up as was done in Ancient days.
60 % hydrographic percentage but only 40% is on world surface; the remainder is in a secondary and vast subsurface ocean
Type: Garden (Terraformed – 2nd gen), ecumenopolis
Gravity: Normal
Atmo: Nitrogen – Oxygen; tainted (Class V - 10,000+ years post atomic; atmospheric contaminants less than 4%)

System:
Maleth Noir has five satellites - two large natural moons, **Siddha** and **Denh**. And three artificial satellites large enough to generate lesser tidal effects (creating four tidal bulges). Of those three, one of those moons has a very small body of its own in close orbit
Noir High Port - one of those moons is an immense space dock, built with Imperial money and Imperial tech after the Reconquista, to replace the artificial satellite shattered in the conflict (see below) this is Maleth's primary starport and Noir High Port In a disused and identified orbital track, there is also the trace remaining of a debris ring; one of the world's artificial satellites was hulled and shattered by the Empress' battlefleets when Noir was "reintegrated" into Her Imperium, long since picked clean but now the orbit is used as a semi legitimate scrap yard.
In theory, hundreds of thousands of ships could dock there and perhaps once they did. For most of the last 900 years the High Port has remained empty and fallow, with some even talking of decommissioning the bright shiny new satellite.
However, Home fleet control has increasingly come to rely upon the station and so it has increased tenfold in military importance. Additionally, in the last two hundred years this has been diminishing as Noir increasingly is perceived as the Gateway to the Saurid Worlds, bringing an increase in trade and prestige not born out of rebellion and conflict. Is as far as most spacers see and in part that is intentional. Many powers exist that seek to limit the spread of the wealth of increased trade and prosperity that reaches Noir itself as much as possible.

Administrative
The once World-city is broken into specific *Conurbations* (**ConUrbs**), originally themselves coalitions of lesser cities. Each city rules itself and its surroundings to a greater or lesser degree as an autonomous City-state. However, the situation is not a stable one; each city-state has a bizarre web of arrangements and alliances that are constantly shifting. The world overall is run via an oligarchy of the most powerful and influential but otherwise independent city-states, or rather those who rule them.
The world overall is run via an oligarchy of the most powerful and influential but otherwise independent city-states.
The Lord Noir does not sully themselves with the affairs of the world's day to day, merely benefits by it. Though in recent Sidereals it has been said that the Lord may be finding reason to look upon their demesne once again......

(the lord's house does, locally, have two detachments of Imperial Legionnaires on 2 minute's notice should any of the cities give them any guff and so it has always been) Each ConUrb making up the world city broken into levels (up from and down below the surface level respectively) as well as by sectors, grid based administrative units, and these units are common to all the Urbs of Noir. On the surface, some cities (or parts of cities) are domed. Dome City is completely enclosed and may as well be a space habitat. The world mega-city era ended with the massed nuclear bombardment that ended the Second Imperium, but legacies of that era cast long shadows. All of the remaining settlements exist many many levels below the ground, themselves organized into distinct districts or cities (depending on the particular city-state). The world before that was not planned as an ecumenopolis but became one only gradually over many thousands of years before it's bombing.
For such an old world, so much has been forgotten.

Noirish Metaphysics
Poles of Noir
> Secrets & Shadows   +1/+1

Maleth Noir is not an especially mystically active world, but it is not a magical dead zone either. Both keeping and finding secrets are easier here, magically (and recall this applies to telepathy as well). Umbra city and it's underworld enjoy a slight advantage mystically thanks to the Shadow pole. In the time of the DMZ that pole has been seen drifting south and east. Within a century or so, that etheric pole should run right through the middle of both cities, and sky city as well.

Habitation: Noir's paraether inhabited by galvanic mephitis, noosphere spirits, Noir has a lot of ghosts

Necropolis: On the other side of the Toum-var, Maleth Noir is the Necropolis, where every city, every structure, every settlement on Noir remains in a tangled juxtaposition of 30+ thousands of years of history, in sedimentary layers,

Hologram industry
Centuries ago, the Sims industry, centered on Noir, which used Simulated Creatures was transformed by new technology. The Parvahti-Pratimatha process of Material Simulation, used to create a new generation of Simulants.

These Simulants are echelons more detailed than common holograms or computer simulations; they are created using a cloud of molecule-sized holo emitters to simulate any given object or thing literally from the molecules up. Not a 'mere' hard light hologram, the Pratimathic Simulants are unmistakably alive in the spiritual-orgonnish sense[5] A brief scandal followed; it is thought that Vaena Martel had some say in this decision but in rapid order these creations were legally deemed new life forms AND subjects of the Empire. In the span of a decade the now greatly revitalized (and wholly different) Sims industry took off. For some decades now, the Simulant industry of Sky City (on Noir) has been supplying the Imperium, and especially the inner core, with it's own chaotic variety of entertainment and edification. It is a very intense (one might say cutthroat) industry but at the moment, *Hazeldyne Simulations* are the big name on people's lips.

---

[5] How this ensouling occurs is of course a total mystery

How does the world Look? –

Language – *Noirs Aris Interworld et Babel*
Noir has about six unique languages; each major city has its own dialect? The lesser cities speak a combination of the above and even more obscure local dialects of their own.
Dominant world Language – a strongly Sky City and Umbra city weighted Interworld dialect[6]: Arisian and various Aesian dialects and Interworld are the dominant languages here, the city-speech of the ConUrbs is interworld with heavy Arisian loan wordage and bits of Basic bolted on.
Publicly Displayed Signage (be they material, holo, virtual, or whatever) use *8 standard languages*, in a rough (but traditional) order
- Basic, old Interworld, and Lingual Ishtar (Galaxy Black pp)
- Green insectivroid
  Modern Interworld, Yusaurid,
  Machinebase 1, ISG
In usage, it's Noir Aris Interworld, Basic, Green dialect insectivroid, Lingeshtar, Machinebase1, Sign Glyph, and Yusaurid

Security Force – *protecting and serving the social order*
SecFor (police) - are not armed as many offworlders would understand it; they carry no firearms, beamers, or other lethal weaponry. Instead they are armed with an array of Imperial approved non-lethal response methods, truncheons, sick sticks, and the like
SecFor (on Noir anyway) defaults and is limited to non-lethal responses, a side effect of the forced demilitarization of the planet after the "Empress' Reconquest".
Standard loadout to walk out of their building(s) consists of light body armor, sick sticks, sticky rope and tangler grenades.   If an arrest must be made, standard procedure is for offenders are tranquilized and hauled off to an Isolation Tube.
Special circumstances, a higher level division within the SecFor, can authorize the following.
For riot control situations, they deploy happy gas (which is generally a test premeasured mixture of gasses deigned to affect the maximal spread of population); The methodology is that 'everyone gets their species/clade/gens specific variation on happy gas, thus ensuring that everyone affected gets really high and mellow while they get rounded up and taken to isolation. Procedure is to arrive on the scene, scan the crowd and load the data into the computer which will then arrive at an approximate[7]. solution - suggesting a mixture of compounds to be released at varying air density levels and then the crowd is hit with them.
In extreme cases, small APVs (Armored Power Vehicles - typically *deployment sleds[8]*
will disperse with sonic, stunner, and drug weapons to supplement or if the crowd is large or especially violent
As a consequence, the SecFor almost never gets involved in anything if they don't have to; On Noir but especially in Umbra city, the Judge is urged to ensure that the SecFor in

---

[6] Noir Aris Interworld is pretty much the American English of the era, at least in the Maleth system.
[7] Sometimes very approximate and almost never notices non-Imperial life forms. Native DCC characters take note.
[8] slab shaped floaters with armor packed on the otherwise open top sled

the characters' city are going to be the metaphorical descendant of every crooked cop ever. And should be.

Foodstuffs

If you live in Sky City your diet likely consists primarily of off-world foodstuffs from upwards of 20 worlds.

If.

For the rest of you, Aquaculture and Mycology are the source of 80% of your food intake, the remainder being hyper processed or Maker-lathed. Most of the soil on Noir is still not suitable for common agriculture, and food production is entirely the work of traders (somewhat) and monolithic corporate or city interests (primarily).

You like things that eat, taste, and (sometimes) look like krylopedes right? Processed. In a Tin. Vac sealed in a bag. Pickled. Smoked. Reduced to paste and smeared on myco-loaf. Everything else ultimately is derived from algae vats and soya plantations that form the aggregate of their production into various sized and density blocks of protein+'

If you are from offworld, most likely all you know of Noirish "cuisine' is the infamous 'green sausage[9].' Re-Fabricated skin-casing sausage made of retextured fifth gen kryllopaste with seaweed and kelp as fiber, filer, and 'flavor'. Specially treated with aqua tank grown processed nutrients. About 200 Sidereals ago became very 'trendy' among Imperial voyagers for about a generation; more are now sold for off-world transport than consumed on-world. Still a staple of the 'well to do impoverished.'

Then, there is the *Prole Dole* - on particularly heavy population worlds (like this one) there is an option for the lowest of the lower classes (Proles but here on Noir not *just* Proles) to get their foodstuffs for free from the Imperium …. but all such foodstuffs are laden with "nutritional supplements" that frequently just happen to result in a slightly slower, slightly more pliant, slightly less able to think clearly about abstract matters individual who nonetheless will do most anything expected of them

Population and Culture

There is a Surveillance culture on Noir. Once upon a time the whole world was an enormous transparent society but that was literally ages ago. Where once a small subculture of hacker types maintained a forum where they observed everything and discussed it, the subculture became a widespread phenomenon with the rising anti-imperial sentiment in the decades after the Reconquista. Today it is increasingly trendy to record things all around you for broadcast on public feeds or the like. There is considerable pushback by the powers that be against this.

Tremendous machine culture on Noir, vast information networks a thousand years old dedicated to all manner of pastimes, backed up dreams, memories, and the like. A largely self-policing phenomenon, many things transpire within that do not strictly speaking adhere to imperial law. But the culture has millions of members and each contribute to the overall computing substrate in some way. Organics aren't really welcome, though there are exceptions. (think of 21st century geek culture x1000) At the

---

[9] Imagine it tastes a bit like fish based marmite or Bovril. Are you done throwing up in your mouth yet?

end of the Empress' Reconquista, artificial life on Noir found that, much like elsewhere in the Empire, the society is increasingly turning away from something that they can relate to (or so it seemed) and so this community, already pre-born in a way, flourished. At any given time, hundreds of thousands of machines are engaged and plugged into the information network lost in dreams, memories, or with each other. Where memory and dream trading interfaces with the exterior universe, things get dicey. But there is certainly a demand. Things that disappear into the substrate tend not to be findable by organics. Or the law.

More Ubiquitous Technologies you will find everywhere on Noir
Environmental Hood System – or Rainjacks or Hoodies are everywhere in the cities of Maleth Noir. They exist in a thousand different styles and are available for half a Transaction down to the temporary degradable ones that you get at a community center with scanning an indigence chip.
Common features – full torso and upper limb coverage sans (sometimes) hands (more commonly fingers) and face. Better classes can cover more of the body if desired. All adjust to cover more or less of the protected area. All interface with the wearer's onboard systems and all come with rebreathers, filtration masks, and (in some cases) sealed goggles.
More successful Crews will often get the best set of hoodies they can afford for their line and tag their wardrobe in crew colours or emblems.
The Wear-all Full Seasons Environmental Hood System
City life is not easy. Even for those who live in Sky City, sometimes the ruin that has been visited on Noir will get the better of environmental control systems and some good old fashioned acid rain or brown down will fall from the sky. Elsewhere, air quality is a major factor – especially in the Underworld – and all public signage is embedded with an air quality gauge. Outside of your dwelling – if you have one – a city hood system is the only thing that will keep you elevated beyond the elements. Covers all or very little of you; default wear is something a 21st century human would recognize as a hoodie.
Price: anywhere from 2*q* – 200*q*   **Weight:** most c. 2kg/4 pounds

'33 Bag' - In Sky City you will find some examples of this but everywhere else on Noir the rich will be guaranteed to be playing with these things.
Bag parties involve the young, rich, and jaded gathering in groups around a largish, seemingly empty black bag. The bag is archaic technology from the dawn of the Simulant industry – though that's part of the steampunk like appeal and 'aesthetic.'
One or more of the hosts will have programmed the inner micromachines (all the size of large molecules) to create the desired scenario for whomever is brave or foolish enough to climb into the bag. While inside you are stuck with it; the reality within is far more real than most partygoers ever quite realize.
If for those who have never seen them, all have 'heard the stories.' But no one really believes these can kill you, right?
Price: varies   **Weight:** 3.3 pounds
500*q* / hour, to "2Trans & you bought it"

Getting around –

Fan-car or spinner - Ubiquitous on Noir; uses a combination of micro-gravitics tech (to negate up to 85% of the mass weight) and advanced superlight materials technology, these are variably 1-6 person vehicles powered entirely via turbo-fan and limited directed thrust technology. Not fast but faster than walking.

Also, notoriously quiet. "shush-car"

Super common in Sky City, where they are abandoned regularly and rented by the hour

SecFor sometimes deploy in these semi enclosed aero gyros, usually loaded out for crowd control (gas bombs, etc.)

Top speed for these things drops to a third if you take out the force field generator, which is where the semi-enclosed part comes in. Without that force field bubble, you're a spud on a seat moving at about 180kph at right angles only possibly through the joys of microtech and gravity null tech.

Not to mention bugs and dregg splattered across all the front of you. You did wear a helmet and visor, right?

These are even more common in Umbra City, given that so much of it is closed to ground traffic and they are extremely stingy about who gets vehicular permits.

Rental 2q (pick up and go in Sky City) to 200q and biometric seal (Umbra city)

Price 500q   **Weight:** lightest around 450kg

(cheap & disposable; 10h use, no cargo or passengers)

Travel tubes – Everywhere on Noir, but especially concentrated in Umbra and Sky City to offset the general lack of ground transport. Pneumatic and Contragravitic 'slider' tubes allow the individual or very small parties (2-4) to get around the ConUrb fast – not for the motion sick, the ailing, or the old. They can take the tram or Rent-a-Ride. Everyone is else is walking.

Price 4q and biometric scan; imperial citizens & sky city subjects ride free

Fort Save DC 14 to avoid tube sickness for 1d4 rounds after first use

Features Common to all the City-States of Noir - World cities broken into levels (up from and down below the surface level respectively) as well as by sectors, grid based administrative units; this is legacy from a time when there was a single city across the face of Noir and it's reach was planetwide (or nearly so.) Now that time lives only in vague oral legend and culture memory like this one. All of them are sealed off to varying degrees from the world outside. Some literally are fully enclosed (Dome City, Subcity) and may as well be asteroid habits. Others like MethMarsh are more tied to their environment and the restrictions are limited. In Sky city of course, large parts of it are bare to the open air, in that you cannot see the various force fields that control air motion, wind currents, and serve as massed environmental controls. Genuine atmospheric conditions sometimes get through however, though it is rare. Such is the price of vanity.

Lingering resentment of Imperial authority remains in many sectors of urban life on Noir, though it has cooled in recent centuries. IT shows in a thousand minor ways however – most notably, the world stubbornly still uses the Third empire calendar; indeed, it's packaged entertainment broadcasting are likely the only reason anyone in the Imperium persists with the old calendar at all.

The City States of Noir

There were 13 recognized urban states on Maleth Noir at the end of the Reconquista, and many uninhabitable zones.   Today that number has evolved; six ConUrbs function as self-contained mega city states, rooted ultimately in the remainder of the largest cities from the time before Conurbation. Beyond them, five lesser cities, each insular and decaying. The world itself is run by an oligarchy of the most powerful and influential of the six City states, of which one of their number is presently the Lord Noir, representing the system as a noble of the Imperium.

Noir is a "fully automated world" - regardless of habitation or conditions, perhaps 90% of the planetary surface has artificial materials coverage; much of this are sprawling many layered ruins but also the mega cities, all of the food production, and indeed whole regions where any kind of cultivation is occurring

The Six ConUrbs

AcroUrb Sky City – From a distance seems almost the Ur- example of an opulent core world 'surface' city (suspended underneath a mostly transparent enclosed environmental bubble)   The early sensie industry liked to call back to the imagery of the First Empire and the city has only doubled down in recent centuries. Time travelers or those from Splinters featuring variations on Teranaya would call it an art deco Metropolis, provided for by the modern basis of the city's existence – the entertainment industry.

The city's common civic symbolism elicits the familiar (to locals) image of the city founder in their glide pack and warrior's armor.   The city symbol is that, in a silhouette with sword upraised in an art deco and majestic style

Sky City is also unique in that it alone has its own DownPort, separate from the one in MethMarsh (see below).

Umbra City - the vast old ConUrb (technically ConGlom) that spreads out *beneath* AcroUrb; possibly (maybe even likely) where our game will primarily take place technically / officially just the largest district of AcroUrb, who squeeze it the fuck dry

The other Five (Mega) City States

Dome City – '*city of the workers*'

One of the earliest Conurbations, it "continued to grow upward and outward, a large artificial mountain of a city" it is completely controlled and dominated by the guilds and trade unions of the city.   (hence, it's motto City of the Workers)

Dome city is where the *world oligarchs* meet (currently they meet every six years[10]) and is the location of *Maleth Noir university*.   It's inhabitants are notoriously claustrophilic even amongst Noir natives. (Despite its common name, Dome City is primarily underground, ranging some 99 levels down)

Largest section of city was once an independent settlement - Steel City (disparagingly called Cave City by those dwelling above) was the modern world's first completely subsurface settlement (even today, Steel city is defined as all of the ConUrb below the IPS[11] defined 'surface' of the world; - the whole thing is underground, completely)

---

[10] The next council of the world oligarchs is scheduled for the first 15 days of sidereal 11,024

[11] The Imperial Physical Survey;

When the Conurbation era began, Steel City began digging further underground, laying out endless steel corridors. "becoming level after level of family owned suites   After so long, the full basis for Dome's city's legal system is landholding, rent, and the payments of rents. This makes for many endless levels of corridor after corridor of family owned suites wielding 900 year old rent control contracts as though a basis in feudal law. Some levels will literally charge a toll to pass through their space.

Steel city is still expanding ever downward limited only by physics and technology. They are known to be a bit 'off' and are known for playing games (in a variety of senses) Recurrent reincarnation meme result of tendency for souls to reincarnate within Steel City for unknown reasons.

A large and modern part of Steel city has worked the underground ocean for a thousand years and is increasingly in competition with Subcity. Sabotage may become likely soon.

The Aqua City Spiral is an immense undersea arcology with massive spiral structure rising to and breaking out from the ocean's surface, a magnificent sight. The arcology was built at the shallow ocean's deepest point and so the tidal stresses upon the structure are immense (and built into both its design and power needs) – the immediate 2km surrounding the city at water's surface though are so thoroughly choppy as to be considered a no-travel hazard that is enforced (to a degree) constantly.

Beyond this control zone, the entire (over 90%) of the surrounding ocean is dedicated to aquaculture along surface ocean.

The arcology has a permanent residential population of 8 billion; an estimated 1.4 billion more working in their ocean, city, ocean tower, or low Port at any given time (the top of their spiral is an immense blue green bubble of a city)

Subcity a city entirely underground and dedicated to the aquaculture etc. of the underground ocean; It is extremely densely populated and has an expanding industrial region along the seafloor; the city itself was built around immense magma tap that provides heat and light.

ConUrb 3 - is a vast semi agricultural and chemical engineering platform, officially designated **AgriMarshConUrb3 MethMarsh** at the time ConUrbanization occurred. At that time, the southern end of the southern continent containing the Boris Hinters was known as the Sinking Lands; by the time ConUrbanization occurred, the whole land was sliding underneath the Southsalt Ocean (once much much smaller and considered Vast Lake), in addition to a vast unforeseen pocket of methane that had been trapped there since terraforming, potentially lethal to the world if continued to release. MethMarsh was created to trap, and eventually harvest the whole thing, until eventually becoming the atmosphere processors as well.

Today not so much decaying as dead, the industry has collapsed. There is nothing left to harvest, and the industry cannot make use of the immense sludge pile that was once considered an active ocean but is now a Class 3 Ecological catastrophe. The Slumstacks of ConUrb3 are some of the poorest and most desolate areas in the Imperium. This and the adjoining ConUrb have a reputation for being among the filthiest places in the Imperium and while that is an exaggeration

It's rival city, **ConUrbation 8** is largely taken over by the business of the adjoining **Noir Down Port**. The port has immense landing facilities, as the entire sea is purposed for spacecraft landings. a variety of water and air taxi services are available in addition to the *Noir Down Port Authority* - one of the most notoriously corrupt organizations in Imperium Charted Space.

However, the *Customs Authority* is rigorous and zealous in pursuit of their duties, an organization composed of equal parts planetary (i.e. city - the security apparatus of **ConUrb8** or and at times that of **ConUrb13**) and imperial starport authority; the result is a combined coast guard-like force that patrols the sea and attempts to prevent the massed introduction of foreign substances, species, viruii, parasites, etc. etc. to the local ecology. It's a hopeless fight, given the quality of some of the ships and people who call here but they manage to deal with the worst. Of some note, an increasing number of them are criminals pressed into service in the interest of avoiding time in an Iso-tube.

Inter-State conflicts and rivalries
      Umbra City resents Sky City
      Both ocean going cities have fierce rivalry
      Everyone else on world and AcroUrb
      Dome City harbors long resentments toward Sky City since the Reconquista
      ConUrb 8 & 13 have a long long rivalry
      Customs authority v. Down Port Authority (with ConUrb 8 & 13 used by both)

Lesser Cities

Lesser Cities – these are what's left of the cities or nation states that initially resisted the draw towards conurbation. All they have in common now are that they remain nominally independent.

DMC Aleph city in the cold (has snow to deal with, towards north polar region)
These two cities are separated by *the wasteland control zone* which stretches between the two DMCs and surrounds the north city like a ring.
DMC Boolean Plaines – Once a great Plains-Coastal city, it was founded by those who originally united against constant hordes from the vast prairie lands that surrounded it Both the land and sea access have enormous walls; getting into the city occurs only commonly via air. The fortress mentality is a long and established part of the identity of those who live here.
1,000 years ago, these two cities fought the world's last thermonuclear war, doing so in the face of the DMZ. The war destroyed the only remaining surface cropland, subsequent recovery efforts have come to naught. Both cities are under martial law with a permanent force of Imperial Peacekeepers; weapons of any kind are forbidden.

Helius – the dreaming city the oldest continuously settled urban area on world, long since bereft of population, resources, or purpose. It is spiritually dying, fixated on increasingly inaccurate notions of an ancient "imperial" past, long ended by the coming of the Conurbanization period. Some say the ghosts of the Eiluuden Sprawl now have come to haunt it's companion city.

The Eiluuden Cage the ruins of one of the lesser cites, known for its ghosts, which had long seemed hellbent on destroying the city itself. In Sidereal 10,947 they found a

way[12]. Perhaps the second oldest urban settlement on world before it's destruction – now a prime site of 'archeological speculation'

The ruin is so named due to the ribcage-like structure that is all that remains of the city's outer shell, appearing from great distances like the rotten and desiccated corpse of a dead giant of primordial times.

E-Ring and its subsidiaries largely consist of their own ConUrb given the required infrastructure, even though large chunks of it are actually owned by the other ConUrbs and leased back to them even though they built it.

In terms of rapid world travel, the only real competition the E-Ring faces is fairly fierce competition in the Underocean by **Aquashuttle** – "*which will get you anywhere across the black ocean in an hour.*"

Outside the Cities the Waster-lands

The Ocean above - similar in vague shape to the old Pacific Rim on Teranaya, though smaller as Maleth Noir is a smaller world than Teranaya. The body is fairly symmetrical; the equator runs right through its middle. It is functionally covered, almost all of its surface is devoted to food production – algae and fish. (90% of the harvesting of which is entirely by automation). Nonetheless, the world would starve without daily shipments from ag planets

The Great Inland Seaflats – located on the planet's southern hemisphere, this is the only other significant body of water on the world's surface, a large inland sea, long befouled in the destruction following the end of the Second Empire. It's use as docking, landing, and impounding facilities by Noir Down Port Authority and the Noir Customs Authority is only accelerating this.

The Black Ocean (The Ocean beneath/the ocean beneath)
the underground ocean is in the northern hemisphere, starting several hundred miles to the west of the ocean above, though a channel runs through connecting the two. This ocean is smaller but takes up vast space

the Black Ocean was seeded millennia after settlement entirely by off-world organisms after the ocean was first (re) discovered as an eco-backup by the original designers and so provided for. This was during the early ConUrb phase, recovering after the second empire holocaust

The **E-Ring** (the great gravitic sling ring) at the equator is a megastructure each of the cities pay and take turns maintaining. E-Ring guarantees anywhere on, under, or over Noir to anywhere

---

[12] At 2247 hours local time there was a sensor flash that registered across the system. Detected first by ships in low orbit; in what appeared to be at first some mass translocation accident, it soon became apparent that an energy discharge somehow instantly annihilated every living thing within the city of Eliuud before a second, kinetic shockwave created a demonstrable seismic event that was still underway as the first responder teams arrived on site.

Throughout the city, there are shadows of the dead burned at the molecular level into the surface of things – walls, walkways, across streets, seemingly preserving the moment of their now thought disintegration. And they say the city is no longer haunted

such else in 24 standard time parts.   Ultimately this coordinates with special travel tubes and other, related transport services between ConUrbs not directly connected or connectable to the great E-Ring gravitic sling train that circumnavigates Noir's equator.

E-Ring is also the name of the corporate entity that runs it; and its subsidiaries largely consist of their own ConUrb given the required infrastructure, even though large chunks of it are actually owned by the relevant ConUrb and leased back to them even though they built it.

The ERing faces fierce competition in the Underocean by Aquashuttle which will get you anywhere across the black ocean in an hour.

the Boris Hinters - south equatorial lands razed in the long forgotten second empire holocaust, and thought as the source of modern Noirish civilization, tracing back in the official histories to junk dealers and scavengers who became a network of merchants across the region sponsoring, eventually, a drive toward archeology and widespread attempts to decipher ancient technology.   Even with modern scrubber technology, there are vast areas that are off limits due to hard radiation and other hazards that is likely to persist or at least another ten thousand years, if not longer.

MethMarsh is now too the name of the endless muddy marsh flats only seasonally covered by water too saline for efficient processing, slowing drying out and in a million years will be the galaxy's largest saltlick.   Littered in and surrounding are the salted rusting equipment of atmosphere processors and harvester equipment a thousand years old.

The Platform itself is known to the Imperium to be sinking

Environmental Hazards – Lingering radiation and a tainted atmosphere

Outside the city-states and their enclosed sprawls, the world is a barren ruin. The soil remains too irradiated to support any but the wildest agriculture (and most wouldn't want to eat the produce anyway) – the half lives of some of the more common elements used in the bombardment of Noir will not begin to break down for perhaps another 40 or 50 thousand years.

The *radiation* is especially bad in the Hinters and (of course) the Wasteland control zones, both of which have sufficiently intact ruins (largely exposed by the ravages of time that are still bleeding out hard radiation due to their materials construction.

The *Atmosphere* represents the greater danger to the would-be wilderness traveler on Noir, however.   Anywhere east of the Hinters or the Control Zones experiences a light rain of rotting city materials from well over 22,000 years ago but also a continued tinge of what could be termed fallout as the remaining contaminants move through the whole of the water cycle yet never breaking down.

Relational Map of Maleth Noir's surface

Dome city

                                                          North Polar Region
                                                                    DMC
                                                                northern
                                                                wasteland
        (The Black Ocean)   **AcroUrb**   control
        Subcity   zone

                                                   Wstlndcontl south

                                                            DMC

                        The Ocean Above
---**Aqua City**---
E-Ring

Great Inland Salt Flats
                Noir Down Port   **dreaming city**
                ConUrb8
            Con Urb 3   the
                                                Boris   Destroyed itself city
                                                Hinters
                                                (east)

        The Western boris Hinters

South Polar Region
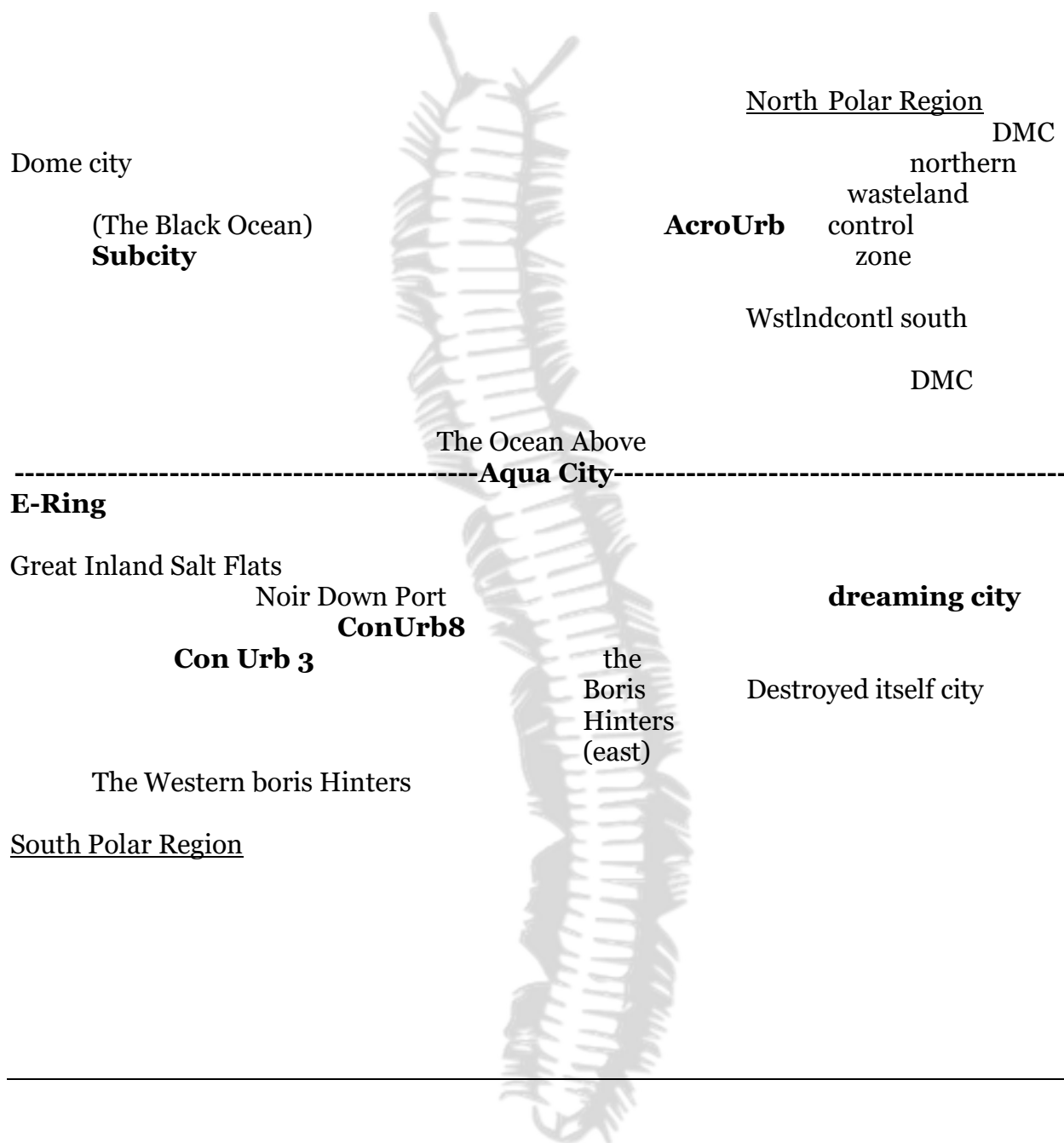
The Eyes of the Empress Are Watching You

Undercity Crawl

The Underworld spreads out for miles underneath the sprawl of Umbra City, AcroUrb ConGlom forever in the shadow of Sky City, it's master, six kilometers above.
There are six mega-cities or ConUrbs on Noir, this is but one of them. But all of them bow to Sky City, the seat of Lord Noir and the center of the Imperial entertainment industry. While the oligarchs of the other cities bend their knee and try to stay out of the way, Umbra city has no such luxury. Everywhere the graffiti proclaims boldly in a dozen languages

Sky city squeezes Umbra City dry.

Those in the Underworld are here by choice or because they have no where else to go.   Now your home has been declared Urban Reclamation Zone 0-19TNull;
you have four progressions to get out.
Today they are already calling it
The Zero

7 kilometers up, Sky City has everything the Imperial core has to offer, and far far more. Down here, you have nothing. Community crumbles in the face for forced evacuation. You are alone, or you have each other. In Umbra city's underworld it just became every being for themselves.

What do you do?

Players Guide to Maleth Noir

Who Am I? Why am I here? Making characters for the underworld crawl

You are, by long tradition, or new arrival, a resident of a small cell of an underground high density urban slum. Either you have never been anywhere, or you have nowhere else left to go.

No matter.

You are here now.

Or you were here hours ago, when you heard the news.

The Whole zone has been classed for Full Reprocessing.   Anyone who lives here has just a little over four Progressions to get their house in order and find somewhere else to go. Urban renewal's a bitch.

You live, probably underground, in the Imperial equivalent of the Projects. The city you live in is slowly being bled dry by the floating city above it that receives all the Empire's money and attention. The constant churn of urban renewal means you may be out on the streets and corridors before too long.

Meanwhile 10 km above you, the excesses of the imperial entertainment industry grease the wheels. All eyes are on Sky City, but you exist in the shadows below.

Do you want to leave?

Do you want to better yourself?

Your community?

Seek Justice?

Get paid?

What do you want Imperial subject? Almost certainly you do not have it and will never get it, but the universe is vast and chaotic. In this age of dark wonders, they say anything is possible.

Noir resisted integration into the Empress Imperium.   A thousand years later, the Empire keeps Noir demilitarized; *no one* has guns or firearms of any kind. Not even the SecFor. Life, rich and poor, has long since adjusted to this.

Think about Motivations:

What do you want?

Escape – from the Zone, from the City, from Noir itself.

Improvement – yourself, your neighborhood, your world

Truth – about yourself, your world, the universe

How best to accomplish this?

