

SHADOWRUN

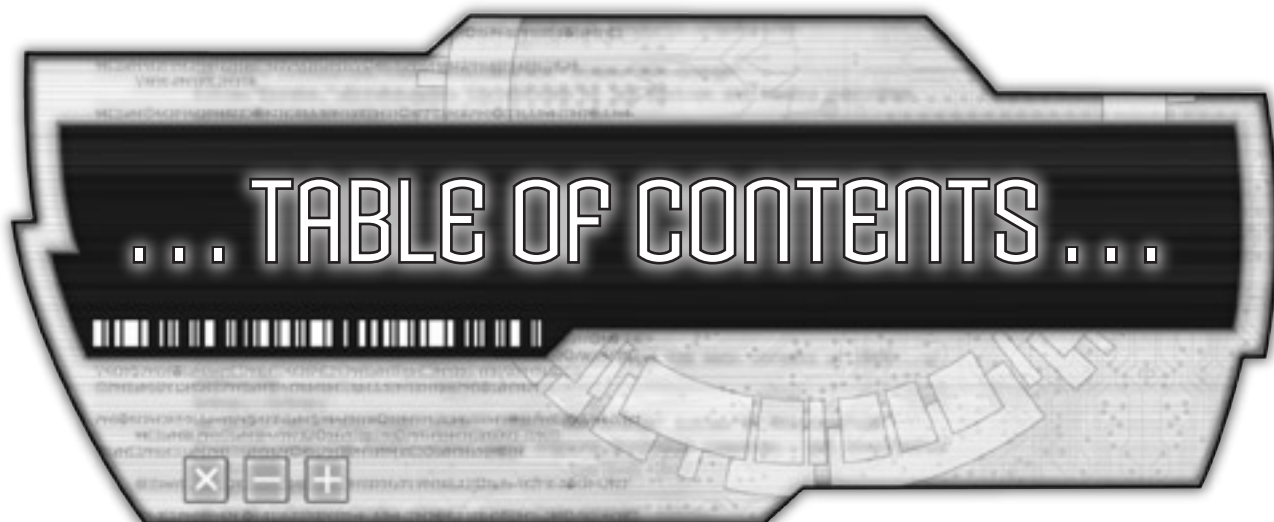
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WK
GAMES

FANPRO



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Connecting Jackpoint VPN ...
... Matrix Access ID Spoofed.
... Encryption Keys Generated.
... Connected to Onion Routers.
> Login

> Enter Passcode

... Biometric Scan Confirmed.
Connected to <ERROR: NODE UNKNOWN>
"It is impossible to make anything foolproof because fools are so ingenious."

JackPoint Stats

46 users currently active
in the network

Latest News

- * <sticky> This private p2p MoSoSo network is still in beta-test, so pardon the mess and report any glitches to me. - FastJack
- * <020270> The bug in the reputation subsystem has been fixed. If your score's still low, it's not the software; you're just an ass. - FastJack

Personal Alerts

- * You have 3 new private [messages](#)
- * You have 1 new re-routed, anonymized, sanitized message from "Mr. Johnson"
- * You have 2 new [responses](#) to your Jackpoint posts
- * [Netcat](#) has increased your [Rep](#) by +1
- * Lone Star has issued an [Arrest Warrant](#) for one of your [SINs](#)
- * 2 outstanding [job offers](#) meet your search agent's [parameters](#)

First Degree

[Netcat](#) and [Haze](#) are online and in your area

Your Current Rep Score: 33
(96% Positive)

Current Time: Feb 3 2070, 0403

PREFERENCES

FEEDS

TASKS

LINKS

HISTORY

Welcome back to Jackpoint, omae; your last connection was severed: 13 hours, 5 minutes, 23 seconds ago

Today's Heads Up

Scan the [Runner Havens](#) tag for an interesting assortment of posts relating to the type of sprawl we all like to crawl. The reviews of Seattle and Hong Kong are generating high feedback ratings, but they aren't the only scum-infested hives of villainy to deserve the name. [\[Link\]](#) [\[Guests\]](#)

Incoming

- * Think you know everything about magic? Ethernaut's dug up a few items that may surprise you. [Tag: [Street Magic](#)]
- * Clockwork and Picador are scraping together some fun facts on the latest guns, toys, and vehicles. [Tag: [Arsenal](#)]
- * Just back from a working vacation in a nice, quiet, secure, gated community? Review your fave biz zones here. [Tag: [Corporate Enclaves](#)]

Top News Items

- * The Corporate Court has indicted the board of A-rated Mikrolens corp on multiple espionage violations. Mikrolens officials blame a disgruntled employee for publicly revealing internal documents, despite being unable to produce a datatrail or proof to back up hacking charges. [Link.](#)
- * JetBlack sighted again in Seattle. Creepy angst-rockers never die, they just need less make-up. [Link.](#)
- * Salish-Shidhe authorities found an abandoned boat adrift in the Sound containing the corpses of 32 Russian and Vietnamese women who died of thirst while locked in the hold. Authorities believe the women were being smuggled into Seattle to serve in prostitution rings. [Link.](#)
- * Lone Star is denying the use of excessive force while arresting two ork men in Bellevue. Privately-taped footage shows police officers kicking the men into unconsciousness after they were tasered and cuffed; the officers claim they acted in self-defense and that the men resisted arrest. Both men remain in critical condition with serious head injuries. [Link.](#)

CHAT

MESSAGES

FILES

POSTS

NEHUS

SEARCH

Runner Havens

Invited Guests

Lei Kung Money Lee Stone
Moji Snow Tiger Umsturz

Posts/Files tagged with "Runner Havens":

- * Hong Kong
 - * Seattle
 - * Cities on the Edge
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CONTINUE

ADVANCED
SEARCH

SAVE



Hong Kong was in constant motion, even at this late hour. The illuminated golden skin of the Splendid Dragon Path wove its way up the side of Victoria Peak, carrying wageslaves drunk on Chinese beer back to their hillside enclaves. Lit ferries slid back and forth across the dark harbor underneath gaudy advertising blimps scrolling with a mix of Chinese and English characters. Only minutes ago, a suborbital super-jet roared across the night sky on its way around the globe. Hong Kong never stopped moving.

Tonight would be Ma'fan's fortunate night. It was the eighth night of the ninth month of the year of the Tiger, an auspicious sign of prosperity and good luck. Ma'fan hoped she wouldn't need it as she rappelled silently down the side of the Ikon Tower, but she wasn't going to turn down a little divine favor.

The surface of the building crawled digitally in front of her, swirling in a miasma of light that her ruthenium-fiber adaptive camouflage wasn't able to keep up with. Fortunately, the residents of Hong Kong were too absorbed in their own lives to notice the small blemish that had appeared on the five-story face of Chu May, the latest East-West amalgam sim-star smiling widely from the skin of the Ikon Tower down onto the scurrying people below.

Ma'fan attached a suction arm to the window in front of her as it danced with color, and she surrounded the area with an inert chemstrip. When she pressed the button and juice flowed into the strip, the activated chemical would burn straight through the glass, which she'd then quietly remove using the suction arm. The whole skin of the building was wired with sensors tied into the building's spider, or security rigger, who would feel the removal of even this tiny section of glass as if Ma'fan was stabbing him with a needle. She waited, hanging fifty stories up like an ascending Buddha in a black catsuit, for the next part of her plan to come to fruition before activating the strip.

Ma'fan's augmented reality display chimed quietly in her ears and windows blossomed opened, casting images of the street below into her view. Perfectly timed, the flash mob of young political dissidents had assembled on the street below, a sudden gathering of 9x9 members protesting the corporate-owned government of Hong Kong. A number of the protesters thrust their arms into the air in a motion that seemed like a rallying cheer, but Ma'fan's cameras tracked the motion of the hand grenades as they flew towards the ground-floor lobby.

With a simple motion, Ma'fan activated the chemstrip as a half-dozen sharp explosions rocked the lobby, the grenades delivering a jolt to the security rigger that masked her illegal entry. Allowing herself a tiny smile, Ma'fan turned on her adaptive camouflage and slid into the fiftieth-story office. Tonight was fortunate indeed.

TIMELINE: HONG KONG

2015—Hong Kong declares independence from China in reaction to communist crackdowns. British diplomats stall a Chinese retaliation while corporate backers secure control of the new free city.

2017—Wu Kuan-Lai, founder and CEO of Wuxing, Inc., builds his new corporate headquarters at a carefully picked location in Aberdeen.

2019—The Red Dragon Association quickly becomes the most powerful Triad in Hong Kong, with the great dragon Lung at its head.

2025 to 2029—The first major wave of Asian refugees flood into a neutral and prosperous Hong Kong following the Republic Civil War in China and the failed Nationalist Revolution in the Philippines.

2039—Wu Kuan-Lai passes away and leaves control of the corporation to his son, Wu Lung-Wei.

2044—The Nationalist War between the Canton Confederation and Taiwan results in a second major wave of refugees who settle in Hong Kong.

2057—The Wu family and Wuxing, Inc. receive a number of valuable bequests from the will of the late dragon Dunkelzahn.

2059—Wu Lung-Wei completes his father's dream and forms the Pacific Prosperity Group, a pan-corporate trade organization designed to combat Japanese economic control of Asia.

2061—Astral space becomes visible to mundanes around the Wuxing Skytower in Aberdeen.

2062 to 2063—A violent Triad war breaks out between the Red Dragon Association and its main rival, the Yellow Lotus Triad, resulting in the destruction of the latter syndicate.

2064—In the wake of Crash 2.0, Government reforms change the process of determining Hong Kong's government.

2068—The pro-democratic and anti-corporate organization 9x9 first appears in Hong Kong.

WELCOME TO THE EAST

Posted by: Lei Kung

Despite what some runners think, Seattle isn't the center of the universe. Spin the globe around a half-tick and you will find that in the East, Hong Kong is where the action is. Eight million souls are packed into the world's busiest *entrepôt*, a supermodern city that exists entirely to move people, goods, and digital transactions from one point to the next. Nearly one-fifth of Hong Kong's population is transient, spending at least half the year outside of the city, but the sprawl's population hardly changes as new, temporary blood flows in to conduct business on a constant cycle. And while extraterritoriality might seem

distinctly twenty-first century to cities like Seattle, Hong Kong invented the concept in 1842, when it became an extraterritorial British colony. But we grew bored of being a trophy city for Britain and China, so in 2015 the city struck out on its own, becoming the Hong Kong Free Enterprise Zone.

- A lot of good that did us. Instead of being ruled by a nation, now we're owned by the corporations.
- Ma'fan

THE PRICE OF SUCCESS

It takes only two minutes on a Hong Kong street to learn that everything has a high price, even prosperity. The rise of the Japanese Imperial State created a huge regional demand for cheap manufacturing, and as China imploded and Southeast Asia erupted in war, Hong Kong found itself primed to thrive. It became an island of wealth and stability in an otherwise chaotic Asia—and as a result became the chief destination for desperate refugees fleeing from the horrors of Chinese warlords and the Japanese oppression of the Philippines.

At first, Hong Kong welcomed these new immigrants as they became the cheap labor that fueled the city's manufacturing base. As the refugees kept pouring in and the demand for manufacturing waned, though, Asia's poor and tired masses overwhelmed Hong Kong's already-sparse social safety net. When it reached the point where the corporate Board of Governors might actually have to face the problem, they instead simply turned their backs on the new slums of the unemployed.

Today, the voices of the second-generation downtrodden are getting louder as urban hellholes like Kowloon get deadlier. The Executive Council is finally talking about the problem, but only after groups like 9x9 started firebombing corporate buildings and demanding true representation. The whole situation is getting very edgy, with council members reaching for their private security forces rather than their budgets. Capitalism continues largely unimpeded, but it's only a matter of time before something ugly happens.

LAY OF THE LAND

Hong Kong is built on rugged, mountainous land that the original British traders bemoaned as too difficult to develop on to be worthwhile. The industrious and persistent locals, however, have carved a massive sprawl out of the rock clinging to the edges of the sea. Whenever they run out of room, they just carve the rock back more or claim some extra waterfront with landfills.

The climate is equally dynamic in Hong Kong; since the city lies in a subtropical zone, it doesn't get four seasons like Seattle does. It gets two: the rainy season and the dry season. From about March to September, Hong Kong suffers the punishment of the southwest monsoon, which makes it hot, humid, and rainy. There's also the occasional fun super-typhoon crashing into the city. During October to February (roughly), though, the winds change to the northeast monsoon, which is relatively cool and dry. I say relatively because compared to Seattle, it will always be hot and humid in Hong Kong, but it's actually bearable during the dry season.



- Unfortunately for us, the shadow business picks up during the rainy season, since it's often easier to pull off jobs when the weather is miserable. The insufferable heat and humidity makes guards less alert and limits them more to working in the climate-controlled indoors. Not to mention the wet, heavy air is equally punishing on electronic security and devices.

- Picador

WHAT EVERY GWAILO SHOULD KNOW

I guess the first thing every *gwailo* should know is what a “gwailo” is. If you're reading this document, there's a good chance you are a gwailo. It translates to “ghost man” or “white devil” and was once a derogatory term for foreigners, particularly Caucasians. These days, it has lost most of its value as an insult and is casually used to refer to non-natives, even among the non-natives themselves.

- In Hong Kong, metahumans are more welcome than foreigners. Which isn't to say that they won't deal with foreigners; being a port for hundreds of years, they've gotten used to their existence. But they'll always feel more comfortable around a Hong Kong troll than they will around a human from Seattle.

- Jimmy No

Superstition

Superstition permeates Hong Kong life, even among jaded corporate executives and Western expatriates. Chinese numerology is especially important; numbers that sound like lucky words are extremely valuable while numbers that sound like unlucky words are universally avoided. For example, you'll be hard-pressed to find buildings in Hong Kong that have a fourth floor—most elevators skip from the third floor to the fifth. That's because the number four is considered extremely unlucky and no one in Hong Kong wants to test fate. The superstitions extend to the animal kingdom also. Native Hong Kong residents consider animals to embody certain qualities that can be transferred to a human who possesses or consumes parts of the animal. Businessmen consume powder made from the dried remains of tigers to enhance their aggressiveness in the corporate world, while old men use dried seahorses as a traditional medicine to cure baldness.

- The Triads are heavily involved in poaching and smuggling rings that transport these animal remains into Hong Kong. Unfortunately, the growing market for exotic animal parts in Hong Kong is straining the populations of these animals in their shrinking habitats. Profiteers in Azania have even resorted to creating clone farms, where these animals are cloned and raised in captivity explicitly for the purpose of harvesting their body parts for sale. Of course, they don't tell the Hongkongers that the parts came from clones; they would never buy into the mystical virility of a cloned tiger raised in a tiny cage.

- Money Lee

- I once heard that a Chinese oligarch in Hong Kong paid hundreds of thousands of nuyen for a small pouch of powder made

ÆTHERPEDIA SEARCH

Chinese Numerology

Commonly, numbers in Hong Kong are connected to Cantonese homonyms. Cantonese words can often sound nearly identical but have multiple meanings, and the words for numbers are no exception. In the case of numbers, however, the alternate meanings shape whether or not the number is lucky. For example, the word for two, “yi,” sounds the same as the word for “easy” in Cantonese. This number is considered lucky because things associated with the number two ensure that you won't have a difficult time. Four, however, sounds like the word for death and is avoided as much as possible. One is associated with unity, six with profit, seven with certainty, eight with prosperity, and nine with longevity. Numbers can be combined to mix the meanings or exaggerate them. For instance, the word for five sounds like the word for nothing or negative, so fifty-four could be interpreted as “not dying” and therefore becomes lucky, even with a four in it. Similarly, 888 is thrice-exaggerated prosperity, which indicates a great deal of prosperity.

from the dried genitals of an adult dragon. Rumor has it he was going to mix it with his morning tea to help his “performance problems” with the mistresses. He'd dismissed countless proven pharmaceutical or cybernetic cures for his problem but didn't think twice about dropping a small fortune for this tiny pouch of dragon dust. Given the source of the dust, though, I have to wonder if the poachers ever got to enjoy their money.

- Elijah

- This assumes he actually got what he paid for.

- Lyran

Qi

Hong Kong pulses with a vital, active energy. The Chinese call it *qi*, which everyone else mistakenly writes as *chi*. Since the Awakening, everyone tends to associate *qi* with spellslinging, but in Hong Kong, it's much, much more. It's the energy that flows through the city as the people move. It is the feng shui of masses of souls shoving down Temple Street or ferrying across Victoria Harbor. You can't help but feel it as you move with them, and it drives this city. The city worships it and builds temples to honor it in every curving, polished steel transportation hub or corporate glass-box skyscraper.

- Only in Hong Kong will you see corporate geomancers pulling down six- and seven-figure contracts for their urban planning advice.

- Ethernaut

- They aren't all corporate, though. Even the poorest neighborhoods often have at least one wise old man or woman who helps

the people of the area maintain good *qi*.

- Jimmy No

Hong Kong attributes much of its success as a city to its maintenance of positive *qi* energy. They claim it drives their capitalist attitudes and feeds their work ethic. After all, only a person whose body and soul are balanced with proper *qi* could work at two or three jobs as many working-class Hongkongers do. Any wujen will also quickly tell you that *qi* cannot be controlled; it can only be nurtured. The energy flows like a river or a breeze; if it becomes captured it pools into negative *qi* energy, creating cursed places like the slums of the Kowloon Walled City, where people and their *qi* are trapped like rats.

- Feng shui is the art of nurturing *qi* in the landscape. There are a number of methods for maintaining a person's own internal *qi*, the most popular of which is the slow movement martial art of *t'ai chi chuan*.
- Snow Tiger

Guanxi

Guanxi is the way the Chinese approach networks of contacts, but it goes above and beyond what you'll see on the Seattle streets. Here, Confucian ideals become mixed with the concept of contacts, creating an important social structure that Hong Kong business revolves around. It is more than just "what you can do for me and I can do for you." It is a system of social capital and a citywide exchange of favors that includes considerations of Chinese social hierarchy. A social "lesser" is expected to pay appropriate honor to a "better" in his *guanxi* network and the "better" is expected to treat the "lesser" well, often as well as he'd treat a member of his own family. Failure to pay the proper respects to the contacts in your *guanxi* network becomes a mark on your image and will often result in other people you know distancing themselves from you. Most importantly, in Hong Kong the concept of *guanxi* is stronger than civic expectations, which is often the reason for such pervasive nepotism and corruption in Hong Kong.

- Bribery, corruption, and cronyism may be scandalous words back in Seattle, but here one is expected to favor those in his *guanxi* network. Understanding this is critical to shadowrunning in Hong Kong, because work often falls to those who have these *guanxi* relationships with their employers.
- Fatima

Face

Sometimes called *mianzi* in Hong Kong, face is just as important a concept here as *guanxi*. In this city, there is a strong social pressure to have a good image in everyone's eyes. Since Hongkongers place an importance on financial success that would amaze even those in the UCAS, often times one enhances face by lavishly flaunting personal wealth and taste. Those without great wealth can improve their face by maintaining an orderly and respectful family or working extremely hard in life. Causing someone else to lose face, usually through publicly

pointing out their faults, is generally avoided in Hong Kong, but can be used as an effective social weapon against a rival.

- At the annual Board of Governors Gala last year, council member Yi Jing-Ze loudly but pleasantly pointed out that Council member William Wu had arrived late. That was a direct attack on Wu's face, attributing his tardiness to a lack of proper respect for his position and a general incompetence. Their rivalry hasn't cooled much since then.
- Fianchetto
- Those types of attacks on someone's face are used only when you're the equal or better of someone in society. Even then, using them too often makes you look bad and will cost you face.
- Ma'fan

THE HONG KONG SPRAWL: SUPERMODERN *QI*

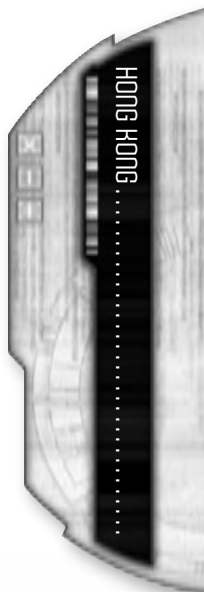
Posted by: Traveler Jones

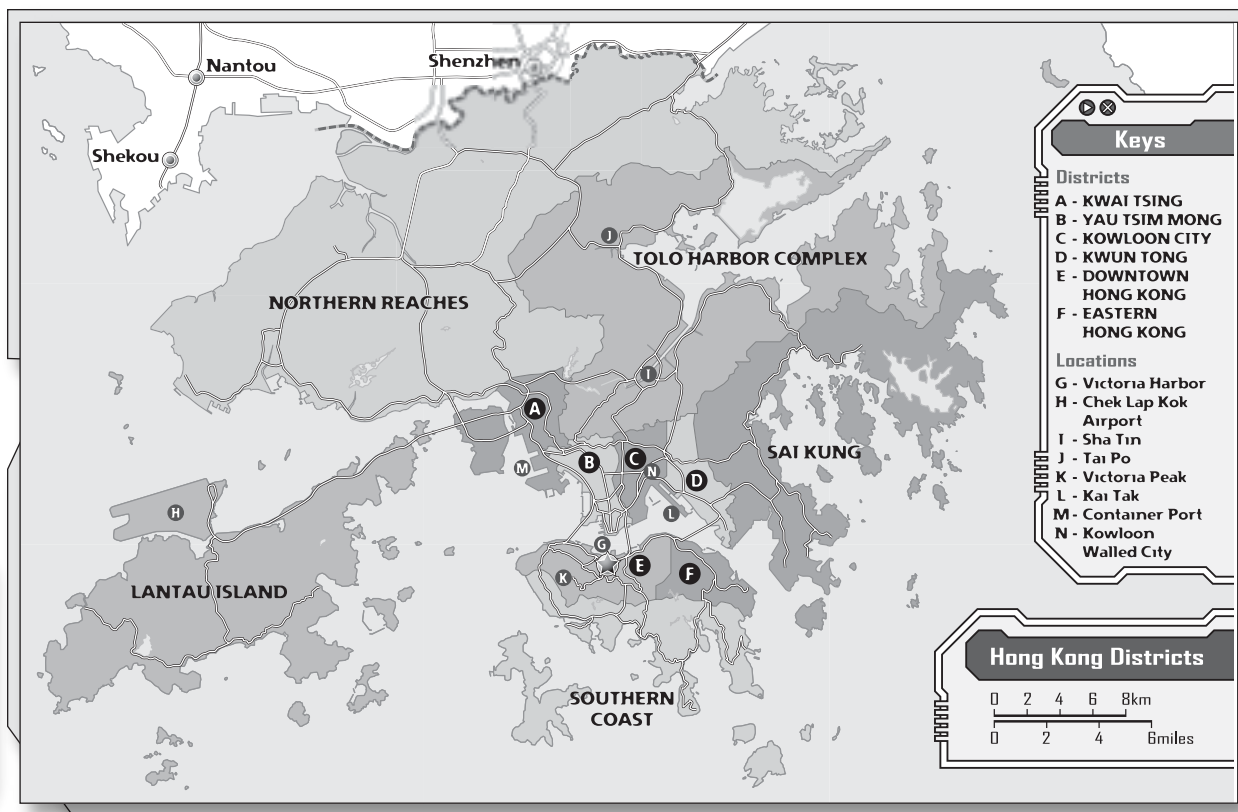
Hong Kong is laid out along a peninsula and its outlying islands, though only a small portion of the land is actually used for development due to the mountainous terrain. Most of Hong Kong's nine-million-plus residents are packed along the harbor that separates the tip of the peninsula from its nearest significant island, Hong Kong Island. To the north of the harbor live many of Hong Kong's poorer residents, boxed in by the flow of unregistered refugees. To the south of the harbor is where the better half lives under the watchful eye of the mega-corporations. North of the peninsula and across a well-monitored border lies the Cantonese city of Shenzhen. To the west, across the Pearl River Estuary, stands the nearby mercenary port of Macao, Hong Kong's smaller and wilder sibling city.

DOWNTOWN HONG KONG

Pressed against the northern face of Victoria Peak and down the slope towards the harbor lies the living heart of Hong Kong and the showcase to its corporate glory. Downtown is where most of Hong Kong's corporations and many of their employees make their home. **Central District** is the center of industry in Hong Kong, a narrow but crowded band of skyscrapers stretching all along the western Victoria Harbor coastline on Hong Kong Island, enveloping even the old Western District and Kennedy Town.

At night, the infamous skyline lights up as colorfully illuminated ferries shuttle past the fantastically strange corporate towers, their bizarre forms guided by the wisdom of feng shui geomancers. During the day, the buildings do silent battle over the mystical energies that course through Hong Kong, trying to ensure that the *qi* is ideal for their endeavors while focusing bad *qi* on their competitors. The organically-curved Evo Tower sits just before the water, lacking any flat surfaces that might impede the flow of energy traveling down from Victoria Peak to the sea. The Wellington Building, home of the international finance conglomerate Hildebrandt-Kleinfort-Bernal, just finished an expensive refinishing to add mirrored surfaces to the outside of their skyscraper to reflect back the "poison arrows" of bad *qi* from the





Urgent Message...

sharp edges of the nearby Saeder-Krupp SwissBank headquarters. News headlines featuring incidents of uncontrolled magic or the scandalous activities of out-of-control spirits are common in the Central District, a side effect of all the mystical tinkering.

