



SHADOWRUN

MISSIONS

FINAL COUNTDOWN

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LAST STAND

An eerie yellow-green light emanated from the tunnel ahead as the team moved through the cramped corridor. Ramirez checked the nav data in his image link. *Looks like the right place*, he thought, holding his left hand up in a fist. The team crouched down behind him. Though his image link, he sent a text to Ziegler to broadcast to the team. Normally, he would be able to broadcast the message himself, but with no access to the Matrix here, he had to use an intermediary.

A short while later, a middle-aged Asian man crept up to his side. Lu Wendao was a specialist (a geomancer) brought in by Wuxing, and he had proved useful so far in dispatching several of the bugs.

“That’s it. Something is wrong here. The mana, it swirls and gathers ahead instead of flowing.” Lu Wendao whispered.

With no reply but a nod, Ramirez sent another signal to Ziegler. His second in command, Rodriguez, led the other *Cuachiqueh* forward, weapons ready.

The team approached the wan light, the tunnel widening into a large chamber, its walls lined with the same resin-like substance as the tunnel. Green, pulsating sacs attached to the walls and floor writhed as they were attended by huge armored bugs.

Ramirez shouldered his weapon, his smartlink changing modes on his gun to the underbarrel grenade launcher. Raising the weapon to fire, Ramirez was interrupted by automatic gunfire from behind. Checking the feed for his team coming in from Ziegler’s deck, he saw the rear of his group. True form spirits soaked up fully automatic bursts before dropping and dissipating back to the Astral plane. Ramirez checked his team’s status. Two down already. These things must have come straight out of the astral.

The large armored spirits in the chamber began looking around, scanning for the intruders, spotting Ramirez’s aura. The beetle-like creatures towered above him, ready to crush him under their chitinous plates. Re-

flexively, he squeezed the trigger on the launcher, and an explosion from the far side turned the spirits’ attention long enough for Ramirez to bolt toward the tunnel.

“Fall back! Fall back, dammit!” he screamed at the ambushed strike force. Loading another mini grenade, he launched it at the chamber entrance, hoping the blast would kill whatever was following them.

A scream came from the right, and the network feeds went dead. Ziegler was either dead, or his deck just got destroyed. Ramirez grabbed the cowering form of a teammate before him and shoved forward. “Get moving!” he yelled, letting a burst fly from his rifle back toward the chamber and the bugs. A blast rocked the tunnel as the previously grenade launched earlier went off, causing a spill of greenish ichor from the beetle spirit behind him.

A white-hot burning sensation stopped Ramirez as he turned to flee down the tunnel. His flesh and armor smoking from the acidic attack, he saw a black claw emerging from his side, a disgusting insectoid mutant having attacked him as he was turned away. Gritting his teeth, Ramirez leveraged his rifle against the thing’s head and pulled the trigger, splattering its mutated innards on the tunnel walls. With a grunt, he drew his combat knife and hacked the black limb off at what could be a wrist.

Looking up the tunnel, Ramirez saw movement in his low-light vision off in the darkness, illuminated by muzzle flashes from Ichiro’s machine gun. A primal yell echoed from Ichiro as the barrel of his weapon begins to glow with heat, and still he stood his ground. Ichiro’s form was overwhelmed as his ammunition ran dry, the barrel of the Ultimax white-hot.

Motion detection showed still more bugs, converging from multiple directions. Ramirez’ thoughts raced for a solution, for an escape, “Four of us left. If we make it out of this one, it will be a miracle.”

COVER

LAST STAND

INTRODUCTION

MISSION
SYNOPSIS

SCENE 1

SCENE 2

SCENE 3

SCENE 4

SCENE 5

SCENE 6

SCENE 7

PICKING UP
THE PIECES

LEGWORK

CAST OF
SHADOWS

PLAYER
HANDOUTS

DEBRIEFING
LOG



INTRODUCTION

SRM 08-06: Final Countdown is a *Shadowrun Missions* living campaign adventure. Full information on the *Shadowrun Missions* living campaign is available at [facebook.com/SRMissions/](https://www.facebook.com/SRMissions/) and includes a guide to creating Missions characters and a regularly updated FAQ. All maps, player handouts, and other playing aids are found at the end of this document.

PREPARING THE ADVENTURE

SRM 08-06: Final Countdown is intended for use with *Shadowrun, Fifth Edition*, and all character and rules information refers to the fifth edition of the *Shadowrun* rules.

ADVENTURE STRUCTURE

SRM 08-06: Final Countdown consists of several scenes. These scenes form the basis of the adventure, which should be completed in approximately four hours. If you are running short on time, you should streamline each and be a little more generous with clues, target numbers, and other requirements to aid in guiding the players through the adventure.

Each scene outlines the most likely sequence of events, as well as how to handle unexpected twists and turns that inevitably crop up. Each one contains the following subsections, providing gamemasters with all the information necessary to run it.

Scan This provides a quick synopsis of the scene's action, allowing you to get a feel for the encounter at a glance.

Tell It to Them Straight is written to be read aloud to the players, describing what their characters experience upon entering the scene. You should feel free to modify the narrative as much as desired to suit the group and the situation, since the characters may arrive at the scene by different means or under different circumstances than the text assumes.

Behind the Scenes covers the bulk of the scene, describing what's happening, what the non-player characters are doing, how they will react to the player characters' actions and so forth. It also covers the setting of the encounter, going over environmental conditions and other properties of the location as well as providing any descriptions of important items.

Pushing the Envelope looks at ways to make the encounter more challenging for experienced or powerful characters and other ways you can add some "extra spice" to the scene. This subsection should usually only be used for home games, or games where time is not a factor. At most convention and

Open Play events, gamemasters should omit this information. It adds to the scene, but does not contain important information.

Debugging offers solutions to potential problems that may crop up during the encounter. While it's impossible to foresee everything that a group of player characters might do, this section tries to anticipate common problems and other suggestions for dealing with them.

RUNNING THE ADVENTURE

Gamemastering is more of an art than a science, and every gamemaster does things a bit differently. Use your own style when it comes to preparing and running the adventure and do whatever you feel is best to provide the best *Shadowrun* game you can for your players. *Shadowrun Missions* adventures are designed to run in a standard four-hour convention time slot.

Please keep this in mind when running the adventure. You should leave at least 15-20 minutes at the end of the time slot to complete any necessary paperwork and pass out the players' **Debriefing Logs**. (Make sure that you have enough copies of the **Debriefing Log** for this adventure to give one copy to each player after running the adventure.) This section offers some guidelines you may find useful in preparing to run *SRM 08-06: Final Countdown* (or any *Shadowrun Missions* adventure).

STEP 1: READ THE ADVENTURE

Carefully read the adventure from beginning to end. Get a feel for the overall plot and what happens in each scene. That way, if something different happens, you won't be caught off guard and you can adapt things smoothly.

STEP 2: TAKE NOTES

Take notes for yourself while reading through the adventure that you can refer to later on. Possible things to note include: major plot points (so you can see them all at a glance), the names of various non-player characters, possible problems you notice, situations where you think a particular character can shine and other things you'll want to keep in mind while running the adventure.

STEP 3: KNOW THE CHARACTERS

Prior to the start of the adventure, examine the PCs' record sheets and Debriefing Logs for your reference and have basic information about their important abilities handy so you can refer to it during play. Also go over the characters and keep their previous events listed on the Debriefing Logs in mind when determining non-player character actions in various scenes if such a dynamic has been included.

COVER

LAST STAND

INTRODUCTION

MISSION SYNOPSIS

SCENE 1

SCENE 2

SCENE 3

SCENE 4

SCENE 5

SCENE 6

SCENE 7

PICKING UP THE PIECES

LEGWORK

CAST OF SHADOWS

PLAYER HANDOUTS

DEBRIEFING LOG



STEP 4: DON'T PANIC!

Gamemastering involves juggling a lot of different things. Sometimes you drop the ball and forget something or you just make a mistake. It happens, don't worry about it. Nobody is perfect all the time and everybody makes mistakes. Just pick up from there and move on. Your players will understand and forget about it once you get back into the action.

STEP 5: CHALLENGE THE PLAYERS

Gamemasters should challenge the players, but should not generally overwhelm them. This is not to say that games cannot be deadly. If the characters die through their own actions and repercussions of those actions, then so be it. But the idea is to challenge the players and their characters, not to overwhelm them. If the enemies and challenges are too light for the characters present, then increase them. On the other hand, if the characters are badly outmatched by the enemies, then tone them down. Make things difficult but not impossible.

GENERAL ADVENTURE RULES

Shadowrun Missions adventures use the rules presented in *Shadowrun, Fifth Edition (SR5)*. Standard rules such as success tests, glitches, critical successes, and other common mechanics are described in *SR5* and are not repeated in this adventure.

Please keep in mind when preparing for the adventure, that the PCs will not necessarily be comprised of a balanced party. It's entirely possible that the party will be made up entirely of technomancers or back-to-nature shamans. If the characters run into a brick wall because of such complications, show flexibility and use your best judgment in how you lead them back to the plot.

NON-PLAYER CHARACTERS

Non-player characters (NPCs) are essential to any adventure. They are the allies, antagonists, and background characters in the adventure that interact with the player characters. NPCs in this adventure have already been created and can be found throughout the adventure.

Minor NPCs are found in the individual scene that they appear in, and generally have a brief write up, noting only their important skills and the gear they are carrying.

Major NPCs can be found in the **Cast of Shadows** at the end of the adventure, and have more detailed write ups, and include most of the skills and the gear they have access to.

The NPCs in this adventure should generally stand up to the average player character but may need

some adjustment to suit a particular group of characters, especially a more experienced and powerful group. The scenes and NPC descriptions offer tips on adjusting the NPCs to suit the abilities of the characters in your group. To adjust the power level of an NPC, refer to **Helps and Hindrances** (p. 378, *SR5*). Take the player characters' abilities into consideration when assessing the NPCs in this adventure and modify them accordingly.

MISSION DIFFICULTY

Gamemasters are encouraged to use their own judgment, and to adjust the difficulty of the encounter to take into account the abilities of the players. If the players have no magical support, replace magical defenses with mundane ones. If the players are weak on combat, reduce the number of enemies by one or two. Conversely, if they're steam-rolling the opposition, add one or two enemies to the fight. Missions should be difficult and something of a challenge, but should not be insurmountable.

A simple method for adjusting difficulty is to simply increase the dice pools and Professional Ratings of the enemies. A simple +1 or +2 to all combat and defense tests gives enemies a minor boost in power, while a +3 or 4 will make them truly formidable. Adding to their Professional Rating will give them a larger group Edge pool to draw from, and gamemasters are encouraged to use this Edge when logical.

Often a combat scene will tell you if it's supposed to be challenging or is simply there to serve as filler or a minor obstacle that the players should steamroll through. When possible, use this as a guide to know when to tweak the enemies and encounters. If it doesn't say, assume the scene should present a challenge to the power levels of the players.

A NOTE ON LOOT AND LOOTING

Gamemasters should be careful what they allow players access to, because they can and will try to steal everything not nailed down (and even then, they often have pry bars and claw hammers to deal with those nails). *Shadowrun Missions* operate under the assumption that two players who have run the same missions will have roughly the same amount of resources available to them (give or take some negotiation and a little bit of minor loot fenced), so when players are able to steal and fence a lot of gear or are able to get their hands on high-priced vehicles, cyberdecks, or foci, it can unbalance the game and make it unfair to players who didn't have the opportunity to get those items. Gamemasters should avoid letting the players get into a position to do high value looting whenever possible.

COVER

LAST STAND

INTRODUCTION

MISSION SYNOPSIS

SCENE 1

SCENE 2

SCENE 3

SCENE 4

SCENE 5

SCENE 6

SCENE 7

PICKING UP THE PIECES

LEGWORK

CAST OF SHADOWS

PLAYER HANDOUTS

DEBRIEFING LOG



CHICAGO, THE CZ, NOISE, AND BACKGROUND COUNTS

While for many the Chicago and the Bug City Containment Zone are synonymous, the CZ comprises less than 1/3 of the total landmass of the city of Chicago proper, not counting suburban areas and farmlands connected to the city. But the CZ is still big, and it is the rotted, gutted, feral heart of the Windy City. It starts at 115th Street to the south and runs nearly 30 km North way to Belmont Avenue to the north, and reaches from the Lake Michigan an average of 15 km to Harlem Avenue to the west. A mass of torn down buildings and hastily-erected barricades were added to and reinforced over the three-year period that the Containment Zone was in effect, and even now nearly 20 years later this barrier stands as an imposing divide between the Zone and the outside world. Anyone can supposedly freely travel between the zone and Chicago proper, but Lone Star watches those coming out and the gangs and warlords watch those going in very closely.

Over the last three years, the Astral Preservation Society in partnership with The Ash Union and various megacorp thaumaturgical divisions have made headway in cleaning up the background count within the CZ and the surrounding area. Thanks to their work, unless otherwise noted in the scene, assume a background count of zero anytime characters are within the Containment Zone. The count will fluctuate wildly at times, so players should expect to encounter everything from high background counts and mana voids to various aspected backgrounds and mana warps. (See p. 30, *Street Grimoire*, for full rules). Areas of Chicago outside the CZ may also suffer background count bleed from the Zone.

With the megacorps construction efforts moving forward in the CZ and surrounding areas, matrix connectivity has improved dramatically. Noise levels will vary from area to area, but unless otherwise specified in the scene, assume a default Noise level of zero anytime the characters are within the Containment Zone.

PAPERWORK

After running a *Shadowrun Missions* adventure, there are several important pieces of paperwork that need to be filled out.

The first is to make certain to distribute a copy of the adventure's **Debriefing Log** to each player. As the gamemaster, please make certain to fill this out and sign off on it for each character. In the interests of time, you may have each player fill out the sections, with appropriate values that you give them. Please consider the PCs actions in the scenario when providing Reputation modifiers, per those rules (p. 372, SR5).