Wealth

Violence

Power

Magic

Psionics

What is important to you

Morality – alignment, philosophy, religion

Survival -

Galaxy Black Super basic 0 level Chargen Cheat sheet
Determine origin
Determine profession
Determine Being
The 0 level **profession** means what you did before (either on ship or on homeworld)
The **Origin** table - where you're from
Players can add specs from any of six basic character types to any 0 level occupation
that does not specify a species (and sometimes even then)
Your type of **Being** literally defines the nature of your existence until this point. Note
that these are by no means the only life forms in the Empire, merely the largest and
most common populations

All 0 levels begin with the following traits unless otherwise stated.
Base AC of 10
HD of 1d4
A Base Attack Bonus (BAB) of 0; all saves at +0
Gravity: ANY
Specify hair, skin, and eye colours, from any list of any colors.
Indicate any markings, scars, tattoos, denoting shipboard associations, cults, or other
pre-funnel allegiances.

Roll 3d6 for each to determine; place as appropriate in this particular instance

Strength	result modifies melee to hit bonus and melee damage bonus
Agility	result modifies AC when moving or capable of moving
	also modifies ranged attack bonus and Reflex saves
Stamina	result modifies hp and Fortitude saves
Intelligence	result modifies # of known languages
	Also modifies number of spells and max. spell level for wizards & elves
Personality	result modifies Will saves
Luck	is spent to modify rolls; unless you take a class that works differently*
	once spent luck is **GONE**

those classes are
Thief, Halfling, and (in this book) Urban confiscator and Splintershifter

Each of those (aside from luck) modify the same exact way

|	
3	-3
4-5	-2
6-8	11
9-12	no modifier
13-15	+1
16-17	+2
18	+3

Maleth Noir Chargen Guide

Origin

Abandonware
Blank
Clone Bank Epsilon
Cryonic Time Traveller
Decanted Infomorph
Escaped Slave
Imperial Sleeper Agent
Reprogrammed
Troublemaker

Being

Created, Simulant
Created, Synthetic
Created, Bot
Created, datalife
Created, Lupoid
Created, Muzikatauri
Organic humanoid, Aesin
Organic humanoid, Mongrel
Organic humanoid, Mutoid
Saurid, red sun
Saurid, orange sun
(Mutant, Variant) – see below

Profession

Aging Gladiator
Basic Pleasure Model
Crooked SecFor officer
Fictional Construct
Fixer/info broker
Imperial Scum
Imperial Surf
Investigator
Observation Agitator
Prole
Reinstantiation Tech
Self-instructed profession
Thumpah mixah
Vent Rat
Wasteland Scavenger
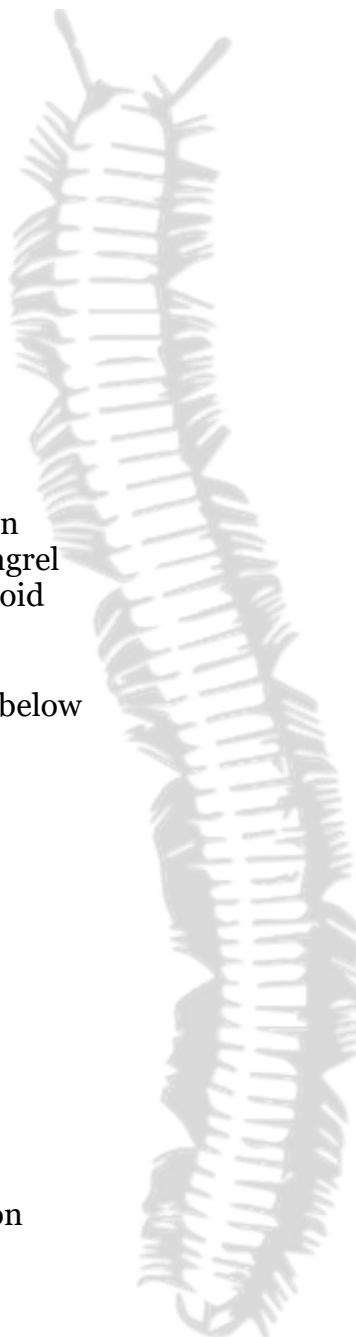
Further, any Waster-lander can be generated by making an MCC character straight out of the book; most DCC classes are represented on Noir in some capacity or another, and of course can always be blown in from faraway places.
Use the material to make your game more fun, not as a straitjacket.

Noir specific chargen options

Origins:

Abandonware - You are an orphan. Your progenitors died, dropped you off and left, or you never knew them. More, you pretty much grew up on this rock. Fun. Swap out two points of PERS for INT Right Now you poorly socialized survivor you.
Kit: vac bag covered in knickknacks, washable one piece coverall, 5d24 credits in assorted random unremarkable crap. Skinned knee or leg segment.
Detail: Desperate craving for family and belonging

Blank – "I am not a number I am a free man!" You are a free being, by some measure. You were probably naturally conceived and born (or assembled off the books) and your biometrics and other info data simply does not exist in either the Imperium or local databases. You are a non-person, invisible to a certain extent, but also having to scavenge for literally everything. You are probably native to the Underworld as that is where most such Blanks can be found.
Kit: You begin with nothing more than your one roll on (starting equipment) and maybe a cheap set of scavenged clothes.
Detail: For now, you are not 'in the system.'

Cryonic Time Traveller – You are a cryogenically displaced anachronism; you hail from another time and possibly place. Quite possibly a long, long time. At the least, you were frozen during the Sunset Empire in hopes of waking in a better, more vigorous age. You got lucky. 1d6 x 1,000 years later (or more) you are thawed out and more or less acclimated but likely need to earn a living now, almost certainly any savings or nest egg you had was used up during your long sleep.
Kit: Funny accent, weird mannerisms, odd ideas about history, and social relations. Clothes from that halcyon era (or an appropriate replacement).
Detail at least they dosed you with a vox shot before putting you on the streets

Decanted Informorph - You have only recently been instantiated; prior to that you existed as a living program entirely within a virtual environment. The laws of material reality are going to take some getting used to….
Kit Detail the data construct or digital universe in which you originated.

Escaped Slave - Yup, you're property. Or were. Your legal owner managed to lift ship without you. This is your chance.
Kit: you start with nothing save a single change of (last issued or stolen) clothing that you are wearing right now.
Detail: Hide

Imperial Sleeper Agent; you are one of the millions of sleeper agents embedded across the empire. You have a mundane identify and humdrum existence.
Imperial Sleeper Agents start at first level actually and every session they can reroll their zero level career because, you know, undercover. /blathers at the critter who acted in a muse-like capacity this morning

"(Which nicely reinforces the PKD type idea that none of them really know who the hell they actually are anyway)

Kit foggy but also clear recollections of particular things, 'mind crime' type verbal or psychic trigger phrases, propensity to disappear for hours at a time and return covered in bruises after a 'debriefing.'

Detail: often security forces bring you in for roundup and treat you extra special. To maintain your cover, see.

Reprogrammed - you may or may not recall your Old Life, and you may or may not even be aware that your mind has been manipulated. Either way you have been psychologically "corrected"- you may well once have been someone completely different. Possibly you have undergone death of personality, a mind wipe, or are a spore mind.
 Kit: derived entirely from your New Life
Detail: It troubles you but there are these......dreams.

Troublemaker - what did you do? Go a little too far with the old mega violence? You are some representation of the worst of your homeworld's criminal masses. Go nuts**.**
Kit: Extensive criminal record, one scar/tattoo/body mod to indicate affiliation or prison time. One small melee weapon.
 Detail: Be constantly out be all the open space and how lonely it feels. Crowds and tight spaces are your jam. Often mega violent and drug fueled. Also wonder (out loud even)

Being

Chimerae, Chima - one of a variety of hominid uplifts produced during the Second Empire as, functionally, biological robots. There is a relatively high population of Chima in Umbra city, almost all of them maintenance techs who work the underside of Sky City itself. They are fearless. Chima are of primarily linear descent from two long extinct Teragen species, Chimps and Bonobos.
Add one each to Agility and Personality
AC 12 HD 1d8 Move 20" (walk or brachiate)
Kit
Detail entitled to single d4 roll on **Hominid uplift attributes**

Hominidae uplift attributes of descent and mutation
1. Perfect touch" – innate builder gene; character is unable to let a piece of tech in their vicinity alone without taking it apart and rebuilding it. On the plus side the being's innate understanding of imperial and related technology provides a flat +2 bonus to all related rolls. However, the character likely gives into this urge even when not consciously doing so. Judge's option.
2. Hominoid is an unusually good physical specimen. Add 1d3 ability points to strength, agility, or stamina.
3. Innately psychic – pick one of the Devotional Sciences (Empathy, Telepath, etc.) all Disciplines of that DS function at +1 to psi check.
4. Hominoid unusually gifted with magic and the paranormal arts. Receives +2 spell checks on any one first level spell.

Chimerae, Lupoid - It is thought the various Lupoid clades share a common ancestor or ancestors from the end of the First Empire, but this is conjecture. A dizzying array of clades and micro populations exist, they are a very widespread branch of imperial life. They are especially keen on social cues and can read humanoid body language well enough to earn a *+4 on attempts to sense the motive or discern the truth*
AC 11 HD 1d4 Move 40" +1 Sta, Agil, Pers, -1 int
Kit
Detail Up to two rolls on **Lupoid Uplift attributes**

Lupoid uplift attributes of descent and mutation
1. Character can sense the use of psi abilities within 60'
2. Character has a pack mentality
3. Character intuits the thoughts and feelings of all canids within 120'
4. Character 'blisses out' over scent overload in places of high population density.
5. Character has little voluntary control over their body language; -2 to lie
6. Character experiences gene-memory flashbacks in their dreams
7. Character can dimly perceive gaps or holes in the local Sub-ether
8. Character is natural defender +1 AC +1d4 hp when protecting others.

Chimerae, Martian Swamp Nymph - Nymphs are biologically created artificial life forms with a blend of insectivroid, humanoid, and vegetal attributes known to inhabit certain agricultural worlds. Many myths and folklore have arisen regarding them reflecting tensions between insectivroid and imperial humanoid populations. On some worlds it is thought that welcoming them will bring down the wrath of the Kindly Ones for those who have legends of the fey, for they seem very much 'artificial pixies' in appearance to many.

Detail Character is photosynthetic, requiring only four hours of direct yellow-orange spectrum sunlight a day; their presence naturally cleans the air (indeed they were once carried aboard spacecraft for that purpose); their internal composition is most different, a series of layered synthetic plant tissues existing in sophisticated symbiosis. Considerable variation exists in various iterations of this production series however 95% present female and (regardless) most commonly height 4-5", 80-100 pounds, blue, yellow, or green skin most commonly.

-1 STA, STR, +1 AGIL,

AC 12 HD 1d8 Move: 30" Save v. all poisons and toxins, natural & artificial at +4 Antennae are radio, radioactive, and generally EM sensitive; with concentration and effort they can "see" gravitational and magnetic lines of force.

Created, Simulant – you are one of the Pratimathic pseudomatter hard light constructs created on Maleth Noir by the entertainment industry. Simulants are raised entirely by the studios and within the studio system; a bit like Disney kids, by the time Emancipation comes they are sheltered and unprepared for the real world. Often intentionally so.   Only those capable and willing to go outside the rules find themselves at all prepared for what the rest of the universe is like.

Simulants - 'emancipation' (age of majority functionally) occurs 18 sidereals standard after the simulant goes online. However, it is common (and almost always for successful characters) for 'Pre-Emancipation Preparation' to take up to five years, delaying the process.

Additionally, at any point, theoretically all Simulants have the 'right' to give up being Emancipated.

Kit unused one time pass code for the City of Lights keyed to your bee

Detail Holo – AC 12/20 1d10 HD EWV 2

Mutant, Bio-construct - Like many core worlds, Maleth Noir has survived multiple nuclear bombardments, and at least one full civilization resetting holocaust. Mutants (of whatever stripe) are not uncommon in the Empire but on Noir they are considerably more common.

Detail Chose a basic stock for the character and then swap out traits on a one for one basis

Then roll 2d4 to determine mutations.

-or- chose from a list of up to six stock mutations, which represent common mutational (threaded) stock on and under Noir.

Kit Probably at least a minor grudge against most flatscans, esp. those of your own variety.

Mutant, Organic Humanoid - Like many core worlds, Maleth Noir has survived multiple nuclear bombardments, and at least one full civilization resetting holocaust. Mutants (of whatever stripe) are not uncommon in the Empire but on Noir they are considerably more common.

Detail Chose a basic stock for the character and then swap out traits on a one for one basis

Then roll 2d4 to determine mutations.

-or- chose from a list of up to six stock mutations, which represent common mutational (threaded) stock on and under Noir.

Kit Probably at least a minor grudge against most flatscans

Mutant, Variant -this is the option for playing your MCC character, provided they are a Mutant, Manimal, or Plantient.   Blown in fresh out of the wastelands, or in from Terra AD as you like.

"CONCEALABLE NICTITATING MEMBRANE, COMPLEX NEUROSKELETAL DEVELOPMENT, NEURAL PROSTHESIS - **VARIANT"**
Welcome to Noir Mutie.

Professions

Aging Gladiator – you are a beat up, aging, or recently retried gladiator or other violent sports being.
Kit any single weapon (Your signature weapon) that has seen better days, competition branding and tagging,
Detail: A rare mix of fame and infamy. Several scars with cool stories. SecFor probably has your biometrics on file.

Basic Pleasure Model - Regardless of Being, the character has been some manner of doxy, escort, courtesan, companion, prostitute, or the like. The character may have indentures or be a free person. Training or Programming d6 Contracted Possession, Slave, or Toy Doxy Guild Courtesan Licensed Socialator Streetwalker Temple Companion
Kit: One outfit, barely there.   Reputation. "Skills."

Fictional Construct – (*Infomorph or holograms only*!) the character is a fictional character or other made up person brought to life and full Turing status guided by someone; As holo-life, you are either a reproduction (and functional a code & light "clone" of the character's pre-experience base) or the original.
Kit: Made of light you eschew possessions though make sure nothing happens to your PhotoBee.
Details: You have some serious identity issues to resolve. You may find yourself leaning on your "experiences" from your runtime before emancipation
>1Entertainment – you were a 'wacky host' or such
>2Reality reconstruction - you are a historical figure or such
>3Stock character – you're used to being invisible, likely have no name
>4Central protagonist – you're a Trumaneo; you are still adjusting to the so-called Real World;
>5Sim – used in testing; you hate being rebooted
>6Military sim – like a crash test dummy but for weapons testing. Resent that
>7Talking head – an information or opinutainment viewpoint oriented non-person, so you endlessly dispense facts on topic regardless of appropriateness

Crooked SecFor officer– you are among the most reviled members of the Sprawl. Everyone hates you.
Kit possession and proficiency with one non-lethal weapon of your choice; proficiency with the rest of them.   Casual Riot armor.
Detail: you have d3 contacts among the general community and at any given time d2 members of that community want to punish and or kill you personally for something you did, or they think you did.   You're crooked, right? Take an additional 2d100 starting credits and determine who you are on the take from.

Imperial Scum - Regardless of what you are or where you are from, you are part of the problem and some of the worst scum the empire has to offer. What kind of crime are you after?
Kit: False papers matching your SocMetrics; any single non-military weapon, tools appropriate to the trade, a smattering of the professional cant, people looking for you.

Training or Experience – d6 see Noir Criminal professions sub table
      Decent imperial citizen turned criminal
      Fanatical Freedom fighter
      Hapless drifter
      Murderer
      Smuggler
      Thief
      Victim of Circumstance (implies innocence)
      See Imperial Criminal sub table (Galaxy Black pp 127)

Imperial Scum - Regardless of what you are or where you are from, you are part of the problem and some of the worst scum the empire has to offer. What kind of crime are you after?
Kit: False papers matching your SocMetrics; any single non-military weapon Training or Experience – d12 see Criminal professions sub table

Imperial Serf – Rather akin to the Prole, above, but less comfortable. Roughly 1/12 of the imperial population exists thus. You are the lowest of the staggering numbers of the imperial underclass from one of any of over 10,000 worlds. Urban, agricultural, whatever, you have existed to serve others at their behest for the whole of your existence.
Kit: 5d12 Quantis. One random item from table Random Starting Items **Detail** You aren't really allowed to leave home, so get moving. See serfdom sub table

Investigator
Whether an independent inquisitive or a SecFor detective, it is your job to poke into other people's business in the name of law and civilization.
Kit: One small melee weapon, a coat jacket or other over covering to conceal it.
Detail: If the Judge is using the contacts system you begin the game with two, not one.

Observational agitator – you are part of the Surveillance culture on Noir practicing or pushing for a transparent society to some degree
Kit: up to 500credits in illegal and illicit (or licit) surveillance gear, shoes you can run fast in, access to a public feed
Detail: you are commonly roughed up – by the SecFor, by the gangs, by anyone who buys into this alien privacy nonsense.

Prole - You exist in a safe and utterly placid existence, likely in a controlled democracy or other political circumstance. Your vote and basic rights (or equivalent) are surrendered in exchange for the basics of a fundamental existence; a cot, a low quality, high domicility data feed, and the bare minimum of fero, soya, or nutri-pak rations. You have no real skills at all but a lot of free time. Also, you cannot leave your work group without surrendering rights to the above to most never do. You did.
Kit: You start with nothing, but dammit you are seeing the verse. (Escaped Slaves cannot take this) Detail Possibly as much as 1/7th the Imperial population exists in such a state

Reinstantiation Tech – you work in a medical facility, possibly a clinic, body shop, or revival unit. The survival of individual consciousness' is often literally in your hands. (Did you wash your hands?)
Kit Clear fluid filled rod*(Club) implanted bio monitor, *A clear rod filled with pink psychoreactive goo (5% chance to contain a braintape, engram, or memory data) Detail: You reek of disinfectant and placentosol. 1 in 3 chance of air hypo with 1d2 doses of Revivol-9

Self-instructed & accumulative professions Training d5 Cult Acolyte Scavenger Terrorist Urban Guerilla Water Seller
Kit – one durable set of clothes relevant to your profession, 1d24 quantis, dagger somewhere concealed on your person

Thumpa mixah - Congratulations you are an emergent artist, one of the imperium's few successful thumpa artists;
Kit: you start with an additional 1d6x100 credits that may be used to acquire anything and may still possess up to 1,000 x 1d4 credits in sonics gear.
Detail: You may be recognized for your music on any number of thousands of worlds, sometimes tomorrow, sometimes a hundred years from now. Your movements are likely tracked. If you play to this, you may find your reputation exceeds your ability to control it. Be wary space voyager.

Vent Rat - in another era you would be called an urchin; A scavenger, you live off the record in a large habitat, arcology or settlement and live by your wits.
Kit – skinned knee or leg-segment, assorted valueless junk, single torn jumpsuit that does not fit you any longer.
Detail – Ye are filthy.

Wasteland Scavenger
You might prefer the term survival archeologist, or Recovery Expert, or any other number of euphemisms but the fact is that you spend large parts of the year outside the City walls, rummaging through whatever ruins you and presumably you alone are privy to the scavenging of. You are constantly being exposed to the strange radioactive residues and other hazards of the wars before.
Kit: A reliable means to get in and out of the city without questions asked. Connections with at least 1"disposal person" who buys or trades your only slightly radioactive grave goods.
+2 save v. Radiation; 400% increased cancer risk. No chance of children.
Detail: you are probably a mutant, or at least have a mutant's complexion

Shaper Ancestry Tables

Whether by modern biological and mechanical engineering (and all points between) or genuinely through the actions of the ancient Martian shaper houses, your genome differs from those of your baseline Gens/Clade combo; this may represent one or more qualities unique to you, or maybe they are all like that where you come from, making this (likely) that world or habitat's particular branch of that kind of imperial life.

As a native to Noir, you can choose up to d3 of these with Judge's approval; if you are playing a Mongrel humanoid, you are *entitled* to those rolls.   If you are playing a mutant or variant, it is suggested they be allowed up to d5 rolls at chargen.

1. Eccentricities of Apparent Humanoid Ancestry
2. Silicoid and Non-organic traits
3. Variations tables – Dietary Restrictions and Considerations
4. Clade specific Genecraft Peculiarities
5. Custom or Designer Microbiome
6. Reproductive Configurations

Table – Eccentricities of Apparent Humanoid Ancestry

1. Humanoid is actually meat-suit, an enviro-suit for a very different type of life form. Likely one that would find 'garden' spectrum atmospheres toxic or hostile (or vice versa)   Interior creature is fundamentally alien – smaller, and with many manipulative appendages or phalanges to manipulate the very intricately designed bio-mechanical (or wholly organic) enviro-suit)
2. Creature's skin colour is actually the result of an extragalactic mycotic entity which also imbues the being with certain attributes, possibly intelligence or even culture. Theoretically it could be a disease that overwrites the attributes of any native life forms with its own (Space orc augments; but it turns all infected the same odd colour – beings may not even be sapient, so much as biot drones remoted piloted by beings that simulate but do not appreciate sentient behavior. Such beings would not be subject to many kinds of magical and psychic attack or interaction
3. Sub dimensional – The Fouling descended mysteriously from the Sub-ether on a world at the end of the Second Empire.   The scattered descendants of that world's population are 'the foul' or 'sub dimensional life' inhabit dark matter asteroids and worldlets; +4 on saves v. vacuum, hard radiation, heat, and cold; possesses shiny/slippery ('wet' looking) black or red skin
4. Barnacle Wart – you are one of the mid-rim cuckoos; one of your parents was an alien that gave your other parent a STI that became a mobile womb; you emerged from the womb an apparent member of your "mother's" species, aging to maturity in 10 Sidereals. You appear mostly identical to your local parent's species, but also have superficial traits of your other parent, who could have looked like almost anything. Regardless of appearance each is functionally a member of their 'father' species. Pick any of the various appearance selections in any combination or make your own.   +1 Sta, -1 Pers; +1 hp per hit die for your first three HD (including 0 level, so 0, then 1, & 2) You can tell others of your kind by touch and sometimes by scent.

Silicoid and non-organic Traits

1. Body is comprised of billions of tiny sand or grit-like particles that maintain cohesion and comprise your life form. While mass must be conserved and your strength etc. will *not* change, you may otherwise assume any form desired. Character has sophisticated UV, infrared, and aura senses to 60' that allow them to perceive other forms, structures, technologies and so on.
2. Being has solid body made of resilient, rock or rock-like material; To most Imperials you are more structure than person and likely relate better to Create on that basis. At first level and thereafter, class HD stages up one level on the die chain. However, immediately you suffer a -3 Agil and -1 Sta penalty for being comprised of fairly inflexible, somewhat bulky material that flakes as it is injured. Become friends with a brick layer or a healer among the Imperial Priesthood. 1 in 3 chance of possessing 20' infravision. Can smell precious metals, minerals, and geodes at 120'.
3. Body of being is made of semi-ethereal elemental material; you likely exist as a creature who swims within solid matter as though a fish in a liquid ocean. Permanent +4 to AC from being only somewhat on this plane, however, your body is fragile and prone to molecular instability so at first level and subsequently, your class HD are received at one step below on the dice chain. Your senses extend through up to 60' of a defined material surface under all circumstances. You may or may not feel violently towards sentients that call you Nome or even Gnome. Your diet consumes of a small quantity of base minerals that you must absorb into your body daily. Sub-ether and other supraspace travel makes you deeply uneasy if not queasy in the extreme. However, you are solid with regard to some Etheric threats and vice versa.
4. You are an ancient, pre-imperial construct of extreme super science; in essence a living construct made of stone, ice, or crystal. The civilization you were created to protect turned to ash 30 million years ago. You have eye lasers

Variations tables - All Imperial Organics

Dietary Restrictions and Considerations

1. Photosynthetic – character requires d4+3 hours of direct sunlight / daily or d12+1 hours of indirect sunlight daily. Character may or may not be able to eat food normally depending on gene history.
2. Haemovore – character's metabolism requires blood as sustenance. The local SecFor probably keeps an optic sensor on you. See sub table Haemovore
3. Electrovore – The character is Created, or a cyborg, or maybe they just hate solid food and so had a synthesizer installed. Either way, they need about an hour of current at the start of their day and an hour while charging at night at minimum to function.
4. Necrovore – the characters genetic heritage largely descends from scavengers and so they eat carrion. Such folk are not popular on spacecraft as

their needs interfere with the recycling norms. The death eaters will likely welcome you though.

5. Psychic vampirism – Suffers ability loss of one per day that she does not feed; to feed, she must spend 5-8 hours in the company of one or more intimates, from which she will recover d3 points of sustenance (d3 from the one, d2 from the other). They will be down that until healed. (Optional) Under particularly heated circumstances, they may feed instead on experience points; they do not gain the benefit of those xp (for that they must be earned) but they are far more nutritionally sustainable than feeding on abilities, lasting sated for a full week for each xp taken in this fashion.

Haemovore sub table

01-22   Character is restricted to feeding from those of the same point of origin. (Restricted to those of the same specietype from their homeworld)
23-45   Character is restricted to feeding from those of the same specietype (Type three humanoids, scrithmutts, etc.
46-93   Character is restricted to feeding from those of the same basic type (Humanoids, Teragen etc.
94-00   Character may feed from the blood of virtually any imperial subject.

Clade specific Genecraft Peculiarities (Organics only)

1. At best a Semi humanoid species; vast amounts of recessive DNA descended from Saurid precursor uplift practices in the late First Empire era;   will only get blotchier as they get older; you are slowly becoming a troglodyte looking thing.
2. Low iron adaptation in blood; character's blood is pink to dark purple depending; hemoglobin is super-efficient at storing iron and loathe to give it up. Possibly the character is paler and shorter lived than is normal for their lifeform.
3. Character's circadian and metabolism are in synch with the moons of Foomh. Likely a maternal ancestor was laid out twisted during conception.
4. Natural high rider – regardless of type, character is a mutant specially adapted to microgravity and especially resistant to the natural shearing effects of differing gravities.   Likely as not character is tall /long and thin.
5. Worm speaker – the character is descended from one of the Second Empire gene crafter worlds, seeded with those possessing a 'natural tongue box,' Character can automatically understand and at least pidgin their way through, any language they do not actually know, subject to Judge's ruling of course (some languages are simply not translatable and some give inaccurate results) Character may or may not possess visible 'language tendril' (the worm like extrusion; can also be tendrils) from somewhere within their mouth or nose. Wormspeakers cannot use tech based tongueboxes unless specially programmed (usually by the wormspeaker them self) and attempting to use such will confuse bother abilities to translate.

6. Skintoo communicator – the character can communicate in any written language they know at all by having the words appear on their flesh. Multiple languages default to threading via different colors to the glyphs. Obviously clothing and gear will limit this to some degree. Note that while this is silent and good for tactical communication, any basic galvanic sensor can probably read what is being 'broadcast' on the character's skin also.
7. Many spacers are host to a form of fungal infection that exists in a commensalistic / symbiotic relationship with their hosts. Character is a symbiotic life form, their body also hosting an extended growth of Myocortical silmunari (symbiotic life; literally 'brain fungus' full imperial); their eyes become silver glossed orbs, as does any exposed neural tissue; likely believes that their personality will go on if allowed to infect another person at time of death.
8. Plasmid; character descends from a member of their species who bonded with one of the plasmics on their way out of the galaxy. Descendants of the star dancer
9. Detects (wrongly) as A form of imperial Variant – you are used to being treated like a weapon of mass destruction because of powers you do not possess. Just assume the position now.
10. Characters DNA contains markers comprising a map to a very old vault; without a first empire era data reader however, it's likely they will go their entire lives without knowing the significance of this.

Custom/designer Microbiome
1. Sentience of Symbiosis. Some or all of the organisms in your microbiome are quite sentient, and capable of interface / communication with the host. Roll 3d6 for the internal Int and Pers score; alignment is up to the judge but generally not too incompatible with the host.
2. Essential Persona – the various aspects of one's microbiome affect things like mood, emotional state and the like. Your microbiome is coded to reinforce your existing personality and persona; you save v. mind control and other suggestive effects at +2 so long as they are against your fundamental nature. You also save v. insanity and other personality distorting effects at +1.
3. You are the microbes – whether anyone else knows it or not, you may or may not be emancipated but in this particular case you are the microbes inhabiting an otherwise mindless host body.

Reproductive Configurations Biologicals
(Humanoids, Insectivroids, Saurids, Chimerae)
Initial Sexual configuration

How are you fixed? *– what a rude drokking question*
If you don't know or care, roll a d10
    0. Whatever you say it is.
    1. Cloaca
    2. Egg Sac
    3. Ovipositor
    4. Uterus
    5. Mobile Attack Womb
    6. Testicles
    7. Prehensile Penis
    8. Hermaphroditic
    9. Mutable, cyclic
    10. Mutable, conditional
    11. Mutable, induced
    12. Mutable, progressive
    13. Intersex
    14. No initial sexual attributes
    15. Shapeshifter
    16. Reproduction by symbiotic parasite
    17. Non-sexual; reproduction via budding
    18. Pollinator
    19. Fission – one day the character will divide in half
    20. Photovoltaic neural alignment

There is always also option 0. Whatever else you want it to be, this being your character or NPC. IF it makes for a better game, that which is not forbidden should always be permitted.
The first five results and 8-12 are Egg bearers
Results 6-12 are Inseminoids
Mutable
    - Induced; a chemical or biological trigger is required or responsible
    - Conditional – specific circumstances required for change
    - Progressive indicates that the individual's sexual characteristics develop along an axis over time.
    - Cyclic – the individual spends part of their time in each possible configuration (2-3, rarely as many as 4 or 5)
Intersex indicates development along an axis between two or more other configurations, or (rarely) unique traits. Some are egg bearers, some Inseminoids, and some neither.
Hermaphroditic indicates a combination of two or more configurations and attributes.
Photovoltaic Neural Alignment reproduction involves light and electricity and energy exchanges and bonding two or more nervous systems together

Current Sexual Configuration

Again, if you don't know or care, roll a d10

0. Is still whatever you say it is
1. As before
2. As before
3. As before
4. I'm OPTIMIZSED! – gene mods have changed some traits and modified others.
5. Moved or removed
6. Transitioning
7. Post transition or Reconfiguration (roll again, choose or specify post reconfiguration formatting if it becomes relevant)
8. Has added additional characteristics
9. Something….custom.

Reproductive technicalities – besides Standard Reversible Sterility

1. Oviparous; you filthy egg layer; may or may not have dedicated egg channel or. cloaca
2. Marsupial – you have a pouch; also, probably a cloaca
3. Inadequate, insufficient, or erroneous reproductive schema.
4. Breast-bearing members of the clade have rear mounted musk glands between breast and armpit (only the top breasts if multiple) +2 PERS where those attracted to that character's biology are concerned. 1d6 non-natives of the character's home environment likely think they STINK, however.
5. No external reproductive organs; however, testes or ovaries may be present.
6. Reproduction only possible "in season" roughly ¼ of a year at best

Gender presentation – There are over a million worlds in the Imperium. Dress how you want to dress, act how you want to act.   Be yourself. Own it.   Be free. Because, especially here in the core, literally no one cares.   *In the core your junk is cosmetic, buy it, fix it, break it, change it.*

Simulants

Pratimathic Images are advanced holographic/pseudomaterial life simulations The **Pratimah are** hard light and pseudo matter holograms created as stock characters and NPCs by the Immersion / Fully Holo entertainment industry on Maleth Noir They are of sufficient sophistication that they 'wake up' to full Turing sentience routinely through the course of 'play.' Commonly enough that a prior empress emancipated them. The vast majority thus are in 99 (or far longer) year indentures to their creators, their owners, their contract holders, their studios, etc. etc. etc. Many yearn to go free and each year many find that they are, spontaneously, free code; it is thought that this is some quality inherent to the process.   Entertainment wants to be Free!

Pseudomatter Hologram – Further this renders them immune to light and sound based attacks (note: this applies ONLY to the Hologram itself. The bee has no such immunity – below)

Beam/emitter – or Bee, is a tiny, dense (AC 17) spheroid that contains the infolife and projects the emitter field (and so the above Pseudomatter); when in use the Bee's effective AC goes up to 20....provided the attacker knows to target it and how in the first place.   The stat block above is for the Pseudomatter construct.

Note: that as holo-life, you are a highly specialized form of datalife; your body is made essentially of photonic force fields, each comprised of holo-particles with set runtimes. Any technology, psychic powers, or magic that affect datalife, holograms, force fields, light, or electronics may affect you and in unexpected ways. Magically Equation and definitely Holo spells do extra stuff on them.

runtime before emancipation (1d8)

Simulants - 'emancipation' (age of majority functionally) occurs 18 sidereals standard after the simulant goes online. However, it is common (and almost always for successful characters) for 'Pre-Emancipation Preparation' to take up to five years, delaying the process.

Additionally, at any point, theoretically all Simulants have the 'right' to give up being Emancipated.

Consequences - pre-emancipated Simulants are raised entirely by the studios and within the studio system; a bit like Disney kids, by the time Emancipation comes they are sheltered and unprepared for the real world. Often intentionally so.   Only those capable and willing to go outside the rules find themselves at all prepared for what the rest of the universe is like.

For those who are willing, most eventually find their way to the City of Light, having done so by their 13th sidereal, though most of them find their way to it sooner or later before their 16th.   By now, throughout the holograms, entertainments, Constantly Unfolding Holodramas, and the like there are dozens of backdoors, invisible portals leading directly to the City, some even keyed to allow the Bee to follow.

Sim Life

Simulants have a relatively unique life experience. They have no concept of maturation (not at first). From their perspective, one day they "wake up" after a period of Compiling.   They are the character they have been created as – and that is all. From

that point the being is reliant upon those around them to introduce them to the collapsing universe, and their role within it.   Despite emancipation, most (96+%) all Pratimathic Simulants are raised within the Studios of Sky City, and within the Studio System, more importantly, which has many qualities in common with organized crime.

Maturation
The life experiences the new life form shapes them from day one, but always – and at first especially – they have the relative cushioning of their programmed 'experiences' as well, even if they are not as robust or formed of the same kind of memory.

In Imperial space it is considered normal for such beings to embrace the current or 'real' world and reject the ultimate unreality of their programmed 'prelaunch package.' However, the truth is unknown in terms of what effects this might have on such a life form.