If you hop a ride on the Splendid Dragon Path, a massive indoor escalator system so big it includes its own shops and apartments, it will take you up the slope of Victoria Peak to the **Mid-Levels**. This is where up-and-coming young corporate professionals live, in crowded but very comfortable mountain-side arcologies and enclaves. A good way to determine an individual resident's importance is to see their view of Victoria Harbor: the better the view is, the more status the person claims. Most of the housing complexes on the Mid-Levels are owned by a single corporation, and rivalry between different corporate complexes is common, manifesting in everything from sporting events to fashion sense. Their doctrinaire fashion sense is so predictable that you can pick out the Renraku accountant traveling home by his Europa blazer or the Wuxing executive by her KoGo skirt.

Looking down on the packed Mid-Level enclaves are the massive estates of **Victoria Peak**, hugging the upper reaches of the mountain from which the district takes its name. From the air, the colonial mansions and their cerulean swimming pools sparkle from a forested hillside embrace that only the absurdly wealthy can afford. Wu Lung-Wei, Wuxing CEO, has his home here as does the Hong Kong action sim hero Johnny Fong. I hear the views of the Central skyline and the harbor are breathtaking, but don't count on seeing them unless you are a very, very important person.

As the skyscrapers thin out and are replaced by glimmering boutiques, you know you've entered **Wanchai-Causeway**.

Due east of the Central District, Wanchai-Causeway is swanky, artsy, intellectual and downright expensive. High heels clatter out of A Whole New You clinics and KoGo boutiques while the setting sun is greeted with the thumping music of fancy nightclubs. Every day brings another dedication gala at harbor-side museums and galleries, each one trumping up its host more than the art.

Toward the east end of this district, the old open-air markets and housing tenements of "Little Shanghai" North Point have been leveled and replaced with expensive apartment towers. On the southern edge, tucked into mountainside valleys, is the red-light district of Happy Valley. Here, overworked Hongkongers can blow off steam at the combat biker arena, gamble the night away at loud and colorful digital mah-jongg parlors, or work off the stress with one (or more) of the talented ladies at a nearby "hostess club."

- Aside from occasional vacations under corporate guard, many young corporate employees never leave Downtown. They live in the Mid-Levels, work in Central, and play in Wanchai-Causeway. This means that a majority of corporate extraction jobs will take place here. Personally, I think snatching targets from Wanchai-Causeway is the easiest. The crowds and noise offer convenient cover, and corporate security doesn't swarm as thickly there as it does in other nearby areas.

- Lei Kung

- Check out the Fortunate Son brothel. Madame Wu can be very accomodating for runners in a tight spot, so long as you bring her a sizable "gift."

- Sounder

EASTERN HONG KONG

Two mountains, Mt. Butler and Mt. Parker, cloister away the sleepy towns of Eastern Hong Kong from the bustle of Downtown. Here, corporate nuclear families make their homes in pre-fabricated but pleasantly comfortable upper-middle class suburbs. Large shopping malls and supercenters ensure the families have everything they could need, though Downtown is only a tram-ride away. This district was once home to the Swire Group, a business conglomerate that dated back to the colonial days of Hong Kong and had diversified into everything from carbonated beverages to international shipping. Wuxing purchased the Swire Group back in 2010. This area served as the home ground for Wuxing until Wu Kuan-Lai built a new headquarters in Aberdeen in 2017. Oddly enough, it was in these sleepy villages, not in the gleaming glass-and-steel towers of Central, that the corporations forged their plans for Hong Kong's independence in 2015, a fact that still fills the local residents with considerable pride.

Three towns primarily make up Eastern Hong Kong. The first, **Taikoo Shing**, is the former home of both the Swire Group and Wuxing and is a rising modern district full of shopping malls and Wuxing employees, many of whom manage the factories across the harbor. **Shaukeiwan** used to be home to Hong Kong's second largest fishing fleet, but the fisherman have all gone. Instead, the local fishing culture has been subverted into suburban kitsch, with nicely painted fishing boats perched up on dry land as a quaint reminder of what used to be. **Chai Wan** is the furthest east of the towns and the least developed, though that is changing. Real estate developers see the area as a possible site for the next cheap housing boom. Blindingly yellow Daiatsu construction vehicles are busy filling in the local bay for flat, reclaimed land.

- Eastern Hong Kong isn't particularly big on shadowrunning work, but there are occasional extractions here as well as dirty laundry jobs such as blackmail and surveillance. Employers here tend to emphasize keeping things quiet—a flashy run attracts a lot of attention in these small towns, and the networks of *guanxi* between families here tends to run deep. A runner could find themselves in well over their head before they knew it.
- Jimmy No

SOUTHERN COAST

Old fashioned mah-jongg tiles clatter and fishermen reel in their nets with the day's catch; it's hard to believe you're still on the same island as Central District. The Southern Coast district is about as traditionally Chinese as you get in Hong Kong, and that's no accident. Since 2017, Wuxing Incorporated has owned large portions of the Southern Coast and has imposed strict development laws that claimed to "protect and celebrate the traditions of Hong Kong." More recently, though, it's become evident there were other reasons behind Wu Kuan-Lai's efforts down here: numerous dragon lines (manalines to you Western-thinkers) crisscross the coast, making the whole region magically rich.

Aberdeen is the largest town on the Southern Coast and home to the Wuxing Skytower, a marvel of modern feng shui

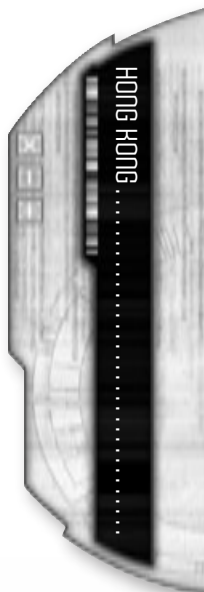
construction that looms over the quaint town. It is encircled by strange astral shallows that unveil the happenings of astral space in the physical world. Beyond the Skytower, people of all stripes live side-by-side, from the boat people in the bay selling traditional wares for the tourists to the multi-generational Wuxing executive dynasties whose yachts sit peacefully in the marina. The fish market on the walkway near Aberdeen Harbor is still lively; thanks to work from Wuxing, this area is one of the best fishing spots remaining near Hong Kong. On Apleichau Island just across the bridge from Aberdeen, a bohemian magical community of sorts has sprung up, attracted to the convergence of dragon lines in the area and the astral shallows nearby. In between Apleichau and downtown Aberdeen sits the floating restaurants in the harbor; massive and gaudy boats that serve fresh seafood and dim sum to the tourists.

Ocean Park was once an aquarium and sea-theme resort park, but soon after the Awakening local marine biologists noticed high populations of aquatic paracritters in the area, especially pods of moon dolphins and at least one community of matsyanari, a variant of merrow that are native to Southeast Asia. The resort park and the nearby crowded beach at Deepwater Bay threatened the matsyanari, so Evo NavTech bought out the resort and the land and turned it into a mix of a protected sea-life refuge and an aquatic research lab.

- There's one particular member of the matsyanari tribe who has expressed a heightened ability to communicate with the metahuman researchers through hand signals and body motions. They call her Shan Hou ("Coral Princess") and the potential breakthrough she represents has made her the target of extraction attempts by Mitsuhamma Hong Kong and Wuxing—and maybe others as well.
- Glasswalker
- A fixer in Japan approached me, saying he represented a man looking to acquire Shan Hou for his "private collection." I turned the job down, but it's left me wondering just what kind of private collection this person has.
- Ma'fan
- I think "man" might be a bit misleading. Contact me privately for more info.
- Elijah

Full of thriving metahuman communities and popular with expats, **Stanley** is a sunny town of pubs and beachside markets. The pleasant party atmosphere is a far cry from the nightmare that led to the founding of modern Stanley: in the late 2020s, well-educated Filipino metahumans came to Stanley to escape Japanese persecution. Today, little pockets of metahuman communities celebrate a mix of Chinese, Filipino, and metahuman customs and cultures mixed with the feeling of a vacation spot.

I'm not sure "Hang Ten" translates well to Cantonese, but **Shek O** and the nearby Big Wave Bay are a popular surfing destination in Asia, a century after the sport was first introduced to the region. The waves here are considered the best in Hong Kong; corporate-endorsed surfers engage in highly publicized



competitions every dry season. The rainy season is a bit too wild for surfing, unless you're one of the crazies who surfs typhoons for fun.

- The tanned and bronze-haired Chinese surfers in Shek O make great scenery, but keep in mind that they aren't all as corporate as their logo-covered wetsuits might make them seem. Some have direct links to radical environmentalist policlubs active along the Pacific Rim, especially some of the powerful groups based out of California.
- Ecotope

YAU TSIM MONG

Yau Tsim Mong is the district of Hong Kong extremes. The streets are packed from one side to the other with market stalls and the pressed flesh of thousands of people. The sky has been replaced by layers and layers of signs (real and AR) mixing Chinese characters with English text scrolling horizontally, vertically, and anywhere else they can possibly fit. The din of thousands of rapidly spoken Cantonese conversations is overwhelmed only by the scents of dim sum and herbal tea stands. Over your head, a slow artificial rain falls from shuddering, crowded air conditioners hanging precariously from tenement windows. Yau Tsim Mong is the real heart of Hong Kong.

- Yau Tsim Mong is also a district on the edge, and the people who live here are well aware of that fact. They know that the refugee problem and the rising crime could overtake the life of the district, but they are working hard to make sure that doesn't happen. I have personally never met more industrious people anywhere than the residents of Yau Tsim Mong.
- Money Lee

The neighborhood of **Mong Kok** is a claustrophobic crush of high-rise tenements, packing within its walls the highest population density in all of Hong Kong. Every form of space is in short supply in Mong Kok, because even the spaces between the high-rise housing blocks are crammed with a panoply of physical and virtual advertisements. Not only do hundreds of digital and neon signs jut out from every story of every tenement, overlapping in a dizzying array of animated pictographs, but the area's augmented reality overlay is insane.

Mong Kok's AR qualifies as a spam zone. If you go through here with your PAN open, you will be assaulted by banners in every centimeter of your plane of vision, many of them screaming at you in Cantonese. Don't even be tempted to check out any of these advertisements; I've been told they're a fantastic way to catch some exotic commlink virus cooked up in Asian or Russian hacker dens. If you keep your PAN well-hidden or turn your wireless off, though, Mong Kok can be an exciting place. Entire street markets full of local electronics (not all of it counterfeit) and knock-off designer clothes can be found here, selling their wares at ridiculously cheap prices.

South of Mong Kok, the smaller but not quite as densely packed neighborhood of **Yau Ma Tei** has earned a reputation as the "poor mystic's market." Street stalls full of "arcane goods"—some authentic, some not—haggle reproduction scrolls, rare ani-

mal parts, pressed flowers, strange herbal tea mixtures, frightening demon masks, and everything else under the Awakened sun. A small temple to the seafarers' god, Tin Hua, sits landlocked thanks to reclamation of the nearby bay, but it watches over the Bird Garden next door, an open air market that sells bamboo cages of every variety of songbird. And just a few blocks away is the Jade Market, a crowded array of jade trinkets and jewelry, perfect for looks or for alchemical enchantments.

- Mong Kok and Yau Ma Tei may be lively and vibrant and all, but both of them are threatened by the presence of the Triads. Triad-backed counterfeiting, pickpocketing, and extortion are fairly common there. An occasional violent turf war even breaks out now and again for variety. Recruitment has been on the rise as the younger generation embraces the fast-living, easy money lifestyle of the Triads over the hard-working, day-to-day grind of traditional Yau Tsim Mong entrepreneurialism.
- Ma'fan

South of Yau Ma Tei, on the very tip of the Kowloon Peninsula, **Tsim Sha Tsui** (say that three times fast) has become more or less an extension of the corporate culture of Hong Kong Island, a cleaned-up parallel to the district's wilder neighborhoods. It is also Hong Kong's premiere tourist town, a sanitized and safe version of the truly exciting corners of this sprawl. Hotels and restaurants stand along the "Golden Mile" of Nathan Road, but they fall a bit short of the glitz and glamour of Wanchai-Causeway.

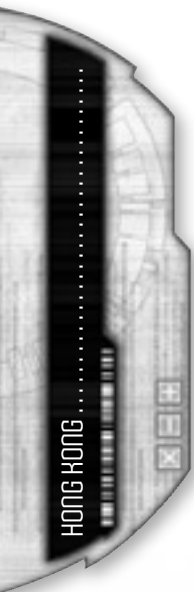
There's a palpable undercurrent of siege mentality and fear among Tsim Sha Tsui's residents as they try to keep the crime and refugee influence at bay. The hotel doormen in their fancy suits, mostly uneducated working stiff's hired to keep other poor people from ever setting foot in the hotel, serve as a symbol for the entire neighborhood—a veneer of sophistication trying to disguise a tough core.

KOWLOON CITY

The people of Tsim Sha Tsui need only look over at Kowloon City to remember what they fear. Kowloon is urbanism pushed to the very edge, then knocked right over the side. The population is primarily made up of unregistered refugees, even generations after their initial entry. Lawlessness and blight rule Kowloon; the police are stretched too thin here and are often pulled back to maintain the peace in districts where the residents pay taxes (and are affiliated with a corporation). The criminal syndicates govern in their stead through the rule of frequently demonstrated violence. Hong Kong has given up on Kowloon City and now simply tries to contain it as if it were a disease—and even that method has only had debatable success.

Somehow, though, the people of Kowloon carry on. It's not pretty or fair, but it does survive on some twisted level. Innumerable small gangs and urban tribes carve out their own sections of turf and try to create some semblance of normal life, though it's always darker, more desperate, and more dangerous than the typical standards of normal anywhere else.

In **Hung Hom**, down on the southern tip near the harbor, urban tribes have taken over old shopping malls and theme



parks and converted them into bizarre communities. Though they are preyed on by the violent gangs and Triads, the tribes' numbers swell with each passing year as more locals find value in the close-knit social networks the tribes provide. Further to the northeast along the coast, at the site of the old **Kai Tak** airport, smugglers, counterfeiters, junk merchants, and tinkerers have turned the old runway into an open-air bazaar. Most of the goods come in by boat, pulled up right alongside the runway that extends over the water or passed off to the boat people who live all year in their sampans and houseboats in the adjacent typhoon shelter. Kai Tak has found its niche in Hong Kong; this is where you go to buy the items you can't get anywhere else in the city—and where you sell things you can't usually get rid of.

Further inland to the north is the **Kowloon Walled City**, the darkest nightmare of Kowloon. When the refugees first started pouring into Hong Kong in the '20s, this area was mostly parks and light residential housing. Then violent criminal gangs started invading the homes and taking them over, as refugee packs turned the city parks into squatter tent cities.

As more people arrived, the area became more crowded and more desperate. The corporations were forced to build some sort of housing for the throngs of refugees, if only to keep them bottled up and away from Hong Kong residents. The result was the Walled City, a dark core of crumbling slums so tightly packed together as to resemble a solid wall of decay from a distance. Within, the most desperate fight to survive.

- Competition is so fierce between the Triads in Kowloon City that they often hire shadowrunners to augment their activities. In fact, Kowloon is where most of Hong Kong's native shadowrunners hail from, brought up from street gangs and refugee families into the shadow biz.

- Money Lee

KWUN TONG

The grinding and clanking of heavy machinery and oppressive industrial factories are the first signs that you've entered the district of Kwun Tong. This district is Hong Kong's main manufacturing center, roused from an economic slumber by the implosion of China and the nationalism of Japan. Overnight, a sprawl that had lost much manufacturing to cheap labor elsewhere suddenly became one of the last stable locations left with reliable and skilled laborers. Raw materials and basic manufactured components flooded into Hong Kong's ports from the Chinese warlord-states and Southeast Asia, where they were processed into complex goods and shipped back out to the hungry Asian markets.

SEARCH: KNIGHT ERRANT TERRORIST DATABASE

9x9 (*Gau Fong*)

The radical group identifying itself as 9x9 (also known locally as "Gau Fong" or "Nine Squared") has lately placed itself at the center of the tensions between the city and the refugees. Their goals are loosely defined and cover a range of anti-corporate and pro-democratic rage, but their organization is so decentralized and diffuse that it is nearly impossible to determine their agenda. Organizational behaviorists working for the Hong Kong Police Force have speculated that 9x9 is some form of emergent social network among disparate radical groups within the city who all share a common frustration with the corporate-controlled government. Others have speculated that the group is being used by some external agent looking to destabilize the city. The fact that 9x9 members have been able to acquire sophisticated computer equipment and weaponry may support that claim.

Whatever their motivation and origin, 9x9 has been responsible for a series of attacks on and disruptions of the infrastructure of Hong Kong. They particularly target transportation networks in the city, which given Hong Kong's status as an entrepôt are perhaps the most vulnerable and valuable assets. 9x9 does not target civilians (though there have been a few deaths related to their attacks), instead focusing on causing economic damage to corporate assets by their sabotage.

The name of the group, which often seems to be one of the few things different members have in common, comes from an ancient reference to the Chinese emperor. During the imperial dynasties, the number nine was often reserved for use by the emperor and was signified by eighty-one brass knobs on the door to the imperial palace, arranged in a 9-by-9 square pattern. The name may also reference the original name for Kowloon, which meant "nine dragons."

See also: [Anti-Corporate Groups](#), [Hong Kong Terrorists](#), [Attack!](#), [Recent Incidents](#)

The recovery that was seen as a happy miracle to the local corporations, however, also brought with it lax labor laws, horrible working conditions, and massive pollution.

- Not to mention at least four different factories that feed the Kong chip industry, dumping low quality Better-Than-Life chips into the laps of addicts worldwide. The chips are legal in Hong Kong but are slipped to the Triads by the factories for illegal sale in other nations.

- Haze

Kwun Tong, specifically the core of the industrial plants in the district's center, is the birthplace and breeding ground of the anti-corporate radical movement. Though the movement as it exists today operates under a single banner, it is believed to have its origins in a disparate mixture of labor, environmental, and democratic movements that sprung up independently within this district. As the group's home turf, the Kwun Tong



INCOMING FEED

district is its primary target. It has been extremely successful in attacking the corporate infrastructure here.

Two more neighborhoods on the outskirts of the district carry noted significance. On the northwest end of the district is **Jordan Valley**, a former landfill closed and rapidly transformed into a series of massive low-income housing complexes. The Jordan Valley complexes were originally temporary solutions to a population shift from the nearby neighborhood of Ngau Tau Kok, which was quarantined and demolished when it became an epicenter for the VITAS plague. But Ngau Tau Kok was never cleared for reconstruction and remains an urban wasteland, while the blocky, bland towers of Jordan Valley have been shored up for permanence.

On the southeast end of the district is **Lam Tin**, the most concentrated hub of transportation in the city. There are eight private busline terminals, two private taxi hubs, a major train station that handles one of the two underwater train tunnels connecting Hong Kong Island to the peninsula, and two major highway tunnels, one traveling underwater alongside the train tunnel and one traveling east through the mountains to Sai Kung. The seafront of Lam Tin has been reclaimed and transformed into piers for the lighter ships that go out to unload freight ships still at sea, transferring their industrial cargo for processing in Kwun Tong. The sheer concentration of the transportation network in this industrial town has made it a frequent target of anti-corporate radicals, who have made bombing and destroying critical transportation infrastructure

one of their hallmarks. Many of these key buildings and structures bear both an increased security presence and the scars of earlier attacks.

SAI KUNG

In the years immediately following Hong Kong's independence, the corporations that took over the city's governance lifted the environmental protections on Hong Kong's many natural parks. In a pattern similar to North America's Resource Rush, the corps descended on any pristine land that had some resource value. Sai Kung suffered heavily as a result. After the corporations took what they could find, the land was too ravaged for tourism so crime moved in. Sai Kung's numerous rocky inlets, protected coves, and tiny islands were too perfect for South Asian pirates to ignore, especially so close to valuable Hong Kong shipping lanes. In a way, corporate greed created a monster that the people of Sai Kung are still trying to tackle to this day.

Small villages dot the ragged coast of Sai Kung, but the coastal security forces have had no luck recruiting their aid against the pirate activity. The villagers, mostly cut off from the rest of Hong Kong, have closer contacts with the criminals than with the government. After the pirate crews hit ships traveling to Hong Kong, they often hide the loot in a cove somewhere until the merchandise isn't as hot. They then trade the loot to the village boat people, who shuffle it down to the Kai Tak market.

Very rarely, t-bird smugglers from the Chinese warlord states cut down over the Canton/Hong Kong border, skip over the sparse land of the Northern Reaches, and try to dart into Sai Kung for a direct entry into the market without paying the middlemen. That path moves over the Tolo Harbor Complex, however, right under the noses of Hong Kong's security forces, and it's exceptionally risky.

- Too many riggers pay for that "get rich quick" scheme with their lives. The Marine Authority is all too anxious to shoot those smuggler t-birds out of the sky.
- Rigger X

- Yeah, but those who make it gain a lot of face. It can pay off big.
- Kia

- Assuming you consider death or a lifetime reservation in a cell for 5 a reasonable risk.
- Rigger X

TOLO HARBOR COMPLEX

The Hong Kong Free Enterprise Zone has no *official* military, but that only means they aren't wearing a flag when they shoot you dead. As a fully privatized free city, corporate security is ubiquitous; nearly the entire Central District is a patchwork of extraterritorial corporate zones sporting dozens of different security forces. The Tolo Harbor Complex goes a step further: it is the home of Hong Kong's Marine Authority as well as Hong Kong's Special Police Forces. Overseen by Ares and Evo, it is a massive military base in everything but name.

At the throat of the harbor is the town of **Sha Tin**. It is bisected by the massive Shing Mun Canal, a controlled river waterway that constantly buzzes with maintenance drones and unmanned supply barges ferrying out to the wet and dry docks servicing Evo NavTech's paramilitary boats and ships. The town, the boats, and even the people in this corporate military town are a strange international mix: English, Chinese, and Cyrillic lettering is etched on nearly every building. Evo NavTech is constantly moving personnel around through Tolo Harbor, which gives Sha Tin the feel of a bawdy shore-leave dive barely held in control by a constant military presence. The town is a rusty, dirty, rough place, and that's exactly the way most of the locals like it.

North of Sha Tin along the coast is **Tai Po**, which is essentially Arestown. After Knight Errant snagged the Hong Kong police contract out of Mitsuhamas's hands, they invested heavily in the village of Tai Po, turning it into a base for their special police units. And when I say "special police units," think of Firewatch teams, military drones, and urban assault vehicles. Ares's development plan seems to be working; their investment in the city through Tai Po has made it impossible for their corporate rivals to dislodge them from the law enforcement contract. At the same time, the increased sabotage attacks in nearby Kwun Tong have justified the heavy arms Ares stores in the area, even allowing them to pull out the big guns on occasion.

- I hear Ares is working on a new category of big guns: armored exoskeletons. It's all being kept very quiet though, because

Mitsuhamas would do everything in their power to disrupt that research and development. If my source is correct, Ares has even tested a few prototypes in secret Kowloon City raids.

- Plan 9

Despite being effectively another military base like Sha Tin, Tai Po has a completely different atmosphere. Tai Po is very se-date, Spartan, and controlled, and the sight of soldiers practicing tai chi chuan or judo is very common. In fact, the central fixture of the town is not even a military asset, but rather the Man Mo Temple, dedicated to the Man Cheung, the god of literature, and Kwan Yu, the god of war. The temple has grown dramatically in size during Ares' renovation. Now dozens of smoky incense spirals hang from the interior of the temple honoring the ancestors and the gods who watch over the soldiers and police.

NORTHERN REACHES

The common—and often accurate—view of the Hong Kong sprawl is one of crowds, noise, lights, and capitalism unleashed. The Northern Reaches, however, are quite different. They are only nominally part of the Free Enterprise Zone, more of a rural buffer between the Hong Kong sprawl and the Cantonese sprawl of Shenzhen. Here there are small villages that have changed little in the past centuries. Extended family clans continue to make a living the old fashioned way, farming and fishing. In fact, the rice paddies and soybean farms in the northwest section of this district around **Yeun Long** supply most of Hong Kong's small homegrown food supply.

Superstition and religion are thick and powerful here, and the old ways are the preferred ways. But times, they are a-changing. Aztechnology has been eyeing the marshlands as a possible extension to their Natural Vat mycoprotein farms, with the intention of expanding their ever-popular soy and mycoprotein paste foods. So far, though, their success has been limited. The locals just aren't terribly interested in Aztechnology's offers and the Big A hasn't found a way to pressure them yet, since their reach isn't as deep in Hong Kong as it is in the Americas.

- Mmmm ... soy and mycoprotein paste, my favorite meal. Wait, it's *every* meal!

- Snopes

- You know, you are what you eat.

- Pistons

- Yep. Good to the last drop, baby.

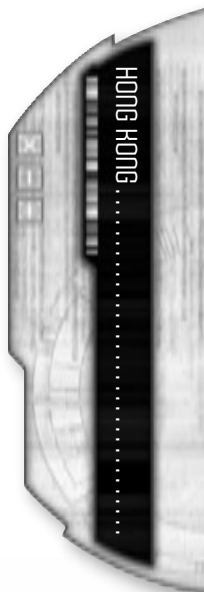
- Snopes

- Men. :rolleyes:

- Pistons

- Aztechnology is considering some pretty shady activities to get their hands on this land, so if you don't have any objections to working for them, keep an eye open. If they could farm locally and package and ship them straight from Hong Kong, it would mean heaps of savings.

