POLYCHROME

A WORLD OF STEEL AND STAIN

By Kevin Crawford

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Polychrome is a poisoned world. Tendrils of insidious alien biotoxin creep across a barren surface, while beneath the skin of the world more than a million desperate men and women struggle to survive in warrens of concrete and steel. Cold-blooded corporate officials control access to vital cybernetic medical tech, and outsiders find the finest cybertech in the sector available to anyone with the credits or the friends necessary to get wired in. Polychrome is a hard world, and its people are ground to a razor edge or broken on its steel.

The Founding Years

Before the Scream, Polychrome was a garden world on the edge of the sector, just within easy trading range of the mantis-like sophonts known as the Zadak. The aliens possessed remarkable biotechnical skills but their strict religious principles forbade them from fabricating most forms of inanimate technology. Human trade allowed the less rigorous among them to sidestep these prohibitions, as the use of "found artifacts" was not forbidden. For the right inducements the humans would be happy to leave goods where the Zadak could "find" them.

In order to prevent tensions with the more zealous of the aliens, Polychrome's industrial footprint was very small. The corporations that combined to push the colonization invested in expensive core-tech nanofabbers that could create sophisticated technical components without requiring major industrial facilities or the pollutants that would otherwise be a natural byproduct of the work. These fabbers were expensive, and it was necessary to bring in financiers from the Exchange of Light to underwrite the process. These transstellar bankers had a significant presence on Polychrome, not only to oversee their investment, but also to work on diplomatic ties with the wary Zadak.

For almost a hundred years, Polychrome prospered on the xeno trade. Colonists moved in, cities bloomed, and the massive half-living "unity ships" of the Zadak plied their ponderous way between stars to carry the human goods to their homeworld of Chot Zadak.

The Scream and the Stain

This ended with the Scream. Psychics were relatively few on Polychrome, and while the damage was significant, the world was equipped to survive without contact with the core worlds. The Zadak were not so fortunate. Their entire psychic caste of mediators were wiped out by the wave of metadimensional energy, the handful that survived now too violently insane to perform their duties. Chot Zadak was convulsed with savage fighting as different Zadak unities clashed in bewildered obedience to their suddenly-savage mediator lords.

One such mediator was aboard the unity ship *Heavenly Nacre*, inbound to Polychrome. For some inexplicable reason, the mediator became convinced that the humans were responsible for his torment, and he turned his remarkable biopsionic talents on the progenitor vats of the ship. By the time the Heavenly Nacre emerged in Polychrome space, all was in readiness. The human defenses weren't expecting the attack, and within an hour of entering orbit, the Zadak ship unleashed the alien plague known as the Stain.

Polychrome Planetary Data

Diameter	500
Gravity	0.98 G
Atmosphere	Invasive toxic
Biosphere	Trace
Temperature	-15 C to 30 C by season
Day Length	26.82 standard hours
Population	Approximately 1 million
Tech	Standard postech plus
Capital	The Warrens
Primary Language	English

Polychrome's primary is registered in Mandate astrographic records as AA-556, a class G star known simply as "the sun" to natives. Aside from Polychrome itself, the system has two significant gas giants, Titania and Oberon, and numerous small rocky planetoids in eccentric orbits. There are no other remotely habitable planets in the system. Space traffic is limited to small mining operations in the system asteroid belt and a station in geosynchronous orbit above the Warrens. Contact with other systems exists but is limited; details of the spike drive course necessary to reach Polychrome are closely guarded by the few captains known to possess them.

Visitors to Polychrome are strongly advised to follow all protocols regarding avoidance of the local atmosphere. While breathable, a persistent alien bioweapon has contaminated Polychrome's atmosphere with a pathogen capable of killing an unprotected human in minutes. The pathogen particulate is remarkably invasive, and vacc suits and vehicle seals are not guaranteed to withstand prolonged exposure.

The Stain was a virulent biological agent that bonded with Polychrome's beautiful atmospheric gas streaks, turning the lovely weather phenomenon into a murderous vector for cellular degeneration. Tendrils of the colored gas pervaded the planet's surface, killing everything they touched and stripping away the life from now-sterile earth. The planetary defenses roared to belated life and the *Heavenly Nacre* was soon brought down in a rain of flaming fragments, but the damage was already done. As the weather system expanded over Polychrome's surface, the entire planet was doomed to become uninhabitable. The areas first struck were wiped out instantly, but some regions had as much as three months to prepare.

The survivors worked desperately to dig a bunker in the earth, a buried dome large enough to hold what population remained. In the chaos, the Exchange Consul Elena Mirahvi stepped forward to take control of the situation. She oversaw the construction of the bunker and she determined which families would live and which would be left to die on the surface. In the end, she led the contin-

gent of volunteers who remained on the surface to hold back the panicked hordes of those who had not been chosen. They kept the desperate mob away from the bunker entrance long enough for the oncoming Stain to do its work, and then they too died in the mist.

The Early Years

Hidden in their underground fastness, the survivors were a bewildered mob. Elena's successor, Amalia Lin, used the reverence for Elena's sacrifice and the general panic to seize control of the underground city. She eliminated her political opponents with a brutality unexpected in an Exchange diplomat, but she did manage to keep society from collapsing in the wake of the disaster.

Lin apportioned the surviving nanofabbers among her political allies, each of whom oversaw a different portion of the "Warrens", as the city was known. These nanofabbers were able to create the parts and components necessary to expand the Warrens and set up the vital hydroponic farms. Unfortunately, the fabbers were unable to replicate themselves, and certain vital core-built components could only be vaguely approximated. Several fabbers broke down completely in the first few years as they were kept running far past their normal operating parameters.

It wasn't long before the malevolent genius of the Zadak became clear in the operation of the Stain. It was insidious, creeping through solid rock and penetrating steel walls with microscopic particles that recombined beyond the barrier. The seals kept back most of the Stain, but an infinitesimal fraction managed to cut through the best barriers the survivors could erect.

The effects were subtle at first- increased incidence of neuromuscular diseases, respiratory conditions, cancers. It was only after the standard medical treatments proved useless that the true source of these afflictions was understood. The Stain particles latched onto certain unique genetic characteristics of a victim, burrowing in and exploiting cracks in the genome to kill the host slowly. Some people were lucky enough to avoid exposure to any strain that targeted their particular genetic makeup. Many suffered slowly-worsening symptoms that promised shortened, painful lives. Others scarcely lived a decade before succumbing to the plagues.

THE ZADAK AND THE STAIN

While the *Heavenly Nacre* was destroyed, many of its escort ships were able to escape. The Zadak aboard were horrified at what their demented mediator-lord had done. Even if the humans were guilty of having unleashed the Scream, there could be no excuse for the destruction of an entire planetary ecosystem, and the blasphemy was unthinkable and unendurable. Rather than admit their unity's crime, the remaining Zadak in the system agreed to blame a maddened human psychic and a malfunctioning Polychrome weapons system for the pathogen's release. All evidence of Zadak involvement with the Stain would be scrubbed and the matter would be buried back on Chot Zadak.

Not all the Zadak agreed with this course. Some insisted on telling the truth, no matter how ruinous it would be to their unity. Their comrades could not permit this, and the remaining Zadak escort ships were torn with brief internecine fighting. The dissidents were forced down on Polychrome, their ships destroyed and the survivors left to the tender mercies of the humans. It was only by fleeing into Stained zones that the few remaining Zadak survived. The insectile aliens were immune to the pathogen's effects, and could take refuge there where humans could not follow.

Over the centuries since their unwilling exile, the surviving Zadak have stubbornly attempted to repair Polychrome's biosphere with plant and animal life derived from Chot Zadak. These life forms are immune to the Stain's effects, but the chemistry of Polychrome is hostile to many of the species, and it has been a long and bitterly difficult labor. Even now, only a few small pockets of alien life have been nurtured on the planet's surface, on the far side of the world from the Warrens and their orbital station. The megacorps have little interest in the presumably lethal surface of their world, so these small zones of gradually expanding life have gone unnoticed by observers thus far. Even the largest is only twenty or thirty kilometers in diameter, and the mists of the Stain make orbital observation difficult even should a searcher know what they are seeking.

The Zadak avoid humans whenever possible. Their technological base has largely degraded, though they've managed to find and retrofit substantial amounts of human technology from abandoned cities. Their numbers are not large; no more than ten or twenty thousand Zadak survive on the surface of Polychrome, each small tribe in their own zone of life. They are dedicated to expanding and tending these oases of greenery at all costs, and fear the consequences of human discovery of their existence. No salvager has yet discovered a Zadak garden, but now that outworlders are arriving with their much more agile and versatile atmosphere-capable spacecraft, it is becoming more and more likely that one of them will choose to explore the far side of Polychrome.

The remaining members of the unity on Chot Zadak have prospered since the Scream, and now form the ruling genotype of the Zadak. Only their most trustworthy members are appraised of the truth of what happened on Polychrome, as full disclosure would likely result in the death of the entire unity under the claws of an enraged world. Occasional ships are dispatched to Polychrome to launch raids against outlying human habitats or salvage groups. Their goal is simply to ensure that the humans shoot all Zadak on sight, the better to make certain that the dissident groups on Polychrome have no chance of forming diplomatic relations with humanity. While these offworld Zadak do not actually want to wipe out all the humans on Polychrome and compound their ancient crime, the unity is willing to take whatever steps might be necessary to ensure that buried truths never come to light.

Feverish work by the surviving biotechnicians developed a series of "Proteus" cybernetic implants that would provoke steady, subtle alterations in the user's genome. The implants had no visible effect on the user, but the steadily-shifting nature of the subject's genetic code made it impossible for the trace intensities of the Stain to get a good hold. It also made it impossible for standard DNA identification methods to function, but such side-effects were considered trivial in the face of the creeping plague.

Subjects that received the tailored cyberware were "clean". They were immune to trace levels of Stain, though they would die just as quickly as anyone else if exposed to the surface atmosphere outside of a sealed suit or vehicle. Those without the money or importance to merit the expensive treatments were the "stained", the steadily-growing underclass of the Warrens.

The Pure and the Profane

After Amalia Lin's eventual death, her lieutenants disagreed vigorously over which of them should be her successor. Only the frailty of the Warrens itself kept the dispute from becoming all-out war between the various corporate factions, and after a tense year a grudging agreement was made to share power over the world. Several major corporations agreed to make up a council to oversee the laws and order of the Warrens and the prosperity of Polychrome's human survivors.

The power of these megacorps was founded on the nanofabbers. They alone had control of one or more of these remarkable devices, and it was only by means of the nanofabbers that the Proteus implants could be created. Certain vital parts and components could only be fabricated by these pretech devices, and the megacorps held the city hostage to their need.

Employees of the corporations and their subsidiary concerns could hope to be rewarded with the implants for good work or the sake of private connections with the company brass. The stained that did the dirtiest, most dangerous work could dream of someday being hired into the caste of clean workers. The corporations were always looking for the brightest, sharpest, and least morally inhibited of the stained; they were egalitarian in that much, if little else.

While the megacorps retain the form and language of businesses, in practice they are governmental bodies as feudal and unconstrained as any borderworld baron. The Council maintains laws and contracts between them, but lesser powers are allowed to exist only so long as they are useful to one or more of the megacorps. So long as a megacorp does not interfere with the personnel or property of a rival, what they do with the stained underclass is of no real concern to the Council's judges.

Their rivalry does provide a little protection for the interests of the stained. A corporation that gets too rapacious or brutal with the underclass can expect many of them to throw in with their rivals, any of which are perfectly willing to adopt the guise of "protectors of the common public" as a stick to beat their enemies. Megacorp public relations workers labor to keep accidents and atrocities under wraps in order to prevent public outcry, and "official" news channels can be guaranteed to report honestly only such things as damage their rivals. A network of stained journalists provide an alternative as spies, truth-speakers, conspiracy theorists, and crazed prophets, some of them gaining a cult following among their brethren.

The megacorp elite live in a sealed world of elegance, nanofabbed luxury, and polished beauty. Yet at its core, this world is every bit as murderous as the bleakest Warrens underhab. Death just comes in more expensive packages: tailored toxins, assassin-implant courtesans, plasma mines, and faked evidence of embezzlement, rather than the dirty knives and cyberclaws of the stained. The megacorps ruthlessly police their images but beneath the facade of civilization and courtesy is a cutthroat struggle for supremacy.

A few laws do exist between the megacorps, honored out of necessity rather than any higher sentiment. Use of physical force is restricted to deniable skirmishes and assassinations rather than open military operations. The Warrens are remarkably sturdy, but not so sturdy that a war can rage through the corridors without bursting some vital seal or destroying some irreplaceable infrastructure. By the same token, sabotage of any of the remaining nanofabbers is certain to earn the perpetrators the united enmity of all the megacorps. Those few corporations that decided to test these rules now exist only as exemplary records and bloody folk legends.

For most citizens, laws are minimal. The common prohibitions against murder, theft, rape, and fraud exist and are enforced by Council-paid security guards, with criminals sentenced to often-lethal labor maintaining the seals or occasionally "volunteered" for corp cyberware testing. There are no laws against recreational pharmaceuticals, prostitution, or "voluntarily-contracted" indentured

servitude. Heavy combat armor and gunnery-class weaponry are forbidden to non-corp personnel, and any visible weaponry is apt to draw unwelcome attention in the better parts of the Warrens. Corp and Council security have carte blanche to deal with disturbances as they see fit, and they're rarely picky about details of "human rights" or "legality" when dealing with stained.

Rebels Below

The megacorps are both loved and hated by the stained. It's the corps that provide the vital necessities of life, and the corps that maintain the seals and barriers that hold back the insidious Stain. Those stained that have jobs have them through corp subsidiaries, and even though the work of maintaining the Warrens is often deadly and poorly-paid, it provides an existence far better than that of their unemployed brethren.

Eighty percent of Polychrome's population is stained. Among them, half are unemployed. Those without jobs subsist on the largesse of the megacorps, different corporations taking turns in handing out minimal necessities and a few recreational luxuries to their client populations. Those that don't spend their days in sullen hab blocks soaking up mindless entertainment usually find their excitement in gangs, criminal endeavors, or bitter conspiracies against the megacorps.

The megacorps tolerate these rebels as useful tools against their rivals. Properly aimed, they can be used to destroy corp property and kill valuable personnel, and it takes time and manpower to hunt them down. The rebels themselves eventually either die under the guns of corp security or are co-opted into the corp structure as operatives of proven worth, usually in exchange for a payoff to the rebel's family or gang.

Lately, the reopening of the space lanes between Polychrome and other worlds has changed the calculus. One of the major rebel leaders, Nemo, is quietly arranging to pull offworlder help into his attempt to overthrow the corporations. The addition of off-planet support might just be the tool necessary to break the megacorp lock on the Warrens. Nemo draws substantial support from several idealistic stained gangs and secret societies, but his charisma and earnest message mask an ambition as cold-blooded as that of any megacorp CEO. He means to smash the Council so it can be replaced with a more enlightened rule- his own. Offworlders who cooperate with him will be counted as valuable allies until their utility has passed, after which they will be noble martyrs to the glorious new age. Sometimes Nemo likes to sit and polish the inspiring things he'll say about them at their state funerals.

Chrome and Blood

Most of the resources necessary for operating the Warrens are drawn from core mines and geothermal taps. The megacorps operate a space station in geosynchronous orbit over the Warrens, but their space navy exists almost solely of a few system mining ships and a handful of gunboats. There are a few gas giants and flecks of rocky debris in the system, but nothing remotely habitable by humans.

The real wealth of Polychrome lies in its cybertech. Alone of the major worlds of Hydra Sector, Polychrome has a thriving industry

in cybernetic enhancements. The infrastructure necessary to implant the Proteus filters also serves to provide cheap, efficient genotyping and customization services for other forms of cybertech, from the simplest phosphor tattoo to the most sophisticated neural rewiring.

Even gutter-born stained can often afford a few cheap pieces of cyber, often luminescent gang insignia or simple cybernetic claws or fangs. Underhab "stitchers" use cast-off genotyping equipment and stolen customization tools to fit the cheap wares to their clients. The biocompatibility often leaves something to be desired, but for many of the stained, there's no point in worrying about eventual system rejection when they've no hope of living long enough to face it.

For clean workers and executives, the aesthetic is one of subtlety and refinement. Their cyber is often undetectable to anything short of a medical examination, though a practiced eye can often place it by the unnatural degree of beauty and grace possessed by heavily-augmented corp elites. Some of the workers in more sensitive positions have assorted security measures built into their hardware. Treachery or incompetence is punished by deactivation of Proteus implants or the shutdown of assorted organs, inducing blindness, deafness, impotence, or other disabilities as a salutary example to others. Officially, such punishments are simply unfortunate glitches in the software, but everyone knows what they really mean.

With the revival of interstellar travel, certain merchant captains have managed to chart the course in to Polychrome from the more connected regions of the sector. These captains guard their knowledge jealously, and it can be difficult to even find one willing to take passengers into the system. A modest passenger trade does exist, however, with the elite of other worlds taking passage to Polychrome for cyberware that they cannot get elsewhere. Export of this hardware is largely impractical, as the implantation requires such an extensive infrastructure that clients need to come to the world itself in order to have the work done. The megacorps have no compunctions about soaking the outworlders but they have yet to settle on a unified attitude toward the other worlds in the sector. For now, they take the outsiders' trade goods and imported luxuries in exchange for the wares of their world.

While Polychrome has been reliant on advanced cyberware for centuries, actual technical advancement has been limited. Much of the ingenuity and effort of their biotechs has been spent in compensating for the gradually degrading quality of nanofabbed components, each generation of output just a little less efficient and well-machined than the last. Polychrome cybertechnicians have been able to compensate for these inefficiencies over the years, improving tolerances and accommodating growing inadequacies. Some wonder what will happen to the world when the nanofabbers finally break down and no more Proteus implants can be manufactured, but these concerns remain dim and distant prospects for most of the megacorps.

Polychrome and Parts Unknown

The surface of Polychrome is a blasted desolation of empty cities and tendrils of lethal Stain. Exposure to the colored mist is invariably lethal in minutes as the victim's biological processes are shut down by targeted genetic damage. A vacc suit or sealed exploration vehicle

can protect from some of these negative effects, but the insidious nature of the Stain ensures that even these protective measures will be eventually overwhelmed.

A PC wearing a vacc suit on the surface of Polychrome needs to make a Physical Effect save every 30 minutes or gain one System Strain as the particles of the alien bioweapon begin to attack their system. Subjects that are already at maximum System Strain take 1d8 damage that cannot be healed until all the Stain-induced strain is removed. PCs in sealed vehicles need only make this check once every two hours. Those with a Proteus implant double the time between checks.

Some desperate stained or exceptionally driven megacorp employees engage in salvage missions on the surface, seeking out lost pretech in the ruins of Stain-tainted cities. When rival expeditions meet the situation tends to rapidly devolve into gunfire and suit ripping. Law is nonexistent outside the Warrens, and what happens out there is of no concern to the Council. Still, some salvagers still dare the dangers of the luminous mists for the sake of lost tech and the hope of finding a functional nanofabber.

Aside from the Warrens, there are also other population centers spread out beneath the surface of Polychrome. Most were established by one or more megacorps after the situation in the Warrens had stabilized. Some are prisons, others are resort habs, and a few are testing centers where research is conducted that would be too dangerous or unacceptable in the Warrens. A handful are maintained by stubborn religious or ideological groups eking out an existence on salvaged gear and what limited resources they can buy from the Warrens. Not all of these habs welcome visitors, and some of them cultivate habits and societies far outside the pale of civilized behavior.