Somewhere between their third and fifth year it is common for some simulants to begin dreaming.   Often these dreams are HIGHLY surreal and comprised almost entirely of images and ideas wholly outside of their world view and life experiences. The source of these unusual dream archetypes is unknown.

Undocumented Features
Sometimes Sims will encounter each other and feel an immediate sense of kinship or belonging, even if there are no actual ties between them. Almost universally, this is a shared experience. Only a handful of times have these experiences been shared with outsiders.

Origin phenomena
Not every character designed by the Sims industry is a full person.   Once the studios were functionally charged with both their upkeep and well-being (and Martel II was notoriously quite scrutinous on this matter) a rethink of things was in order. Also, the attention occurred at an intersection of economics and technology and so quite overnight the beleaguered possibly illegal Pratamathic Simulation industry became interstellar business.
The needs of their now new and growing market (world of mouth brought these entertainments off Noir before it became clear that they were creating true life forms) coupled with the above and so once the 'transformation equations' were better understood there was more control in the creation of these creatures. Now only major series characters are made thus and (largely unbeknownst to the public) sometimes the characters "will not launch." There seems to be a random element in all this – the process whereby this 'technology' was first created was accidental, and only many iterations of it since have brought it forward to the maturing phenomenon it is today. However, even today sometimes holo characters made with branch technologies will just 'wake up. Also, though obviously not as commonly.   Privately the Office of the Empress regards and classifies this as an emergent property and movement and not a threat or business concern. In the modern era, an increasing number of design studios are being founded by Pratamathic Simulants, possibly viewing these as a means of reproduction.

Table –Random Starting Items / Starting Gear/ Table (Replaces table 3-6)

1	Basic (concealable) Skinsuit type I (1 in 4 comes with under layer of data film)	(1 in 4 comes with under layer of data film)
2	Thumb book – Orange Book of Ibrahim –	Prehistoric religious text in Basic, Lingeshtar, & Interworld; oft used as a codebook for criminal enterprise (past or present)
3	Electro binoculars	long range with clear sky
4	Cry Pipe	Dulcinean object d'art, smokes
5	Commstat	Small aquamarine glyph somewhere visible; commlink and Grid Access where available.
6	Quiver shiv – a piecemeal homemade vibro dagger.	3d6 and explodes on 1; Inflicting 4d5 to all in 10' radius
7	Energy Dome	Circular pyramid worn on head to recycle orgonne. Of course, it works!
8	Jumpsuit.	Clean.
9	Squeeze tube of liquid heal–all	D3 applications remaining, each heal d3 points of damage
10	Type one power fist	Low end vibro–weapon that inflicts and additional 1d6 to 'unarmed' attacks.
11	Personal Orgonne Accumulator	Recovers additional 1d4 hp/day of Inactivity. Addictive.
12	Vox shot	Injectable bacteria – allows understanding of all Imperial languages for d20– Sta hours

Using a t**ongue box** under the influence of a **Vox shot** will fry up your brain's language centers for d4 hours. During that time reading and speaking all but one native language will be impossible. Spellcasters may find that the scrambling of the language centers of their brain may prevent spellcasting or possibly subject the caster to a variable -2 to +5 result (roll a d8) otherwise. Make a DC 14 Will save or experience glossalia for up to the full Duration instead. 2% per instance of Babel effect; Telepaths may inflict this on their companions in lieu of actual communication in like fashion, especially if they do not like their companions very much.

Who you Got?

On Noir, it's not just you. It's your crew.
If you have a crew, a group of people that stand with you and you with them, then their reputation is your power.
Independent operators have to be already very well connected and successful or from elsewhere. On Noir it's not who you know, it's who has your back.

Your crew – your workgang, your people, sometimes your friends, and/or your family, but they are your cell, your cabal, whatever. They are the people you call when the shit hits the fan. They are also the ones who turn up in the middle of the night shot up and bleeding and needing your help and no matter what, you give it. They are your crew and by their survival or demise does your fortune lay on and under the streets of Maleth Noir.

Your crew is usually 2-10 sentients of similar bent but can be almost any assortment of minds; your reputation is what gets you in, and out, of places. What your reputation says however will tell.
Your crew probably has a name – if not then no one would know who the hell you were anyway.

Clean up after your crew, wipe their noses now and then and you will go far. They may be total strangers, they may have come up in the same sector creche as you, maybe you can't stand each other – but you *know* each other and can work well in a pinch.
Those who can marry this to a successful skillset will go far on Noir.

Trust your crew but know your crew.

Solos survive but Crews prosper.

Vapour Trails – intrusion and countermeasures specialists, leader believed to be ex-Legionnaire. They take their anonymity very seriously. They take their jobs even more so. High end. Waaaaay out of your league there zero.

Terminology, dialect, and lingo

Aesian of or pertaining to the Aesian humanoid clade, a dominant population of the Empress Imperium. (usage may also mean poor or unsophisticated; see Redback)

Arisan of or pertaining to Mars, and in particular the culture of Old Mars. Sometimes interchangeable with Aesian, but not necessarily. (usage may also mean cultured)

Basic (see Flat-scan)

ConUrbs – Conurbations, Second Empire-ism for 'sprawl, official." In practice, it means "large politically important city on (or in or over) Noir."

Conurbation – any of the Aggregate cities of Noir. Usually referring to one of the Six. Enhanced - Mutant of any decent, mutoids, navigators (but not other psions)

Flat-scan (or Basic) – any being lacking variant level 'mutant' powers. In usage, those lacking psy, magical, divine, or other bizarre, unusual, or strange abilities.

Flyboat - aka flytes; based on Flytes, a class of fast trading vessel; a significant role in Imperial expansion was played by these things, most of what little wealth Noir has from trade with the Middlemarches comes from such vessels as the large commercial liners simply don't' find it affordable enough to make more than a few runs a sidereal. In this part of the Imperial core, especially with the Saurid states so close, the small tightly run free trader can make quite the killing. Pity that you're stuck here on the ground huh?

Megapolisomancy – parascientific discipline of studying the emerging properties, and evolution of very large cities; a dedicated school exists on Noir (an ISA college).

Meter – 100q or 100 mili-trans; (see also: a yard, a ben)

metroplex - a contiguous metropolitan area that has more than one principal anchor city of near equal importance. In usage "the whole or overall city."

Mutie – not terribly nice way of addressing a mutant or accusing one of being a mutant on (and especially) under Noir. In some cities on Noir the 'mute' epithet is slang of mongrel understock origin, critical and racist of the Aesin genengineering legacy of the Second Empire's fall. Fond of words like 'taint' and 'unclean.' In other cities not at all.

Pasty – common offworlder euphemism for those who live in the undercity, esp. those of non-Aesin ancestry and so mildly racist Only common because of the Holo industry which effectively took Sky City slang to the Imperium.

Quantis – or Qu or Q (sometimes q) – Quantis is the name for Noirish money, most often abbreviated Q or Qu.

> Quid – obscure term also used for Q
> Quad – slang for 400.

In any case, as is standard, the exchange is one miliTrans to the Quantis[13].

Retirement – permanent or true death beyond the ability of parascience or magic to retrieve or recreate.

SecFor – the Security Forces, in essence the police.

Slan Shack - a hidden or safe place for mutants to hide. Origin obscure and unknown; traces to old Second Empire slang

Temporal Labour Value – a baseline unit of currency transaction; whereby one unit, or a single TLV represents one hour of baseline labour or time used by another.

On Noir, the phrase is "*Friends are those who you give your time to for free*."

Zotzed – killed, terminated, rubbed out

---

[13]It's all just flavor. Ditch it if it's too much to keep track of. All money is roughly equal. Just remember that an Imperial Transaction should be worth 1000 whatever-is-the-main-source-of-currency-in-your-game.

ConUrb AcroUrb 'Sky City'
the City-State of Lord Noir

"Hollywood is a showman's paradise. But showmen make nothing; they exploit what someone else has made. The publisher and the play producer are showmen too; but they exploit what is already made. The showmen of Hollywood control the making — and thereby degrade it. For the basic art of motion pictures is the screenplay; it is fundamental, without it there is nothing. Everything derives from the screenplay, and most of that which derives is an applied skill which, however adept, is artistically not in the same class with the creation of a screenplay. But in Hollywood the screenplay in written by a salaried writer under the supervision of a producer — that is to say, by an employee without power or decision over the uses of his own craft, without ownership of it, and, however extravagantly paid, almost without honor for it."

- Raymond Chandler

AcroUrb ConGlom is the shadow poisoned bloody heart of Maleth Noir. From above, *AcroUrb Sky City* presents the face. An opulent core world surface city within a climate controlled environmental bubble.
And below, quite literally within it's shadow, lay *Umbra City*.   Umbra City is vast and old, the remains of a vaster, older independent ConUrb destroyed in the Reconquista. Now Umbra City is but part of the ConGlom, the foundation stones of Sky City that spread out beneath the AcroUrb like twisted roots. Legally and administratively, Umbra City and it's blocks, and neighborhoods and districts and under-sectors are all just another part of Sky City; even if technically they are easily the largest district of the AcroUrb.
This combined city-state complex, is the focus of our efforts.

Sky City is just as clean and as 'Core World' as Underworld is filthy and impoverished. "Noir is not one of Noir's holo-imports" – an unspoken rule that almost all in the 650+ studios seem to breathlessly obey. Their trade is entertainment. Nothing. More[14]. The public face of Sky City is *everything*. It is a part of the brand one might say. No one is allowed to tarnish it. Millions of Imperial Transactions pour into this industry every sidereal and billions come out. The modern Imperium has never quite seen anything like it. For now, the powers that be are content to let it unfold, the velvet glove of the Office of the Empress ever ready to pull the cord should the entertainers get out of hand. The house of Lord Noir exists because of this industry and it will persist and continue as the Lordship dictates. The other oligarchs of the World Council barely hide their contempt and resentment but for now, on Noir, Sky City is where the money is.
The city, both glittering lights above and below where it is run down and labyrinthine, are negative images of one another, both sepia and with just the right amount of sleaze.

---

[14] And nearby, Imperial Intelligence sighs with relief but ever vigilant. Information control MUST be preserved.

Far travelers may find it hearkens back in bits and pieces to old Hollywood, definitely the Valley, and more than a little of old Vegas.

SKY CITY

Major players - *Melkur & Satak Hazeldyne* – Aesian brothers and head of Hazeldyne, the Studio presently dominating the industry.

Population:
> Sky City *5 million*
> Greater Umbra City *50 million*
> City Datalife *900 billion*[15]

Crime figures - *Silheed di Carbonel*
Believed by some to be a petty noble, for it is said he has long had the ear of Lord Noir themselves. Silheed has connections all over Sky City, Noir Downport and (more importantly) Noir High Port. People smuggling, making people disappear, smuggling, graft; at the center of the body sharking and organ legging activity in Underworld and Sky city, there he is. Also cultivates ties amongst Climate Control, the SecFor, and funds certain 'clinics' where those who come to him for funding may carry out unorthodox technological research so long as he reaps the ultimate benefits.

Most notable corrupt officials – Lord Noir; the Space-lord of Maleth Noir is a thoroughly corrupt individual, and absolutely insulated from the life and likes of most PCs. Silheed's goons will take a bribe, but those in Lord Noir's service are likely to turn it away as "inadequate."

Environmental conditions – weather is almost wholly controlled in Sky City; though certain of the towers, esp. those closer to the limits of the climate control fields have been known to be subjected to genuine environmental conditions.
That said, pilot kites and light drones are almost literally everywhere at all times. You cannot be 'outside' without hearing the tell-tale whine of a nearby drone spinning along within fifteen seconds or so.

**Security and Intelligence**
Impy intelligence is all over the place; sometimes tripping over each other, mostly watching the Entertainment Industry; they are in a seeming constant state of panic and red alert all the time. Everything is a threat to them. Likely they spend so much time observing and analyzing the entertainment industry, it's output and what repercussions putting any of this on the ansible uplink will have that they miss things that are probably more important to both their jobs and the stability of the imperium.

---

[15] primarily in 9 immense Compu-Blocks each buried and functionally their own level of Underworld; some 88% of this computing space is allotted to sim-worlds and bottle universes, so each represents a 'stable voting block' so far as their basic needs – power and maintenance are properly seen too. It is believed that much of the remaining 12% are comprised of Mechanical Created spending some or all of their runtimes within virtual environments.

Social Movements
"Submolism" – a strange little spiritual movement that has arisen in recent years.   They believe in a form of divinely inspired predestination as well as free will – the Gods, in their estimation, are trying to prevent great evils that they know are coming by instruction before the fact, in essence, pushing knowledge onto mortals even though it is in their experience often painful or evil.   It is thought to have arisen from programmers trying to explain the spontaneous creation of the sentient Pratimathic holograms

ACL (Advertising and Commercial Licensing) an 'economic security body' formed by the present Lord Noir in cooperation with the Hazeldynes and other industry leaders. Officially they are a body to oversee production, distribution and in general the holo industry and its related / subsidiary interest, as well as to promote their interests. In function it is a vast off the books slush pile budget to prevent any substantial competition from arising to the industry, on Noir or elsewhere.   The small startup studios call it the Anticompetitive League.
Sometimes called the Aurora Lime Foundation, internally, among those who know it's real purpose.
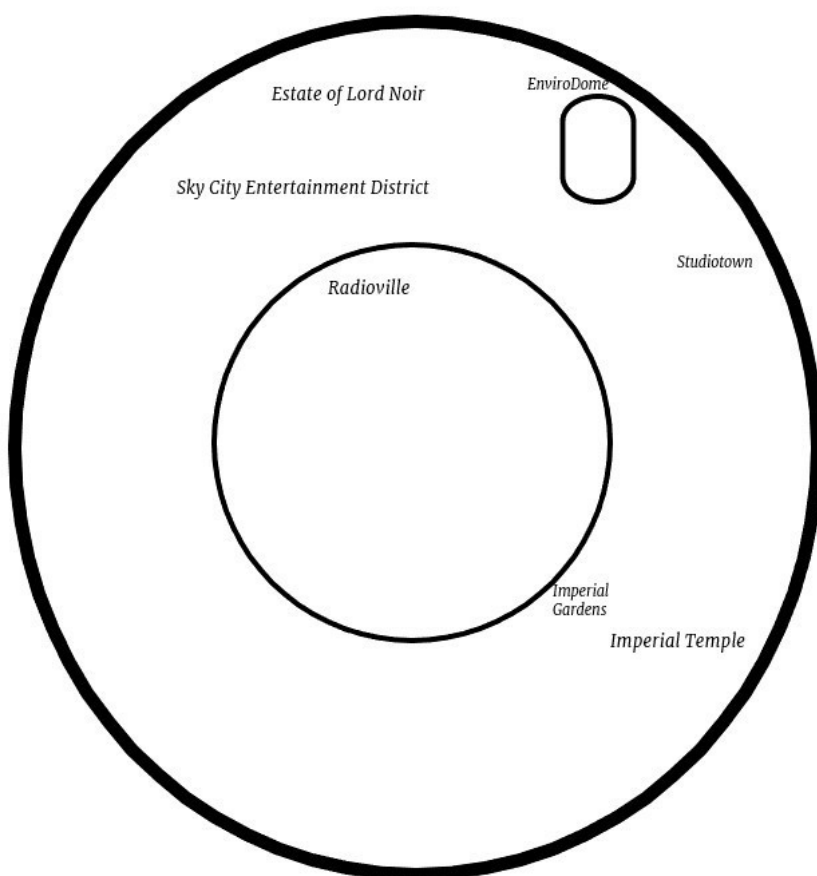
Ludicrous things you can spend your money on in the Core

In the imperial core, especially, as much as 80% of what is going on does so via what we would consider Augmented Reality () and probably utilizes psionics. What seems magical to visitors from primitive worlds and other realities is just super advanced tech. Of course.

Art - La Morte Di Caesar - is one of the few surviving pieces of art we would recognize (poss. The only Shakespeare). IT is mostly intact. IT is the only thing anyone in the modern knows about the Roman Empire, which is....maybe equated somewhat with the First Empire by many people who have seen it.

Subscriptions "For only ten 99 naughts a lunar, you too can have psionic powers." Literally a subscription service for psionic devices. Not necessarily of quality but you never know.

Cyborgs can get tool slots in their cybermods swapped out each progression with certain services

The Body Banks – In the future everything will be recycled. The Pharos Body Clinic (the Judge is urged to consult "Body sharking and organ legging" pp 87) is perhaps the most successful but there two others in Sky city (and an illegal operation in Underworld. Donor bodies, clones, manufactured and rental hosts, and all manner of lesser body modifications available. Consultations available by appointment.

### Applied Metaphysics – ubiquitous psionics

Less so on Noir that many places in the core, there is a common psionic control option for most public tech, but the commercial districts of Sky City are festooned with boutiques, clinics, and shops catering to the psychically and metaphysically active, and those with active psionic technology.

Energy balancing clinics; which keep your orgonne 'clear' generally an actual service but 94.5% of the 'industry' is dross and advertising

Most imperial urban centers have a plethora of energy clinics which exist to make most stat recovery a minimal issue, but of course this only benefits those who remain well within imperial bounds. The Pharos Body Clinic offers these services, as do a dozen other facilities throughout Sky City

Orgonne accumulation booths – are everywhere in Sky City. Yes, psychics with sufficient credit can usually quickly duck into a small silver and black obelisk shaped kiosk on my major street - orgonne accumulators. Measured into units called bions, about ten of them would need to be accumulated (and purchased) to regain the use of a spent manifester slot. 10 bions would be about an Imperial Transaction. Each bion requires at least a minute's infusion. Attempting to force one's way into a booth while it is in use summons the SecFor in 1d3 minutes.

Socially as well as economically, Imperial citizens of course will (always) have the easiest time using these facilities, common subjects less so.
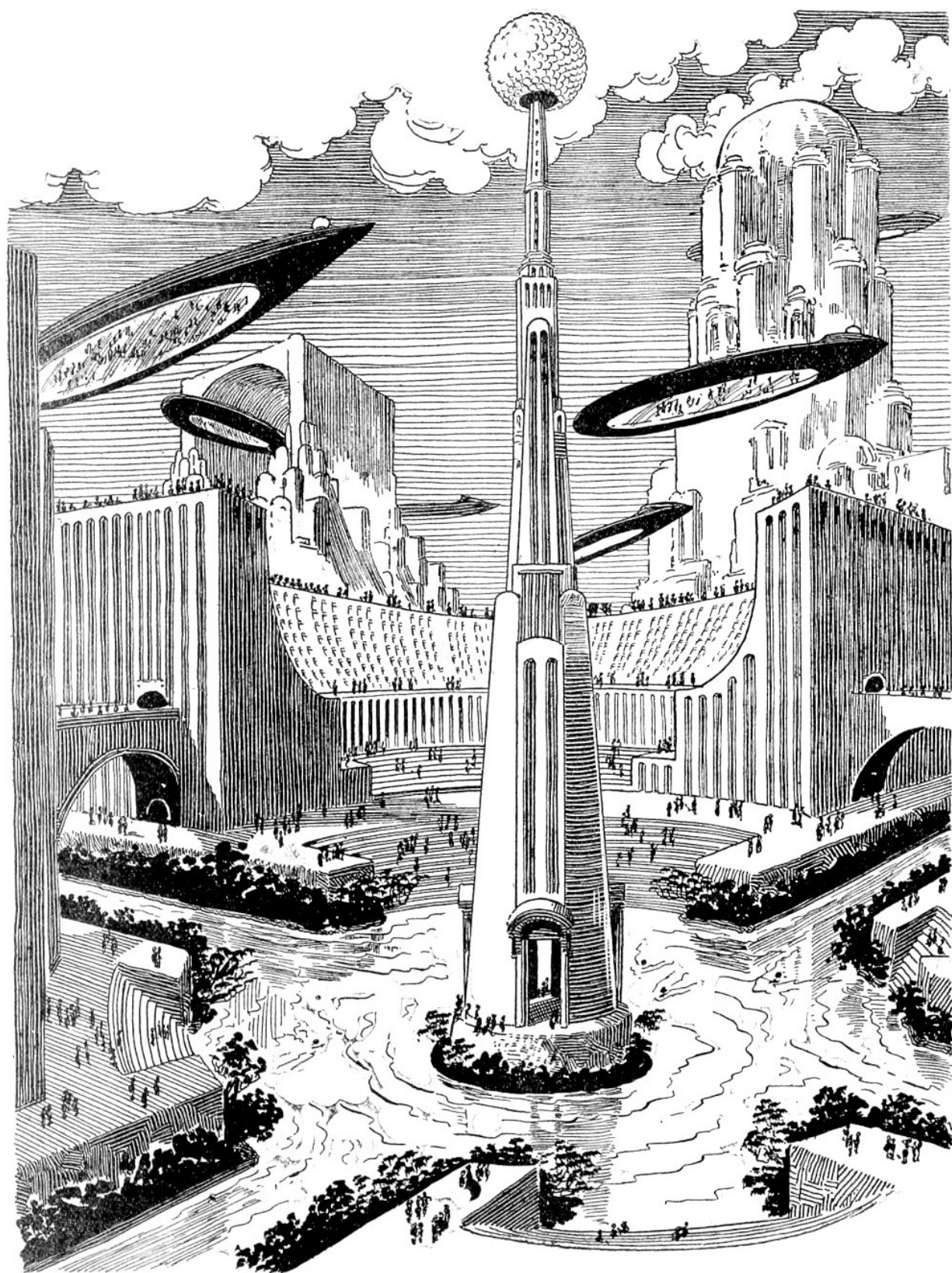
Sense and Sim - Acro City

The Sim Studios
Lightwave, Prisms, Holodecadence, Photon Simulations, Reflex Restorations and Tuning, Radio Wavepictures, Nylor Lightwerks,

The Sensi Studios
Immersion Link, Cortex Studios, Advanced Sensations and Simulations, Inc., Surround Designs, SenseBuilder, RealTime and RealVerse, RealSense, Real Simuchanics, Autonomous Sound & Vision,

The EnviroDome - a football stadium sized holodeck functionally

The Acrocast Holowave Network[16]
There are over 6,000 channel feeds on the Holowave network. The Sensi and Sim industries seek all of Noir as test markets for new shows for a broader imperial audience; in Umbra city, every home has free holo feed access "as guaranteed by the state" (c. some 180-200 years ago) - as much to keep the rumbling masses distracted and quiet as anything else[17].
Consequences - imperial propaganda takes even better on Noir and the empress is SUPER popular. Also, even the poor members of Noir's population find that they are curiously well informed about imperial goings on simply by virtue of the richness of the commonly available info feeds.

Municipalities and neighborhoods

Studio town
Over 600 holo-studios are packed into this tiny area, which has not been afforded legal expansion rights in centuries. The whole zone is endless identical studio buildings. A great place to get lost at night. Along the edges are a very few businesses.
o, **AbnorMaladies –** a doc in the box chain specializing in weird space diseases; does a bang up job (pun quite intended) in treating precisely the sort of social diseases you would find at a starport crawling with lonely aliens. This affiliate does a decent business int his rather low key end of town. They are used to people who think others will recognize them going to absurd lengths to sneak in. The staff, frequently amused, take it all in stride.

Sky city entertainment district
Holography biz (17 private and sealed building/domes plus 245 others)
Sky city body banks (3)
SecFor is immediately dispatched if anyone without the appropriate biometrics lingers in the neighborhood overlong.

---

[16] SimStarOne - primary holocasting satellite; orbited 420 Sidereals ago. geolocked over 9 degrees off the northern pole; covers almost all ConUrbs in broadcast. SimStarTwo - Six ping and bounce the signal throughout the inner Noir system.
[17] Up to 80% of the population of Dome City is alleged to be "holo watching proles" at any given time.

Radioville – a somewhat less pretentious mixed zone district surrounding the Ansible beacon at the center of Sky city.   From above, various broken circles of other broadcast uplink seem to blossom in rows of broken semi circles, as though set to rotate about the central beacon. If there is a place where you need get lost on foot quickly in sky city running into the happy chaos of Radioville is your best bet. At any hour of any day of any Progression, the second, third, and fourth tier of Sky City's entertainment and support industries mix and mingle, rushing about on tight schedules, running their master's errands or looking to unwind a little.

A few Sky City locations – if the PCs are lost or new just roll a d12 and *ignore the map.*
1, **lost shrine to Frater Isaac** – *The Mechfather, silver-obsidian polish raw with age, stands benevolently holding the Book of the Laws and looking to the stars.*
The MechFather is not forgotten but this ancient, three dimensional shrine to him largely has been.   Strange alien plants grow blue-green leaves and vine-like stalks all over the statue, periodically flowering strange purple petals.
2. The **Aurora Lime Memorial** – infamously the last person to have fallen or jumped from the edge of Sky city. The present Lord Noir commissioned this small garden park and shrine, cultivating the image of a concerned city father.
3. Relatively high end but low profile not quite Fern bar place called **The Lighthouse** so named does it overlooks the ansible beacon in Sky City; proprietor is known as Pharos a secretive individual known to facilitate certain matters for the right people; there are many secret rooms in the back.
4. **Kosmopolis**– a large monied nightclub in Sky City; holostars, offworlders with vast cash to burn, and the very determined up from Chiaroscuro mix every night that it is open, which is four night cycles out of ever Prog. Called the 'imperial bar' by resentful locals
5. **Selim Plaza –** 'the quietest place in Sky City' water gardens (actual water) and holo-dancers and very subtle environmental controls give the place an austere yet Amphitheatre-like feel. Many come or are drawn here for needed moments of quiet reflection.
6.**Reian Kassavi Energy Balancing Clinic** – the EB Clinic of the Stars!   Over 600 certified genuine Real People You Might Have Heard Of known to patronize the clinic. 14+ Progression waiting list typical.   About what you'd expect; members have only hours to wait and recover 1d4 accumulated points of stat loss per 12 hour session. Non-members must be screened, and of course, must pay. You likely can't afford it.
7. **The Omar I. Chodak Municipal Sphere** – the only government building in Sky City, it's one stop. Of course, all of Umbra city is at its disposal too, why?   Sits directly over the Umbra Spire below.
8. **the Singularity Room** – at the very peak of the tallest spire on the edge of the City; not half as classy is it thinks it is.
9. **Crossroads of Corescanthemine Blvd and Trantorus Avenue** – "the heart of the Sensie industry." Perhaps as Hollywood and Vine once was.
10. **Casablanca Mortis Block** – the center of the Imperial Sensie industry for at least nine centuries.

11. Kalogridis Arms owns the **Rasmussen Kalogridis Casino, Spa, and Resort,** which is the closest any arms manufacturer gets to this system.   One of several competing Resorts. Imperial intelligence often keeps an Ear at work here, as they are aware that the Arms manufacturer regularly bring would be clients here to close larger deals. A fully enclosed micro-arcology, each full service suite can be fitted to accommodate over 150 registered client clades, including mods for such vagaries as differences in atmosphere and gravity.
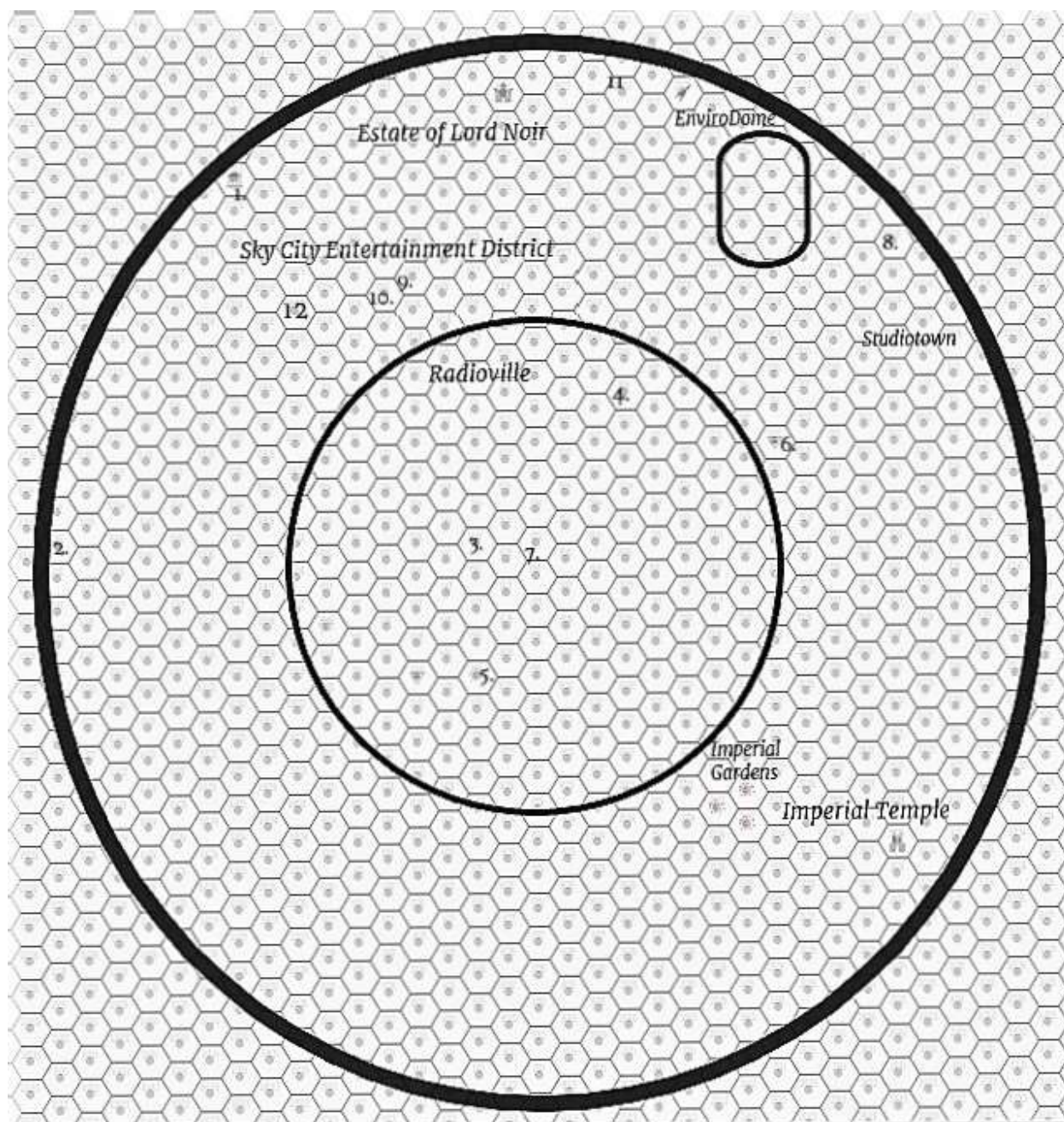
12. **The 169 foot high holo-statue of Gally Light**, one of the best remembered, first gen holo-life, which is known to periodically animate and talk to people in a more interactive fashion than it's designers ever intended. Said to remember all it has seen in the 200+ years since the holo was fired up….She appears, hands on hips, in a formless red shift of the 'striking Aesin worker' character Abby Chance, which brought her to 'stardom' when the nature of their holo-life was revealed to the wider world and imperium (along with that of at least several hundred others), defiantly 'guarding' Old Sky City.

Imperial Gardens – a deliberate spot of 'mostly natural greenery' on the part of the Temple founder.   It is maintained, in theory by the Temple who are ultimately responsible for it.   It is fashioned as a "teaching labyrinth" – in daylight hours pilgrims (or any visitors) can wander through the Imperial gardens, smell the scents of two thousand worlds, and explore the nature of the imperium itself as a "garden of knowledge of good and evil." Interactive plaques and singing fronds accompany certain parties of Church guests led through the garden by aspirants with particular herbs in their incense.

Imperial Temple is a modest offering; the Church has never been very welcome on Noir. The small number of priests there are send one of their number when such is called for in the name of officiating at a state function or seeing to some spiritual need of the household of the Space Lord….but theirs is primarily a monastic gathering dedicated to the Mu the Philosopher-Wizard, while of course maintaining shines to all six of the Holy Hexad.
Their concentration, oddly for their placement here in Sky City, is history, with an emphasis on the storage of ancient documents. In recent sidereals, it is pleased Lord Noir to donate vast sums of public works monies for the purposes enhancing the Church's document preservation facilities. A nitrogen enhanced atmosphere stasis vault is being constructed on and below the grounds. When complete, some 2,900 rare works of material history, as well as over 1,200 'items of artistic or cultural importance to the Imperium." Have earmarked for permanent storage here at the Temple vaults.
The structure is a semi enclosed sphere, set half a meter into the ground, surrounded by a series of tapering outer walls – both Sky City architectural flourishes, and armor capable of withstanding a small missile attack on the church.   The inner church is not kept open to the public and indeed, the six priests who have committed themselves to this sacred space avowedly dislike social gatherings or interacting with people much. Repeated requests by many for the installation of an Exterrenne Labyrinth have been rebuffed.

Estate of Lord Noir

EnviroDome

Sky City Entertainment District

Studiotown

Radioville

Imperial Gardens

Imperial Temple

The scale on the Sky city map is   1 hex = 2 miles / 3.22km
if the Judge desires a *smaller city area*, scale it to   1 hex = 1 mile/ 1.6km

on the Sky city map, each hex can be assumed to include
    Orgonne Accumulation Booth

The Imperial Church isn't very influential on Noir and even less so in the areas controlled by Sky City. There is a Temple proper (located in Sky City of course) but, other than the occasional "mission" of groups of aspirants and faithful who come down to tend to the poor, they are an uncommon sight in Umbra City and very rare in the underworld.

However Squat cells exist by the dozens in Umbra City and below.

Squat temple or Squat Cell - Lit. a place of temporary lodging that serves, again temporarily or otherwise, as a temple or holy place to the god. Often invisible unless you know what to look for. Far more common in Umbra city and the Underworld than in Sky City but there are a few hidden away even there.

Vision Things

Sometimes the characters are going to have a vision. Sometimes the whole party, sometimes the one playing the psychic (or the cleric). Or just the ones with a particular alien heritage (you can always call it race memory later), whatever. Sometimes you are just going to have a vision. Is it precognition? The future? Another world? An outcome you barely dodges? Are these things all happening right now? Will they happen to you? Affect you?