- Nephreine



KWAI TSING

The Kwai Tsing district is immediately identifiable by the legions of shipping vessels huddled in the waters around it and the dozens of spidery cranes lifting an endless stream of shipping containers onto the port. The peninsula section of Kwai Tsing is known as **Kwai Chung** and is home to the infamous Container Port, the primary point of contact for most shipped materials coming into or going out of Hong Kong. This district is mostly responsible for Hong Kong being the largest seaport in the world and constantly in contention with the Europort for the busiest. Beyond the port facilities, Kwai Chung is mostly warehouses and blue-collar residential complexes catering to the port workers, many of whom are mainland refugees and metahumans.

The other main section of this district is **Tsing Yi Island**, just across Rambler Channel from Kwai Chung. Tsing Yi also contains some limited port facilities, most notably the Mitsuhama-owned and largely unmanned Ying Chau port, but its real significance is in moving goods and people around after they have come ashore. Tsing Yi is threaded with bridges connecting the island to Kwai Chung and to the Chek Lap Kok airport, its highways crowded with new arrivals to the city and massive truck-trains shuttling freight to the peninsula. Tsing Yi also has a number of hotels catering to the business transient, including blocks of coffin motels for the thrifty traveler.

There has been a dramatic increase lately in reports of human traffickers and smugglers using the Container Port to bring refugees and illegal goods into Hong Kong. The Marine Authority has stepped up controls and inspections, but they fall far short of perfect. Their hands have been tied by the Executive Council and the corporations it represents, who favor the economy of a free port to the security of a safe port.

- 9x9 is also said to be looking to expand some of their major sabotage efforts into Kwai Tsing. Shutting down the port would seriously hurt the corporations, even for a short period. The corps know their wealth is tied to the continued flow of goods into and out of the city, so they have managed to keep the group out of the district so far.
- Rigger X

LANTAU ISLAND

Lantau Island used to be endless tracts of protected parks, but those days are long over. Now the island is infested by corporate resorts and gated communities. The unspoiled beauty of the island and its wide open space attracted the corporations early on, who recognized its value as prime real estate. Today nearly all the executives too wealthy to live on the Mid-Levels but not wealthy enough for the Peak live on Lantau. Even those who can't quite afford to live here spend time here on corporate-sponsored vacation packages.

As far as vacations are concerned, Lantau claims to have it all: massive entertainment complexes like Virtual Horizons Disney, piers for passenger cruise ships making tours throughout the Pacific Rim, and spectacular age-old temples. In fact, the interior of the island has the grandest and wealthiest temples in all of Hong Kong, competing with each other for the most followers, tourists, and money. The undisputed winner at pres-

ent is the famous Po Lin Monastery and its twenty-six-meter-tall bronze Buddha statue, sitting atop a temple pedestal overlooking the countryside. That has not stopped other local monasteries from competing for big donations.

- Sometimes the competition for donations gets downright nasty. One temple may hire shadowrunners to dig up dirt on another to publicly implicate it in some scandal. Scandals are a big trade among the temples, as it usually causes the scandalized temple's worshippers to scatter and look for another temple to support.
- Jimmy No
- Not that anyone is actually scandalized. It's just bad fact to seem not to mind. They come back in a few months, but that can be enough to get what you need done.
- Ma'fan

Lantau has a number of growing neighborhoods, though each one does little to distinguish itself. They are all well-planned and well-controlled corporate communities, beautiful on the outside but lifeless on the inside. **Discovery Bay** is nauseatingly clean and safe and just a stone's throw away from the Disney resort (and I highly recommend throwing stones at it). **Silvermine Bay** used to be highly polluted, but Shiawase led an effort to clean up the area and has done a remarkably good job, though scientists worry that the pollutant-eating bacteria they used are also killing plant-life crucial to the sea ecology. **Pui O** is your typical beachside resort town, half split between spoiled social butterflies and pricey hotel resorts. Finally, **Tung Chung** is an aggressively growing little burb built in the shadow of the **Chek Lap Kok** international airport, trendy with the jet-setting business-class crowd.

PLACES TO SEE

Posted by: Money Lee

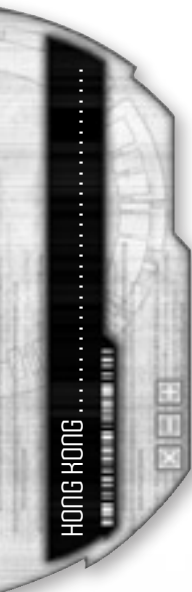
As should be clear by now, Hong Kong is a city of relationships and connections, where people and business are constantly in transit but come together at key locations. I could slap a tourist guide listing up here, but that'd be of no real use to runners like us because the real business takes place in Hong Kong's less-crafted locales. I'm going to give you the back-alley and by-harbor tour instead, pointing out the joints where Asia's shadows come together.

GETTING IN, OUT, AND AROUND

Movement is a constant in Hong Kong, whether you're shuttling across the harbor or shuffling down the Peak. But unless you want to be pushed around by the current of the crowds, it pays to know the key hubs and transportation systems in the sprawl.

Chek Lap Kok International Airport (Lantau Island)

Chek Lap Kok was built on an artificial island on the north side of Lantau way back in 1998, but it's been expanded twice since then. It is the largest airport in Asia, with full capability to handle semiballistic and suborbital flights. Its sophisticated



computer system was built by Mitsuhamma and handles a complex web of air traffic control.

Hong Kong takes its role as a transportation and trade hub for Asia very seriously, so don't even think about hacking your way into this system: it's damn near impossible and extremely deadly. Entry into Hong Kong through the airport is also one of the most securely watched methods, meaning it's not the preferred method for shadowrunners unless you've been set up with some solid ID. If your ID checks out, the Hong Kong Police patrolling the airport and the private security outfits guarding the individual terminals won't hassle you in the least. Courtesy to visitors is more important here than at other entry points, since Chek Lap Kok tends to handle the big shots.

Mass Transit Railway

The MTR is the most common way of getting around within the Hong Kong sprawl, because there are still many streets where the pedestrian crowds make it impractical or impossible to navigate a car. The MTR's extensive rail and subway system stretches out to nearly every corner of the city, from Aberdeen to the Northern Reaches and from Sai Kung to Lantau, meaning a shadowrunner can utilize it to not only disappear in the crowds, but to quickly shift locations. However, the clean, efficient (and some say soulless) MTR system is very carefully controlled. There's no smoking, no eating, no vandalism, and no large luggage allowed. Police are noticeable at nearly every station (much rarer the further into Kowloon the station is), small bags are screened or inspected, and IDs are checked when you pay to enter the train platform. So while the trains can work in a runner's favor, they can also be difficult for an unprepared runner to use.

Splendid Dragon Path (Downtown)

Stretching well over a kilometer as it winds its way down the lower slopes of Victoria Peak, the Splendid Dragon Path has the bizarre title of being the "longest enclosed walkway on Earth." Built by a cooperative council of Hong Kong corporations, the Splendid Dragon Path was constructed to replace the old Mid-Level Escalator, an automated people mover that shuttled pedestrians down from their residences in the Mid-Levels neighborhood to their places of employment downtown in Central. The Splendid Dragon Path takes it further; it's literally a snaking indoor cocoon of moving sidewalks and escalators that move people past arcology-style shops, eateries, and apartments down its length.

Though not fully self-sufficient like a true arcology, people can and do live inside the Splendid Dragon Path, while others just hop on the escalators and move from the Mid-Levels housing enclaves down to the corporate strip in Central. Remember, though, that you're a captive audience as you move down the Path, a feature that the corporations have learned to take advantage of by peppering commuters with real and AR advertisements throughout their trip.

- Since the devil is always in the details, here's the ground that the Path covers: it originates on Conduit Road near the Mid-Levels and runs down alongside Shelley Street down to Hollywood

Road. There it curves east alongside Hollywood Road until it cuts south over Queens Road Central towards the Central MTR stop and Connaught Road along the Harbor. It's not the fastest way to travel down the Peak, but it sure beats walking.

- Traveler Jones

- From the air, the Path looks stunning. Its windowed ceiling has a gold tint from the outside, making the whole thing look like a golden-scaled dragon slithering its way along and over the busy streets of downtown Hong Kong.

- Lei Kung

- There's reports that during an astral shallow a couple of years back, the path showed up as an actual dragon in the astral. Scared the shit out of some mundanes. Now there's a shrine for offerings at its "head." Some shamans have supposedly been trying to contact it, but thus far there's no luck.

- Fatima

Star Ferry Service

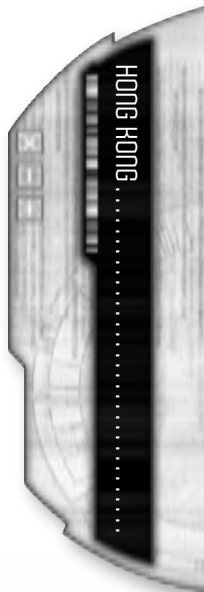
Nothing says Hong Kong quite like the Star Ferries that bounce back and forth over Victoria Harbor carrying passengers between Kowloon and Hong Kong Island. They are a historical part of the city dating back to the late nineteenth century, though the actual Star-brand ferry service has changed owners half a dozen times since. Nowadays, the line is controlled by a holding company which itself is owned by Wuxing. Dozens of ferries, including small passenger-only ferries and large vehicle ferries, still hold to the tradition of having the word "star" somewhere in their name, such as the "Morning Star" and the "Shining Star."

The ferry service is the best way for shadowrunners to travel between the island and the peninsula because of its relatively lax security. Vehicle traffic through the tunnels is closely watched and monitored and the trains require ID scans, but the ferries are largely anonymous. Sure, they're supposed to check IDs before boarding, but there's never enough time to do it properly and stay on schedule so the requirement is largely ignored. Likewise, even the few ferries that do have onboard security cameras lack the ability to easily match up passengers with camera footage, making a shadowrunner just another face in the crowd.

Victoria Harbor

Victoria Harbor is the busiest sea-lane in Hong Kong, its packed waters snaking between the island of Hong Kong and the Kowloon Peninsula. During the day, the waterway is crowded with sea traffic: hydrofoils zooming off to Macao, freighters unloading cargo at sea, police boats making regular patrols, and even small nautical drones maintaining order. The traffic is less dense at night, but the harbor twinkles with the light from the Central District's skyline and from the hotels and restaurants of Tsim Sha Tsui, not to mention the lights of the twenty-four-hour ferries and private helicopters darting overhead.

As the most significant artery of Hong Kong, residents pass over, under, or through Victoria Harbor nearly daily. The signifi-





INCOMING FEED

cance of the Harbor is not lost to the megacorporations: they have invested billions of nuyen over the decades to ensure that it continues to run smoothly. One of the most advanced traffic management systems in the world links each ship or boat passing through the Harbor into a wireless network that watches for snarls or congestion. It then delivers computer-assisted navigational advice to properly equipped ships to alleviate problems before they start. And a massive set of automated sea walls can rise from the earth on either end of the Harbor in the case of a typhoon to shelter the entire stretch from storm surges and flooding.

- Back a couple years ago, the sea walls around Victoria Harbor activated for no apparent reason, cutting off sea traffic for hours. The Executive Council claimed it was a software glitch, but that's not what I've heard. Some friends in the area tell me that the corps were looking to cut off the escape of one particular vessel, a freighter named the *White Moon Carp*, on its way to Hakata, Japan. Whether they are right or wrong, I haven't been able to discover whether a vessel of that name ever existed.

- Kane

- That's not what I heard.

- Lei Kung

FACETIME SPOTS

You can't build face in Hong Kong without being seen. But where you are seen often matters as much as how you are

seen. Every dive and getaway in the city carries its own culture, so it pays off in spades to do some homework first and then spend a little time being spotted in all the right places.

Charlie Chan's (Wanchai-Causeway District)

Charlie Chan's is a swanky little restaurant and bar in Wanchai-Causeway, popular with the cultured class. It's done up like an old Shanghai speakeasy, complete with jazz singers, chandelier lighting, and lazy ceiling fans twirling above (never mind that the place is climate-controlled). After a little digging through some old scan, I managed to learn that the name is a reference to some old black and white movies popular in the U.S. in the 1930s and 1940s. They were centered around a Chinese international detective who solved cases while gifting the audience with cheesy Confucian-style sayings ("Mind like parachute—only function when open.").

Big with the international business crowd looking to make contact with the up-and-coming Hong Kong natives, Charlie Chan's can be a good place for making shadowy connections. The bartenders and wait staff can hook a friend up with local fixers who represent rising stars in the market for a little edge in the business. But remember, Charlie Chan's is all about a certain style; don't come trudging in wearing your street threads, they'll kick you right out. You don't need to be upscale to come here, but you need to at least look like you are.

- For those in the business, this is also the place where the relic fences hang out, negotiating deals between illicit relic hunters and groups like the Atlantean Foundation and Apep Consortium.
- Am-mut

Cloud Nine (Central District)

Hong Kong is, by its nature, a fairly lonely city. With its transient population who flitter in and out of the city and its overworked residents who consider leisure time a fantasy luxury, it's a wonder anyone in this city ever gets to know each other. I suppose that is why *guanxi* is so important. But leave it to some enterprising Hongkonger to apply the latest technology and come up with another solution to this problem: the Cloud Nine nightclub. Hong Kong's take on the "link club" is decidedly local; instead of partying with people from all over the globe, you party with eligible bachelors and bachelorettes from all over the city. If you're lucky enough to have a night free, you can go to Cloud Nine in person, drinking and dancing it up like you would at any other club. But let's say you've only got thirty minutes between your day job and your night job and you live on the other side of the sprawl. You can log into Cloud Nine's Matrix node and receive full-ASIST feed from the dance floor. You can even have a representation of yourself projected into the physical club by the building's web of holo-projectors.

Since Cloud Nine exists so that people can easily meet up, both physical and virtual club-goers typically display biographical information linked through their AR displays. The club's own node can intelligently pair up one visitor's interests with another, marking those in the club you should seek out for a potential romantic match. Hell, you don't even have to be at the club to find a date; for a fee, you can store a three-dimensional virtual representation and biographical information in the club's "Cupid Booths," which both physical and virtual patrons can visit to scan for dates.

Dante's Inferno (Central District)

Located conveniently just outside the Splendid Dragon Path, about a third of the way down its descent to the Harbor, one of Dante Passini's trio of Inferno nightclubs gives Hong Kong patrons their glimpse of the afterlife. Unlike its counterparts in Seattle and London, this Inferno isn't modeled after Dante Alighieri's vision of Hell, but instead is based on the Buddhist multi-leveled Hell popular in Chinese belief. The Buddhists believed in Ten Hells with various distinct sections of punishment, so the nightclub mixes ten floors of sinful entertainment with hellish themes that change at the club owner's whim. Casual visitors enter at the first level—which is actually five floors above street level—and if they are on the right list, they can descend down the spiral ramps along the outside of the glass dance floors to the lower and even subterranean levels built into the slope of Victoria Peak.

Cutting-edge augmented reality overlays link up the Inferno Hong Kong with the other Infernos, so dancers pulsating to the liquid-hot rhythm in "The Hell of Molten Iron," for instance, can groove alongside with all-day partygoers in London and Seattle. The most well-connected and important visitors can cut straight through "The Hell of the Sword Tree"

or "The Hell of the Barbed Wheel" down to the very lowest level, where legend says souls face judgment for reincarnation. In reality, Dante Passini keeps this level ultra-secure and very private. It's used by people who need to conduct business they don't want anyone to know about.

The Drunken Monkey (Southern Coast)

The Drunken Monkey doesn't look particularly interesting, but the fact that it's hugely popular with Hong Kong's expatriate mercenary community makes it a hot spot for shadowrunners. Just inland from the beach, the Drunken Monkey is an unassuming pub constructed of visible wood beams and filled with tables carved from large pieces of driftwood and old wooden boat hulls. The woodwork is intentionally sturdy and inexpensive; brawls and bar fights are all too common here. Even the bartenders here—most of whom are orks—could easily pass for pirates, and likely were earlier in their careers. The selection of food is limited and simple, mostly variations of rice and fish, but most of the patrons come here for the wider selection of Chinese beers and strong rice wines.

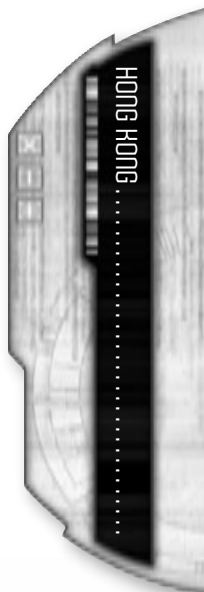
For shadowrunners, this is the kind of place to find mercenary or pirate work or to hire last-minute muscle for a job. Be careful, though; since the mercenary outfit Combat, Inc. moved to Macao, the selection here tends to be risky. Be careful about turning your back on whomever you hire—they might just decide to "renegotiate."

- A former mercenary veteran of the Asian war zones owns the Drunken Monkey, an old friend of mine named Sho Tung. If you're neck-deep in trouble and need some reliable help, drop my name and ask to see him. He'll treat you right. Don't bring up Southeast Asia, though, even in light conversation; he's got a lot of troubled memories from Ha Giang that he doesn't like to relive.
- Picador

Happy Valley Arena (Wanchai-Causeway District)

Formerly the Happy Valley Racetrack, home to many of Hong Kong's old beloved horse races, the Arena has been updated in the past decade to host Hong Kong's new favorite spectator sport: combat biking. Combat biker teams from throughout Asia compete in the Happy Valley Arena, though the screaming fans reserve their adoration for the hometown team, the Hong Kong Cavaliers. The Arena is also a prime spot for Hong Kong's second favorite pastime: gambling. Blue-collar grunts and white-collar wageslaves wager their paychecks away on the outcomes of games and seasons, often blowing their winnings on the crowd of bars and brothels that pack Happy Valley's red light district. In the off-season, the Arena hosts Hong Kong's wilder concerts, with acts ranging from CrimeTime to D-Generation slated for the near future.

Because it is noisy, crowded, and very public, the Happy Valley Arena is sometimes chosen as a spot for meets. It's the kind of place where neither side can afford to make a scene but also where the meet won't be noticed. It's also a good place to come in contact with members of the Red Dragon Association and the Smoke Circle Society, as they are both heavily involved in the local gambling and prostitution.



- In addition to the bars and brothels, the Happy Valley Arena is surrounded by seedy digital mah-jongg parlors, most of which are money-laundering fronts for the Triad gangs. Stay clear of them—a good many of the games there are fixed.
- Sounder

Luk Yu Teahouse (Central District)

The Luk Yu Teahouse is a Hong Kong time capsule, an authentic colonial teahouse that has been in operation for well over a century. To be honest, the food isn't terribly inspired, but that's not why anyone comes here. Part of the reason is for the décor: the colonial-era hardwood paneling, marble tabletops, and brass spittoons (which are still used!) are all authentic and lovingly preserved. The other reason is the exclusivity: you cannot get into the Luk Yu Teahouse unless you are a regular or know a regular—and some of the regulars go back six, seven, or eight generations. The courteous staff are all outfitted with headware filters that ensure that even while they serve you dim sum and tea, they will not remember a word of what was said at your table. This makes the Teahouse the number one spot for secretive meetings between Hong Kong's most powerful corporate and underworld figures.

Chances are most shadowrunners will never come close to seeing the inside of the Luk Yu Teahouse, but if you do you know you've hit the big time. For a regular to bring you inside these walls, it means you are a valuable and trusted asset. But remember, be on your best behavior; anything you do reflects on your host.

Lover's Stone (Wanchai-Causeway District)

To the west of the Happy Valley Arena, the infamous red-light district gives way to the wooded and hilly crannies of Wanchai Gap. Deep inside Wanchai Gap is a spot famous among Hong Kong's magical community: the Lover's Stone. Ancient tiny shrines to animistic spirits circle a nine-meter rock outcropping that juts out from a nearby hillside, while joss sticks burn nearby and paper offerings flutter in the breeze. Hong Kong natives come to the Lover's Rock to pray for good fortune, especially with luck in finding a mate or having children. Hong Kong's magicians also come here to chat, relax, and peddle magical talismans and fortunes to the visitors. On festival days, local magical groups will put on displays of their abilities, whether they are sparring adepts or wujen crafting illusions.

If you are a magician, the Lover's Stone is the place to be seen. Magical groups sometimes recruit from those they talk to here. Even if you have a magical group already, it's a great place to find spell formulas, foci, or alchemic materials. Just remember that this isn't the place for magical rivalries; though the debates can get contentious, violence (physical or magical) is not only frowned upon, but believed to anger the spirits that reside here.

Nakatomi Opera House (Wanchai-Causeway District)

Put your Euro-centric preconceived notions aside; Chinese opera is a wholly different beast from the Wagnerian stuff you may immediately think of. The kind of opera popular in Hong Kong includes impossible falsettos and garish costumes instead

of booming voices and elaborate stage sets. In fact, whereas holographic stage design has taken off in the European modern opera scene, in China that sort of thing is forbidden, with even traditional stage design pared down to the minimum. Instead, design efforts are concentrated in elaborate costumes, colorful and overdone makeup, and complicated gesture codes that the Chinese opera literati instinctively understand.

To be honest, if you're not familiar with Chinese opera and don't read up on the story and traditional codes beforehand, you won't have a single clue what is going on. For instance, a character with his face or mask painted green means that he is impulsive and ferocious — and it's assumed that you know that before you enter the opera hall. For all the opera's complexity, Hong Kong eats this stuff up, especially the upper crust.

Rumor has it that Shihei Nakatomi despises Chinese opera, but he knows the right way to make an impression in Hong Kong. He funded the construction of the Nakatomi Opera House in 2066 as Hong Kong's premiere showcase for the art form, and it has been great for his reputation in the city. The Opera House gained a great deal of face for Nakatomi and Renraku. From the second he proposed its construction, it no doubt helped the corporation secure key Matrix contracts and the Executive Council spot.

Noodleboy (Yau Tsim Mong District)

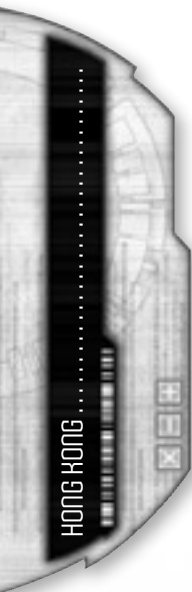
Technically, this little noodle shop in the heart of the crowded Mong Kok neighborhood doesn't even have a name, but the locals refer to it as "Noodleboy" because its owner is an entrepreneurial fourteen-year-old boy. Whether it was dumb luck or pure genius, Noodleboy has taken off, churning out endless steaming bowls of noodle soup for the throngs that pass through this neighborhood everyday. There's no seating at Noodleboy—just counters for shouting orders over the din—but diners who don't need to be somewhere right away often just stand and eat their noodles under the wide eaves of the shop.

Really, I recommend Noodleboy because the crowds that surround it really encapsulate Hong Kong. It also serves some damn good noodles, but there's more to it than just that. The Triad soldiers of the 289 Gang often eat here and they protect the shop, a relationship that has put the shop's owner in the know. If you need a fence or are looking for some hard-to-get items, come to the shop shortly before closing time at four in the morning. Just don't try to scam the kid who runs the joint; he knows his way around, and the 289s won't take kindly to it.

- The kid is more than just the owner of a noodle stand, he's the White Paper Fan for the Gold Tigers of Portland Street, one of the member gangs that make up the 289s. They run robbery and assaults up and down Portland Street and fence the stolen goods through the kid's contacts.
- Ma'fan

- Damn good noodles, though.
- Traveler Jones

- Jones, is there anywhere you haven't eaten?
- Frosty



- Of course, darlin'. Just not anywhere good.
- Traveler Jones

Shangri-La (Southern Coast, Aberdeen Harbor)

Shangri-La is Aberdeen Harbor's largest floating restaurant, a multi-story barge that serves up a wide variety of seafood recipes made with the fresh fish from the local waters, as well as fresh imports from nearby Asian fisheries. In the past, most of the floating restaurants that shared this harbor catered to the tourists and served mediocre dishes, but Shangri-La is different. It caters to a mix of tourists and Wuxing-employed locals and has an expansive menu that fuses ethnicities from all over the globe, from Cantonese-style prawns in black bean sauce to Cajun catfish courtbouillon. And feel free to grab a dish of seafood dim sum from the carts that the wait staff wheels by; the shrimp dumplings are the finest in the city.

Besides the excellent food and the unique views from the windows that look out onto the water, Shangri-La is important precisely because it attracts the Wuxing crowd. Whether you are working your *guanxi* on a contact in the corporation or just looking to be seen by the right people, Shangri-La is the place for a runner to go if he's looking to maintain contact with Hong Kong's top corporation. I've heard that if you slip the wait staff an extra-large tip and a note, they can often point you to Wuxing executives looking for some shadow talent.

GETTING THE GEAR

A shadowrunner can't work without her toys. We all have our tools of the trade, whether it is cyberware, mystical talismans, or the latest hot code. If you are coming from elsewhere, bringing the goods with you can be risky, so it always helps to know where the locals shop.

Chop-Chop Shop (Kowloon City)

Sure, we'd all like to get our cyberware installed at a delta-grade clinic and spend a few weeks at a body-sculpting spa when we need to upgrade our adrenal gland, but let's be realistic. The SINless have to make do with what we've got. Sometimes you just have to get some work done quietly and on the cheap. Now, Hong Kong has more than its share of backroom doctors and second-hand goods, but when it comes to one-stop shopping, the place called the Chop-Chop Shop deep in the heart of Kowloon City is your best bet.