The second is to make sure that all players have updated their character's **Mission Calendar**. PCs are al-

BACKGROUND COUNTS

Background Counts impose a negative Dice Pool penalty equal to their rating for all tests that are linked to or utilize magic in any way (i.e., spellcasting, summoning, assensing, any test made while astrally projecting, and any active skill that benefits from active adept powers such as killing hands, critical strike, great leap, or improved skills, etc.). Dual Natured creatures and spirits suffer this penalty to all actions.

Aspected Background Counts grants a boost to any Limit that utilizes magic in any way (see above) to any metahuman, spirit, or Dual Natured creature that matches the Aspected Domain. This includes spellcasting Force Limits, so spellcasters need to be careful as it can be hard to control the additional surge of mana. Any magically active being that does not match the Aspected Domain should treat this as a normal Background Count and suffers penalties.

Background Counts above 12 are called either a Flux (For Aspected Domains) or a Void (For magically dead zones), and are very dangerous. Any being that is magically or astrally active in any way (dual natured, astrally perceiving, casting a spell, has an active adept power, has an active focus, etc.) takes Background Count-12 unresisted Stun Damage each turn that they are active and exposed to the Flux or Void.

lowed to go on one run per week. The calendar is used to track the character's monthly lifestyle expenses, adventures, and their downtime exploits.

MISSION SYNOPSIS

The runners are contacted by Juan Xihuitl for a meet at a Taco Temple. He says he wants to meet in such a location due to the lack of surveillance by the UCAS armed forces. Directing them to the walk-in cooler, Juan tell the team of a joint corporate strike team who penetrated the tunnels under Chicago, and were subsequently killed, but for two members, a Wuxing geomancer and an Aztechnology *Cuachiqueh* (an Azzie black ops operative.) The geomancer is alive, though the Aztechnology operative died of his wounds shortly after making it back to the surface. Juan hires the team recover data from the cyberware of the dead *Cuachiqueh*, and to contact and extract the geomancer, who is currently being "debriefed" in the UCAS army encampment surrounding the ruined and demolished remains of Wrigley Dome. Once this is finished, the team is to head into the

COVER

LAST STAND

INTRODUCTION

MISSION SYNOPSIS

SCENE 1

SCENE 2

SCENE 3

SCENE 4

SCENE 5

SCENE 6

SCENE 7

PICKING UP THE PIECES

LEGWORK

CAST OF SHADOWS

PLAYER HANDOUTS

DEBRIEFING LOG



hive, using a distracting force to pull most of the bugs away, and end the threat to Chicago once and for all.

The team makes plans to infiltrate the encampment, gather the data, and extract the survivor, Lu Wendao. Once the team gets Lu Wendao out of the encampment, he tells them the ley lines under Chicago have become corrupt due to the presence of an artifact in use by several insect shamans. The geomancer is also aware that due to the failure of the joint corporate strike force, the UCAS military has moved up the timetable on what they call the "Ripley Initiative," a plan to destroy Chicago and the insect spirits with gratuitous use of neutron bombs. Armed with this information, the team returns to Juan to get the team into the insect tunnels to retrieve and destroy the artifact.

Around the time of this meeting, the team is contacted by Dr. Martin Tate with an offer to simply leave town for a few weeks. If the team takes him up on his offer to leave, they may do so, but Chicago is done for.

Should the team decide to tell Tate to stuff it, and finish Juan's mission to destroy the artifact, they must enter the bug tunnels through one of the known access points, and using the navigational information lifted from the cyberware of the dead *Cuachiqueh*, the team finds the chamber where the artifact resides. After defeating the remaining soldier spirits set to guard the artifact, the team can recover the object and destroy it through one of many ways.

While deep within the tunnels, the muffled sounds of a battle reach the runner team from above. As they exit the hive tunnels, they find themselves in the midst of a battle, where the UCAS military and corporate forces have engaged the Queen spirit but have been largely overrun by many spirits on the ground. While the battle rages around them, the team must find a way to destroy the Queen spirit or flee for their lives.

Scene 1:

TACO TUESDAY

SCAN THIS

The team is contacted by Juan Xihuitl to meet at a Taco Temple. He offers a job to extract a survivor from the joint corporate strike force, held by the UCAS military in the encampment at what's left of Wrigley Dome.

TELL IT TO THEM STRAIGHT

Work's been fairly steady recently. With the bugs having moved back into Chicago, the corps have been gung-ho about securing their assets. Even lowball street runs are thriving, with gangs and organized crime looking to take advantage of the situation while law enforce-

ment is on the ropes. It's no surprise when your comm beeps the ringtone you have set for work calls. On the other end, the stoic, craggy face of a troll greets you.

Juan Xihuitl wastes no time with pleasantries. "I have an offer of employment for you. If you are amenable to a meet, come to 9467 West Higgins, near O'Hare. Be there by 2 p.m."

What's the worst that can happen from going to talk?

READ THIS WHEN THE PCs ARRIVE AT THE ADDRESS:

Arriving at the address you look around for the bar, or discreet building you are used to holding meets in. The address points to this address, but there's nothing here but an empty parking garage and a busy Taco Temple.

READ THIS WHEN THE PCs ENTER TACO TEMPLE:

Inside, the Taco Temple is loud and crowded as hungry folks stand in line, waiting for food they ordered off the AR menu. Looking around briefly, you see who you are looking for. Juan Xihuitl, normally formal and extremely businesslike, sits in a troll-sized plastic booth dressed in casual street clothes and mirrored aviator sunglasses, the remains of some sort of burrito on the table. As far as you can tell, he's been eyeballing you since you approached the Taco Temple, the large windows providing an excellent vantage point for anyone coming in through the front. Acknowledging you, he balls up the half-eaten burrito and wrapper, and deposits it in the trash on the way to you. He motions for you to follow him as he enters the short hallway near the restrooms, stopping at the door marked "Employees Only." Opening the door and walking through into the kitchen area, your team and Juan are stopped by a gangly looking teenager.

Through a cracking, nervous voice, he says "I'm sorry, uh, sir and everyone, this area is off limits for ..."

He is cut off by Juan, who thrusts his arm forward carrying some form of identification, "We're from corporate. We're here for an inspection."

The teenager swallows hard and nods, letting your team pass. Juan leads you to the rear of the

COVER

LAST STAND

INTRODUCTION

MISSION SYNOPSIS

SCENE 1

SCENE 2

SCENE 3

SCENE 4

SCENE 5

SCENE 6

SCENE 7

PICKING UP THE PIECES

LEGWORK

CAST OF SHADOWS

PLAYER HANDOUTS

DEBRIEFING LOG



fast-food joint, and through the door of the walk-in cooler. Inside is barely enough room for your team to stand among the boxes of refrigerated and frozen tacos waiting to be re-thermalized.

Juan finally addresses you as the cooler door shuts. Small drones on tracks occasionally enter the cooler through miniature doors to gather more supplies as he speaks. "Thank you for coming. I understand the circumstances of this meet are unconventional, but I needed to make sure I was at a place where I was not being watched. Earlier today, forces of several corporate interests attempted to penetrate the insect hive below Chicago. After a prolonged firefight, they were repelled. Because of the apparent failure of this mission, the UCAS military is attempting to get approval to go forward with what they are calling the 'Ripley Initiative.' This operation would be the destruction of the greater Chicago area through the use of multiple high-yield nuclear weapons, finishing the task Ares started many years ago. That's right, we're talking about the nuclear destruction of a major city in North America."

"We need to finish the job of the strike team, and that's where you come in. I need a team to get into the UCAS base and extract the strike-team survivor so we can get what he knows. His name is Lu Wendao, and he is the only member of the team who's biomonitor still reads in the green. He's a geomancer, brought in from Wuxing to examine the ley lines. Last communication from him had him finding the hive at a junction of lines that have some kind of 'corruption.' Get him out alive and find out what he knows about this corruption. I know he's alive, and his biomonitor says he's in the camp at the Dome, likely in the infirmary. Once you have what you need, turn him loose."

"Your secondary objective in the UCAS base is to find where the body of another operative is being stored and recover the memory from his cyberware. His head data will have navigation and tactical information critical to finding your way through the hive tunnels."

"Once you recover both of these, contact me, and we will insert your team into the tunnels,

create a distraction for the spirits in the hive, and giving you a window to stop the bugs for good. Hopefully, we can draw that nasty Queen Spirit away and give you a chance. Get this done, and I'll pay you 15,000 nuyen per person from my personal slush fund for operations. What do you say, amigos? Ready to be heroes?"

BEHIND THE SCENES

Juan Xihuitl, an Aztechnology Mr. Johnson, has found himself behind the eight ball. A few weeks ago, Juan received intelligence that showed beyond the shadow of a doubt, the bugs were not only back but were getting ready to make a move on Chicago. Pulling several high-powered strings, Juan attained authorization to put together a joint corporate strike force with assets taken from several of the Big Ten, as well as support from the UCAS military. The mission was simple: penetrate the bug hives below Chicago and eliminate the Queen Spirit.

Juan wasted no time in getting this team together, enlisting the Aztechnology *Cuachiqueh* (or "Shorn Ones," Aztechnology's crack Black Ops division) as the spear tip. The team penetrated the hives under the city, killing every flesh-form it encountered. The *Cuachiqueh* were guided through the hive tunnels by Wuxing geomancer Lu Wendao, who was following the energy of the ley lines. They met their fate when the team broke into the hive chamber containing a major ley line intersection under Chicago. Unfortunately for them, it also contained the Queen. Immediately, the team engaged the Queen, fighting off many powerful spirits in addition to the infested dragon. The insect spirits proved to be too much for them, and the team was forced to withdraw. By the time they made it to the surface, only two had survived: Lu Wendao, who was swiftly quarantined for debriefing, and Hector Ramirez, a *Cuachiqueh* who quickly succumbed to his wounds.

When they were given the mission, the joint corporate strike team was tasked with the mission of eliminating the insect queen spirit and destroying the central hive. Failing this, the UCAS government would proceed with the "Ripley Initiative." Juan does not know what this is, beyond its name. When the strike team was assembled, Aztechnology instituted a travel ban on all its employees from entering or leaving Chicago. Similar bans were put in place for other corporations as well. Juan suspects something big is about to happen if they cannot produce proof the hive has been dealt with.

With the failure of the strike team, Juan now turns to a local runner team to help finish the job before the UCAS military moves forward with their Ripley Initiative. Juan also suspects certain elements within the UCAS military are pushing this agenda, so he calls a meet out-

COVER

LAST STAND

INTRODUCTION

MISSION SYNOPSIS

SCENE 1

SCENE 2

SCENE 3

SCENE 4

SCENE 5

SCENE 6

SCENE 7

PICKING UP THE PIECES

LEGWORK

CAST OF SHADOWS

PLAYER HANDOUTS

DEBRIEFING LOG



side of the Aztechnology compound at a place where he is confident he is not being surveilled. Once the team arrives, he will lead them through the Employees Only door to the back, and into the walk-in cooler where he will finally discuss business.

Juan is looking to hire the runners to infiltrate the UCAS army encampment at the remains of Wrigley Dome, extract the Geomancer, and download the cyberware memory of the dead *Cuachiqueh*. Once this is finished, they are to find out what happened to the corporate strike team and finish the job of destroying the insect spirit influence. Runners who balk at the idea of a shadowrunner team being capable of doing what the joint corporate strike force could not are reassured by Juan that the insect hive has been hit extremely hard, providing a window of opportunity for a small team to strike where it has been softened up. Juan recognizes the inherent danger of such a mission, so he opens the negotiations by offering 15,000 nuyen per runner. This number can be negotiated with an opposed Negotiation + Charisma [Social] test, increasing by 500 nuyen per net hit, to a maximum of 20,000 nuyen.

Once negotiations are finished, Juan provides the team with a contact number for him. It is not his usual number, as he is attempting to cover his dealings. He tells the team if they attempt to contact him via his normal contact, he will deny any knowledge of them.

Any runners who bring obvious weapons or armor into the Taco Temple will be regarded by its patrons as strange, and they will likely have their pictures taken. In the world of lightning-fast social media, no weirdo goes unnoticed! If a runner enters the Taco Temple in such a manner (take into account runners with the Distinctive Style Negative Quality,) increase their Public Awareness by 1.

PUSHING THE ENVELOPE

While the runners are in the cooler, a crazed man with an AK-97 bursts into the Taco Temple to rob it. He angrily enters the lobby, fires off a burst into the ceiling and yells at the customers and patrons to get on the floor. He is expecting to rob the customers, as most transactions in the Taco Temple are done electronically. This man is high on cram (included in stats below) and unhinged, willing to shoot anyone who appears remotely threatening.

With this, the runner team is faced with a choice. They can intervene and take out the crazed man. If they do, the grateful patrons will cheer them on and take many pictures of them, immediately posting the situation to p2.0 feeds, causing at least a small bit of fame, increasing the runners' Public Awareness by 1 for heroically taking down the "Burrito Bandit." However, if the team employs excessive or otherwise negative methods, such as mind control, increase the runners' Notoriety by 1.

If the team attempts to simply wait, the police are called, and Lone Star will show up on scene within ten minutes. Lone Star will then take into custody anyone with any illegal items on their person as well as take out the crazed robber with a few well-placed Ruger Thunderbolt shots. After the Burrito Bandit is taken down, Lone Star will sweep the property for additional threats and request everyone's identification, running the entire place for warrants and illegal contraband. Should the runner team be discovered, any illegal gear not concealed will be confiscated.

Alternatively, the team can simply try to sneak away during the robbery, which is easy to do through the back door. They must simply make an opposed Sneaking + Agility [Physical] test versus the robber.

DEBUGGING

The only way this could go wrong is if the runner team does something stupid to get the cops called, get caught trying to sneak away with many thousands of nuyen worth of illegal ordnance, or otherwise get the negotiations completely derailed.