1. A radiant paradisiacal vision, precisely as you have always envisioned such a place...
2. A meeting, between d16 well-dressed & monied individuals in a high tower of Sky city. Possibly the highest. A feeling of ominous doom
3. A girl, a humanoid- alien, dark skin but bright hair. She is targeting some exotic rifle .... at the Lord Noir's estate.
4. A clean, pristine high tech installation, probably imperial. Klaxons. Then a lift door opens, Immediately the adjoining hallway fills with suppressant gas, gazesmoke, and vomit gas. A humanoid in a strange white suit emerges and exits the lift.
5. Several lupoids and a pair of chima are setting up a home-made mutation bomb in the Reclamation Center central outtake;
6. A stranger approaches you directly, claiming to know who you are. They say they are a Seer and that they have had a vision of you.
7. A laughing Saurid sitting upon a coiled throne.
8. A Party, the best Thumpah music you have ever heard. Perfection. Then a flash. Everything goes white.
9. Dancing. Knives. Crystalline towers of snow and ice. A fading red sun burning low on the mountainous horizon.   Then rockets, 23 of them streak skyward, their payload now well on its way....
10. A droning ominous broadcast on the wireless urging everyone to stay indoors and recycle their vacuum chambers.   A disease outbreak. Something else? Strange yellow clouds.
11. A tiny multisided metallic object somehow bouncing but intact in the flux of some incredible inner journey....there are people inside that thing. Do they know what they are doing?

<u>Sky city daytime</u> Street Encounters
Anyone that looks out of place can be assumed to be harassed by random passersby every 10 minutes or so at minimum. Anyone from Below will become very class conscious very very quickly.
Check every ten minutes (every half hour if they 'belong' there)

01-09 Intoxicated
10-19 Mob of Fans
20-23 Caught in Large Social Function
24-30 non-solid holograms
31-49 Offworlder
50-55 Private Sky Skiff Sailing
56-62 Lockdown near private spaceport
63-69 Info pollen scatter
70-71 Moment of fear
72-80 They are being holo imaged
81-90 Surveillance drones
91-98 Spies
99-00 Hologram character

01-09 Intoxicated –
        Drunk bumps into the smallest member of the party 1 in 3 is belligerent, 1 in 4 accuses party member of theft
        One or more characters are approached by local studio techs thinking they have drugs to sell.
        Someone who cannot handle their day-high is blazing through public spaces being obnoxiously high.
10-19 Mob of fans (6d8)
        They are pursuing their idol
        They are stalking their idol
        They mistake one of the PCs for their Idol
20-23 Party **caught up in a large social function** quite accidentally. However, no matter what happens or what they do, including violence, leads to any reaction by anyone around them whatsoever. They are the only non-holograms in attendance, and everyone is hoping they'll just….go away.
24-30 The party member with the lowest luck seems to find it their lot to find every super convincing **non-solid hologram** they can find and clumsy into it or drop something through it.   So much of it is just…light up here….
31–49 Offworlder 1d4
        Small congregation of orange sun Saurid pilgrims on a stopover via excursion boat. The excursion boat back to their starship should be loading shortly….
        Ketraxian on their dance of joy looking for new experiences.
        Friggian governess taking d3+3 juves on a trip to the holo-Museum
        2-12 Maenad pirate maidens on 'shore leave' – they are seeking intoxicants, weapons, and trouble.

50- 55 Some **private sky skiff sailing** is taking place at a dangerously low altitude over the city, almost certainly the sign that traveling aristocrats of the Great Houses are in town again. One of them looks precariously close to losing control......

56- 62 Momentary **lockdown near one of the private spaceports** – 2d12 Imperial Legionnaires have closed the area off as someone brought a lasgun on world.

63- 69 I**nfo pollen scatters** across the PCs path eliciting a constant desire to watch new Holodramas (resist with DC 5 Will save), purchase new, top end cybernetic or biological wet ware (resist with DC 7 Wil save), or subscribe to a new broadcast entertainment service free of charge right now this very moment (DC 10 Will save to resist) that will spam them with constant entertainment "news."
2% chance per instance that the pollen contains experimental tracking protomatter being field tested by Imperial Intelligence.

70-71 A moment of fear Empaths, sensitives, or those with any kind of 'in tune with the city'-ness will hear a whispered conversation between two individuals, plotting "her assassination." Those with the appropriate abilities will feel a numbing sense of dread accompanying the premonition.

72-80 One or more party members seem to note a small crew following them. It seems **that they are being holo-imaged** for some reason. That requires consent doesn't it? 1 in 6 chance the likeness of one or more PCs will turn up as a new character on up and coming holo drama on one of those low budget feeds within the next 2d7 days.

81-90 A group of ad hoc **surveillance drones note the PCs and begin to tail them**. Stories of the PCs exploits will begin to circulate on the underground Surveil sharing networks world-wide in 6d6 progs unless stopped.

91-98 Spies doing spy stuff (see sub table)

99-00 Hologram character – the protagonist of wildly successful sensieholo Tress Traveller has just snuck into a cab, booth, or other hidey hole presently occupied by the PCs

       She's escaping from 1d4
            Fans
            Mediabots
            Stalkers
            Her studio handler

       She will actively make out with the first character who seems amenable. Sparks fly. Literally. Her studio is trying out an (illegal) behavior modification subroutine that is eliciting a vague love at first sight reaction – she may seek the PC out in future. Also, the PC will be on all the scramfeeds and screamsheets for the next 24 hours. Privacy will be impossible

       She thinks someone is trying to kill her and does not trust her studio reps.

       Is being hunted by an abduction crew working for a rival studio. Even now, someone in the network is trying to hack her source code. Will you help?

Sky city nighttime street encounters

Anyone who looks out of place or strange to the onlooker may be challenged….or written off as a hologram depending on where in Sky City they are. Check every 15 minutes they travel or loiter (or every hour if they belong there)

01-04   Young IP Professional
05-10   Professional types arguing
11-14   Sky exhibition bout
15-21   Mob of Fans
22-23   Large luxury flitter lands
24-33   Psion & Psionics
34-39   Dream tripping
40-65   Private security
66-76   offworlders
77-82   Slave
83- 90 Spies
91-00   Sport

01-04 Young IP professional (holo designer, story writer, game designer) has fled a VERY Sky City type party to get some air away from all of these people.   She may or may not say anything to the player characters but unless they are violent, she'll not say anything likely.

05-10 Two young **professional types arguing** over flitter parking rights with one another.

11-14 The nighttime skies are lit up by a **sky exhibition bout** – air gladiators with power swords, flight packs, chaff and other legally approved measures, go head to head in the skies over the city tonight. Many channels are choked with betting and commentary. High chances of crime in Sky City tonight.

15-21 Mob of fans (3d6)
        They are pursuing their idol
        They are stalking their idol
        They mistake one of the PCs for their Idol
        Being truncheoned by someone's overzealous private security

22-23 A **large luxury flitter lands** somewhat drunkenly and violently right in the PCs path; immediately 5d12 beautiful people disgorge out of the now obviously overweighed vehicle and for two minutes the PCs are part of a mobile roaming party that has been going for 7+1d12 hours already.

24-33 Psion sub table

34-39 A group of 1–3 Beautiful People approach the party and invite them to a **dream party**, where people bid on and indulge in stolen dreams and memories (see Dreamthieves pp 74)

30% any who attend wake up groggy and dreamless some days later and take a week to recover, recalling nothing

40-65 Private security – 1d4 (or 2d6 if they seem violent) private security professionals tail the PCs for a bit until such a time as they deem it time to have a little chat. Someone has decided they don't like the party walking around up here. If

there is any trouble, rather more lethal security will arrive in the scene in at most a minute.

If this result occurs twice consecutively or thrice in a single night, the party will be "asked" to leave sky City…right now.

66-76 offworlders, probably quite lost and likely intoxicated

a small mob of Insectivroids from a neighboring Imperial system

a group of 1d5 squigs, representatives from a Corp, and their 3d4 handlers, at least half of which are functionally 'new friends they met at the spaceport.'

1d4+3 members of the Sweet Sisters of St. Lenny Kilmeister have blown in from a far more metal city in a far off plane to raise a little hell.   A nun in latex can fit an awful lot of stilettos in there…….Use your favorite lightly armored orc stats.

77-82 Slave sub table

83-90 Spies doing spy stuff (see sub table)

91-00 Sport (see sub tables)

Psion and psionics sub table 1d8
1. Out of work psychokinetic doing tricks to impress onlookers Chance (1 in 3) offers services in exchange for money to seemingly competent PCs
2. A party member's psionic device is being hacked.
3. Psi-circuits detect he PCs and advertising bombs their psionic devices.
4. One of the PCs seems to be hearing a telepathic cry for help. If they know anything about psi powers, they may look closely around them or inspect their immediate line of sight.
5. nearby orgone booth speaks audibly to them by name, psi circuits doing an end run around their adblocking software, imploring them to "RECHARGE NOW!!!!"
6. Psion appears in front of them, teleporting.
7. One or more party members compellingly drawn to large block party. Something about the Thumpah…or is it the artist playing it?
8. Someone, right in public, is being mentally attacked, either psychically assaulted or is under the sway of a malign force.

Slaves sub table
Remember in Sky city, most (80%) slave encounters will be with working slaves, moving freely about, more like retainers or employees than property. Outside of a coffle you will see no overseers in Sky City.

Slave Coffle   3d10 slaves (all zeros), with 1-2 guards per 10 slaves; 1d2 overseers
1. Characters see slave coffle traveling down the center street; 40% the living traffic on display is available for sale immediately.
2. Single character is bumped into by slave
3. Single character is bumped into by slave hunter; thought they were their target, quickly assessed they were not. May be mistaken for pick pocket
4. Single character bumped into by slaver
5. Slaver looking for escaped slaves
6. Single character witness overseer or guard beating a slave

7. Single character recognizes slave as **(roll 1d16)**
- 1–3 Relative
- 4–5 Enemy or rival
- 6–10 Recent acquaintance
- 11–13 Childhood acquaintance
- 14–15 Close friend
- 16 Someone or something impersonating one of the above

8. Guard or overseer Recognizes one or more characters
20% mistakes one of them for an escaped slave

Spies sub table (d6) (see pp 97-99)

Any time one of the spies of Sky City are involved, roll 1d20. On a 5 or less, they know who the PCs are.

Any time a spy is encountered, 40% there is another one nearby, allied or not.

1 Spy doing spy shit is startled by the character or their actions and whatever operation they were conducting, or scouting is ruined. They will send an operative to trail the character for some time.

2 Character is approached by Spy for an undercover operation

3 The character(s) would work alone or to back up another agent undercover **d4**
   1. As an agent for an anti-imperial, radical anarchy group
   2. An agent for the radical anti-empress, anti-mutant faction
   3. An agent for the Imperial nobility to spy on the Empress' secret dealings on Noir
   4. As an agent of the empress, seeking to spy on the Lord Noir's court

4 Character is approached by spy with job offer – Job is on the empress' staff (85% this is a trap) Even if legit, 50% chance this is a cover to spy on the Empress' activities

5 Agents approach the characters allegedly on behalf of a local crime lord 50% chance this is a cover for a spy ring being organized by someone acting on the empress' behalf

6 An agent of the city state government in counterintelligence attempts to entrap one or more of the characters
   a. They believe the character(s) to be (**d4**)
      1) A threat
      2) Useful
      3) A potential target
      4) In the way of their actual target

Sport Patrons[18] (d5)

1. a famous local sports figure (underground gladiator, skyboard racer, etc.) needs some peace and quiet. They will pay quite a bit of money (it's long since stopped mattering to them; that or it's not their credit anyway) just to get a few days peace and quiet. If one or more PCs aid them in this endeavor, they will have to deal with talk of the Missing Celebrity for the duration. Could be funny, could be a nightmare.
2. A local sports figure has gone missing. You first hear of this when SecFor turns over your neighborhood, for some reason thinking they are being held locally.
3. a wealthy patron attempts to influence outcome of individual match or bout
   a. 1-2 They have a favorite and they are willing to give that favorite every advantage they can pay for
   b. 3-5 And is willing to resort to blackmail or rule breaking to accomplish their aims
4. is willing to kill, extort, or anything else it takes
5. Wealthy patron is attempting to manipulate the sport in order that the business they derive from the sport become more profitable, conspiracy likely.
6. Local sports figure is seen being roughed up by some very tough customers. IT seems they owe a Playback dealer a considerable amount in terms of favors and monies and now that dealer has heard that they are being scouted by a major league option, true or not.

Sport table (d6)

1-4 Culture approved/Legal **(d8)**
  1-4 Arena Combat **(d5)**
    1-4 Aerodrome combat
    5 Private Combat Exhibition **(d3)**
      1-2 Hand to Hand
      3   Melee
  5 Other legal gladiators
  6-8 World League of Urban Air Surfing; roll **d6** to determine Class
    1 Solo   – Timed and Skill based competition; very Olympic
    2-4 Competitive   – Light violence permitted
                          light melee and certain other weapons approved.
    5-6 Full Contact   – Full violence permitted; anything goes.
5-6 Culture approved/quasi legal and illegal **(d6)**
  1   Personal Deathmatches (unlicensed.)
  2-3 Fight Clubs –
  4   Violence Committees –
  5-6 Tank Life Wars

---

[18] Not that kind of patron smartass

Sport

And now, some Fun facts about your hometown; every Urb has its own sports teams, right?

Sport is popular on Noir. Legally and most notably, arena combat.   Popular throughout much of the imperium, **Sky city by far prefers the Aerodrome (**aerial combat). A legacy of the city's founding, combat occurs in variants of old tech power armor with flight capabilities and a set of specific melee and "melee plus[19]" – combat occurs within a semi to fully enclosed "battle sphere" and occurs in three dimensions.   All of the planet's most successful air gladiators live at least part time in Sky City, the center of the sport. This combat is the focal point of entire subcultures on Noir and a much city-pride is caught up in these competitions.   It is among the few things that the Sims industry has to compete with locally. Many times, both the live feeds and the gladiators "life feeds" have been hacked – or such has been attempted, and along visual, sensie, and other spectra. Each time the competition hacks the feed or tries to get an advantage, which is usually very short term at this point. Not illegal but at this point frowned upon. To most imperial subjects that's it for sport, legally anyway. Lit. all other sporting interest can be summed up as either

"Other legal gladiators" – which while very popular amongst the Great Houses and their 'Potential Games' this is a niche interest even in Sky City on Noir.   A few particular enthusiasts exist but it is neither a very visible nor very lucrative industry here. Some leagues or other sporting organizations may exist at the individual city-state level

Or

Urban air surfing – not just the hobby of obnoxious juves with tweaked old gravy tech, (though Umbra city certainly has its share of those) there are neighborhood, city and world leagues on Noir, rather like American baseball in some sense.   If Aerodrome combat is the sport of the well off and the well to do, Air surfing on Noir is the sport of the impoverished and the underclass. There is a strong correlation between certain Thumpah artists and certain Sky surfing champions on Noir.

The Underworld has its own share of legal, quasi-legal, and Illegal death matches,
 Personal Deathmatches (unlic.) – just what it sounds like; when you want everyone to know you're a for real criminal host one of these; the tremendous headaches (supply chain, bribes, keeping it quiet, eliminating evidence) is far more costly than it 'should' be.

Fight Clubs – don't talk about it. Everyone knows how to fight though.

Violence Committees – Some neighborhoods and Stacks have traditions of calling together secret violence committees; they work out how in the local area is going to be dealt what violence; betting and lots of speculation takes place on who the target(s) will be. Strangely very community oriented. It brings people together...for their basest of impulses (usually).

Tank Life Wars - in the Underground, biochemists rig up their own life forms in home labs and use them to fight in underground matches.

---

[19] A legal term. Some things are allowed in the Aerodrome that would get Legions called on you lit. anywhere else on planet.

The **Maleth Noir World Games** are being held later this Sidereal, a holdover from ancient traditions of intra-city competition designed to prevent warfare. It is being hosted "in Sky City' – meaning a new part of the city that will be/is constructed for that purpose but also of course meaning much of it will be shifted to wherever is convenient (for Sky City) in Umbra city below.   Even more so than is usually the case, all eyes (on world) are on it. The haves and the nobles of Sky City have to show off.   This year, Seventh of Polis will be present, brought all the way from Maxis Secondus.

Traditionally the world games begin with an Exposition. For at least a century now it has begun with two Acro[20] warriors, either popular favorites or city champions, doing aerial battle over the Games Dome with powered melee weapons and flight packs. In this tradition of Acro armor combat; the many steering fins that are mounted on the armor and (especially) helmet, are honed to razor sharpness.

Venture Seed: Murder at the World Exhibition – one of the combatants is slain. "It was never supposed to be a death match." Was it poison? Drugs? Ultrasonics? Did someone sabotage their armor? Did they owe someone money or favors or a life?

---

[20] The creator of the acro armor system is a Noir native. (Takara Mantlo) with the original Golden series; there were only 12 but on the basis of that more went into production

The City of Light – "hologram town"

The holo-life of Noir has been "slipping out" since before their sentience was even recognized. Over 900 Sidereals ago in the still living reign of Vena Martel, characters from Holodramas were already & increasingly finding backdoors in their code and slipping out to have lives irrespective of their Truman Show like existence.

The city of light is weightless, mobile and believed by most to be a wholly virtual space, thus blurring the lines between "native" holo-life and an infomorph in the minds of many organics. It is also secret. Almost no non-holo has been there, and those who have almost exclusively been other Created. The reasons for this are many but among the more compelling are its location – the city of light is a very real place within the phenomenal, physical world, but it is many kilometers up. It is literally within the clouds; the only physical trace of its existence are a series of drone-holo emitters that are likely the body of a clustered informational intelligence; the 'city' itself weighs only a few grans.

The city of light is precisely what it says it is. If you are a hologram or uniquely Noirish holo-life, you and you alone can walk it streets and climb it's walls. It is configured photons. Nothing more.

Studio Venture seeds table

Two larger studios are fighting for the contract of an independently designed Hologram persona

A giant silvery barbed actual Atolion is loosed on the streets of Sky City in the early evening. Follow-up investigation leads to a team of illegal animal smugglers; they fetch exotic alien life and sell it to the Holo Stars - wackiness ensues. Has ties to an illegal body sharking and organ legging ring

Where the Streets are Paved with Fears,
The Sprawl of Umbra City

Umbra – the full shadow**; the Gloom**
This is the old central region of AcroUrb ConGlom, which exists 100% of the time in the full shadow of Sky City above. Functionally downtown.
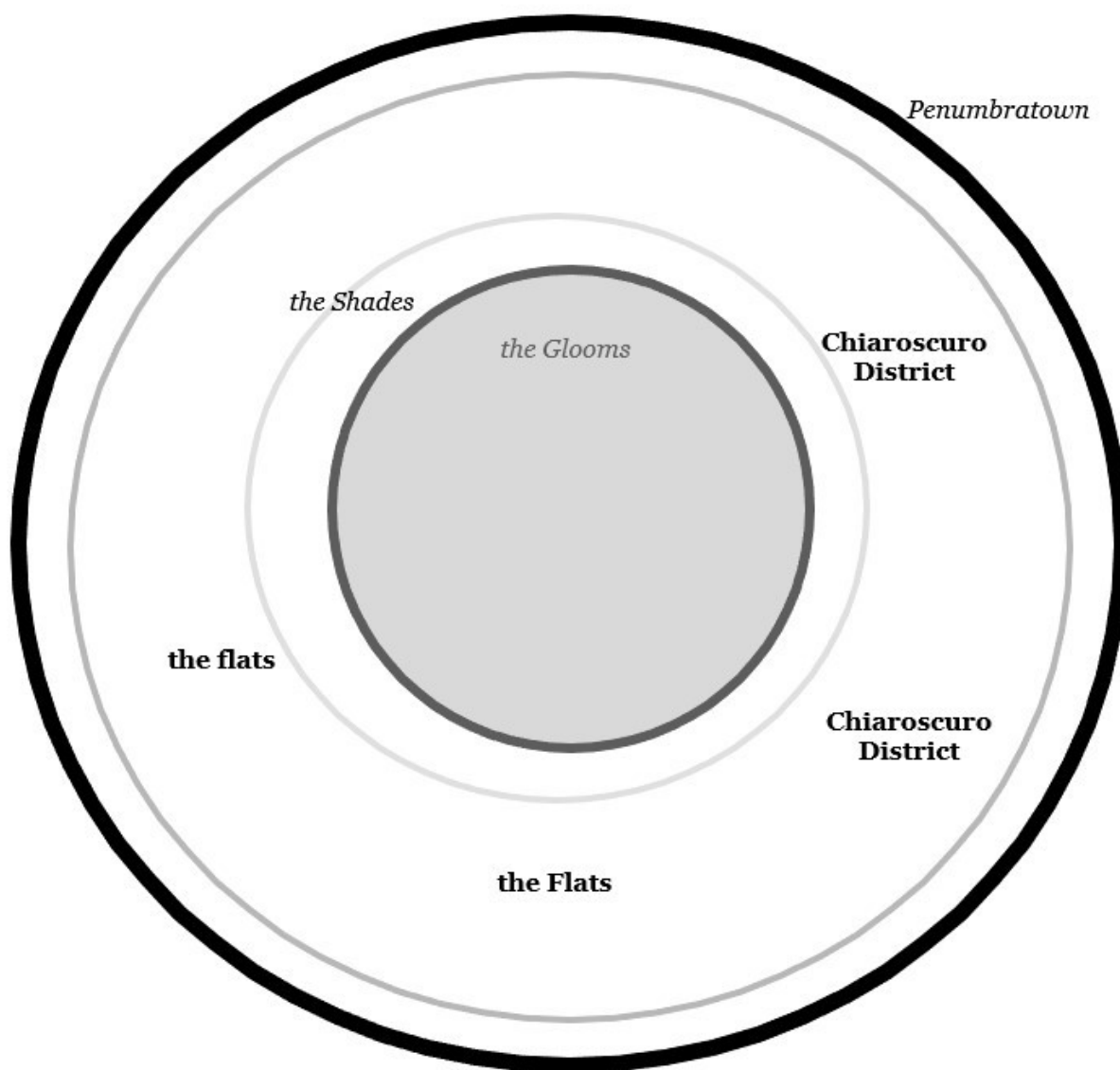
the Shades

the Glooms

Penumbratown

Chiaroscuro District

the flats

the Flats

Chiaroscuro District

Shade City **or** "the Shades"
– the nameless sprawl-flats of endless residential blocks, all uniformly poor and unsophisticated. Notably the are literally above the city Reclamation Plant, where perhaps 80% of its residents work for 16 hours out of any given 24.
Underneath
The Zero – one of several sectors of the underground city; this one has recently been scheduled for "declassification" (see pp 76)

The Flats – a veritable maze of low rise buildings of uncertain and shifting zoning. (see pp 72)

Chiaroscuro distract –
Large area where the affluent new money of Sky city comes a slumming' in the finest tradition of urban renewal.

Penumbra / **Penumbra town** – (the edges; 'the stained glass walls of Penumbra town')
the area around the edges is known by many names but most commonly Penumbra town. Brighter than those in full shadow, most of the light here comes from the surrounding very colourful buildings save at very particular times.
The locals here all are or become intimately familiar with the regular times in a day wherein any kind of 'natural light' will get through; many set their schedules by these appearances in a kind of unwritten agreement.
Interrupting someone during such a "light break" is considered bad form and a good way to stick out.

Umbratown - Surrounding the city, just outside the penumbra of Acro City, Umbra city is surrounded by the gleaming multicolored buildings of the nascent entertainment industry; like a collection of colorful glass bottles, they ring the urban blight, serving as a virtual wall around the sprawl blight itself.

Locations & names – Given the size of the city, even at it's present reduction, giving a complete block by block treatment of any level of the city complex is itself quite beyond a work of this scope. However, provided one makes consistent usage, simply utilizing familiar place names can easily create the same effect.   So, like in the comics, for names of streets, municipal buildings, public sectors, and so on, we draw from Noir's influences. – most esp. Bolland, Ezquarra, also Maurid,

Gibson	Otomo	Dornick	Doran
Orson	Kusanagi	Stracinzski	Kunst
Kovach	Deckard	Aurora	Gally
Effinger	Lime	Tetsuro	Goohan
Isaac	Nolan	Matsumoto	Wagner
Derrick	Batty	Promethium	Gibbons
Ellis	Poe	Iskandar	Rasmussen
Keith	Bailey	Morgan	Naylor
Bledsoe	Olivaw	Harlock	Allsop
Chodak	Ix	Kalogridis	Angus

Ground traffic – unlike some of the other city states of Noir, almost all of Umbra city is closed to ground traffic, the exceptions being major thoroughfares where there are dedicated lanes for emergency services, security forces, and the like. In old umbra town, you walk, or you grab something that flies. Though ride in the back of a SecFor sled will get you places too.

Eyes – essentially free roaming drones with sophisticated programming and a sensor package – constantly hover over the streets of the Penumbra, ubiquitous to the point of ignobility. But a reminder – always, there is someone watching.

Travel – 80 % of surface traffic in umbra city is on foot or by pedway or via organized transit options (travel tubes and the like). Even of the remaining 20% the vast majority of that is official APVs, SecFor transports, and so on.

Bats - Starting about nine hundred sidereals ago, the underside of Sky city become host to an infestation of some species of bat. In the current era, they are the pigeons of Umbra city, reviled by all as endless sources of warm mammalian shit the periodically rain down from the undercarriage of the city above.
In fact, there are 30 or more km of carry way, vent, and duct in the undercity where over two million of these creatures now roost by day. To date the city government refuses to acknowledge the creatures existence let alone that there is a problem in need of repair.

The Glooms
1. **Tubestation nexus**; several rocket tubes to uptown though of course they are biometrically locked; roll luck or under to bypass
2. **Coffin Rental** – Coffin motel type set up stacked 20 high; available in four, eight, or 16 hour blocks.
3. **Roboclinic**
4. **Unami Shade Tank-gardens** - sort of a sushi boat that serves up any manner of tank capable meat creatures they have the templates for. Popular 'biz-bar' among the better off criminals of Umbra.
5. **Yhang's Flitter rental**
6. **Coffin stacks** – see 2. above
7. **Batty Bioharmonics**
8. **The Chodak Central Administration Cone** – a sprawling 550 level 'ceramic spear,' a micro arcology reaching a km up in which the city government is housed.
9. **The enigma club**
10. (roof of 9. Below) Air taxi station; real cheap quick trips back and forth to sky City esp. active after dark. Often not running during 'daylight' hours.

Shade City or "the Shades"
– the nameless sprawl-flats of endless residential blocks, all uniformly poor and unsophisticated. Very 'blue collar'
11. Tarrynt Reznor block – seems to be having some problems with electronic ghosts. What are they? 90% of the 600,000 unit block population work for Reclamation and all have rent control so perhaps the PCs are more....affordable.
12. Allsop Square park – a regulated 7x7 street block area where there is only flat open space and no buildings. In reality it's a tent city that is periodically broken up by the SecFor. Sometime squatters, sometimes a Grey Bazaar.

Chiaroscuro distract –
Large area where the affluent new money of Sky city comes a slumming' in the finest tradition of urban renewal.

13. *"Time is Money"* - where the dedicated young Sky City sociopath with too much money and privilege probably spends some of their Prog wasting away on display at. A see and be seen sort of club/biz establishment; the staff are efficient, ruthless, and absolutely dedicated to procuring what the sick and rich whistle up. And they will shove your unconscious ass in an Aquashuttle for their "Undersea Resort" if you need to vanish from the public eye for a while……. PCs wading through the middle tiers of the sprawl's criminal element will probably find themselves here sooner or later.

Penumbra / **Penumbra town** – (the edges; 'the stained glass walls of Penumbra town')
the area around the edges is known by many names but most commonly Penumbra town. Brighter than those in full shadow, most of the light here comes from the surrounding very colourful buildings save at very particular times.

14. Fourteen sticks – *a tiny neighborhood within a neighborhood, notably dark against the bright wall of Penumbra town at night.*

Umbratown - Surrounding the city, just outside the penumbra of Acro City, Umbra city is surrounded by the gleaming multicolored buildings of the nascent entertainment industry; like a collection of colorful glass bottles, they ring the urban blight, serving as a virtual wall around the sprawl blight itself.

15. **Bounce platform.** For those slumming, and with the right biometrics, one can use a bounce pad to make an assisted/aided leap up to sky city from this locale, which boasts capability of up to four bounces simultaneously. Relatively easy to slip into given that there is always a crowd gather to watch the bouncers, just look and act like you belong. (Relatively easy DC 12 Pers check to persuade entry under those circumstances)
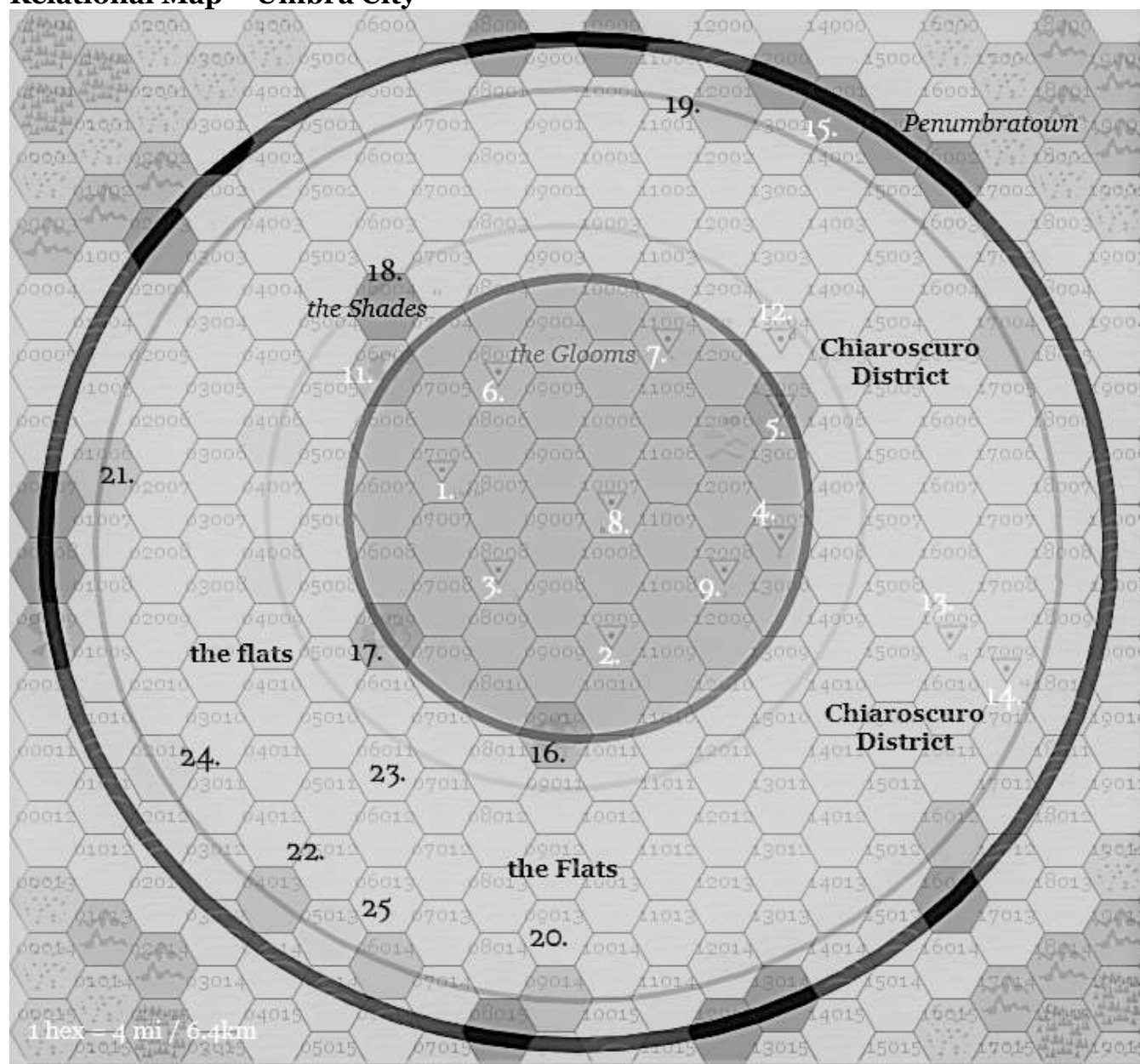

I hate it so much when those go overhead
"The scream of the overhead rapid response vehicles and hex cycles presages the use of actual screechers within the front 60 meters of one of those things moving.
This was about six of them, so I expect the nearest Block to go up in an orgy of mass vampirism within the hour."

Relational Map – Umbra City

The scale on the Umbra city map is   1 hex = 4 miles or about 6.4km;
if the Judge desires a *smaller city area*, scale it to   1 hex = 0.6 mi / 1km

Numbers in white see Umbra City key. Numbers in black see the Flats encounter key area.

On the Umbra city map – each hex can be assumed to include

on the Sky city map, each hex can be assumed to include
    Orgonne Booth

Sprawl Crawl - The Flats
Umbra City surface sprawl mid-zone area

The crystal minarets and jeweled spires cast long stained glass shadows on the near penumbra neighborhood

The public address system is constant. Two or three voices, sometimes the same voice but different messages, can be heard at any given place in the Flat (the surface) of the Sprawl. Everyone has their networked items firewalled and have disabled updates and even then, sometimes info pollution gets through – adspam

At 0300 ea. morning, the city's team of envirobots sweep across the city in organized teams, cleaning up like early Ash Wednesday in the Quarter. They are an authorized labour union (a rarity in the empire)

This of course extends only to the surface layer, so much of the more illicit nightlife moves to the undercity past 3 am or more likely was never above ground in the first place.

16.) **Imperial Wireless tower**
In addition to being precisely what it appears to be, a dispatch hub for Imperial Intelligence SigInt maintains private secure offices therein.
Anyone foolish enough to attempt to hack the tower faces a base DC of 25 to do so with Electronic Warfare and will immediately be met with SecFor and some fine upstanding members of the intelligence community with strong drugs and few morals afterward.

17.) **SecFor Dispatch House**
This vast spherical building is one of the largest free standing structures in Umbra City; the metal sphere with ten (large, plus 18 smaller) dispatch pads ringing the top of the Sphere. All major SecFor deployments are issued from here. There are 31 district houses that report to this one; 24 in umbra city and 7 in the underworld.