Remember, when it comes to health care, you pretty much get what you pay for. Don't ask too many questions about where the discount cyberware or generic bioware comes from, because you probably wouldn't like most of the answers. Don't ask why your doctor doesn't work at one of the corporate hospitals, because they've got their share of reasons that would probably make a patient nervous. That said, in a world where most hacks tend to vanish after a few months, the Chop-Chop Shop has been around for years, making it more reliable than the alternatives. Though they tend to get their parts courtesy of deals with the Black Chrysanthemums, the relationship is one-way, meaning you're not likely to become spare parts for the next guy. When it comes to shadow clinics, what more can you really ask?

- They stay in business because they are discreet. In a city where the police and government are corporate extensions, there's a lot to be said for any doctor who will tend to your wounds without filing any reports. The cops don't bother to shut them down because the doctors here don't ask their patients enough questions (or provide enough answers) to be terribly useful for major busts.

- Butch

Clockwerks (Central District)

For those of us who are too good for the Chop-Chop Shop's black market cyberware, you'll want to check out Clockwerks. Mitsuhama owns Clockwerks, but allows it to operate independently as a public high-end clinic capable of beta-grade implantation. In exchange, the clinic is expected to market MCT's latest developments.

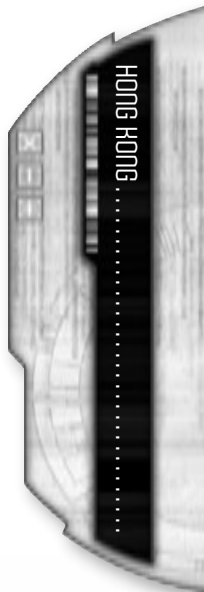
Clockwerks is minimalist, highly automated, and ultra-sterile, specializing in expert implantation and short hospital stays in lieu of a comforting bedside manner. One of Clockwerk's main draws is that some of the finest cyber-implantation doctors around the world can be requested to handle the surgery via telepresence robotic surgery, utilizing top-of-the-line Mitsuhama medical drones to enhance natural surgical precision instead of working against it.

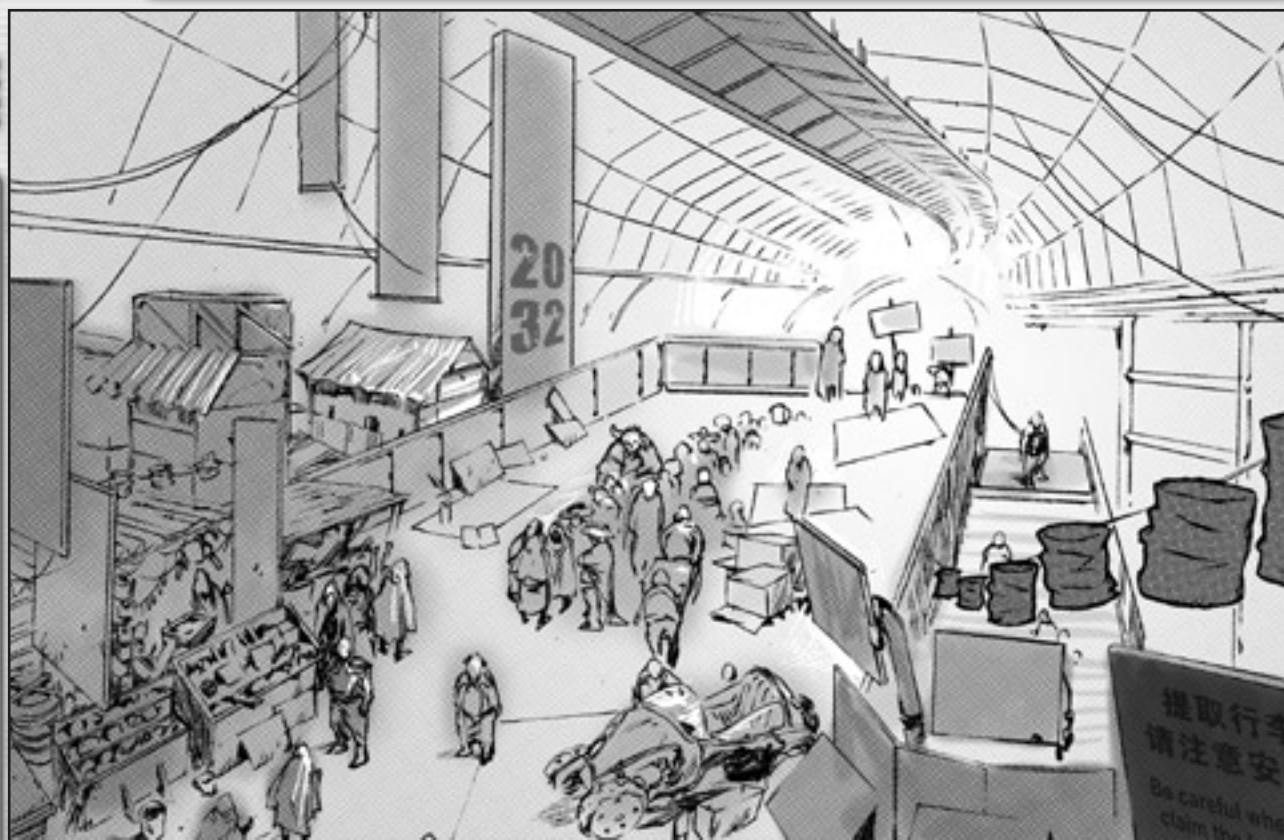
Clockwerks may be more accessible than most private corporate clinics, but it's still quite discerning. The waiting list can be impractically long, and the clinic often opts against taking some patients in favor of regulars or well-connected clients. Unfortunately for most shadowrunners, Clockwerks requires valid identification, extensive medical records and substantial health care coverage before they will even consider you as a client (though Mitsuhama has been known to pull some strings for important shadowrunners in their employ).

Evolution (Eastern District)

Evolution is a chain of "lifestyle modification" spas owned by Evo Corporation and dotted in major cities all over the world. The Hong Kong location is brand new, having just been built on redeveloped land near the newly installed beach in the Chai Wan suburb. "Pampered enlightenment" is Evolution's catchphrase, and the entire complex is designed to make you feel as if you're being eased into the next stage of mankind's existence. Body sculpting, genetic modification, anti-aging treatment, bioware implantation, even voluntary psychotropic conditioning for mood alteration are all offered to you in a heavenly setting. Want a massage from a sculpted beauty to ease the pre-surgery tension? At your service! How about a dip in the hot springs to loosen your implanted musculature? No problem! The cost is astronomical, but the service is unbelievable.

Unlike Clockwerks, Evolution isn't as picky about its client list as long as you have the cash. In fact, Evolution's "look the other way" courtesy is part of its charm, since they perform some questionable work for wealthy clients. If you happen to be filthy stinking rich, Evolution is a nice place to go since they won't ask questions. Then again, if you're filthy stinking rich, why are you a shadowrunner?





INCOMING FEED.....

The Golden Mile (Yau Tsim Mong District)

Otherwise known as Nathan Road, the Golden Mile is the nickname for the endless stretch of shops, street stalls, restaurants, peddlers, and hotels that flank both sides of this wide strip. It stretches through three neighborhoods and is always packed with people, even though the deals are not great, the merchandise is of risky quality and the noise of haggling could drive a deaf man insane.

On the northern end of the Golden Mile, in the Mong Kok neighborhood, shops line the street filled with cheap electronics. Among the fakes are overstocked, brand name items: commlinks, chip readers, audio-video gear, drones, and more. Be careful though—you may just discover that the bargain commlink you just bought is loaded with malicious software.

South of there is the stretch of the Mile that cuts through the Yau Ma Tei neighborhood. You'll know you've entered Yau Ma Tei when the software stands give way to squawking cages and open stalls full of "mystical" talismans. The famous Bird Garden is along this section, which is easily the largest concentration of bird dealers anywhere, not to mention the bamboo cages of crickets (for bird food) and dueling mantises. Just past the Bird Garden is the Jade Market, where tables and open suitcases display rows of jade jewelry, some of it claiming to be enchanted. If you're a skilled shopper and don't believe all the hype, you might actually find some great buys.

The talismonger stands soon blur into souvenir peddlers and dim sum carts, indicating that you've entered the south-

ernmost stretch of the Golden Mile, in Tsim Sha Tsui. This section is the ultimate tourist trap, with hotels that dump their guests right into the middle of endless restaurants, cafes, and kitsch dealers. The whole Golden Mile is designed to strip visitors of every last nuyen they have, beating their resistance down with pushy shopkeepers and a constant barrage of advertisements.

Speaking of advertisements, don't even get near the Golden Mile with your PAN on active mode; the corporations have a laissez-faire attitude about network enforcement here and the whole stretch is slammed by spam.

- Nathan Road is perfect for ducking on to if you think you're being tailed. The sheer saturation of advertising garbage makes it virtually impossible to run any sort of electronic surveillance here. The dense crowds, signs, and shop stalls also makes it hard to track someone physically.

- Fianchetto

Kai Tak Night Market (Kowloon City)

Let's say you're not in the market for a fake Fairlight or a jade love charm. Where do you go to pick up a new nine-millimeter, a box of armor-piercing rounds or parts for your drone's weapon system? The action you want is at the old Kai Tak airport off of Kowloon City after the sun goes down.

As night falls over Hong Kong, the Kai Tak runway lights up, bustling with smugglers off-loading their goods. Sampan

and fishing trawlers pull right up to the runway and hand off crates of gear they purchased from local pirates.

The Kai Tak Night Market is Hong Kong's worst-kept secret. The Executive Council knows about it, but the whole operation is run by the Triads—and the Triads have corporate ties. Hell, the corporations use the Night Market to get goods out of the city that aren't legal elsewhere, like Wuxing's Kong-chip BTLs. The Police Force raids the Night Market now and then for show, but by the time the cops arrive, all the really illegal goods have vanished. As long as you stay out of their way, the cops won't hassle you. You'll even be free to continue your shadow-shopping as soon as they leave.

- The Red Dragons may control the Container Port, but if it can be smuggled in on a small boat, you can get it into Hong Kong through Kai Tak instead. Be warned, the Ten Thousand Lions continue the old Yellow Lotus control of Kai Tak. If you haven't already worked out a deal with them in advance, they will take whatever cut of your operation they deem necessary.
- Sounder
- From what I hear, didn't you lose your right eye because of a smuggling operation through Kai Tak gone wrong?
- 2XL
- I was young and stupid. The Yellow Lotus taught me a lesson, and I learned it well.
- Sounder

WHERE TO CRASH AND STASH

Even if you're washing down your Long Haul pills with cans of FizzyGoo, you're going to need to crash somewhere, sometime. Whether you're looking for ultra-luxury or just a moth-eaten mat to sleep on, Hong Kong has you covered.

Kowloon Bay Typhoon Shelter

Bordering the old Kai Tak airport runway on both sides, the Kowloon Bay Typhoon Shelter is a densely packed tangle of boats, sails, and rigging. It's so crowded in some parts that the boats can no longer escape their place in the web. Here entire families live out their lives beyond the fringes of government or corporate oversight, SINless and forgotten. It is a mixing pot of cultures and languages, with locals chattering in Cantonese, Hindi, Vietnamese, and countless other tongues and specialized dialects. The people here are decidedly low-tech, though they've learned to live in the shadowy corners of the modern world. It's not an uncommon sight to see an old junk relying on the wind to sail a shipment of BTL chips into the smugglers' market on the runway, or young boys paddling a makeshift raft bearing boxes of grenades out to an idling smuggler's speedboat.

Though internal family bonds are strong among the dozens of internal communities, they aren't unfriendly to strangers or overly discerning about who they do business with. If a runner in Hong Kong needs to disappear, there is probably no better place than here. These people have been invisible to the rest of the world for decades. Just make sure you at least know Cantonese

or are wired up with a damn good linguasoft. The boat people out here don't tend to speak English, Japanese, or Mandarin, and their dialects contain a lot of local flavor.

- Wujen may be common in the rest of Hong Kong, but folk shamans are the spiritual shepherds of the Kowloon Bay boat people. Their backgrounds are too numerous to describe, ranging from Hakka sea witches to Tamil Murukan cultists. They are very clannish and superstitious, though. If you've got the Talent, don't go flaunting it or you could wind up in trouble.
- Goat Foot

The Peninsula Hotel (Yau Tsim Mong District)

Money comes in and out of Hong Kong every hour of every day, but the Peninsula is where it stays overnight. The colonial rooms and suites of the Peninsula Hotel look as if someone plundered a nation just to pay for the upholstery. As Tsim Sha Tsui fights tooth and nail against the decay that has crept into the rest of the Kowloon peninsula, this hotel remains its standard, the flawless jewel of the Hong Kong dream. Every whim and desire is taken care of before the guest even considers it, from the moment he arrives to the moment he is driven away in one of the hotel's fleet of armored Rolls-Royce Phaetons.

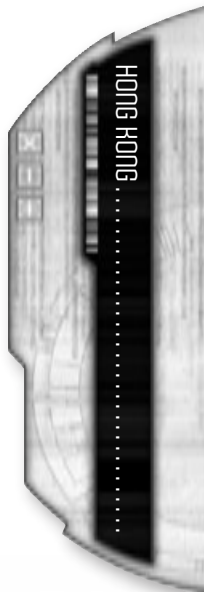
Each room is a subtle paradise served in the old style, before the days of flashy technology and gimmicks when service was king. There is no need to display a new view with augmented reality because every view is beautiful. There's no need to reach out to the global network because the staff makes sure anything you need is at your fingertips. It's the kind of place we in the gutters can only really dream about but might occasionally glimpse through the service of the cold-hearted and powerful bastards. All I have to say is be careful if you take a job from anyone staying at the Peninsula. They are not only powerful, influential, and wealthy, but they also aren't locals, which makes them even more dangerous.

Dynasty Mansions (Throughout Hong Kong)

Let me clue you in a bit: the Dynasty Mansions are neither mansions nor would any dynasty ever lay claim to them. It's a fancy and completely farcical brand name for a chain of run-down dumps. They are strewn across the sprawl wherever someone desperate might need to suddenly stay for a night. As it happens, that makes them fairly ideal for our line of business.

The Dynasty Mansions are conveniently located near transportation hubs—train stations, bus stations, ferry piers, and the airport—but that's where the convenience ends. The rooms are little more than coffins, the beds are hard foam slabs (made for easy disinfecting), and the strips of cheap lighting will drive you to near madness with their sixty-cycle hum. On the plus side, the Dynasty Mansions are dirt-cheap, don't ask any questions, and sure as hell don't bother to spend a yen on those fancy cameras and ID scanners that most hotels have.

Security at each Dynasty Mansion location is handled by down-and-out rent-a-cops, usually ones who were tossed out of a real law enforcement outfit because of some embarrassing character flaw, like drug addiction or a criminal history. In other words, watch your own back and take your weapons to bed



with you. Also, because of the nature of those who typically stay at the Mansions (no offense, mind you), the area around each one seems to be a breeding pool for those who would prey on the desperate: pimps, joytoys, chiphead muggers, and the rest. They make a good place to fall off the map, but be careful your plunge isn't permanent.

CityGate Complex (Lantau Island)

When the old CityGate was renovated and expanded two decades ago, they clearly had the traveling wageslave in mind. The whole complex sits right on the fringes of the Chek Lap Kok airport and borders a bus terminal and a train station. It's a completely uninspired mass of bleached-white hotel high-rises, shining with crisp banality. A bed with fresh white sheets, a Cantonese-made trid, and an ice bucket—oh, and a balcony view of the next high-rise over. If you get bored in the hotel (and unless you are lobotomized, you will), you can travel one block down to the CityGate Mall, featuring all the monoculture of home. There's a Kong-Wal-Mart, a McHugh's, a New You clinic, a Stuffer Shack, and everything else you'd find in a mall in Seattle, Kyoto, Paris, or Boise.

For all its faults, CityGate is certainly a step-up from a Dynasty Mansions dive. Surveillance is sparse and there's just one weak ID scan when you check in. Remember, though, that you're dealing with the international cubicle-jockey standard. Don't go flashing any visible 'ware or weapons or the nervous kid behind the counter will call the cops.

LIKELY TARGETS

Some places in Hong Kong are magnets for shadowbiz. They are also the places that pull the strings to make the city run. While jobs dealing with these locales may be plentiful, going in without knowing where you're going will just secure you a fast ticket to the lock-up—or a grave.

Government House (Central District)

Until 1997, when Hong Kong was handed back to China by the British, the Government House was the formal residence of the colonial governor. During the Japanese occupation of Hong Kong in World War II, the Japanese governor was housed here. Since Hong Kong's independence in 2015, Government House has been used by the Executive Council as a combination of office space and reception area for all sorts of social and political functions. It's just about the only government building you'll find in Hong Kong that includes butlers and maids as part of the full-time staff.

The building and grounds themselves are very symbolic. The architectural changes made by the Japanese occupational government created a fusion of Eastern and Western style that still stands today. In many ways, it symbolizes the character of Hong Kong. The view from the estate is blocked in every direction by the towering shapes of corporate skyscrapers, a not-so-subtle reminder to the Executive Council regarding who is really in charge.

Security is handled by private contractors—usually tied to whichever corporation has the Executive Council Chairman in its back pocket. Thanks to Chairman Deng's benefactors, the

Government House is watched over by Red Samurai. That will very likely change when Deng leaves in the next election.

- Fear is the primary motivation for each Executive Council Chairman bringing in his own security detail. Relying on another corporation for your personal security would ensure a very short term in office.
- Kay St. Irregular

Ikon Tower (Central District)

One of the quintessential towers that makes up Hong Kong's dazzling skyline, Xiao-Renraku's 79-story Ikon Tower walks a balancing act between being unobtrusive to the local landscape and dominating the surrounding area. The reinforced glass skin of the tower is transparent from the inside, allowing the workers to view the little people below. The outside of the glass panels are lined with ultra-thin displays. The building appears totally different depending on the time of day.

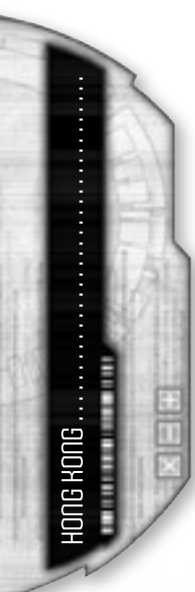
During the day, the building respects the local feng shui. The displays reflect its surroundings, making the building blend in. The geomancers claim that this allows for the unobstructed flow of *qi*. At night, the displays come alive with all sorts of media, from advertisements to animated film shorts, all dancing over the skin of the skyscraper and lighting up the Central skyline. In addition, these nighttime displays are AR-active, allowing those viewing the building to interact with what they see displayed.

The Ikon Tower houses most of Xiao-Renraku's Hong Kong facilities, including regional offices for many of the megacorporation's Asian subsidiaries. Security is tight to the point of paranoid, though its weakest area is magical security. Runners who have jobs to pull in or around this building should take advantage of that, because their Matrix security was originally designed to keep a hostile artificial intelligence out and their physical security is heavily augmented by Red Samurai detachments. Renraku doesn't pull any punches here on its home turf, especially since they currently head the government.

Po Lin Monastery (Lantau Island)

Usually when you think of Buddhist monasteries, most people have this image of sublime little retreats. The Po Lin Monastery is the other side of that coin. During the bid for Hong Kong's independence in 2015, the Po Lin monks led the faction of religious leaders who encouraged the secessionists, mostly so they could nab control of valuable Lantau Island land that was formerly under the control of the Chinese-backed government. When Hong Kong became a free city, the Po Lin monks turned around and negotiated with the corporations to develop some of the land. Needless to say, the Po Lin monks became very influential and very, very wealthy.

As is obvious from the twenty-six meter tall bronze Buddha that casts his serene gaze over miles of crafted landscape in the interior of Lantau, the Po Lin monks aren't terribly subtle about their power. They are Hong Kong's grandest monastery, and they attract not only legions of tourists, but also the patronage of powerful wujen. Po Lin serves to grease the wheels between the spiritual world and the corporate world in Hong Kong, whether they are setting up a meeting between SwissBank and





HONG KONG

INCOMING FEED

a skilled geomancer or finding a nice, private monastery retreat for the latest chipped-out sim starlet. The caliber of people who come through the Po Lin monastery's hallowed halls make it a prime target for extractions set up by competing corps or by rival magical groups.

- The Po Lin monastery continues to train some of the best geomancers and astrologers in Hong Kong, which allows them to influence many of the city's largest deals. The corporations know better than to butt heads with tradition and superstition in Hong Kong. They ensure that the Po Lin monks get their cut and the monks arrange for the stars to be in the corporation's favor.

- Jimmy No

Wuxing Skytower (Southern Coast, Aberdeen)

Far from the bustle of the crowded Central District, the Wuxing Skytower is without a doubt the most impressive sight in Aberdeen, rising up eighty-eight stories from the mountain-side to look down on Aberdeen and its harbor. The outside is covered in a rounded, channeled trusswork that Wuxing claims to guide *qi* energy through the building. Inside, the rectangular building envelops an internal octagon-shaped cylinder that runs up the entire height to a garden temple encompassing the top five floors. In the center of that garden temple is the famous artifact bequeathed to Wuxing from the late dragon Dunkelzahn, the Jade Dragon of Wind and Fire. It's said that the magical power of the artifact is so intense that you can feel

it when you enter the temple. But that's just rumor, though—I don't know of anyone who's ever been up there.

Though Wuxing owns buildings all over Hong Kong and Asia, the Skytower is its headquarters and spiritual center. I mean that literally: the Wu family ancestors were reburied in the Chinese cemetery in Aberdeen, not far from the Skytower itself. If you have to pull off any runs in the Skytower, keep in mind that while its Matrix and physical security staff are restrained, they've gone all out on magical security. Dozens of bound spirits patrol the grounds of the Skytower. Occasionally an astral shallow surrounds the grounds of the Skytower, which can throw a whole new level of complication into the plans for any job.

- The Skytower has been the target of no less than two dozen attempts to disturb the flow of *qi* emanating from the building. The few that have succeeded have marked strange fluctuations in the entire tapestry of magic in Hong Kong, as well as corresponding financial fall-out for Wuxing. Needless to say, security has been tightened each time.

- Ma'fan

Xuan Wu Aquacology (Tolo Harbor)

Evo NavTech's Xuan Wu ("Black Tortoise") Aquacology rises up out of the waves of the Tolo Harbor, a squat, dark dome bristling with retractable piers and helipads. It's large enough that even the Marine Authority's largest ships can slide into its internal dry-dock for repairs and modifications, far

from prying eyes. Evo claims that the Aquacology houses its research projects, including biotechnology labs, nano-fabrication facilities, shipbuilding factories, and even their Typhoon Analysis Center. It's also known that the Marine Authority's high-threat response teams are housed inside Xuan Wu; when the "Turtleshell" starts spitting out unmanned drones, low signature helicopters, and modified speedboats, you know there is big trouble going on somewhere in Hong Kong.

What leaves people wondering are the levels under sea level, descending down to the sea floor. According to reports Evo filed with the Executive Council, those floors contain aquaculture projects. No one ever sees any sea-grown food actually come out of Xuan Wu, however; meanwhile there are plenty of creepy rumors about things smuggled in, including captive people. While those rumors are enough to make any shadowrunner curious, remember that Xuan Wu is effectively a naval installation with all the military assets expected of one. It's completely offshore, meaning the only ways in are by air or by sea; a sensor net carefully monitors both methods.

- Truly ballsy smugglers occasionally try to skirt the Xuan Wu sensor net to run goods quickly from Shenzhen down to the piers in Sai Kung or the Kai Tak Night Market. It's risky and potentially deadly but it's fast, allowing you to beat your competition to market if you pull it off.
- Rigger X

THE LOW TOWN FLAVOR

Hong Kong isn't all glitz and glamour. In fact, there are gaping wounds in the sprawl. The Executive Council has simply turned their back since fixing them doesn't benefit their corporate masters. Sometimes these places can be valuable to those of us in the shadows, but they can also be as dangerous to us as they are to everyone else.

Kowloon Walled City

Some urban hells refuse to be buried, no matter how many flowers are planted over their graves. During the days of British Hong Kong, the Kowloon Walled City was a forgotten slum, a former Chinese fort inhabited by squatters that Britain never cared to dislodge. At the end of the twentieth century, a joint effort by the Chinese and the British led to the Walled City's evacuation and demolition. The tenements were torn down and a tranquil park was built over the dark memories of human suffering that had been the legacy of this land.

That didn't stop local residents from claiming that the damage had already been done, that the land was warped beyond repair. When the Awakening brought the old magical ways visibly back into Hong Kong, people claimed the park grew even worse, that it hummed with dark yin and twisted yang from the decades of death and violence that had once been commonplace there. Superstitious Chinese moved farther and farther away from the area; property values collapsed as refugees from war-torn Asian nations began to pour into Hong Kong seeking a peace they wouldn't find.

The Executive Council was faced with mounting pressure as squatters invaded Kowloon neighborhoods and crime fol-

lowed in their wake. An agreement born of this desperation came in 2032: the corporations agreed to build low-rent, high-capacity housing to address the squatter problem and the city agreed to relax many housing regulations on the site and grant tax incentives as an encouragement to the cooperating corporations. As is usually the case, the people got the short end of the stick on this arrangement.

The area of the park where property values were down to nearly nothing was snatched up by the corps and filled in with dense blocks of unsafe tenements. They were built so claustrophobically close to each other that from the outside, they appeared to form a wall around the area. Utilities, sanitation and security all became scarce in the new Kowloon Walled City, but crime and despair were in no short supply. The corporations even subcontracted out their rent collection to the Triads, because the slum had become so horrifying that they weren't willing to set foot there themselves.