BURRITO BANDIT

(HUMAN MALE, PROFESSIONAL RATING 4)

B	A	R	S	W	L	I	C	EDG	ESS
4	3	4(5)	3	2	2	4	2	0	6

Initiative: 10 + 2D6

Condition Monitor: 10

Limits: Physical 5, Mental 4, Social 4

Armor: 9

Skills: Automatics 4, Unarmed Combat 2, Perception 4

Gear: Cram (2 doses), lined coat

Weapons:

AK-97 [Assault Rifle, Acc 5, DV 10P, AP -2, SA/BF/FA, RC —, 38 (c), w/ 27 rounds regular ammo]

Scene 2:

BASE HIT

SCAN THIS

The team makes their way to the encampment at the old Wrigley Dome and must find a way inside without drawing too much attention to themselves in order to get to their targets: a dead black ops soldier and a mage under interrogation.

COVER

LAST STAND

INTRODUCTION

MISSION SYNOPSIS

SCENE 1

SCENE 2

SCENE 3

SCENE 4

SCENE 5

SCENE 6

SCENE 7

PICKING UP THE PIECES

LEGWORK

CAST OF SHADOWS

PLAYER HANDOUTS

DEBRIEFING LOG





TELL IT TO THEM STRAIGHT

The area around Wrigley Dome has seen significant upheaval in the past few weeks. The old sports complex used to house the Cubs, but its current appearance is a far cry from any baseball game. About one third of the dome has been demolished, though no heavy equipment operates near here, leaving the area littered with ruined concrete and detritus. Nobody's going to be playing baseball here for a very long time.

As you pull up to the neighborhood, traffic is stopped and re-routed around the complex, around which has been erected a temporary chainlink fence and a series of checkpoints barring entry to anyone who does not pass the scrutiny of the guards. UCAS military police with dogs patrol the fence line, stopping periodically to check in with each other. To the north, a small shanty town built around some government-issued housing trailers has popped up in the old parking lot.

Other trailers and prefabricated buildings occupy the space inside the fence. Somewhere in that mess is your guy. Now you have to find a way to get him out.

BEHIND THE SCENES

Wrigley Dome has been gutted and partially demolished following the discovery of tunnels leading to the main hives under Chicago. The UCAS Army has established a base of operations in the old sports complex,

using it as the primary point of contact for operations in the hive. As such, a great deal of attention is given to the tunnels and sewer structures under the complex, as they are viewed as the site most likely to be attacked by an incursion of flesh forms.

Several tunnels have been collapsed by the UCAS military, and seismic sensors have been installed to detect any new tunneling. The residents of the dome have been driven out and given temporary government housing. These have not been maintained well, and a small tent city has cropped up around the prefabricated government issued buildings on the north side. The residents of the shanty town are largely just trying to survive. They are not allowed into the encampment, though they watch it closely.

The perimeter of the encampment is surrounded by temporary chainlink fence with barbed wire stretched across the top. The area on either side of the perimeter fence is clear of debris up to three meters. Three guard patrols of two soldiers and a dog move along the fence in even intervals, checking in routinely with each other periodically.

Astrally, a patrol of fire and earth elementals and an astral mage watch carefully for any undue magical activity.

At each entrance, three soldiers check identification of anyone who enters, while a mage analyzes the auras of those who enter. Another building is serving as a temporary barracks for troops stationed at this location, housing thirty off-duty soldiers at any given time.

COVER

LAST STAND

INTRODUCTION

MISSION
SYNOPSIS

SCENE 1

SCENE 2

SCENE 3

SCENE 4

SCENE 5

SCENE 6

SCENE 7

PICKING UP
THE PIECES

LEGWORK

CAST OF
SHADOWS

PLAYER
HANDOUTS

DEBRIEFING
LOG



Inside the fence of the encampment is a hastily constructed garage / hangar, housing a wing of T-birds. In all, there are four GMC Banshees, fully loaded with military grade weapons. They are currently in the process of being refueled and rearmed, and are not matrix-active in any way. The GMC Banshees are not in operating status, and an attempt to control or hijack one will result in the realization they have no fuel. This hangar is also patrolled by 4 steel lynx drones armed with Stoner-Ares M202 Medium Machine Guns.

Other buildings in the camp are a command building and infirmary, a temporary mess hall, and an armory. Several military tents cover other parts of the grounds, providing a place for storage and disposal of waste. Non-combat personnel mill about the encampment, largely ignoring the military presence except where necessary.

There is a Matrix host that has been set up on site. It is heavily monitored at all times by a security spider, operating from a room in the command building. All vehicles and locks on site are slaved to the host.

Lu Wendao is being held in the infirmary, recovering from his wounds sustained during the corporate strike force mission. He has been cuffed to a metal table in the room with metal restraints. These restraints may be unlocked with a Locksmith + Agility (5) [Physical] test. His room is guarded by one MP, and he is currently being interrogated by a plain-clothed CIA operative.

The remains of Hector Ramirez are in one of prefabricated storage buildings in a body bag, being temporarily held until it can be released back to Aztechnology. The tent is unguarded, though it is within the field of view of several guards at any given time.

Runners may try to sneak their way into the base, though this may prove difficult through traditional means (such as cutting the fence or scaling the fence) due to the patrols.

A frontal assault on the base is not recommended. Should the team wish to drive their armored vehicle in through the checkpoint, they would be a target for every available soldier and vehicle in the base. It is possible for a team to use magic to get into the encampment, manipulating the minds of the checkpoint guards, or creating some sort of illusion.

Another alternative would be to impersonate military personnel or base personnel, using Impersonation + Charisma [Social] versus the Perception + Intuition [Mental] of anyone who questions the runner. Runners may take a Military Procedures + Logic (4) [Mental] Test (or other appropriate military background or professional knowledge skill) to receive a +3 dice pool bonus on Impersonation tests used to fool military guards or blend into the base.

Runners who attempt to impersonate personnel from this encampment receive a penalty to their Impersonation test equal to their Public Awareness + Notoriety, and have their social limit reduced by their Notoriety for this roll.

Should the runners attempt to use magic to gain entry, use the Perceiving Magic rules. To determine if a person notices a spell being cast, make a Simple Perception + Intuition [Mental] Test with a threshold equal to the skill rating of the caster minus the Force of the spell being cast, or 6 - Force if no skill is involved, both with a minimum of 1. (p. 280, SR5)

Seismic sensors have been installed on all tunnels that connect to the Wrigley Dome, and cameras have been installed at each entrance to the encampment, and each entrance to the tunnels. In addition, there is a surveillance camera covering the armory and the hangar. These cameras are controlled by the on-site host.

PUSHING THE ENVELOPE

The entire encampment is on high alert, having just pushed back an incursion of flesh forms from one of the tunnels. As such, every soldier in the base is fully alert and equipped. Security is extremely tight during this time, and the base is under lockdown conditions, allowing no one in or out until the lockdown is lifted. All soldiers and personnel at this site receive an additional 2 dice for resisting Impersonation attempts.

Due to this incursion, several soldiers have been killed. Each of these have been examined, identified and stored temporarily in the storage building, which is being used as a temporary morgue, until they can be picked up. There are ten separate bodies in bags inside the storage building, one of which is Hector Ramirez, all in unmarked body bags. The runner team will have to open each of the body bags with a random chance of finding who they are looking for.

DEBUGGING

If the team starts a fight with the UCAS military and decides not to flee and regroup, this can turn deadly very quickly, as the combined force of arms present at the encampment can easily destroy most any runner team

TEMPORARY UCAS MILITARY HOST

Rating	Attack	Sleaze	Data Proc.	Firewall
10	12	10	11	13

Installed IC: Patrol, Tar Baby, Track, Black IC

Slaved Devices: Encampment Lights, Alarms, Cameras, Hangar Locks, Armory Locks, Seismic Sensors

Spiders: UCAS Army Decker (see below)

Sculpting: Army Base

Security Procedures: Patrol is always running and makes a Matrix perception test every turn. If an intruding persona is detected, launch Tar Baby, then Sparky, then Track, followed by Black IC

COVER

LAST STAND

INTRODUCTION

MISSION SYNOPSIS

SCENE 1

SCENE 2

SCENE 3

SCENE 4

SCENE 5

SCENE 6

SCENE 7

PICKING UP THE PIECES

LEGWORK

CAST OF SHADOWS

PLAYER HANDOUTS

DEBRIEFING LOG



UCAS ARMY SOLDIER

(30, HUMAN MALES AND FEMALES, PROFESSIONAL RATING 4)

B	A	R	S	W	L	I	C	ESS
4	4	4	4	3	3	3	3	6

Initiative: 7 + 1D6

Condition Monitor: 10

Limits: Physical 5, Mental 4, Social 5

Armor: 18

Skills: Firearms skill group 5, Athletics skill group 5, Close Combat skill group 5, Perception 4,

Gear: Goggles [Rating 3, w/ low light, flare compensation, smartlink], full body armor with helmet [w/ chemical seal], Hermes Ikon commlink [Device Rating 5]

Weapons:

Colt M23 [Assault Rifle, Acc 4, DV 9P, AP -2, SA/BF/FA, RC —, 40(c), w/ smartlink, 40 rounds of regular ammo]
Combat knife [Blades, Acc 6, Reach —, DV 6P, AP -3]

UCAS ARMY MAGE

(ELF MALE, PROFESSIONAL RATING 4)

B	A	R	S	W	L	I	C	ESS	M
6	3	4	5	4	2	4	3	6	4

Initiative: 9 + 1D6

Condition Monitor: 10

Limits: Physical 5, Mental 7, Social 8

Armor: 18

Skills: Assensing 4, Close Combat skill group 5, Conjuring skill group 5, Perception 4, Sorcery skill group 5

Gear: Full body armor with helmet [w/ chemical seal], reagents (10 drams), Hermes Ikon commlink [Device Rating 5]

Spells: Ball Lightning, Control Actions, Flamethrower, Improved Invisibility, Mass Confusion

Bound Spirits: 2 (1 Force 7 Fire Elemental, 3 Services Remaining; 1 Force 8 Earth Elemental, 3 Services Remaining)

Weapons:

HK 227 [Submachine Gun, Acc 5(7), DV 7P, AP —, SA/BF/FA, RC -1, 28(c), w/ 28 rounds of regular ammo]
Combat knife [Blades, Acc 6, Reach —, DV 5P, AP -3]

UCAS ARMY DECKER

(HUMAN FEMALE, PROFESSIONAL RATING 5)

B	A	R	S	W	L	I	C	ESS
5	6(9)	5(7)	4(7)	5	5	5	4	1.3

Initiative: 12 + 3D6

Condition Monitor: 11

Limits: Physical 8, Mental 7, Social 5

Armor: 18 (Full Body Armor + Helmet)

Skills: Athletics skill group 6, Close Combat skill group 7, Cracking skill group 7, Demolitions 5, Electronics skill group 6, Etiquette 4, Firearms skill group 8, Leadership 6, Perception 6, Sneaking 6

Augmentations: Cybereyes (Rating 3, w/ flare compensation, image link, low-light vision, smartlink, thermographic vision, vision magnification), datajack, muscle augmentation 3, muscle toner 3, wired reflexes 2

Gear: Full body armor with helmet [w/ chemical seal], Shiawase Cyber-5 cyberdeck [Device Rating 5, ASDR 8, 7, 6, 5, Programs: Armor, Biofeedback, Configurator, Decryption, Encryption, Fork, Hammer, Lockdown]

Weapons:

Ares Alpha [Assault Rifle, Acc 5(7), DV 11P, AP -2, SA/BF/FA, RC 2, 42(c), w/ integral smartlink, 42 rounds of regular ammo]
Ares Predator [Heavy Pistol, Acc 5(7), DV 8P, AP -1, SA, 15(c), w/ integral smartlink, 15 rounds of regular ammo]

UCAS ARMY RIGGER

(2, HUMAN MALE, PROFESSIONAL RATING 4)

B	A	R	S	W	L	I	C	ESS
3	5	6	4	5	5	5	3	4

Initiative: 11 + 1D6

Condition Monitor: 10

Limits: Physical 6, Mental 7, Social 4

Armor: 18 (Full Body Armor + Helmet)

Skills: Armorer 5, Close Combat skill group 4, Electronic Warfare 5, Engineering skill group 5, Firearms skill group 5, Gunnery 6, Pilot Ground Craft 6, Pilot Aircraft 6, Perception 4

Augmentations: Vehicle Control Rig 2

Gear: Full body armor with helmet [w/ chemical seal], Maersk Spider rigger command console [Device Rating 4, DF 4/5 w/ Clear sight 5, MMG Targeting 4, Steel Lynx Maneuvering 5]

Weapons:

HK 227 [Submachine Gun, Acc 5(7), DV 7P, AP —, SA/BF/FA, RC -1, 28(c), w/ 28 rounds of regular ammo]
Combat knife [Blades, Acc 6, Reach —, DV 5P, AP -3]

NON-COMBAT UCAS ARMY PERSONNEL

(15, MIXED RACES PROFESSIONAL RATING 2)

B	A	R	S	W	L	I	C	ESS
3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	6

Initiative: 6 + 1D6

Condition Monitor: 10

Limits: Physical 4, Mental 4, Social 5

Armor: 0

Skills: Pistols 2, Running 4, Unarmed Combat 2

Gear: Hermes Ikon Commlink

Weapons:

Unarmed strike [unarmed, Acc 4, Reach —, DV 3S, AP —]

COVER

LAST STAND

INTRODUCTION

MISSION SYNOPSIS

SCENE 1

SCENE 2

SCENE 3

SCENE 4

SCENE 5

SCENE 6

SCENE 7

PICKING UP THE PIECES

LEGWORK

CAST OF SHADOWS

PLAYER HANDOUTS

DEBRIEFING LOG

CIA AGENT

(HUMAN MALE, PROFESSIONAL RATING 5)

B	A	R	S	W	L	I	C	ESS
6(7)	6(10)	5(9)	5(9)	5	4	6	4	0.6

Initiative: 15 + 4D6

Condition Monitor: 12

Limits: Physical 12, Mental 7, Social 5

Armor: 9 (Synergist Business Suit)

Skills: Acting skill group 6, Athletics skill group 7(10), Close Combat skill group 8, Demolitions 7, Firearms skill group 9, Influence skill group 5, Perception 7, Stealth skill group 6, **Augmentations:** Cybereyes [Rating 4, w/ flare compensation, smartlink, vision magnification, thermographic vision, low-light vision, vision enhancement 3], muscle augmentation 3, muscle toner 3, reflex recorder (Unarmed Combat), smuggling compartment, suprathyroid gland, synaptic booster 3, toxin extractor 6

Gear: Gamma Scopalamine (4 doses), Synergist business suit [w/ chemical protection 6, nonconductivity 6], Transys Avalon commlink [Device Rating 6]

Weapons:

Colt Government 2066 [Heavy Pistol, Acc 6(8), DV 7P, AP -5, SA RC —, 14(c), w/ 14 rounds of APDS ammo]
 Combat knife [Blades, Acc 6, Reach —, DV 12P, AP -3]

STEEL LYNX DRONE (4)

HAND	SPEED	ACCEL	BODY	ARM	PILOT	SENS
5	4	2	6	12	3	3

Programs: Clearsight 4, Targeting 4 Weapons:

Stoner-Ares M202 [Medium Machine Gun, Acc 5, DV 10P, AP -3, FA, RC —, 100(belt), with 100 rounds of regular ammo]

GMC BANSHEE (4)

HAND	SPEED	ACCEL	BODY	ARM	PILOT	SENS	SEATS
6	8	4	20	18	4	6	12

Upgrades: This scout variant has four individual bucket seats in the utility compartment, which also provides equipment storage. Turret armament is a 1,250-round autofeed Vigilant rotary autocannon, a 2,500-round coaxial assault cannon, both with anti-aircraft capability, and a four-slot, armor-protected missile-launcher unit on the left turret side. The commander's cupola on the left turret top is a micro-turret mounted with a single 500 round HMG.