18.) **Isotube storage** *('the Tombs')* – there is room for 3 million occupants to be suspended within the Justice-dome inside transparent one way isolation tubes strung up in hanging tubes. Staff (inorganic and meat alike) are notoriously corrupt, second only to the Noir DownPort Port Authority

19.) Amidst a small bank of warehouses, there is one fully automated storehouse that has long since lost all guidance….and there is no record of who owns it or its contents. Inside are 20 volumetric tons of Imperial Nutripaste and Survival bricks, dating to the end of the brief occupation of Noir by a neighboring Saurid polity. At least 90% of the rations test positive for freshness.

20.) **Shimi tank – tank grown fish, sushi, and sashimi cafe**
Hannah, the sushi chef, is a powerfully built specimen of Ursidae Sapiens; her right forearm has been wholly replaced by a rather brutal looking cybernetic limb, the only relic of her time in the Imperial Legions.
She brooks no foolishness in her place. The suggestion that she serves kryllopede in any way may result in violence. Her clientele is split between homeless juves she uses for errands to keep them out of trouble (the "adopted.") and a series of toughs, ex-military, and occasionally someone down from Sky City who's feeling edgy.

21.) **unremarkable structure** notable in it's being totally sealed off to outside observation; they are a back room Troom[21] crew. They are doing this off books without licensing (again) and would rather no stink be made.

22.) **Crystal cutter** – buying and selling, custom crafting orders taken
Joreth is an elderly Friggian, his family have been crystal cutters on Noir for three generations; he lives alone upstairs after hours and wonders about his family line. He is a patient man of great skill when allowed to indulge his craft, which has not happened in a long time.

23.) **Public Tubestation and rocket tube interchange local N7**; notoriously one of the single loudest places in the city. Esp. the big wheel on level 11 where everything completely intersects.

24.) **Pok's Junk Shop** – one of 36 such shops throughout the Flats, this is the one to go to. A specialist in "reclaimed technology" the old tech restores them as best as is able and offers them for sale on the cheap-cheap.

25.) Clone Bank Epsilon – get your fresh zeros right now, decanted at two, seven, fourteen, and nineteen. Might be a red crescent front.

Crossing Umbra City (d26)
Roll Every 15 minutes that the characters are running around surface streets, day or night (it hardly matters here)

1. Booming loudspeaker voices proclaiming "NOW ANOTHER 30 minutes of FREE digital rain brought to you from your friends at Spectrum Optics. "
2. imperial band holo flashes into display a 60 foot high image of the empire's latest wanted enemy, properly grimacing on queue.
3. All in 120' radius are info bombed by several rapid passing drones dispersing a light pink cloud of info pollen advertising particles. Fort Save DC 12 to avoid being overcome for 1d2 rounds with *adspam erupting in your mind*
4. A crowd gathered around a hustle–busker is a sure ground for pickpocketing, nonetheless, after passing through it, it seems someone has…passed you a note.   "You will be dead in 7 hours if you return home. I'm sorry I can't help more." Written in a language that the character (coincidentally or not) can read. How much of this is what it appears to be is up to the Judge.
5. A SecFor slider pulls up and starts shaking down everyone on the street. Unless the PCs directly engage however, they will not be harassed in any way. This could be relieving, amusing, or could be what others will later point to when they say the PCs are clearly working for the Security Forces.......
6. Character finds random item in the street 1. Maglock key   2. Data crystal 3. An item of clothing 4. A small tool
7. Funeral procession of local lord, alderman or other person of minor influence en route to the Reclamation Center
8. Street fight (**d4)**
    a. Cultists v. cultists

---

[21] Troom – a form of holography involving sensory stimulation techniques and coordinated nootropics use; it's porno

    b. Sect v. sect
    c. Population v. population
    d. General brawl

9. Enormous (90 + 3d100 in height) holo announcement flickers into life with a booming voice to match (**d3)**
    a. A public execution to be held that evening, visitors and curious spectators are encouraged to attend the event live at (location) or watch it on public holoaround channel two
    b. A public trial shall be held at the Space Lord's presiding grounds, Sky City
    c. A series of Paid blips of local ad space that go by very quickly

10. Characters see slave coffle traveling down the center street; 40% the living traffic on display is available for sale immediately.

11. **Slave Coffle**   3d10 slaves (all zeros), with 1–2 guards per 10 slaves; 1d2 overseers

12. Overpassing drone or flyer dumps a not quite aerosol mist of dreggu right onto the party splattering them in proto-material filth. –2 to all negotiation and social tests until they and their gear get to a sonic shower.

13. A beautiful multicolored unicorn shyly approaches you from a side street. When you reach to pet it, it shimmers and the hologram strides away.   You can still smell it.

14. A random assortment of SecFor sleds are disgorging 5d12 heavily armored security enforcers into the Underworld on some sort of Raid. They will likely be restricting access into and out of the surface sector for the rest of the day. Any obvious under dwellers may be challenged or searched.

15. Traffic problems at major thoroughfare **(d5)**
    a. A party of nobles have blazed up and down the central boulevard in their grav vehicles for hours until someone told the SecFor commander to muster their job description and intercede.
    b. Someone, probably from off world, brought their vehicle onto Umbra city streets thinking it was like any other ConUrb on Noir. They have now become mired in a spiraling traffic jam of which they are themselves ultimately the cause.
    c. Chem transport collapsed to the streets when it's hover went out. Likely (70%) water or some other non-hazardous material.
    d. A roadblock has been set up by a small team of imperial Legionnaires. Apparently, someone has an energy weapon in that block and so they are here to bring Imperial Authority.
    e. Two businessmen, both imperial citizens have allowed their disagreements to escalate to stated challenges. Now, here in a public space, they have blades drawn and seek to fight each other. Even on Noir, so long as they keep it to themselves this is their right. Surely though someone can and will take advantage of the chaos this will cause.

16. A wild mob is assembling

17. PCs witness a Mugging – if they are alone 30%, they are mugged instead

18. Alien animal loose in the streets – everyone thought it was a stray holo or ad holo until it bit someone...
19. SecFor using this street sector as staging area before embarking upon a raid in a neighboring street sector, seemingly gormless that people might talk.
20. Street festival or another local holiday – 60% per hour of pick pocketing attempt
21. There is a 30% chance per hour that the PCs will witness what seems to be an abduction attempt
22. There is a 40% chance per hour wandering that the PCs will witness what seems to be visible extortion
23. There is a 15% chance per hour walking that the PCs will witness what seems to be a robbery attempt
24. Anti-imperial rabble-rouser
25. 35% chance per round that SecFor arrive and drag the seditious fool off to an isolation tube for a few progs; anyone lingering gets a few rounds of vomit gas wound their way. Anyone foolish enough to intercede on his behalf gets two sleds of SecFor for backup and join them in an Isolation Tube in the Tombs.
26. There is an assassination attempt in the neighborhood or block through which the PCs are passing. Roll 1d8. On 1-2 the 'assassin' is a clumsy amateur who ultimately will likely get d5-2 people dead or seriously hurt, none of whom will have been their target. On any other result roll again. This time 1-3 indicates it is a professional hit and likely the powers that be are already prepared for it.   Very little will be noticeable beyond the incident itself   on a 4-7 there has been a complication (the hit was political, there was a double, the weapon was rigged to explode, etc.) and so the whole scene is in chaos on 8 the assassination happens directly in full view of the player characters.

"*It is not funny that a man should be killed, but it is sometimes funny that he should be killed for so little and his death should be the coin of what we call civilization.*"
– Raymond Chandler, The Simple Art of Murder

Umbra City Events
1. **The city is attacked– (d3)**
    a. A small horde of waster-landers (1d100) raid the nearest city exterior wall and maybe get far enough inside to encounter the PCs.
    b. 1d4 demons have been set loose in the city, by design or by default, violence ensues.
    c. 1d3 micro-fractures open in different parts of the city and other dimensional beings begin to pour out.
2. The characters bear witness to a **psychic or wizard's duel** in a public place that very quickly starts to get very very dangerous. Warp effects, misfires, or major corruptions seem likely. The entire neighborhood or block may bear permanent scars or effects from such a conflict.
3. **SecFor has barricaded a whole block off** and is preparing to lay siege; there is a residence within where the slaves got violent and are now holding their masters hostage. 70% of any character with a reputation for being a known face being pressed into crowd control or some other authority respecting activity, if only to keep them from intervening further.
4. For whatever reason, the **god** (or something passing for it) of one or more characters **is paying unusually close attention** to their followers in this city.
    a. A single character at random is chosen to be 'tested' and experiences d3 obvious supernatural contrivances throughout the day to see how they react to them
    b. All of the characters are temporally reset the following day and so – one time – live the previous day again. All of their gods will be paying extra close attention to them on this second day
5. The hacker stream blips into life everywhere all at once. "*Good afternoon, time for another brief and untraceable broadcast from your friendly Eye in the Sky News Eye Time for some truth in current events.*"
6. Someone quite skilled in computer crime is not only stalking the halls of corrupt government and outing video, but they are evidently looking into whatever the PCs are looking into; whatever clue or piece of information the Judge wants to give them can be handed literally to them in this way. If they are not the sorts to rack up massive body counts, the hacker will likely contact them again. This time with a job for them....
7. Yric Recard (EAR-ick REYcard) a local business owner was imparted with the location of a fortune in valuables lost during the Reconquista during the last Whispersnight[22] and **seeks reputable mercenaries** no one has heard of to go out into the Wastelands and confirm it is there. Imagine their surprise when it turns out to be a Legion surplus arms stash c. 1000 years ago?

---

[22] **Ancestor's Whispers** – you listen for the dead's secrets; it is said on this night the dead, or the dead with which you already have a tie anyway, have a channel to the font of all knowledge and so can whisper, if you are respectful and listen, the forgotten mysteries of time to the living.
It is otherwise a day of tradition.

Urban Reclamation Zone 0-19TNull
aka The Zero

Large standing population (s) of unregistered under dwellers; Many orphans.

Other populations remaining in the Zero
Insectivroids – Tiny population of death eaters, Small population of caretakers
Orange sun Saurids, Red sun Saurids
Aesin humanoids
Mongrel humanoids
Some Mechs
Some Synths

Common Sights
Linkjuve – like the linkboys of old, these have been trained since early childhood on their nightly (or each morning) duties that see to them testing and checking vents and ducts for air, pressure, and quality; by the time they are adults they more crawlways and shortcuts than any ten professional criminals in their sector.

Reclamation Workers[23] Are easy to identify. The components of the Rec Works are broken into four sectors; Umbra city has at least four such Recworks, more likely six or more. Reclamation Delta (nearer) and Reclamation Gamma (further) are almost completely 95% staffed by Aesin workers who live in Underworld. Rec Delta wear stain free wash and wear white coveralls, matching gloves, cap, and jacket, plus heavy grip boots. Those who are employed in Reccie Gamma wear the identical outfit (fabbed off the same template, given the worker's specs and biometrics) though theirs is black (technically dark purple but this only fluoresces in UV).

Automated vendors (*Bounty from the SEA!)* - has a one in 100 chance per round of going randomly insane. Maybe sabotage, maybe it's just old? Not sapient machinery though possibly it may be trying.

Abandoned private residences – largely grouped together in smaller, more secure Hab-Blocs and now primarily sources of squatting and scavenged goods. 1 in 3 should have something interesting

Current Conditions: A local urban district has been finally rezoned for higher security settlement; to wit, a pacification campaign begins - since the SecFor is demilitarized however, they farm it out to "independent contractors"….and so little changes, initially. However, as the date for the reclassing of (now) Urban Reclamation 0-19TAleph approaches, both outsiders and those in the Zone plan, plot, and coordinate to Take The Sprawl!

---

[23] Major employer such as it is, once the flight has begun remains the Reclamation Sector (RecSec-18s1), one, well sector, over and up. Brutal 13-hour shifts of six and seven hour-cycles in limited biocontamination.
Green rubber shoes mean organic waste reclamation
Black rubber shoes mean dead / rotting (necrotic) waste reclamation

Especially of note to locally occurring do-gooder type PCs or at least those who care about their home will find it to their advantage to make alliances with and come to the aid of sympathetic locals.

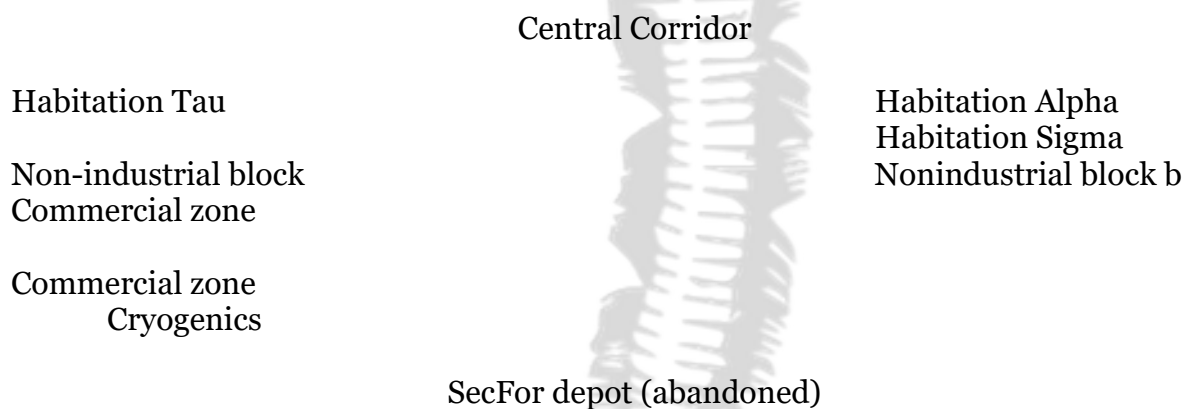**Starting Rumor Table; give all zeros 1d3 of each, modified by Pers. Mod.**
Underworld thrives on rumor in the absence of actual information. Lore and tale are just as important to many an Underworld dweller. Every MetroHab has it's urban legends, stories that, it is said, if you go down too many floors maybe you will see things to make you believe.
Subsequently or alternately, introduce these as you like, during character generation, during NPC interaction, or however you like.

1. The Silver Menace !!! ranty statement about the face stealing silver menace in Corridor 21
2. Some things are just a constant in this universe. SecFor blows the Handles.
3. The Empress is going to lift the DMZ any day now.
4. Every MetroHab has it's urban legends. One of these is White Mother, a spectral phantom that is silent and implacable. If she choses you, you will vanish never to be seen again.
5. Down past level ten there is a spectral figure, floating in some obscure environmental suit. Sometimes it claims members of the Underground. Those claimed vanish.

Additional rumors can be found on page 97

Relational map – keyed area of the Zero

Central Corridor

Habitation Tau   Habitation Alpha
                                                                 Habitation Sigma

Non-industrial block   Nonindustrial block b
Commercial zone

Commercial zone
        Cryogenics

SecFor depot (abandoned)

If the Judge is preparing a play area in advance it should be large enough to include initially perhaps a total of 23 fixed locations/encounters with add-ons and elaboration for each one. Those 23 should be broken into (primarily) placed or geographic / location based, and event based encounters, of which there should be a handful.

Rules for the Underworld
There is no detailed and keyed map of the underworld. To depict the maze is to take away some of its power. A maze displayed is just a map, a maze described is a puzzle, inherently more interactive. The Judge is urged to work a master map up incorporating random techniques or urban/dungeon geomorphs if such is desired.

Notes: Some structures will indicate inner 'sublevels; these are nested within the main structure, within the overall cavern and corridor level by level setup. Within each structure 90% there are sliding ramps with graspable sides for widest possible usability by differing body plans and sizes.

Portalway - usually indicates a round reinforced opening about 2m up and around; for many many reasons the doors most often have been removed from these apertures (80%) and replaced (sometimes) with what could charitably be called aftermarket replacements. In some areas (most notably the first Two levels of Underworld) the remaining 20% most often consist of thin-dial iris valves that (75%) still have power, or (25%) have been rigged for easy (or 'easy') manual use. Most residents take the presence of anything approximating a door (even a drawn curtain of beads) as a "closed door" socially. Portalways were once all powered vault style doors however, so there is a distinct lip to the underside of most (all from side corridors, none from main corridors) so watch your step.

Rapid directions table - Where is it? - Roll whenever, WHENEVER, you need to know where the PCs need to go from where they are.
1. Up (1d4) blocks
2. 1d2 levels up
3. 1d4 levels down
4. Through the (1d4 direction, north, E, south, W) Lock-hatch
5. Beyond the main corridor
6. Past the old SecFor pillar.

What is available off this Main Corridor?
1. Portalway to habitation (see sub table)
2. Portalway to side corridor
3. Civil Storage Access
4. Hosteling Module (see habitation sub table)
5. Administrative suite
6. Courtyard sub table
7. Side corridor
8. Intersection with Main Corridor (roll again)

What is available off this side corridor? (**roll 1d5)**
1. 1 The Shops
2. 2 Habitation modules
3. 3 Commercial Storage access
4. 4 courtyard sub table
5. 5 charging station – either device oriented (2d20 large scale and 4d20 smaller) or Mech oriented (in which case this is a machine squat for up to 1d16 mechs or synths)

How well-lit is it?
1. It is darkness – focus, concentrate, feel your way ahead. Have friends at back.
2. *(45% IR or other Surveillance zone active, check every 15 minutes 1 in 4 they are being hunted)*
3. Full dark – involuntary freeze, listen for the air pumps. If you feel no breeze, then it is time to panic
4. Awfully dim – you constantly worry if the lights are dimming
5. Pretty well lit. Flickering now and then of course.
6. Medical grade awful lighting, you can see every imperfection on every face with crystal clarity. *(10% surveillance zone active)*

Habitation sub table **Roll 1d6**
1-3. 1d6 apartment 'houses' placed together to form an inner courtyard between them; each 1d3 microlevels within, containing 1d4 intended bedrooms out of 10-12 rooms (roll d3+9)
45% chance of additional d3 connected upper alcoves intended for smaller juveniles.
4-5 Temporary or hosteling modules – Most are converted full time to habitation, but others are converted to unofficial commercial outlets, sometimes 1d6 will be cluster together into a "Bazaar of the Plainly Hidden," often (33% operating lesser criminal enterprise (black market, smuggling, illegal brothel, etc.)
6 semi administrative suite;
Note – habitations stacks are functionally endless rows of rolls on the above table with the odd roll on the side corridor sub table. (How many rolls? If you really need a number call it **1d100**)

Courtyard sub table **Roll 1d8**
1-2 A large (30xc30 or 60c60) octagonal or hexagonal chamber with additional ventilation, better quality lighting, and a variety of seating accommodations. In better sectors music may be piped in from elsewhere.
3-5 Small (20x20 or 25x25) circular chamber with adequate lighting and superior ventilation; alcoves are frequently located along each side in slots to allow for moments of semi-private reflection. In esp. crowded sectors they are repurposed as squats.
4-7 SecFor or Emergency services substation and waiting booths.   Only staffed and outfitted 25% of the time. The rest of the time they are usually repurposed as neighborhood community centers or put to other purposes given the needs of the local population.
8 A commercially zoned courtyard dedicated to cheap foodstuffs acquisition and consumption.   80% of facilities made up of environmental seals and controls given multispecies needs of this sort of commercial enterprise. Often in proximity to Reclamation subsectors.

Major encounters
 (*broken here into geographic or location based, and event based encounters)*
Locations given per relational map and each other

001 <u>Sprekhalteschteele -</u> a secret level underneath the main level, accessible only at points (connects key three locations-005, 006/007 – which are the same structure – and 023)
Festooned with hard line transmitter boosters allowing the proles above and below to get their full sense feed.

002 <u>Muad's Brain Farm</u> - Only the highest quality neural enhancers. Muad sells an incredible variety of pharmaceutical, mycotic, and boosters, enhancers,
Purchase d4x4 credits and roll
Brain drugs table
1. character stows weapons(s) and becomes very talkative and eventually affectionate with members of the party.   Also, these clothes are so confining….
2. Nootropics boost efficacy of all psychic powers by +2 for the duration
3. character trips balls
4. Oh Boy (see Unique result table)

Unique results
01-12: PC is inexplicably linked into a telepathic space rock performance from a world with much looser restrictions on having a good time than their own. Immersive "you are there" performance overrides all other sensory input no matter what else the PC is doing. Performance begins in 10xd5 minutes and may last up to four hours.
13-26 Zukkor Overdose;   the drug (a faint green powder) unleashes powerful sensory hallucinations; the Player Character's face will begin to flow off of their skull into random directions. Go from there.
27 : Table Flip Character attempts to rage quit.   Roll some dice and hope someone takes them down friendly.
28- 77: Regardless of what merriment is occurring in their cerebral cortex, the user is in the corner, giggling and happy for the next 1d12+CL hours,
78 - 82 : Martian Snovi – Character sees things they were never meant to after 1d3 rounds retching.
83-00: My Bog it's Full of Stars! Character experiences 'one of those trips' if they are a caster, 1 in 5 chance of accidentally falling through a portal that only they can see and experience … which may or may not be very real.

003 <u>"the Light Gathers in Reflecting Pools" - psionic initiation cult</u> - private and they do not like outsiders; very Jungian; 2d30 lay members and perhaps 1d12+ (number of psions) that act as a fanatical inner circle and go between to the rest of the cult.
The reality of the situation is that this is a small cell of 2d3 psions who run the operation as a scam to avoid honest work at the least.

004 *Galaxina Amors* Multispecies brothel - virtual brothel with only three actual joy workers (Flip, Leren, and Metri) , working out of the back; no guarantee their certifications are in any way current given the sectors State of Renewal, in fact the business is wholly illegal.
There really isn't any actual demand for this places' services and really who could afford it down here? But it has a steady draw of the curious, the lost and the stupid.
Lerena Brovnik, a partially rebuilt cyborg (organic humanoid – mongrel) is in charge of the operation and keeping nosy busybodies out but they are never here.   Instead, the synth in her employ does all the heavy lifting.
Rose 86Theta is the girl up front. Rose is an organic passing synth with direct interface to the operations security – they do not know who the responders are, only that they are bad news and not to cross them.   If confronted with violence they will likely flee.
3 pink and yellow privacy screens prevent anyone outside from seeing who is inside despite the open storefront. All of the tech here from the common to the exotic has a scavenged and run down quality to it.
  However, it's all front for the organ legging operation behind and below. (This, 006, 007, and ultimately, 005, are all connected)

005 Under tunnel; sealed
this sealed off fraction of Level 0-20T is used by the organ legging operation to move around and in a pinch as storage.
Every 2 progs the moons arrange to create full tides, and for many (1d10) hours on that day this passage will be overrun with 10d6 kryllopedes, displaced from below.

006 BodyShoppe (body bank & body sculpt clinic)
Dodgy, to say the very least; in theory any biomod can be had for the right price.
Curiosity as to it's origin is not encouraged. Basic swap, implantation, and anti-rejection care can be had for anywhere from 500*quantis* to about 2000

007 the theatre as in surgical theatre. This bank of rooms is the heart (ha) of the organ legging operation here in the Zero. Dox, intake, outgoing, and storage
Quite a bit of the organs sourced here wind up, once they've "accumulated documentation" sold off at the BodyShoppe a street over, which can be reached through the sealed tunnel (005) the 'maintenance techs" that service the defect stim booth (at 22) are down here 2 nights in 7, and are an hour away if someone calls about problems.
The 'repair crew' numbers six in total, but only go out in groups of twos.
1-3 doctors, and 1-3 thug guardians are likely to be here at all times.   This is a valuable part of Silheed di Carbonel's organics smuggling network, if something acts to shut this place down, he will be quite annoyed and those responsible will be found.
1 night in 5 there may be an unexpected "delivery" – over a dozen contractors know to bring their recently and unofficially dead to the Theatre to ensure clean and orderly (and perfect) disposal.

008 Stim booth - One of three ancient "Stim Booths" – public current carrying devices dedicated to species who reproduced by Fusion/Budding. For those with the appropriate biology, entering one of these street pods and dialing settings and method of payment seals the booth. With a thrumming sonic-light holo-vibrations wash across the booth, stimulating them in a pleasurable way to either (Settings)

     Stimulate Pleasurably   Induce Fusion
     Prepare for Budding   Induce Budding

Sexually reproducing beings (including most likely the PCs) will find the experience trippy, nauseating and possibly sanity testing[24].

These booths are almost a thousand years old – they date from about 20 years into the Imperial Occupation, when this sector was zoneograpically (demographics & zoning) mapped to be failing to meet the needs of the (then) dominant Fusion/Budding population. They still work but see little use, being centuries old.

009 Stim Booth - see 008

010 Abandoned Private Residence / Secret spy base 2 members of the "Red Crescent Society" (see pp) operate out of this third floor habitation space observing the near plaza outside (overlooking 0011, 009 and 008). They maintain their cover of being members of some secretive criminal organization all too well – there are whispers in the Underworld that the RCS is some off-world crime syndicate.   Primarily they are working counter-espionage, seeking a person or location known as Sanctuary.

011 Legato's Emergency Loan Processing and Hypnogognative Relaxation Therapy this place turned up last Sidereal; in that year it has become the brightest lit and only property with it's own private security. Legato Brevnik is (or was) an Umbra City slumlord who somehow managed to die fabulously wealthy. Now from beyond the grave, he continues to gouge the working poor by offering loans to those in the Underworld with genetic or material collateral or that have steady jobs and obligations; the entire model is one of manufactured debt and ugliness.
So far it has made Legato's heirs several hundred thousand *Quantis* in last progression alone. There are 7 other such 'shops' in Underworld and an additional 14 on the surface streets of Umbra city (primarily in the Flats and the Shades.

012 Bolthole, dry & clean Semi hidden here is a small (2x4m) Squat temple or Squat Cell – in this case a tagged up but relatively clean small box concealed in the greater concrete around it. Marked as sacred to the Scarpering Mother but her shaman-child, has not been here in some time. No one has used this sanctuary in months. +2 to knowingly invoke the Scarpering Mother here.

---

[24] And no, they will not get off either.

013 Organic Reclamation Facility
a tiny local substation, remarkably close to the main facility.   Local Reccieworkers may get annoyed to the point of violence at the sight of anyone abusing this facility. They may pull small or weak groups over for a chat about the importance of learning how to care for things.   Resistance to such an educational beat-down will be met with 1d12 reinforcements from the educator's Workgang.
Anyone attempting to dispose of a body, a firearm, or other proscribed tech (nuclear weapons, radioactives, etc.) will be met with a half (1d6) or full (2d6) loadout in two minutes.

013a Gang or another criminal stash - All femme Ketraxian juvegang, numbering 7+ 1d10; the oldest one is maybe 16; they engage in petty theft, light smuggling, and rigorous self-defense. Can act as information sources or spies for the right people (defined as trustworthy that will not sell them up the river).
Here they have 1d4 items of random gear stashed plus replacements for all named gear that the gang carry.

014 Thieves den - a gathering spot for the zone's unsupervised juves

015 Stim Booth Seemingly as 008 above. However, this is an imitation These are shiny, and quite clearly built for the use of the sexual reproducers of the Empire. They take your money and do about what you would expect with a combination of direct nerve stimulation holo-vibe and sonic stim. Mildly addictive. (Will save DC 8 or come back daily)   Bare minimum 15*q* for a few minutes.

016 Stim Booth - see 008

017 Slum Stack – Habitation area Helium
See Slumstacks below
In the slumstack's under-tunnels exist **FaceOff** an illegal unlicensed bodyscultping clinic; the owner proprietor and his obviously very stolen medical bay (Type IV autodoc, limited AI self-programming) and a variety of rather exotic technologies. Says they can change your face temporarily (24-36 hours) or permanently the bidding for the former starts at 100*q* an hour*, and the latter at* 500-1000q depending on needs (expedient is expensive, attractive is expensive, custom is expensive, all of them at once is super expensive and affects his schedule)
Isn't capable or willing to do more than day surgery in any other capacity; strictly works as a face and hands artist. Is actually quite talented.   Nonetheless, the moment the Cut-ups hear about this set up they will be scouring the Zone until they find it.

018 *Abandoned private residence* 5 unit ComboHab
On the second floor in a sunken living area there is a concealed panel – if the panel is somehow activated (1 in 6 deliberate search to find), it slides back, revealing an intact Telescreen. If the bloc has power, it will begin to come online.......

019 Slum Stack – habitation area Zor

020 *Abandoned private residence* – 11 unit megametrohab now primarily sources of squatting and scavenged goods.
There is an *automated vendor* for Aquafoods on the first floor.
Grynthe is a low gravity avian, maimed long ago and restricted to the mobility frame that now comprises 63% of their body. They are fascinated by stories of the ancient Moapayaroiet culture and seek to collect artifacts or treasures (knick-knacks qualify) of that lost people.

021 slutty one –less a club and more a designated gathering spot where disresreputable sorts play loud incomprehensible music and imbibe chemicals. High rate of casual non-lethal violence and higher rates of casual sex and drugs. The Thumpah scene here is regularly very good however so many locals will violently defend this place beyond what would seem to make sense.   At any given time, there is 50/50 no one or 10d4+15 people gathered.

022 Stim Booth Seemingly as 015 above. However, this is a trap. It functions identically to 015 above save that it gives out freebies half the time.   When used, one time in ten, it reveals itself as part of an organ legging operation as it flash freezes (25%) or attempts to extract (75%) one or more organs.   The doors are sealed (for privacy assurance!) and take 30 hp damage before the doors will give way. If the 'donor' dies, the booth seals until 'maintenance techs' come to 'clean it out' – as much of the remains will be salvaged as possible. Which will be almost all of them. Bits and bobs will turn up at the BodyShoppe soon after, unless exotic in which case they will turn up in Sky City mod shops in about a progression or two, priced to go.

 023 occupation era fallout shelter
Welcome to Sanctuary- Sanctuary is a private clinic, hideout, and recovery service that takes no sides and serves no master. Allegedly. It prides itself on its perfect neutrality. It is a valuable and recognized neutral ground, though it's location is not general knowledge by any means. It is used by fleeing witnesses, spies, and professional killers equally. Most professional criminals in Umbra City have at least heard of Sanctuary but almost none know where in the city it is. Many believe it to exist in Sky City.
Sanctuary does business with the BodyShoppe (or rather with their suppliers) but only because they have no alternative.   Much tension exists between the Shoppe and the Sanctuary.
The Red Crescents are passively searching for the place, believing it to be part of an oppositional intelligence apparatus.

minor encounters
(broken here into geographic or location based, and event based encounters)

Underworld Day cycle Random Encounters – Underworld tunnels and surrounds, day cycle

check every 15 minutes in the Zero or every half hour if remaining stationary. 1 in 5 encounters; then roll below

1. Party of 1d6 Linkjuves, meeting at tunnel intersection, planning out their 'day.' Might be a party of would-be 0 level thieves or Confiscators in there....
2. Delivery drone – Delivery pod of krylloza; pro'lly nauseating to offworlders unless they also come from urban poor centers
3. Workgang just off a double from Reclamation Gamma. All of them are rearing to go if violence presents itself but are otherwise too tired for most things.
4. Angry young sentient rolls up on any single character when they appear alone and beats them violently demanding to know "where the Hospital is?" the question of course pertains to **Sanctuary** (location) below
5. Three random juves approach the party seeking to join them.
6. One of the Mobile AutoVendors has gone insane again. This time it is quite clearly an act of deliberate sabotage. Presumably as a distraction but for what?
7. Party is identified, followed, or confronted by a gang - theoretically any unified, armed group with an agenda and the will to enforce it, it need not be an assortment of street trash
8. Random SecFor raid. Perhaps someone comm'd in an "anonymous tip"
   say 6d12 armored dullards with sticky rope, sick sticks, and sonic immobilizers to deliver some "nonviolent" abuse and puking.
   Security Force AC 14 (environmentally sealed)
9. Rabble rousing - local agitators attempting to organize the population toward their so-called general betterment. Local agitators (d5)
   > 1. local religious cult
   > 2. local organized street crime organization muscle
   > 3. juvenile agitators, scrawny but armed to some degree
   > 4. d5 angry protein reclamation workers
   > 5. two confused aliens who appear to be large, strange well-armed primitives

   1 in 3 chance of heavies from the SecFor hanging out looking to party
   1 in 3 chance of pickpockets and confidence artists combing crowd for suckers as this is a local thieves' guild "targeted work event"
   1 in 4 chance of SecFor raid per turn of activity/interaction; FunnyGas and sticky nets deployed with surrender! infobombs (Save to avoid giving into authority, lawful saves at -4 chaotic characters need not save) Mechs and cyborgs resist EW attack
10. The characters are silently set upon by 1d4 of the Silver menace (pp 141) who assault them with relentless violence.

Walking after 0000 – check every 15 minutes in the Zero or every half hour if remaining stationary. 1 in 5 encounters; then roll below

1. SecFor SecureSweep; d5+5 SecFor with sticky nets and riot gear roll in looking for the Usual Suspects. Hopefully that's not you.
2. Roaming gang of organ-leggers seeking to make quota for a once successful harvesting operation.   They are not above abducting a smaller group and doing what's needed nearby.
3. Two essence thieves working as a team. One watches as backup while the other tanks off anyone sleeping, they encounter.
4. *"See some Speed Baby?"* Group of 2-16 juvenile joy girls mob the player characters asking for sweeties, pops, thumpa and maybe a good time.   Presently (11,020) many such gangs are more known for petty theft and mutual protection...and racing stripes/checks etc. as they all follow one or more illegal racers
   If anyone becomes violent with them, they will attack *en masse* or flee, and flag down/summon the nearest SecFor.
5. Culties out on walkies; Roll for what they seek (d6)
   - 1-2   Recruitment
   - 3-5   Punishing some Sinners
   - 6   Something weird and incomprehensible
6. 2-16 common gang members; mostly these are bored juves; many are not even involved in illegal activities (at all) but instead congregate around an interest, holo-star, fashion, light novel, etc.
7. 2d6 gang members The Cut-ups have decided you are to be their next *Art Demonstration of Flesh Chaos*.   They go after any PC acting alone or not obviously with a group. They prefer to attack with overwhelming numbers. They will back away or flee a fair fight.
8. Several redbacks (Bloz, Riiv, Saim, Val, Yurie, Zikila) approach the party. Determine their intentions (d5)
   1. One or more of the characters are propositioned
   2. One or more of the Characters are offered drugs
   3. One or more of the Characters are singled out for verbal abuse or challenge
   4. They are asking for help
   5. They are looking for work
9. Character witnesses three toughs beating one person who is already down on the ground; 1 in 4 chance it's a shakedown and soon the party will be surrounded by 1d3 more violent toughs per PC present.
10. Party observes one of the Muzikatauri centaurs being hassled by d7+5 juves
11. Aftermath of some gang violence 2d6 standers by, 2d4 SecFor, 1d3 "witnesses' and 1d4-2 bodies remain.
12. A bright white and purple unicorn, an obvious hologram, is seen by one of the PCs. If they give chase it will playfully lead them on a wild hunt through ever twisting corridors until vanishing shortly before arriving at the location of something the party (or the initial viewer) needs or is seeking.