A bad situation has only gotten worse. Tenements that were poorly designed from day one are now nearly forty years old. Entire floors have collapsed, only to be rebuilt and reoccupied as soon as the corpses of the former tenants were handed over to the Black Chrysanthemum organ-leggers. Armed garbage-collecting drones come around so rarely that piles of garbage burn in the narrow streets, sending toxic fumes into the hovels above. Tenants prey upon others or sell themselves just to pay the meager rent; the Triads make examples of those who fail to keep up with the payments. Astral space in the area is polluted and warped from crimes of the past and present, an emotional history of the damned.

I don't care how badass you think you are, never go into the Kowloon Walled City after dark. What happens there during the day is bad enough, but what happens after the sun sets is far, far worse.

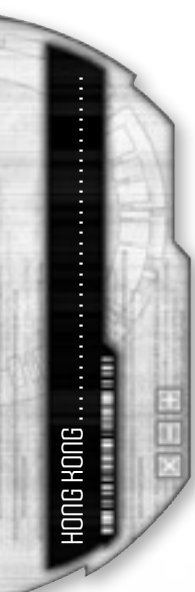
- The pain and misery here are entirely human, but the things that have come to encourage it are not.
- Man-of-Many-Names

- The Walled City is like nothing in Seattle, though you can find similar hovels in places like Metropole or Cape Town. You can literally stretch out of the window of one and touch the next one across the way. In between the buildings is a rat's nest of piping and wiring that siphon off the few working utilities to try to feed everywhere else. Most of the Walled City is without Matrix access, but occasionally a hot spot will appear for a brief window, likely set up by the Triads or techno-tribes.

- 2XL

Mamasan Laan's (Southern Coast, Aberdeen)

There's no sign on the outside of this sleepy little colonial mansion in Aberdeen to let you know where you are; you either know or you don't. People call it "Mamasan Laan's" because of the lady who runs the show, a matronly elven madame named Laan. Technically, she works for the Smoke Circle Society, but within the walls of her brothel, she is in charge. Don't let that motherly tone fool you; the girls in her house only continue so long as they can keep making money and weaving influence.



She is charm and sophistication with a cold, iron heart pumping anti-freeze through her veins.

The Smoke Circle Society is somewhat old-fashioned; they don't go in for the "made-to-order" prostitutes that have become the state-of-the-art craze throughout the vice industry. Instead they take advantage of the poor and downtrodden families throughout Asia, taking in unwanted young girls in exchange for a cash pittance. They train the girls intensely in Hong Kong culture, steeping them in language, manners and grace, and then hook them on the Triad's addictive products coming out of the Golden Triangle. The result is a sad sort of glamour that still appeals to the men of this city, especially the powerful men.

Mamasan Laan knows her classic "product" still has a market, and she's peddled it deep into the webs of *guanxi* that wrap around Hong Kong's elite. The "little black book" in her head could probably bring down the power structure of the city if it ever left the calculated corners of her mind.

Six Demon Bag (Varies Throughout Kowloon City)

Everyone knows about the occasional astral shallow around the Wuxing Skytower, but it's not the only astral phenomenon in the city. Since the Awakening, the run-down expanse of warehouses and parking garages southwest of the closed Kai Tak airport are rumored to be haunted and are only occupied by desperate squatters. Street folk and ghost sightings aren't all that region hosts, though; it's also the location of the Six Demon Bag, a sort of wandering arena for magical duels.

A wujen named Lei organizes the duels, which pit boastful wizkids against Triad apprentices in battles for magical supremacy. The sporadic astral shallows throughout this region are the perfect settings for the duels, since the astral pyrotechnics become visible to the eyes of even the most mundane spectator. Lei seems to have a hidden talent for being able to predict where the astral shallows will form, so the duels can be arranged days in advance even for shallows that only stay around for a few hours.

Word of mouth is the only way to figure out when and where a set of duels will be taking place, but word spreads rapidly when Lei announces the next match. Most of the duels are contests of astral manipulation between the astral forms of the two participants and are harmless to bystanders, but there are the occasional sorcery shoot-outs. Lei sets up wards to keep the duels from spilling over, but since a ward can block one's view of the action in an astral shallow, many spectators are left to their own defenses.

- In addition to the occasional loose fireballs, the duels sometimes come under attack from hostile paracritters or spirits. The astral shallows make the area light up to anything seeking prey from astral space, and dueling mages can be particularly vulnerable to a surprise attack. Attend at your own risk.

- Ethernaut

- And bring popcorn as it's hard to get locally.
- Traveler Jones

Yen-Yen (Wanchai-Causeway District)

This dive's name comes from old Cantonese opium slang, attributed both to the drug and the addictive craving for it.

The name is fitting, since Yen-Yen's is where you go for just about anything you have to have but shouldn't be able to get. On the surface, Yen-Yen looks like an herbal teasop, crowded with the giant brass kettles and tea jars common to a million other tea joints throughout the city. Anybody who is anybody, though, knows the real business is downstairs in the labyrinthine cellar levels, which doubles as a storefront for all sorts of vices and a den for their use. Kong chips, dreamchips, moodies, hyper-fabricated heroin, bliss, zen, red orchid: anything you might want, they can likely get here. After you've handed over the money, feel free to take your brainbender and collapse into some dark corner in the deeper levels and rot away. If you manage to cack off in the process, they'll hand your corpse over to the Black Chrysanthemums, who are sure to find some use for it.

The stuff at Yen-Yen's isn't cheap, running well over the typical street value. Managing the connections it has to the various Hong Kong Triads isn't cheap either, nor is paying off the cops to ensure that it sticks around. With its customers, it makes up for the cost in reliability and variety and deals with a wealthier class than the Kowloon City street junkie.

- For a fee, Yen-Yen will drug someone up and hold them temporarily. If you need someone pacified and hidden and perfect health isn't a requirement, it's an option to keep in mind. Be wary, though; if your songbird might be of greater value to the Triads, Yen-Yen won't hesitate. They owe too many favors.

- Hannibelle

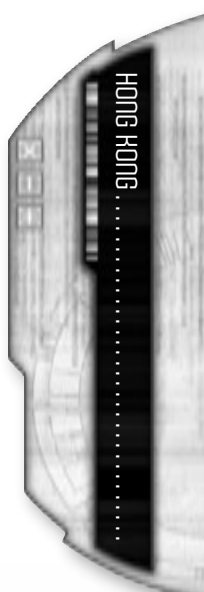
THE UNREAL

There are places in Hong Kong that defy easy labeling. Strange and deeply mysterious, you never know when a run might involve one of these odd corners of the sprawl.

The Myriad Dream (Wanchai-Causeway District)

To the casual observer, the Myriad Dream might seem like a bad take on the North American phenomenon of coffin clubs. Patrons pay at the door to pass through a set of wards and into the club, where bands perform acts steeped more heavily in emotion than talent for the benefit of astral observers. The coffins are missing here, though, meaning the magically talented in the crowd typically just watch the acts through astral perception, as few are unwise enough to zone out and leave their bodies alone on the floor of a nightclub. All in all, most foreign visitors leave the club wondering how Hong Kong got it all wrong.

Of course, like most things in Hong Kong, the real action is behind the scenes. Patrons who know the right people and pay the right premiums are invited downstairs, past another set of wards and into the underground atrium where the real shows happen. Here, the special patrons leave their bodies in one of eighteen comfortable cubicles and make their way to the atrium's astral side, where talented conjurers risk their lives to put on miraculous spirit displays. Powerful bound spirits recite spirit-stories, woven tales of emotional poetry that are intoxicating to observers in the astral plane. Some wonder if any of the unbelievable tales the spirits tell are true, but it hardly matters, as the performances are amazing either way.



- This whole thing is going to blow up in their face sooner or later. The demand for more spectacular shows is leading to the binding of exotic spirits of greater and greater power. How long before they turn to summoning an insect spirit queen, a blood spirit, a toxic spirit, or worse?
- Axis Mundi

Market Research Group (aka “M.R.G.” or “The Morgue”; Hong Kong Grid)

Common knowledge is that the Market Research Group—the world’s largest online repository of marketing data—was the first casualty of the Crash 2.0, torn down by the earliest waves of the strange Jormungand worm. In truth, the MRG didn’t quite die with the rest of the Singapore grid on that day, due entirely to the unparalleled corporate paranoia of Renraku.

Soon after the appearance of Deus, Renraku backed up everything of virtual value behind layers of secrecy and security, including a silent effort to copy the endless logs of credit histories, purchasing profiles, and transaction logs contained in the MRG. When the Singapore Market Research Group crashed and burned, the Renraku-built Hong Kong copy became the only record of this information left on the globe.

The Morgue is an apt nickname for the host. Purchasing histories of billions of people are in cold storage here, analyzed by endless virtual agents for anything of value to Renraku. They sell the information to lending institutions, public relations firms, and even spammers—an invaluable service in the modern world of the augmented reality Matrix.

Though some skilled hackers have pried their way inside, there is no hidden society of hackers buried deep within Renraku’s MRG (as was the case with the old Morgue), and the corporation protects their asset ruthlessly. The new Market Research Group’s virtual host is a maze of cold, brushed steel cabinets and files—a combination of a data warehouse, a morgue, and a sanitarium—scoured by gaunt, monastic agent programs who calmly rummage through the information. Authorized users access the data within the Morgue through either the virtual host or augmented reality interfaces.

- The new Morgue is Renraku’s little secret. Though much of the information inside is up for sale to the highest bidder, they have never advertised or admitted that they still possess the original MRG’s complete record history. Many of the other megacorps owned shares in the original MRG and would be pissed to learn that control has been snatched out from under them.

- Pistons

- I’m willing to bet most of the other megacorporations already know about the new Morgue, but what can they really do about it? They could take it to the Corporate Court, but they’d have a hard time bringing a case against Renraku for copying data that they partially owned.

- Glitch

- I’ve heard that a handful of the sysops and veterans of the old data haven survived and have their eyes squarely fixed on

Hong Kong’s MRG and plan to make this Renraku host a target. Expect fireworks.

- Slamm-O!

The Whampoa (Kowloon City)

When the economic prosperity of Kowloon City took a nosedive, many bankrupt commercial properties were appropriated by squatters and gangs. The bizarre Whampoa, a mall in the shape of a ship in the neighborhood of Hung Hom, was no exception. It became home to a number of strange urban tribal communities over the decades.

The Whampoans of today are an odd tribe of techno-fetishists and tinkerers. From antenna towers mounted on the ship’s highest point, they maintain Hong Kong’s local data haven, known simply enough as the Whampoa Data Haven. They offer technical assistance to a number of gangs and Triads in Hong Kong, which keeps their community safe from intrusion. Even an attempted raid by the Hong Kong Police Force seven years ago resulted in the cops being fought off by armed gunmen from gangs that would normally be in competition. The Whampoans are too valuable of a resource to risk losing.

The tribe largely lives in what used to be the Jusco department store. They’ve converted it into ramshackle housing, mostly tents and walled-off cubbyholes. The large gaming arcade has been made into the tribe’s workshop, which is cluttered with computer parts, cabling and active augmented reality displays. The ship’s theme is carried into the Whampoa’s AR and VR presence, such that even the virtual setting of the data haven appears to be a vast ship cutting through the grid. The mysterious Whampoans who run the data haven even speak reverently about someone they call “The Captain,” but no one outside the tribe has ever seen him.

- The Whampoans have probably the largest concentration of technomancers in Hong Kong. Others can be found from the Matrix gangs of Mong Kok to the corporate research centers in Central, but this is the only place you’ll find them gathered.

- Glitch

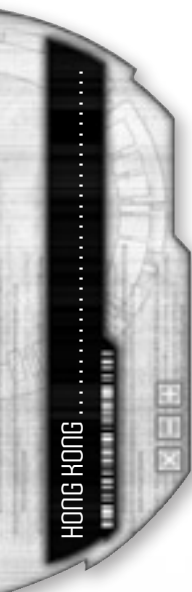
- That’s what you think.

- Puck

Wong Tai Sin Temple (Kowloon City)

The largest temple complex in Kowloon and among the largest in Hong Kong, the Wong Tai Sin temple holds dozens of shrines to Chinese divinities, including the central shrine to Wong Tai Sin, one of the Taoist Great Immortals. The temple is frequently visited by the desperate and poor of Kowloon City who cannot make the trip to the monumental temples of Lantau Island. The whole complex is filled with the curling smoke of hundreds of burning incense cones. However, a number of temple buildings in the interior of the grounds remain off-limits to visitors, an edict even the local Triads fear to challenge. In fact, wujen who have visited the grounds claim that there is something unnerving and concealed within the *qi* of the forbidden temples.

Local rumor persists that the interior temples house a real divinity, either a Taoist immortal imbued with divine al-



chemy or a living Buddha mummified but held to this world through enduring compassion, depending on who you ask. Some claim to have seen him personally on rare occasions, his body hidden underneath an ornate silk robe, as he was moved between temples on a litter. But aside from the rumor, there's very little evidence to back up the claim. Only thick superstition remains.

- Something is very wrong about the astral space around those off-limit temples. It's hard to tell because it appears that it is being cleansed nearly constantly by an order of monk-attendants, but you can definitely feel it if you get close. Don't get too close, though; the monks are serious about the boundaries.
- Jimmy No
- Their living Buddha's immortality is not meant to be and the world knows it.
- Man-of-Many-Names
- There is much more to it than that. Check the information on the Bureau of Heaven and Earth further on in this feed.
- Puck
- Can't say I know much about the dark secrets of the temple, but I can tell you one thing for sure. Four months back, I was hired for an extraction from the temple grounds. Not surprisingly, the target was a monk, but I don't think Mr. Johnson realized I know as much about Asian religions as I do. I could tell by this monk's robes that he wasn't a Taoist or a Chinese Buddhist. He was a Tibetan Buddhist.
- Sticks

GOVERNMENT: THE SNAKE'S TAIL

Posted By: Money Lee

In Hong Kong, they have a saying: "One cannot tell where the snake's body ends and the snake's tail begins." You see, the snake's tail is Hong Kong's government and the snake's body would be the corporations. No matter how closely you examine the situation, it is hard to tell where one ends and the other begins. To take the analogy even further: the snake's tail goes where the body goes. I suppose we could bemoan the servitude of Hong Kong's government all night, but the current situation is not much different than the situation that has always existed here. All that has changed is who holds the lease. Once it was the British. Then it was the People's Republic of China. Now it's the corporations. At least the corporations aren't pretending to be communist.

At the foundation of Hong Kong's government is the Board of Governors. You half expect a cozy little room full of chubby generals and merchants with handlebar moustaches and monocles deciding policy over a spot of tea. These days it's a climate-controlled conference room full of corporate lawyers in custom-tailored suits from C. K. Cheung's. When the corporations led the charge on Hong Kong's independence in 2015, they naturally turned to themselves when it came time to figure out who would run the place. And well, let's admit it, representative democracy is so damned ... *un-*

predictable. So they decided to skip the middleman and institute a corporate government, starting on the ground floor with the Board of Governors.

The Board of Governors is, according to its own advertisement, a group of local corporations with Hong Kong's best interests at heart and an eye to the city's future. So who determines which corporations sit on the board and run the show? The corporations, of course!

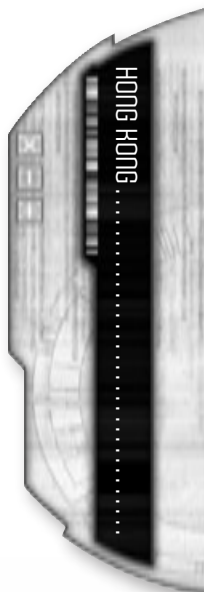
Corporations are constantly applying for membership and organizing self-congratulating presentations to the Board of Governors to prove why they should be a member. The base requirement is that the corporation applying has to be headquartered in Hong Kong (foreign corporations usually apply under a local subsidiary or division), but nowadays that isn't nearly enough. A prospective corporation must demonstrate how it has invested in Hong Kong's growth, which can take all kinds of forms, but boils down to the question of how the applicant corporation will benefit the Board of Governors' bottom line. If three-quarters of the corporations currently on the board can find a way to use the prospective corporation for their own personal agendas, then the board has a new member. If not, well, there's always next year. At present, twenty-eight corporations sit on the Board of Governors.

THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL

If a job gets too messy, you hire some other fool to do it. Running a city is a thankless, difficult, stressful job where you have to at least pretend to answer to the unwashed masses. The Board of Governors set up the Executive Council, an eight-member committee of exemplary Hong Kong citizens to represent the people and run the city on their behalf. But, of course, *you* don't vote for them. Every two years, two Executive Council slots come up for election and the corporations on the Board of Governors put up some possible candidates and vote among themselves in a closed door session. Of course, every single one of these candidates is on some corporation's payroll, somehow. Voila, instant government!

- The Executive Council used to change on a rotating four-year cycle through the Board of Governors. The Board continued to get larger, and the more influential corporations don't like having to sit out the Executive Council for longer and longer stretches of time until it rotated back to them. In the chaos of the Crash 2.0 in 2064, the more powerful corporations changed the rules. The little guys couldn't do a damn thing about it.
- Cosmo

The Executive Council effectively acts as Hong Kong's legislative and executive branches. Though teams of corporate lawyers technically write the laws, the Executive Council votes on them, with a six-member majority necessary to pass. Every year they elect one of their own to be the chairman, and it is his job to set the agenda (and consequently bury the ideas his corporate masters don't like). Though Council members cannot be re-elected consecutively after their eight-year term is up, there is no limit on how many of those years they may serve as chairman.



- The old tradition of each Council member being the employee of a single corporation is starting to go out of style. It is simple math: there are eight Executive Council member spots and twenty-eight corporations on the Board. What corporation wants to be the wallflower? With the rules changed from rotating seats to elections, the more popular candidates tend to have backing from multiple corporations or whole industry lobbies.

- Fianchetto

Executive Council Chairman Deng Sai-Kan

(Term ends in 2072; Backed by Xiao-Renraku and Eastern Tiger Corporation)

Mr. Deng is a weasel and a corporate shill, a fifty-five year old former barrister and contract negotiator. He helped facilitate Renraku's purchase of Xiao Technologies from Evo, no doubt the precursor that led to him being Renraku's mouthpiece on the Executive Council. Though he is entering the twilight of his term, he has served as chairman for the past five years, which is no small feat.

- Deng gets plenty of assistance from information fed to him by Xiao-Renraku's control of the city's data security. It's no coincidence that the last Executive Council member who butted heads with Mr. Deng ended up tied to trafficking underage Filipino girls. Since then, few are willing to push against Chairman Deng's proposals too hard.

- Glitch

Mr. Deng's agenda has been laid out by his sponsors at Xiao-Renraku: keep NeoNET out of the city. He's done a remarkably good job at it so far, managing to tangle all of NeoNET's attempts in endless red tape and investigations. This has kept Hong Kong's information infrastructure securely in the hands of Xiao-Renraku and Eastern Tiger for the past five years. Deng Sai-Kan's days on the Executive Council are coming to a close and the winds are shifting; the newer Council members seem more concerned with the rising refugee problems and less concerned with limiting NeoNET's influence in the city.

Executive Council Member Diego Mangabat

(Term ends in 2072; Backed by Daiatsu, pro-immigration groups)

Diego Mangabat is probably best known for trid spots where he's shaking hands with the immigrant population down in Kwan Tong or Kwai Tsing. Mr. Mangabat is an immigrant himself, a Filipino who worked his way up from a laborer to the regional vice president of Daiatsu's Hong Kong office. He's a colorful character on the Executive Council, dressed in bright tropical shirts and speaking plainly to the people. Lately he has been subdued, as if someone has been pressuring him not to make any waves before his upcoming Council retirement.

- Some Filipino Huk rebels I worked with a few years back spat when I mentioned Diego Mangabat's name, claiming he was a traitor to his people, overseeing slave labor camps personally for his Japanese employers.

- Kane

- If someone has proof of that, it could be the blackmail they are holding over his head. The immigrant population that usually supports Mr. Mangabat would turn on him in an instant if they knew about it. I guess the real question is: who suddenly has Diego Mangabat in their back pocket and what do they want?

- Fianchetto

Executive Council Member Yi Jing-Ze

(Term ends in 2074; Backed by Wuxing)

The elderly matriarch Madame Yi Jing-Ze is a wealthy patron of Hong Kong's art community, sitting on the boards of half a dozen museums and galleries in the Wanchai-Causeway District. She was once a first-class economist working for Wuxing Financial Services. Just because she's been enjoying her retirement for twelve years doesn't mean her former employer won't call in favors.

- She's been married to half the Wuxing senior executives in Hong Kong. She recently divorced husband number five, the Chief Financial Officer of Minh-Pao Exports, a Wuxing subsidiary.

- Ma'fan

- Minh-Pao Exports, huh? That outfit's been linked to all sorts of criminal involvement, ranging from Triads to Yakuza. If Minh-Pao is helping launder some syndicate money, Jing-Ze's ex-husband would certainly have been involved. Perhaps Ms. Yi has ties to groups even seedier than Wuxing.

- 2XL

Yi Jing-Ze is a die-hard fiscal conservative and is shamelessly anti-immigration. She has publicly pursued cuts in government spending and privately encouraged corporate kickbacks. She ruthlessly seeks stricter border control but currently lacks a strategy for paying for it. Word is that she has been cozying up to foreign leaders, trying to get them to staunch the flow of refugees from their nations into Hong Kong in exchange for promises of increased economic cooperation.

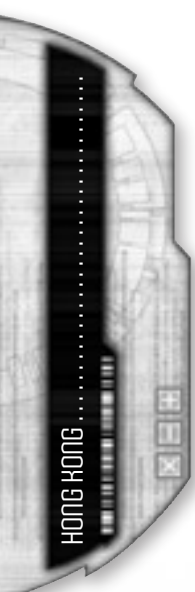
- If the syndicates really do have their hooks in her, you have to wonder what they think of her calls for tighter borders, which would cut into their bottom line.

- Red Anya

Executive Council Member William Wu

(Term ends in 2074; Backed by Yokogawa, Mitsuhama, and other Japanese business interests)

Pudgy, red-faced William Wu is a bit of a local hero in Hong Kong. Back when Petrovski Security still handled Hong Kong's law enforcement, he was the Commander of the Organized Crime Task Force. He subsequently worked for Yokogawa's Emeral Crisis Management, the corporation that handles Hong Kong's fire departments and many of its hospitals. From there he was recommended to the Executive Council and faced very little opposition for the position. Though he doesn't have the shrewd political skills of his peers, his knack for navigating the labyrinth of civic administration keeps him afloat in the pool of sharks.





Mr. Wu has been pushing hard to get more city funding for infrastructure improvement and emergency services, and he's been able to capitalize on the news reports of the terrorist attacks to gain support. Needless to say, his friends among his former employers, Mitsuhama and Yokogawa, have no problem with more funding coming to areas where they enjoy steady contracts. Wu is, however, running up against Councilwoman Yi Jing-Ze, who has been against increases in budget spending and has been coached to oppose anything that might increase the influence of the Japanese corporations in Hong Kong by her contacts at Wuxing.

- When he was working for Petrovski, Wu cracked down hard on the Triads and shipped a number of their people off to corporate prisons in the Philippines or on the mainland. I'm sure if Wu's paranoid security staff dropped their guard for a moment, the Triads would take the opportunity to settle the score.

- Ma'fan

- I wouldn't be surprised if his orders to crack down on the Triads came from Yakuza up in Mitsuhama's ranks who wanted to thin out the Pacific Rim competition a bit.

- Mihoshi Oni

- With the 9x9 attacks headlining the evening news, William Wu's getting a lot of popular support thanks to his record. There are a number of corporations who are pushing to get him into

the Executive Council chairman position after Deng is gone. Of course, Madame Yi will still be around then and I think she'd choke on the idea of William Wu as Chairman.

- Pistons

Executive Council Member Mei Sterling

(Term ends in 2076; Backed by the Horizon Group)

Mei Sterling, self-made eleven bazillionaire, has created a lavish living out of her self-help programs. Her first virtual course, "Finding Your Pinnacle," sold in the billions worldwide. In it, she tells her story of rising from the mean streets of Hong Kong to the lap of luxury through a focused meditation technique where she envisions the vast reaches of her own abilities. For thirty nuyen a month, you can do it too!

Fortunately for Mei, at the pinnacle of her success she found the Horizon Group waiting. In Mei, the Horizon Group found a popular celebrity to endorse their media deregulation efforts on the Council, which eased the corporation's absorption of many smaller Hong Kong media outlets. Mei's devil-may-care attitude has made her a few enemies. Her open embrace of new technologies and her willingness to open Hong Kong to more foreign investment has put her dead against Chairman Deng's protectionist agenda.

- Xiao-Renraku makes a good profit selling copy-protection and encryption schemes to media companies in Asia. Mei Sterling has put a negative spotlight on the invasiveness of some of

Xiao-Renraku's software, though, presumably because the Horizon Group has ideas how to profit from emerging new technologies. Chairman Deng actually accused Ms. Sterling in session of encouraging the theft of Hong Kong's media property.

- Glitch

Executive Council Member Tai Kong

(Term ends in 2076; Backed by Ares and other corporate military interests)

Easily the most hawkish Council member, Tai "King" Kong's election was a knee-jerk reaction to recent terrorist attacks by 9x9. Kong is a retired general from the mercenary outfit Combat, Inc., which used to be based in Hong Kong until a recent shift to Macao. In a move that hasn't surprised anyone, Tai Kong has pushed for increased security spending for the sprawl and options for dealing with the refugee situation, including military options.