The Warrens are a maze of tunnels, streets, and hab blocks built beneath, around, and on its protective dome. Even the most up-to-date maps are prone to inaccuracies as Lucid Industries or some ambitious underhab gang engages in a little extemporaneous rebuilding of some tenement or private district zone. The Warrens throb with relentless life and activity in all but the very bleakest of underhab slums, a rhythm that pulses regardless of the night cycles of the city dome light.

The dome of the Warrens extends in a circle roughly ten kilometers in diameter and one kilometer high at its highest point, the inner surface fashioned as an artificial sky spotted by a pale "sun" that crosses from east to west each day. Beneath this dome are the mazy tunnels of the geothermal power conduits and vent shafts that help keep this teeming city alive. These "coreways" are home to some of the most desperate characters in the city, those willing to live in the presence of titanic energies and heavy traces of Stain to avoid discovery. Few last long down there. Corp maintenance crews are heavily armed and summarily execute anyone caught in the coreways without the appropriate identification.

Above the coreways are the underhabs. These city districts are built on the bedrock of the Warrens, tall hab blocks stretching upward from the pockmarked streets. As the Stain tends to settle out, the traces of that alien pathogen are strongest in the underhabs, and the stained who live there are the quickest to show the signs of degenerative syndromes. No one lives in an underhab district unless they've got no better place to go.

Still, even these slums possess a gritty vitality. Small manufactories and corp subsidiaries profit by the cheap labor available and minimal concern for environmental damage, working the stained until

their bodies give way. Most workers are glad of the chance, as the pay gives them hope of "moving up" in time. Those without these jobs are reliant on petty crime or the minimal Council handouts meant to keep them from rioting. These efforts at containment are not always successful, as fewer than sixty percent of the Warrens population has a job of any sort.

Above the underhabs are the "rim districts", built along the inner surface of the dome and connected by ascending concentric rings of streets and tubeways. Most of the inhabitants of the rim districts are among the lucky half of the stained population that has a job of some sort, and these men and women are inclined to do whatever it takes to keep that job. The luckiest and most talented among them can hope to someday receive funding for a Proteus implant from their employers before the toll of the Stain claims their bodies.

Rim district hab blocks are relatively safe compared to the barely-restrained anarchy of the underhabs, but the locals are under constant pressure from gangs that boil up from below to take profitable revenge on the "sellouts" and "traitors" who have thrown in with the megacorps. The uptown districts where the clean managers and executives dwell tend to be far too dangerous for these gangers, but the rim districts provide the perfect blend of profitable looting and righteous vengeance. In consequence, many of the rim residents actively hate underhab dwellers, and go out of their way to make their lives as unpleasant as possible.

At the center of the dome, suspended from the integral struts that help support the entire underground structure, rise the uptown districts. Corp security keeps a careful eye on the tubeways and streets that connect the rim districts to uptown, and those who mean to enter had best have an appropriate identity record. Offworlders are welcome, as are clean citizens, but the only stained that make an appearance among their graceful towers and gengineered gardens are those who serve the elite as workers or indentured servants.

Many of the stained are more than willing to fill those roles for the chance to live uptown. Stain trace densities are lowest here, and even without a Proteus implant a stained has a decent chance of living out their life without significant damage. The streets are ruthlessly secure, the quality of life is superb even for the lesser managers who call the district home, and the quarters for "servants" are better than all but the best the rim districts can offer. Still, every stained knows that their presence in uptown will only last as long as they are useful, and any failure will be punished with exile at best.

Despite the security of uptown there are always ways into it that corp monitors cannot follow. The support struts are honeycombed with engineering spaces and maintenance shafts, and while the security measures there are uniformly lethal, some stained are willing to risk it to get a crack at uptown's plunder. Others slip in with false identities, or bribe less than sedulous corp security to turn their attention. Even in the heart of their power, surrounded by painted servants and hired protectors, the lords of Polychrome cannot ever completely forget the rage that constantly threatens to boil over from below.

Meet the Locals

The following NPCs are just a sample of some of the people that might be met in the city. Most of them have the statistics appropriate to normal civilians, though the more martially-competent might use the statistics that appear later for corp security or gang thugs.

Dr. Anthony "Scissors" Bright: An illicit stitcher with an underhab implant lab and an addiction to the kind of amusements that can best be had where life is cheap. He finances his inclinations with cheap but good cybertech implantation, no questions asked. He's a thin man, long-fingered and smiling and breezily unconcerned with anything but his "hunting trips". Sooner or later he'll go too far, and earn attention he won't be able to handle.

Jimmy Cogs: An up-and-coming cell leader for the rebel mastermind Nemo, Jimmy Cogs is often put forward as an offworlder contact for Nemo's "People's Revolution". The young man is blonde, twitchy, and fingers the fringes on his synthsilk jacket when he's nervous. Cogs actually believes in the People's Revolution with the burning sincerity of youth, but he's also smart enough to keep out of corp security's reach. His sister is one of Nemo's many paramours, and it may be the rebel leader might end up dropping some words around her that Jimmy ought not to hear.

Anna Feng: Proprietor of a shop in the underhabs, Anna's never going to see thirty again, and she's got a bad, racking cough from the Stain. Still, the remnants of a girlish beauty linger about her, though often well-concealed behind the hard glare and palliative aerosol sticks she sucks on. Her husband died five years ago, and her teenage daughter Liana is attending a rim district academy on the proceeds of the shop. She's under constant pressure from the local gangs to step up her protection payments, but if they get much higher she won't be able to afford the academy. She's willing to do whatever it takes to give her daughter a better future.

Wilson Hutter: Chief of a rim district security station, built like a fireplug and possessing the general disposition of a grizzly with a toothache. While Hutter is reasonably particular about following the legal forms with district residents and other "respectable people", he nurses a bitter loathing of underhab stained. As far as he's concerned they are universally lazy, thieving, stupid, vicious, and animated only by a desire to steal the honest fruits of a respectable person's labor. Underhabbers can expect to get a very hard road from Chief Hutter, and the jobs he commissions to deal with their incursions on his turf are not always strictly by the book.

Zoe Kimura: One of the innumerable aspiring rebel leaders in the Warrens, Zoe had an unremarkable rim district upbringing and would normally have transitioned seamlessly into some minor clerical position suitable for a stained of her good academic records. At least, until her best friend Alex sold himself into an indenture contract to a managerial paramour in uptown, imagining a future as a pampered kept boy. The facts were rather different, and the few messages he was able to smuggle out before his death spoke of horrific activities in his patron's social circles. Zoe's current cover is as social coordinator for a midlevel Synthesis executive, but she uses her position to build up cells of saboteurs and infiltrators with an eye towards destroying the indenture system on Polychrome- and killing the corp exec responsible for Alex's hideous death.

"Sparks" Olonwe: A stained scavenger and black-market cybertech, Sparks will deal with anybody who has the credits or the favors to show for it. The young man is very dark, with close-cropped hair, the smell of ozone clinging to his ratty clothing, and nine fingers after an unfortunate lab accident. He has a remarkable talent for repurposing salvaged cyberware and stripping it down for refit into new users, often managing it with only minimal rejection issues. He and Dr, Bright have a long-standing hatred, as Olonwe suspects that Bright was responsible for the disappearance of his younger brother years ago.

Joshua "Core" Rackman: "Core" is the current gang boss of the 5-17 Authentics, an underhab gang operating out of Lucid Gardens 5-17. This sprawling hab block is one of the underhab's near-arcologies, a self-contained tenement with all that its makers imagined that 15,000 half-feral stained could require to keep them pacified. The Authentics have since taken over most of the porn shops, brothels, eateries, drug shops, and clubs that pock the 5-17, and Core means to expand his reach to the surrounding hab blocks. His skinny frame, ill-fitting "real" fiber clothing and unruly mop of black hair have led some to underestimate him. Beneath it is a coldly brilliant mind with an almost supernatural talent at sensing treachery. Some say that he's a feral psychic, and that sooner or later he's going to burn out spectacularly. Others say he already has.

Clarissa Otombe: A relatively high-ranking Lin Foundation marketing executive, Clarissa is more widely known as the chairperson of the Social Justice Foundation, a group of like-minded corp employees who push for greater Council welfare funding and more underhab-specific employment opportunities. Many of the members have never met a stained who wasn't a carefully-vetted employee or indentured servant, and most aren't interested in anything more than the pleasant frisson of righteousness that comes from depositing a donation every now and then. The SJF sometimes hires people to carry out relief works in the underhabs. These projects are almost always poorly-conceived and administered with willful ignorance of the actual facts on the ground.

Bastable Quint: A half-crazed treasure hunter, Bastable is a big man with a shell-like growth covering the left side of his face and down the side of his neck, freezing that side of his mouth into a perpetual grin. The expedition that got him that Stain tumor also got him plunder enough for his Proteus implant, and he's been leading treasure-hunting expeditions out into the abandoned cities ever since. He's a fair boss, and his salvage teams can expect to keep the majority of what they find, but he's ruthlessly willing to cut a group loose to die if they get pinned down by automated security systems or a sudden tendril of heavy Stain. Most of his expeditions are mounted in gravflyer shuttles that are nimble enough to avoid incoming Stain fronts. He also leaves when he says he'll leave- and missing the last shuttle out is a death sentence.

Places to Go

A few of the more relevant or typical places in Polychrome are given here for the GM's use.

Amalia Lin Spaceport: The spaceport for Polychrome is actually a separate dome placed directly on the surface of the planet, not buried as is the main dome of the Warrens. Hatchways open to allow the entrance of shuttles and fighter-class hulls, with two berths large enough to handle direct landing of most frigate-class hulls. The constant exposure to the raw outside atmosphere plus the lack of buffering between the dome and the air leaves local Stain levels alarmingly high. While the short exposure most offworlders receive is negligible, stained work at the starport only when no other opportunities present themselves, and an unusually large percentage of the administrative staff are granted Proteus implants by the Council. Customs on Polychrome are minimal. Ships are not searched and the port master has discretion to let in anything he doesn't think will cause problems below. In case of emergency, the city is perfectly willing to blow the supports on the access tunnel, sealing the starport off.

Daybreak: Once one of the major cities on the surface of Polychrome, Daybreak was hit hard by the Stain. The Zadak launched their attack almost directly over the city, snuffing out its inhabitants in minutes. The lifeless centuries have left much of the city mummified with arid decay, but within the tottering buildings is a king's ransom in pretech artifacts. Stained salvagers and foolhardy corp climbers have all launched treasure hunts into Daybreak, but the Stain remains ferociously strong in the area. Salvagers need to time their incursions to match the chaotic weather patterns. The reckless risk being caught in a luminous storm of Stain powerful enough to worm through a starship's atmosphere seals in minutes. Overland travel into the city is borderline suicidal, as land or atmosphere traffic requires dodging multiple cyclonic weather fronts of Stain. Rumor has it that the infamous treasure hunter Barnabas Arkwright found a map recording the location of an intact nanofabber somewhere within the city, but died under the claws of an angry joygirl before he was able to mount an expedition to retrieve it. His map is said to be hidden somewhere within the Warrens still.

Downbelow District: A maze of narrow alleyways and access tunnels cuts through this decaying cluster of underhab blocks. The main geothermal core tap for the Warrens cuts through the center of the district, and the air steams with a perpetual smouldering heat. Many of the stained locals go about in little more than phosphor tats and weaponry belts. Clean citizens never enter Downbelow without an armed escort or a crew of fellow slummers.

The Glass Tower: Headquarters of Lucid Industries, this pillar of gleaming multicolored glass juts upward within the central dome of the Warrens, dominating the lesser structures that cluster around it. Gravstat drones take off regularly from the tower to monitor the Warrens for structural faults and large-scale outbreaks of violence. Stained drone pilots regularly disguise their illegal gravstats as these ubiquitous, dog-sized flyers.

Irontown: A refinery and reprocessing rim district within the Warrens. Most of Irontown's inhabitants are stained working for VulcanTech, a megacorp responsible for much of the mining and scrap reprocessing in the Warrens. The vent piping from the smelters and sorters is imperfect, and the streets and access tunnels of the district are often hazed with a faint, foul smoke. The locals often sport breath masks as they go to their jobs amid the fiery furnaces and blazing laser sublimators. The locals of Irontown are clannish, but take pride in being better than the "underhab scum" below.

Lucid Gardens 5-17: A massive underhab hive block meant to house 15,000 stained, Lucid Gardens possesses a concrete and composite aesthetic that would make Le Corbusier blanch. Most of the surfaces in Lucid Gardens are fabricated from "stainproof" materials pocked with bullet craters and graffiti. Every necessity the designers thought appropriate to a semi-civilized stained population is available within the Gardens, everything from prostitution to no-cook meals to semi-adequate trauma repair provided by those few locals who retain ambitions higher than the glory of gang membership. Outsiders enter the Gardens at their own risk. The dominant local gang, the 5-17 Authentics, is liable to exact a 50 credit per head passage tax on anyone who looks remotely capable of paying.

Mirahvi Plaza: Painstakingly crafted to resemble a classical Persian pleasure-garden, this plaza is a adorned with holoprojected blue skies and lush gengineered greenery. The verdant lawns are favorite places for the young and wealthy to see and be seen, while the secluded bowers are popular spots for clandestine meetings.

The Nightingale: On the surface, the Nightingale is a typical, slightly upscale underhab knocking shop, with the almost 100% artificial madame Miss Cecilia overseeing a stable of men, women, and other genders available for varied entertainments. Behind that exterior, however, Miss Cecilia offers access to a warren of coreway passages in the basement of her brothel, with guides available for an extra consideration. Passage is usually 100 credits a head, with 500 more for a guide. The coreways come up at multiple points in the underhabs and rim districts, but the navigation is dangerous.

Opal Court: A typical uptown hab block, Opal Court towers above the neatly-landscaped grounds in a pillar of nacreous white composite. Uniformed security maintain a largely decorative presence at the entrance and in the lobbies, and the security cameras are always active on the hallways- and, some say, on the apartments themselves. Not all of the residents are entirely pleased with this, but their employers like to know what their minions have been up to. These files can sometimes be intercepted by other interested parties.

Rejection: A bar near the Warrens spaceport, Rejection is decorated with stylized photographs of cyberware users suffering end-stage implant immunorejection, the legacy of an artistic movement championed by a former lover of the bar's owner, Ilsa Chow. She keeps the images up to remind her what a terrible idea the whole relationship was, but the grotesquery appeals to certain patrons.

Polychrome is run by the Council, a vestigial remnant of the original Exchange of Light and their consulate system. Each of the eight megacorps on Polychrome has a seat on the Council, as does the successor of the Exchange of Light's original consul. In theory, these nine men and women soberly debate the proper course for Polychrome's future and come to a reasonable consensus about the best policies to establish.

In practice, the Council is a snake pit of intrigue, bribery, treachery, and the occasional assassination. Each of the megacorp representatives is concerned only with the interests of his or her company, and the Chief Councilor appointed by the Exchange can do little more than tip an even struggle into the least damaging outcome. While the Chief Councilor is responsible for the day-to-day running of the Warrens and its judiciary system, she knows that all it takes is a single megacorp's real interest in a matter to remove it from her hands. The law on Polychrome is what the megacorps say it is.

The tyranny would be intolerable if the megacorps could stop hating each other long enough to cooperate. The relentless struggle for advantage and shifting web of alliances leaves most of the corporations deadlocked in an even match of influence and authority. The Chief Councilor can sometimes negotiate something resembling justice by playing one side off against the other.

The Council maintains its own security force and administrative structure, but their authority usually only flows into those districts and places that no corp finds sufficiently profitable to interest them. In practice, this means the underhab districts and slum zones of the city, where the stained are too poor and restive to make direct corp control worthwhile. Most Council officials nurse a poorly-concealed bitterness towards the corps for their constant interference, and some make a habit of setting corps against each other whenever possible.

The current Chief Councilor sees the same opportunities in offworlders as do the rebel cells. Like them, she sees them as a potential wedge to break the megacorp control of the Warrens with their enormous interstellar wealth and exotic tech. Even the most unreliable offworlder freebooter might well find himself encouraged to take certain Council jobs, either with money or with the chance to have certain regrettable misbehaviors overlooked by Council courts.

MEGACORP	PORTFOLIO
EverLife	Hydroponic and vat-grown foodstuffs. EverLife prides itself on the importance of its products, and cultivates a corporate culture of high-minded devotion to their vital duties. In practice, this tends to manifest as an utterly ruthless willingness to crush anyone who gets in their way, fortified by the sanctimonious knowledge that they're merely protecting the city's vital interests.
General Fabricant	Consumer goods. GF worms its way into providing the countless consumer goods that the other megacorps don't have the time or expertise to exploit. They have the worst reputation among small businessmen, as many of them specialize in the same small household goods that GF produces. GF "marketing specialists" can be brutal in suppressing any small manufacturer that gets too successful.
Icarus Combine	Vehicles and drones. Icarus is a tight consortium of vehicle manufacturers that share control over a nanofabber, and spend much of their time consumed with infighting. Many suspect that one of the main reasons that Polychrome has yet to field a spike drive ship is because Icarus can't coordinate well enough to build one. The other megacorps may step in to "rectify" the situation if Icarus can't get their act together.
Lin Foundation	Entertainment, cultural products, and art patronage. The Lin Foundation often offloads the most vulgar and mindless entertainment on small subcontractor corporations to maintain its "highbrow" image. Lin Foundation security squads are among the most informed in the city, relying on a network of subverted stained artists and culture producers to tip them off to impending trouble.
Lucid Industries	Housing, atmosphere seals, and maintenance of the Warrens. Lucid Industries is the landlord for much of the slums, and they're notorious for the ruthlessness of their heavily-armed eviction teams.
Paradyne	Weaponry and defensive technologies. While the smallest of the megacorps, Paradyne sells most of the weapons, personal armor, and combat cyberware components in the Warrens.
Synthesis	Cybertech and medical services. While every megacorp can handle basic cybernetic implants and the production of the vital Proteus tech, Synthesis handles most of the more elaborate medical and biotechnical work and produces most of the medical hardware. The megacorp is notoriously riven by struggles between different research groups, all of them trying to grab a larger share of the corp's profits for their own pet projects. These disputes can occasionally come down to hired guns and targeted killings.
VulcanTech	Power generation and mining. VulcanTech operates the geothermal core taps that power the Warrens and manages the limited asteroid mining that goes on. In consequence, VulcanTech employees are much more likely to leave the safety of the Warrens, and there are persistent rumors that rebels have focused on subverting VT officials in order to establish safe havens far outside the reach of most other powers.

The Faces of the System

The following selection of characters are a fair sample of some of the figures that PCs might run into if they have significant dealings with the Council or the megacorps. Most of the non-combatants would have the same combat statistics as a normal human, or possibly a specialist normal. Most of the more martial NPCs can be described by the statistics given later in the Combat on Polychrome section.

Sofia Bondieu: Current Chief Councilor and a woman of sublime patience. As an heir to the pacific and mercantile beliefs of the Exchange of Light, she regards the current megacorps as abominable heretics against the principles of honest exchange and mutual advantage her ancestors taught. She and most of her predecessors have struggled simply to keep things from getting worse on Polychrome, but now that offworlders are arriving once more, she sees an opportunity to break the power of the megacorps. Offworlders who get into trouble on Polychrome are apt to be recruited to "assist" in exchange for having their myriad sins overlooked by the Council.