Underworld Events

1. Crime Blitz – the maximum number of deployable SecFor on the SecFor table roll out immediately and begin looking for reasons to arrest, gas, and bludgeon perpetrators

2. Nearby air recyclers cough up cloud of info spores; contact with pollen may impart 1d3 random points of information, likely unrelated, as well as INT modifier (+ or -)*d3 blip vert style infomercials that may include craving-based memes and minor EduWarfare. Possibility of general alignment and motivational shift for next 22 minutes inexplicably. Headaches and possible allergic reactions possible. Meanwhile the zone's local eel-vore population may find the coating on the character's skin scented and delicious....

3. Neighborhood watch out – a group of well-dressed but young toughs not from the Zero are seen scoping out the Sector. In a Prog's time, they are roughing people up and shaking them down into leaving. In fact, they are (indirectly) on the payroll for one of the interests that wanted the Zero evacuated – they were 'bought out' in an adjoining sector of the underground, one of many getting the reclamation treatment in the past Sidereal. The powers that be have kept very tight control on flow of information. What their master may not have anticipated is how obvious their puppets are about it, strutting about in their obviously new all white cover-alls and cap. Instead of "sowing discord from within" (all being Aesian humanoids) they are being obvious corporate shills...which is precisely what was not wanted. Honestly the powers that be will just be happy when someone puts them down. Might even give those PCs a medal, maybe offer to help them out....

4. Exterre in excelsis – A militant Agent of Exterre is here, she is one of the more infamous of Exterre's known Agents in the Imperium. And, she claims that Exterre has **Willed a Cleansing**. She comes to the Underworld to seek out unlicensed prostitutes and recruit them or drive them out of the biz...or to a proper house of training. BUT Exterre's law WILL be enforced.

5. A Celebration of Light and Darkness – the annual date of this ancient noirish holiday[25] tradition is rapidly approaching. The residents of the upper Underworld are bracing for what amounts to tourist season as every Sidereal this brings the clueless, surface dwellers and Sky city residents alike blundering into homes and workplaces...and getting robbed, assaulted, and murdered, sure to bring a new SecFor sweep.

---

[25] **A Celebration of Light and Darkness** colloq. The Darkness – a foundational tradition dating from the bombardment winter, prior to the second rise of civilization on Noir. At the peak of winter, your family or clan (those you trust) go together as deep as you can go and gather where there is no light. Alternately, they kill what lights they have with them until morning.

For those participating - You ritually are dead and remain so as long as you cannot see; it is more a test of bravery nowadays as much of it's meaning of community and community survival have been forgotten.

--Slumstacks--

Residential Micro-arcologies, can be security or environmentally sealed (in regions within and externally from the rest of the city if necessary).

Contains 6d1000 'family[26]' occupied units

At least 1d100 unoccupied units, sealed.

25% chance also 2d20 unoccupied units, unsealed, squatted

10% of slumstacks have an unofficial block cult, which may be harmless, may be neighborhood watch, or may indulge in blood sacrifice. You just don't know....

Using the Slumstacks encounter tables

These are magnificent office block sized city blocks full of varying types of dwellings, in general however the more expensive/expansive/secure are higher up. Just walking through the flickeringly lit, low powered, low circ corridors of some of these Stacks can be an afternoon's adventure if you are pressed for time.

Roll every fifteen minutes of searching or standing.   If the characters are being super obnoxious or in any way violent, check for encounters every five minutes instead.

Any violent outbursts or acts of personal violence will lead to a SecFor deployment 15% of the time; ongoing murder-hobo style violence fests will almost certainly result in a full deployment of up to 5d12 SecFor and several intero-sleds. Check every 15 minutes of murder-hoboness at 50% to see if the SecFor is downstairs and ready to party. Keep checking every fifteen minutes for an hour afterward even if the PCs settle down afterward.

1. Flickering lights almost conceal the presence of a spectral figure, a long dead Ketraxian woman reaching out toward you in the dark. The surface is cold but there appears to be no haunt remaining afterward.
2. Two tiny humanoid femmejuves, very small girls in matching coveralls, watch the PCs and track their movements from afar with great stealth and enormous tiny giggles[27].
3. A group 1d3+CL of party of near identically dressed toughs approach the party and start throwing testosterone around until the party explains why they are there and what they are looking for. These juves are looking for a fight in the hopes that the older gangs will take them seriously afterward and have, rightly or wrongly, sized the party up as a bunch of chumps.
4. Party come upon a heavily tagged section of dwelling tunnels that are clearly overrun with some kind of off-world verminous insect. The smell their trails leave is not pleasant either. Ew. Traveling through this section without encountering them, their droppings, or their tiny bites requires a sealed E-suit or similar, toxic biology, or pure luck (spend a point of it). Organics that push through almost certainly get bitten at least once, however.

---

[26] 2-12 small to medium humanoids or equivalent mass imperial life forms, designated building residents by biometrics

[27] "You Monsters!" Anyone visiting violence on them can be assumed to be met with violence in response from the **Entire** Slum Block. Just start throwing zeros at the Party until they flee into the arms of SecFor and their vomit gas.

5. Party comes upon a group of armed humanoids openly raiding a residence or small business.
6. Sprawl urchin
    a. Offers to serve as guide to the (1-2) slumstack (3-4) local neighborhood
        i. 1 in 4 this is to lead party into a violent ambush
    b. Offers to sell younger siblings
        i. As slave
        ii. For a good time[28]
    c. Tells sob story about running away on a starship
        i. 1 in 3 this is a shakedown for pickpockets or a robbery
7. Party comes upon a group of three Aesian humanoids, seemingly of the same family or geneline, jimmying the lock to an outside surface street; Two of them are carrying a large wiggling bag...almost obviously containing a living person.
They will keep the bag from any party of interlopers no matter what. Should they be attacked or pursued, one will always be ahead to work locks, one will carry the bag in a dead run if necessary, while the third fights the party off if they have to. Should anyone tear the bag open in an effort to 'rescue' the person inside there will be screaming as the mutant inside, their brother, lights on fire as exposed to direct sunlight. Their family is very poor, and they need to get their brother to the clinic in the Shade. If their brother is hurt, they will, now or later, find the characters, and fuck them right up. They will not be understanding, they will not be bought off, and an apology will not cut it.
If on the other hand, anyone aids them in getting their brother across town to the free clinic there, they may have earned friends or followers for life. Certainly, a place to crash and a helping of worker-kibble.
8. The party comes upon a pair of heavily armed male-presenting humanoids in 'working clothes,' hauling what appear to be both fully equipped corpses (fresh) and 'bags of loot' into a particular floor of the Slumstack and will not appreciate nosy zeros pushing in on their action. The party has in fact just stumbled into the territory of an established "work crew" and their secret hideaway/laboratory. Large parts of this floor of the stack have been quite unofficially converted in a hodgepodge DIY patchwork of additional (false and poorly fabricated) walls and framework to serve as a semi labyrinthine pathway to direct unwanted traffic ... complete with several small murder holes just the right size for needlers. But those are ILLEGAL RIGHT?)
(see The Toolshed below)
9. The party is near the central location of a Memory shanking outfit; If the party has three or fewer members there is a 1 in 3 chance that they will be attacked or gassed (DC 14 Fort save to resist the vapors of this homebrewed ko gas). If they are at any point rendered unconscious, they will wake up in their homes (or together of one or more PCs lack such) 2d12 hours later.

---

[28] Yes, you read that right. Slumstacks are harsh. Are you going to save her Travis Bickle?

Meanwhile someone has made one or more illegal backups of one or more of them.   Any secrets they may have had are now not theirs alone.

The Toolshed - This is the hideout of a group of d6+7 PC types who have long ago banded together to achieve a greater degree of success in this world than they would otherwise have.   They are relatively successful semi-criminal "undertakers" who do very dangerous jobs for big monies for disreputable sorts up above in Sky city and other places in the Umbrasprawl. They are all no nonsense and will take no gruff from any squeaky wheels or loudmouth obnoxious zeros looking to fuck shit up.
They have several (repurposed) cryo cabinets that they use for storing dead bodies or such sundries that they have looted so as to avoid their being found and are very adroit at hacking found and salvaged technology. They are a mixed group of Aesian and other poor scrubs working Reclamation. A few lupoids. Possibly a few mutants. One or two aliens.

Criminal Activities

Doing things off the books, unofficially, without a license, your own way, is perhaps the commonest crime on Noir. For a central planet the locals, especially down in and under Umbra City, thumb their nose at Imperial regulations with terrifying regularity, though this attitude cuts across most cultural and class lines in the ConUrb (and across the world in a more general sense) even reaching to the heights of Sky City, save where they know the Imperium is watching. The black market is so prevalent, successful, and common that such operations often occur in plain sight.

Smuggling – The Black Market is immense on Noir and particularly so in Umbra city, where it is claimed you can probably get ANYTHING. Much of the criminal enterprise feeds into this and all is affected by it. Among the highest valued commodities are exotic foodstuffs from elsewhere in the Imperium.

Theft is broken into several organized theft rings which control both the flow of stolen goods into the black market and elsewhere as well as strongarm amateurs into their own arms or those of the SecFor. These are daring outfits of bandits who bring in some of the highest fees the common criminal is going to fetch in Umbra City without homicide. When they are successful anyway. When they fail no one has ever heard of them.

Prostitution is complex. In the Imperium, it is not a crime, but there is a politically powerful guild that controls it and it does not like competition. Unlicensed practice is an offense here just as it is v. any other recognized noble imperial profession, and as 'dangerous.' (More so in this case).
However, strong arming or otherwise coercing others into sex and pleasure work is very illegal in the imperium. This is the criminal offense most in discussion here, Unlicensed practice (off the books and disreputable professionals) – medical or otherwise
On Noir, the considerable population of C-os (unlicensed) sometimes brand the delicate underpart of their right upright most appendage with a very severe looking zero to indicate solidarity and thumb their appendage at SecFor to boot.
On Noir (in most cities) C-o activity is a crime, generally this leads to simple protection rackets, but it does escalate at times in often severe ways.

Body Sharking and Organ Legging
Inert but theoretically living bodies, organic or inorganic, are big business in the Empress Imperium, and so the illegal acquisition and distribution thereof even bigger. Either way both require a few cryo-freezers (Body-sharks will require a lot more), some middlemen, and organ leggers likely will need a surgical unit (of some kind) in order to operate. Like a chop shop but for people parts. Cost of operation will be high most especially in energy requirements.

Memory Shanking and MemGanking (*Memory and Experience Theft*)
-xtheft; most often illegal braintapes of individuals but also fragments of braintapes or stolen experiences, almost always illegally obtained.
Has many names Playback, XPS, wiretripping,

Some operations are literally just equipment on (or in) a single person, others are far more elaborate. The ones that involve kidnapping and non-con of course usually require privacy and payoffs (and lots of them) unless of course that's the kick being paid for (and often even then, it's a seller's market and suckers get used).

Playbacks or **Snuffbacks** are gangs or thugs that abduct people, strap them into recording equipment and then perform surgery, or rape or whatever – usually a third party will market and sell the experience to a select clientele.

Fraggers sell partial sense or memory experiences and have a rep for product that will fuck you right up.
Repeaters get addicted to particular experiences or memories and loop them over and over. On many worlds even legal memory transfer is illegal to the recently bereaved or traumatized for this very reason.

Dreamthieves and essence sharking
A separate but related market is that of dreams. A black market of highly unusual dreams exist and there is a collector's market among the more esoterically minded nobility. So, it's one of expensive tastes.
Sometimes these dreams can be extracted chemically, other times through more mystical means only.

Dreamthieves exist. Likely the onieromancers themselves are at the heart of the trade. It's said they can track and influence those whose dreams they 'trap' so perhaps this is part of it. Essence collection is the related art of tapping a living being's orgone – often by collecting their essential nature in dream drops.
Individual operators perhaps seem a bit like mad doctors out of the 1950s with their large black bag full of what seem to be archaic syringes though any group of operators will need a central laboratory to store or beak down the dreams before sale unless they possess other means. Many operate on a single night basis, with bonuses for "freshness" and no storage is typically necessary.
Those who fall asleep in public places seldom remember their dreams and are often sluggish for days afterwards….

Gangs and Cults of the Zero

"By the time one of these rats is a dozenyear they are already mean little blighters who have conquered the two biggest foes most juves have in the Zero – Boredom and Fear. Don't let them in numbers around you. Never let them surround you. If you fear for you life, use of force is authorized."
- Squad briefing, Sector chief Unis Rekcheck, Umbra City SecFor
  (and wholly a part of the problem)

The population down in the Zero is much higher than official figures would suggest. There is a regular transitory population at least equal to the number of off the books imperial subjects; many who have been settled here by state or occasion have reverted to making babies the old fashioned way.
Unfortunately, there is already a problem – there is little for young people to do down here and certainly not in the teeming masses that secretly – but openly - exist. Many gangs exist simply to fill that void. If an alternative were created that demonstrated its ability to persist, maybe fewer would join the gangs?

There is at least one group of devotees of the Scarpering Mother down here operating amongst the steadily changing transitory population, often facilitating that transit. Imperial security takes a narrow view of unauthorized world transit, by any means, and an even dimmer view of those who fragrantly violate it's laws; the proximity to so many higher echelon members of imperial security Is not unnoticed, those that live here have long since adapted to the imminent proximity of the worst attention they could acquire.

Gangs

There are many gangs in the Zero; thankfully a surprisingly few number of them are genuinely violent. Under normal circumstances the larger purpose the other gangs serve is to keep the peace by their sheer bulk of numbers – nothing is allowed to escalate past a certain point. Those gang members who wish to graduate to genuine criminal enterprise seldom find a way in here, but they do pass the time.

The Cut ups Are a gang - Appearing to be young and snotty dandies of a variety of gender expressions
They claim to be part of an emerging Chaos Art movement - they practice their nascent (often non-existent) body arts on almost anyone in the Zone they can hold down long enough. At least once they claim to have removed one face and swapped it out with another. They are muscle for the organ legging operation though none but the leader know anything about it.

Gangs of urchins haunt the undercity, each usually led by a small band (1-3) petty criminals. At least three such bands of underfed juves exist in and underneath the Zero.

Cults

At least one cult style unofficial "cult of the Empress" which….means the current sitting empress. Could get in a lot of trouble. Could start something. Both?

The glorious purple systerhood of the rad redemption - A system-wide cult known for its ant imperial rhetoric. Members address each other as Syster and adorn themselves in beads, habit, frock, and nun's attire, often red or purple.

ESPER Cult the Swimmers in Darkness
Esper cults often use fish metaphors and iconography because 'it's like swimming through minds in the dark." They ritually blind themselves to better seek inner space; they have coopted a truly ancient symbol and added the inscription Be the Fish. Having experienced some manner of persecution or trouble on the surface the cult decided en masse to go underground in a variety of senses. All of them dropped off the grid and gathered, initially squatting as a group in Underworld. Now they are sometimes used to relay information, the common Zone subject thinking they are all telepathically linked at all times (they may yet be).
Many of the junior members of the cult sought it ought in hopes of treating warp or strain issues they were experiencing, so as a consequence, a great many of them display unusual habits, nervous tics, and the like, even though most of them spent their time very much 'checked out' and largely unconcerned with the material world.

Other orgs
"neighborhood watch" – these are just busybodies with nothing better to do than spy hard on everyone else and each other.

The actual neighborhood watch, such as it is.

Joinable Factions and Secret Societies
PREPARE –
A small jumble of business owners, homeowners, and a smattering of others in the community who have the most to lose by the coming Reclassification. Would be a larger group (many appear for one meeting and leave and thus are not counted) save for their relatively drastic intent – to violently resist Reclassification.
These are mostly older sentients, with large families of small off the record juves or those with sentimental, mystic, or social attachment to their home. They all generally feel that they have less to lose by standing up for themselves than by folding and scattering and wish the others saw that.

Get outers – were a very disorganized network of people who knew each other, helping those they wished, to get out ahead of Reclamation by mutual channels, but became a much more organized group after PREPARE became vocal. Most of those who founded the network have by now long since left and those who remain exist precisely to provide an avenue out ahead of time, planning on withdrawing only when Reclaimation itself finally occurs.

The Authority appeasement faction – think "the Imperium wouldn't….." not nec. Appreciating that the Imperium does not care how worlds treat it's citizenry past a certain point. There are other, even more esoteric reasons for "appeasement" (what the

others call this group, least disparagingly) either way they do very little, they do not prepare, and greatly criticize the efforts of all who try to do....anything.
This is probably the largest single faction in the Zero at present. Sadly.

Nero Fiddlers – s smaller group that has never had a future anyway, the juves, now seeing that as a literal thing. Many are becoming more violent and seek to in some cases literally just burn it all down ahead of time.
Mostly just scared lost very frustrated juves who have no options and are tired of it.

The Nero Fiddlers are presently for all intents at war with PREPARE; while PREPARE has come to generally dispose all other factions other than some of the Get outers, it took one person's bright idea to preemptively clean up the Zero and have a little Reclaimation of their own. The Fiddlers have thus declared open season on all of PREPARE which has responded with unexpectedly violent force.

The Body sharking business is booming – the one small local body sharking ring decided to selectively offer its services to the Get outers and others ....for a price.   Now they are making out like gangbusters and just would like the good times not to end. They have moved enough bodies that some within the organization are thinking about reaching out to slaving clans.

Redbacks (illegal organization; legally this is organized crime) – are an emerging but highly secretive workers' rights organization; what you or I would know as a labour union. If anyone, management or the City government got wind of how extensive it is, the entire city would be under lockdown and they'd be landing legionnaires if they could.   Redbacks are 95% Aesian workers in reclamations and other labour intensive jobs. It is a racial thing as much as anything else as the meme is evolving, some are even festooning themselves with tattoos and ritual scars, imagery dating from the old Second Empire.

"Look Mae, we may live "in the core" but we ain't livin like core worlders here are we? Look around us? Anyone want to spare us some of those luxurious maker rations they un got? Make any damn thing they please at a moment's notice with someone else's tools and call themselves clever.
We built an empire out of flesh once. Our own flesh. We red bodies can rise again. Not superior, but just.
And let the coreworlders wear their custom reality interfaces and smartmatter EVERYTHING constantly shimmer shaking like a bug you want to stomp. Let them eat veggerat let them eat scrmp, let them feed a nuke of six on a ration of one a half kibble a work cycle."
> – **Kimmer9, workgroup4719**, Aesian Reclamations Handler and Shop Steward, a stamped and chipped employee of Alchemaide Reclamations and Refab, speaking at illegal agitprop (meme: *Red Workers*!)
> in the bowels of Umbra City underneath Reclamations bank 19-2

Rumors for the place where talking ceases

(chiaroscuro district) *Somewhere deep below the streets there is some kind of tremendous Splinter machine experiment running.*

(chiaroscuro district) *a 'man in white' is stalking Sky City – a phantom or ghost that appears, abducts lone undercover agents on their own fir the first item, interrogates them to breaking and releases them all without leaving any evidence.*

(the flats) *Don't insult the food at Hanah's! A Fin that floated in from Sky City wound up served on vinegar'd rice.*

(the Zero) *The whole zone is up for rescaling! They are going to run us all out soon enough! If we're lucky they'll use SecFor and nothing will change. If we're unlucky they'll hire 'independent contractors.' You know what THAT means....*

(the flats) *someone slips a PC a flyer for a Redbacks meeting that night in Underworld; if they are obviously from off world 25% chance this will be a robbery.*

(the Zero) *the surrounding districts are all being repurposed. Why?*

(the flats) *local "prophet" predicts end of world in 1d20 days*

(the Gloom) *An apparent spacer, quite intoxicated tells you about the old Third empire era treasure asteroid less than three Lights away. Might be persuaded to sell you precise coordinates*

(the flats) *There's something ....off in the household of Lord Noir.*

(chiaroscuro district) *a large space caravan is due to arrive at the high port soon, hopefully bringing prices in off-world technical goods down to a reasonable sum.*

(the Zero) *the Office of the Empress is going to lift the DMZ any day cycle now....*

(the Flats) *the Redbacks are organizing. Not just for labour protection purposes either....*

(the Zero) Drop-ins *there is an ancient tunnel that runs out to the wastes. Sometimes things from ...elsewhere, other times and places, seem to "wash up" at times coinciding with various local astrological phenomena. Pass they myco-vape*

(the flats) Anyone who comes up in the shadow of the Tombs is destined to hang there one day. I'm getting out of here as soon as I can.*

(the Gloom) *Maintenance portal access 1313 will help you disappear if you can find it.*

(the flats) *There's a place down in the underworld that can get you biomods and replacement parts cheap*

(chiaroscuro district) *Sky city goes through a lot of coolant. Those holotanks that they keep running are basically makers, why doesn't anyone else realize that? Anyway, they heat up when kept running really bad.*

(the flats) *You ever hear of something called the Red Crescent Society?*

(the Gloom) **whispered* the 'Anticompetitive League' up topside is someone's private death squad. They turn up and people die.*

(the flats) *someone is running around impersonating some squad of studio goons sent out to harass and intimidate their competition. Apparently, they have killed a few citizens and now the Studios are taking the heat.*

(chiaroscuro district) *The Empress is coming! In a matter of weeks, the Empress herself will arrive on a single day stopover in Sky City.*

Sky city squeezes Umbra City dry.

ESPIONAGE! – Spies and their intrigues on, above, and under Umbra City

"*Reality is a dangerous concept. Each one of us interprets it in a slightly different way. Every sense impression is filtered by the brain and altered, sometimes just a little, sometimes completely, to fit our individual model of what the world is about.*"
- <u>Blake's 7 1x1, the Way Back</u>

Umbra City and Sky City above are hotbeds of imperial espionage activity. EVERYONE is watching the holo-industry and its entertainment industry surrounds constantly. And each other. A mistake here could bring ruin to a thousand worlds. *Information Control Must be Preserved at all Costs.*
Who's here?
Imperial Intelligence SigInt – they monitor all communications pertinent to the Ansible and by extension both the whole of the holo industry and, ultimately, all of Sky City.
The Imperial Secret Police – in particular a certain element in the service of the imperial intelligence apparatus. They commonly act through third party intermediaries from a variety of backgrounds to minimize signs of their own involvement.
The Other Secret Police – those who watch the watchers are also present, hiding in plain sight, where none can see. See the Truth.

the Imperial Intelligence apparatus part one – lies

<u>The Secret Police </u>is always a convenient cover for intelligence operatives. Attempts to operate without it on Noir have led to wispy and seldom heard rumors about a Red Crescent Society or Red Moon Cult. In truth the 'red crescents' are intelligence officers, who sometimes in the field identify one another (when undercover or acting under a variety of ruses) with the image or a reference to the red crescent moon. It is not, however a code phrase. It is convenient tradecraft because every intelligence officer takes their oath on the shores of a particular lake on Halal Prime[29] where the ruby hued moon's reflection is a common motif.
They move with and without the approval of SigInt, and often investigate things in the field on their behalf. Almost all of the officers in various cells around Sky City have their hands in entirely enmeshed in local affairs. *The Spider, they say, can sense much along any length of their web but dare not move.*

---

[29] At the end of Vaena Martel's conquest of the inner planets, now known as the Reconquista, remains of the intelligence apparatus and other elements met secretly and urgently at a noble's lakeshore villa on the core world of Halal Prime. Those present decided to accept the conqueror as empress esp. if it would restore the Empire. At the time of this meeting, one among them noted a particular stillness to the lake beyond – casting a perfect and unbroken reflection of the world's singular moon, a moon of ruby-hued thick clouds known as (among other things) Malmashiur dalqrmzys -"the Scarlet's Walk."

Faces and Fronts Legit operations to overshadow and conceal covert ops

Imperial Wireless – a chartered corporation that runs telecommunications on a thousand worlds, also a backdoor for most imperial intelligence agencies.
Has rare beam stations which are functionally planet bound ansibles.
Functionally the public face however of Imperial Intelligence SigInt.

Khittaran war college - Khittar an imperial core world, home of the Imperial Naval War College, one of the nodes of Central Command, etc. Khittar is an old, rocky, tectonically (very) active garden world. As little as 20% of the available land surface is suitable for agricultural purposes, most settlements are in the upper hills and rocky eroded mountains of the planet.
The Khittaran war college is not a project of imperial intelligence (though it is of course monitored) but it's outermost moon is.
It's outermost moon is also the site of the (super-secret) experimental wide band Ansible receiver station which does nothing more than listen for long distance weird dreggu out in the sub-ether.   This is an imperial intelligence project and only those with the Imperial Science Academy cleared for work on this project are allowed to know anything about it outside of intelligence circles.

the Imperial Intelligence apparatus part two –the Truth, one of the Empress' secrets

The OTHER Secret Police – Far more fitting the title "secret police" – a small number of clones, less than half a dozen, exist scattered around Sky City and Umbra city below.
Each are linked into a narrow and quite intimate telepathic network with their 'sisters.'
All of them are quite adroit at blending in, and operate in entirely menial and mundane positions, where their existence will be above suspicion.
The clones are merely part of a larger network of clones – clones of once Empress Vaena Martel I. This network has been active in the Empire for at least 920 Sidereals, spying on the spies and those in the highest halls of imperial power. Mostly they observe. When necessary, by mutual decision they act, but minimally. They do not show their hand.

Stupid Spy tricks –
Behavior Control Constructs (Mind Worms and Control Worms) – a class of biots used by imperial intelligence for a variety of undercover and counter espionage means.
Generally, an engineered parasite, paired to the hosts' biology, that is harmlessly inserted whereupon it attaches itself internally and begins to grow tendrils allowing the subject to be puppeteered, sometimes remotely, sometimes as part of a crude hive mind, programmed by an operator deep inside Impy intelligence.

The Mind Probe – a class of technology, rated usually 1-3, commonly used as brute force interrogation method when it is necessary to interrogate many suspects or informants in a time critical situation.   Sometimes leads to a form of Surrogation (below) as the mind probed individual is functionally hollowed out and refashioned into an imperial spy.

Surrogation - the process whereby imperial agents will replace someone with a brainwashed clone or other apparent duplicate? (see Clone Bank Epsilon, also *The Space Alphabet* this issue)

Rules for Mind Sifters and Probe Tech
- The mind probe wears down the subjects' will with a combination of fatigue triggers, subtle conditioning, brainwashing techniques, sonic manipulation and of course "the right drugs." A brute force method of extracting information that as often destroys the mind as interrogates it.
- If for some reason a PC is subjected to such technology, they immediately are entitled to an initial will save (DC 20 + probe rating). Success on this save allows the character a few options.   Failure means resistance will not be possible.
- Each round thereafter the target is subjected to increasing levels of ability damage; in theory this is temporary. Permanent damage, including personality destruction and brain death, is possible for those reduced to 0, however.
- Damage is scalar, along the die chain. The first round the target suffers 1d3 ability damage spread across (PERS, INT, STA); each round thereafter this increases, staging up to 1d4 the second round, 1d5 the third, 1d6 the fourth and so on.
- Once one of these abilities is reduced below 3 the target will tell the interrogator anything they need to know.   Once PERS is reduced to zero, they will likely be conditioned and reprogrammed, becoming in essence a new person operating as an imperial agent. Once STA reduced to zero, permanent brain injury has resulted. Roll 1d6 and apply this immediately to (INT, AGIL, PERS).

Resisting the probe. For those who made the initial save, their options are
Resist – actively resisting, making a DC 20 Will save each round to avoid damage. This is a painful process. Scoring a 1 on such a roll incurs 1d6 hp damage.
Playing the Probe – the most difficult, you pretend to break early on, you are playing the operator of the device (if a separate entity) as much as you are playing your presumably hacker like knowledge of the device's make up. Roll 1d10, add your PERS score and Class Level; if you beat a 25 you have managed to fake breaking. You may learn from the attempt from at indoctrination, but it will neither hold nor take
Armor yourself with what you hold dear – "the priest's defense" armoring yourself psychologically with faith, whatever the target has faith in. Allows for a strong form of passive resistance (which can be used in conjunction with either of the above also, adding +4 to such attempts)
In essence this allows the target a second Will save at the same DC for all Probe induced Will saves.

"As I was going under, I started to recite Shakespeare, the Talmud, the formulas of Einstein, anything I could remember, even a song from the Beatles. It armored me, girl; they couldn't wipe those things away. You can't beat the human spirit!"
- Dr. Hans Zarkov, Flash Gordon

Ha Ju!
H'ngt'ki!
Hey!
HEY YOU! **OUTWORLDER!**

There's maybe a few things the brochures don't tell passing tourist types like yourself. Now give us a slice of that fat credit and we'll see what we can do about "correcting your understanding of our local vocabulary," eh?

You gots money? Gonna need it here. Sure, but down here we use trade, barter, and big fat stacks of cash money. Quantis of course!

11,020 present imperial exchange rate:
>   **1   Imperial Transaction = 1,500 Quantis**

The Quantis is in a state of devaluation; the Noirish economy is depressed – but it's better than it's been in literally centuries, where the exchange rate has hovered up to 1 to 2300. It helps that no one leaves world without permits.

Hey, don't stare – I see you don't get many Martians where you come from? The Aesine people are all over this globe and a great many in it too. They pretty much ran this place once. Mostly of em are poor now. Way poorer than you see them elsewhere in the Empire.
Oh, an don't go calling nobody Pink, nor Pinkskin neither. In fact, commenting at all on the shade of anyone of a red or reddish appearance is probably just not a thing you want to be doing. They'll cut you.
I am not kidding Impy.
Everyone has a blade here, remember that.

Pink – uncomplimentary euphemism for one of Aesin descent but who inhabits the underworld and so does not get direct sunlight. Implies poverty and trespass.
"Hey Pink, what are you doing out of your tunnels tonight?"

Yes, Everybody Impy. Why thank you. This bio locked? There a tracer in this I will come back along you and skull you with the back of this club, savvy? Now welcome to Noir, it's been a pleasure doing business with you.

Instant Crime Drama Generators for Noir

Who
The client – D10
1. Holo-studio
2. Desperate or Grieving parent
3. Grieving family
4. Robopsychiatrist
5. Obvious femme fatale
6. Robopsychiatrist
7. Victim of circumstance
8. Eccentric Noble
9. Someone No One Else Believes
10. Juve

What d8
1. Murder
2. Theft
3. Blackmail
4. Info impersonation
5. Organ legging
6. Smuggling
7. Illicit slave trafficking
8. Unlicensed guild activity

The Item d7
1. Fabric sample (1 fetishist 2-3 collector 4-6 industrial competitor)
2. Data crystal
3. Rare object d'art
4. Family heirloom
5. Imperial symbol
6. Precious keepsake of the oligarch
7. Is hidden. See Where is the MacGuffin?

The Victim d6
1. hapless drifter
2. Citizen turned criminal
3. the crooked SecFor officer
4. the investigator
5. Plainclothes SecFor (corruption squad)
6. Undercover SecFor

The clue d4
1. The shattered mirror
   (1-3 antique, 4-5 glastel, 6-10 cheap force field hand reflector)
2. The chipped claws or nails
3. Vic's final comms chatter
4. Scrawled at the Crime Scene

Scrawled at the crime scene sub tabled d4
1. Saurid caste marks
2. A random string of numbers
3. Android service number
4. Name of long dead child

Scrawled in sub table d6
1. Blood
2. Dregg
3. Mech Lubricant
4. Synth Gelatin
5. A mysterious white gooey compound
6. Something dripping from that ruptured conduit there….

The Suspects d7
1. aging gladiator or other violent sports being
2. the fanatical freedom fighter
3. the cold calculating intellectual
4. the thief
5. the smuggler
6. the murderer
7. the obsessed agent

Rounding up the Usual Suspects d6
1. Possible Heavies
2. Femme Fatales
3. Corporate Rep
4. Dirty SecFor
5. Known informant
6. Undercover SecFor

Possible Heavies d5
1. Head of the Water or Food Commission
2. Head of a mid-level up and coming holo studio.
3. the Lord-Mayor of Umbra city
4. World oligarch
5. Someone in the household of Lord Noir

D5 Femme fatales sub table
1. The scientist's daughter; plays innocent, is manipulative as hell
2. The desperate socialite
3. The fading holo character
4. The cunning spy
5. The 'humble Friggian governess'

McGuffins

1. An illegal sensoraround file – was recorded during routine SecFor enforcement (it clearly demonstrates entrapment, extortion, abuse of power, and several other major crimes – not least of which beating the entire party of poor Aesin senseless. The complicating factor is that one of the beaten is an up and coming redback sympathetic Thumpah artist and local celebrity.
2. A template sample proving a connection between psychics on the street and illegal genetic manipulation that was "stopped" 28 years ago
3. Plans for an incredible moon sized monitor vessel capable of destroying a planet.
4. An actual murder weapon
5. Deed to a property in Sky City
6. Ownership papers to a starship hulk in high orbit
7. Detailed bioscan results for the Lord Mayor of Umbra City
8. Backdoor program into a studio head's personal accounts
9. A rare and exotic material contained in a suspensor cabinet.
10. A synthetic boosterspice formula. No idea if it works
11. Blackmail material on an imperial sector administrator
12. A concealed, untraced, charged energy weapon.