- An anonymous leak from the Executive Council outlined one option that included undermining terrorist elements in refugee-heavy districts through the use of AR and magic, then occupying the worst areas with military assets. It even called for a new detention center to be built on High Island in Sai Kung to contain terrorists. Tai Kong has called for an investigation. The Board of Governors said that if it is discovered that a Council member was the source, the individual will be removed from their position.

- Picador

His proposals have been received with mixed feelings in committee, however. Corporations that stand to make billions on the military contracts—like Evo, Ares, and Baihu—back General Tai's ideas and keep playing the fear card to gain popular support. Opponents criticize the increase in tax spending that the proposals would require, though no doubt the critics are also pushed by corporations who fear that Tai Kong's proposals could weaken their pool of cheap refugee labor.

- The opposition is getting support from an unlikely ally: the Triads. The Triads effectively are the government in the worst slums of peninsula. Military action in their neighborhood hurts their bottom line. The debate is getting so contentious that there have been rumors that the Triads are volunteering to help shut down 9x9 if that will keep the soldiers from marching in.

- Jimmy No

- There's a reason they call him "King" Kong. General Tai is a troll. A big troll.

- Fatima

Executive Council Member Shan

(Term ends in 2078; Backed by a cooperative of smaller Asian corporations)

It's a real pity that Council member Shan teleconferences to the Council meetings, because I'd really love to see these political figureheads staring across a conference table at an eastern dragon's snout. That's right, Shan is a dragon. Dragons, while not common in Hong Kong (or anywhere else for that matter),

are pretty readily accepted by Chinese culture, which always gave dragons the roles of officials in the Celestial Bureaucracy. Shan isn't really your stereotypical politician, though, or even your stereotypical dragon. To the handful of beings he considers more significant than him, he's perfectly polite and respectful. To the many beings he sees as playthings, he's playful, bawdy, and mischievous.

Shan is an engaging gambler; he loves to make every aspect of his life into games of strategy and chance. This extends much farther than his addiction to games of mah-jongg; his whole career is built upon a careful manipulation of risks and rewards. A corporate shark, Shan has made a fortune buying up Asian companies, remaking them, and selling them off to other corporations. He's shown a masterful ability to take advantage of conflicts of agenda between politicians and corporations. An able mediator when the situation calls for it, Shan has also shown considerable ability to profit from discord.

Though Shan is a crafty critter, he knows he owes his position in the Executive Council to a number of smaller Asian corporations who pooled their membership on the Board of Governors to ensure his election. Baihu Corporation, Kolkata Integrated Talent and Technologies, Shibata Construction and Engineering, Tan Tien, and more call on Shan for favors to make sure the bigger corporations don't drown their voice out.

- Shan takes advantage of more than just political and corporate competition; he is also playing a dangerous game, profiting from the disparate agendas of his superiors: the great dragons. Shan has put himself between Lung and Ryumyo in the Pacific Rim, working out struggles or taking advantage of moves by those two to secure influence in the region.

- Winterhawk

Executive Council Member Dr. David Tan

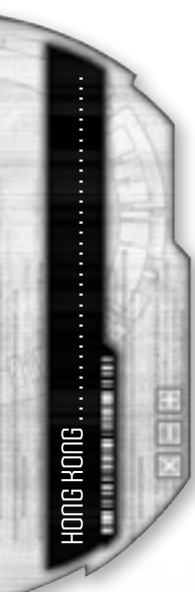
(Term ends in 2078; No direct backers, but too many suitors to list)

This quiet young idealist is on the Council as the result of compromise politics; he was the only candidate who was harmless enough to get the backing of multiple corporations in a deeply partisan Board of Governors. A well-educated bodysculpting surgeon, David Tan's only real corporate links are friendships with a number of executives who get work done through his practice.

All that could be about to change—just about every corporation on the Board of Governors and numerous entities outside the Board are looking for ways to ensure Tan's loyalty to their cause and secure one more precious vote on the Executive Council. With the sharks circling, I don't give Tan's optimistic idealism a long lifespan.

- Since he's new to the Council, the corporations are still trying to woo him. His calendar is filled with lunch dates, meetings, and parties with the Hong Kong elite. At the same time, no corporation has had full success in bringing him under their wing yet. I expect the gloves will come off soon.

- Lei Kung



- They'll have to be careful, because the corporations aren't the only ones trying to influence Dr. Tan. There are at least a couple of eastern dragons who would like to have more direct influence over the Executive Council.

- Winterhawk

- I've heard rumors that David Tan secretly works for the Hong Kong Police Force, bodysculpting protected witnesses for high-profile cases. He rebuilds their physical identities so they can go into hiding after testifying against some of the big Triad members.

- Nephrine

- I've heard something similar, but my sources tell me that he bodysculpts corporate spies. He helps create identities for them so they can infiltrate corporations, which would leave him with some powerful secrets given his new place on the Executive Council.

- Fianchetto

THE STREET BEAT

The Executive Council is important for those of us in the shadows to understand because some of us will likely end up working for them. Of course, it's equally important to know those whom you might work against. Hong Kong is a fully privatized city—the law enforcement, border security, and even health care are all contracted out to lowest bidder. Don't let that give you the impression that the standards are low, though. Hong Kong is also a corporate city. If the failures of any civic contract infringe on the city's ability to make money, someone will be out of a job.

The **Hong Kong Police Force** underwent a recent change in management from MCT's Petrovski Security to Ares's Knight Errant, following a newsnoop's story that exposed links between Petrovski's police force and the Japanese Watada-ren-go Yakazu.

Visitors to Hong Kong should beware: the police out here have a rather wild take on law enforcement. Legal repercussions against the police are almost non-existent in Hong Kong, which makes the police more apt to bring out the big guns and pull crazy stunts to take down the perpetrator. It's almost like the Wild West out here, with Knight Errant as the sheriff.

- Case in point: In Hong Kong, safe deposit boxes are still a big deal. Families like to keep their assets in material goods rather than digital numbers, making old fashion bank heists still worthwhile. Five armed men tried to pull one off last month at a Bank of China branch in a high rise downtown. The police boxed them in before they could escape, and the whole thing rapidly evolved into a hostage situation. In the middle of "negotiations," the police stormed the bank by rappelling down from the roof and blowing the windows open with explosive charges. The final outcome was five dead bank robbers, two dead hostages, two wounded police officers and thirteen rescued people. It was seen as a perfectly acceptable outcome.

- Lei Kung

- The HKPF occasionally raids the Kowloon Walled City, though only for truly important operations. They go in heavily armed and outfitted and there's usually a high body count on both sides.

- Picador

Hong Kong is an independent port surrounded on all sides by water, which gives the **Hong Kong Marine Authority** significant power. Evo NavTech has held this contract for decades, even back when they were Yamatetsu. They take their job very seriously.

The saying goes that the police are wild in the streets and serious at home, but the marines are serious on the water and wild while on leave. The Marine Authority patrols the rivers and sea-lanes of Hong Kong with everything from souped-up speedboats to heavily armed cutters, shutting down smuggler routes, human traffickers, and pirates whenever the opportunity presents itself. They know they can only do so much, however, so they tend to focus on the big fish while looking away from small-time illegal sea traders. If you're one of those, however, don't get too soft—the Marines will still net the small fries in order to flip them against their bosses.

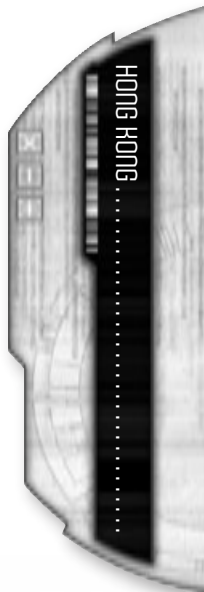
- It's important to remember that the Marine Authority doesn't just use boats. The sea is their turf, but they also have helicopters and VTOLs at their disposal, and they make frequent use of aerial and seaborne drones. The sensor network they have set up in the waters around Hong Kong is constantly being upgraded in the ongoing arms race with increasingly savvy pirates and smugglers.

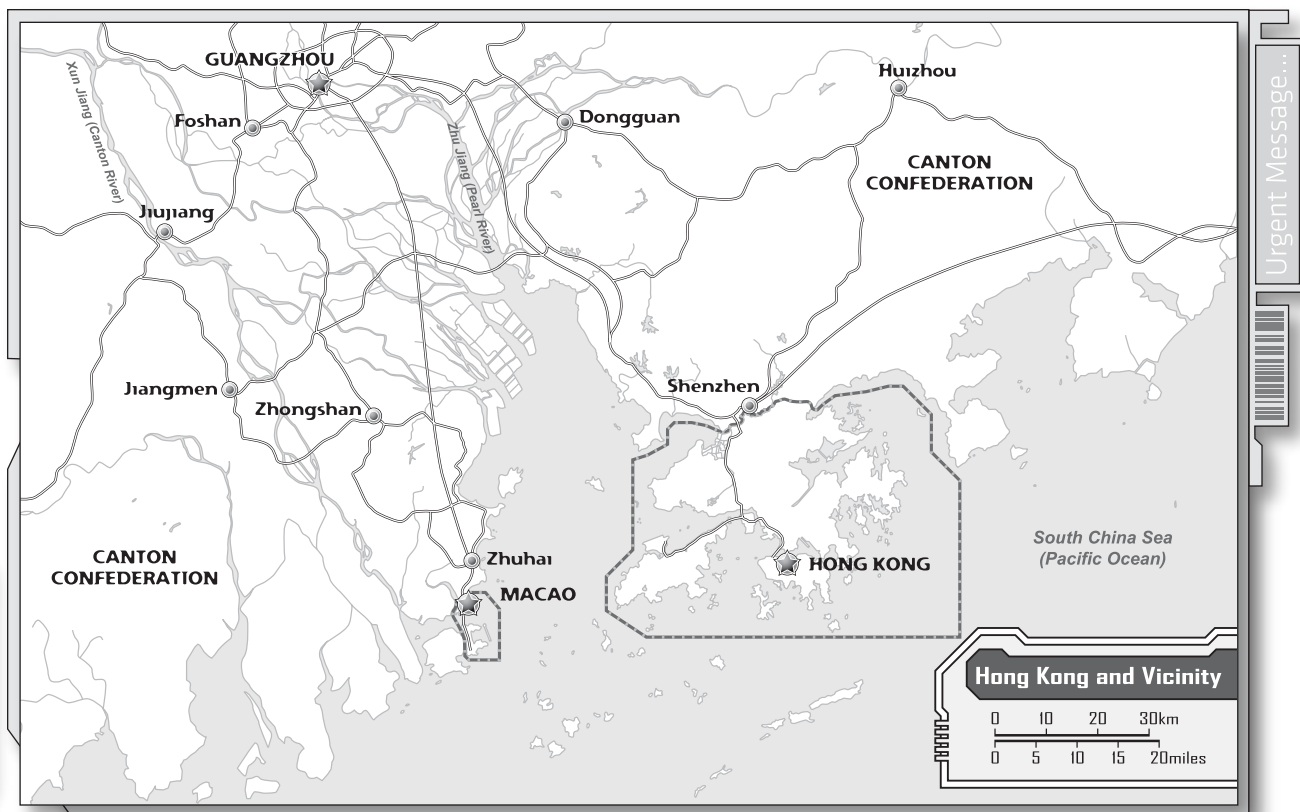
- Mihoshi Oni

Firefighting and emergency medical services are handled by **Yokogawa Corporation**, a powerhouse in the civic safety business in Asia. The fame that their Emerald firefighters earned back in the comet days, responding to earthquakes and volcanic eruptions, is rapidly fading. It's back to business as usual for these hard-working, hard-drinking, hard-gambling blue-collar folks. DocWagon operates in Hong Kong through a partnership with Yokogawa: DocWagon gets access to the market that Yokogawa effectively owns and Yokogawa in turn gets a share of DocWagon's profits without having to build a single ambulance. As a result, DocWagon contracts purchased in dozens of other cities around the world are perfectly valid in Hong Kong with the same guaranteed response times. However, turf battles between Emerald/DocWagon and the Hong Kong Police Force are common, since both respond to emergency calls.

IN THE NEIGHBORHOOD

Hong Kong may be a free city, but it isn't self-sufficient. It depends on its trade relationships to survive—particularly its relationship with the Canton Confederation, the contentious and wealthy Chinese splinter state that borders Hong Kong on the north and shares the significant Pearl River Delta. The Canton Confederation is a gilded Byzantine web of corporate and criminal intrigue, barely held together by lucrative trade agreements. Their alliance is so tenuous that Hong Kong generally prefers to deal with the nation's more powerful cities





than to navigate the central government's ministers. Of those cities, two that share particularly strong links to Hong Kong are the port of Macao across the Pearl River Delta and the city of Shenzhen just across the border to Hong Kong's north.

Macao

Locals are all too serious when they say that Macao's three largest demographics are gamblers, mercenaries, and drunks. Macao is Hong Kong's crazy little brother across the Delta, famous for being the home of countless small mercenary outfits that cater to war-torn Asian nation states. When the top-tier mercenary army Combat, Inc. was forced out of Hong Kong by Wuxing, they set up shop within eyeshot in Macao, probably as a way of giving their former home a big one-fingered salute while remaining stationed right in the middle of the regional action.

- Whereas Wuxing seeks profit by bringing Asia together, Combat, Inc. profits from the continued strife between Asian states and corporations. The two entities have a very bitter feud going. While neither lets it get in the way of making money, it is starting to put a strain on Hong Kong-Macao relations.
- Picador

Many of Macao's mercenaries work the supply line, escorting motor convoys carrying food from the Chinese mainland across warlord states and bandit territory back to Macao, where the food is shipped across the Pearl River to Hong Kong. Without Macao's food shipments, Hong Kong would starve. Without Hong Kong's money, Macao would likely explode into open warfare. The relationship has remained stable for decades, but recently a number of mercenary outfits are reporting increased

attacks on food convoys. Less food is now reaching Hong Kong's port. Of course, what eventually reaches Hong Kong goes to the wealthy first, leaving the poor and SINless to suffer.

- The food convoy attacks are a fabrication. The mercenaries are working for someone who wants to deliberately cut short Hong Kong's food supply. If the poor begin to starve, it empowers groups like 9x9 to overthrow the Board of Governors. It's no coincidence that many of these food shortages have come from routes that Combat, Inc. works.
- Cosmo
- If the backers are looking to ruin the Board of Governors, their plan might just backfire. There are proposals before the Executive Council now to reach new agreements with Aztechnology for more expensive but more reliable food shipments. The result could turn out to be a stronger Aztechnology presence in Hong Kong.
- Jimmy No
- Ever think that maybe that's the real goal?
- Fianchetto

Shenzhen

The national border between the Hong Kong Free Enterprise Zone and the Canton Confederation is all that prevents Shenzhen from being absorbed into the Hong Kong sprawl. Shenzhen has profited tremendously from its close proximity to Hong Kong, supplying the free city's factories with raw materials and simple manufactured goods. The job market in Shenzhen is stronger than just about anywhere else in the

Confederation, which has led millions of Cantonese residents to swarm to Shenzhen in search of jobs. The rapid population boom and Shenzhen's close friendship with Hong Kong has the Canton Confederation's central government worried that the city might secede and join the Free Enterprise Zone. In response, the central government has strongly controlled the amount of legal residency SINS provided to Shenzhen, in hopes of controlling the flow of new residents. It's mostly backfired however, resulting in one of the largest SINless populations in Asia.

- Hong Kong is none too happy about that either. By necessity, their border with Shenzhen is fairly open given all the trade that flows between the two cities. With the trade, however, comes Shenzhen's SINless, flowing over the border with no record or control. Some of these end up staying in Hong Kong, contributing to the refugee problem and security issues. The Executive Council has pressured the Canton Confederation government to change their policy, but the Cantonese fear of a Hong Kong-Shenzhen annexation has made them deaf to the Council's advice.
- Lei Kung

Shenzhen is a booming metropolis, but in spite of all its efforts to look appealing, it is still a factory town at its core. It lacks the luster and high society of Hong Kong, held back by its sprawling warehouses, towering smoke stacks, teeming SINless hives, and uncontrollable crime. In many ways, Shenzhen's overwhelming desire for wealth and power and its general lack of oversight make it a disaster waiting to happen. When it explodes, many wonder whether Hong Kong will leave its partner to suffer or risk angering the Canton Confederation by coming in to assist.

- Pollution in Shenzhen is horrible. Hong Kong makes sure that Shenzhen doesn't dump too many waste chemicals into the sea that it shares, so instead the city burns or buries much of its waste. The air in Shenzhen will burn your eyes and your lungs for eight months of the year, and ground water needs to be run through half a dozen filtration systems just to be safe to drink.
- Ecotope
- Though Seattle is an ocean away from Hong Kong, the relationship between the two cities is worth mentioning. A once friendly relationship between the two major Pacific ports is now souring, thanks to Wuxing's support for Aztlan's Nicaragua Canal. The new canal has really put a dent in Seattle's economy. In the minds of Seattle's newly unemployed, there's no difference between Wuxing and Hong Kong. There has been talk on the Seattle side of things about tariffs on Hong Kong trade, but so far the corporations have blocked those ideas from becoming a reality. Nonetheless, even the corporations aren't able to drown out all the bad feelings cropping up between the two cities.
- Fatima

FREE ENTERPRISE

Posted by: Kia

- Before Kia's listing of the major Hong Kong corporations, anyone want to give me the details on what exactly the Free

Enterprise Zone is?

- Ethernaut

- At the most basic level, it means that Hong Kong is one giant duty-free zone. No extra taxes or tariffs are levied on imports and exports flowing in and out of Hong Kong, making it an ideal port-of-call. Raw materials can be brought in for manufacturing without corporations having to pay the city as a middleman. And shipping companies who don't handle long trips can move local goods into Hong Kong, where another long-haul shipper can buy them and haul them across the globe without adding extra fees onto their purchase.

- Mr. Bonds

- Hong Kong goes even further than that, though. Not only are there no taxes or tariffs on goods flowing in and out, but there's no capital gains tax in this sprawl. Capital gains taxes are collected when something (often stocks, bonds, or property) is sold at a profit. In most nations, that profit is taxed. Since it's not taxed in Hong Kong, this city not only makes a great port, but also a great financial center. You can buy low and sell high all you want and not be taxed for it.

- Snow Tiger

- Along those same lines, that also means one less official body conducting oversight on financial transactions. This is an important distinction if you happen to be a shadowrunner who likes to dabble in the market a little.

- Nephrine

- No thanks. Playing the market and shadowrunning is like taking a tour of the sausage factory. Now that I know what goes on behind the scenes, I keep my money in gold bullion.

- Snopes

- In the end, the people of Hong Kong end up footing most of the bill for operating the city. The corporations are subject to an income tax, but they can collect tax breaks if they re-invest the money elsewhere in the city's development. This allows the corporations to skip past the Executive Council's budgeting and apply their money in ways that may benefit the city, but often benefits themselves just as much or more.

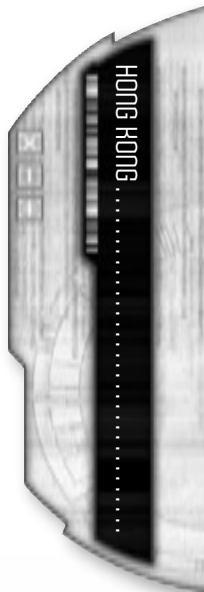
- Lei Kung

- For example, Wuxing's clean-up of Aberdeen Harbor. They wrote off the clean-up as investment in the city, scoring huge tax breaks for themselves, but it is something they would have done for their own benefit. They make money from the fishing industry there, and the living harbor is said to contribute greatly to the Skytower's *qi*.

- Ecotope

THE HONGS

Way back in the relatively ancient days of the 19th century, foreign powers set up international trading companies in Hong Kong which the locals called "hongs" (no relation to the city's name). Hongs such as the East India Company and



Jardine Matheson pretty much controlled Hong Kong as an extension of their own economic power, thriving off exporting Chinese goods to the Western world. Ironically, the city has pretty much reverted back to those days, but the hongts are different. While the names have changed, the business hasn't. Just like the old days, Hong Kong has become little more than an extension of their international economic might.

- FWIW, Hong Kong's name actually comes from the English interpretation of two Cantonese words, "heung" and "gong." The two words together are often translated as "fragrant harbor," but there's no saying for sure how the two words came to identify the fledgling British colony. Some say there was a village near present-day Aberdeen named Heung Gong, while others say it was named because of the port's incense trade.
- Snow Tiger

Ares Asia Holdings

Ares's presence in Hong Kong is small and subtle, a combination that many Westerners visiting Hong Kong find strange. They primarily operate through their Knight Errant subsidiary, which holds the contract for Hong Kong's law enforcement.

Ares Asia Holdings is essentially a local shell formed to get Ares on the Board of Governors, though Damien Knight takes personal interest in the region and sees it as a potential market for arms and military technology sales. To get that foothold, however, Ares needs to dislodge Baihu Corporation, a Canton-based military conglomerate that currently handles most arms deals between the Chinese warlord states. Many local runs for Ares use Hong Kong as a staging ground to disrupt Baihu's business dealings on the mainland.

Unfortunately, internal troubles adapting to Hong Kong's way of life are slowing down Ares's efforts on the arms trade. Roger Soaring Owl, Knight Errant's eternal chief, has always prided himself on keeping KE relatively free of corruption. In Hong Kong, however, the police have always had traditional relationships with the Triads, even using those relationships to acquire Triad aid in shutting down non-syndicate criminals. Soaring Owl has called for a number of internal crack-downs, but this has barely slowed down the corruption while hurting police morale.

- The relationships the officers have with Triad members comes down to *guanxi*, which is oftentimes more important to them than company policy. Soaring Owl has his work cut out for him.
- Lei Kung

Aztechnology Australasia

Aztechnology's Australasia division oversees a complex web of local subsidiaries from its office in the Central District. Spinning this corporate web is Domingo Ramos' own black widow, Sonia Maria Soto. Despite the Chavez faction's close ties to Wuxing, Ramos considers Australasia his turf and placed a close ally at the helm. So far, the two factions have been cooperating for their mutual benefit.

The Big A's Australasia assets include everything from agricultural facilities in Australia to textile mills in Vietnam. Their Free Transit Cartage subsidiary also operates in Hong Kong, moving goods from the shipyards to Hong Kong factories and stores, and temporarily storing shipped goods prior to pick-up. Ms. Soto is also trying hard to reach an agreement with villages and farmers in the Northern Reaches to replace some of their rice paddies with mycoprotein fungus farms.

- Sonia Soto used to work for Ramos' David Cartel in Panama and in many ways probably still does. If those farmers continue to resist her goals, she may pull out some tactics she learned dealing with the coca farmers who tried to keep a share of the crop.
- Marcos

- Speaking of, I don't think fungus is the only reason why Ms. Soto is here. If I had to lay money on it, I'd bet Ramos wants to work out some deals with the Golden Triangle druglords.
- Nephthine

- I wish him luck—there's no way the Triads will let him in on that biz.
- Money Lee

Daiatsu, Inc.

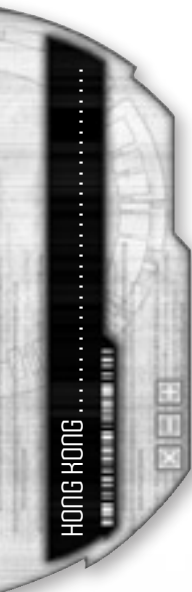
As the number-one corporation in earthmoving projects, Daiatsu does a steady business in Hong Kong, a city that is constantly reclaiming the earth from the sea in order to grow. They currently have projects ranging from one side of Hong Kong to the other, from the Eastern District on one end to the undersea tunnel for the Macao Link on the other.

Recently, Daiatsu has run into some local problems. Work sites under their contract have come under extortion pressure from the Red Dragon Association. The Triad threatens violence against the workers or damage to the ongoing construction until the subcontractors pay up. Daiatsu has tried to work through Diego Mangabat on the Executive Council, but they've had no luck. Apparently the Red Dragons have some deep connections.

- Or Diego Mangabat isn't really pushing the issue. He definitely hasn't been himself lately, after all.
- Fianchetto
- Diego is on his way out soon. If Daiatsu loses its voice on the Council, you can bet they will turn to the shadows to deal with the situation.
- Money Lee

- Oh, they already have.
- Picador

- So tell me something. Why is Viktor Jovanovitch, a researcher for the Apep Consortium, staying in Hong Kong on Daiatsu's bill? The data trail leads straight back to Daiatsu, but I can't figure out why. Did they dig up something recently?
- Elijah





HONG HONG

INCOMING FEED

- Anything?
- Elijah

Eastern Tiger Corporation

Eastern Tiger Corporation was well established in Hong Kong when the Crash 2.0 occurred, and they took advantage of the chaos following that incident to expand their portfolio. With their acquisition of grid provider Pacific Rim Communications, ETC was in the perfect place to benefit from the reconstruction of the Matrix. Especially since the new Matrix giant, NeoNET, had not previously set up operations in Hong Kong.