Susanne Fortinbras: A freelance fixer who rotates clients in from several different megacorps. Susanne makes a business out of knowing nothing more than she absolutely has to. The slim, synthetically beautiful young woman is known both for the spectacularly ugly twin bruisers she keeps as live-in bodyguards and her willingness to take a chance on new talent. Her contracts are always on the level insofar as she presents them, but some of them have involved unforeseen complications.

Captain Maria Jamesson: Council security chief for the Downbelow District, one of the worst underhabs in the Warrens. She's short, dark, good-looking and wired so thoroughly she puts static on nearby radios. She and her men are paid by the Council to keep order, but they're expected to get out of the way and go blind when corp security turns up. Jamesson nurses a much-bruised sense of justice all the same, and stubbornly tries to protect her sullen charges from their own violent habits.

Tatyana Lin: Heir to control of the Lin Foundation megacorp, she and her six less influential clone-siblings are descended from Amalia Lin's genetic material. Each one is a perfect physical replica of their illustrious ancestress, seven porcelain beauties with long black hair and dead black eyes. The Lin Foundation champions cultural innovation and artistic development within the Warrens, all the better to control the artists that arise from the stained masses. The clones all cordially hate each other, and spend time arranging assassination attempts between board meetings.

Salvatore Musveni: Director of Lucid Industries, the megacorp largely responsible for the housing, seals, and atmosphere maintenance of the Warrens. An elderly man too proud to wear a young face, he is suspicious of offworlders and keenly interested in maintaining boundaries of all kinds. He is fair by his measure, but he will sacrifice any number of stained or employees to maintain the security of the Warrens and Lucid Industries- in that order.

Fat Tom Sandoval: Spaceport chief of operations under the nominal control of the Council. Tom's always got a reeking synthetic cigar stuffed between his lips, and is almost as wide as he is tall. The fat conceals remarkably powerful muscles, and the man's busted knuckles are a badge of his stained youth as a prizefighter. He's clean now, and he means to keep it that way. He's remarkably bribable by offworlders, however, provided the outsiders aren't proposing anything that could be convincingly pinned on him.

Dr. Lucy Brandt: Willowy and as blonde as modern science can make her, Dr. Brandt is one of Synthesis' best cybernetic researchers, and leader of the Evolution Group within the corporation. Currently the strongest of the factions within the corporation, Brandt's protege William Candless is the current CEO and makes sure she and her people get whatever they want. And what they want right now is data from several ancient biometric devices left within the surface cities shortly before the Stain overwhelmed them. Brandt is convinced that the data from these devices will allow the Evolution Group to succeed in finding a cure for the Stain, and she's willing to sacrifice any number of employees to get it.

Terrence O'Keefe: Terrence runs the Silvergrin dentifrice factory in one of the worse sections of the Warrens, manufacturing the mirror-bright tooth cleaner/enamel stain under license from General Fabricant. A skinny man who developed a mild twitch from the Stain before he finally earned his Proteus implant, he's now watching his youngest daughter Mary start to show the same symptoms he did- at a much quicker rate of degeneration. GF won't pay for Proteus implants for his family until he manages to bump Silvergrin sales by at least 100%. Right now he's torn between trying to sell out his knowledge to a rival corporation or trying to arrange the catastrophic failure of the rival "Bright Morning" toothpaste. He'll do almost anything for the 10,000 credits it'd take to get Mary an implant.

Ludmilla "Tiny" Raskovna: A nineteen-year old woman a little past two meters in height and showing signs of heavy steroid use, "Tiny" Raskovna works in one of the many small factories and loading centers that the megacorps contract in the stained parts of the Warrens. On a tour of the facilities, a corp exec's son was taken by her unusual look, and amused himself by seducing her. Ludmilla was young and hopeful enough to fall for it. An incurable romantic, she keeps telling herself that her beau's secret visits are merely to protect her from his rivals. If she ever realizes that he merely finds her a bracingly exotic freak, she'll maintain her sweet tractability just long enough to destroy him, and will gladly use any outworlders that come to hand to that end.

Brandon Torskeld: Megacorp information security chief, responsible for dealing with hackers and aspiring data thieves. Torskeld is actually only a nominally talented computer tech himself, but he has the best that corp money can buy to do that for him. What he has is a malignant genius for entrapping and capturing anyone who tries to put their grubby fingers on pure, pristine corp data. If Torskeld has a weakness, it's a love of the dramatic. He's almost let a few of the wilier subjects off the hook when he gave them just a little too much rope before sending in the SWAT team. Some of his superiors in the corporation are worried that one of these days, one of Torskeld's "projects" is going to get their hands on something explosive while the security chief waits to roll up their entire support network in one dramatic raid.

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When it comes time to write up an adventure for Polychrome, a GM always has the option of turning to the adventure chapter in the *Stars Without Number* core book and using the elements contained here to polish up something entertaining for all involved. Sometimes a GM isn't feeling the spark of inspiration, however, or they just don't have the time to hand-craft something out of the raw parts. This section covers a number of basic adventure seeds that can be customized with the elements listed here to create a quick, flavorful cyberpunk adventure for PCs on Polychrome.

Preparing the Adventure

The first thing you're going to need is an adventure record sheet out of the *Stars Without Number* core book. It's a convenient format for noting down all the important elements of the adventure, and once the adventure's over you can file it with the rest of your campaign for later reference and callbacks in future events.

Next, look over the following seeds and pick one that sounds interesting or approachable for your players. Each template includes drop-in elements- Friends, Enemies, Bit Players, Valuable Things, and so forth. You can either extemporize the necessary components or pull them off the lists available in this section. For likely combatants, you can fill in their combat stats at the bottom of the adventure sheet. The Resources and Reference section includes example combat statistics for a number of likely enemies.

Once you've made a quick pass over the outline, look back on the PCs' prior activities and see if you can't connect these events to something they've done or seen before. It doesn't necessarily have to be a direct consequence of their action; it can be just as rewarding for PCs to run into another NPC they've dealt with before, the better to build up a sense of a coherent world with persistent characters living in it.

Finally, set hard numbers for the worth of valuable items and XP rewards for the adventure. For XP, check the *Stars Without Number* core book's adventure chapter and assign an XP value in line with the speed of advancement you want to maintain for your game. For other valuables, a good rule of thumb is to assign them a worth commensurate with the type of people fighting over their possession. Stained slum-dwellers might knife each other over a hundred-credit note, but a megacorp exec wouldn't bother bending over to pick it up. As a rule of thumb, 100 credits is a lot of money to a slummer, 1,000 credits is a lot of money to a worker, 10,000 credits is a lot of money to a clean corp manager, and 1,000,000 credits will make even a corp executive sit up and take notice.

Don't worry too much about putting too much money in the hands of the PCs. Living well on Polychrome is not cheap, and even getting offplanet is liable to run 10,000 credits a head if the PCs don't have their own starship and knowledge of the spike route. If they want to burn their money on buying expensive tailored cybertech, let them- if they didn't want to play with cyberpunk-flavored tropes, they probably wouldn't be hanging around Polychrome in the first place.

Adventure Seeds

The PCs are approached by a Friend who is being threatened by an Enemy. The Friend has possession of a Thing, and wants to get both it and themselves offworld. The Enemy is exerting their efforts to make sure that doesn't happen, before the departure is possible the Thing must be retrieved from a hiding place now rendered dangerous by a Complication.

An Enemy mistakes the PCs as allies of a Friend currently subject to the Enemy's wrath. The antagonist engineers a Complication, intending to take out both the PCs and the Friend in the ensuing trouble. The Complication unexpectedly reveals a Valuable Thing, and both Enemy and PCs lunge to take possession of it.

A Friend who happens to be an untrained psychic wants to get offworld before a corp forcibly enlists him or her. They dread the Firewall implant process and the thought of becoming pampered corp property. Meanwhile, a corp-affiliated Enemy is hunting them down, and is going after a Bit Player loved one who might be able to help them find the Friend. The Friend refuses to leave the Bit Player behind.

An Enemy is arranging for the forcible clearing of a gritty but decent rim district in order to ostensibly build a new industrial facility. In practice, they just want to clear the locals out so they can blow holes in the ancient hab blocks and find a long-lost Valuable Thing that their records suggest is hidden there. The Council is willing to let them clear the district in order to build the factory, but their rivals would never let them smash it up just to plunder the Thing.

A disease is spreading rapidly in a bad hab complex, and the PCs happen to be there with a Friend when Council security seals it off. Corp extraction teams are sent in to retrieve valuable personnel, but the slum-dwelling locals are left behind. A riot breaks out, and some of the locals blame the offworlders for bringing in the disease. The PCs learn that a corp intends to purge the entire district with a combination of a steam leak and a kill team, using the riots as cover, and the PCs need to either stop it or escape in time.

A megacorp wants to extract an exceptionally talented scientist from a rival's research center, after lengthy secret negotiations with the man. The center is in a remote hab bubble five hours away from the Warrens, accessible only by overland travel. The scientist has been able to smuggle out maps of the interior and notes on the security system. The PCs are enlisted as expendable offworlders who are unlikely to know enough about the local power structures to successfully betray their employers. An unexpected Zadak raid strikes the hab bubble just as the PCs make their move.

A rebel leader arranges to frame the PCs for an assassination carried out by one of his cells, planning to stir up trouble between the megacorps and the offworlders. The real assassin is a Friend who is outraged at this chicanery- she wants the megacorps to fear the stained, not the outworlders. The Friend contacts the PCs and helps them hide from the megacorps, offering them the real story and the chance to take down the rebel leader who set them up. Meanwhile,

the rebel leader makes his sincere apologies once he realizes that his plan is blown, and gets a message to the PCs offering to arrange proof of their innocence and substantial payment if they bring him the Friend's head.

A Friend approaches the PCs with a map to a long-lost corp research complex deep within the coreways. The complex was once a research outpost for Allied Metamorphics, a megacorp that was eradicated 300 years ago when they made an unsuccessful attempt to sabotage General Fabricants' nanofabber. In the chaos, AM's nanofabber was never discovered, and there's a chance it could be hidden in the complex. The Friend fails to mention that they stole the map from an Enemy who is even now pursuing them. The complex probably doesn't contain the nanofabber, but it almost certainly has at least one Valuable Thing for the taking- and a number of still-functional security measures. It's possible that a small community consisting of the descendents of the original researchers might still be present.

The PCs are hired by a megacorp as adjunct negotiators to help a group of Polychrome-native corp managers cut a charter deal with a quarrelsome and annoying offworlder ship captain. The corp is convinced the PCs have the right social graces to deal with a fellow offworlder. Meanwhile, an Enemy in the pay of a rival corp strives to sabotage the negotiations by ensuring that the PCs can't provide the favors the captain demands before he's willing to charter his ship to the corp. At the climax, a kill team is dispatched to eliminate the captain- and the PCs if they aren't willing to get out of the way.

A Friend belongs to a local gang, and they and their compatriots are facing death as a more powerful rival gang is pushing them off their turf and into the reach of hungry rivals. The Friend offers a Valuable Thing if the PCs are willing to help- but unbeknownst to them, the enemy gang is being backed by a powerful Enemy and being steadily subverted into obedience by blackmail on the gang's leadership. If the Enemy's grip were broken or the blackmail evidence were destroyed, the gang would gladly turn on its erstwhile backer.

1D20	ADVENTURE COMPLICATIONS
1	A megacorp official is acting with charitable intentions
2	A fixer is being framed with the appearance of treachery
3	One of the people is addicted to expensive chems
4	Two of the people involved are long-estranged family
5	A gang leader wants a favor from a former gang member
6	One of the people is actually a member of a rebel cell
7	A clean citizen's Proteus implants will be deactivated unless he betrays someone
8	Pipe ruptures have filled the district with rivulets of boiling toxins
9	Someone is offered desperately-wanted biosculpting or cyber to betray another
10	A megacorp official wants the PCs as fall guys
11	Someone is forcibly biosculpted into a decoy for a wanted person
12	The Council is playing two corps against each other
13	A rebel cell picks an inopportune time to make a terrorist attack
14	Offworld bounty hunters have come to collect one of the people involved for their crimes on another world
15	Stained riot near the starport in the belief that offworlders are spreading some hideous disease
16	One of the people involved is the son or daughter of a spacer who came here twenty years ago- and they're convinced the offworlders owe them a way off this disease-ridden hellhole.
17	One of the people involved is a gang plant who intends to set up everyone involved for their comrades
18	A database containing extremely useful information relevant to the adventure exists- but it's in a Stain-suffused surface hab bubble that was abandoned after a Zadak raid six months ago.
19	One of the people involved is actually a cyberninja with a contract on someone else involved
20	Flip the seed- the ostensible Friend is actually an Enemy and the entire situation is a set-up for the PCs

1D10	FRIENDS	ENEMIES	BIT PLAYERS	VALUABLE THINGS
1	Rebel leader	Corp security chief	Stain-raddled wino	Cutting-edge cyberware
2	Offworlder stuck here	Amoral rebel leader	Biosculpted prostitute	Nanofab spare parts
3	Truth-telling journalist	Gang leader	Slumming clean corper	Blackmail on an exec
4	Idealistic medic	Treacherous fixer	Gangster with defective cyber	Rebel leader's true identity
5	Struggling stained worker	Human trafficker	Paranoid stained worker	Secret corp bank account
6	Megacorp reformer	Ruthless researcher	Stained urchin thief	Pretech relics from the ruins
7	Indentured servant	Zealous cultist	Corp test subject collector	Map to surface cache
8	Small business owner	Megacorp manager	Offworlder "professional"	Keycodes to corp facility
9	Whore with a heart of gold	Grudge-minded termie	Burnt-out good cop	Proof of a leader's treachery
10	Council official	Sadistic pimp	Raving street prophet	Friend's indenture contract

Urban and cyberpunk-flavored adventures often involve a substantial amount of investigation. NPCs need to be questioned, areas need to be searched, obscure organizations and hidden malefactors need to be located, and all manner of other dire truths must be brought to light by the undaunted PCs. Especially in a cyberpunk-flavored game, players often assume that there are sinister machinations operating behind the outward seeming of a situation, and dig in accordingly. Handling these investigations can be problematic.

Investigative stories are stories about finding things out. Even in the purest sandbox game, players are unlikely to be all that thrilled with being tossed around a situation by powers they can never understand or approach, whether or not this situation is "realistic" for the setting. Especially when dealing with a cyberpunk-inflected game, the stories tend to be about the protagonists discovering the real truth behind events. Sometimes this happens before the climax and sometimes it happens after, but protagonists in these kind of games do not end ignorant of what has been done.

With that in mind, the dynamics of investigation in a cyberpunk game should never boil down to simply making a skill check or thinking of the right question to ask an NPC. It should come down to the price of the information- to what PCs are willing to pay or do to get the information they want. Everything can be known if the PCs are ready to put in the kind of credit and work necessary to discover it. Whenever the players want an answer to a question, the GM shouldn't be thinking about whether they can get it, but what and who they'll have to pay to get it.

Information brokers, street gossip, and related Culture/Polychrome or Culture/Criminal checks are excellent entry points for investigation. These sources may not know the answer to a given PC question, but they can almost certainly point the PCs in the direction of someone or something that does. A high-priced information broker or excellent skill check might not only reveal a good source for the information, but also give some hints as to useful handles for getting them to divulge it. A failed check or casual street gossip might only point the PCs to the source, with no further clues.

In many cases, these intermediaries won't be needed at all. The players will just naturally make their own assumptions about which people they should talk to or which databanks they should hit for the answer. As a rule of thumb, only allow one false start. If their target is completely useless for passing them useful information, use it to direct the players toward more fruitful sources.

Once they've found a source for their information, be ready to determine what kind of price will have to be paid to get the data. In some cases, the target might be willing to sell the information, for an amount varying with the risk of talking. As a rule of thumb, a stained slum-dweller will usually rat out something that might get them killed for 500 credits. Something dangerous but probably non-lethal to admit might run 100 credits, while casually-known facts and gossip might cost ten or twenty. Multiply these numbers by 10 if dealing with an ordinary worker, 100 if dealing with a corp manager, and 10,000 if trying to persuade a corp exec.

Other sources of information involve databases and sealed records. In those cases, information gathering becomes an exercise in breaking and entering. Reducing a hacking attempt to a simple Computer/Int skill check tends to be minimal entertainment, so you're sometimes best off requiring the group to break into some location where the database can be directly tapped. A failed skilled check under those circumstances might result in garbled data, but also a clear pointer at an alternative source for the information.

Cash isn't always of interest to a living subject, however. Some of them will want favors done, usually of the sort best accomplished by people who aren't terribly fussy about legalities. The table below provides a number of different ideas for favors a subject might want accomplished before handing over the information- just roll or pick from the list based on the motivations of the people involved.

A few can't be expected to talk willingly at all. For these people, a smash-and-grab kidnapping might be in order, or a probe by a convenient telepath, or the acquisition of blackmail or other extortion materials. Inducing an unwilling subject to talk can involve activities that aren't terribly pleasant to contemplate, and depending on the moral qualms of the PCs, they may or may not be willing to use torture to persuade a victim to talk. For most ordinary people or common gangsters, these tactics will work if the victim has the information. If not, the victim will gladly tell their torturers whatever they think will make them stop. Exceptionally fanatical, disciplined, or well-trained people might be able to hold out longer than their tormentors can afford to wait. As a general rule, avoid putting PCs in situations where the only feasible course for getting information involves torture. Such brutality can exist as a tempting shortcut, but not many players are enthusiastic about getting railroaded into it.

In general, let the players come up with a means of getting the information, and then let that means work. If they plan to get blackmail material to force a gang lieutenant to reveal the identity of the corrupt section chief in the local security branch, then let that plan work if they're able to get the blackmail. It can leave players intensely frustrated to find their plans ineffectual. Even if the plan they're hatching isn't likely to have the results they want, you should make sure that they get some sort of payoff from the effort.

1D12	WHAT DOES THE NPC WANT FROM THE PCS?
1	Money
2	Sexual favors
3	Protection from an enemy
4	Information
5	They want them dead for a slight unknown to the PCs
6	An object owned by the PCs
7	Entrance into a place
8	Employment
9	Someone's death
10	Religious conversion
11	Sabotage of an enemy
12	Roll once for cover, once for their real motivation

The Warrens are suffused with telecommunications channels- wireless, fiber cable, quantum link, and half a hundred other mechanisms for communication. The density and centralization of human habitation in the Warrens has made it possible to connect even the most impoverished parts of the city with standard telecom links of remarkable speed and reliability. This net is used for all manner of data transfer, socializing, and recreation. Most stained can afford nothing better than a vidscreen and keyboard to connect to the net, but the clean elite have software to interface the net with their cyberware for a complete sensory experience.

Most megacorps are cautious enough to keep their most sensitive databases off the net, but due to the centuries of overbuild and myriad different protocols involved in the construction of the Warrens, even this doesn't necessarily seal a database off from outside intruders. The sheer volume of different non-physical access methods can allow hackers to reach in and touch hardware that appears to be completely disconnected from the outside world. Using these back doors requires a voluminous knowledge of ancient comm protocols, obscure quantum entanglements, and deprecated net architecture, but it makes the seemingly impossible a lucrative possibility for adept hackers. Truly paranoid corps keep their most precious information in completely different habitat bubbles elsewhere on Polychrome's surface.

Hacking involves a Computer/Int skill check at a difficulty rating based on the type of activity being contemplated. Experts can use their *Like A Charm* class ability to reroll unwanted hacking checks, but they have to accept the second roll even if it is worse. Multiple hackers can cooperate on the same task, in which case the best check roll is used. If any of the hackers fail their skill check, the identity they're using is flagged with the usual consequences for failure.