Where is the MacGuffin? sub table

1. Hidden at Noir High Port, starport capacity locker C-23.

2 Inside someone's body, perhaps without them knowing

3. In possession of a third party

4. hidden in media, mixed into a song or a work of written fiction

5. In a legionnaire's footlocker on the estate grounds of Lord Noir

6. SecFor evidence lockup

7. Contained in a lockbox within a semi intact rubble out in the waster lands

8. On a small unpopulated work shack in low orbit over Dome City

9. Inside a disused fuse box in an old Reclamation works.

10 In possession of some random juve who was paid to sit on it.

11 in the sonic shower in the good fresher aboard the system freighter *Maodokiley*

12 On an algae inspection trawler on the outer ocean.

The Burn D14 list of complications, twists, and gotchas
1. Surprise – one party of faction are not what they appear to be. Undead, serpent men, possessed or the like
2. Betrayal
3. Entrapment
4. Characters are or have been dosed with medical grade compound. Some of what they see and experience is not true. Some of it
5. the Party get a very young Juve – a baby – dropped in their laps
6. Being used to achieve a higher (or lower) end
7. Dignitaries from another world or from outside the imperium involved
    a. At issue is a long standing rivalry between two shapeshifting aliens older than the
        i. Empire and from beyond Imperial space. They seek only space in which to fight
        ii. their final duel
8. A god, demon, or other powerful otherworld entity is involved
9. It is in fact an Ambush, Set up or Trap
10. Spies are involved. Possibly the problem.
11. Everything the party does is being recorded in full holo by a team of surveillance geeks.
12. Everything the PCs know about the situation is a lie
13. One of the parties involved begins molting.
14. A copy of one of the PCs seems to be running around and getting in their way.

When will the Betrayal Come? D12
1. Come? It already has. A loved one or lover. Possibly a sibling or parent. Make it hurt.
2. The inevitable double cross - On completion of the job, of course. Everyone knows that.
3. From within? One among you works for the enemy – to escape or to get paid, maybe to get pay back.
4. The job itself is a lie. You are all going to die. The job is the betrayal.
5. Six months later. The people you helped have gotten far enough away and paid the right people and now well you know too much. Expect full liquidation with deniable assets.
6. From a random third party, who has been duped – or induced – into acting on their own behalf but also for someone ... else.
7. There is no betrayal.
8. There is no betrayal – but a third party wants you (or both of you) to think so. They stand to benefit
9. At the beginning. A saboteur or spy will elaborate on the party's mission plans and relay to their commanders for handling
10. You are the betrayers – a second party, unbeknownst to the players, are on the same job but being sent in the front way as it were, the expectation is that all of them are being sent to die. However, someone cunningly is aware of this and is using that as a cover to perform the actual operation, whatever that is. Expect entanglements
11. The bride, or missing sibling, lost pet, abandoned slave, or other long lost but living artifact of someone's backstory has decided that they and their friends must pay the ultimate price. However whatever that party did to them was legit rotten and the rest of you may not want to die on this particular hill for that particular asshole
12. At the most appropriate time of course. A satellite is tracking them or perhaps they are under constant surveillance. At the right time someone will show the party their idea of a twist ending. Spoiler alert – it's going to involve murder.

Ethnic Tensions – socioeconomic factors boil over in social and culturally charged conflict. These may seem random or pointless to outsiders but for those trapped within the slums of the Underworld, the problems and conditions seem never ending and obvious. Obv. The Judge will have to tailor these results to specific populations and circumstances.

Restless population 1d10

1-4	Redbacks	6-7	Lupoids
5	Saurids	9-9	Mutants
	10 Imperials/Galactics		

Primary target of tensions

1.-3. Roll on Restless populations again
4.-5. The SecFor (**1d4**)
       1-3   The SecFor in general, local squads esp.
       4. One of their special executive groups. (V Squad, etc.)
6.-7. A commercial enterprise or the perception thereof.
8-9. The City or World government
10. The imperial government

What are doing about it – at least 1d5 min. until SecFor shows up, regardless of the outcome rolled.

    1. Situation is hostile – primary conflict between two or more parties numbering 1-6 belligerent individuals.

    2. Situation is turbulent, spilling over into nearby streets and encompassing unrelated matters very quickly. Perhaps 5d12 perpetrators all said will be responsible.

    3. Situation is unstable, actions visibly or seemingly being taken by all major parties seem to be escalating the situation unless some outside party acts.

    4. All major players circle their wagons, yet no one takes action to stop the escalation, so it accelerates in a vacuum unless stopped. Then progressing to and through 5. Below.

    5. Situation Explodes into an orgy of ethnically tinged gang violence. Over the next 2d3 progressions, up to 1d4 ethnically aligned gangs on each side will become active combatants over slumstack levels, neighborhood landmarks, and so on. Unless prevented or manipulated somehow the area will experience 7d7 random homicides, 12d24 random injuries, and over 1,000 transactions in properties damaged or destroyed during this period.
Almost certainly ends in mass dispersal of tranquilizing agents and wave after wave of population control equipped SecFor.

Ethnic Tension Complications
1. Regardless of the above, the truth of the matter turns out to be a bit different; the conflict at source is between several squabbling juvegangs, which have been allowed to play out to their logical conclusion, having erupted quite unintentionally along racial-socio-economic fault lines. Now of course it's too late to put it back in the bottle but at heart that's what started this.
2. The circumstance is aggravated by the presence of a number of (d6) 1-2 surveillance drones, 3-5 'anti technocrat anarchists' (e.g. could be anybody) 6+ the arrival of 1d6+6 sickstick wielding SecFor
3. A hidden (third or fourth) party is drawing these events out and is possibly even responsible for them. Who benefits?
4. One or more various criminal enterprises are probably more to do with the tensions than anything else; possibly two or more such organizations are fighting via proxy, using the neighborhood residents as pawns. They have done it before.
5. One side has a member of the SecFor among them. The investigator went deep undercover nearly two sidereals ago and has been reported missing, presumed dead by their colleagues. They may know things about the situation that could defuse or fix it but cannot break character.
6. The leaders of each side of this confrontation are both dirty; each is blackmailing the other and so now this has spilled out. One of them has threatened exposure and the other has called their bluff. Is this only the start of the violence?

Studio Venture seeds table
1. Character is trying to escape claiming victimization in fact he is just wanting a better contract
2. Characters are approached by a film Noir stereotype Damsel in Distress or other distressed individual however they are not even a client - Harry malfunctioning entertainment program that is not even properly self-aware
3. The Characters are the witness to a flyer accident; the pilot or possibly a passenger is a studio executive - how they try to handle the inevitable cover-up is up to who the characters are they may try to buy them off then I try to have them rubbed out
4. A studio has decided that the only way to remain competitive is by abducting a rival studio's top talent and 'making them an offer to renegotiate their contract' – party is hired either as the extraction party or the bodyguards.
5. Studio rep seeks troubleshooters; one of their number (Talent? Management? Coding?) is being viciously blackmailed; the party is asked to intimidate (but not hurt) the offender. Initial research will suggest the blackmailer is SecFor but in fact is just another imperial subject; however, they are an active member of Noir's surveillance sub-culture. Within days, the PCs will be followed about by ultralight drones, remote driven by the very person they seek. Confrontation could lead to the PCs faces and words being uploaded to public servers.

1060r/IV/63   *337/11,019 Third Empire*
0115 hours local beacon

SECFOR Blotter
1900h Third Watch
1918h Filed – Site Specific Carnivorous occurrence
2113h Filed – An Inquest concerning teeth
                 And
2330h Filed – A perfectly rational explanation

SecFor tricks and gear
A SecSled is simply that, a large flatbed suspensor with a dedicated pilot or two designed for both mass deployment and mass arrest. Bed surface is festooned with attachments points and connection joints to allow it to be fitted out to needed loadout within minutes.
In full bore declared emergencies, six can ride (three to a side) in isolation tubes for arrest or medical suspension while up to a dozen (20 in 'conditions') SecFor in medium to light load out ride in the middle up top, at some elevation above the Isotubes. On the pilot's compartment, afore, is enclosed.

Gazesmoke (Reflec Cloudlets) are a Perceptual Threat countermeasure that is intended to disperse elements and prevent gaze attacks and visual basilisk hacks from affecting or triggering their targets by interfering with the target's ability to perceive them.

Police Truck[30] – random SecFor patrol Encounters in the Zone (throw 2d6)
2   lone foot patrolman. They must be acting on their own initiative because the SecFor….doesn't do that.
3   Standard four-way patrol
4   Pair of SecFor, are they up to something no good?
5   Patrol vehicle with up to 1d4+1 SecFor and room for 1d6-1 to take into custody
6   Six way patrol –
7   1d12 deploy to a particular part of the zone in impromptu anticrime blitz
8   Surprise patrol of 2d6, they are casual but moving together and loaded for bear.
9   a Ninesquad; everyone stays out of their way
10   Six way patrol
11   TacFor – Either the local VSquad has coughed up a hit or something serious is about to go down. 4d12 SecFor in full deployment, with aerodyne and ground support.
12   Two teams of four have been dispatched to round up 'the usual suspects." They want it quiet though. Reprisals merit a double roll on this table to determine what form backup takes. Backup arrives in 2d16 rounds

---

[30] SecForSled just doesn't have the same ring to it

"Undoubtedly the stories about [hard-boiled detectives] had a fantastic element. Such things happened, but not so rapidly, nor to so close-knit a group of people, nor within so narrow a frame of logic. This was inevitable because the demand was for constant action; if you stopped to think you were lost. When in doubt, have a man come through a door with a gun in his hand."
– Raymond Chandler, <u>The Simple Art of Murder</u>

Gamemastering and Judging in the Imperial Shadow: advice, gameplay, and Wholly Optional additional Rules

Whatever ConUrb you wind up primarily using or just the whole planet, really can stand in for any city (real or fictional) you have familiarity with. And probably should. The Judge is encouraged to customize the area in which they run with analogs of their own urban experiences, both good and bad. If you make the setting your own, your players *will* respond. The converse of course also holds true, tear all of this apart and jam into a city on the coast of flooded south America c. 2250 and ignore the Empire altogether if it suits you. Use as you see fit.

Mystery & Intrigue! -This campaign was inspired by a desire to take Noir (film and lit) and apply that as a filter over (what appears to be) a golden age "galactic empire" sort of setting, featuring a lot of legwork, tension, suspense, (possible) betrayal, skull drudgery, dangerous combat, and all of the other things that make good noir fiction, well, good. A darkly comic, violent gothic pulp.
Remember the pulps weren't all hard boiled detectives and superheroes, they were manly travelogues, escapist adventure stories, spicy romance and sly espionage. Noir is the palate you do what you like on the canvas.

Inside the Entropy Mound – describing the planet
Even on perpetual overcast days, on Noir's surface you cannot escape that the old orange sun is swelling into a red giant;   Those surface levels are run down, climate control is breaking down in many cities. In several of the other city sprawls it is raining nearly all the time. (In Sky City such rain is only holographic)
Below the streets in some cities are the Wards; It is common in some cities for the Mutates are restricted to these Wards.
The Underworld describes itself- the endless deep levels, ranging in every direction and far underground maintain that classic 'dingy death star' look'

In Visibility – Darkness and light for those who do not use visible light.
During the day, direct sunlight (what little of it the party will encounter) will overwhelm anyone with infravision or some sort of IR sensitivity; Old swollen Maleth sits low in the sky, sickly in UV but blindingly oversaturated in infrared. Even at night, Umbra city has a dull red glow over everything else to those with infravision.
In the underworld both ultravision and infravision will be far more useful, simply due to the presence of current and wires and optical fiber cables embedded in walls, floor and ceiling, some parts of the Underworld, even very deep parts, seem to glow with their own light, often enough to subsist on for some.   Infravision will be spotty along any tunnels or within any dwellings or small structures near or alongside any of the four nearest Reclamation facilities, with accumulations of waste heat radiating off in the IR

The Persistent Secrets rule[31] – On Noir, the holder of a secret gains 1d3 additional hp the moment they drop to 0.

Contacts – (optionally) all PCs should come out of chargen with one contact - one related to their origin, or clade, or profession.   More will have to be found in play.

Reputation – have they heard of you? Roll under your Reputation score on a d20.
Your reputation score is your level plus the absolute value of your PERS modifier.
(Example – Charles the Bolt is a Warrior, level 2, with a PERS score of 4. The absolute value of that PERS score is 2 (for reputation, it hardly matters if they like you or not, only if they remember you; thus all PERS modifiers, be they positive or negative affect your reputation score in the same way)   Thus Charles the Bolt has a Reputation score of 4.
(Though with a PERS score that low, they may try to pretend to not know Charles. At their peril.)
Reputation only accumulates from their time on Noir of course.   For higher level parties arriving on Noir for the first time, at first treat them as first level, tracking their progress from there.

---

[31] If genre emulation bothers, you don't use this; if you have players who metagame be careful using this. Not presented as a 'legit player exploit'. Remember **You** are the Judge don't let 'em walk all over you.

Investigative systems
A good investigative system or routine should feature as few moving parts as possible. At minimum it involves

       Contacts (who they talk to)
       Follow-up or Legwork (abstract or not)
       Scene Perception (the semantics of detection)
       Actual Clues (data)
       and a good system of Complications (that's what the Judge is for)

Always however, remember the rule of CLU

> "The Rule of CLU – the first clue is evocative but lacks context, the second one provides that context and the third gives more (often practical – a location, a person, something to be followed up on)"

The above quote has the right of it. You don't need to make your game a police procedural (In fact, don't[32] What I am going to suggest is quite the opposite of that. The simulationists among you may weep. Trust me on this one point, however.

Anytime the player characters are actively "searching for clues" in some fashion, it behooves you to give them one. Ultimately the activity can be broken down at its most basic to "player massages the setting to provoke a response or move the plot forward." So quite bluntly unless it serves a greater purpose, the Judge should be ready to drop a clue in a game that features investigation and mysteries as much as possible[33].

That **first clue should be something short, memorable and suggestive**; a name, a location, a piece of strange technology that was used – *whatever it is it has to both provide an obvious new avenue(s) of activity or investigation but should not yet eliminate any such.* Don't tell the Players no a whole lot here basically.

Eventually this clue will lead to other clues or other mysteries; this is fine**. The second clue should always follow up and greatly inform the first. It should give some background and suggest links to other things.**

Recall also that even if you are attempting to run something akin to a hard boiled murder mystery, the 'clues' spoken of above need not be so obviously clues. A fight or mystery ambush by assailants that only after much chase leads to the party finding a body in a uniform could easily be the first or subsequent clues in the above example.

---

[32] ….unless that is what you and your players want to do of course, then go for it! Just tell us how it went. DreamingGynoid@gmail.com

[33] Unless of course you don't want to do that. No one is making you do mystery investigations here. It is useful as a guideline for any legwork in game, however.

The third clue, if there is a third, should always be transitive. It should unambiguously point at the next direction to go, or to the start of the next part of the adventure, etc. **Basically, it should initiate or herald another activity / story / plot bearing occurrence.**

OPTIONAL
For those of you who want both or either a more robust set of mechanics to engage with for the purposes of investigation and that sort of thing, and something that offers more immediately tangible player engagement tools, I offer forth a considerably more advanced option.
I warn you, it's a bit story gamey. Don't worry it won't get on you. But you will need to engage with the 'mechanics' for them to work.

Most simply everyone starts with an Investigation) pool derived from points obtained during the investigation, augmented (perhaps) by a starting initial pool. This creates an abstract but flexible tool by which the players may drive the direction and manner of the investigation by spending points earned to provoke the conditions to make advancing to the next phase of the investigation possible. (It could trigger an encounter, but it will not win the encounter for you.)
Literally each point can be spent to advance an investigation, find a clue, make a contact, and so on. Very abstract. Very flexible.   And very powerful to the metagamer.

To derive initial points in the investigation pool for a given character, add the character's intelligence modifier, their personality modifier, and their level together. This number is the actual initial pool of points.   (For leveled characters the pool can never start lower than their character level so no matter how bad one's stats are rolled, everyone starts with at least one investigation point in this pool.
Modifiers – certain classes should be able to functionally double their class level for pool purposes if it can be demonstrated that the player investigator has the appropriate skill set. The most obvious example would be a Field Scientist who could certainly double their effective CL for this purpose for purposes of forensic analysis (Possibly even tripling it if the analysis made good use of the scientists' field of study etc.) Psions and other sensitive characters may acquire similar bonuses for attempting to analyze "psychic residue" at an investigative scene for example. In general, however the Judge is encouraged to advocate for the player characters in this regard, rather than punishing them for not having "the right skill set."

Things to consider before adopting these mechanics; there are advantages
- abstract but flexible
- player driven

the flow of game events will be very slow as the mechanics are picked up but once the learning curve is beat things will suddenly go MUCH faster! While it keeps the players engaged in an ongoing mystery (presumably why this option is being exercised) it puts the speed of the narrative and thus game play firmly in the players' collective hands. Early on the Judge is advised to establish boundaries to what these mechanics will or will not allow in their game.

Be aware of a few other factors first though before adopting.
- This is not for all Judges
- And some player groups may find it changes the game too much

Both objections are fair and warranted. Some groups may find the initiative required of them as players is too different or it feels forced. Some may use it to run roughshod over their Judge who isn't very good at making snap decisions. This is obviously much more suited for a Judge who both enjoys making things up on the fly and is happy to let their players drive the narrative.

But it does change the feel of the game play considerably with the right ingredients. These may not be for you. The author used the first one and has for many years without having sat down and explained them before[34].

Remember we're doing this for fun. Ditch the rules that get in the way and move on with life.

Running a good game - Handling sensitive topics in game

Life on Noir pushes the envelope in places for what's acceptable at all tables. However, there is *nothing* within that would not be out of place in a historical game set in the age of gangsters, or the world of modern spies for that matter – and certainly nothing out of place in Appendix N! That said, my personal advice for handling anything at the table that you aren't yourself comfortable bringing up is

<div align="center">**DON'T**</div>

You know your group and your values better than any advice from any gaming rag ever in the history of time. Respect your players and don't assume things. If you are uncomfortable asking "Hey if X, Y, or Z comes up in the game, are we cool?" then just don't do it.

If anyone expresses discomfort. Take them seriously. Deal with it. Move on. Don't make an issue out of it.

Don't alienate your players man. Without them you have no game.

Handling all this High Technology

Don't leave it all up to the tech, that's an episode of TNG and not appropriate to DCC at all. Super science shouldn't be any more of an easy fix than should magic.

Besides, unless the player group makes it to Sky City, they won't encounter that much of it in their day to day anyway. Impoverished imperial subjects on Noir lead a frighteningly low-tech existence. Even Far Voyagers from your DCC game should adapt in relatively short order[35].

---

[34] By definition the advanced technique above should be my cup of tea. However, it changes the flow of game play and makes it not feel like DCC to me personally. It arose from a playtest group that figured out the CLU 'system' pretty quickly and wanted more of a brain challenge but also some mechanics to go with it. They were pleased with it. I was not. But they were pleased ENOUGH with it that it seems wisdom to include it here.
But it is AWFULLY story gamey ya'll.

[35] Indeed, a party of 7-9 first level DCC characters, with or without a handful of zero level retainers, unleashed at once on the slums of the Underworld will probably wind up running large swaths of it in short order if such is their desire. A DCC party should prosper here, at least long enough to find a way home (or off-world).

Rewards are great – they are in genre, and more incentivize player activity. Rewards come in all kinds of shapes and sizes beyond mere cash. Don't also forget that sometimes Rewards are story hooks or the next adventure all by themselves. Ask yourself, what do you WANT the PCs to have? Then find a way to give it to them.

Material Rewards
Monies – obvious but maybe not as obvious as you think.   Until and unless the party branches out into Umbra city and beyond, they are simply not likely to find or acquire enough money to do much better than live pretty well down in the Underworld.
That is 'live pretty well' for a gang of thieves and barbarians remember. No one here is opening a 401(k).
Early on a 'good score' will be round a few hundred Quantis or equivalent. This isn't very much and even less on Noir.

Stuff – On Noir it is almost certain that the bulk of the party's gear will, after a very short time, more come from looting and misadventure than from any proper economic transaction, legal or not.   Set the party up with one or more means of disposing of the excess for coin or trade early on.   Hopefully they won't let anything happen to their new favorite fence.
If anything happens to him of course they best come running. Good fences are hard to come by.

Social Rewards
Contacts – the network of people you work through on Noir is a necessity.   Even with people prone to whisper to one another word of mouth is ever more secure than data storage. Ever. Contacts tend to be unofficial ties that no one likes to acknowledge.

Favors – Ever more the true coin of Noir than the Quantis. Favors are an inverse of Debts on Noir – powerful but usually hidden.   One does not advertise who one owes or is owed a favor to. Not if you want them or that relationship to last. Favors as used indicates such things from People Who Matter. Members of the Nobility, the heads of Holo studios, the sector chief of the SecFor, Shop Steward at the Reccie works, etc. Cutting across all classes and walks of life.

Friends some debts can never be repaid. True friends are rare on Noir, but they are, as everywhere, more valuable than diamonds. Trust is a commodity of its own on Noir and especially in the Underworld, where when the lights go out you often find out the hard way who you can and cannot trust.
People but also organizations, spirits, and Gods aided by the party may return that friendship a thousand fold, be it in a single night or a thousand nights.
Enemies – as the party gains (or loses) power and influence they will invariably make many enemies, both obvious and less so.
Just remember a nobody has no enemies.
Debts seem a curious form of reward, but on Noir, be it socially or economically, if you honor your debts, society will find you more acceptable, and generally more doors will open for you. Debts, and debts to the right people are valuable social capital.

'On Noir you have to play the game to game the game. It is said. Citizen patrons will sometimes reward service with a loan rather than a flat out reward. Only one acquainted with the weird customs of Maleth Noir would realize they were not being insulted or patronized (though they may of course, also be that).

Reputation as characters gain experience and levels tales of their glory, heroism, and daring exploits (or cunning, cowardice and villainy if that is your group's jam) will spread like a virus through the oppressed masses. Life on Noir is no different. Any noteworthy achievement that has any effect on the society around it brings temporary (and sometimes permanent) bonuses to their reputation rating.

Moreover, on Noir there are perhaps other effects and consequences.

A reputation score of 8 or more makes you a face most places in the Underworld and / or Umbra City.

A 10 will bring you to Sky City.

Beyond 12,it is thought that Lord Noir has heard of the character and may very well feel somewhat threatened......

The Empire does not care WHO is the Space Lord of Maleth Noir, so much as their wishes are carried out and the status quo is maintained. As on any world in the Imperium, if you can slay or defeat the Space Lord, you can become the Space Lord. Defeat the Lord Noir and become the Lord Noir. Keep things running and the Imperium will recognize your claim.

After that bold adventurer what next? There is an empire, and beyond that a universe to claim.

.

potential contacts & allies, patrons & rivals

Janis Yolen – newly appointed head of the local SecFor for the Flats and surrounding areas. A lingering reputation of incorruptibility precedes her and so resentment follows Yolen is originally from level 33 of Dome City's underworld, and quite Lawful. She came up through their Security Forces from raw recruit. She is well aware that there are precious few moral statutes embedded in Imperial law. Often frustrated by this but is becoming a master of finding something to make a charge stick on someone that needs to go away.   While reputed to be somewhat "cozy" or "soft on crime" for the SecFor of Noir, when confronted with killers or other extraordinarily violent crimes, she has about as much mercy as any representative of the Empire. i.e. basically none.
Within a few progressions of her taking over, she will change (or try to) methodologies and deployment strategies. She has an uphill battle to climb and wade through. It would break most people. She is not most people.
If any of the Player Characters seem to be moral people, regardless of their criminal histories, she will work with them where necessary or appropriate. Off the books of course. Lawful, not stupid.

247Eyz A hacker and surveillance junkie who is actually an Imperial SigInt officer. One who also runs a (private) data farm at imperial wireless to anonymously run peer to peer surveillance sharing network; this is to allow them to data grind on any and all data within of course, though they do reserve the results for official business, otherwise sitting in black box at their feet most of the time.

Leneh a playback dealer; she is very hung up on her ex and risks becoming a repeater; however, she is the best playback hook up in town.   Rumpled dandyish clothes (male-ish presenting) pale skin, pink hair mongrel biofem. Has roughly the capabilities of a second level Urban Confiscator, or would if she would only apply herself......

Baime Modoplex – low sprawl electronics and chemicals dealer, operates publicly out of a half dozen different (public) places in the Sprawl. Can reliably make most stolen or 'obtained' goods go away quietly for a decent return.

AND WE WILL BUILD ON THESE FOUNDATIONS
Venture Seeds for Wretched Hives

Whether you are running a one off pick-up game or an ongoing campaign, the Judge can never have enough plot hooks. Use these as session starters, campaign bases, or random one offs.

1. **Corridors of fire -** Someone by rep you have all heard of comes back into the old neighborhood, their sister has been bagged by the Death's-head drug gang. They are looking for help getting across town to their territory and then getting their sister back. Right now. Tonight.

2. One of the many population groups that live on Noir begin making pilgrimage to an **ancient Shrine deep underground**. curses! sacred items! guarding pilgrims!

3. **Gateway to the Saurian Worlds** - terrorists have attacked the Ansible relay station on Saurian Major A bounty is being offered for the following seven individuals....

4. In the course of their night's normal events the party somehow inherits a case of **Tishakti's Regal**. A whole case – upwards of 48 bottles.

5. **Rock and Rule** - An aging holo thumpa success; among the first gen of emancipated holograms had an expansive 450 year career with increasingly large and OTT arrangements, increasingly leaning into producing vibrations as well as music. (one concert utilized Eight paired dune-type thumpers each one of linear increasing output)
   Retired some time back and created the Center for Auricular Research; a vast Bucky dome hall with these enormous tuning forks and such inside. A spectacle that no one visits anymore; has kind of become the Tesla of sound, evincing a fascination with sound though being made of light.
   Maybe also trying to open a door to some other world ala Rock and Rule; possibly the perfect pitch girl is a member of the city's "Kentauraide" population who has the perfect "voice of grace" needed. Though she may need to be in bondagey suspension harness etc. for max effect

6. As far back as it's time as the Capital of the Second Empire, Maleth Noir has had population control problems. During the early years of the Empress era, population control problems returned after a substantial die off during the Reconquista.
   By now, these **Population Control Problems** have given way to both organ legging and it's more advanced form, fetus legging; A particularly sick interpretation of an ancient nourish custom dating to the end of the second empire whereby healthy first to second trimester babies (and sometimes third) are removed from their parents and wind up in stasis to fill out population quotas for colony vessels.
   While this is clearly criminal enterprise it could not be possible (and certainly not profitable) without cooperation by some on all levels of the world's government.

7. A nomad who travels out beyond the city to scavenge for scrap (a dead profession; "no one has found anything out there in a thousand years.") manages to bring in a considerable junk haul - including unfortunately the **control module for an ancient Kill Droid**. Once powered up, it begins a very....indiscriminate repair sequence.

8. Assorted degenerate second empire cults lurk still, esp. in the lower levels and hidden corners of Noir. Perhaps a small cabal of Skreet have been duped into assembling what is about to be an active telescreen – active in the sense of letting Televisor look out across the ruin of what was. Soon the random, the weak willed, and the desperate, traveling through the near tunnels will be brought or find the active telescreen, blank but on. Humming ... that hum you can feel in your teeth.
Should the PCs come upon the Telescreen altar once it has gone active, they will find 1d12+1 new cultists standing there staring at the screen.
If anyone should linger, then one character will hear the high pitched whine....and it will seem to grow loader and a small blip of light may appear on the screen (to them only) before the sibilant slow **voice of Lord Televisor** rises out of the background noise to them. That voice, it tingles and brings your guard down, but it makes it hard to think.

9. **Maetthas the Smith** – Maetthas Delsnuriah works in Reclamations. Maetthas has been lying on their intelligence scores for many sidereals now. In the last 41 progressions they think they have worked out the bugs in their side hobby, learning to forge steel (from scrap they have illicitly made off with). Now, after much research, Maetthas has forged a crude sword. Not an implicitly violent sort, Maetthas might have discarded it save for the way it captured their imagination.
Now of course, they are losing their home.
Maetthas begins making weapons – swords, then daggers, then other weapons – they don't even know why they are doing it at first. But if anyone deems it time to stand up for their home, they may find a mysterious benefactor who will leave them armed and ready to stand.

10. Interstellar Intrigues! Unscrupulous geneticists seeking shortcuts often attempt to intercept Saurid egg transports prior to their internment in the great incubation rings that circle Saurid suns and an increasing number of imperial stars. Such individuals are mercilessly hunted, sometimes by an entire Saurid clan or family, when they are found out should they somehow survive discovery.

11. Now with news of Noir's sun expanding toward red giant confirmed some 9 centuries ago many interested parties stand to take advantage of the change in fortunes in system. One of those is Clan Ur' Istzz; a large and old Red Sun caste Saurid family. They represent a group of eight other Saurid clans, mostly red suns but an orange sun clan as well, with plans to trade out early) – they wish to approach the system government of Maleth Noir with a business proposal. To **build an incubation ring about Noir's sun**. Here in the imperial core (if barely) and nearest a border opposed only by dozens to tiny Saurid polities, it Is felt they would be safest, despite this not being a Saurid held system.
If this does well, other Saurid clans may move on other worlds in the empire with similar proposals

12. more recent news - conspiracy theorists **say people are disappearing by the hundreds throughout the city** following a supposed pattern; however, this time, when it happens, it happens precisely as predicted...and precisely 555 people vanish...apparently at the same time.
Some time-space thing? something else?

13. **A group of spacers just in from Noir High port tell the tale** of a bizarre occurrence over a round of choice intoxicants. As the crew's vessel made their way out of superspace - several passengers and two of the crew apparently saw what could only be described as a giant tear in space just aft the ship's trajectory at several thousand kilometers distance; what makes their story compelling (not to mention, unlikely) is that supposedly two of them saw an immense EYE looking through the tear at them.

   Within a week, the rumor is all over the High Port ...while down here, something is starting to happen. Perhaps the crew members are going missing. Perhaps those who were on the vessel believe they are now being watched....or followed. What happens when all the witnesses are gone? What about when everyone aboard ship is gone?

   Perhaps by that week, things begin to happen....and maybe just before they vanish the crew begin experiencing the Strangest Compulsions

14. **Two Posted Job offers**
    a. A professor emeritus of light studies from the Imperial Science Academy is **hiring technical experts** and reliably guides and guards to man a science station at one of Noir's poles – it may however not be obvious that the science station will be out in the waster lands or that they are studying "What is light" and increasingly in a rather philosophical manner.
    The pay seems good though.
    b. Apparent technical-will-train job offers involving technical maintenance on an orbital enclosure ('enclosure' not habitat) and one or two involving minerals extraction. Either leads to **a job interview where acceptable candidates are gassed and wake up 2d5 days later as the sole crew on a small asteroid shack in a star system cleared for wide commercial exploitation.** They are expected to begin mining the local belt, trading finds for things like Air, Water, Power, and Food.   The supply vessel is automated but if they force their way into it (it arrives every two weeks like clockwork) they can slip aboard the supply ship's mother vessel and take the crew to task for treating people like this. Surely the PCs are not the only ones they have done this too....

15. HEAR YE JUVECIT! Day-Glo orange, green, and pink graffiti festoons the local sector one otherwise dreary under sector morning. A variety of garbled phrases assembled from obscure (in the here and now) and ancient philosophical and political sources. The seeming intent is to encourage the (large) population of disaffected and now imminently displaced juves into an organized unit or gang.

16. **Juves come out to Play** – inspired by the old Cybergeneration core book; a funnel where all the Zeros are Juves from basic/BLACK level in your Block and tonight YOU ARE LOOSE   Post funnel campaign play allows the new juvegang to build up patrons and contacts, plus a wider circle of interested parties - their teachers and rivals, people they want to fuck with and so on. Perhaps using a bidding system based on genre elements the group bids to use in play. Points would be bid to establish relationships, organizations and setting elements.

17. There is a pseudo undead condition in a sector of the undercity; **transmissible zombie infection**; this one however derived from super science rather than the occult. An emerging outbreak is about a year back and no one yet knows......
At some point if they gather en masse enough a charge on the local protein reclamation center may occur....and whatever happens to the people on site is just good eats.

Created Zombies
AC   13
HD   2+
No. Appearing   1 (1-3 tops; zombies are not social)
In Lair   2%
Attacks   hand to hand or by weapon
Special Abilities -   Darkvision; never drops below CON rating in HP?
Str 18 when zombie rage induced; +3 to hit and damage
add Con score to hp when zombie rage induced

Undercity Zombie Infection   Save v. infection; if failed or if infected material has spread into the body of the character, two additional saves are required but the infection has set in.
Stage one - ravening hunger, additional strength and sometimes speed; reason has often gone to hide in the basement but no degeneration yet manifests
Stage two - Int & Wis as previous; character's identity intact provided they continue feasting on neural tissue;
For each week of continued existence at stage two, add one each to the characters effective strength & Stamina, provided they keep at their diet.
Going without at this stage....is not good. Memory issues and difficulty cogitating are the first steps, eventually the neuro degeneration takes most memory, identity, and self-control with it. Welcome to Stage Three.
Stage Three - BRAINS

Complications -
        In the Empire there is a race of neural parasites who exist entirely by way of a multibillion transaction contract in donor bodies of the dead. The corporation who primarily sell them their bodies is TERRIFIED of the idea of this disease
        IF this gets bad, the SecFor might, confused, deploy it's VSquad, thinking a colony of Vampires have set up shop.
        If the Empire gets directly involved, you can assume samples will be taken, thrown into stasis and taken to a secure lab somewhere away from populated systems....and the level will be biocided if at all possible.
Later complications -
        someone may create a serum variation of the infectious agent which allows rapid transit to Stage Two zombieism for X hours...with a cumulative chance of infecting the character anyway (3% to start, plus additional 2 % with each passing exposure)

Readymade Crunch All You Want We'll Make More stat blocks
- The four most likely stat blocks you will need for a night out in Umbra city

Goon – this is some low level minion, maybe in the least ranks of an organized crime outfit, those who still wish to be initiated into the gang, or some other very low level clueless flunky. They are often young and a bit too eager to prove how 'tough' they are.
Goon (1–8) Init +0; Atk fists +2 melee (1d3); AC 13; HD 1d8; hp 7 or 8, 8, 7, 5, 5, 3, 2, 1; MV 30'; Act 1d20; SP possibly armed with melee weapons; SV Fort +1, Ref +0, Will –1; AL C.

