

The Round Square

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By "Swashbuckling" Sam 2402

Ahoy! The marvelous Captain Chaos sent me on a quest to investigate a new data haven that appeared on the horizon not too long ago. Against all odds, I have returned, despite merciless perils and great dangers that could not stop me reporting my findings! I present my booty to you, dear reader, so that you may know the secrets of the Round Square.

History

Our story begins with a pirate decker known as Double Take. Back in the heyday of 2058, ol' DT found himself in a lucrative financial position and used it to seize control of a off-shore bank called Banco Sin Fronteras that was sliding into the waves. The bank hadn't been able to keep up with the times, but with DT at the helm it began to reap profits through its anonymous virtual services and accounts.

- > Nothing hauls in the nuyen like a blind, money-laundering, tax haven.
- > The Chromed Accountant

It just so happens that DT had a fine Matrix system at his disposal that was not being used to its full potential, so he decided to fill it up. First he rang up some old pirate chums-the media pirate kind. He offered them free networking services and storage space, in return for permission to archive and market their material. As his hosts expanded into a den of pirate tridfeeds, DT made some key purchases and developed a fine archive of general paydata. As word got out, every corsair in the Caribbean checked into the place, and our own little homegrown data haven began packing in icons like sardines.

- > I hear that Double Take scored a data core liberated from a Fuchi Internal Security installation during the corp war. The paydata in those databanks was the coup that pushed the Round Square into the spotlight.
- > Gray

- > You don't say. What dashing scoundrel pulled that job off?
- > The Gingerbread Man

As 2060 rolled around, DT's future was looking good. Then-poof!-he was gone. Before you could say "mutiny," DT was dead and gone, and a new force was running the show. The new owners relocated the hardware and expanded the system and run it to this day.

Meet The New Boss

The new captains of the Round Square are a pair known as Mills and Siren. Siren's a rigger-turned-decker who built a solid rep as local talent for more than five years before hooking up as DT's sidekick. After a few too many near-death experiences in the shadows, she's now taking on the brunt of the Round Square's programming needs.

Ethan Mills was heading a tough little pirate crew called the Die Harts, based out of Guadalupe, before joining up with Siren. Originally he hails from Denver; word is he took to piracy to avoid some heat in the mountain zone. Mills is a mage, though he refers to himself as a technomancer because he sidelines with computer work.

- > Isn't that taking the worst of both worlds?
- > Jacques
- > Say that again after you've caught one of his "fireball" attack progs.
- > Lance McLane

Mills and Siren are technically partners, but Mills is the data haven's public voice. More than Siren, he seems to be the visionary steering the data haven down a certain course. Siren seems to be along for the ride-or else she's really good at hiding her influence.

- > Siren was DT's domestic partner and helped set up the Square from day one. They had a falling out, and Siren called in Mills to help take DT out. Mills' pirate crew hit the Square's physical locale (St. Eustasius, I hear) and stole everything that used electricity. I'm not sure where they've resettled, though I've heard some rumors about the Lesser Antilles.
- > Dipper
- > DT survived and he's pissed. I hear he's tried to crash the Square several times, without any luck. Last I heard, he was hiring runners to track down the haven's physical site and trash it good.
- > Cold Soup

What's To Know

If you ask around the seaports and shantietowns, you'll hear that the way to access the Round Square is through Banco Sin Fronteras' public host. Scuttlebutt sez that you need to look for a vanishing SAN or maybe a trapdoor. But the BSF host story is a ruse, used for nothing other than legit virtual transactions. The real way to find the Round Square is to find a small, unassuming UMS icon buried away in the depths of the Virgin Islands grid. This icon gets moved around now and again, and its new address is spread via word of mouth. If you don't know someone who knows someone, it's unlikely you'll find the system unless you stumble across it by accident.

The Round Square consists of about ten interconnected hosts, all with a very cliché Escher-esque theme of staircases on the ceiling, doors in the floors and all that drek. Thank the waves there's no up or down in the Matrix, is all I'll say about it. The haven's in a stage of constant development, so security ratings fluctuate from host to host. Most of the defenses are aimed to kick people out instead of hurt them.

- > There are several backdoors in the system, put in by Double Take, which Siren and Mills haven't discovered yet.
- > Anonymous

The Round Square focuses on pirate media. Almost every trid pirate with a Matrix connection archives his material in the Square. Aside from the old news, you can

access real-time feeds of banned bloodsports, sample the wares of the copyright-violation crews or even participate in a live broadcast of some of the Carib's home-grown pirate stations. If its banned somewhere, odds are you'll find it in the Square.

> The Square has an entire host dedicated to paydata purloined from mainstream news sources. The bulk of it has been compiled by an otaku crew called the Seekers, who seem to have NewsNet's archives wrapped around their fingers. A lot of the media pirates sift through the files for choice samples or leads to new stories.

> News Junkie

> Can anyone tell me why the Square has terapulses of footage shot by KSAF out of Seattle? Most of it unused?

> Smudge

Aside from that, the Square deals with any other data that's profitable. If it can't be fished out of another haven, troll through the Square. You may get lucky and hook something good.

> Given its locale, a lot of the Square's data relates to pirate activity-the "sail-the-seas-loot-and-pillage brand of piracy, that is. Aside from rubbing virtual shoulders with real life corsairs, you'll find good intel on shipping routes and schedules and even the occasional cargo manifest.

> Smiley

> The Round Square also has a good selection of magical lore, mostly compiled by the various voodoo-nistas of the region. The reference material on Carib talismongering and talislegging is priceless.

> Eldritch

The Round Square Rules

The Round Square is the perfect data haven for a Caribbean or cyberpirate campaign. Run by pirates for pirates, it specializes in anything that's banned, pirated, or otherwise made illegal in some place or another. There's a large section on shipping and smuggling, as well as magical lore for the Caribbean and news from across the globe.

The Square's hosts security ratings fluctuate from host to host due to constant development. Most of the security uses non-lethal means, sticking primarily to grey IC. Quite a bit of the available data and programming space is devoted to pirate broadcasts, both archiving and supporting them. There are illegally broadcasting trid stations throughout the Caribbean, and nearly all of them archive their material at the Square. The Square also seems to attract other obscure bits of data through it's connections with other data havens. It is not as thorough about removing old data as some of the other data havens, however, so there's always the chance to glean some rare tidbit from its files.