Careful infiltration of a site might allow for the acquisition of passwords, network architecture information, and other data useful to a hacking attempt. These network secrets allow a variable bonus on hacking, ranging from +1 to +3. Information of this kind tends to get stale in a hurry as protocols and passwords change.

Failing a hacking roll usually results in an immediate arrest warrant for the identity that made the attempt. If an attempt is failed on the Council financial database or a megacorp headquarters server, subtract the margin of failure from five- that's how many minutes the hacker has to get out of there before a corp SWAT team arrives.

Hacking is usually used for one of four activities- creating identities, stealing money, acquiring information, or changing records.

Creating Identities

Every citizen of Polychrome has some kind of identity, usually one built up over long years of electronic commerce and corp tagging. Even slum dwellers usually have some electronic footprint, as they require some notarized identity in order to use electronic credit transfers, use the net, or receive payment in anything but physical credit notes. Contact with corp or Council security creates a trail as well, and all the myriad little contacts with the wider world gradually build up a history.

These identities are usually keyed to identification cards and private passcodes. DNA locks are impractical with the metamorphic effects of the Proteus implant, and retinal and fingerprint identification can be copied by any halfway-competent stitcher. Even if a card is stolen, it's useless without the corresponding passcode. Most providers include optional services, such as a passcode which allows a user to gain access to a small amount of money, but flags the card as being stolen and used under duress.

Because every electronic transaction or net log-in requires an identity, corp and Council security have an easy time tracing a person's activities or fingering the culprit for illicit database intrusions or financial hacking. As a result, most criminals and other borderline types find it necessary to have an alternate identity they can use to conduct their less legitimate business. As long as no one connects their "ghost" to their real identity, the corps have no lead on them. Ghosts come in multiple levels, depending on their completeness and anonymity, and each requires time and a Computer/Int skill check to create. They can also be purchased on the black market, though the quality of wares is never completely guaranteed.

Level 1 ghosts are fairly superficial. Such a ghost can spend and receive credits and conduct activities on the net, but they can't own real estate or own property worth more than 50,000 credits. Assets greater than that amount trigger automatic integrity checks in the databases that invariably reveal the identity to be false, resulting in

Ghost Level	Time	Difficulty	Market Price
1	1 day	7	500
2	1 week	9	5,000
3	1 month	12	50,000

the instant confiscation of its credit balance and its flagging for corp security. Dead ghosts are useless, and any hacking attempts with them invariably fail.

Level 2 ghosts are as substantial as real people. They can own real property and own any amount of credits, as they're woven in deeply with the local databases and impervious to ordinary integrity checks. They have a plausible credit history and background entry and are for all intents and purposes as real as any living, breathing person.

Level 3 ghosts are more than real- they're a self-obfuscating identity cluster that regularly mutates to avoid scrutiny. Whenever the Council or a corp attempts to make a change to that identity, whether to confiscate money or flag it as criminal, the GM should roll 1d6. On a 4+, the change silently reverts 24 hours later, without notifying the corp or Council. The bank account attached to a level 3 ghost also has augmented integrity software attached, giving the owner 2 hours to pull out assets before an attempted wipe or confiscation will go through.

Creating a ghost requires substantial skill. The GM rolls the Computer/Int skill check, rolling twice for Experts and taking the better score. If the check is failed by 3 or more points, the identity seems good, but actually contains flaws that will eventually trigger an alarm. Each time it's used, the GM should roll 1d6. On 3+, local security is alerted and the ghost is "killed".

Stealing Money

Hackers can plunder electronic bank accounts or alter ownership records on valuable financial instruments. Unfortunately, there's always a time limit associated with these alterations, as the financial system's backups and integrity checkers will invariably correct the loss sooner or later. Once that happens, the stolen money disappears from whatever account it currently occupies. This temporary cash is known as "joss paper" or "joss" after the ritual money burnt by certain local faiths at funerals.

Passing joss requires speed and discretion. As individual credit transactions are tagged to a buyer, and as those credits will soon disappear from the recipient's account, it is generally a very poor idea to spend joss through a real identity. Private citizens and small merchants can do little more than file a complaint about theft, but corps that receive joss from a buyer will often flag that identity for security attention. Most joss is used to buy valuable commodities from a small business or private seller through a level 1 ghost identity that can be dumped after the transaction goes through.

Amount	Difficulty
1d6 x 100	7
1d6 x 500	8
1d6 x 1,000	9
1d20 x 1,000	10
1d10 x 10,000	12

Before rolling to acquire joss, a hacker needs to decide how large an amount he or she will attempt to steal. Joss lasts a minimum of 24 hours. For each point by which the hacker beats the difficulty, the joss lasts an additional 24 hours. If the hacker beats the difficulty by four points, the infiltration was so perfect that the theft is permanent, and the credits are real money.

Stealing money requires 1d6 hours of work for a single skill check.

Permanent theft of electronic credit is possible through other means, but it usually requires the physical infiltration of a corp office and the perfectly-executed alteration of numerous financial records. Accomplishing a feat like that should be an adventure in itself rather than a single skill check.

Acquiring Information

Almost everything that a person could wish to know about Polychrome and its denizens is recorded somewhere on the net. Financial transaction databases, gravstat drone recordings, long-forgotten security pickups, social network files... all of these sources offer answers to those with the wit and expertise to go after them.

Accessing Polychrome's array of databases and information boneyards requires understanding the local terrain. An offworlder hacker without a good grasp of the useful local resources operates at a disadvantage; anyone without Culture/Polychrome-0 or better

Information Source	Difficulty
Megacorp Branch Office	11
Plans and activities related to that specific branch. Names, addresses, and biographical data on employees there.	
Megacorp Headquarters	13
Personnel records for all corp employees. Overall business plans. CEO-eyes-only project records. Corp black operations.	
Small Business	8
Payroll information, security schematics, financial information. Many small factories are controlled directly from the server.	
Gang Servers	8
Financial records, payoffs to snitches in other gangs, payoffs to corp and Council security, snuff vids of termie executions.	
Social Networks	9
Recent activities and social pursuits of a person, pictures and audio of a subject, relationship and hobby details.	
City Records	9
Property deeds, tax information, criminal records, historical data, current lists of wanted criminals.	
Private Citizen	7
Pornography, private correspondence, personal finances.	
Starport Servers	10
Records of offworlders and their visits, customs information, arrival and departure schedules.	
Council Financial Database	13
All electronic financial exchanges in the city, listing the identities involved. A single hack can usually get up to six months of any single identity's total financial activities.	

suffers -1 on all skill checks to interrogate the net for non-public information.

The difficulty of the check is affected both by the obscurity of the information and the paranoia of the database containing it. Even when the information is located, it's often necessary to infiltrate particular offices or hack into certain locations in the city in order to reach a sealed database. Usually, the most a hacker can get while sitting at home is an idea of where he needs to go to get at the real facts.

The information source table provides a list of potential targets, the kind of data they keep, and the difficulty of hacking into their systems. The difficulty is 2 less if the hacker is simply trying to determine whether or not they have the information.

Acquiring information usually requires 1d6 hours if off-site. Downloading a server's records while on-site requires 1d6 rounds.

Changing Records

Whatever is written can be rewritten, and some hackers make a respectable living by reaching in and altering data on other peoples' servers. The scope of these changes tends to be limited due to the redundant integrity checks and backups used by most databases, but minor alterations can go undetected for months or even years, while major changes can hold for a few vital hours.

The difficulty of changing data file depends on the security of the database involved and the significance of the data. Erasing the record of a specific identity's purchase of a case of combat rifles is relatively minor in the greater scheme of things on Polychrome, while erasing the fraud flag on a false identity would be more significant. Eliminating an identity's criminal record and cleaning any flags on it would be a major feat of rewriting.

The difficulty of the feat is added to the base difficulty of the database being altered, as given in the information source table. The margin of success is then compared to the table to see how long the change persists until automated integrity protocols revert it. For example, if the hacker just barely makes the check, the change lasts for 24 hours. If he succeeds by a margin of 4 or more, the change is effectively permanent.

DIFFICULTY	EXAMPLE ALTERATION
-1	Change a person's registered address.
-1	Edit most audiovisual or text data files.
+0	Disable an electronic lock or camera.
+1	Disable all electronic security at a site. Local security will realize that they have been compromised in minutes. The most secure sites have multiple security servers.
+3	Subvert electronic security so as to selectively ignore the hacker and his team.
-1	Remove an arrest warrant on an identity for a minor property crime.
+0	Remove an arrest warrant on an identity for a major property crime or a crime of violence short of murder.
+1	Remove a warrant for murder.
+3	Remove a warrant for the murder of someone important.
+2	Hack into a gun-equipped gravstat drone being piloted remotely by corp security. The drone will remain active for 1d4+2 rounds before the handler can shut it down.
+1	Take control of computerized machinery on a site.
+1	Register identities as permitted visitors at a site that might expect to have such visitors.

Altering records requires 1d6 hours if performed remotely. If the hacker is on-site, it takes 1d6 rounds of access to the server.

While expert hacking can conquer any protocol, it can't alter human memories. A sector security chief with a grudge may not realize that his beat cops are no longer being prompted to arrest the offworlder who busted up the sweet deal he had with the local chem gang, but as soon as he notices that the files have been altered, he'll certainly refile the flags. PCs who earn powerful, vengeful enemies can't rely on clever hacking to protect them forever.

Whether in the steel tunnels of the Warrens or the elegant tower apartments of the corp elite, it's almost inevitable that the PCs are going to get into some sort of violent altercation. Combat is a mainstay of many campaigns, and some general framework is useful for a GM intending to handle it in the context of Polychrome's local culture.

Assault and battery are technically illegal on Polychrome, and in the better parts of the Warrens corp or Council security guards are inevitably close by. In the good parts of the city, security will come within five minutes of a report of violence or other criminal misbehavior. Such response invariably involves at least twice as many cops as reported malefactors. Security will prefer to use non-lethal force such as stun batons, but if the criminals are using guns or other lethal weapons, they'll shoot first and apply lazarus patches later. The same lethal violence will be used against the assailants of high corp officials or trespassers on megacorp property.

In the slum districts and stained hab blocks, however, the rules are different. Council security staff are nominally responsible for policing these areas, but the quality of oversight varies greatly. Some local stations are almost as efficient as those uptown, with street brawling or gunfire met with a quick, decisive response. Most underhab stations respond only to explosions, major street combat, or mass murder. Individual assaults, rapes, murders, and thefts are unlikely to be pursued without an "inducement" of at least a hundred credits, and more if the criminal might be dangerous to apprehend. Council security is much quicker to bring out the lethal force in lowtown districts, and there is no consequential concern for issues of due process or legal rights. An underhab security guard *is* the law, and this liberty often attracts the dregs of the district. If it weren't for the occasional Council oversight officer coming in to clean house, some of these security stations would be worse gangs than anything the locals could come up with.

Cops always patrol in groups of at least two, usually on foot. In bad districts, they won't leave the station in groups smaller than four. As soon as they spot a problem or come under attack, one of them will call in for backup, which will usually arrive in less than five minutes. Most fights are long over by then, but PCs that get involved in an altercation with security can't afford to wait them out. Killing security guards guarantees a ferocious response, with dozens of heavily-armored troopers and grav drone gunships dispatched to bring down the culprits. Even if the PCs get away, they can expect their faces and any other identifying information to be prioritized to every street patrol and security drone pilot in the Warrens. Whether Council or corp, Polychrome's security apparatus does not appreciate cop-killers and they feel no obligation to be gentle about finding and eliminating them. Most criminals will stay well away from such popular targets.

Getting Hurt

Advanced trauma care is relatively cheap on Polychrome due to the enormous infrastructure dedicated to cybernetic implantation. Even a grimy back-alley stitcher can provide medical care for physical wounds equal to most postech hospitals elsewhere. PCs who get badly injured might well need that kind of attention, and there's usually a stitcher around to provide it with no questions asked. Badly-injured PCs should have a care about where they go to ground, however, as enemies sometimes take advantage of the opportunity to finish the job.

Guns and Ammo

Most personal weaponry is nominally legal on Polychrome. Small arms, bladed weapons, stun batons, and other hardware can all be had on the open market. Energy weapons tend to be uncommon, but those that can be built with postech levels of industry can be had through several manufacturers. Gunnery weapons and other heavy hardware must be acquired through street dealers or connections with megacorp security.

In the underhab slums and stained districts, open carry of weaponry is normal and expected. Doing the same in the good parts of town is an invitation for a long talk with security that is unlikely to be enjoyed by anyone involved. In practice, hidden weaponry is expected even in the best districts, but brandishing or wearing it openly will bring security. Most corp buildings, clubs, and other social hotspots require that weapons be checked on entry in all but the roughest parts of the city.

Armor of combat field uniform weight and lighter is nominally legal, though anything that can't be disguised as normal clothing will bring security attention in the good parts of the city. Powered armor and other heavy gear is illegal and will always be a problem, as the locals naturally assume that nobody would be wearing something that heavy unless they expected imminent trouble.

Evading Consequences

It's not at all unlikely that the PCs will eventually shoot someone they shouldn't have, or otherwise incur displeasure for their violent or larcenous activities. The polymorphic effect of the Proteus implants common to the city's upper class make conventional DNA tracking ineffective on Polychrome, so adopting a new identity is much more practical here than on some other advanced worlds.

A superficial biosculpt job as described in the Cybernetics section will usually be sufficient to defeat any attempt to match a person by appearance, fingerprints, or retinal scans. Acquiring at least a level 1 ghost identity is also often necessary in order to maintain a bank account and conduct business without physical credit notes. Both of these things are expensive, with a superficial biosculpt running 500 credits at most stitchers and a fresh level 1 identity costing the same amount from a hacker.

The Mean Streets

Life is cheap on Polychrome, and there is no shortage of men and women willing to help take it. The following statistics cover some of the more common human and alien perils to be encountered on Polychrome.

Corp Security

Armor Class	4 (CFU)	No. Appearing	2-5
Hit Dice	1	Saving Throw	15+
Attack Bonus	+1	Movement	30'
Damage	1d8 SMG, or 1d8 Stun Baton	Morale	9
Skill Bonus	+1		

The usual run of corporate or Council security shares the same equipment, but the more sophisticated support varies widely. Council security usually oversees the worse parts of the Warrens, and their backup often revolves around masses of SMG-armed security officers on grav transports, with tear gas and sonics for dispersing rioters. Corp security oversees corporate property and the most politically sensitive areas of the city, and there's very little that they can't call in if the district commander finds it necessary. Anything from a rapid-response combat psychic team to a squadron of powered armor-wearing heavy weapons specialists can be summoned on short order if the city's major powers are threatened.

Cyberninja

Armor Class	4 (CFU)	No. Appearing	1-4
Hit Dice	3	Saving Throw	14+
Attack Bonus	+5	Movement	30'
Damage	1d8+2 Cyberclaws, or 1d8+1 thrown blade	Morale	10
Skill Bonus	+2		

Where brute force fails, subterfuge finds a way. "Cyberninja" is the colloquial name for a heavily-wired combat specialist that focuses on infiltration, theft, and assassination. Most cyberninjas are equipped with Feint cyberware systems to conceal the true nature of their cyberclaws, and the more expert among them cultivated a carefully innocuous appearance. Most shun guns or other obvious weapons, preferring their claws and small thrown monoblades when range is necessary. Some specialists take regular biosculpt jobs to alter their appearance and gender so as to optimally appeal to a target, getting close enough to execute them in an unguarded moment. These "Judiths" or "Judies" can easily command as much as 50,000 credits for the successful assassination of a mid-level corp manager.

Elite Operative

Armor Class	4 (CFU)	No. Appearing	1-4
Hit Dice	6	Saving Throw	12+
Attack Bonus	+8	Movement	30'
Damage	2d6+2 Mag Pistol, or 1d8+1 Monoblade	Morale	10
Skill Bonus	+3		

These operatives constitute the best talent available on the open market. A few others might have more skill, but such true legends rarely work for mere money, and the megacorps have need of more reliably mercenary contractors. Elite operatives will do what they're paid to do and usually make no particular distinction about causes. Most of them are cagey about employers, however, and won't hire out to an untested or unproven patron; none of them have any intention of being made cannon fodder by some jacked-up rebel zealot or amoral corp climber. Employment costs start at 500 credits a day for a simple bodyguard job, 25,000 for the execution of a mid-level corp manager or minor gang boss, up to one million credits plus expenses for a small team willing to take a shot at a megacorp executive.

Gangster Thug

Armor Class	9 (None)	No. Appearing	2-8
Hit Dice	1	Saving Throw	15+
Attack Bonus	+0	Movement	30'
Damage	1d4 Knife, or 1d6+1 Pistol	Morale	7
Skill Bonus	+1		

Common street scum, thugs differ from the ordinary run of stained proles or slumming clean workers in their willingness to use violence for immediate profit. Most of them have no real combat training worth mentioning, and will flee as soon as their comrades start dying.

Stained Termie

Armor Class	9 (None)	No. Appearing	1-4
Hit Dice	1/2	Saving Throw	15+
Attack Bonus	+1	Movement	20'
Damage	1d4 Knife, or 1d6+1 Pistol	Morale	12
Skill Bonus	+0		

Some stained aren't lucky enough to dodge the myriad syndromes of long-term exposure to trace atmospheric Stain. This progressive, irreversible sickness often includes tumors, nerve damage, or severe respiratory difficulties. Over the centuries, the signs of a terminal condition have become common folk knowledge, and "termies"

know that their end is just weeks or months away. Some of them use their impending death to take revenge on those who have wronged them. Gang bosses and other important figures often make a point of capturing termie attackers for spectacularly unpleasant executions, in hopes of dissuading others of their kind with the recordings.

Zadak Raider

Armor Class	6 (Chitin)	No. Appearing	2-8
Hit Dice	1	Saving Throw	15+
Attack Bonus	+4	Movement	30'
Damage	1d8 Zadak rifle, or 1d6 Claws	Morale	9
Skill Bonus	+1		

A Zadak raider resembles a two-meter tall humanoid praying mantis. A long abdomen extends behind a pair of legs, above which a middle set of limbs has specialized into manipulating arms, and the uppermost set of limbs serving as a pair of scythelike claws. Zadak can breathe in human-miscible atmospheres and are immune to the effect of the Stain. They shun any technology which is not at least in part composed of living matter, and their "rifles" are symbiotic plant creatures that spit razor-sharp splinters of chitin at a target. Average range is 100 meters and long range is 200 meters, with the rifles able to shoot 20 rounds before requiring a day to regenerate their ammunition. Rifles deprived of water and ultraviolet light will die within a week. If the weapons are captured, megacorp buyers will pay 200 credits apiece for them.

Zadak Warbeast

Armor Class	4 (Chitin)	No. Appearing	1-4
Hit Dice	5	Saving Throw	13+
Attack Bonus	+7	Movement	40'
Damage	1d8/1d8/1d8 Claws	Morale	10
Skill Bonus	+1		

It's unclear whether warbeasts are native fauna of Chot Zadak or a mutated form of the base Zadak physiology. They appear vaguely centipede-like, except that each segment has its own pair of scything, mantis-like limbs. Any creature within melee range of the warbeast is subject to three claw attacks each round. Warbeasts have only an animal degree of intellect, and respond obediently to a specific handler within a Zadak warband. If this handler is killed, the warbeast will go into a frenzy, attacking the nearest creatures for 1d6+2 rounds before curling up in an unmoving huddle of chitin and legs.