- NeoNET still hasn't had very much luck expanding into Hong Kong, which is no accident. Eastern Tiger Corporation is engaged in an ongoing shadow-war against NeoNET's assets in the Canton Confederation, dead set on keeping them on the defensive so they can't expand.
- Snow Tiger

Through the Pacific Rim Communications subsidiary and with cooperation from Xiao-Renraku, Eastern Tiger operates Hong Kong's wireless Matrix grid. The only voice they possess on the Executive Council currently, however, is through Xiao-Renraku's influence on Chairman Deng. With Deng's term nearly over and the Council's agenda shifting towards dealing with the refugees, Eastern Tiger is scrambling

to try to get a representative they control on the Executive Council next election.

- They are having a rough time of it. Years of aggressive acquisitions haven't made ETC many corporate allies. They are likely to start making some deals in the shadows or forcing some hands that they couldn't convince diplomatically.
- Money Lee

Evo NavTech

When Evo restructured a few years back, Hong Kong and Vladivostok became the centers of the corporation's naval manufacturing and oceanic research. Hong Kong, specifically, oversees much of the research end of things, as well as construction of civilian sea vessels. Vladivostok, however, keeps the Hong Kong office equipped for dealing with their contract—handling Hong Kong's Marine Authority.

- Evo may build civilian and merchant ships in Hong Kong, but that's sure as hell not what they are using. Even their light patrol boats for the HKMA are equipped for military engagement.
- Red Anya

Evo NavTech's oceanic research is distributed among a number of surface and undersea installations throughout the Earth's oceans, but some of their research they keep close to home. The Xuan Wu Aquacology in Tolo Harbour is largely a

mystery. The above-surface levels house the Marine Authority's high-threat response groups, but there's no word what is kept in the undersea levels.

- Lay off the mystery a bit. While Evo does keep it hush-hush, it's mostly just cutting-edge undersea farming breakthroughs they are working on. They are trying to breed strains of sea floor plant life that are hardy and nutritious enough to support large colonies.

- Snopes

- But that's so . . . boring.

- Sticks

- I'm not so sure about that. My crew and I had a job to commandeer a particular pirate vessel in Sai Kung. We offed the pirates and seized the ship, but while we were doing our sweep, we discovered that the fish freezer had been converted into a hold . . . full of children. To make it all the more interesting, the ship's autonav had it heading straight towards Xuan Wu. What would Xuan Wu need with a hold full of kids? I don't think it's for growing kelp.

- Money Lee

Hildebrandt-Kleinfort-Bernal

On the surface, HKB is a nice quiet bank. Mind you, they are the fourth largest banking and financial institute on the globe and second largest in Hong Kong, but they usually manage to stay below the radar. They carry the European stoic penny-pincher reputation with them, which seems low-key compared to the flash and glitz usually put on by Asian banks. The more you peel back the layers at HKB, the more complicated things start to become.

Former Executive Council chairman Adrian Cheung runs HKB's operations in Hong Kong, which are extensive. Though you'd never know it, HKB owns sizable chunks of many small Hong Kong corporations, as well as plenty of other corporations outside Hong Kong in the Chinese nation-states and in Indochina. Their control is usually hidden through unpublicized investments, shell companies, and quiet donations. If you scratch at the surface of Hong Kong, thought, there's a solid layer of HKB money running through just about everything.

- Adrian Cheung isn't shy about using HKB's influence. Business success is part of the Hong Kong dream. Too many small businesses, desperate to break into bigger circles, turn to HKB for investment capital. For awhile the extra money seems like a boon, until Cheung comes around asking for favors and insisting on changes.

- Mr. Bonds

- HKB shuns the spotlight, but recently it seems like the corp can't avoid it. In particular, the news media has resurrected old allegations of HKB funding terrorists in an effort to drive up insurance premiums. This is news again because it came to light that many of the properties 9x9 have damaged have been insured by HKB. There are allegations HKB is feeding the 9x9 cells money and information, and in exchange HKB suffers some superficial damage and drives up insurance rates.

- Sunshine

- I don't think HKB is actually behind it this time. I think someone is relying on old news reports to frame HKB and distract the public and Executive Council investigators.

- Snow Tiger

- The great dragon Celedyr has an ongoing feud with HKB over the Transys-Neuronet assets. HKB left that battle behind when Transys became NeoNET, but maybe Celedyr isn't done yet.

- Winterhawk

Horizon Group

The Horizon Group has long been present in Hong Kong as a small but successful cooperative of advertising firms and sim studios. Their intuitive understanding of the psyche of Hong Kong consumerism launched them to the forefront of their little corner of the economy. Though numerous corporations on the Board of Governors contracted the Horizon Group for media and public relations work, none of them really considered the Horizon Group a threat.

That changed in a big way when the Horizon Group added two major outfits to its portfolio. Global China Group Ltd., the Hong Kong trid giant, was attempting to dodge a takeover bid from Ares Global Entertainment just after the second Crash when Horizon extended it some aid. Horizon offered Global China membership in its union of media companies and a spot on the central consensus that guides Horizon's corporate decision-making, which would basically take Global China off the table as a potential Ares takeover. Global China accepted, preferring Horizon's power-sharing corporate structure over Damien Knight's infamous corporate dictatorship.

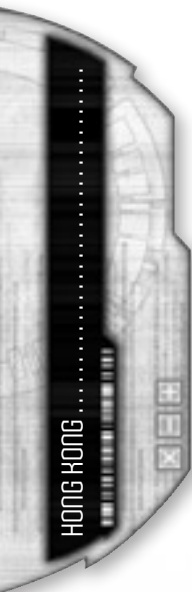
Only a year later, a series of accidents and bad press plagued the Virtual World Disney resort on Lantau Island. The Horizon Group was hired to help repair the resort's image and stock value; somewhere along the line the companies agreed a merger would benefit them both. Like Global China, Virtual World Disney joined the Horizon Group, bringing together both companies' assets on the Pacific Rim.

The Horizon Group's central consensus now controls four of Hong Kong's six major trid networks, two major Hong Kong movie studios, and the Lantau Island Virtual World Disney complex, not to mention a bunch of smaller local advertising and public relations firms. In the span of just a few years, the Horizon Group positioned itself as a major player in Hong Kong while operating almost entirely under the radar of the established megacorps.

- Not everyone is pleased with Horizon's ascendance. Damien Knight has made public comments indicating he still hasn't totally gotten over the Horizon Group's stunt with Global China. Evo's Ramon Dizon was also looking to expand into Hong Kong's media outlets, but he's left owning only one of the major networks here in addition to his Philippines Broadcasting Network.

- Sunshine

- After the earthquake and floods in Los Angeles, the Horizon Group scooped up many of the remaining producers of California Hots BTLs. I've heard they are using the new assets to try to



find a way to compete directly with the Kong chips that have cornered the BTL market. That would put the Horizon Group directly up against Wuxing and the Ten Thousand Lions Triad, especially if Horizon decides to cut out the middleman by moving forward with their ideas to distribute the BTLs covertly through direct download sales.

- Turbo Bunny

Kuroyama Geosource

Kuroyama GeoSource is Shiawase's main presence in Hong Kong. It is a recent expansion of the former Kuroyama Minerals, which is seventy-percent owned by Shiawase Envirotech. The rest of the Kuroyama stock is owned by a collection of investment houses, including the all-too-predictable investment from Hildebrandt-Kleinfort-Bernal. The investment houses are particularly interested in Kuroyama's efforts to mine untapped resources in the South China Sea, including the undersea mining installation used to extract manganese-56.

- Ah, manganese-56. You need it for fusion reactors, so it's pretty invaluable to Shiawase. Fortunately for them, they came out victorious after a series of lawsuits with Wuxing over local mineral rights. The Corporate Court eventually sided with Shiawase, but Wuxing isn't throwing in the towel—they're hoping pirate activity and runs against the miners will do what the lawsuits couldn't and get Kuroyama out of the area.

- Sounder

- One of Kuroyama's lesser known shareholders is the dragon Rhonabwy through a number of front companies. No idea what his interest would be in undersea mineral extraction, aside from fattening his hoard.

- Winterhawk

Another of Kuroyama's ambitious projects is the Cha Ma Wan Feng Shui Facility. Cha Mo Wan is a massive wind farm and wave kinetics collector used for power generation ("feng shui" literally means "wind and water"). Though it doesn't match the power sold to Hong Kong from Shiawase Atomic's nuclear power plants in the Canton Confederation, it provides enough electricity to support emergency power throughout the sprawl.

- Empress Hitomi of Japan dropped by the facility eight months ago, expressing considerable interest in applying the technology in her nation. Japan has plenty of water but very little land, so any energy that can be collected from the sea and seaborne wind would be a great boon for them.

- Mihoshi Oni

- Shiawase's competitors would like to be the ones to supply Asia's energy-hungry market, so the technology behind the Cha Ma Wan facility is a prime target for runs. The Marine Authority has stepped up patrols of the sea around the area, but Kuroyama doesn't trust Evo with their security and has been hiring pirates and shadowrunners to make them feel safe.

- Kane

Mitsuhamas Hong Kong

The Mitsuhamas division located in Hong Kong is independent, operating separately even from Mitsuhamas Australasia. Whether this was done so MCT could establish itself on the Board of Governors or for other reasons isn't known, but the little Hong Kong fiefdom doesn't seem to be hurting them any. A number of smaller factories, warehouses, and research laboratories operate under the oversight of Mitsuhamas Hong Kong, which operates by the will of Hanashima Ito, the vice president of MCT-HK.

- I knew that name was familiar. Ito was the Director of Mitsuhamas Automatronics in the Philippines a few years back. He used to run all the Imperial-serving factories there and was responsible for dumping tons of waste runoff into Manila Bay. His eagerness to screw the Filipinos and the environment for the benefit of the bottom line likely put him on MCT's fast-track to promotion.

- Fatima

Mitsuhamas Hong Kong's most visible presence is the automated drones that help offload ship containers onto the port, scanning them and prepping them for truck transport. Their robotics are also common in the manufacturing plants in Kwun Tong, where MCT takes Canton-made electronic components and puts them together into appliances, computers, and other electronics that it ships elsewhere. Less visible but no less important is Pentacle Distributing, the subsidiary of Mitsuhamas which sells magical materials to shops, talismongers, and alchemists world-wide.

- Pentacle is here because of the illegal trade in poached magical components. Not only is the market huge in Hong Kong, but they use the city as their base of operations to negotiate with poachers in Southeast Asia and mainland China.

- Lyran

- Cold-hearted butchers. They slaughter Asian elephants just for their tusks because some wage-mage in New York needs ivory for his new focus.

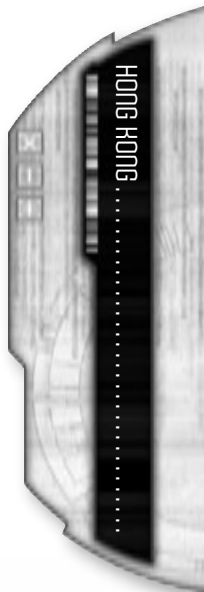
- Ecotope

- Don't let the mages themselves off the hook in this. When a formula calls for exotic materials, very few mages give much thought to where the materials have to come from.

- Ethernaut

Saeder-Krupp SwissBank

Saeder-Krupp SwissBank is Hong Kong's third largest financial conglomerate after Wuxing's web of financial institutions and Hildebrandt-Kleinfort-Bernal. Though Lofwyr's claws don't seem to reach too deeply into Asia, he's smart enough to know a financial haven when he sees one. The Free Enterprise Zone's laissez-faire capitalism makes it the perfect beachhead for Saeder-Krupp to play the Asian markets. SwissBank's presence in Hong Kong is geared mostly towards moving money and investment around through numerous brokerages and mutual funds.





INCOMING FEED

- SwissBank is infamous in Hong Kong for its cavalier, ethically questionable tactics. With trading laws as lax as they are in Hong Kong, using dirty tricks like late-trading (where stocks are purchased after the close of the market for an earlier price) doesn't risk much legal penalty. SwissBank also controls a number of hedge funds through various shells. They are notoriously risky, using state-of-the-art computer modeling to try to predict the future of the market. If they happen to fail dramatically, the partnership running the fund strangely vanishes and no one ever digs deep enough to pin the blame on SwissBank.

- Mr. Bonds

- SwissBank does all that and more, and it makes Wuxing extremely nervous. Hong Kong is Wuxing's backyard—they've got a lot of money invested in development here, and SwissBank's tricks can screw up the Hong Kong market. Wuxing has a lot more to lose from financial scandals in Hong Kong than SwissBank does, so Wuxing hires a lot of shadow-talent to put the hurt on these operations before they can cause too much trouble.

- Snow Tiger

SwissBank's operations in Hong Kong are overseen by Thomas Moy. Moy is a financial genius and an astoundingly successful risk-taker, but he lives life so close to the edge that he seems ready to fall off at any time. When you're on a great dragon's payroll, a spectacular failure can mean you become lunch. No pressure, right?

- There are rumors that Thomas Moy is a technomancer. Of course, there are also rumors that he is a BTL addict. Both may be wrong, both may be right.

- Puck

Shibata Construction and Engineering

Shibata capitalizes on the thousands of things being built or designed around Hong Kong, large and small. The most obvious presence Shibata has in the sprawl is in the half-dozen skyscrapers being built downtown that bear Shibata's name as the contractor. Typically, the way it goes is that Daiatsu moves the earth and sea, and Shibata builds on top of it. Shibata is also a popular subcontractor for other megacorporate projects: they've done design work for Evo shipbuilding efforts, they've manufactured components that go into Mitsuhama robots, and they have helped construct the wireless towers that Eastern Tiger Corporation is putting up all over the city.

The contracts with other megacorporations result in a very lucrative business and a great way for Shibata to expand, but it also makes them very susceptible to inter-corporate politics. This is especially true in a city like Hong Kong, where city politics and inter-corporate politics are the same thing. Working with one corporation may hurt Shibata with another corporation down the line. In Hong Kong, where so much relies on appearances and face-saving, sometimes Shibata has to go to great lengths to keep relationships smooth.

- Shibata has actually gone as far as hiring runs against its own assets so they have an excuse to pull out of a project without losing face. For example, it would look bad for Shibata to pull out of a contract with Shiawase to secure a more valuable competing contract with Wuxing. But if sabotage against the Shiawase-Shibata venture makes it too expensive to complete, Shibata can deep-six the project without losing face with Shiawase.

- Money Lee

- Passive-aggression as an art form. It's a beautiful thing.

- Kat o' Nine Tales

- Sort of, but not really.

- Pistons

- Don't come to HK with that attitude, Kat. They'll eat you alive.

- Snow Tiger

Wuxing, Incorporated

Wuxing, Incorporated is an institution in Hong Kong, a fact that quickly becomes apparent to visitors. Subsidiaries of Wuxing in Hong Kong loudly advertise the fact because Wuxing is well-loved here, mostly thanks to the work of the Wu family. Wu Kuan-Lai, the founder of Wuxing, is considered a city hero for his leadership role in the declaration of Hong Kong's independence in 2015. His son, current CEO Wu Lung-Wei, is applauded for boosting Hong Kong's economy and regional influence vastly through the formation of the Pacific Prosperity Group. Even the other corporations begrudgingly acknowledge that if it weren't for Wuxing's efforts, Hong Kong might have ended up a casualty of China's implosion rather than a wealthy corporate port and shining jewel of the East.

Though its corporate headquarters are absent from the Central skyline (the Skytower is on the southern coast, in Aberdeen), Wuxing's presence is everywhere in the city. Wuxing acquired the Malaysian Independent Bank after the system failure, and its financial clout is unrivaled in Hong Kong, if not all of Asia.

Wuxing is involved in every aspect of Hong Kong's economy: banking, investment, insurance, and property development. Hong Kong is the hub of Wuxing's worldwide shipping might. From here the corporation maintains a merchant fleet which hauls cargo to every corner of the globe, not to mention their road and rail assets throughout Asia and Africa.

Wuxing is also heavily involved in electronics manufacturing and entertainment. They ship components over from the Canton Confederation and Southeast Asia on their own ships, truck them to their factories on their own trucks, and assemble cheap electronics in their own factories before shipping

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The Wu Dynasty

... "The grandson of Wu Kuan-Lei, Wuxing's visionary founder, Wu Lung-Wei shows no signs of slowing the highly personal and very profitable control of his father's corporation. In fact, he has turned corporate governance into a family affair, seamlessly melding business and home life. His wife, Sharon Chiang-Wu, has returned from maternity leave to reclaim her visible position on Wuxing's Board of Directors. She has spearheaded Wuxing's increasing investment in rising urban centers, crossing over into the political realm without a hitch, encouraging free trade policies and special economic zones. The corporation's future is visible in the power couple's five identical quintuplet daughters, who are already being groomed as the corporation's heirs, even at the precious age of nine. With parents as talented as theirs, Fo, Shui, Moak, Tou, and Gum are sure to have a golden road of opportunity in front of them. The Wu family is China's latest dynasty, with a reign that shows no sign of ending." ...

- This article has been tagged by someone in your network.

- Accessing Tag ...

- Identical quintuplets are about as rare as an impoverished dragon. Common rumor is that the Coin of Luck that Sharon possesses, which by legend blesses the holder with fertility, is the reason for the couple's amazing progeny. Others say that it must be the result of Chinese eugenics research that was mysteriously "lost" after the Crash of '29. I guess the couple believes it is a magical blessing, since each of the five daughters is named after one of the five Chinese elements.

- Jimmy No

them back out to the world with their own services. Though the Horizon Group's Hong Kong expansion has cut into their entertainment clout, they still own one of Hong Kong's major trid networks, not to mention a major sim studio and one of the top gaming studios.

- Wuxing's magical assets are rarely mentioned, but they are becoming more and more important to the corporation's profits. Ming Solutions is a Wuxing subsidiary that tells other corporations how to properly integrate magic into their business models or security schemes. Since magic doesn't come cheap, corporations with little mystical background quickly turn to more experienced hands. Minh-Pao Exports, another Wuxing subsidiary, is branching out into a new field too: forming partnerships with indigenous tribes in Asia and Africa for the collection of magical materials. The tribes do the gathering and Minh-Pao under-pays them for the goods.

- Ethernaut

- Minh-Pao's shipments have been erratic lately. I suspect that conflicting loyalties in Minh-Pao between Triad elements and invasive Yakuza elements (perhaps courtesy of Mitsuhama) have them fighting an internal battle. If the Triad loyalists come out



on top, Wuxing will have a lucrative new market. If the Yakuza loyalists prevail, the Japanese corps will have succeeded in crippling Wuxing's entry into the talislegging business.

- Jimmy No

- Games and trid sets aren't all Wuxing makes in its electronics factories here. They also produce and manufacture the cheap BTL chips known as "Kong chips." They sell them locally in Hong Kong and Southeast Asia where the cranked-up sims are legal, then partner up with the Triads to smuggle them into nations where they aren't legal. The Yellow Lotus Triad used to be their partner in Hong Kong until the Red Dragons wiped them out. Now Wuxing deals with the Ten Thousand Lions, who move crates of Kong chips out of the Kai Tak Night Market.

- Turbo Bunny

Xiao-Renraku Computer Systems

Xiao-Renraku is one of Shikei Nakatomi's Asian jewels, a thriving subsidiary of Renraku Computer Systems. It has made a full comeback despite the corporation's past troubles. In many ways, Xiao-Renraku epitomizes Nakatomi's personal business philosophies. Xiao-Renraku fights as dirty as Nakatomi does, as is evident by its very embittered and political effort to keep NeoNET out of Hong Kong, an effort Nakatomi sees as an extension of his own continuing rivalry with NeoNET's Richard Villiers. Also, Xiao-Renraku is an example of Nakatomi's strategy of ruthlessly acquiring whatever advantages you need to succeed; Renraku Computer Systems acquired Xiao Technologies from Evo Corporation after driving Xiao's stock price down by distributing hacks that would get around Xiao's new line of maglocks.

After integrating Xiao Technologies into the Renraku subsidiary, the combined Xiao-Renraku staged a strong drive to take advantage of the conditions it had created. First, with NeoNET successfully stalled from entering the Hong Kong market, Xiao-Renraku partnered up with Eastern Tiger Corporation to construct Hong Kong's wireless Matrix grid. Then Xiao-Renraku combined Renraku's data management and security with Xiao Technologies' physical security devices and launched new product lines that became the standard for physical and network security throughout Hong Kong and most of Asia. Now the only question that remains is whether they can maintain the momentum they've created with the new concerns about the terrorist attacks and Xiao-Renraku's time on the Executive Council coming to an end.

- After the second Crash, Renraku ended up in control of the lion's share of the intact stored global data. This was mostly a happy accident; since the problems with Deus and concern over the Network infiltrating the corporation, Renraku beefed up its data security and moved whatever assets they could offline. When the Matrix fizzled, Renraku used its control of critical data as a bargaining chip and secured its place in the new Matrix handling data storage and data security. In Hong Kong, they were able to push that even further, extending it to handling much of the back-end software of Hong Kong's grid.

- Glitch

Yokogawa Corporation

Yokogawa is well-known as Asia's "blue-collar corporation." They rose to power in the wake of mass privatization of civic maintenance, with Hong Kong being one of the markets that remains critical to their bottom line. In this sprawl, Yokogawa is most frequently seen as Hong Kong's fire fighters, though the heroic glow they had following the eruptions of the Pacific Rim has finally rubbed off.

Yokogawa is involved in a number of partnerships in other civic services. It owns many of Hong Kong's hospitals and initiated a partnership with DocWagon to handle medical response. It also works with Ares and Evo on handling emergency management, such as the city response in the wake of a super-typhoon. All in all, they enjoy a good reputation among Hong Kong's citizens, though the opinion among Hong Kong's SINless is decidedly less favorable.

- Who can blame them? Yokogawa doesn't respond as fast to fires in Kowloon and the ambulances only show up in the bad parts of town if a high-paying customer is in trouble. You can forget treatment in a Yokogawa hospital if you're not well-insured. They'll send you to one of their clinics, where your bill is paid by using you as a drug trial guinea pig or by taking an organ out while you're under the knife.

- Money Lee

- There's another problem brewing in Yokogawa's ranks: a possible Triad war. The Red Dragon Association has its hooks fairly deep in Yokogawa in Hong Kong, skimming money off of city contracts to bolster their extortion threats (the Red Dragons set your business on fire, then strangely the fire trucks don't show up until it's burnt to the ground). However, the 289s have been targeting Yokogawa's first responders, setting up ambushes then hitting the ambulances for the drugs and gear they carry. The Red Dragons have sent some threats in the direction of the 289s but the 289s have just increased their attacks to piss the Dragons off. There's no telling how far it'll escalate.

- Lei Kung

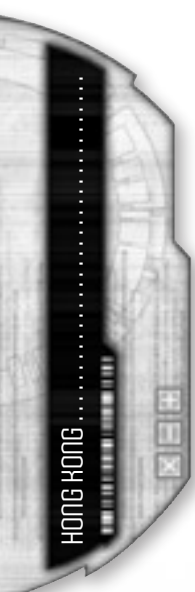
- Don't forget about the Yakuza. They have very little presence in Hong Kong, but in Japan the Kodachi-gumi are deeply involved with Yokogawa. They don't like the idea of the Triads using Yokogawa Hong Kong as a jumping point for involvement in Japan. They're ready—really ready—to take a chance to put the Red Dragon Association in its place, primarily as a way to show the Watadarengo that the Kodachi are best suited to take over Japan's underworld when Akira Watada passes away.

- Mihoshi Oni

HONG KONG CRIME

Posted by: Snow Tiger

Making money is Hong Kong's mantra, and making money through criminal means is a natural part of this sprawl. Every street corner has its hustlers, junkies, scammers and gamblers, but if a criminal enterprise wants to last more than a generation in Hong Kong, it needs organization, tradition, and legacy. Competition is as fierce in the criminal under-



world as it is in the corporate boardrooms. Shadowrunners would do well to learn all they can about the syndicates they share the shadows with, since many of them are centuries older than today's street operatives.

HEAVEN, EARTH, AND MAN: THE TRIADS

The Triads are droplets of truth in a sea of false myths, a modern criminal enterprise rooted in an ancient world. They are romantic mysticism clouded by blood, violence, and horror—and for them, it works. But don't believe everything you hear about the Triads.

If you heard them tell it, they would talk about their origins, steeped in old myth, as descendents of five surviving Shaolin monks betrayed by the Manchu Ch'ing Dynasty. Nearly eradicated, the surviving monks built a secret society intent on overthrowing the foreign Manchu rulers and returning the empire to the golden age of the Chinese Ming Dynasty. Even today the Triads see themselves as patriotic anti-heroes who have faced down the Manchu, the communists, the corporations, and every repressive power in between. It's all part of a popular folk mystique that covers up their bloody criminal lifestyle.

The Triads probably mix the ancient and the modern more than any other syndicate on the planet. At the top ranks of any large Triad gang are leaders and mystics who embrace the old ways. They spread the Triad myths and carry on the mystical rituals, binding even the most vicious gangsters in legendary oaths of allegiance. At the lower ranks, the Triads are essentially modern street gangs using counterfeit commlinks and practicing their own cobbled-together gun-fu. They all take the Triad ideal seriously, though, as hypocritical as it makes them. Even the youngest punk flashes centuries-old Triad hand signals, speaks in the numbered code supposedly used by the early Triad revolutionaries, and takes the loyalty oaths that have bound the Triads since their creation.

- Usually your average runner won't deal with the upper ranks of any Triad in Hong Kong, but if you're astute, you'll feel their presence. The street gangs are ritually compelled to respect their leaders. Even the most swaggering bravo will crack when he is passing down the orders of the masters.