Weapons:

Vigilant Rotary Autocannon [Assault Cannon, Acc 4, DV 16P, AP -6, FA (up to 5 rounds per action), RC 3, 1,250 (belt), w/ 1,250 rounds of assault cannon ammo]
 Cupola Mounted Assault Cannon [Assault Cannon, Acc 4, DV 16P, AP -6, SA, RC 0, 2500 (belt), w/ 2500 rounds of assault canon ammo]
 Anti-vehicle missiles [Missile, Acc 6, DV 24P, AP -4 (-10 vs vehicles), SS, RC —, 4 (m)]
 RPK HMG [Heavy Machine Gun, Acc 5, DV 12P, AP -4, FA, RC 6, 500 (belt), w/ 500 rounds of regular ammo]

GUARD DOG

(HUMAN MALE, PROFESSIONAL RATING 5)

B	A	R	S	W	L	I	C	ESS
4	3	4	4	3	2	4	3	6

Initiative: 8 + 1D6

Movement: 6/8/12

Condition Monitor: 10

Limits: Physical 6, Mental 4, Social 5

Armor: 8

Skills: Intimidation 4, Perception 5 (Smell +2), Running 5, Tracking 6, Unarmed Combat 5

Powers: Enhanced Senses (hearing, smell), Natural Weapon (claws/bite: DV 5P AP—)

Gear: Canine Armor

SPIRIT OF FIRE

(FORCE 7, BOUND, 3 SERVICES)

B	A	R	S	W	L	I	C	ESS	M
9	9	10	5	7	7	8	7	7	7

Initiative: 17+2D6

Astral Initiative: 14+3D6

Condition Monitor: 12

Skills: Assensing 7, Astral Combat 7, Exotic (Elemental Attack) 7, Flight 7, Perception 7, Unarmed Combat 7

Powers: Accident, Astral Form, Confusion, Elemental Attack: Fire, Energy Aura: Fire, Engulf: Fire, Fear, Guard, Immunity to Normal Weapons, Materialization, Sapience

Weapons:

Elemental Attack [Exotic, Acc 10, DV 14P(Fire), AP -7]
 Engulf [Unarmed, Acc 10, DV 14P(Fire), AP -7]
 Unarmed Strike [Unarmed, Acc 10, DV 14P(Fire), AP -7]

SPIRIT OF EARTH

(FORCE 8, BOUND, 3 SERVICES)

B	A	R	S	W	L	I	C	ESS	M
10	4	5	10	6	5	6	6	6	6

Initiative: 15 + 2D6

Astral Initiative: 16 + 3D6

Condition Monitor: 14

Skills: Assensing 8, Astral Combat 8, Perception 8, Unarmed Combat 8

Powers: Astral Form, Binding, Confusion, Engulf, Guard, Immunity to Normal Weapons, Materialization, Sapience, Search

Weapons:

Engulf [Unarmed, Acc 15, DV 16P, AP -8]
 Unarmed Strike [Unarmed, Acc 15, DV 12S, AP —]

COVER

LAST STAND

INTRODUCTION

MISSION SYNOPSIS

SCENE 1

SCENE 2

SCENE 3

SCENE 4

SCENE 5

SCENE 6

SCENE 7

PICKING UP THE PIECES

LEGWORK

CAST OF SHADOWS

PLAYER HANDOUTS

DEBRIEFING LOG

Scene 3:

EYEWITNESS

SCAN THIS

The team, with Lu Wendao, the geomancer they extracted from the UCAS military, contacts Juan to get paid, and are offered a secondary contract, where the stakes are much higher.

TELL IT TO THEM STRAIGHT

Lu Wendao seems extremely happy to be with you, and has been quite cooperative with your team, moving quietly and quickly wherever he is directed. Once away from the UCAS encampment, he finally pipes up, in well-practiced, though slightly accented English.

“My supervisor, Mr. Hong will be very happy you have retrieved me. May I use a commlink to contact him? Mine was confiscated by the interrogator.” He asks, politely for a guy who was just being questioned while handcuffed to a table.

BEHIND THE SCENES

Lu Wendao has been recovered, and unless he has been led to believe otherwise, he thinks the runner team has been sent by his corporation to extract him to return him to Wuxing. However, he will soon realize his saviors have not been sent from his corporation and will quickly stop talking. He can be convinced the runners have been sent from Wuxing, though, with a successful opposed Con + Charisma [Social] Test. A runner can get a bonus of 2 dice on this test if they converse with Lu Wendao in Cantonese.

If Lu Wendao does not believe the team is there to deliver him back to his handler Mr. Hong, he will not be very forthcoming with information. He can be intimidated with a successful Intimidate + Charisma [Social] Test, and it is simply possible to read his thoughts with magic if necessary. A well role-played appeal to him regarding the danger of the bugs, and the imminent Ripley Initiative could be used as well, prompting an opposed Negotiation + Charisma [Social] test. All of these social tests would use the standard modifiers for Social Tests (p. 140, SR5). Further, Lu Wendao has been dosed heavily with gamma scopolamine. Attempts to Mind Probe him result in a strange psychedelic dream (see **Pushing the Envelope**, below).

Once convinced to talk or otherwise give up his information, Lu Wendao tells the team there are multiple ley lines running under Chicago. This much has been known for several years by geomancers. What was not known until a proper divining could be performed was that the

ley lines under Chicago seemed “sick,” as in something was directing the energy to flow in a non-natural manner. As they approached the central hive, the “sick” feeling intensified until the magic at the center of the hive was almost unreachable. It was here the strike force engaged a large portion of the insect spirits, which defended the area near the ley lines with intense ferocity. During the fighting, Lu Wendao was able to identify an object that seemed to be polluting the manastream of the ley lines, causing it to be warped. He firmly believes that removal and destruction of this object would cause the ley lines in the area to eventually heal, and the immediate destruction of the object may be enough to weaken the insect spirits’ connection to the ley lines themselves. This object was concealed under a fair bit of a hardened resin like substance that hung from the ceiling in the central hive chamber, and he was able to notice it due to the eddy it created in the ley line’s manastream. He describes it as oval shaped, similar to a magical focus, only much more specialized. It would have to have orichalcum in it and be very powerful.

Lu Wendao also has another piece of information. During his “debriefing” by the CIA operative, he was told the Ripley Initiative would be going forward as soon as the failure of the joint corporate strike force to destroy the central hive could be confirmed. The survivors of the strike team were the last piece of evidence needed, and even now preparations were being made to pull forces back from Chicago in preparation for it.

As for getting the data out of the dead Aztechnology operative, the runner team needs a way to run power to the now-dead cyberware. A runner may do this with a power source, such as a deck, and a Cybertechnology + Logic (4) [Mental] Test. When the cyberware is restored to power, the corpse’s cybereyes will open, and the body will begin to twitch as the damaged wired reflexes installed in the body runs through its initial diagnostics and struggles to function. Once the cyberware is powered, it will begin transmitting a wireless signal, which can be detected with Matrix Perception.

All of the cyberware is cutting edge and has a device rating of 5. Since the operative is dead, his willpower is effectively zero for purposes of resisting. Data can be downloaded from the corpse’s implants, and much of it is meaningless diagnostic information. Most of the video files are corrupt, but the navigational information regarding the operative’s last mission is intact, tracing a path through the insect tunnels to the central hive. This data can be parsed from the mass of jumbled files and uploaded into a device to be used to follow the trail of the strike team.

Once the team has the information from Lu Wendao and the navigational data from the Aztechnology operative’s corpse, they are ready to contact Juan to start the second phase of their run.

COVER

LAST STAND

INTRODUCTION

MISSION SYNOPSIS

SCENE 1

SCENE 2

SCENE 3

SCENE 4

SCENE 5

SCENE 6

SCENE 7

PICKING UP THE PIECES

LEGWORK

CAST OF SHADOWS

PLAYER HANDOUTS

DEBRIEFING LOG



PUSHING THE ENVELOPE

Lu Wendao has been drugged out of his mind, having been dosed with an extreme dose of gamma scopolamine. Until he is detoxed, he is unable to answer any questions coherently. Additionally, any attempts to mind probe him result in an odd combination of a fever dream and hallucinogen-induced flashback. A successful Detox Spell at Force 12 (the Power of the toxin) will clear him up, as will a full night's rest. If the team is not able to get the information from Lu Wendao, it is entirely possible they attempt to go into the insect spirit hive with no information on what to look for or do once there.

Antidote patches may help get him focused, and the runners may have a street doc contact, who can flush the chemical from his system for a paltry 200 nuyen.

DEBUGGING

If Lu Wendao has somehow been killed, or if the team was unable to get him out, the navigation data from the dead *Cuachiqueh* should prove enough to get the runners to the center of the hive, though they may not have any idea what they must do to cure the corruption in the hive. Should the runners not be able to get the navigational data, there are other ways to find the way into the middle of the hive, but the team will likely encounter additional insect spirits to combat along the way.

It is possible the team would want to keep the body of the Aztechnology *Cuachiqueh* for its value in cyberware. Unfortunately, most of the cyberware was made with custom modifications for this specific operative, so it will not be as valuable to re-use. Still, a street doc contact may wish to purchase the entire intact body for research purposes for 5,000 nuyen in order to learn how higher grades of cyberware integrate with normal human anatomy.

If for some reason the team is unable to complete either of the objectives, Juan will still insist the team attempt to enter the tunnels to destroy the insect spirit threat for good. It is still possible to do so at this point, but not entirely likely, since they will not know to look for the artifact nor the proper tunnels guide them more directly to the hive's center.

The team may not know what to do with Lu Wendao once they have his information. Realistically, they can cut him loose anywhere, though if the team wishes to contact his handler Mr. Hong, they can do so through Juan, or by letting Lu Wendao use a comm.

Scene 4:

COUNTEROFFER

SCAN THIS

Dr. Tate resurfaces to contact the runner team and give them an offer to get out of town while they still can.

TELL IT TO THEM STRAIGHT

"Unknown Number," your commlink buzzes for the third time. Generally, you screen your calls, but whoever this is just doesn't seem to get the picture. Annoyed, you finally answer the call. On the display, Dr. Martin Tate, without his customary lab coat and sterile medical facility surrounding him, smiles cordially at you.

"It has come to my understanding that you may be working with a corporate element involved with the UCAS military. That is most dangerous work, and I would not want to see business associates such as yourselves get unnecessarily injured. I know that our interests in this matter may run counter to one another, but I hope you can retain your customary sense of professionalism enough to hear an offer." Tate says, his tone warm and even somewhat pleasant.

"I am prepared to offer you no small amount of nuyen to cease any operations and walk away. Pack your things, and leave Chicago, immediately. Check in with me once you get and stay out of town for two weeks. For this, I am prepared to offer you 50,000 nuyen each to get out of town with your bodies intact. You would be paid two weeks from today. As it were, I hear Atlanta is especially nice this time of year."

"For my part, you may or may not know that I have been released from my employment at Truman Technologies. As soon as I was terminated, Horizon froze most of my assets. With perhaps some small bit of assistance to hire a third party who is still within the corporation, to acquire and hold the funds in escrow should anything happen to either of us, your payment will be secure. Unfortunately, this individual does not work for free and has requested a payment of 20,000 nuyen to perform this action. I would make a humble request for your group to front this, as my assets are either frozen or tracked currently, until I can have them set up with a private account through the Zurich-Orbital Gemeinschaft Bank. Again, I am not asking you to do anything that would risk either of our lives, only asking you to leave, and take a vacation."

"Please, take a moment to consider it. I will only remain available at this number for a short time."

With that, Dr. Tate ends the call.

Getting paid for a vacation? There's worse offers than that.

COVER

LAST STAND

INTRODUCTION

MISSION SYNOPSIS

SCENE 1

SCENE 2

SCENE 3

SCENE 4

SCENE 5

SCENE 6

SCENE 7

PICKING UP THE PIECES

LEGWORK

CAST OF SHADOWS

PLAYER HANDOUTS

DEBRIEFING LOG



BEHIND THE SCENES

Tate has contacted the runner team to get them to leave town. He does not have any knowledge of the team being hired by Juan Xihuitl, but he does wish to get what he considers a highly competent wildcard out of the picture as soon as possible. To Tate, the team represents an unknown factor that could seriously jeopardize his plans of aiding the insect spirits. He knows there was an incursion into the hive, and he also knows the incursion failed, though at an enormous cost to the hive's defenses. A runner team could potentially pick up where the strike team failed and cause more damage. Further, he views the runners as useful tools, and he intends to use them again once the insect spirits have kicked their rivals out of Chicago.