On Polychrome, the density of MES-affected humanity was never very high. Most of the initial citizens were first-generation colonists fresh from the core worlds who had little history of metadimensional exposure in their families. This lack of major psionic powers mitigated the worst effects of the Scream, but it also leaves modern Polychromers very limited in the number of psychics available. Most researchers estimate that there are no more than one thousand people on the planet with MES.

None of them are trained. Corporations snatch them whenever they are found, but there's little they can provide by way of effective training. Each psychic is forced to develop their own powers as best they can with the fragmentary and minimally useful examples provided by corp records. The mental and physical casualty rate is grim.

In order to mitigate some of this, the megacorps turned to cyberware. The result was the Firewall implant- a system that did not prevent neural damage so much as it increased the user's capacity to endure the trauma. Expert biotechnicians remove a portion of the psychic's brain tissue and force-clone it into small tabular "chips" that are slotted into an interface usually implanted behind the psychic's right ear. Gengineered nerve routings channel incoming MES energy through the cloned tissue instead of the rest of the psychic's brain, killing it off slowly but preserving the rest of the psychic's mind.

When the chip is completely burnt out, the psychic simply removes it and inserts a fresh tab. Due to the expense of the tabs, most psychics prefer to simply let the chips slowly regenerate in a bath composed of a few common chemical constituents.

For security reasons, a Firewall implant also includes a cranial pharmaceutical drip loaded with a complex tailored cocktail of ingredients that are largely harmless, but lethal if their supply is interrupted. A psychic that goes rogue can expect to be dead within a month as their chemical supply runs out. The specific mixture is polymorphic in nature, making it extraordinarily difficult to replicate without the right biocryptographic key. Such keys are carefully guarded in isolated, heavily-defended megacorp facilities.

Psychics are pampered and indulged property of the megacorps. Most are completely satisfied with their lives, earning comfortable lifestyles and numerous special privileges simply for using their telepathic powers or precognitive abilities at the direction of their supervisors. Yet some chafe at this existence in a gilded cage, or come to resent the sort of tasks that the corps expect them to facilitate. These psychics might seek to arrange for offworlders to help liberate their keys and get them off planet before their "owners" realize what's happening.

Polychrome's megacorps are currently hunting desperately for a psychic mentor willing to train their personnel in the old and reliable protocols of psionic training. The Firewall system is serviceable, but it's a stopgap, and the psychics it produces rarely develop above fourth or fifth level in talent. A mentor willing to work for a megacorp could easily expect to be paid as much as ten million credits for successfully imparting psychic mentorship skills to a megacorp trainer. However, such training could take years to first train a corp psychic in basic psionic power usage and then impart the secrets of mentorship. During that time the psychic could expect to be the favorite target of dozens of rival assassination squads from the other corporations. This unfortunate truth has thus far kept any mentors from being overly tempted by the offer.

The Firewall System

Implantation of a Firewall system costs 30,000 credits on Polychrome, and is completely unavailable elsewhere. Megacorps cover the cost for a candidate, though some outworlders might want to avail themselves of the service at market rates. The system has a permanent System Strain cost of three points.

In addition to the system, users need to purchase "brainchips" loaded with their own cloned cerebral material. Each brainchip costs 10,000 credits and is good for ten psionic activations.

Firewall-equipped psychics do not have power points. Instead, every activation of a power subtracts one activation from their currently-slotted brainchip, regardless of the power's level. When a brainchip is completely exhausted, the psychic can continue to use their abilities, but they are then treated as torchers and suffer all the usual attribute losses.

Brainchips will slowly regenerate their tissue if not completely cooked. A bath of certain chemicals commonly available on any TL3+ world is required, but one activation will regrow for each day of immersion. A biochip that has been completely expended is dead, and cannot regrow.

Use of a Firewall system builds up trace MES charges in the user's brain, and swapping in multiple consecutive brainchips can overload a psychic. If a psychic slots more than one brainchip in a day, he or she must make a Tech saving throw at a penalty of -2 for each prior chip he's slotted that day. Failure means that the system has overheated, and requires 24 hours to cool down. Any psionics use before that time is treated as torching.

Firewall systems are incompatible with the neural activity patterns created by conventional training. A psychic cannot be trained or use power points to fuel powers so long as a Firewall implant is present. Psychics that use Firewall implants cannot master their powers, and cannot progress beyond fifth level without such special training or ancient psitech augmentation as the GM might decide appropriate.

Cyberware on Polychrome is remarkably cheap by sector standards. Each piece of cyberware listed in the *Stars Without Number* core book is readily available at one-tenth the ordinary price. A PC that manages to get passage to the world can load up on high-quality cyberware, but most smuggler captains who know the spike drill route in charge at least 10,000 credits a head, each way. Favors for the captain can lessen this tab, or PCs might be reckless enough to attempt to chart their own course.

Installation and recovery take one week for every point of System Strain induced by a piece of cyberware. Those items that have no System Strain cost can be installed on an outpatient basis, often taking no more than a few hours in some dirty back room with a half-functional genotyper and a staple gun. It's not generally practical to export Polychrome cyberware; the tech requires too much local biomedical infrastructure to implant, and replicating the necessary framework offworld would drive prices up to easily equal the usual costs.

There is no such thing as "illegal cyberware" on Polychrome. Even implanted weaponry is technically permissible, though everyone knows that any such tech implanted in a corp clinic is guaranteed to tag the owner as a potential unstable element and a useful person to watch. Underhab stitcher-docs do a lot of business in putting in hardware that the owner wishes to go unregistered with the corps.

Some varieties of Polychrome cyberware are so superficial that they have no effective system strain cost for implantation. Other varieties can be purchased in "tailored" format, with extensive genotyping and custom-fabricated parts for optimal biological synthesis. Such tailoring usually requires the services of a megacorp clinic, and the cyberware often costs at least ten times the amount of its less customized equivalent. A prosthetic limb that would usually cost no more than 250 credits on Polychrome would run 2,500 if tailored to the wearer. Tailored cyberware inflicts one fewer point of System Strain on the user. There is a limit to the amount of benefit that can be had through tailoring, however, and no subject may benefit from more than two tailored cyberware systems.

Cyberware

Biosculpt: Available in two different varieties, a biosculpt job involves the implantation of immunoneutral tissues and artificial implants to produce a desired appearance. Gender reassignment is relatively simple, and any humanoid appearance can be selected as a final result. Some partisans of "natural beauty" decry the faintly sterile and stylized look of cheap biosculpt jobs, but the best tissue artists can create effects indistinguishable from nature. "Rebuild" biosculpts involve a low-level rewrite of the subject's genetic code to give them a completely new identity, one lacking even DNA links to their former existence. Such jobs are much more expensive than mere cosmetic biosculpting, and cannot be reversed or removed.

Cyberclaws: This version of a body arsenal array trades subtlety for brute force, often projecting spikes, talons, elbow blades, and other large, sharp polyceramic implements. While the array's existence is obvious to any close visual inspection or weapons scanner, it counts as a monoblade in hand-to-hand combat, and can be used with

POLYCHROME CYBERWARE				
Item	*Local Cost*	*System Strain*	*Tech Level*	*Function*
Biosculpt/Rebuild	10,000	1	4	*DNA-level reconstruction of a person's body*
Biosculpt/Superficial	2,000	0	4	*Superficial alterations of the subject's tissues*
Cyberclaws	500	1	4	*Heavy-duty implanted blades, relatively obvious*
"Deep Echo" Penetrative Radar	7,500	1	4	*Can sense nearby objects and perceive through walls*
Direct Interface, Level One	3,000	0	4	*Wireless control of compatible hardware*
Direct Interface, Level Two	30,000	1	5	*As level one, but at a deeper level of interface*
"Feint" Cyberware Signature	5,000	1	4	*Disguises one piece of cyberware as another*
"Gecko" Gravity Anchors	10,000	1	5	*Allows user to run up walls or along ceilings*
Inertial Shunt Nodes	5,000	1	5	*Disperses full-body kinetic impacts, such as falls*
Integral Biostatus Monitor	1,000	0	4	*Provides constant monitoring of physical condition*
Integral Commlink	500	0	4	*Acts as a commlink reliant on the local grid*
"Masquerade" Polymorphic Identity	20,000	1	5	*Can adopt the DNA/retina/fingerprints of a target*
Neural Overload Wiring	30,000	2	5	*Enables hyper-fast actions, if not reactions*
Panic Button Implant	5,000	1	4	*Emergency one-shot life saving implant*
Personal Augmentation Technology	300 each	0	4	*Numerous petty physical changes or hygiene augs*
Phosphor Tattoos	100	0	4	*Glowing programmable tattoos*
"Proteus" Metamorph Implant	10,000	1	5	*Stain resistance and symbol of upper-class status*

either the Combat/Primitive or Unarmed skills, adding the skill level to the weapon's damage roll. Cyberclaws can affect targets in heavy armor, but they cannot be used while wearing any armor or vacc suit with an encumbrance value higher than 0.

"Deep Echo" Penetrative Radar: Implanted in the user's torso, this tech uses assorted penetrative radio waves to assemble a mental map of the nearby surroundings. The user can get a sense of masses and shapes through walls less than twenty centimeters thick, with awareness of unobstructed space out to about ten meters. The information is conveyed in a pale green overlay atop their ordinary vision. Users suffer no penalties for blindness within the radar's range and can distinguish details sufficiently to tell people apart. The radar is extremely "loud", however, and runs the risk of triggering some advanced postech security alarms.

Direct Interface, Level One: A series of universal interface ports are implanted in the subject in conjunction with a subvocal pickup unit and audiovisual patch films for ears and eyes. As a result, the user can control and receive input from most standard electronic equipment without accessing the usual keyboards, screens, or controls. Wireless-capable devices can be operated from within thirty meters, while others gear usually allow for direct plugs to jacks usually implanted along the spine. While this operation is hands-free, the controls require standard subvocalization and subtle somatic gestures, and are no quicker or more precise than standard methods.

Direct Interface, Level Two: This interface integrates much more deeply into the somatic nervous system of the user, allowing mental input and output from compatible wireless devices or plugged-in equipment. The user sends commands and receives images and sound from the devices through simple mental focus, with no subvocalizations or gestures required. The cyberware grants a +1 bonus to all Vehicle, Navigation or Computer skill checks with equipment used via the interface, but users run the risk of cerebral crosstalk interfering with the operation when rushed or in a tense situation. On a natural skill roll of 2, the attempt automatically fails with some significant negative consequence. Experts cannot use their *Like a Charm* ability to avoid this effect.

"Feint" Cyberware Signature: While it's usually impossible to conceal the fact of existing cyberware from a medical examination or deep security check, the Feint system involves intricate re-engineering of the system to appear as a more innocuous type of cyberware of the user's choice. Cyberclaws can be concealed as an integral commlink, revenant wiring can be made to appear as a direct interface, and so forth. Actual use of the cyberware is not hindered, though its true nature may be obvious if deployed. Each Feint system must be associated with a specific piece of cyber, and if multiple systems are to be concealed then multiple installations are necessary. Once in place, only pretech-level bioscanners unavailable on Polychrome or actual surgical investigation will reveal the true nature of the cyberware.

"Gecko" Gravity Anchors: These implants rely on sophisticated pretech micrograv generators. While not powerful enough to lift the user in true flight, it allows them to briefly alter their gravitic frame of reference, running up vertical surfaces or across ceilings as part of their normal movement. If the user ends their turn while
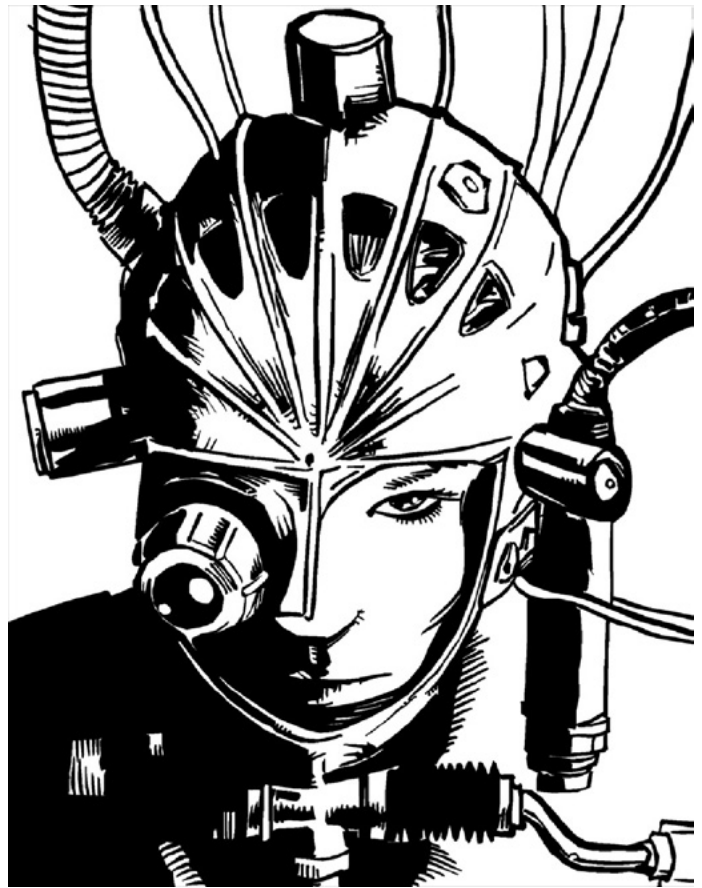
suspended by the anchors, they must succeed at a Tech saving throw or fall. On a success, the anchors continue to hold them up through their next turn. The anchors can support as much weight as the user can normally carry.

Inertial Shunt Nodes: Another application of the microgravitics used in the Gecko system, inertial shunts vent sudden, drastic kinetic impacts into harmless visible light and somewhat more-than-harmless heat. When struck with a "full body" impact such as a fall, vehicle crash, structure collapse, or other largely generalized kinetic trauma, the shunt dampens the force into something more survivable. Provided the user has at least one round to spin up the shunts, no damage is taken from the immediate impact, and even unexpected impacts can be negated with a successful Tech saving throw. This protection is extended to anything or person the user might be carrying or holding during the impact. The shunts are not precise enough to negate tightly-focused trauma such as bullet wounds or weapon strikes, and activating the shunts more than once every minute inflicts 1d8 heat damage on the user. A user trapped under a collapsed wall might well roast from the shunts before they're crushed by the weight atop them.

Integral Biostatus Monitor: A series of probes and filters are implanted in the subject, all designed to maintain a steady observation of the user's physical condition and any ambient dangers. The monitor will alert the subject on exposure to any poison, pathogen, or radiation, and will identify the substance and standard treatment if it exists in the toxicological libraries. This quick identification grants a +2 on the first skill check made to treat a poison or infection. The instant diagnostic information also allows a +1 bonus on all Tech/Medtech skill checks to aid a wounded character.

As a general rule, many of the pieces of cyberware listed in this section are available only on Polychrome. Any cyberware with a tech level of 5 is not normally available offworld. Other items on the list may or may not be available at the GM's discretion. Even if someone can be found with the requisite hardware and implantation facility, the price will usually be ten times the amount given on the cyberware chart in the section.

Tailored cyberware is not normally available elsewhere, barring some surviving pretech medical lab or a brilliant biotechnical savant's personal work.

Integral Commlink: A more limited version of a standard ghost talker transceiver, integral commlinks are meant to operate within a planet or ship's ordinary communications grid. They do not function in the absence of such a grid unless the user is plugged into a supplementary transmission device such as a comm server. So long as the grid is available, however, the user can place and receive calls and audiovisual recordings. Activation is through subvocalized commands.

"Masquerade" Polymorphic Identity: An offshoot of Proteus research, the Masquerade system allows for the collection of a "library" of DNA, fingerprint, and retinal signatures that can be swapped in by a user with no more than a few minutes of adjustment. Retinal and fingerprint samples can be acquired simply by meeting a target's gaze or glancing at their fingertips, while DNA samples can be had by contact between the user's fingers and the target's skin. Adopting a different DNA signature requires five minutes of adjustment, but the effects are visually undetectable, aside from the change in fingerprint ridges. The mimicry is sufficient to overcome any standard postech retinal, DNA, or fingerprint scanner, but a close medical inspection will reveal the false nature of the readouts.

Neural Overload Wiring: These implants reinforce the user's joints and musculature to allow brief bursts of incredible speed. When triggered at the start of a round, the user gets two full rounds of actions, including movement and attacks. One round is taken at their normal initiative, while the other is taken after everyone else has acted. These actions cannot be aborted or retracted once declared- the user is literally moving faster than they can react to changing circumstances. Psionics cannot be used in the same round as the wiring. After each round in which the wiring is used, the subject gains one System Strain point and must save versus Tech. A failed save means that their wiring has overheated and cannot be used for the next hour.

Panic Button Implant: This small composite disk contains a powerful cocktail of regenerative nanites and bonded oxygen substitutes, all intended to maintain life in an otherwise nonviable user. One minute after a character reaches 0 hit points due to injuries, the panic button triggers to flood the subject with medical compounds, restoring them to 1 hit point if there aren't any major tissue masses missing from the remains. The panic button will not trigger if someone has successfully used a lazarus patch or some other stabilizing treatment in the time since "death". Panic buttons are one-shot cyber, and degrade after use in an automatic de-installation procedure that takes one week to complete. The process is always extremely traumatic to the subject, and a victim automatically loses 1d4 points off of Strength, Dexterity, or Constitution, divided up as the player chooses. If the subject's Constitution modifier goes down due to this loss, they lose 1 hit point per level.

Personal Augmentation Technologies: Less elaborate and more finely-controlled than a full-scale biosculpt, these augmentations involve a wide range of minor outpatient implants, tweaks, and adjustments revolving around personal grooming and intimate activities. Hair removal or growth, body geometry alterations, physical performance enhancement, integral hygiene implants, and other minor technologies all come under this heading. Most clean citizens have at least some of these alterations done for ease or personal enjoyment, but some jaded debauchees, stained "entertainers", or indentured servants sport much more drastic augmentations.

Phosphor Tattoos: Luminous or textured images can be programmed into the wearer's epidermis. New patterns or images can be uploaded by means of an inductive data feed that is simply pressed to the user's skin. The tattoos can be switched on or off with a subvocalized command, and cast light up to 5 meters away from the wearer if sufficient skin is exposed.

"Proteus" Metamorph Implant: This specialized medical implant slowly and imperceptibly alters and repairs the user's genetic code to deny trace levels of the Stain any purchase on the user's biology. The user gains a +2 saving throw bonus against radiation and any other diseases due to this metamorphic DNA. Most clean citizens have a visible Stain exposure readout on the palm of one hand to make their status obvious.