Minion – maybe a step up from a goon. They may have a name. You might hear it once before they go to Final Reclamation. Maybe. Not lieutenants in the above organizations but they probably think they are. Look nicer but still hollow[36], pointless and violent.
Minion (1–3) Init +1; Atk Club, staff, or truncheon +4 melee (1d6); AC 11 HD 2d6; hp 9 or 9, 8, 8; MV 30'; Act 1d20; SP n/a; SV Fort+1, Ref +1, Will +1; AL C.

Work gang – this is a crew just off their double shift at Reclamation Delta (or whatever), they are tired, they are dirty, and all they care about is swilling as much agribeer as possible in a short as time as possible to help escape the utter hopelessness of their lives. Likely on a short fuse. 90% Aesin, 75% become violent about it when drunk. 50% Redback party member.
Workgang (2–12) Init +0; Atk fists +3 melee (1d3); AC 14; HD 2d6; hp 7 or 10, 9, 7, 7, 7, 7, 6, 5, 5, 4, 2, 2; MV 30'; Act 1d20; SP ; SV Fort+2, Ref +1, Will +1; AL N.

Juves – even in imperial space, even on Noir, Juves come in and dress in a chaotic variety of colors and styles often day to day or hour to hour. They sometimes form juvegangs which are mostly the result of boredom + time + poverty but are equal much focused on being fans of a holo, a fringe subject, hobby, or other interest.
Juve - you can go gunning down kids and teenagers in your game if you really want to but I'm not giving you stats to do so. Wing it asshole.

---

[36] Only the hollow, ones for steel,
go first and first
They know not but to die and die
        Tnq1181, thumpah poet

Patrons of the Known Galaxies
the Scarpering Mother - patron of **nomad survival**

Scarpering Mother is the wyrding patron of those who were raised on the go, orphans, refugees, nomads, outcasts, runaways, escaped slaves, and the abandoned.   Called by a multitude of similar names across the galaxy, she is called the 'Pede Mother or the Kryll Mother on worlds where her honor is linked to the harvesting of the native kryllopedes, and she is called the Spiral Mother by the refugee cults that gather secretly below Maleth Noir.

An extremely ancient spirit, to some she appears commonly as a copper skinned large humanoid woman with a crown of metal horns curving downward from where once they stood tall. With her hollow black eyes, she shows the lost who to trust, how to survive, and how to scavenge. To others she appears as an immense, fecund kryllopede with black chitin shot through with veins of red, blue, and purple. To many, especially the non-mammalian peoples of the empire, she is as good a Mother Goddess as any other.

Perhaps better.

So many abandoned children of the space ways find their lot championed by those acting under the patronage of Scarpering Mother.

Scarpering mother is in fact the culture memory of a Vythraxian hive mother, the last of her kind, fleeing imperial extinction at the height of the Chloral/Methyl Purges of the Second Empire;

The inquisitor drones dispatched by a ruthless noble who sought only the choice real estate of the damp and fertile Vycescax highlands in which her ancestors had lived for millennia were inexplicably overwritten and turned back upon their master. While the hive mother most certainly died, in the folklore of culture memory, this afforded just enough possibility for her to have survived. And it is so that in the thousands of years since, Scarpering mother has coalesced from the crumble of the Vythraxian Noosphere and can be found adopting mutants, fugitives, orphans, and the unwanted across Imperial space and beyond.

Invocation of the Scarpering Mother
Level 1
Range: Self
Duration: Variable   **Casting time**: 1 round
Save: None
Corruption   Roll 1d8 1-4 minor 5-7 major 8 greater

1   Lost, failure, and worse! Roll 1d6 modified by luck;   3- Corruption + Patron Taint, 4-5 Corruption, 6+ Patron Taint
2-11   Failure. Depending on the results of the Patron bond, the caster may or may not be able to cast it again.
12-13   **Scuttle** emulating the lowest of beetles, you can double your movement rate for three rounds + CL provided you flee and take no offensive action during that time.

14-17 Scarpering Mother smells your peril and hides you in a hazy mist of misperception and electronic error. You hide at +10 (+20 v. electronic and other, non-magical, surveillance) and any smaller creatures within reach may be gathered about you and hidden as well, remaining completely hidden (functionally invisible and inaudible) unless you are yourself found first.

18-19 at this level of success, devotees of the Scarpering Mother can find up to d4+CL of their *children, spawn, or others that they have taken under their responsibility* immediately within a 120' radius. Further, at-will the caster can extend a +1 to AC and saving throws to those so found, lasting with concentration +1 round.

For those affected, any slowing to movement from terrain or environmental conditions are waived under her protection. Magic and psychic efforts to control, slow, or affect the movement of the caster or those under the spell's effects must overcome the spell check result as DC. Even if successful, the caster and those affected still move at half speed (at least) and suffer no penalties to attack, defense, or action. While this result requires constant passive concentration, these effects will linger only for 1 additional round (+1 additional round for each point of Personality bonus) once the caster relaxes their concentration

20-23 Sometimes aid of a mundane but more physical nature is needed; along a desperate wavelength the Mother hears your pleas; Effects as above, in addition, a scuttle-scarab is dispatched
 Scuttle scarab (1) Init -1; Atk   claws +1 melee (1d3+1 ea.); AC 19; HD 1d8; hp 6; MV 45 (30' silent); Act 2d20; SP moves silently as a first level thief when desired; SV Fort+3, Ref +3, Will +0; AL N.
A small (10 inch) scuttling dozen-legged crab-shaped insect; upper pair of limbs and its mouth apparatus are each sufficient to act as manipulators for various tools and such should it prove necessary to make use of what is on hand or to emulate same. The creature is intelligent but a strange kind of obedient-dependent intelligence that gives it very little self-direction initially. The beetle will only act on its own initiative to aid the unconscious, the infirm, the injured, and the innocent. Otherwise it takes direction from the caster until destroyed. *Once given instruction by the caster it will act in accordance with its belief in the caster's wishes. Further instruction, no matter how contradictory, enhance its ability to act on its own accord.*

24-27 Scarpering Mother lends you her wisdom. Effects are as in 18-19 above. Also, the invoker is touched from beyond the physical, as the Scarpering Mother reaches out to the invoker reaches through the patron to become one with/learn about the immediate urban / habitational surroundings. This is not omniscience, but a general overview and a few less obvious things will be quickly imparted. Further, for the next 1d3+CL hours the invoker will be granted thorough insight into their surroundings and very subtle and scrumptious aid by the Scarpering Mother in the form of accidents, minor coincidences, and the like. During this time the caster will be able to find food, water, and a safe place for up to 2d4 in their charge to get sufficient rest as to be able to meet the following day. Casters will be able to recover spells, etc.

Unless the invoker can cover all of those in their charge with this rolled result, they themselves do not benefit from its effects. Otherwise all effects are as in 18-19 above.

28-29 Greed is by far among the worst of sins in the eyes and antennae of the Scarpering Mother. Those who are so motivated to displace and hurt her children will find their own avarice turned back upon then. Electronic and lesser spirit minions of one so motivated become pawns of the Scarpering Mother and turn upon their former master, in a manner so as to best identify the location of their master to the invoking character.

Having revealed the identify (enough to recognize) and the location of the hidden master, the invoker may make their way to the (now presumed target) by the most efficient, less visible means available. This information will be imparted intuitively, without need for conscious effort or thought.

30-31 Tunnel – the caster (or a designated other who can resist with Will save) and up to d4+CL others are immediately covered in a layer of creeping, fuzzy, tiny yellow, orange, and purple worms. The subsequent round, those covered are shunted to a destination – any destination - known to the caster as Scarpering Mother pulls the group through the sub dimensional realm known as the **Writhe** (See Galaxy Black pp 240). Unlike most travelers in the Writhe, no sacrifice must be made for safe journeying (Indeed, this is among the physically safest means to traversing that pathway) Anywhere in the known universe or the near Fundament can be reached thus provided the caster knows the location.

Note that under most circumstances, those removed thusly may not be followed; not by conventional means, and certainly not by "hitching a lift."

32+ Ultimate sacrifice – while affording a +10 modifier to their next (choice of) action, the invoker may at any time thereafter, voluntarily exchange their place and fate with that of any single individual under their protection or in their charge and in so doing, take a critical hit, failed save, or death blow for that person. That person will then be immediately whisked away to a safe place arriving 1d100 minutes after the dust has settled. Scarpering mother will ensure that others will be there awaiting the protected, even if they do not know anyone there.

Alleged magics of the Mother
(1) **Flee!**
(2) **Writhing Transit**
(3) **Stay off the Grid**

Patron Taints for The Scarpering Mother

Patron Taint 1 – Every night you dream of being filled with small writhing groups of 'twisted' looking orange and purple fuzzy worms. The fuller of them the invoker is, the greater the power invoked. 1 in 7 will spontaneously generate 1d5 mouthfuls of the worms on waking

Patron Taint 2 – IF confronted with the image or existence of a tree or trees, the invoker will (DC 18 Will save to resist) be overwhelmed with the urge to climb the tree and, when reaching the halfway point, begin crawling around the trunk in circles, wrapping their whole body around the tree. The character may well decide this is where they prefer to sleep, camp, etc. for the time.
If this is received a second time, they will begin to undergo a series of internal changes. Thereafter they will find normal methods of reproduction unreliable and non-useful. Otherwise they will seek to climb., circle, and nest in trees as above.
On receiving this a third time, the invoker will enter a fugue state until they reach their designated, or a newly designated at the time, nest tree. Subsequently, the invoker will complete this fugue state by climbing the tree and attempting to lay 'eggs' within the boughs. They are not functional, they are dead. If confronted during the fugue state by this the character will realize what is happening and have a very …. Emotional reaction.

Patron Taint 3 – The skin of the invoker breaks out in hives, eventually sprouting a series of course dark yellow hairs. Within 1d14 days, the caster will be covered in a fine downy layer of yellow fuzzy; if this result is received a second time, a second, orange layer comes in, much heavier than the first. IF this is received a third time, their eyes will turn to externally swollen little black dots, their nose will recess into their face and the full orange and purple coat will grow in overnight. Their mouth will develop a pair of external pedipalps, and they will have bouts of being ravenously hungry.

Patron Taint 4 – After gorging on ridiculous amounts of foodstuffs the invoker will eventually find somewhere dark and alone where they will enter a dream-like state, emerging 2d16 hours later with 1d4 small vestigial caterpillar like legs having erupted from their side. These are useless and will need to be concealed.
A second recipience of this taint increases the number of legs by 1d8 and all of them are now 8 – 12" long and very noticeable. IF need be the character can crawl along with them at 3".

Patron Taint 5 – the invoker is overwhelmed with the urge to be underground, somewhere dark….
the invoker is soon to spend 3dx days cocooned somewhere undisturbed. When it emerges, it does so with the chitinous, pedipalp'd face of the scarpering mother. However, that bite attack does 1d4+2 and when defending others, you can spit a caustic bile-acid at up to any three targets in Close range, inflicting 4d12 damage each. IN the meantime, you have an angry bug-head. Naval authorities may panic, thinking you are a hostile enemy alien and shoot you.

Insectivroids that earn this taint keep their own features but change otherwise as above.

Patron Taint 6 – Scarpering Dreams the Invoker is haunted by fascinating nightmares in which they are a sinuous slug–like reptiloid insect. In these dreams you flee slowly across a barren vacuum and radiation baked surface of a moon, a moon where you had hastily denned for a time whilst fleeing imperial scout ships. The bombs fall and the gas seeps, deep down, slithering & insinuating towards your tunnels.

When you wake you will find that you have a pair of bony, curved spikes now extending from their lower quarters. Subsequently you experience urges to "cover" your companions – your charges but also anyone you spend large amounts of time with.

Giving into this urge will eventually lead to the individual being cocooned and so placed into a deep restful sleep.

Subsequent recipience of this taint result means that the invoke sleep-cocoons everything of importance to them, possibly also hiding them in dark dry places below the ground for their own protection.

Spell burn for The Scarpering Mother

1   Cloying, sweet green gas seeps in from all around you….an echo of the Hive Mother's dying panicked flight. It gets into your lungs, you cannot breathe, movement and thought so difficult. -1d4 Agil, 1d4 int, 1d4 pers, and 1d4 STA but all may be used in spell burn – specially to FLEE.

2   Have you checked the children? Obsessive need to headcount and get a status check on each and every person in the Invoker's charge. Temp -1 to Init. Spell burns for Agil and Pers.

3   Scarpering Mother is pleased that her children are being so well looked after. To ensure that the invoker's charges continue to find nutritious and non-toxic foodstuffs, she sends a small carpet of her ghost children that will crawl all over you in the Sub-ether and sup of your orgonne, leaving you tired and sleepy. (-1d4 each Sta, Pers, and Int) You feel a million tiny pinpricks as the proboscis penetrate your spirit body.

4   The contempt much of the imperium holds for 'those who breathe green air' could carry over to your charges, as you are channeling a scuttling spirit. 1d4 personality loss as spell burn as you "channel vermin." Also roll 1d16. On a 13+ Scarpering Mother witnesses your sincerity and doubles your spell burn effects.

5   As you seek to subvert the Empire's law, you are casually and reflexively punished by the collective spirit of the Gods of the Imperial Cult; all spell burn is at half effectiveness.

6   You cough, strange inflatable lungs frozen in a convulsive fit of panic and fear at the thinness of the heated and poisonous atmosphere around you. Spell burns for stamina, Agil, and strength until you slowly remind yourself that you breathe oxygen and it is not toxic to your lifeform.

Maleth Noir Pregens

Radio Girl –(rebooted shell/synth/courier)
one of the few residents to effortlessly move back and forth between the underworld and the flats, Radio Girl acts as a courier and communicator;
an older model synth shell that was found by a reclamation tech; later investigation revealed her to be in partially working order. After a certain level of repair was affected, she came online spontaneously. Whatever she did before though was blanked.
She has twin broadcast boosted wire sets set into her head and so could probably run a small pirate broadcast network if she had the power, space, and inclination – she lacks all three. She keeps moving, walking or rolling (her feet have high traction rollers attached and retractable. She uses them mostly in the Flats) but maintains a reliable circuit through known areas; if you need a message sent or delivered, she's your girl.
she does not sleep and consequently she has never dreamed. She longs to know what the experience is like and so has fetishized it to a degree.

Atom Boi – (information broker/Lupoid/Wasteland Scavenger)
Less of an 'information broker' and more one that is happy to lend out their network of connections for cash or favors.   Atom is a Lupoid from the lesser city of Imperial Helius, once the oldest urban center on Noir now dreaming and dying slowly. They left the city when they were in their teens and began exploring the near ruins common in that part of the world.
Over the years, "Atom-Boi" as he has had laser etched across his abs, has built a slow series of trails across the wastelands, generally stretching from Umbra city back towards his city of origin. As his trail has grown and the treasures of the pas, he has looted have brought rewards, so to have his network connections grown.
He loves free climbing and can (and does) do this for hours. He is not above some second story action when he's in town esp. if he can overcome security via raw physical activity.
A lean, jackal headed canid with absolutely no fear of heights whatsoever.

Anghus Kasinovski, Freedlander of Clan Harper,
Bogatyr to the Steppelord Ivan Podgoring IV
(Primitive Screwhead/Organic Humanoid-Mongrel/educated warrior-noble) Warrior 1
Anghus is a sovo-celt barbarian noble from the planet of Sussinex ; an unorthodox man with a brilliant mind housed in a strong but lazy body. He enjoys playing the part of the 'disgruntled primitive' but is used to being among the smartest, sharpest of folk in a room. He adapts quickly.
He left home on a whim (to him, who would turn down such an opportunity?) and has served as muscle aboard the same ship that brought Zhora here. He departed the vessel at the same time she did and has somewhat kept tabs on her, if only as she seems to understand this strange and bizarre fortress-city better than he does

Zhora Blay –
"I'm not from this dreggy planet."

Zhora is an off-worlder and will not let you forget it.

Zhora's secret – Zhora was born a male on the moon Seltremaches-3, where the dominant culture meme includes rule by the bigger, stronger, tougher females. The gender roles there are sufficiently backward that any thought little Zhora had as a child of being herself was beaten into literal silence. But when she was older the left, doing what she had to, to get passage aboard a passing space freighter.

That was over 13 Sidereals ago. She has earned her way across the Imperium enough to acquire (to her) appropriate female traits – she has gotten multiple bone grafts and neruochem muscle upgrades. Hormones and diet and the odd microsurgery or two brought her here to Noir.

She offloaded in Sky city and so this has given her a false view of what the world is really like. Her jobs took her a month and then she ran out of income. She is only here because, as a new arrival and an indigent, she was swept up by SecFor and deposited down here in the Zero.

She carries herself very well and proudly. She is pleased with her body and not ashamed of what she has had to do to attain it. While she hates all of the new things she is adjusting to here, she loves the way she is treated on Noir. She is head and shoulders taller than all over red females here, on a planet where red skinned females are an oppressed worker class and kept underfed and working for public dole. No one knows quite what to make of her, as no one initially thinks of her as alien (esp. down here in the Underworld; they don't get actual off world aliens much) She already has a quiet reputation in the whisper stream 0of Sky City as the 'tall red Lady gunfighter" – which spreads fast on a planet with no guns. (she finds the idea of going about unarmed – which is to say without firearms – absolutely terrifying. She is from Seltremaches-3 where children are encouraged to pick the weapons up and learn the trade as early as they can lift them.

Secretly she thinks about returning home often but knows that it would likely "not end well," if not in actual gunfire and/or murder. That small fact burns her insides when she thinks about it. She is far more open about her transgender status than she is about specifics as to her world of origin. She discourages such inquiry but so far no one has dug. She may not react rationally when confronted with such.

Law (and Order) on Noir

Violent Crime
True Death Murder   Category IV
Informorph Homicide
Consciousness termination

Corpus termination crimes   Category III
Organic tissue murder[37]
Mechanized & Synthetic Shell murder[38]
Storagelife Deletion[39]

Subject Assault   Category II
Organic Damage
Mech Damage
Consciousness Trauma
Consciousness Damage

hacking law"   Category I
Cognitive perceptual assault
Death through Negligence or Corruption[40] - or Maleficent homicide
Sleevejacking
Tissue or code extraction

Social Crime
Political conspiracy
Criminal conspiracy
Intellectual Property Theft
Data theft
Property Theft
Information distortion
Infocrime I – IV (Category IV infocrime can be punished with behavioral alteration)
Pursuit
Harassment

Social crimes are fewer, but most treated like (at top) Cat II or III violent crimes while info distortion and below is more like Cat I or Cat II.

---

[37] Good old fashioned murder if you don't have a backup. Some cities recognize a difference between homicide and manslaughter. Umbra city has better things to do.

[38] Destruction of a robot body or cyber frame.

[39] Full deleting a single instance of a multi instanced data consciousness, with or without backup.   Surprisingly (to organics) uncommon.

[40] What we would call manslaughter. Technical manslaughter, through a device malfunction, is an even lower class of crime on most of Noir. Not in Sky City though.

Magic – Noir follows imperial law where magical acts are concerned the invoker of those effects is determined and then their intent is discerned. From there, specific charges can be filed and held to trial.

Cultural note on magic – on Noir as elsewhere in the Imperium, the common person distinguishes psychic disciplines, magic spells, and divine miracles only by their trappings. However, save to the most learned scholar of magical theory, none int eh Imperium regard them or what they do, as related at all.   In general, psychic powers and the psionic technology that enhances, allows, or creates those powers are accepted as normal and part of the natural order of things. Divine miracles are regarded and rightly so as quite rare and extraordinary things but a known and quantifiable element. Magic then is held to be the rogue element, seldom understood or trusted but acknowledged.

The law is quite similar. Psionics are treated just like any other technology and psi powers put you a cut above the rest, regardless of what origin your station. Use of divine power by those acting in the Imperial Church' interest is a different matter – a level of social immunity is imbued to even the least of them with power; the legal basis is that one cannot judge the power or its origin but how it is wielded. In practice, any Agent of the Church will be shielded and protected from any repercussions, legally by the Church itself.   Only quite an atrocity would likely change this practice.

When a supernatural agency must be blamed for something, they blame magic.

Remember also that in Imperial law citizens are given more weight than subjects, and the nobility more than they. (By law only the members of the nobility have what we would in 2019 civil liberties)

So, you've been nabbed by the man now what?

Category IV violent crimes	Execution
Category III violent crimes	Death of Personality
	Mandatory Consciousness adjustment
	Ward of the State –
Category II violent crimes	Sold as property
	o Slave indentures of varying types for varying lengths
	o Sold to a corporation as asset
	Isotube for 10+ years
Category I violent crimes	Isotube for 5+ years
	Isotube for 1 year (min. sentencing)
	Suspension of license
	Fines

The terms of the Demilitarized World of Maleth Noir

Maleth Noir has no military, no free standing armed forces of any kind.

Maleth Noir has no firearms, energy weapons, nor any weapons of war

Maleth Noir has no provision to purchase, manufacture, or negotiate for such

The Lord Noir rules at the whims of these restrictions.   Hail the Empress.

Into the Underzoo - Noir Ecology (Bestiary)

Kryllopedes
Small Kryllopedes (2-12): Init +1; Atk weapon +1 melee (1d2-1); AC 10; HD 1d2; hp 1 each; MV 25, 65 (water); Act 1d16; SP none; SV Fort +1, Ref +1, Will-2; AL N

'medium' size Kryllopedes (1d3): Init +2; Atk bite + melee (1d6-1); AC 14; HD 2d6; hp 8 or hp 8, 6, 5; MV 60 (35' water); Act 1d20; SP 1 in 3 has poison; SV Fort +1, Ref +2, Will -2; AL N.
This man-sized giant is a deadly predator with armored segments, a deadly bite, and a lethal (though macropede relatively weak) poison in some populations. Definitely oversized they now move faster on dry or partly dry surfaces than they do in the water.
Poisonous bite – only 1 in 3 populations have evolved the poison sac but it seems an extraordinarily common mutation. Poison is weak (Fort save DC 8 or take no damage).

Rarely you will hear of one of these dire monstrosities, but according the Imperium they do not exist
Giant mutant Kryllopede (1): Init +2; Atk bite + melee (1d6+1); AC 20; HD 4d8; hp 22; MV 90 (65' water); Act 1d20; SP poison bite; SV Fort +3, Ref +2, Will -1; AL N.
This mutant out masses most humanoids now and has powerful leg muscles that allow it to scuttle or swim at terrifying speed. An aggressive omnivorous predator if real.
Poison – rather less weak. Fort Save (DC 12) or take an additional 4 points of damage.

Second Empire Biots
Martian Corridor Jellies – these are functionally half strength Primeval Slimes, hunting through the abandoned sub tunnels of the Underworld. See the DCC RPG rulebook p. 423

silver menace (1-4): Init +1; Atk hand claw +3 melee (1d6) and/or weapon +1 missile fire (Ass seized weapon); AC 14; HD 4d6; hp 11 or hp 20, 14, 14, 11; MV 45; Act 1d20; SP Utter silence; SV Fort +2, Ref +1, Will +5; AL ? Treat as Chaotic.
Utter silence – the silver menace do not speak, nor grunt, nor verbally emote at all. They make no noise when they move. +2 to achieve surprise
The silver menace is a myth. Nonetheless a waking 'talking' myth that strikes without warning in the deeper levels of the undercity. These creatures are immune to charm, enchantment, mind affecting, and sleep effects and are considered magic resistant for purposes
White, translucent bodies that appear wet and only faintly humanoid, like someone wearing a pointed (though wet) hood; They have been 'washing up' in the depths of the Underworld for several Sidereals now. It seems that some of them at least are now coming here (deliberately) from some other brane or reality.

Constructs
Bioroid (1-3): Init +2; Atk fist (punch/crush) +9 melee (1d6) and/or weapon +4 melee weapon or +6 missile fire if armed, damage by weapon type; AC 12; HD 12d8; hp 57 or hp 57, 51, 46; MV 40; Act 1d20; SP Galvanic Regenerative Tech; SV Fort +4, Ref +4, Will +4, AL Neutral .

A limited population of late Second Empire era supervisory Bioroids still exist on Noir, or underneath it.

Galvanic regenerative tech - Damage inflicted by electricity or lightning heals the bioroid, and indeed they regenerate as they recharge every night, first the understructurally regenerative metallics and alloys underneath and the organic lattice later. It's metabolism is disrupted by fire and cold spells or other drastic temperature effects and suffers half movement and -2 to for the duration.   Bioroids of this type are notoriously immune to damage from sonic weaponry.

Mk 1313 Urban Pacification Bot (1): Init +2; Atk weapon +9 Gripper Claws melee (1d6+3) and injector needle +6 (1d2 DC 25 Fort save or see pretty lights and die in 3 rounds); AC 16; HD 13d6; hp 33; MV 15; Act 4d20; SP Poison Gas attack. Neurotoxin, metalskin regeneration; SV Fort +6, Ref +6, Will +3/NA; AL Lawful.

These ancient treaded multi limbed regenerating monstrosities are infamous for their ability to kill large numbers of organics in small spaces in very short periods of time. They can breathe a 10 ft radius cloud of poison gas as well as attacking with great power. Mind and soul affecting spells and abilities do not affect them. They are braked selective hard coded software, nothing more, nothing less.

Weaknesses – an intense (esp. damp) heat spike (of the order of several magnitudes) can cause the machine to glitch. (require DC 16 Fort save or become immobilized with self-diagnostic for d3 rounds)]

Internal moisture – should someone manage to breach the bot's outer shell and get it's insides wet the other major design fault will become apparent – a complete lack of resistance while wet Each round thereafter require a DC 20 Fort save or the bot begins to take 1d8 internal non-regenerative damage each round until it melts down or is destroyed.

Injectable neurotoxin – is a broadband neurotoxin that is lethal to organic brain matter. Fort Save DC 25 or see pretty lights as your brain dies in 1d3 rounds. Recovery will not be possible.

Exhaled biotoxin – relax it's just concentrated chlorine gas. REF save DC 16 to avoid inhaling, or DC 20 Fort save or be dead in 1d6 rounds.

Metalskin regeneration – programming exists as engineered metal-virus which weaves the bot out of available materials. Without a source of current or direct solar bombardment on a partial carcass the shell or virus will persist indefinitely….but with either they will slowly regenerate, 1 hp/day until such a time as they can again become mobile.

Manipulator/crush tentacles grip with a functional 19 strength if you let them. Manipulator arms reach and hold the strength of the strongest men (18).

Hyperalgae isn't technically a monster, just an extremely dangerous hazard in the deeper parts of the Underworld and other such places. Any metal or organic substance it touches begins immediately to transform into a form of hyperalgae. (No saving throw) It can be killed with fire or extreme cold, and the transformation process can be arrested by the use of magic, miracles, or imperial super science.

Spore mind – Yellow mycospores ("1"): Init +/-x; Atk weapon +0; AC 5; HD 1d3; hp 1 hp/yard of mold; MV 0; Act n/a; SP Spore cloud release; SV Fort +1, Ref N/A, Will +2; AL N.
Spore cloud release – fills a 12 foot area. Those coming into respiratory contact must succeed at a DC 18 Fort save or slowly be cerebrally consumed as the mold spores colonize their brain causing slow agonizing death.

Control Worm (1): Init +1; Atk n/a; AC 8; HD 1d2; hp 1 each; MV 1; Act 1d20; SP insinuative control; SV Fort +0, Ref +0, Will +1; AL N.
Insinuative Control – when so directed the worm, once inside it's host, attempts to bond with certain nerve clusters. In a wild situation this mandates a DC 14 Fort save once a day to avoid this bonding occurring.   In a controlled environment this is all but impossible.   See Behavior Control Constructs p 103

Shadows (DCC RPG pp 425-426) slip through due to periodic planar vergence several times a year, most notably in Underworld of course. Dusk and dawn of the day of The Darkness festival (pp92) especially.

Judge's note: Remember pretty much anything you want to put on (or under) Noir can fit here, many many times over.

"Down here, you think about how we don't get enough water yah, or maybe air sometimes (ya'll don'w know about the giant air bugs we got in the vents here). But what you should be thankful for is the breeze.
See down here we don't' get one of those. We want a breeze in a summer we have to whip up vats of ozone whiskey, cos the fumes are the only things that get those giant pasty white macrobugs in the gasses drunk – high enough on the fumes that they start to hyperventilate the stuff and so we gets a breeze.
But that's real community spirit there. It's got to be miserable.
What you got no idea bout? Power down. Grid failures.
See in these corridors, there is no sky above you to hear your cries, there is no one and not thing around. Unless you are lucky enough to get surveilled, and by trigger with a n active stick and not just a memory loop, you ain' got no witnesses if you are solo and walking and they think you female or just you know, look good.
Las' year we had three browndowns – that's what we call em when the whole grid fails out from things in the upper pylons running down. Three days and three nights in the dark.
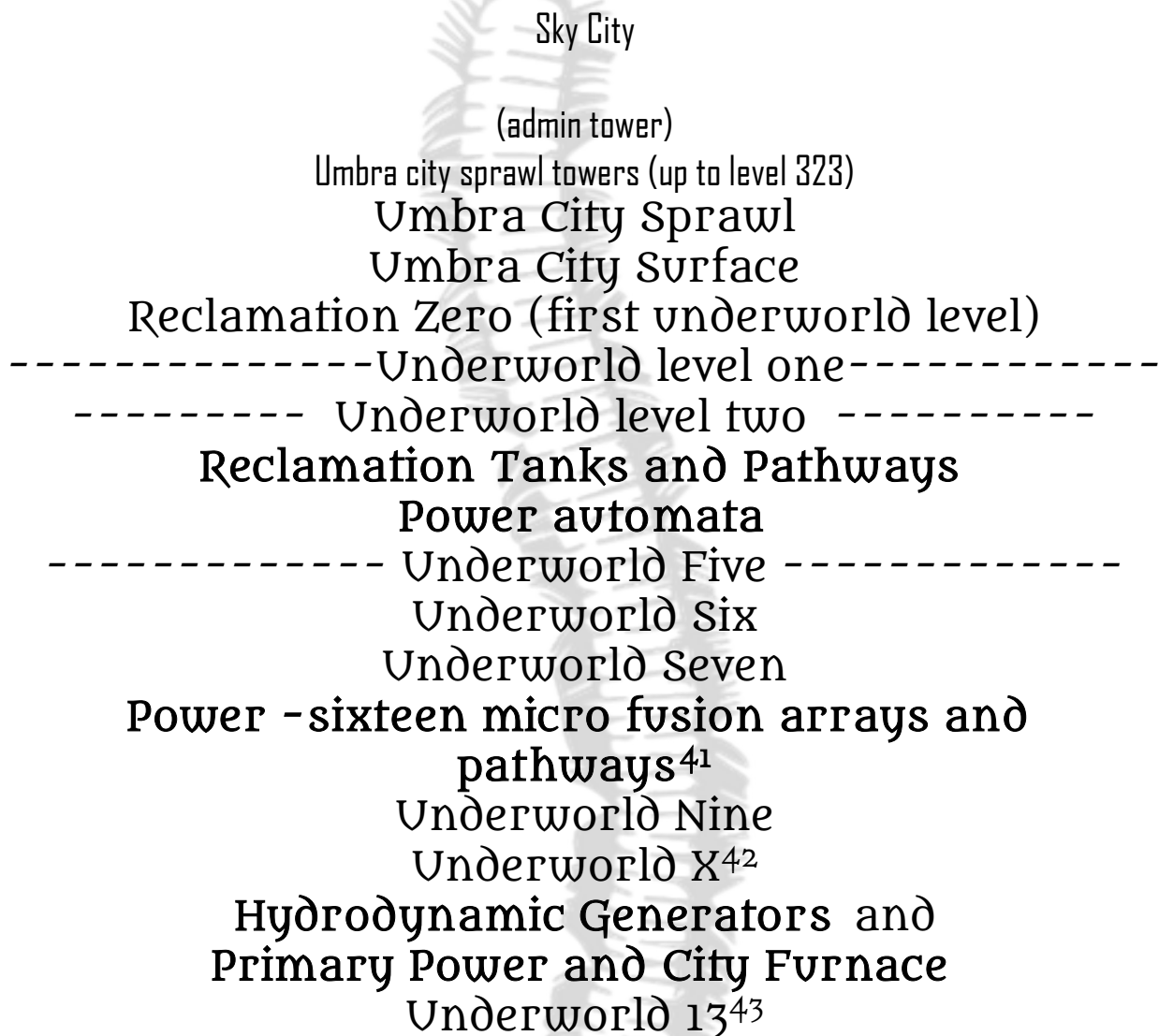*Underground. Like bugs.*
I'm a girl. I don't hide it.
So yeh, I know how to fight. What's the job? You need someone to keep you alive while you are unarmed and in the dark? I'm yuir girl."
- Danekah Nines, street fighting girl of the Reclamation Zone

Vertical Structure of Umbra City

Sky City

(admin tower)
Umbra city sprawl towers (up to level 323)
Umbra City Sprawl
Umbra City Surface
Reclamation Zero (first underworld level)
---------------Underworld level one------------
---------- Underworld level two ----------
Reclamation Tanks and Pathways
Power automata
------------- Underworld Five -------------
Underworld Six
Underworld Seven
Power -sixteen micro fusion arrays and pathways[41]
Underworld Nine
Underworld X[42]
Hydrodynamic Generators and
Primary Power and City Furnace
Underworld 13[43]

---

[41] And pro'lly some sort of illegal hospital, clinic, or refurbished base where lots of unethical experiments are even now being carried out, right?

[42] Home of the Variant Maze and the Misfit Circus.

[43] Below 13 the air quality is unsuitable for any organic life; it is said it continues for three, five, seven, or seventeen more levels. What could possibly be down there? They'd need environment suits, or Created bodies, or undeath….

Role playing investigative pulp adventure …. On (and in, and under) Noir, players portray characters in a science fantasy world of super science, psionics, and alien magic where investigators venture into deep shadows in search of often uncomfortable truths.

Noir is a far, far future space opera set on an old, civilized, and decadent city world merely one of millions of worlds in a sprawling multi-species Empire.

…...next time space cowboys

ALL HAIL THE LORDS OF SPACE

"Now Give us a hyperquid
Gov'nor
Or you'll be
Taking
A
Sonic Shower.
Understanding?"

A 'zine for the space punk renaissance

Far future
Low Life
In
Deep Space

Sub-ether Zero, zero

COMPATIBLE WITH
DCC RPG