Tate's offer is genuine, at least on the surface. His assets are indeed frozen and unavailable to him, but he has an inside man who is willing to create a few "system errors" in order to release his funds for a window of time. This inside contact does not work for free and requires the payment Tate spoke of before he will perform this job.

Tate is willing to negotiate the offer to leave town. With a successful opposed Negotiation + Charisma [Mental] Test, Tate will adjust the offer up 2,000 nuyen per net hit, to a maximum of 65,000 nuyen per person. He is also willing to negotiate the cost of his inside man to be lower, as he could potentially take on more of the initial costs. Each net hit on a Negotiation + Charisma [Mental] Test will lower the cost by 500 nuyen, to a minimum of 15,000 nuyen.

Tate will absolutely not offer any upfront money. What money he has, he needs for himself.

If the team takes his offer, gives him the money, and leaves town, they will be contacted in three days with account information to view the funds in escrow. Tate is the only one with the access to release the funds, and the account will indicate he will not do so until two weeks have passed.

If the team takes his offer and intends to go through with the original run anyway, the funds will still be held in escrow and not distributed until Tate releases it.

Regardless of which way the team deals with this, Tate will never have the opportunity to release the money. He will not release it if the hive is compromised and Queen is destroyed. If the hive is intact and the Queen survives, the Ripley Initiative will take place and the resultant battle will kill Tate, regardless of the outcome, even if the bugs take over the city.

PUSHING THE ENVELOPE

There is no need to push the envelope in this section.

DEBUGGING

If the runners take Tate's offer and leave town, obviously they will not be paid by Juan. They will also not go into the hive, destroy the Entomo Klitevo, or defeat the Queen spirit. This option will represent a total victory for the insect spirits.

Scene 5:

TUNNEL RATS

SCAN THIS

The team heads into the bug tunnels following navigational information gained from the dead operative. They find their way to the heart of a ley line intersection, where they must destroy the spirits guarding the artifact corrupting the lines and decide what to do with the artifact itself.

TELL IT TO THEM STRAIGHT

"I hope you are ready for this," Juan grumbles, his trepidation uncommonly bare. "Included in this data transfer is the location of an entrance to the insect tunnels, created only a week ago. One of our informants witnessed some activity in this parking garage and took a few pictures. The worker spirits were unmistakable, and the bugs have been using it to transport sedated individuals into the hive. If our information is correct, this tunnel very likely connects to the one used by the corporate team to enter the hive initially. You may have to deal with a few hostiles near the surface, but once inside the tunnels, resistance to the central chambers should be minimal. The reason is that we are going to kick the hornet's nest from the other side. By engaging the insect spirits in close proximity to the military base, we will force the UCAS to respond with its military forces present at Wrigley Dome. Hopefully, this will buy you enough time to get into the hive and take out the incubation chambers and fix whatever is causing all these bugs to infest the area."

"There's no guarantee it will drag out all of the defenders, but if we can make enough noise, you may have a shot to get in there," Juan states. "Come out successful, and we may stop this city from being nuked."

The troll hangs up the comm. Shortly after, a message pops up. It's a set of coordinates along with an address. Looks like you know where you have to go.

BEHIND THE SCENES

The address provided is a parking garage at 230 North Avenue, a three-story concrete structure with a crum-

COVER

LAST STAND

INTRODUCTION

MISSION SYNOPSIS

SCENE 1

SCENE 2

SCENE 3

SCENE 4

SCENE 5

SCENE 6

SCENE 7

PICKING UP THE PIECES

LEGWORK

CAST OF SHADOWS

PLAYER HANDOUTS

DEBRIEFING LOG





bling brick façade littered with AR and real graffiti. The garage has two lower than street levels in addition to the two above the ground floor. The burnt-out hulk of a 2040's era SUV blocks entry for vehicles into the garage. Inside, the remains of several cars, none with intact windows or tires litter what used to be parking spaces. A few makeshift derelict campsites occupy corners near blackened burn barrels and empty plastic liquor bottles. No people are present at any of these sites though.

On the deepest level, part of the concrete looks to have collapsed inward, and the collapsed area has been recently dug out, the moved dirt and building material piled in a nearby corner. Three rusted and broken-down old cars occupy spaces, obscuring the view to the collapse.

Guarding the tunnel entrance, are two Force 6 ant soldier spirits. These are here to make sure nothing that does not belong in the tunnels gets in. The spirits simply watch and attack any people who get close.

Once into the tunnels, the ground is uneven and littered with loose rocks and chunks of concrete. Matrix Noise increases to 6 as the team descends, all but cutting off Matrix signals to the surface.

Background count increases here as well as the team approaches the central chambers to 5, and the insect spirits are acclimated to ignore it, thanks to the Entomo

Klitevo, present and active in the central hive chamber.

This side tunnel winds through the claustrophobic darkness (no light sources are present) for approximately a kilometer. The tunnel is roughly hewn, and rocks and loose earth periodically fall from the roof, which has not been reinforced. before opening into a two-meter-wide passage. If the team has the navigational data downloaded from the Aztechnology operative, the way to the central hive is easily followed.

If the team was not able to retrieve the navigational data, they must navigate on their own through the tunnels. GPS is ineffective here, so a runner can make a Tracking + Intuition (4) [Mental] Test to follow the tracks of the fleeing corporate strike team back to the center of the hive. If Tracking is unavailable and the team does not have the navigational data, runners may make a difficult Perception + Intuition (7) [Mental] Test to notice spent ammunition casings, blood trails, and other artifacts left by the strike team. A failed test indicates the team has traveled down a side passageway and will encounter a pair of Force 5 ant worker spirits.

Once the team finds the central chamber, the tunnel opens into a large round chamber, approximately twenty meters across. Along outer edge, dozens of cocoons pulse with an eerie green light. Stalactites and stalagmites made of an amber resin form three pillars,

COVER

LAST STAND

INTRODUCTION

MISSION
SYNOPSIS

SCENE 1

SCENE 2

SCENE 3

SCENE 4

SCENE 5

SCENE 6

SCENE 7

PICKING UP
THE PIECES

LEGWORK

CAST OF
SHADOWS

PLAYER
HANDOUTS

DEBRIEFING
LOG



SCENE 5: TUNNEL RATS

connecting floor to ceiling, and other structures in the room. A large dome of resin hangs from the ceiling in the center of the chamber.

Another exit, much larger than the tunnel the team came down, sits on the opposite side of the chamber. This ascends quickly to the surface, coming up in downtown, near Navy Pier.

The resin has a Body of 10 and Armor of 16 (Structural Materials; see **Barrier Ratings**, p. 197, SR5). Should two of the resin pillars be destroyed, the central chamber will collapse in 2 Combat Turns, causing 30P damage to anyone in the chamber proper. The tunnel the team came in from will collapse. The large tunnel will remain intact.

In the large hanging central dome, the artifact, the Entomo Klitevo, floats, causing disruption of the mana lines. Any runner using astral perception may make an Assensing + Intuition (5) [Mental] Test to attempt to notice the artifact's aura on the inside of the resin structure. A character who is an initiate and has the Geomancy power can make an Assensing + Intuition (3) [Mental] to notice the same thing, only paying attention to the disruption in the mana lines present instead of trying to read a raw aura.

In the room, are two Force 7 beetle caretaker spirits, two Force 6 wasp soldier spirits, and five Force 5 ant worker spirits. The Queen is not present, having been drawn into combat by the distracting force led by Az-technology. The peculiar thing about spirits kidnapping and killing people, bedraggled looking scavengers, and a very strong sense of despair as the emotive energy of Chicago is brought boiling to the surface. Any spell being cast creates a mana surge, as wild magical energies whip around the group. For more information on Mana Storms, see p. 34, *Street Grimoire*. This Mana Storm cannot be cleansed with metamagic.

PUSHING THE ENVELOPE

Not only are the insect spirits able to ignore the negative effects of the background count, they are aligned with it (See p. 32, *Street Grimoire*) and gain a bonus to all limits while affected by the background count. The insect spirits also use their Fear Power to force the more obvious threats to leave. Anyone carrying a weapon focus or engaging the spirits with spells is prioritized. Their powers will be greatly diminished versus these spirits; the spirits are smart enough to know what will pierce their immunity to normal weapons.

DEBUGGING

At this point in the run, time limits may be your biggest enemy. Take stock of how much time is left in the mission. If you have less than ninety minutes left in the time slot, reduce the number of spirits in this chamber, and make it more obvious the resin can be collapsed in order to destroy the chamber.

ENTOMO KLITEVO

The Entomo Klitevo is an artifact from the Fourth World. It was designed by mages to access the plane of the Invae.

The artifact is a black-and-green marbled oval stone that is nestled into two orichalcum-veined, crescent-shaped pieces. When mana is channeled through the artifact, the stone levitates, and the crescent-shaped pieces separate and float next to the stone. The stone then focuses the channeled mana into a beam that erupts from the stone and opens a portal to the plane of the Invae.

The artifact requires at least three grade 2 insect shaman initiates to activate. Once the portal is open, one mage can maintain the opening. The mages can then communicate with residents of the other plane, and spirits can pass over from one side to the other.

The emanations from the stone can do two things: quicken the preparation of a vessel as a host and open the portal to the plane of the Invae.

To quicken the preparation of a vessel, the vessel must be placed in the emanations from the stone for four hours a day for six weeks. Once this is done, the essence of the original vessel is gone and can then be replaced with whatever spirit the user requires. During the process, the vessels slowly lose their life force, leaving them tired and drained at the beginning; in the end, they lapse into a coma.

In this case, the Entomo Klitevo has been used in conjunction with the summoning of a wasp queen spirit and has been disrupting the mana lines that intersect at the central hive chamber. It has been funneling the power of the plane of the Invae into the mana lines, creating a background count aligned heavily with insect spirits.

The Entomo Klitevo is a powerful artifact to be sure, but it is still made of stone and metal. It can be destroyed with enough force. It will resist all magical attempts to damage it. Any physical attempt to damage the artifact will be resisted with Body 8 and Armor 12. The Entomo Klitevo effectively has 10 boxes of damage.

Should the Entomo Klitevo be destroyed, the pent-up ley line will surge forward, creating a mana storm (p. 34, *Street Grimoire*) in downtown Chicago that lasts for five hours. Further, the insect spirits all will lose their acclimation with the background count, causing them to be weakened significantly.

COVER

LAST STAND

INTRODUCTION

MISSION SYNOPSIS

SCENE 1

SCENE 2

SCENE 3

SCENE 4

SCENE 5

SCENE 6

SCENE 7

PICKING UP THE PIECES

LEGWORK

CAST OF SHADOWS

PLAYER HANDOUTS

DEBRIEFING LOG



ANT WORKER SPIRIT

(HYBRID FORM, FORCE 5)

B	A	R	S	W	L	I	C	EDG	ESS	M
5	5	5	6	5	5	5	5	2	5	5

Initiative: 10 + 2D6

Movement: 10

Condition Monitor: 11

Limits: Physical 8, Mental 7, Social 7

Armor: 10 (Immunity to Normal Weapons)

Skills: Assensing, Astral Combat, Perception, Unarmed Combat

Powers: Animal Control (ants), Enhanced Senses (Smell, Thermographic Vision), Hive Mind, Immunity to Normal Weapons, Inhabitation (living vessels), Movement, Sapience, (*All Physical damage by ant spirits is considered acid damage)

Weaknesses: Allergy (insecticides, light), Evanescence

Weapons:

Natural weapons (Unarmed, Acc 8, Reach —, DV 6S, AP —)

ANT SOLDIER SPIRIT

(2, FORCE 5)

B	A	R	S	W	L	I	C	EDG	ESS	M
8	6	6	8	5	5	5	5	2	5	5

Initiative: 13 + 2D6

Movement: 12

Condition Monitor: 12

Limits: Physical 10, Mental 7, Social 7

Armor: 12 (Immunity to Normal Weapons)

Skills: Assensing, Astral Combat, Counterspelling, Exotic Ranged Weapon, Gymnastics, Perception, Unarmed Combat

Powers: Animal Control (ants), Fear, Hive Mind, Immunity to Normal Weapons, Inhabitation (living vessels), Natural Weapon, Sapience

Weaknesses: Allergy (insecticides, light), Evanescence

Weapons:

Natural weapons (Unarmed, Acc 10, Reach —, DV 8P(acid), AP -1)

BEETLE CARETAKER SPIRIT

(TRUE FORM; 2, FORCE 7)

B	A	R	S	W	L	I	C	EDG	ESS	M
7	8	8	7	7	7	7	7	3	7	7

Initiative: 15 + 2D6

Movement: 16

Condition Monitor: 11

Limits: Physical 10, Mental 10, Social 10

Armor: 18 (Immunity to Normal Weapons, Beetle Spirit Bonus)

Skills: Assensing, Astral Combat, Leadership, Perception, Unarmed Combat

Powers: Animal Control (beetles), Astral Form, Guard, Hive Mind, Innate Spell (Physical Barrier), Manifestation, Mystic Armor, Sapience.