1d12	HOW DOES THE NPC KNOW THE PCs?
1	Local gossip
2	Saw them on an illicit newscast
3	Friend shot video of them
4	Friend at the starport
5	Council files on outworlders
6	Fixer set up a connection
7	Former lover/employer talked
8	Professional reputation
9	News article written about them
10	Recognized style or possession
11	They're a friend or distant relation
12	They saw them at a club/religious services

1d8	WHAT DO THEY VALUE MOST?
1	Family and loved ones
2	Money
3	Their own particular code of honor
4	Revenge against an enemy
5	Their career ambitions
6	The prospect of a Proteus implant
7	Dreams of getting offworld
8	Safety from the dangers around them

1d20	MALE NAME	FEMALE NAME	SURNAME
1	Amal	Amalia	Al-Kindi
2	Bashir	Ayumi	Arkwright
3	Bei	Belinda	Bainton
4	Colin	Chiaki	Choudhury
5	Cui	Daiyu	Danton
6	Derek	Elena	Feng
7	Ezekiel	Elise	Goldstein
8	Francois	Ilsa	Gow
9	Hanzo	Jade	Khatoob
10	Jamal	Jie	Lee
11	James	Joanna	Lin
12	Kuen	Khalila	Matsumoto
13	Kurien	Lae	Mifune
14	Louis	Leila	Miraflores
15	Lucius	Mina	Mirahvi
16	Marcellus	Patience	Nejati
17	Miles	Serafina	Ofeni
18	Randall	Stella	Osoba
19	Tenzen	Tasha	Patel
20	Toshio	Yuna	Vorlov

1d20	A MEMORABLE NPC QUIRK IS THEIR....
1	Constant scratching of their phosphor tats
2	Immobile facial features
3	Elaborate facial piercings
4	Angry red rejection streaks around cyber
5	Stain tumors on hands and limbs
6	Perfect face above burn-scarred torso
7	Gaudily fashionable clothing
8	Clothing in vivid gang colors or corp insignia
9	Perpetual Stain-induced tremors
10	Constant smell of ozone around them
11	Stylized, artificial beauty
12	Heavy scarring, possibly artificial
13	Signature perfume or cologne
14	Fingering a weapon or trinket constantly
15	Perpetually mildly drugged or intoxicated state
16	Relentlessly austere and modest dress
17	Unblinking gaze
18	Missing 1d4 fingers, ears, eyes, or other limbs.
19	Bulky, aggressively obvious cyberware
20	Humanly impossible hair or skin color

1d12	WHERE IS THE NPC?
1	*Dance Club:* Feedback, Tremens, The Vent
2	*Brothel:* The Jade Pavilion, Sister Maria's, The Locker
3	*Restaurant:* Etienne's, The Smokehouse, VatFresh
4	*Holotheater:* Royal Plaza, Girls and Boys, Excelsior
5	*"Stitcher" doc:* Shaky Eddy, Silver Hand Sue, Ripper
6	*Council Office:* Housing, Crime Reports, Sanitation
7	*Church:* New Catholic, Neo-Theravadin, Sunni Truth
8	*Gang Bar:* Exes and Ohs, Spitshine, Steamhouse
9	*Vehicle Shop:* Silver Wheels, Greasy Suzy's, Turbo's
10	*Tech Shop:* Hot Wires, The Bucket, Lockout
11	*Fighting Pit:* Flesh and Blood, The Arena, Targets
12	*Apartment Hab:* The Luxor, Upside, Plaza Heights

1d8	WHO ARE THEY REALLY WORKING FOR?
1	A megacorp
2	An old enemy of the PCs
3	A loved one who needs their help
4	A small business
5	The Council
6	A rebel cell
7	Another offworlder
8	A gang

These tables can be used to provide quick answers to questions that often crop up in the course of an adventure. The GM should feel free to extemporize as necessary.

1D20	SUDDENLY!
1	Cyberninjas attack a nearby assassination target
2	A gravstat drone focuses on someone, who pulls a gun.
3	A pimp starts beating an insufficiently industrious prostitute
4	A steam pipe blows, injuring many and barring the exit
5	Cheap cyber malfunctions and sets someone aflame
6	Gangsters try to enlist some people for "voluntary" indenture
7	Several clean youths out slumming decide to start trouble
8	A badly stained junkie loses it and pulls a gun
9	Rival gangs suddenly clash
10	Local security ambushes a wanted rebel
11	Someone blows a water main, threatening to flood the area. Panicked locals jam the exits.
12	Zadak raiders attack if the group is outdoors
13	Stained gangsters decide the PCs look like easy targets
14	A fissure lets in a tendril of Stain, forcing a district quarantine
15	Stained proles riot while the PCs are out in the streets
16	A friend is brutally accosted by corp security in the presence of the PCs
17	A gravstat drone is hijacked to kamikaze into the group
18	An offworlder in the area is blindly oblivious to some danger they're courting
19	A persistent hawker tries to foist expensive trash on the outworlders
20	A cargo truck is forced off the road to be plundered by gangsters

1D8	WHAT MEGACORP WAS RESPONSIBLE?
1	*Everlife:* Hydroponic foodstuffs
2	*General Fabricant:* Consumer goods
3	*Icarus Combine:* Vehicles and drones
4	*Lin Foundation:* Entertainment and culture
5	*Lucid Industries:* Housing, seals, and maintenance
6	*Paradyne:* Weaponry and armor
7	*Synthesis:* Cybertech and medical services
8	*VulcanTech:* Power generation and mining

1D10	WHAT'S IN THAT CORPORATE SITE ROOM?
1	*Office:* desk, workstation, trivial personal decor
2	*Lounge:* machine for tea and coffee, battered tables
3	*Washroom:* 1-2 male, 3-4 female, 5-6 other-identified
4	*Presentation Room:* Large table, chairs, viewscreen
5	*Storage Room:* Boxes of whatever is made there.
6	*Reception:* Waiting room for managerial petitioners
7	*Server Room:* Thrumming blocks of computer tech
8	*Production Room:* What gets made here is made here
9	*Bunkroom:* Sleeping quarters for all-nighter workers
10	*Vault:* Something valuable/illicit. The door is secured

1D10	WHAT'S THAT UNDERHAB BUILDING?
1	Brothel: on 5+ on 1d6 it's dangerously illicit
2	"Stitcher" doc: on 5+ on 1d6 he's incompetent
3	Gang-turf tenement
4	Heavily fortified Council cop station
5	Equally fortified corner sundries market
6	Squalid apartment block
7	Club: on 5+ on 1d6, it's dangerous for non-locals
8	Dingy manufactory
9	Run-down church, mosque, or temple
10	A ruin of one of the above, waiting for demolition

1D10	WHAT'S THAT CORP DISTRICT BUILDING?
1	Restaurant: on 5+ on 1d6, stained aren't welcome
2	Club: on 4+ on 1d6, stained aren't welcome.
3	Corporate office building
4	Medical clinic
5	Boutique shop
6	Power and ventilation control structure
7	Corporate cop station
8	Upscale apartment block
9	A walled park
10	Garage for the groundcars of the wealthy

1D8	SECURITY INCLUDES ONE OR MORE OF....
1	1d4 gravstat drones operated from inside.
2	Redundant physical locks as well as electronic ones.
3	Regular security patrols, 2d10 x 5 minutes apart.
4	Motion sensors within the rooms, Diff 8+ to defuse.
5	Guards posted 24 hours a day near entrance points
6	Hidden plainclothes security watching the site
7	The workers are all armed combat veterans
8	Gun turrets controlled from the security room

Enemy	AC	HD	Attack	Damage	#	Save	Move	Morale
Corp Security	4/CFU	1	+1	1d8/SMG or 1d8/Stun Baton	2-5	15+	30'	9
Security for the megacorps, with carte blanche on the street. Heavy backup is never more than five minutes away.						Skill Bonus: +1		
Cyberninjas	4/CFU	3	+5	1d8+2/Cyberclaws or 1d8+1/Monoblade	1-4	14+	30'	10
Heavily-wired muscle for infiltration and assassination. Some specialize in gaining a target's trust before striking.						Skill Bonus: +2		
Elite Operatives	4/CFU	6	+8	2d6+2/Mag Pistol or 1d8+1/Monoblade	1-4	12+	30'	10
Only megacorps can regularly afford these exemplars. They don't stop sharpening their knives for less than 5,000 credits.						Skill Bonus: +3		
Gangster Thugs	9/None	1	+0	1d4/Knife or 1d6+1/Pistol	1-8	15+	30'	7
Every serious hab gang has a few elite warriors. These guys aren't them. They'll almost always run after the first fatality.						Skill Bonus: +1		
Stained Termies	9/None	1/2	+1	1d4/Knife or 1d6+1/Pistol	15+	1-4	20'	12
Nothing left to lose, these termies know the Stain will claim them shortly. They just want to get some use out of dying.						Skill Bonus: +0		
Zadak Raiders	6/Chitin	1	+4	1d8/Zadak Rifle or 1d6/Claws	2-8	15+	30'	9
Mantis-like humanoids with a cultic reliance on biotech, Zadak raiders always leave a few survivors to spread word.						Skill Bonus: +1		
Zadak Warbeast	4/Chitin	5	+7	1d8/1d8/1d8 claws	1-4	13+	40'	10
A cross between a mantis and a centipede, with all the good points of an angry chainsaw. Only Zadak can control them.						Skill Bonus: +1		

LIFESTYLES AND SERVICES

Service	Cost
Nothing but vat soy and synthetic rags, the bare minimum for survival	3/day
One-room hab block apartment with minimal food and no luxuries	8/day
Three rooms, decent clothes and a vidscreen, a middle-class stained lifestyle envied by their lessers.	15/day
Hab suite in a good district, regular dining out, holovid, and fine clothes	40/day
One floor of a good hab block, servants, corp manager lifestyle.	100/day
Executive hab block residence with offworld luxuries and trained staff	1,000/day
False clean identity with fake implant	500
Intensive medical care	50/day
Mail message, interstellar	100/hex
Passage to nearest world, per person	10,000
Indenture contract for a stained adult	500/year 5,000/indefinite
Mass transit weekly pass	2
Rent a groundcar for Warrens streets	15/day
Rent a gravstat drone	60/day, 2,000 deposit
Hire a Vehicle/Grav drone pilot	50/100/200 per day
A lot of money to a slum dweller	100
A lot of money to a worker	1,000
A lot of money to a corp manager	10,000
A lot of money to a megacorp exec	1,000,000

Locks, Security, and Environmental Perils

Locks: Most locks on Polychrome are electronic, responding to key-cards or embedded cyber. Lockpicking checks are usually Security/Int at difficulty 9, with the wealthy affording difficulty 10 or 11 locks and the highest-grade megacorp security requiring 12.

Security Systems: Most Polychrome security systems are wired with cameras, audio sensors, and motion detectors, all set to alert corp or Council security if triggered. Commercial-grade security requires a Security/Int difficulty 8 skill check to shut down, while corp security starts at difficulty 9 and goes up to 12. The GM rolls for attempts to defeat security- the PC is told the difficulty, but is not told whether or not they succeeded until the security is actually tested.

Gravstat Drones: These dog-sized flying drones are usually unarmed, and have vehicle statistics of Speed 1, Armor 2, HP 5, TL 4, and cost 2,000 credits. Versions with one hardpoint cost 5,000 credits. Drones can be hacked with a commpad and a Computer/Int skill check, but only one attempt can be made on a drone per day. If the operator is running the drone remotely, such as from a corp security center, the hacking difficulty is 10. If the operator is within 100 feet, it's much harder- difficulty 12. A kamikaze drone attacks with +5 to hit and does 2d8 damage on impact.

Caustic Chemicals: Contact does 1d6 damage even through clothing, though vacc suits can resist up to 5 rounds of exposure. This damage can reduce a victim to 1 HP, but won't usually kill. Complete immersion requires a Physical Effect save to avoid death, otherwise doing 1d20 damage.

Live Steam: Superheated water vapor boils unfortunate victims alive. Vacc suits ignore steam, but those without suffer 1d8 damage per round of exposure with no saving throw.

Razorwire fences: Anyone can climb them, but it requires an Athletics/Dex check at difficulty 9 or an AC of 4 or better to avoid 1d6 damage from the blades.

Stain: Direct exposure to unfiltered Polychrome atmosphere requires a Physical Effect saving throw each round or one System Strain is gained. Once Strain is maximized, each failed save does 1d8 damage. In areas of heavy Stain mist, each failed save might add as many as 3 points. Vacc suits can hold off the atmosphere for 30 minutes between checks, and sealed vehicles can do so for 2 hours.

Three weeks ago, the Stained Freedom Front managed to slide a number of highly-skilled rebel operatives into the high-security production chain at Lucid Industries. Among these operatives was Tamara Gascombe, a former biocyber researcher who had recently obtained control of the SFF after the death of its founder in a corp ambush. The tiny crew slipped through Lucid security, got into the cyberware construction complex, and planted a dozen microscopic data taps along the megacorp's industrial feeds.

One operative, Brandon Mikazawa, couldn't resist the temptation to steal a dozen completed, untyped Proteus implants on his way out. Each was worth thousands on the black market. All it would take was a back alley stitcher doc's genotyping equipment and a little surgery to set a patient up with a Stain-free existence. By the time Lucid's security checks realized the untyped implants were missing, Mikazawa would be counting his credits. Saving the Warrens from the tyranny of the megacorps deserved a little side income for the righteous, after all.

However, Mikazawa didn't understand the real purpose of the infiltration. Gascombe had sold it to the cell as a recon job, a chance to get SFF data taps in place in one of Lucid's most secure facilities. In actuality, the entire job was simply to get her in place to hotwire a batch of Lucid's Proteus implants with a special piece of code she'd worked out over the months beforehand. The tainted implants would operate exactly as expected for a few weeks, just long enough to evade any immediate medical follow-up. Only afterwards would they suddenly stop shifting the user's genotype to defeat the Stain and begin to open holes tailor-made for infection.

Gascombe didn't want the team to understand exactly what they were doing. Not all of them shared the purity of her purpose, the burning need to strike back at the system that had cost her so dearly. It was inevitable that some of those tainted implants would land in innocents- that some corp exec children would get them as well as collaborating managerial staff. It was unfortunate, but it was necessary that the corps learn to dread the very instrument of their salvation. They would learn to suffer as the stained suffered. The cell never needed to know.

Mikazawa's greed derailed the plan. The tainted implants were sold onto the streets, and one of them ended up implanted in the stained guide that a thoughtful starport admin had arranged for the PCs on Polychrome. The man lies dying in his grubby underhab apartment right now, but his sister wants revenge, and she's willing to make it worth the PCs' while to help her get it.

> **Bad Blood** is an adventure for 3-5 PCs of levels 1-3, and assumes that at least one of them is an offworlder freshly arrived on Polychrome. If the PCs play their cards right, they can walk away with about 10,000 credits apiece plus a favor owed by the CEO of Lucid Industries. Less judicious play might leave them wanted terrorists.
>
> To adjust the adventure for higher levels, simply modify the number and combat stats of the NPCs given in this section.

At the Amalia Lin Starport

On arrival at the starport, the PCs will be given an overview of the world by starport staff and will be advised of the basic rules for getting along well on Polychrome. Pass them the player handout and let them ask whatever questions arise. If there's a PC with Computer skill, you may want to hand them the hacking handout as well and let the player absorb some of that at the start of the adventure.

As a courtesy of the Council, a local guide has been engaged to show them around the city and help them entertain themselves during their stay on Polychrome. The staffer will very strongly hint that it is a very bad idea to go wandering around the city without at least a minimal orientation. The address of the guide will be provided to the PCs and detailed directions to the apartment hab in which he lives.

If one or more PCs is actually a native of Polychrome, they can be inserted into the adventure as alternate guides who were hired in place of the no-show Hong Yu. Before showing the other PCs around the Warrens, the starport staffer will request that they look in on Yu, as it's not like him to not show up for outworlders.

The adventure assumes that the PCs will get around to visiting Hong Yu in relatively short order. Don't prevent them from doing a little shopping beforehand if the party feels the need to stock up on some essentials. If they dawdle, throw an event off the Suddenly!! adventure resource chart at them and point out to them that they're going to have more of these quaint native encounters if they don't find their local guide. Whether or not they dawdle, keep the Suddenly! chart to hand to throw in some action if some players should seem to grow weary of the investigative or social portions of the adventure.

Meeting Hong Yu

The grimy underhab apartment block known as Expectation Towers contains the one-room home of Hong Yu. The stench of his suppurating flesh oozes from around the yellowed plastic of his door. His sister sits at his bedside, holding his hand. It's one of the few recognizable limbs amid the mass of weeping, pustulent tumors that have swollen from the man's withered body. Lan Yu will apologize for the smell, but explain that it was necessary that the offworlders see what had been done to her brother before she explains what she wants done. As Lan Yu speaks, she fingers a small sprayhypo she holds in her free hand.

"Three weeks ago my brother was offered a Proteus implant by an acquaintance of mine, a physician named Six-String Jasper. Perhaps you have heard of these implants. They are necessary to prevent a slow death from the Stain, a disease that permeates our city. The wealthy and powerful and useful have them. We who live in the underhabs do not. Six-String Jasper offered the implant very cheaply. My brother sold everything he owned and had the operation."

"One week ago, my brother fell sick. Little tumors at first, around his new implant. He complained to Six-String, but the doctor claimed to

Tamara Gascombe: Leader of the Stained Freedom Front after the founder, Jensen Blake, died during a corp ambush. The SFF was never a major player, and the corps seemed to assume it was eradicated, but Gascombe has rebuilt it into a small but highly motivated group. Her background as a former Synthesis biocyber tech has given her the money and the skills to get the SFF farther than they'd ever have managed on their own. According to public records, she left Synthesis after an unfortunate lab accident killed her two children- deeper digging will suggest that the children were enlisted as part of an unlabeled research program led by Lucy Brandt's Evolution Group faction. At the GM's discretion, she may actually be a plant from Synthesis tasked with carrying out terrorist attacks against their rivals. If not, she simply nurses a burning and unquenchable hatred toward the entire megacorporate oligarchy, and Lucy Brandt in particular. She's a tall, synthetically pretty woman with dark hair and fashionable hazel eyes, apparently in her mid-twenties. She is aggressively nondescript in her clothing and comportment.

Brandon Mikazawa: One of the newest members of the SFF, Brandon was always a gifted grifter and thief, but he never had the kind of discipline necessary to work well on a team. His natural greed tripped him up and made him persona non grata in Polychrome's criminal underworld until he finally fell in with the SFF. His smooth line of patter and evidently heartfelt conviction brought Gascombe around to trusting him, but he'd sell her and her cause out in a heartbeat if offered the right price.

Six-String Jasper: Having earned his nickname by using only six lengths of polysuture to stitch up the grievously wounded Iron Dragon boss Fei Yun, Six-String Jasper runs a shabby back-alley stitcher operation in the underhabs. He picked up an untyped Proteus implant from Brandon Mikazawa for three thousand, and passed it on to Hong Yu for a hundred percent markup. Two weeks later, Hong Yu came back complaining of some strange, tumorous growths around the implant site. Eighteen days later, Hong Yu was too sick to do anything but call and rave at Jasper. The doc knows that Hong Yu's sister used to be an Iron Dragon hard case, and he's lying low right now until he can figure out what to do. Six-String is a skinny, pale man in his thirties who favors a lab coat decorated with an intricate spiderweb pattern of silvery polysuture.

Rasmus Blake: Jensen Blake's older brother, and a member of the SFF. Rasmus isn't the sharpest monoblade in the rack, but he was always ready to follow his brother's lead. When Jensen died in a corp ambush he acquiesced to Tamara Gascombe's leadership, but he's starting to have doubts about it. Blake's willing to pop his share of corp lackeys, but he didn't sign up to kill bystanders, and Gascombe is starting to talk about "necessary losses". Still, the SFF is all he's got left of his brother, and he knows he's not smart enough to lead it himself. He doesn't want it to collapse but he doesn't want to end up just as bad as the corpers he's fighting. Rasmus is a grizzled man with shoulders as broad as an axehandle and minimally-concealed cyberclaws.