Weaknesses: Allergy (insecticides, light), Evanescence

Weapons:

Natural weapons (Unarmed, Acc 10, Reach —, DV 7S, AP -0)

WASP SOLDIER SPIRIT

(HYBRID FORM, 2, FORCE 6)

B	A	R	S	W	L	I	C	EDG	ESS	M
9	7	7	9	6	6	6	6	3	6	6

Initiative: 13 + 2D6

Movement: 14

Condition Monitor: 13

Limits: Physical 12, Mental 8, Social 8

Armor: 12 (Immunity to Normal Weapons)

Skills: Assensing, Astral Combat, Counterspelling, Exotic Ranged Weapon, Flight, Gymnastics, Perception, Unarmed Combat

Powers: Animal Control (wasps), Fear, Hive Mind, Immunity to Normal Weapons, Inhabitation (living vessels), Natural Weapon, Sapience, Venom

Weaknesses: Allergy (insecticides, light), Evanescence

Weapons:

Natural weapons (Unarmed, Acc 12, Reach —, DV 8P, AP -1)

COVER

LAST STAND

INTRODUCTION

MISSION
SYNOPSIS

SCENE 1

SCENE 2

SCENE 3

SCENE 4

SCENE 5

SCENE 6

SCENE 7

PICKING UP
THE PIECES

LEGWORK

CAST OF
SHADOWS

PLAYER
HANDOUTS

DEBRIEFING
LOG



Scene 6:

HARD TO KILL

SCAN THIS

The team emerges from the tunnels in the middle of a war zone. The UCAS military and corporate forces have engaged the Queen spirit and a horde of flesh forms. The team must decide to get involved and take out the Queen, or run for their lives

TELL IT TO THEM STRAIGHT

A cool rush of air and the sounds of gunfire lead you up the large tunnel, banking upward sharply from the central chamber. The walls, a combination of concrete, dirt and a resin-like substance show large rents and claw marks in areas; most of them are extremely fresh. As you ascend to the surface, it becomes readily apparent the opening is very recent, with the amount of debris increasing as you make your way to a rough hole torn in the earth.

A monstrous roar underscored with buzzing pierces the cacophony. A sound of metal straining to the breaking point, followed by a loud crash, and the whine of turbines echo from the rift in the earth.

The tunnel gives way to the surface, but the surface looks like something out of a Karl Kombatmage trid. Uniformed UCAS soldiers huddle in cover spots, taking shots attacking insect spirits threatening to overwhelm their position with sheer numbers. The flaming hulk of a GMC Banshee smolders near them, its once-sleek lines bent and broken like a toy.

On the other side of the fight, an Aztechnology Lobo maneuvers into position, as a commandeered bulldozer provides cover for the Azzie forces moving in.

Caught in the crossfire again, chummer. It could be worse, you think, when you hear the roar again. Following the noise, you turn in horror to face what actually is worse. A monstrosity, part bug, part western dragon grapples with an Aguilar attack chopper, its nose gun whining as rounds flatten against the creature. With a cry of rage, the dragon-thing tears the nose gun and the front part of the helicopter with one of its extra claws before breathing a noxious green stream of boiling acid on the doomed pilot.

A ballistic whipcrack from the Lobo is heard as its railgun opens up. The creature moves with a jerk and bears down on the Lobo while it struggles to bring another weapon—this one chemical—to bear. Seeing an opportunity, the dragon spirit tosses the wreck of the Aguilar at the Lobo and dives hard, claws and stinger at the ready.

The impact is deafening, the ruined helicopter knocking the t-bird on its side and taking out two of its

stabilization engines. The dragon-bug follows, its claws and stinger lashing out at the underbelly of the armored vehicle. A claw finds purchase on the bottom, and the Lobo is opened like a fresh can of soy-spam. Shrieks inside are silenced quickly, as a gnashing snout tears at the occupants.

Autofire hits the spirit in the back, and it roars in pain and moves to attack soldiers on the other side, leaving the ruined tank smoking but largely intact.

The chips are down, and the hand's been called. What's it gonna be, chummer?

BEHIND THE SCENES

The team has followed the large tunnel obviously used by the dragon creature to the surface and has emerged close to downtown. To the east, the ruins of Navy Pier jut out into Lake Michigan. Nearby, the Spire and other buildings are in the center of an open warzone. Aztechnology sent another team to kick the wasp's nest, literally. The sheer number of flesh forms and the appearance of the queen spirit has forced the hand of the military forces present at Wrigley Dome, who have mobilized to join the fight.

When the team emerges from the tunnels, they immediately gain the attention of a group of flesh-formant soldier spirits. These are five Force 6 spirits, which should make for an extremely tough fight. Rubble and wrecked vehicles form plenty of spots for cover. Should the Entomo Klitevo be destroyed, they no longer receive a modifier to their limits for all actions, as they are purely astral creatures no longer acclimated to the background count. As an additional note, the mana storm still counts as a Force 5 background count in addition to the effects listed previously. This background count cannot be cleansed with metamagic and must dissipate naturally.

Additionally, the queen spirit is currently engaged with UCAS military forces. Due to its crossed draconic and spirit nature, it is extremely resilient to damage, and some pretty heavy ordnance is needed to damage it. Spells might be able to damage it, but casters have to deal with the background count, or, if the Entomo Klitevo has been destroyed, the effects of a mana storm. Unfortunately, the queen is highly intelligent and knows what can and cannot hurt it. Once someone actually damages it, the queen moves very quickly to destroy the source of the injury. *****At the beginning of this scene, the Queen has sustained 4 boxes of Physical damage from battling the forces prior to the team's arrival.*****

The Wrecked Aztechnology Lobo sits aflame, approximately sixty meters from the team's position, its Relampago railgun systems intact but damaged, only able to fire two shots, as the magazine has been crushed. The railgun is damaged but functional. A runner can use

COVER

LAST STAND

INTRODUCTION

MISSION
SYNOPSIS

SCENE 1

SCENE 2

SCENE 3

SCENE 4

SCENE 5

SCENE 6

SCENE 7

PICKING UP
THE PIECES

LEGWORK

CAST OF
SHADOWS

PLAYER
HANDOUTS

DEBRIEFING
LOG



the railgun using Gunnery + Agility [10] at a -4 dice pool modifier to reflect the damage to the system. A successful Armorer + Logic (12, 10 minutes) Extended Test is required to get the weapons systems back up and running with no penalties involved. Another runner may assist using Aircraft Mechanic + Logic. Additionally, a runner who inspects the biological weapons system on the Lobo, will find it labeled "BLUE-227." A successful Sixth World History + Logic (4) [Mental] Test (or appropriate skill pertaining to the Aztlan-Amazonia war) reveals that Blue-227 was a weapon developed by Aztechnology specifically to kill dragons, acting either as a coagulant or anti-coagulant on the blood of dracoforms, should it be introduced. The tactic with this was to punch a hole in the dragon with the rail gun, then fire the Blue-227, which would explode in an aerosol, introducing the agent into its bloodstream via its wounds. This did not happen, as the weapons did not get deployed in time. Should the team get the weapons online and use the Blue-227 against the queen spirit, the monstrosity will begin hemorrhaging blood and ichor as the chemical liquefies its draconic innards. The queen spirit will bleed for 2 boxes of damage per combat turn, eventually dying from this. The launcher for the Blue-227 is a missile launcher, can be used with a successful Gunnery + Agility [5] test. The missile is set to explode wirelessly, creating a cloud ten meters across. A runner requires three hits in order to make the missile explode in the proper place. Should they not get the three hits required, roll scatter of 4D6 meters - hits (p. 182, SR5). The cloud created by the explosion will remain airborne for 3 Combat Turns, should the queen spirit travel through it.

The team may also wish to use the wreck as cover, in which case the armored t-bird has Body 20 and Armor 18.

Should the team wish, they can assist the UCAS soldiers, who are engaged with a force of termite spirits, but the UCAS soldiers treat the team with suspicion. Still, they won't turn away aid.

PUSHING THE ENVELOPE

Should you feel the need to make this run more difficult, the wrecked Aztechnology Lobo is not present, leaving the runners to their own devices in piercing the heavy armor of the queen spirit. Alternatively, the Lobo is still present, but the ammunition for the Relampago railgun needs more work to get online. Another option is to have the Blue-227 depleted or damaged beyond repair.

The area is littered with all manner of insect spirits as well. An attack by more insect spirit flesh forms is likely.

DEBUGGING

If, for some reason, the team does not exit via the large hole in the central chamber and decides to run back

MANA STORMS

Mana storms are violent and unpredictable disturbances of magical energy. They create a background count equal to their rating. The area affected by a mana storm is (Rating) square kilometers. This storm also disrupts a 100+ meter perimeter of natural weather phenomenon (rain, wind, hail, etc), resulting from atmospheric disruptions caused by the mana storm's physical manifestations. A mana storm can move randomly up to its Rating in kilometers per hour. It dissipates at a rate of 1 point of Rating per hour as the mana levels disseminate through the gaisphere. A mana storm can create a number of spell effects equal to its Rating every ten minutes. Treat the elemental and illusory effects as spells (chosen from the Indirect Combat and Illusion spells) with a spellcasting test of Rating x 2 [Rating]. Any spell that needs sustaining can be sustained indefinitely for as long as the storm lasts, but the storm can only sustain a number of spells equal to its Rating. The Homeground quality has no effect on mana storms.

After a storm passes, the background count of the storm is added as a positive modifier to tests related to hunting reagents (p. 318, SR5). These reagents are only stable for two hours after the mana storm passes; after that the mana dissipates into the aether, and any unharvested reagents return to a mundane state.

When a magician casts a spell in a mana storm, roll on the mana surge table to determine the additional effects of the spell.

MANA SURGE TABLE

1D6	EFFECT
1	Drain becomes physical. No change in Force
2	Reduce Force by 1D6
3	No change
4	Reagents cannot be used with this spell/summoning (the magic smoke is released for any reagent used for this test and cannot be used again); no change in Force
5	Increase Force by 1D6
6	Witch's Mark*

**Witch's Mark: Spell or summoning does not occur. Instead, something totally unexpected happens. Water may catch fire with blue flames, a spirit from the Wild Hunt may appear, or frogs may fall from the sky. The gamemaster is encouraged to be creative. The player can spend a point of Edge so that the Witch's Mark does not negatively impact him (while not necessarily being beneficial).*

COVER

LAST STAND

INTRODUCTION

MISSION
SYNOPSIS

SCENE 1

SCENE 2

SCENE 3

SCENE 4

SCENE 5

SCENE 6

SCENE 7

PICKING UP
THE PIECES

LEGWORK

CAST OF
SHADOWSPLAYER
HANDOUTSDEBRIEFING
LOG

through the tunnels, they will not emerge into the battle itself. Should this happen, they will receive a call from Juan requesting backup downtown.

It is important to note, that this particular scene will have heavy expenditure of Edge on all sides. Remember, the Queen spirit has Edge, and is will-

ing to use it and burn it to not be torn down in one shot.

The team may not see an alternative but to flee the combat. If they do, drop hints that the tank is still operational, though heavily damaged. It could be used for cover as well as its weapons.

COVER

LAST STAND

INTRODUCTION

MISSION SYNOPSIS

SCENE 1

SCENE 2

SCENE 3

SCENE 4

SCENE 5

SCENE 6

SCENE 7

PICKING UP THE PIECES

LEGWORK

CAST OF SHADOWS

PLAYER HANDOUTS

DEBRIEFING LOG

ANT SOLDIER SPIRIT

(5+, FORCE 5)

B	A	R	S	W	L	I	C	EDG	ESS	M
8	6	6	8	5	5	5	5	2	5	5

Initiative: 13 + 2D6

Movement: 12

Condition Monitor: 12

Limits: Physical 10, Mental 7, Social 7

Armor: 12 (Immunity to Normal Weapons)

Skills: Assensing, Astral Combat, Counterspelling, Exotic Ranged Weapon, Gymnastics, Perception, Unarmed Combat

Powers: Animal Control (ants), Fear, Hive Mind, Immunity to Normal Weapons, Inhabitation (living vessels), Natural Weapon, Sapience

Weaknesses: Allergy (insecticides, light), Evanescence

Weapons:

Natural weapons (Unarmed, Acc 10, Reach —, DV 8P(acid), AP -1)

TERMITE SOLDIER SPIRIT

(6+, FORCE 5)

B	A	R	S	W	L	I	C	EDG	ESS	M
8	6	6	8	5	5	5	5	2	5	5

Initiative: 13 + 2D6

Movement: 12

Condition Monitor: 12

Limits: Physical 10, Mental 7, Social 7

Armor: 12 (Immunity to Normal Weapons)

Skills: Assensing, Astral Combat, Counterspelling, Exotic Ranged Weapon, Gymnastics, Perception, Unarmed Combat

Powers: Animal Control (termites), Fear, Hive Mind, Immunity to Normal Weapons, Inhabitation (living vessels), Natural Weapon (Claws; DV 8P AP-1), Reinforcement, Sapience

Weaknesses: Allergy (insecticides, light), Evanescence

Weapons:

Natural weapons (Unarmed, Acc 10, Reach —, DV 8P, AP -1)

UCAS ARMY SOLDIER

(10, HUMAN MALES AND FEMALES, PROFESSIONAL RATING 4)

B	A	R	S	W	L	I	C	ESS
4	4	4	4	3	3	3	3	6

Initiative: 7 + 1D6

Condition Monitor: 10

Limits: Physical 5, Mental 4, Social 5

Armor: 18

Skills: Athletics skill group 5, Close Combat skill group 5, Firearms skill group 5, Perception 4

Gear: Full body armor with helmet [w/ chemical seal], goggles [Rating 3 w/ low-light vision, flare compensation, smartlink], Hermes Ikon commlink [Device Rating 5]

Weapons:

Colt M23 [Assault Rifle, Acc 4, DV 9P, AP -2, SA/BF/FA, RC —, 40(c), w/ smartlink, 40 rounds of regular ammo]
 Combat knife [Blades, Acc 6, Reach 0, DV 6P, AP -3]

WRECKED AZTECHNOLOGY LOBO

HAND	SPEED	ACCEL	BODY	ARM	PILOT	SENS	SEATS
N/A	N/A	N/A	20	18	N/A	N/A	N/A

Upgrades: N/A

Programs: N/A

Weapons:

Relampago Railgun [Railgun, Acc 10, DV 18P, AP -half, SS, RC —, 2(ammunition)]



Scene 7:

FALLOUT

SCAN THIS

The team must deal with the consequences of their actions, be they skipping town at the request of Dr. Tate, failing to recover or destroy the artifact, fleeing the battle with the queen, or coming out on top.

TELL IT TO THEM STRAIGHT

IF THE TEAM TOOK TATE'S OFFER IN SCENE 4:

The warm sun hanging in the afternoon briefly grabs your attention from the poolside bar. It's been just over a week since you left Chicago and settled into a luxury hotel while you wait to get paid for being on vacation. The booze has been flowing freely, and your team has been living it up.

A hushed gasp goes up in the bar, and the trid screen are quickly overridden with a news report.

"... exactly is happening. What we know is that heavy fighting has been reported in Chicago between UCAS military forces, the National Guard, and an unknown insurgent party using insect-like creatures as troops. At 11:36 a.m. today, approximately thirty minutes ago, a greenish fog has enveloped the city, creating some sort of barrier no vehicle can pass through. All contact with forces and citizens inside the fog has been severed. Authorities are struggling to re-establish communications with those inside as quickly as possible..."

Three days later, airstrikes begin. Bombers flying high above the city drop their heavy payloads on what was once their own soil. Orbital weapons are brought to bear, but nothing seems to pierce the mist. Chicago is lost, and for some reason, Tate still hasn't contacted you or released your pay.

IF THE TEAM SURVIVED AND WAS PARTIALLY SUCCESSFUL (DESTROYING THE ENTOMO KLITEVO BUT NOT THE QUEEN OR VICE VERSA):

Juan Xihuitl sighs heavily, his eyes tired from the entire ordeal that is Chicago.

"Here's the money we agreed upon. Unfortunately for us, it didn't work. I received word the UCAS government is going forward with the Ripley Initiative. Apparently, there was more to the issue than what you were able to figure out. You aren't bug experts, I understand, but we did the best we could. Best I can do for you now is offer to get you and yours out of town."

Juan is good to his word and puts you on a chopper, depositing you in Cleveland. Most of your gear is back in Chicago, especially anything heavy. Holding up in a crappy hotel, the urban brawl game suddenly is interrupted by a special report. Heavy fighting has been reported in Chicago between UCAS military forces and an unknown insurgent force using insectoid creatures as troops. At this point, Chicago has been quarantined, and no one has been allowed to leave.

Three days later, airstrikes begin. Bombers flying high above the city drop their heavy payloads on what was once their own soil. Orbital weapons are brought to bear as well, inflicting devastation on Chicago never seen before. It doesn't stop there, though. Twenty-four hours later, three high-yield nuclear weapons are detonated in Chicago. Hundreds of thousands of people are incinerated in the blasts, but the bugs are vaporized in kind, and what was once the Windy City is blasted glass on the lake. Guess there really was no going back.

IF THE TEAM WAS SUCCESSFUL IN DESTROYING BOTH THE ENTOMO KLITEVO AND THE QUEEN SPIRIT:

Juan leans back in his chair and breathes a sigh of relief.

"Hopefully, this will be enough to turn the tables. The hives are exposed, and the ley lines

COVER

LAST STAND

INTRODUCTION

MISSION
SYNOPSIS

SCENE 1

SCENE 2

SCENE 3

SCENE 4

SCENE 5

SCENE 6

SCENE 7

PICKING UP
THE PIECES

LEGWORK

CAST OF
SHADOWS

PLAYER
HANDOUTS

DEBRIEFING
LOG



under the city are returning to normal. Thanks to you, this city will see another week. UCAS, Ares, and Aztechnology mop-up crews are working to kill the rest of the bugs—at least the ones we know the location of. Here's your payment. Look me up if you need work. I get the feeling we'll be operating in the area for some time. If you ever figure you need it, we can always use more dedicated teams."

Taking the money, you can only imagine what the stakes were, and if Juan was telling the truth. Would they really nuke Chicago ... again? Not that it mattered, really—you still got paid, and the Exterminators are playing the Mountain Dragons tonight in round one of the urban brawl playoffs.

BEHIND THE SCENES

This scene represents the ultimate end of Chicago. Depending on how well the runners performed, the city may be a new haven for bug spirits, recovering from a big fight, or blasted to oblivion.

If the team takes Tate's offer, the bugs have established a foothold in the material plane and have brought forth many more using the Entomo Klitevo. Led by the highly powered wasp queen spirit, the bugs create a magical barrier not unlike the one surrounding the Tibetan Plateau. Using their considerable magical abilities, the bugs repel the UCAS forces and attempt to retake the city, inhabiting anyone who was left behind except for in small pockets of resistance, which are crushed when discovered. The runner team is vilified by media outlets as Aztechnology brings its considerable PR to bear, pointing the finger at treacherous collaborators.

Should only the Entomo Klitevo be destroyed, or only the queen destroyed and the artifact intact, the victory is tangible, but only partial. The bugs' strength is temporarily broken, but they return in force as their numbers are replenished more quickly than the UCAS can mobilize troops. The decision is made to go forward with the Ripley Initiative, and within days, a full nuclear strike levels the city, collapsing the bug tunnels and incinerating bug and citizen alike. Protests against nuking Chicago begin, and political pressure eventually causes a referendum on the presidential administration. Aztechnology lets the blame land squarely on the UCAS government, supporting refugees while covering up its own involvement. Other corporations likewise condemn the actions, garnering more support for them against the government.

Lastly, if the team is successful on all fronts, the city remains intact, and the fighting is contained to down-

town and the old CZ. Once the queen spirit is destroyed, it breaks the back of the insect force, allowing corporate and UCAS forces to mop up the other insect spirits. Aztechnology and Saeder-Krupp are swift to take credit for spearheading the efforts to eradicate the insect spirits, letting word of the Ripley Initiative leak to the public. Outrage over the government looking to nuke the city sparks support for the corporations and protests against the current government. For the runners' part, business goes back to more or less usual.

PUSHING THE ENVELOPE

There is no need to push the envelope here

DEBUGGING

If, for some reason, the team voluntarily abandoned the run and stayed in town or stayed in town after only completing one of the objectives, their lives are pitifully short, as the Ripley Initiative takes places and destroys the city, including the runners.

Tate never pays the runners either way. In one scenario, the bugs win, and he no longer needs them. In another, Tate is dead due to a superheated nuclear shower.

PICKING UP THE PIECES

MONEY

- 15,000¥ + 1,000¥ per net hit up to 20,000¥

KARMA

- 2 Karma - Destroying the wasp queen
- 2 Karma - Destroying the Entomo Klitevo
- 2 Karma - Surviving the adventure
- 3 Karma - Overall adventure challenge based on highest opposing dice pool/6, rounded down.
- -2 Karma - Taking Tate's offer and leaving town

GAMEMASTER REWARD

When running this adventure, you may choose to count the Missions as "played" for your personal *Shadowrun Missions* character. You must choose to do this the first time your run this Mission only, and take the optional results to match those the team you game-mastered for earned. You may not choose to wait for a "better" attempt to choose your rewards. You're on the honor system here, so please don't skew the adventure

COVER

LAST STAND

INTRODUCTION

MISSION SYNOPSIS

SCENE 1

SCENE 2

SCENE 3

SCENE 4

SCENE 5

SCENE 6

SCENE 7

PICKING UP THE PIECES

LEGWORK

CAST OF SHADOWS

PLAYER HANDOUTS

DEBRIEFING LOG



to help the players gain extra rewards just so that you can get better results.

You will earn a flat amount of Karma and nuyen, regardless of how well (or poorly) the players do, listed below. For other missions' results and rewards that you track on the Debriefing Log (Objectives completed, reputation and contacts earned, etc.), take the average results of the group you're gamemastering for. So if four out of six players earned a point of Notoriety, you will earn one as well. If only two players out of five earn a +1 Loyalty with Simon, you would not get that +1 Loyalty.

- **Karma Earned:** 9 Karma
- **Nuyen Earned:** 17,000

REPUTATION

During the adventure, runners may perform actions that will add to their Street Cred, Notoriety, or Public Awareness (p. 372, SR5). Besides the scenario-specific gains listed below, gamemasters should consider the characters' actions throughout the game and award additional points as appropriate. If a player earns Public Awareness or Notoriety, don't be afraid to give them extra points.

- +1 Street Cred if the players publicly stop the Burrito Bandit
- +4 Street Cred if the team destroys both the Entomo Klitevo and the Queen Spirit
- +1 Notoriety for any player who uses Mind Control versus the Burrito Bandit
- +3 Notoriety if the team decides to take Tate's offer (Juan advertises their involvement)
- +1 Public Awareness if the team publicly stops the Burrito Bandit
- +3 Public Awareness if the team decides to take Tate's offer (Juan advertises their involvement)

CONTACTS

Successfully completing objectives or performing the actions listed below will earn characters specific Missions contacts at a Loyalty of 1, and should be given the **Contact Sheet** included with this Mission. If they already have that contact, they gain a +1 Loyalty to that contact (up to a maximum of 4).

Characters might interact with NPCs not specified by the Mission, and may earn these NPCs as a contact at Loyalty 1. They may also work with non-Mission specific contacts that they have already earned or that they bought at character creation, and gain a +1 Loyalty to these contacts, with a maximum Loyalty of 4. Gamemasters should not grant these lightly, and players should have to work to earn these contacts by going the extra mile to impress the NPC, offering up favors, or paying them well above the standard rates for information or services.

- +1 Loyalty with Juan Xihuitl if the team completes the run
- -4 Loyalty with Juan Xihuitl should the team take Tate's offer and leave town. If loyalty is reduced to zero, Juan is no longer a contact for that character.

LEGWORK

When a PC gets in touch with a contact, make an unopposed Connection + Connection Test for the contact. The results of this test determine how many ranks of information the contact knows about the question. If the relevance of the subject is a specialty of the contact, they get +3 to this test. The player then makes an unopposed Charisma + Etiquette + Loyalty Test, the results of which determine how many ranks of information the contact is willing to divulge for free, up to the max ranks of information they know. If the contact knows more, they will require a payment of 500¥ - (Loyalty x 100¥, minimum 100¥) per rank of information they still know.

If the PCs have worked all of their contacts and are still missing important information, they may request that a contact ask around. If they do so, have the Contact make an extended (Connection + Connection (1 hour)) Test. Additional information will be available at a cost of 1,000¥ - (Loyalty x 100¥, minimum 200¥).

A **Matrix Search** action (p. 241, SR5) may also be utilized to gather information from the following charts, using the appropriate thresholds and search times.

WRIGLEY DOME

Contacts to Ask: Squatter, Chicago Local, Conspiracy Theorists

Contacts	Matrix Search	Information
0	0	Frag off, I'm a Sox fan
1	1	It's where the Cubs used to play before they moved out of town
2	3	It supported a shanty town inside, ever since the days of the CZ, but I heard they got kicked out by the army.
3	—	The UCAS army moved in when they heard the place had a connection to the bug hives. Lots of activity there, and the security is pretty tight. All eyes seem to be on the tunnels below, though. They have already dealt with several attacks from the insect spirits using them. If you're

COVER

LAST STAND

INTRODUCTION

MISSION SYNOPSIS

SCENE 1

SCENE 2

SCENE 3

SCENE 4

SCENE 5

SCENE 6

SCENE 7

PICKING UP THE PIECES

LEGWORK

CAST OF SHADOWS

PLAYER HANDOUTS

DEBRIEFING LOG



looking to get in, stay topside if you want to stay in one piece.

- 4 6 There was some activity that involved many of the AAA corporations working together at Wrigley Dome, in the name of protecting profits.
- 5 — I heard they fished a few guys out of the tunnels after a failed incursion. It was bad, but what's worse, is the CIA has got an operative there working the survivors over for intelligence.

RIPLEY INITIATIVE

Contacts to Ask: Government Agents, Corporate Intelligence, Conspiracy Theorists

Contacts	Matrix Search	Information
0	0	Isn't that related to waste management?
1	1	Some sort of Government sponsored program relating to Chicago and the bugs.
2	3	Rumor has it, this is some kind of plan to deal with the bugs once and for all, backed by both the UCAS government and Ares.
3	—	They keep telling us this will help, but all I see is forces leaving the area. What are they going to do with the bugs, charge them rent?
4	6	Word on the street says this is a kind of final solution to the insect spirit problem. The kind of solution that ends with black glass and radiation, and will make Cermak look like a firecracker.
5	—	Looks like the CIA is pushing for the operation to go through. Anyone who is talking about the joint corporate strike team gets shut down, saying it was a failure, and I hear an active field agent is detaining anyone with intel about the bug hives.

JOINT CORPORATE STRIKE FORCE

Contacts to Ask: Company Man, Mr. Johnson,

Contacts	Matrix Search	Information
0	0	Lay off the novacoke, chummer.
1	1	I heard a bunch of assets were being moved to Chicago, but didn't know for what. Looks like Renraku, Mitsuhama, Ares, and Saeder-Krupp are all involved, and Aztechnology is coordinating.
2	3	The team went in just a few days ago and came out the same day. I haven't heard about any of the members.
4	6	The strike force plan took out a lot of bugs, but the plan didn't go as well as was hoped. Only a few made it out alive, and even now, they are being held at Wrigley Dome.
5	—	The team is missing. Any survivors have been detained by a CIA spook who is looking to make sure Ripley goes live.

COVER

LAST STAND

INTRODUCTION

MISSION SYNOPSIS

SCENE 1

SCENE 2

SCENE 3

SCENE 4

SCENE 5

SCENE 6

SCENE 7

PICKING UP THE PIECES

LEGWORK

CAST OF SHADOWS

PLAYER HANDOUTS

DEBRIEFING LOG



CAST OF SHADOWS DR. MARTIN TATE

JUAN XIHUITL

Juan Xihuitl (Pronounced like “She-Wheat”) is a Mr. Johnson for Aztechnology. Juan represents AZT’s interests in Chicago and is interested in using Project: Takeback to recover as many of AZT’s lost assets as possible, including Aztechnology’s lost Pyramid/Archology. He’s a very traditionalist corper, and smart runners tread lightly around him as he sees them as they are: deniable, disposable assets. He doesn’t play games, he doesn’t tolerate fools, and he doesn’t coddle shadowrunners.