Lan Yu: Sister of Hong Yu, nineteen and a talented medical tech. She picked up most of her expertise through field practice and self-training, running with the Iron Dragons gang when she was a girl. Now she's got a job at an underhab stitcher joint, doing the work that her chem-addled boss can't manage most days. Her diagnostics identified the source of Hong Yu's sickness, and she's bent on revenge. She can't pay much up front, but she's willing to pay 1,000 credits to the offworlders if they take the job, and 5,000 more if they find out who's passing the corrupted implants and kill them. She'll fail to mention that she'll earn the money by selling herself into indenture to her sodden boss. She's short, black-haired, almond-eyed, and wears clothing to accentuate the half-dozen scars she received with the Iron Dragons.

Hong Yu: An underhab bawd, usually employed to squire clean kids around on their slumming expeditions, but engaged by the starport administration to act as their guide while on Polychrome. When Six-String Jasper offered him a Proteus implant for a mere six thousand credits, Hong Yu took him up on it. Two weeks later, the random fuse burnt down in the hardware, and now Hong Yu is a mass of weeping tumors. The degeneration was remarkably quick, but his sister Lan Yu was able to trace the collapse to his sabotaged Proteus implant, and she knows Jasper put it in for him.

know nothing about it. He said my brother had gotten sick of his own doing, that it was his bad habits that had caused it, that it was not the Stain. But it was. Four days ago my brother became too sick to leave his home, and Six-String has disappeared. I am a medical tech, and I could do nothing for my brother. Last night, before your ship landed, I finished my diagnostic tests. My brother's Proteus implant was sabotaged. It opened him to the Stain and it kills him now. It is too late for my brother. It is not too late for revenge."

"I want you to find Six-String and learn from him why my brother's implant was sabotaged. I want you to kill the person who did it, and I want to see his head. I will pay you one thousand credits now if you will do this for me, and five thousand more if you bring me the head of the one responsible."

Lan Yu is unable to haggle over the price- a thousand credits is all the money she has at present, and she can't get the five thousand more without selling herself into indenture, a step she won't take until after she's certain her brother is avenged. In Lan Yu's world, "altruism" is not a meaningful motivation. She shows the PCs her brother's suffering to make clear her own motivation, and she will not think to appeal to their charitable natures in asking for help, or to mention the cost to her in raising the money.

If the PCs refuse to take the case, skip to the end of the section to review the default outcome of events. Optionally, one of the corp managers whose young son was killed by a defective implant will seek out the PCs on reports that their guide was one of the first to die to the sabotaged cyberware, and he or she will offer the PCs a much sweeter deal to find the person responsible- a deal that amounts to an offer they can't refuse. If the GM prefers not to push such a heavy-handed hook at the players, the places and NPCs in the adventure can simply be stripped down and recycled for whatever adventure the players find more to their liking.

If the PCs accept the job, Lan Yu will permit herself a faint smile before leaning over the festering hulk of her brother to whisper a reassurance to him and press the sprayhypo to his wrist. Hong will die at last, and Lan Yu will ask to be alone with him for a while. Before the PCs leave, she will pass over a note listing Six-String Jasper's clinic address and the online locations of a few useful social network databases that might help in locating him.

Finding the Missing Stitcher

The PCs may choose to check out the clinic address, even though Six-String has been gone for days. If so, skip to *Body Music* for the clinic's particulars.

The PCs might want to use the social network addresses to try and pin him down. If any PC has the Computer skill, pass them a copy of the player hacking reference handout and explain the rolls and risks involved in gathering information that way, along with the prudence of buying or building fake identities before doing any hacking. If they want to buy an identity, pick an NPC from earlier in the worldbook as a seller- Susanne Fortinbras works well, and her address can be present on the note Lan Yu hands the party. If the PCs want to hire a hacker, it will cost them two hundred credits through Fortinbras to get a run made on the databases.

A light probe of the social network databases can optionally be performed at difficulty 7, simply to determine whether or not the database has the information. The answer will be "The database has a brief video snippet of Jasper as of four days ago." Whether or not this probe is made, a hacking attempt at difficulty 9 will reveal a random gravstat drone shot of Six-String Jasper entering the Blue Moon, an underhab club run by the Seven Luck Yakuza. There is no corresponding video of his departure.

The PCs may prefer to use footwork to sort out the situation. Pull one of the NPCs from earlier in the book to serve as an information broker if necessary. Ludmilla Raskovna works, as she might be getting her steroids from Six-String. For a hundred credits, she's willing to mention that she heard that Six-String Jasper is hiding out at the Blue Moon. She doesn't dare look him up there for her steroids, because the Seven Luck Yakuza is fighting with the Iron Dragons, and she's not interested in getting caught in some random gang violence.

The key information the PCs need to get is that Six-String is at the Blue Moon. Allow any reasonable plan to get the information to work. If the PCs flounder utterly, allow Six-String to hear of their investigations and offer to meet them at the Blue Moon, where he feels safe enough to explain the situation to them- and then have his Yak pals off them if they won't see reason. This kind of fumbling will cost time and lessen their eventual XP reward for the adventure by 25%.

Body Music

Six-String's clinic, "Body Music", is a small, shabby building in the shadow of a krill vat farm. The streets are monitored by Council security due to the vat farm nearby, and a direct attempt to pick the front door's locks or force a way in will bring security. The back entrance retina lock can be bypassed with a difficulty 8 Security/Int check or forced open with a cutting laser. A gravstat drone sweeps by the back of the place every ten minutes, however, and if the door is visibly damaged, four Council security officers will come to investigate.

Fleeing from the building into the warren of side streets and alleyways requires a successful Stealth/Dex or Athletics/Con check at difficulty 8 to hide or outrun security. Anyone with at least Culture/Polychrome-0 adds +1 to their check due to knowledge of the local streets. On a failure, the PCs are cornered by one cop per failed roll. If the security is killed or knocked unconscious, the PCs can escape, presuming they do so quickly. If no security guards are killed, the Council will have better things to do than hunt them down. If a cop dies, however, street cameras will be searched to find footage of the PCs' flight. If the PCs weren't disguised or otherwise operating with their faces concealed, their appearance will be prioritized on the Council's facial recognition algorithms and any stop by security or passage into a Council building will almost certainly result in the use of lethal force to apprehend them.

Within the clinic, most of the equipment has been removed for storage, leaving little but cheap steel furniture and faded holoposters of outdated, vaguely pornographic phosphor tattoo styles. The office commpad flashes with one unplayed message, however. It's an

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angry screed from a customer who's complaining that his phosphor tats were installed with an insecure OS, and that he's a walking billboard now for every script kiddie with a wireless connection and an image to upload. The rant ends with "I know you're at the Blue Moon, you goddamn quack, and as soon as you stop hiding under that Yak kimono I'm going to feed you your fucking balls!"

Blue Moon

A low, glaring block of dazzling blue light and coruscating images, the Blue Moon is a gaudy nightclub serving the more upscale elements of the local underhab district. Even a few clean types can be found there on any given night, slumming with a half-dozen of their friends or in the company of three or four heavily-armed minders. The clientele is young, loud, scantily-dressed, and kept polite by very large bouncers dressed in outfits that blend elements of a kimono over-robe with vividly-printed vests and trousers.

The Blue Moon itself is a square building two stories high, window-less on the first floor and with barred windows evenly spaced around the second. The window bars are too tough to be broken without a cutting laser or a grenade wedged between them. There's a back door on the first floor, but it's kept physically barred. A very slight crack in the door frame is sufficient to let a psychic teleporter blink to the other side or telekinetically shift the bar. From the storeroom on the other side, a staircase leads up to the second floor.

The cover charge is four credits a head, with four of the bouncers minding the door. Guns and knives are to be checked on entrance, but pistols and smaller objects can be smuggled in with a successful Stealth/Int check versus difficulty 7 or a good plan. The bouncers use patdowns to locate weapons rather than any metal detector or similar tech.

The dance floor swirls with frantic clientele enjoying the frission of danger that comes from the venue. Three-meter wide lights of cerulean blue orbit overhead on thin cables, occasionally flashing with some harsher color. Drinks are served against one wall, drugs are sold at a kiosk in the corner, and a pair of bouncers stand watch-fully by a doorway that leads into the back offices.

A stairway leads up to the second floor. Patrons can be seen ascend-ing and descending, a few credits slipped to the bouncers at the foot. The upper floors are reserved for those desiring a bit more privacy, and four credits a head buys passage.

The second floors is divided into numerous small, curtained cubicles equipped with chairs and a fold-out bunk. A few rooms with lock-able doors are available as well, reserved for delicate negotiations or those desiring more emphatic privacy. Six-String Jasper is living in one of them, keeping his head down for the moment. If the PCs simply knock on the door, he'll assume that it's a Yak with his meal, and open the door. The PCs will one round of action as he stands in shock before he slams the door shut and calls for security.

If the PCs simply ask to see Jasper, the Yak will be dubious, but pass the request along. Jasper's willing to see them, but will insist on doing so in the presence of at least one Yak for each PC. The GM can conduct the interview as given in the Talking To Jasper section,

but if it comes out that the PCs are working for Lan Yu, one of the Yak will twitch: "You're working for that Iron Dragon bitch? Are you trying to get straight with a Dragon, Jasper?" Jasper will gabble frantically about not wanting to help Lan Yu, but the Yak will not be inclined to listen to him. Give the PCs a few rounds to try to convince the Yak that they aren't actually in league with the Iron Dragons, but if they can't talk fast enough a fight is going to break out. Jasper will join the PCs in desperation.

In total, there are one hundred patrons and twenty-five Yak in the Blue Moon. If the PCs get into a sufficiently loud altercation in the Blue Moon, they can expect 1d6 of the Yak to get to them every 1d4 rounds until the entire club is after them. The patrons will serve as little more than panicking battlefield obstacles and will utterly jam the front door within 1d4 rounds of fighting.

The key information that the PCs need to pick up in this exchange is the meeting location and the email address to request the meet. It might be found on Jasper's commpad if the PCs kill him before he can talk, or discovered in a hacker's ransacking of Jasper's online communication. If the PCs manage to burn all their leads and need to be hand-fed the information, Tamara Gascombe will get word of their flailing and invite them to the meet location to talk business. This failure will lower the PCs' XP reward for the adventure by 25%.

Talking with Jasper

Jasper is expecting trouble from Lan Yu, whom he fears will sic her old Iron Dragon comrades on him. The Iron Dragons have their hands full with the Seven Luck Yakuza at the moment, however, and so the PCs are it. Jasper doesn't want problems and he doesn't want to die, and he's working very hard to avoid those two even-tualities. He's perfectly willing to roll over on anybody in order to keep his skin intact.

He'll readily admit that he picked up the defective Proteus implant from Brandon Mikazawa. He'll honestly claim that he had no idea that it was sabotaged, but he also didn't bother to give it a very thor-ough check, either. Mikazawa said that he had several to sell, but Jasper only had the cash for one. As far as Jasper knows, Mikazawa's just a thief and a grifter who's managed to irritate several dozen former partners enough to stop working with him but not enough to have him killed. How Mikazawa got his hands on those untyped implants, Jasper can't begin to guess- they're locked down tighter than a corp exec's favorite rent boy.

Mikazawa gave him a meeting location to drop by if he wanted to buy any more of the implants- a back alley in the underhabs where there's a connection to the coreways. Jasper was supposed to show up there and flash an email to a particular social network address. Mikazawa would be there within a half-hour to make the deal.

The PCs might choose to blame the whole thing on Jasper and bring his head to Lan Yu. The medtech will have no reason to believe that it was anything other than Jasper's general incompetence, and will come through with the payment after signing her indenture to her addict boss. The eventual consequences of the tampered implants will come about without the hindrance of the PCs.

The Alley Meet

Investigating the meeting location beforehand shows it to be a dead-end alleyway that runs up against a battered steel door at the back of bunker-like city utilities building. Hacking investigation of the email requires a difficulty 9 roll, and will show that the email account is empty- but that somebody has planted a forwarding sniffer in it as of one week ago, rerouting a copy of the mail to another destination. Further checking indicates that the alternate destination is an abandoned half-meter strip of screen-phosphor tacked to a nearby building face. Anyone could be reading it from any one of a number of different remote cameras. In actuality, Tamara is the one who hacked Brandon's drop address, and she's waiting for someone to ping it.

Deeper investigation of Brandon Mikazawa before the meet through city records, fixers, or social networks would show that he has a fairly lengthy criminal record, but has managed to avoid drawing hard time. He's widely disliked by his former partners as overly greedy, and recently there are rumors connecting him to the Stained Freedom Front, a petty rebel group that was thought destroyed a half-year ago when its founder got himself crosswise with a security drone's machine gun.

Ten minutes after the PCs launch an email at the address, Tamara Gascombe and Rasmus Blake will emerge from the coreway access within the utility building and step out into the alleyway. Both will be wearing combat field uniforms and have holstered semiautomatic pistols, with Rasmus carrying his favorite SMG as well. They will wait there for the PCs to arrive, Tamara idly toying with a memory chip. If the PCs go in with guns blazing or otherwise burn the meet, Tamara will make certain to drop the memory chip before fleeing with Rasmus back into the utility building and down into the coreways. On the chip is a map of the coreways leading from the utility building to Brandon's hideout below.

Tamara wants the PCs to kill Brandon. She's discovered his freelancing, and she wants him dead, especially since he might well be smart enough to make something of the fact that all the Proteus implants he stole had been sabotaged. Rasmus agrees that a man willing to risk an operation for the sake of a little extra side cash needs to die, and Tamara wants him along as extra insurance. She does not want him to realize what she's been doing, as he might just have qualms enough about it to do something unfortunate.

Brandon is feeling the heat, and he's gone to ground in the coreway tunnels. If they don't get him soon, he might find an alternate route up and get away for good once he gets a biosculpt and a new ID. He's currently holed up in a maintenance room placed shallowly in the coreways, trying to find a way out that doesn't lead past Tamara. He's greedy, but he's not stupid, and he realizes that Tamara's little trip to the factory wasn't simply to plant bugs. He'd sell her out to Lucid Industries in a heartbeat if he could figure some way of doing it that wouldn't get him killed too.

If the PCs are willing to talk to Tamara, she'll introduce herself as someone who's looking for Brandon as well, as he screwed an infiltration job she hired him on and is in need of terminal correction. She will decline to discuss the nature of the job itself and will show no interest in talk of Proteus implants. She will try to steer the conversation away from such discussion- Rasmus is fairly stupid, but highly observant. If a sufficiently large number of details are given to the man, he might be able to piece together more than is healthy for Tamara.

Tamara will inform the PCs that she's managed to track Brandon down to his hideout, but has concerns about going in after him with just Rasmus as support. The thief knows he's cornered, and he's liable to fight to the death. If the PCs agree to help take him down, Tamara will go with them.

The crucial information the PCs need to get from this encounter is the location of Brandon's hideout. In the unlikely event that the PCs fail to read the memory chip that Tamara will all but shove into their hands, provide chalked marks in the tunnel inside the utility building and subtract 25% of the total XP awarded for the adventure.

In the Tunnels

Inside the utility building, an unlocked tunnel hatch leads down into a miasmic, steaming passage of gusting winds. The passage throbs like the breath of a living thing, stinking and wet. The map leads the group around churning pistons that hammer in giant subterranean engines and through mazes of sparking electrical arcs. It's quickly obvious that exploring these tunnels is liable to be extraordinarily dangerous.

Not far from the entrance to his hideout, Brandon has wired a tripwire to the pin of a grenade wedged behind a pipe. If the players specifically say that they are looking for tripwires or carefully checking the floor as they progress, they automatically notice the wire. Otherwise, the lead PC must make a Perception/Wisdom skill check at difficulty 9. Success means the wire is noticed in time, while failure means a grenade attack that catches 1d4 people in the blast and alerts Brandon of impending company. The blast does 1d8 damage as it's partially deflected by the pipe, and victims can make a Luck save for half damage. Targets take 1 less point of damage for each point of AC below 6.

The passage terminates in a rusted steel door that shrieks like a banshee when opened. It's unlikely that the PCs will have any means of muffling the sound, but if they come up with some plausible means of entering silently they will catch Brandon entirely unawares, assuming they haven't already alerted him with the grenade.

Boil and Bubble

If Brandon is caught completely off guard, he will be wearing a vacc suit with the faceplate up, seated in the main service room, leaning up against the deactivated piston and eating from a tray of self-heating rations. He will immediately leap up and dive for cover behind the piston, assuming he survives the surprise round and the gunfire that Rasmus and Tamara will level at him immediately. If Brandon has been alerted by the grenade, he will have had time to put on his suit of assault armor and hunch behind the piston. If he's only had the screech of the door to alert him, he'll have had time to dive behind the piston for cover, but will still be wearing a vacc suit.
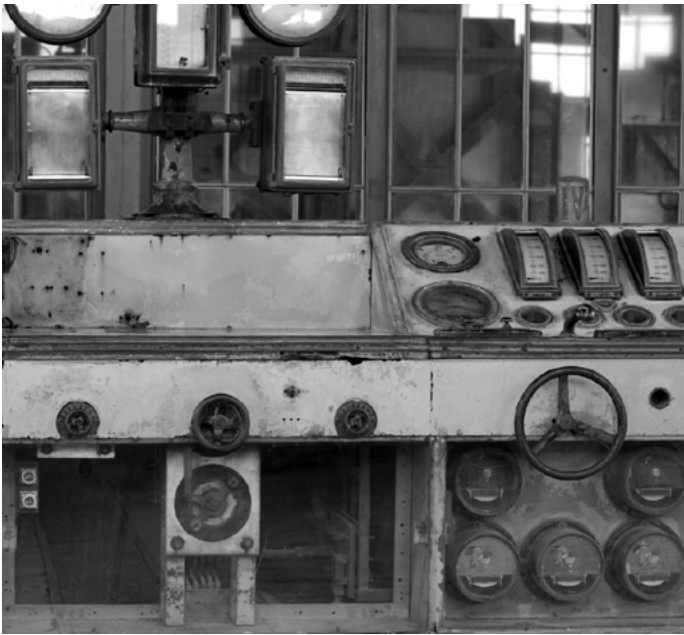
The maintenance room is large, 20 meters long and wide and 10 meters tall. Transparent removable panels cover banks of controls and monitors on every wall, except for one panel that has been crudely levered off, a rope attached to a large red switchpull on the controls behind it. The center of the room is dominated by a massive piston, three meters wide. Inactive, it stands as a pillar of steel. If activated, it churns up and down in a blur of motion.

Brandon's first round's movement will be to leap behind the piston if he isn't already positioned there. A PC can move into position to shoot or strike at him, but unless the group splits up to fire from multiple directions, Brandon will gain a -2 cover bonus to AC as he hides against the pillar.

Brandon will hold his fire initially, screaming that "The crazy bitch did it! She's the one who fucked the implants!" He doesn't recognize the PCs, but he knows Rasmus, and he's hoping to split the two. Rasmus will pause in his firing, briefly baffled, and the PCs will have a chance to demand answers from Tamara or Brandon. Tamara will deny everything, claiming that the implants were sabotaged by Lucid Industries itself as part of a plot to discredit the SFF. She will continue attempting to shoot at Brandon during this time, but the thief will constantly dodge and hide behind the pillar. Rasmus will freeze, uncertain, and look to the PCs.

If the PCs throw in on Brandon's side, Rasmus will just hunch down and avoid shooting, while Tamara tries to escape through the tunnels. Those PCs who succeed in a difficulty 8 Athletics/Con roll will catch up to her, and if any PC does, the rest will do so 1d4 rounds later. Brandon will join in the chase, but will promptly attempt to vanish as soon as the PCs get up into the utility building, leaving the assault suit behind in his haste to flee.