Juan Xihuitl is very traditional and respects his Aztec heritage. He is a medium-size Hispanic troll with a large, flat nose, and small, curled ram’s horns. His hair is dark and worn long, slicked back, pulled into a ponytail. He has medium-sized Aztec-style ear plugs in his ears. His suit is the height of current Aztlan fashion, a marriage of traditional Aztec warrior garb and a modern-day suit.

B	A	R	S	W	L	I	C	EDG	ESS	M
7	3	3	7	5	4	4	4	5	6	8

Initiative: 7 + 1D6

Condition Monitor (P/S): 12/11

Limits: Physical 8, Mental 6, Social 8

Armor: 9(12)

Active Skills: Arcana 6, Assensing 6 (10), Blades 5, Computer 4, Con 5, Etiquette 5 (Corporate +2), First Aid 4, Leadership 4, Negotiation 8 (12), Perception 5 (9), Pistols 4, Unarmed 6

Knowledge Skills: Aztlaner Cuisine 5, Aztlaner Sports 4 (Ollamalitzli +2), Chicago Area 2, Corporate Finances 5, Corporate Rumors 6 (Aztechnology +2), Corporate Security 6 (Aztechnology +2), History 5 (Central American +2), Psychology 4

Languages: Aztlaner Spanish N, English 5, Japanese 3

Qualities: Adept

Initiate Grade: 2

Metamagics: Adept Centering (Chanting), Masking

Adept Powers: Astral Perception, Danger Sense 4, Enhanced Perception 4, Improved Ability 4 (Negotiation), Improved Potential (Social), Mystic Armor 3

Gear: Armor clothing, contacts [Rating 1 w/ image link], earbud [Rating 1 w/ sound link], Transys Avalon commlink [Device Rating 6]

Weapons:

Ares Light Fire 70 [Light Pistol, Acc 7, DV 6P, AP —, SA, RC —, 16(c), w/ 16 rounds of regular ammo]

Ceremonial Dagger [Blades, Acc 5, Reach 1, DV 9P, AP -1]

Dr. Martin Tate is working on behalf of Horizon, heading up their resurrection of the Truman Technologies name, utilizing the assets of that company that they purchased following Crash 2.0. He has set up several clinics around Chicago and the Zone, utilizing his medical prowess to help the residents in the area. He’s also acting as a Mr. Johnson for Truman Tech, working to claim former Truman assets in the city.

Tate is a friendly individual, though he often seems slightly distracted, as if he’s thinking about a dozen things at once. He wears a nice shirt, tie, and slacks under a white lab coat most of the time, and is always wearing a set of custom glasses that have several different lenses that he can flip down.

B	A	R	S	W	L	I	C	EDG	ESS
3	5	3	3	4	6	4	5	5	4.9

Initiative: 7 + 1D6

Condition Monitor (P/S): 10/10

Limits: Physical 4, Mental 10, Social 7

Armor: 6

Active Skills: Blades 4, Computer 5, Con 5, Cybertechnology 9, Etiquette 5, First Aid 7, Medicine 8, Negotiation 7, Perception 6

Knowledge Skills: Biology 7, Chemistry 5, Corporate Politics 4 (Horizon +2), Cyberware Design 3, Local Drug Dealers 4, Local Gangs 2, Medical Advances 5, Opera 4, Organleggers 4, Parabiology 6, Parobotany 5, Parazology 5, Psychology 4, Smugglers 3

Languages: English N, Spanish 3

Augmentations: Datajack, datalock 12, pathogenic defense 6, mnemonic enhancer 3

Gear: Armor clothing, DocWagon Platinum, tranq patches [Rating 10] (x10), stim patches [Rating 10] (x10), trauma patches (x10)

LU WENDAO

A geomancer working for Wuxing, Lu Wendao was selected to be part of the joint corporate strike team utilized to take out the insect hive under Chicago. Normally accustomed to much calmer areas, Lu Wendao is nonetheless a skilled magician and able to see subtle differences in ley lines. He successfully identified the problem with the ley lines under Chicago, and that an artifact was causing corruption in their flow, making it easier for insect spirits to come across from their plane.

Unfortunately for him, Lu Wendao’s group met a disastrous end. Hector Ramirez, the officer in charge and an Aztechnology Cuachiqueh was able to get Lu Wendao out before succumbing to his wounds.

COVER

LAST STAND

INTRODUCTION

MISSION SYNOPSIS

SCENE 1

SCENE 2

SCENE 3

SCENE 4

SCENE 5

SCENE 6

SCENE 7

PICKING UP THE PIECES

LEGWORK

CAST OF SHADOWS

PLAYER HANDOUTS

DEBRIEFING LOG



Lu Wendao is dressed in dark-colored fatigues and combat webbing, even though the rest of his gear has been stripped from him.

B	A	R	S	W	L	I	C	EDG	ESS	M
4	5	4	3	6	6	5	5	5	6	8

Initiative: 10 + 1D6

Condition Monitor: 10/11

Limits: Physical 5, Mental 8, Social 8

Armor: None

Active Skills: Arcana 5, Assensing 6, Automatics 4, Conjuring skill group 5, Perception 6, Ritual Spellcasting 8, Spellcasting 6, Unarmed Combat 4

Knowledge Skills: Feng Shui 8, Wuxia Magical Theory 7, Magical Threats 5

Languages: Cantonese N, English 4, Mandarin Chinese 5

Initiate Grade: 2

Metamagics: Geomancy, Divination

Gear: None

Spells: Astral Window, Fireball, Heal, Mana Barrier, Physical Barrier, Stunbolt

Weapons:

Unarmed strike [Unarmed, Acc 5, Reach 0, DV 3S, AP -0]

DRAGON WASP QUEEN

(FORCE 10 WASP QUEEN SPIRIT)

Until recently, this was Aethelinda, an adult Western Dragon. It was originally captured by a malicious vampire insect shaman and was being prepared for inhabitation when a team of runners killed the shaman and freed the dragon. Too weak to escape on her own, the team called Dr. Martin Tate to help examine and take

care of the dragon. Dr. Tate subsequently turned the weakened creature over to another hive on insect spirits in need of a queen. Unfortunately for Aethelinda, there was no team to save her from what she became.

A horrible amalgamation of dragon and wasp spirit, this queen spirit is newly Awakened, with the help of ley lines under Chicago that were corrupted using an artifact last seen in Seattle. Though most of the magical capabilities of the dragon have been consumed in the inhabitation process, it still retains its considerable physical prowess. The fiery breath has been corrupted into a noxious acid, and the claws and stinger can deliver a deadly venom.

B	A	R	S	W	L	I	C	EDG	ESS	M
18	7	8	40	11	11	11	10	5	10	10

Initiative: 25 + 2D6

Condition Monitor (P/S): 17/14

Limits: Physical 36, Mental 14, Social 14

Armor: (Physical/Immunity to Normal Weapons) 18H/20 (These stack, for a total of 38 vs. normal weapons)

Active Skills: Assensing, Astral Combat, Con, Counterspelling, Exotic Ranged Weapon, Flight, Gymnastics, Leadership, Negotiation, Perception, Spellcasting, Unarmed Combat

Powers: Animal Control (wasps), Astral Gateway, Banishing Resistance, Compulsion, Concealment, Enhanced Senses (ultrasound), Fear, Guard, Hive Mind, Sapience, Search, Spirit Pact, Venom, Wealth

Weaknesses: Allergy (insecticides, severe)

Weapons:

Elemental Attack (Acid) [Exotic Ranged, Acc 36, DV 20P, AP -10]

Claws/stinger [Unarmed, Acc 36, Reach +3, DV 41P, AP —, with venom]

COVER

LAST STAND

INTRODUCTION

MISSION SYNOPSIS

SCENE 1

SCENE 2

SCENE 3

SCENE 4

SCENE 5

SCENE 6

SCENE 7

PICKING UP THE PIECES

LEGWORK

CAST OF SHADOWS

PLAYER HANDOUTS

DEBRIEFING LOG





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JUAN XIHUITL

Aztechnology Mr. Johnson
Male Troll

Connection Rating: 5

Loyalty:

Key Active Skills: Etiquette, Leadership, Negotiation

Knowledge Skills: Aztlaner Cuisine, Aztlaner Sports (ollamaliztli), Chicago Area, Corporate Finances, Corporate Rumors (Aztechnology), Corporate Security (Aztechnology), History (Central American), Psychology

Uses: Jobs, Corporate Information, Gear



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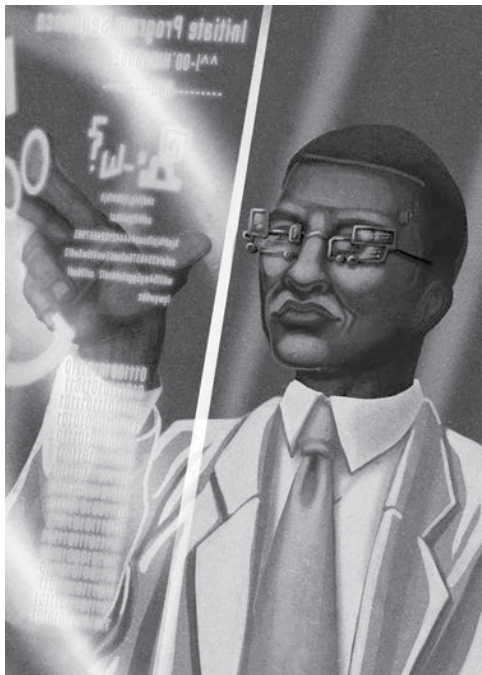
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Dr. Martin Tate is working on behalf of Horizon, heading up their resurrection of the Truman Technologies name, utilizing the assets of that company that they purchased following Crash 2.0. He has set up several clinics around Chicago and the Zone, utilizing his medical prowess to help the residents in the area. He's also acting as a Mr. Johnson for Truman Tech, working to claim former Truman assets in the city.

DR. MARTIN TATE

Horizon/Truman Tech Dr. Johnson
Male Human

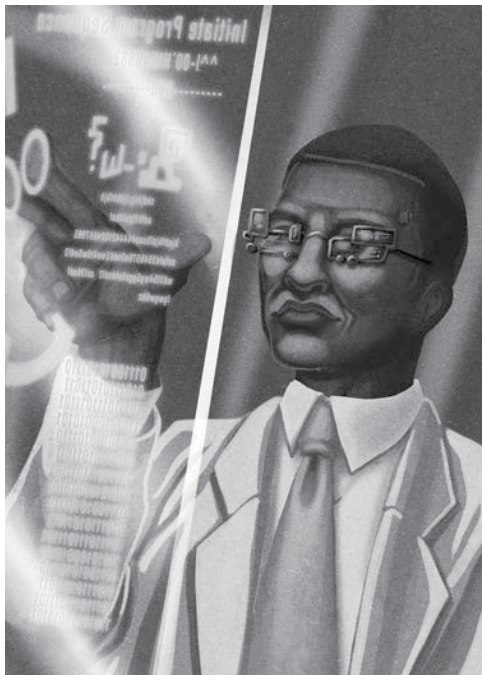
Connection Rating: 5

Loyalty:

Key Active Skills: Biotech Group, Etiquette, Negotiation

Knowledge Skills: Biology, Chemistry, Corporate Politics (Horizon), Cyberware Design, Local Drug Dealers, Local Gangs, Medical Advances, Opera, Organleggers, Psychology, Smugglers

Uses: Cyber and Bio, Information, Jobs



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DR. MARTIN TATE

Horizon/Truman Tech Dr. Johnson
Male Human

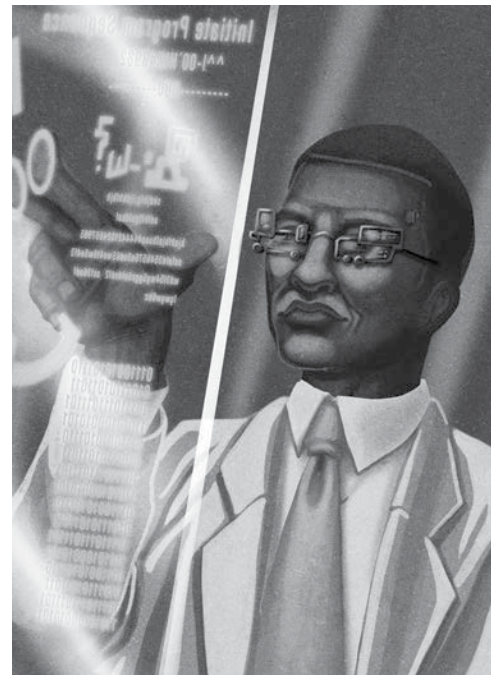
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Horizon/Truman Tech Dr. Johnson
Male Human

Connection Rating: 5

Loyalty:

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Knowledge Skills: Biology, Chemistry, Corporate Politics (Horizon), Cyberware Design, Local Drug Dealers, Local Gangs, Medical Advances, Opera, Organleggers, Psychology, Smugglers

Uses: Cyber and Bio, Information, Jobs

DEBRIEFING LOG



PLAYER _____ DATE / /

CHARACTER _____ LOCATION _____

PERSONAL INFO

SRM 08-06: FINAL COUNTDOWN

The Joint Corporate Strike Force has failed, but there still may be a window to end the bug threat to Chicago, once and for all.

- Extracted Lu Wendao Successfully
- Retrieved Navigational Data
- Took Tate's offer and skipped town
- Destroyed the Entomo Klitevo
- Destroyed the Queen Insect Spirit

SYNOPSIS

MISSION RESULTS

Names

Character Improvement

Karma Cost

TEAM MEMBERS

ADVANCEMENT

Previous Available _____
 Earned _____
 Spent _____
 Remaining Available _____
 New Career Total _____

Street Cred _____
 Notoriety _____
 Public Awareness _____

Juan Xihuitl

KARMA

REPUTATION

Previous Available _____ ¥
 Earned _____ ¥
 Spent _____ ¥
 Remaining _____ ¥

GM's Name _____
 GM's Signature _____

NUYEN

VALIDATION

CONTACTS/SPECIAL ITEMS GAINED OR LOST/NOTES

DEBRIEFING LOG