If the PCs throw in against Brandon, his first round's action will be to yank the rope connected to the switch, assuming no one has snatched it out of his reach. Once pulled, the piston will begin to churn into motion and massive clouds of scalding steam will start to billow up around it. Brandon and any other PC in a vacc suit or other environmentally-sealed armor will be immune to this steam, but those not protected will risk boiling.

On the first round, the steam simply gives a -2 penalty to hit to all ranged attacks as it obscures targets. The next round, every PC needs to succeed on a Physical Effect saving throw or suffer 1 point of steam burns. On the fifth round, the steam is so thick that visibility is nonexistent, and ranged combat automatically misses 80% of the time, regardless of the roll. Furthermore, the burns now do 1d4 damage per round, with no saving throw allowed.

If no one physically blocks the door, Brandon will run for it as soon as the steam is too thick to see through. He's practiced often enough to do it with no chance of failure, unless someone physically interposes. If blocked, he has to drop the blocker before he can get out. The steam will eventually extend twenty meters out through the hallway outside.

Tamara and Rasmus will flee the room once reduced to one-quarter of their maximum hit points. If the PCs bunch up in the hallway outside the range of the steam and wait for Brandon to emerge, he'll pitch a grenade ahead of himself. The steam blinds him too, and the throw automatically goes 1d10 meters off from the center of the group. Once the grenade goes off, Brandon will attempt to charge through. If any PC is still standing and specifically says that he's trying to block the escape, Brandon will need to put him down before he can get past in his bulky suit. If Brandon does manage to rush past he can be pursued as per Tamara, except that the Athletics/Con difficulty is 7.

After the Confrontation

Assuming Tamara survives the encounter with Brandon, her attitude towards the PCs will hinge on whether or not they believed or cared about Brandon's accusation. If the PCs didn't appear to be overly concerned about the charge, she'll keep them on her short list of potentially useful mercenaries. True, they almost certainly know that Tamara is with the SFF now, but without some link more reliable than a meeting in the coreways they're unlikely to be able to sell her out. It's possible that she might seek to hire them for jobs that are too "necessary" for the softer hearts in the SFF.

Rasmus is going to be torn by events if he survives the fight in the coreways. Too many little details point towards Tamara being responsible for the impending horrible deaths of dozens of innocents, but if he warns Lucid Industries they'll certainly stop at nothing to destroy the SFF. The organization is all that he has left of his brother, and he'll be paralyzed with indecision until it's too late. If Tamara died during the fight, he'll do his best to keep the SFF functioning, but the scrappy bunch will likely either collapse under his lack of foresight or be exterminated by a vengeful Lucid Industries.

Lan Yu will buy any reasonably plausible explanation as to why a particular person was really responsible for her brother's death. Provided she gets the severed head of someone and an appropriate story to match, she'll pay off the 5,000 credits 12 hours after being handed the proof, as she'll need that much time to sort things out with her boss, Lucinda Creighton. Lan is knows that putting up with Lucinda's attentions and slobberingly bad chem addictions will

be bad, but she expects the stitcher to die soon, and plans to regain her freedom when her estate is settled. Unfortunately for Lan, the Seven Luck Yakuza will catch word of the former Iron Dragon's new condition, and buy her out from Lucinda with an offer the stitcher doesn't especially want to refuse. Depending on the degree of sympathy the PCs have, they may want to try to rescue her before she becomes the star in a Seven Luck snuff vid issued as part of their current gang PR push. The Iron Dragons will do nothing, having disowned the tech after she left them for more legitimate work.

Six-String Jasper will try to set his clinic back up, assuming he survives. If he's managed to infuriate the Seven Luck Yakuza, he'll have to continue to lie low, and might be amenable to working for the PCs in exchange for passage offworld or plausible safety from the Seven Luck. If the PCs stay on his good side, he can get them cyberware at only 80% of standard cost- but there's a 1 in 8 chance that his installation of it will be less-than-perfect.

Brandon Mikazawa means to get a new face and a new identity as quickly as possible, assuming he survives Tamara's attempt on his life. In the unlikely case that he actually manages to escape with the box of tainted Proteus implants, he's greedy enough to keep selling them, even knowing their side-effects. He will want absolutely nothing to do with the SFF or the PCs after their first encounter, finding them altogether too dangerous to handle.

Aftermath

If the PCs do not alert Lucid Industries of the tainted Proteus implants, they will be parceled out to megacorp employees and their families within the next week. Within the next three weeks, all of them will have induced either terminal or crippling Stain infection in their users. By the time Lucid Industries' techs are able to identify the source of the problem, forty-seven midlevel managers, thirty-one of their spouses, and twenty-eight children from the elite Transparent Academy will either be dead or permanently crippled by the Stain. Lucid Industries may or may not eventually realize that the SFF was behind the act. If they do so, they will stop at nothing to exterminate the rebel group.

If the PCs wish to warn Lucid Industries before having concrete proof of the contamination, whatever functionary they reach will be polite but deeply skeptical. Hong Yu's implant will not be valid proof, as the diagnostics that Lan Yu ran on it were destructive in nature, and any evidence of the corrupted programming was ruined. The official will insist that the PCs produce real proof of the taint, but will offer a reward of three thousand credits apiece if such can be provided.

In truth, the functionary will be hammering the red panic button to HQ roughly thirty seconds after the PCs leave his office. Proteus implants have been sabotaged before, and it's just an obscure enough threat to seem unlikely as a whim of a group of uneducated offworlders. An immediate recheck of all implants produced within the past month will be conducted and the cyberware at fault will be found and destroyed. Meanwhile, Lucid Industries will wait for the PCs to dig up a lead they can follow to apply corrective death to the people who thought it was a good idea to meddle with the implants.

Whether or not the PCs are ultimately successful in getting concrete proof, they'll each be passed a self-destructing video slug two weeks after they gave information about the tainted implants. When played, it will prove to be a message from Salvatore Musveni, recorded from his office in the Glass Tower.

"I understand that our ultimate purposes may not be in perfect alignment, but I appreciate what you did in warning us of the contaminated implants. My youngest granddaughter was due to receive one of the tainted batch. I intend to have a long, rewarding conversation with the people involved in the sabotage, but I do not want you to think me ungrateful simply because I cannot publicly acknowledge the debt. Lucid Industries has enemies, and I would not recommend they mistake you for employees of ours."

"Suffice that I consider myself in your debt, and that Lucid Industries does not fail to repay the debts it owes- neither those of gratitude, or those of justice. When the time comes to repay my obligation, you may contact me through any Lucid Industries commpad at the address on this slug, with the keyword "Julia". I appreciate that we may have our differences... but for my granddaughter's sake, I thank you."

The video will self-destruct after playing, but each slug is loaded with a contact address and a 10,000 credit balance. Each PC involved in the revelation can call in a favor from Musveni, and these favors can be substantial. Wiping out a street gang, access to any piece of cyberware on Polychrome, temporary use of Lucid Industries facilities and personnel... Musveni's gratitude is real. Calling in these favors will be impossible to conceal from other megacorp spies, however, and the PC who does so is likely to be labeled a minion of Lucid Industries regardless of their real motivations.

Experience Award

Each PC involved in the adventure should gain a standard experience award for their level as listed in the *Stars Without Number* core rulebook. Botching certain steps of the investigation can lessen this award, but any character who survives the experience should receive at least one quarter of the listed reward.

Combat Statistics

The following entries cover the relevant combat statistics for those NPCS most likely to get involved in an altercation. Random NPCs can use the statistics for a normal human given in the *Stars Without Number* core rulebook.

Brandon Mikazawa

HP:	20	AC:	7 or 2	Skill:	+3	Morale:	8
Atk:	+4/1d8 SMG, or 2d8 grenade			Save:	13+		

Brandon will tend to blaze away with burst fire, gaining +2 to hit and damage with each attack. The SMG can manage six rounds of firing in that mode before he'll need to swap magazines, but odds are he'll either be dead or fled well before then. If given warning by the explosion of the grenade trap, he'll be wearing AC 2 assault suit armor, but with less time to prepare he'll be in an AC 7 vacc suit, with the armor lying in a heap near his other belongings. Brandon has two grenades at his belt, and will use them if his enemies bunch up so as to block his escape route.

Council Security Guard

HP:	3	AC:	4	Skill:	+1	Morale:	9
Atk:	+1/1d8 SMG, or +1/1d8 Stun Baton			Save:	15+		

These Council cops are keeping an eye on the krill manufactory next door to Six-String Jasper's clinic. They might also be called in if the PCs manage to create an unusually violent public disturbance. If the cops are engaged by the PCs or find a serious situation, they'll radio in for a backup force that will arrive within five minutes. The PCs really don't want to be there when that happens, as the backup can range from anything but a half-dozen more officers to an entire combat-rifle-slinging, assault-suit-wearing urban SWAT team with gun-equipped gravstat drones. The guards will fight with their stun batons so long as the PCs don't appear to be using lethal force, but any guns or knives will induce them to bring out the SMGs and blaze away.

Rasmus Blake

HP:	12	AC:	4	Skill:	+2	Morale:	10
Atk:	+3/1d8 SMG, or 1d8+3 cyberclaws			Save:	14+		

Rasmus prefers to get in close with his cyberclaws, relying on his muscle and superb fighting reflexes. Otherwise, he tends to fight cautiously and will pull out of a fight if significantly wounded. He carries four Lazarus patches at all times, and he'll use them on downed allies in preference to attacking- but he'll save one for Tamara.

Seven Luck Yakuza

HP:	3	AC:	9	Skill:	+1	Morale:	8
Atk:	+1/1d6+1 Pistol			Save:	15+		

Typical thugs, the Seven Luck Yakuza have only a notional relationship to anything remotely traditional. Their success has come largely in their contacts with a number of VulcanTech chemical refinery operators who slip them the raw ingredients necessary for a wide variety of recreational pharmaceuticals. The quality sometimes leaves something to be desired compared to Synthesis or General Fabricant products, but the stained clientele are usually more interested in price than purity. Most Seven Luck yaks wear normal quasi-Japanese street clothing in vivid patterns, and can be expected to have at least one firearm tucked away at all times. None of them are all that interested in dying, and they'll often break after a particularly brutal killing among their allies.

Six-String Jasper

HP:	8	AC:	7	Skill:	+1	Morale:	7
Atk:	+2/1d6+1 Pistol			Save:	15+		

Not the best stitcher in the underhabs, Six-String Jasper has gotten this far on a combination of luck, low prices, and native cunning. If the Seven Luck Yakuza turn on him, he'll throw in with the PCs long enough to get out of the Blue Moon, and will try to parlay what he knows about Brandon Mikazawa into some kind of protection or payoff. If threatened with bodily harm, however, he'll promptly roll over and give up what he knows.

Tamara Gascombe

HP:	16	AC:	4	Skill:	+3	Morale:	11
Atk:	+4/1d8 SMG			Save:	13+		

Like Brandon, Tamara prefers to use burst fire mode to deal with obstacles. Her primary goal to kill Brandon before he can spill the facts regarding her sabotage of the Proteus implants, but she has no intention of fighting to the death over it. If the tides of battle turn against her, she'll pull out- preferably with Rasmus, but alone if needs be.

POLYCHROME

Polychrome is a world wreathed in a toxic soup of alien biowarfare pathogens. The brightly-colored gas streaks in Polychrome's breathable atmosphere have been infested with a particle known as the Stain, a bioweapon unleashed by a crazed Zadak unity ship in the aftermath of the Scream. The mantis-like aliens still launch occasional raids against the planet's surface, but the attacks are rarely dangerous to anything but isolated habitat bubbles and scavenger expeditions into the surface ruins.

This Stain is so powerfully invasive that even the barrier walls of the domed Warrens cannot completely resist it. Constant exposure to trace levels of Stain greatly increases the likelihood of cancers, nerve damage, and respiratory diseases. In order to combat these syndromes, the survivors of the attack developed the "Proteus" cyberware implant. This sophisticated DNA prophylactic relies on pretech parts manufactured by the few remaining pre-Scream nanofabbers. Control of these nanofabbers is the basis of the power held by the megacorporate entities that control Polychrome.

Those citizens who work for the megacorps or have ties with its managerial class can afford a Proteus implant, joining the "clean" caste of citizenry. Those without such advantages are known as the "stained", and are lucky if they manage to live past fifty. Some go their whole lives without exhibiting any Stain syndrome, while others are dead by thirty. The final stages are ugly, and some victims "go term", ending their lives in suicidal attacks on their enemies. Nonlethal weapons are common on Polychrome simply to give a better chance of taking such "termies" alive, the better to illustrate the unfortunate consequences of such fatalism. Vids of their last hours are a cultural currency among gang leaders, each vying with the others for creativity in executions.

The heavy biotechnical infrastructure required for the Proteus implants has been used to sell other forms of cyberware at dirt-cheap prices compared to the rest of the sector. Cyber costs one-tenth as much on Polychrome as elsewhere, and even gutter-dwelling stained can often afford a few cheap phosphor tats or a set of cyberclaws. Back-alley "stitchers" don't always do the best work, but few stained live long enough to care about implant rejection.

The planet is ruled by a Council composed of several megacorps, each one in possession of one or more nanofabbers. An ancient diplomatic organization known as the "Exchange of Light" has a traditional role as arbiters among the megacorps and runs most of the day-to-day operations of the Council, including the occasionally-honest district security officers. Their authority ends as soon as a megacorp takes an interest in something. Most locals view them as well-meaning but useless.

Local laws are minimal. The usual prohibitions against murder, theft, rape, assault, and the other common laws exist, but good luck getting them enforced in a bad district. The security squads have all

POLYCHROME PLANETARY DATA

Diameter	13,505 km
Gravity	0.98 G
Atmosphere	Invasive toxic
Biosphere	Trace
Temperature	-15 C to 30 C by season
Day Length	26.82 standard hours
Population	Approximately 1 million
Tech	Standard postech plus
Capital	The Warrens
Primary Language	English

Polychrome's primary is registered in Mandate astrographic records as AA-556, a class G star known simply as "the sun" to natives. Aside from Polychrome itself, the system has two significant gas giants, Titania and Oberon, and numerous small rocky planetoids in eccentric orbits. There are no other remotely habitable planets in the system. Space traffic is limited to small mining operations in the system asteroid belt and a station in geosynchronous orbit above the Warrens. Contact with other systems exists but is limited; details of the spike drive course necessary to reach Polychrome are closely guarded by the few captains known to possess them.

Visitors to Polychrome are strongly advised to follow all protocols regarding avoidance of the local atmosphere. While breathable, a persistent alien bioweapon has contaminated Polychrome's atmosphere with a pathogen capable of killing an unprotected human in minutes. The pathogen particulate is remarkably invasive, and vacc suits and vehicle seals are not guaranteed to withstand prolonged exposure.

but abandoned some of the worst to gangs and termies. Contract law is ruthlessly enforced, however, and you need to be careful about what you sign. Indentured servitude is legal on Polychrome. Weaponry should be kept out of sight in the good parts of the Warrens and heavy armor is an invitation to trouble. Local security writes their own rules for dealing with troublemakers.

Polychrome's had offworld visitors for the past twenty years. The locals know the rest of the universe exists, and some stained will do anything to get offplanet. The clean are less enthusiastic about these new visitors. They're a dangerous new element in the local balance of power, but they have tech and imports that simply cannot be acquired any other way. Polychrome has no known spike drive ships of its own, so they're currently reliant on hired offworld traders. Such visitors are advised to keep a low profile lest they be taken for easy marks by the more predatory locals.

All hacking checks are Computer/Int. Experts can use their *Like A Charm* ability to reroll, but must accept the second roll. Unless otherwise noted, a hacking check requires 1d6 hours if performed remotely, or 1d6 rounds if done with physical access to the server in question.

Hacking is usually used for one of four activities- creating identities, stealing money, acquiring information, or changing data. Hacking, along with any other use of Polychrome's financial or legal infrastructure, requires the use of an identity. Hackers are advised to use false "ghost" identities. Level 1 ghosts can't own real estate, but can have accounts of up to 50,000 credits. Level 2 ghosts have no maximum bank account size or property restrictions. Level 3 ghosts can sometimes actually revert warrant flags or fines levied on the identity. All can be bought from fixers with the right contacts.

A failed hacking roll will result in the flagging of an identity for arrest. If a run at a megacorp or Council financial server is failed, you can expect to have at most three or four minutes before a corp SWAT team comes blasting through the door.

Many servers require physical access in order to obtain information or alter records. If you are simply trying to find out whether a particular site *has* a given piece of information, the difficulty is at -2. The information source listing provides an overview of the sort of data kept on a particular type of server.

Hacking can also be used to create counterfeit credit known as "joss". Joss vanishes from whatever account it ends up in within a day or two, so hackers are advised to only pass joss through identities they're willing to see flagged for fraud. Most small corps and private individuals don't have the time or resources to ensure that their payments aren't actually joss, but trying to pass it on a megacorp or on a Council terminal is an invitation for immediate arrest.

GHOST IDENTITY LEVEL	TIME	DIFFICULTY	MARKET PRICE
1	1 day	7	500
2	1 week	9	5,000
3	1 month	12	50,000

JOSS DESIRED	DIFFICULTY
1d6 x 100	7
1d6 x 500	8
1d6 x 1,000	9
1d20 x 1,000	10
1d10 x 10,000	12

Joss lasts for 24 hours. For each point of success over the minimum difficulty, it lasts an additional 24 hours. If the check is beaten by 4 or more points, the joss is permanent, and as valid as any other credit.

INFORMATION SOURCE	DIFFICULTY
Megacorp Branch Office	11
Plans and activities related to that specific branch. Names, addresses, and biographical data on employees there.	
Megacorp Headquarters	13
Personnel records for all corp employees. Overall business plans. CEO-eyes-only project records. Corp black operations.	
Small Business	8
Payroll information, security schematics, financial information. Many small factories are controlled directly from the server.	
Gang Servers	8
Financial records, payoffs to snitches in other gangs, payoffs to corp and Council security, snuff vids of termie executions.	
Social Networks	9
Recent activities and social pursuits of a person, pictures and audio of a subject, relationship and hobby details.	
City Records	9
Property deeds, tax information, criminal records, historical data, current lists of wanted criminals.	
Private Citizen	7
Pornography, private correspondence, personal finances.	
Starport Servers	10
Records of offworlders and their visits, customs information, arrival and departure schedules.	
Council Financial Database	13
All electronic financial exchanges in the city, listing the identities involved. A single hack can usually get up to six months of any single identity's total financial activities.	

DIFFICULTY	EXAMPLE DATA ALTERATION
-1	Change a person's registered address.
-1	Edit most audiovisual or text data files.
+0	Disable an electronic lock or camera.
+1	Disable all electronic security at a site. Local security will realize that they have been compromised in minutes. The most secure sites have multiple security servers.
+3	Subvert electronic security so as to selectively ignore the hacker and his team.
-1	Remove an arrest warrant on an identity for a minor property crime.
+0	Remove an arrest warrant on an identity for a major property crime or a crime of violence short of murder.
+1	Remove a warrant for murder.
+3	Remove a warrant for the murder of someone important.
+2	Hack into a gun-equipped gravstat drone being piloted remotely by corp security. The drone will remain active for 1d4+2 rounds before the handler can shut it down.
+1	Take control of computerized machinery on a site.
+1	Register identities as permitted visitors at a site that might expect to have such visitors.