- Ma'fan

- They all know Bad Things happen if they break the oaths they made to the Triads. It's not just respect they have for their leadership, it's also a healthy dose of fear. The gangsters understand bullets and violence, but when your body erupts in bloody gashes or your blood burns in your veins for snitching on your crew, well, that's the kind of otherworldly shit that strikes the fear of the gods in them.

- Money Lee

Triad organization is about as cryptic and complicated as everything else in the syndicate. The ranks reach back to the ancient structure, when they were supposedly nationalist freedom fighters. They feature bizarre ritual names and even more bizarre number associations, connected to both Chinese numerology and

a number-based code used to obfuscate their organization. Like everything else in the Triads, these ancient connections have modern-day applications. Nothing in the Triads is purely decorative.

At the top of any Triad organization is the Shan Chu, also known in various Triads by the colorful titles of Mountain Master, Lodge Master, First Route Marshal, or Dragon Head. He is also identified by the number 489 or sometimes 21 (4+8+9 for those of you who skipped remedial math). He's the big cheese; everyone answers to him.

The Shan Chu is usually insulated from the violence of the Triad world; he doesn't get blood on his hands but he sets the direction of his organization. Most Shan Chu lead public lives as businessmen, but unlike the Yakuza leaders, Shan Chu usually embrace a cover of humility. Instead of sitting on the board of an international corporation, the most powerful Triad leader might run a restaurant or a small business by day. Too many people unfamiliar with the local ways end up underestimating the "humble" Shan Chu.

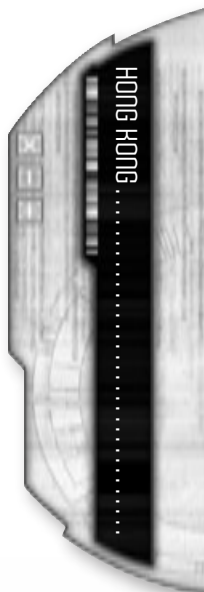
Below the Shan Chu are the 438s or 15s (you do the math). These are the Shan Chu's advisors, fully embraced by the ancient ways and the only people who interact personally with the Shan Chu. There are always at least three people at this rank who stand at the sides of the Shan Chu. The first is the Fu Shan Chu, the deputy to the Dragon Head. The Fu Shan Chu translates the leader's desires into logistic realities and brings those orders down to the street level gangs. The second is the Heung Chu, the Incense Master or Ceremony Master. It is the Heung Chu's job to pass down the ancient traditions and myths of the Triads and to administer the rituals and oaths that instill Triad loyalty. In these days of the Sixth World, the Heung Chu is always magically talented. The third is the Sin Fung, otherwise known as the Vanguard or Guardian. A modern Triad syndicate is made by absorbing smaller Chinese street gangs, and it's the Sin Fung's job to seek out new gangs to absorb and make sure they come under the Triad's influence. In a large Triad organization, such as those in Hong Kong, this rank of officers will also include the Sheung Fa, or Double Flowers, which are essentially the bosses of the largest gangs that the Sin Fung recruits. Even though the Sheung Fa are considered 438s, they are never really equal to the Shan Chu's inner circle of three.

- It's rumored that Zheng Li Kwan, the Lodge Master of the Yellow Lotus Triad in Seattle, is a Sheung Fa in Hong Kong's Ten Thousand Lions.

- Kat o' Nine Tales

- Other than occasional links like that, international Triad organizations are usually independent. There's no central authority like the Mafia or international hierarchy like the Yakuza. Links between Triad organizations in different cities are formed either because the newer group is a spin-off of the older one or because it is in their interests to be allied. In the former situation, sometimes the spin-off is formed by a blood relative, which can make the two groups close. In the latter case, the deals are sometimes mutually exclusive and sometimes they involve less negotiation and more intimidation.

- Ma'fan





INCOMING FEED

Below the Shan Chu's officers are the street sub-bosses and the soldiers. In Hong Kong, these ranks almost never have any personal contact with the Shan Chu, though some of them have regular contact with his officers. The street ranks are made up of multiple gangs with their own independent business and turfs. They conduct their own criminal enterprises and pay part of the proceeds up the ladder to the Shan Chu, who keeps the peace between the gangs and brings them together to dominate their enemies. Each of these gangs typically has three sub-bosses, and either one of them is considered the leader of the street gang or all three answer to the Sheung Fa from their gang (in the case of the largest gangs).

The Hung Kwan is also known as the Red Pole, the 426, or the 12. He's the street gang's "military commander;" he orders the soldiers when they fight to keep or expand their turf, or when they deliver their "messages." The Pak Tsz Sin is the bookkeeper, also known as the White Paper Fan, the 415, or the 10. He handles laundering the money from the illegal enterprises. These days he also manages any Matrix presence the gang might have. The third sub-boss is the Cho Hai, otherwise known as the Grass Sandal, the 432, or the 9. It's his job to be the go-between; he handles the gang's bribes and pay-offs (both incoming and outgoing) and acts as a liaison between the different street gangs and between the different levels of their gang.

At the bottom are the Sze Kau, or 49s. These are the street toughs and soldiers, the modern criminal gangbangers in the Hong Kong sprawl. They all take the initiatory oaths when

they join the Triad, a ritual described—usually right before the snitch dies horribly—as mixing and consuming the blood of the novices while burning paper strips bearing the thirty-six oaths of the Triad. Most of these Sze Kau die young, either at the hands of rival gangs or the Hong Kong Police Force, but a few lucky ones hope to someday be sub-bosses themselves or carve out their own turf and spin off a gang of their own.

- About those thirty-six oaths—every Triad member, down to the lowest soldier, takes them. The oaths are steeped in magic and mysticism, but not all the Triad initiates are Awakened. Those that are tend to rise up through the ranks faster and are usually members of elite and secretive initiatory groups built into the largest Triad syndicates.

- Jimmy No

Decades of cutthroat competition and internal warfare have shaped Hong Kong's criminal landscape into the state that exists today. The great majority of the sprawl's underworld remains controlled by a few large Triad syndicates, themselves composed of many smaller street gangs. Some, such as the Red Dragons, operate closely and under a largely singular vision. Others, such as the 289s, barely seem like a united syndicate on the surface, but their cooperation becomes evident on the street.

- Things are never peaceful in the criminal underworld, but it has been relatively quiet lately in Hong Kong. The current syndi-



cates are mostly in recovery mode after the recent turf war between the Red Dragons and the Yellow Lotus. There has been some friction over turf and control of some enterprises, so I wouldn't be surprised to see some flare-ups soon. Keep your head down.

- Money Lee

Red Dragon Association

After fighting a long, bitter and bloody war with the Yellow Lotus Triad, the Red Dragons emerged victorious and became Hong Kong's largest Triad. It was a costly victory, however, that claimed the life of the organization's Shan Chu. Today the Red Dragon Association is led by Hsiao Wai-Gong, the late Shan Chu's deputy. He was responsible for holding together the Red Dragons at the height of the gang war.

- It wasn't the Yellow Lotus who killed the Red Dragons' last Shan Chu, it was Hsiao Wai-Gong. He used the chaos of the gang war to off his own boss and secure the leadership position for himself. He covered up his treachery by hiring outside help; word is he hired Chimera assassins to do the job.
- Ma'fan
- Wait a tick ... how come offing the Shan Chu doesn't count as violating the oaths of Triad loyalty? Wouldn't doing something like that result in some painful divine retribution?
- Mihoshi Oni
- Internal strife and betrayal to someone outside are two wholly different things.
- Snow Tiger

The majority of the gangs that make up the Red Dragon Association operate out of the Kwai Tsing district, influencing large sections of Hong Kong's dockyards. Other member gangs that swear allegiance to the Red Dragons extend throughout the Kowloon Peninsula and even onto Hong Kong Island. From these locations they run vast extortion schemes, threatening local businesses and collecting payoff money from them. They also control Hong Kong's gun-running trade, bringing arms in from the warlord states in China and selling them to local gangs and pirates. They even have influence on some of the city's megacorporations through bribes and intimidation against their personnel.

- The Red Dragons' control of the Kwai Chung Container Port is so pervasive that they are able to smuggle heavy weaponry in shipping containers on freighters then intercept the crates before they are examined.
- Red Anya

(E-MAIL EXCERPT) HONG KONG POLICE FORCE :: *Internal Memorandum*

Subject: Lau Hyut ("The Bleeding")

CC: Office of the Executive Vice President, Knight Errant Security Services

This is a notice to all precincts and special divisions related to organized crime. Recent evidence has indicated that the magical oath rituals used by the Triad syndicates have been strengthened, making interrogation of Triad suspects and infiltration of Triad organizations much more difficult. Triad members who go against their loyalty oaths to the syndicate are displaying immediate and violent physical reactions often resulting in death. The exact manifestation of the effect appears to vary from one syndicate to the next, though the results are often the same. Members of the Ten Thousand Lions displayed the intensified oaths first under interrogation, sweating blood rapidly until death. Red Dragon Association members have shown similar effects, their skin bursting into hundreds of small, bleeding gashes under interrogation. An undercover agent placed within the Black Chrysanthemums who was forced to take the loyalty oath later died during an interview with his handler, his skin rapidly bruising into dark patches until he passed away from massive internal bleeding. Our police wujen indicate that a magical enchantment of some sort is involved, but they have so far been unable to dismantle the enchantment prior to interrogation without the violent effect activating and causing death to the subject. The use of blood magic in the oath is highly suspected. Until we determine a method for breaking the oath safely, the Central Precinct is suspending the use of undercover agents in Triad operations.

The Red Dragon Association is a truly international operation, probably the most cohesive Triad syndicate in the world. Though the local branches operate largely independent of each other, the Red Dragons have spin-off and vassal gangs throughout mainland China, Southeast Asia, Australia, North America, and South America. One of the shadows' most persistent rumors is that the ultimate Shan Chu of the entire Red Dragon Association is a real red dragon himself, the great dragon Lung. Whether this is true or not has never been conclusively proven, nor is it apparent how directly the local branches would report to him if it were.

- Believe it. Lung has loyal spies planted in the officer ranks of Red Dragon affiliated Triads all over the Pacific Rim. In Hong Kong his servant is Mao Bei, the aging Incense Master of the Red Dragon Association here. Mao Bei has been among the officers of the past three Shan Chu leaders and stayed right where he was when Hsiao Wai-Gong took over. He must wield some considerable power.
- Ma'fan
- I wonder if Lung approved the Red Dragon coup in Hong Kong then?
- Red Anya

Black Chrysanthemums

The Black Chrysanthemums are a ruthless new arrival to Hong Kong, imported from the city of Macao. They came in during the height of the violence between the Red Dragons and the Yellow Lotus and established themselves in some of the worst slums of Hong Kong before anyone could stop them. The Black Chrysanthemums trade in flesh, blood, and bone—literally. They are Hong Kong's main human trafficking syndicate, transporting refugees into Hong Kong in horrifying conditions, dumping them in the most poverty-stricken ruins, and forcing them into lifelong slavery to pay for their ticket. They even smuggle people out of Hong Kong to places like Seattle and San Francisco, typically in packed shipping containers or in the holds of ships, with few ever reaching their destination alive.

- A fact which doesn't bother the Black Chrysanthemums in the least. If a refugee dies in transport, the corpse just gets funneled into one of their other disgusting trades.

• Riser

Organ-legging is another major enterprise of this syndicate, often going hand-in-hand with their human trafficking. Countless SINless residents disappear every day, many of them snatched off the street by Black Chrysanthemums to be harvested for whatever parts can be resold. Because of the dangers of keeping corpses around in the recent years, this Triad tends to carve up the bodies and then dispose of them in countless methods, each more nauseating than the last.

- Some of the bits that can't be sold end up dumped right in the waters off the coast. The wildlife makes quick meals of them, especially the sharks, but Hong Kong officials are concerned about the possibility of disease.

• Nephrine

- It only gets dumped if they can't sell it to the local ghouls. The Kowloon Walled City includes a regular population of ghouls and other Infected who buy their food from the Triad.

• Riser

The central gangs that form the backbone of the Black Chrysanthemum are mostly refugee mainlanders forced into the worst corners of Kowloon City. Though Triad gangs of all stripes can be found in the Walled City, only the Black Chrysanthemums willingly call that dark urban slum home. Because this Triad rarely expands into the nicer areas of the sprawl, the Hong Kong Police Force rarely raids them. Attempts by the other Triads to smash the Black Chrysanthemums have been largely ineffective. Instead they continue to spread like a cancer throughout Kowloon, making a bad situation worse.

No one is quite sure who leads the Black Chrysanthemums in Hong Kong. What little information has been gained from gang members suggests that even at the initiation rituals, the identity of the Incense Master remains cloaked. The only officer that outsiders can attach a name to is the Triad's Sin Fung, a man named simply Hak. The name is probably a moniker, since it means both "carve" and "cruel" in Cantonese.

- Hak is bad news. I met him once and I wish I hadn't. He wears his hair long and loose, which sometimes conceals hideous pockmarks on his face that look as if they were caused by acid. After he left, one of the other Black Chrysanthemums told me he gained those marks while killing a toxic razorback with nothing but a knife.

• Lei Kung

Ten Thousand Lions

Up until two years ago, the Ten Thousand Lions were nothing more than a Kwun Tong street gang that pledged its loyalty to the powerful Yellow Lotus Triad. Then the Red Dragons came down on the Yellow Lotus with the fury of ten hells and decimated the Triad, wiping entire gangs off the face of Hong Kong and killing all of the leadership.

Well, *almost* all of the leadership. Rizal Fei, a half-Filipino, half-Han Chinese ork, was originally a Sheung Fa in the Yellow Lotus but ended up the only surviving officer. A canny survivalist, Rizal pieced together the patchwork survivors among the former Yellow Lotus gangs and built up the Ten Thousand Lions, becoming the Shan Chu of the new Triad.

Because of the unconventional nature of Rizal's rise to power, he is an exception among Triad leaders, often seen interacting with the street level toughs and deliberately not bothering with the humble front businesses often run by Shan Chu. Instead, Rizal is a hands-on leader, personally holding together the new Ten Thousand Lions operations. Through his efforts, the Ten Thousand Lions have expanded to include numerous smuggler groups, pirate crews, and metahuman gangs in the Kwun Tong and Kowloon City districts, and he has apparently rekindled the links Wuxing once had with the Yellow Lotus, taking on the shipment of Kong chips to markets where they are illegal.

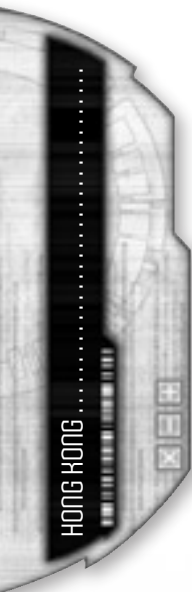
- Those aren't the only Wuxing links Rizal has imported. The Ten Thousand Lions were the first Triad to strengthen the magical investment in their ritual oaths, making them more binding and deadly to the oathbreakers. Many believe that this sort of magical research isn't something a Triad could pull off alone, and there are a lot of fingers pointing at Wuxing for the origination of this technique.

• Jimmy No

- Their new rituals are a key factor in the continuing survival of the Ten Thousand Lions. Their rituals made them extremely hard to infiltrate, which protected the fledgling Triad from both the police and the Red Dragons.

• Lei Kung

The power base for the Ten Thousand Lions remains the metahuman neighborhoods of Kwun Tong, where Rizal rebuilt the Triad, but they have since expanded. Their most significant acquisition in turf is the old Kai Tak Airport (now the Kai Tak Night Market), which is run by Ten Thousand Lions smugglers and critical to the BTL trade. The Night Market includes far more than just BTLs, however, playing host to Hong Kong's thriving black market. It deals in just about everything, even dabbling in trades controlled by the



other Triads. The Ten Thousand Lions are new, but they are tenacious, driven, and poised to grow by taking advantage of strengths that the other Triads ignore, like the foreign and metahuman communities.

- Ignore is a strong word. All of Hong Kong's Triads include foreigners and metahumans to some extent. The Ten Thousand Lions are just the first to give metahuman gangs substantial power and to base their key operations in foreign refugee communities.
- Fatima

The 289s ("Easy Money Gang")

The Triad known as the 289s is a tight confederation of young, contemporary gangs focused mostly in the Yau Tsim Mong district. Pressured by larger and more established Triads all around them, the streetwise Asian gangs of Hong Kong's most densely populated district have pooled their resources for survival. They share a modern take on the traditional ways of the Triads, displaying media-savvy and technical skills and applying them to their criminal enterprises. The 289s have cornered the market on media piracy, identity theft, gambling, and counterfeiting brand name products. They have even portrayed themselves as urban street heroes in low-budget sims that have become popular on the streets of Mong Kok.

The 289s' name comes from Chinese numerology: a combination of numbers that roughly translates to "easy money and longevity." As a result, sometimes they'll refer to themselves as the "Easy Money Gang." Tales of scams that result in fast money gain prestige in their circles. Traditional numerology and pictograph characters appear frequently in tattoos among 289 members, and the ancient Triad hand signals have been worked into a complex street language of gestures.

- No lie about gaining prestige in the 289s through quick and easy scams. The guy who can back up boasts about living high on a simple scam becomes king of the urban jungle.
- Puck

The leadership of the 289s is about as egalitarian as Triad leadership gets. The Shan Chu and the officers are representatives of the largest and most successful gangs, with no single gang having more than one officer in the inner circle. To take it even further, the 289s are the only Triad in Hong Kong that has a woman as a Shan Chu—in this case the young female ganger named Chai Chai Feng, or CeeCee. CeeCee scammed her way up to the top at the age of only twenty-eight. As long as the Triad flourishes, no one questions her leadership.

- The technical expertise that the 289s display makes people think that they must be lax in the magical department. Not true. A couple of the gangs that are part of the 289s are wiz-gangs full of untrained, but otherwise skilled, young wujen. They especially prefer flashy magic like illusions and elemental manipulations so that their spells look even more impressive than they might actually be.
- Jimmy No

- The wiz-gangs in the 289s are usually active in Yau Ma Tei, dabbling in the talislegging and cheap magical trinket trade. They have also been known to save a few goodies for themselves.
- Lyran

- The magical talent in the 289s isn't all spellslingers either. They've got a few adepts in their ranks too, especially those that juice up their gunslinging with a little mojo. There are even rumors that CeeCee is a social adept. That might explain how her criminal career took off so fast.
- Ma'fan

Smoke Circle Society

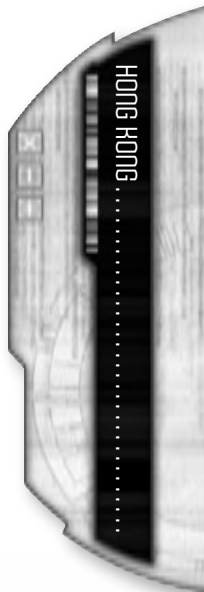
Though all five of Hong Kong's major Triad organizations have their hands in the Golden Triangle's drug trade, the Smoke Circle Society claims the biggest share. The Smoke Circle balances agreements with a number of Southeast Asian druglords, including the one named Kalokdam, who supplies them with his specially crafted Awakened opiate, Red Orchid. So far, the market for this expensive and unique drug is small, but it is growing. Red Orchid is becoming the new fashion drug of Hong Kong's entertainment and artistic community, a fad that the Smoke Circle is pushing hard.

- Red Orchid makes for an amazing trip. My Awakened friends tell me that what I'm experiencing is a metaplanar journey ... but I'm a mundane. It's unimaginable. I wonder if this stuff could open new doors into magical research for the mundane?
- Sunshine
- You can keep that junk, thanks. Do you think Joe Wageslave is mentally or spiritually prepared for metaplanar journeys? They aren't even safe for trained magicians. Not to mention the rumors I've heard about people who trip on Red Orchid coming back ... different.
- Winterhawk
- The one that leaves the body is not always the one who returns to it.
- Man-of-Many-Names

Beyond the drug trade, the Smoke Circle Society is also closely tied to talislegging, illegal trade in animal body parts, and prostitution. The Smoke Circles often hook young, impoverished children onto their most addictive drugs and then force them into flesh trade to satiate their addiction. Their brothels run from cheap, dirty love hotels to high society courtesan services, but no matter which, the Triad keeps the same tight leash on their "product."

- These guys are sick bastards. Sometimes they trade young girls—or boys—to the druglords or Ghost Cartels in exchange for business agreements. To them, it's nothing more than bartering.
- Glasswalker

Though the Smoke Circle has gangs in the urban sprawl of Kowloon like the other Triads, the majority of their core leader-



ship operates from the southern coast of Hong Kong Island or the outlying islands as far as Sai Kung. They run many of their brothels from wealthier districts on Hong Kong Island, while the secluded Sai Kung district allows them to move their drugs with more privacy. Rumors say that the Smoke Circle runs “training camps” for their young captives on these islands, where they are hooked on the drugs and then taught how to do the job they’ll be doing for the rest of their lives.

FOREIGN DEVILS: IMPORTED SYNDICATES

Unlike Seattle, Hong Kong really is a one-syndicate kind of town. From the lowliest street gangs up to the most convoluted criminal enterprises, nearly everything that happens in Hong Kong’s underworld is under the thumb of the Triads. The constant transit of people through Hong Kong from around the globe, however, has created a cosmopolitan atmosphere even in crime that the Triads have struggled to keep up with. The general acceptance of women, metahumans, and even non-Chinese into the ranks of the Triad syndicates has allowed them to stay on top of the shifting demographics here, but where they have faltered, foreign criminals have taken hold. There are still no Italian Mafia or Japanese Yakuza operating in Hong Kong—the Triads are quick to eliminate any that appear—but the Koreans and Russians have made in-roads into the underbelly of the sprawl. They’re bound to clash with the Triads before long.

Kim Dragons

The Kim Dragons are a loose grouping of vicious Korean gangs that operate out of the Sham Shui Po neighborhood, on the border of the Yau Tsim Mong and Kwai Tsing districts. They began appearing in Hong Kong decades ago, but had no real organization or significant presence until Kim Tak Goh, a former Korean political dissident in exile, united them. Now the Kim Dragons survive between the shadows of the Triads through kidnappings, home invasions, and other violent crimes.

- The Kim Dragons operate through fear even more than the Triads do. The Triads have tradition on their side; many Hong Kong residents see them as an integral part of the city. The Kim Dragons don’t have that so they resort to terror, cowing the local population through constant demonstrations of violent enforcement. Mutilation, rape, murder, and worse are common where the Kim Dragons operate.
- Kia
- Some locals dealing with the Kim Dragons are so desperate that they have begun turning to the Triads for help. Families have sought out members of the Red Dragon Association and the 289s and pleaded with them to come in, offering them protection money. But so far, the Triads haven’t risked war with the Kim Dragons. Those who have sought out the Triad support usually end up dead.
- Money Lee

Kim Tak Goh is still alive, though he is in his seventies and leads the Kim Dragons from a distance (specifically, the distance from his Lantau Island estate). The gangs that make up the Dragons rarely see him unless things start to fall apart, at which

point his loyalists swoop in and mercilessly put down any ideas of new leadership. So far, that system is working, but many wonder if the Kim Dragons will continue to stay together after Kim Tak Goh’s inevitable death.

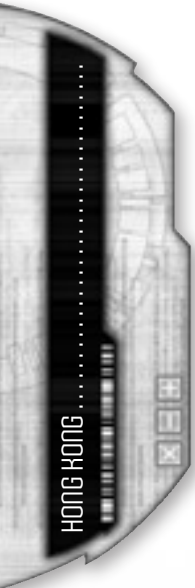
- Kim Tak Goh is on his way out. The old man is totally senile and frequently has entire conversations with himself. Word is that a few of the gang leaders on the streets in Sham Shui Po are already planning to take over.
- Baka Dabora
- They are in for a rude surprise. Kim’s not senile, not by a long shot. He doesn’t talk to himself, he’s talking to something not human. There are whispers that he has a pact with some sort of spirit, maybe a free spirit or wraith or something. Whatever it is, it has a keen interest in keeping the business of the Kim Dragons going. It will assist Kim Tak Goh if he needs to crack down on usurpers.
- Jimmy No

The Tolo Vory

When the Hong Kong Police Force crushed the Vory v Zokone presence in Wanchai-Causeway four years back, it was already too late. The Russian mobsters had seen the writing on the wall and moved their operations north, fully expecting pressure from the HKPF or Triads over their North Point operations. The demand for vice and contraband among the soldiers and sailors of Tolo Harbour made it a more lucrative market anyway, and the already-established Russian presence in Evo NavTech’s naval personnel made the community easy to infiltrate. The Russian mafia moved in right under law enforcement’s nose, with the blessing of many of its people.

Today the Tolo Vory are fully integrated into the expatriate community of Sha Tin, serving the many illicit needs of the military personnel. They run prostitution rings and pornographic sim studios, not to mention funneling BTL chips up from the Ten Thousand Lions for a little escape while at sea. They have members who are corporate military officers themselves. They ensure the syndicate has room to work, or at least proper warning before a crackdown.

- The Tolo Vory’s leader is Konstantin Arsov, who is a captain in Evo NavTech’s Hong Kong Marine Authority. I’m not sure how he continues to operate from within Evo’s ranks, but his position allows the Tolo Vory a lot of freedom.
- Red Anya
- He can lead the Tolo Vory from within Evo NavTech’s ranks because they know he’s there and they let him do it. Ramon Dizon isn’t stupid—he’s well aware of Captain Arsov’s double-life. But just as it benefits the Vory, it also benefits Evo. The relationship goes both ways—Dizon uses Arsov to expand Evo’s influence in the criminal underworld throughout Asia. Hell, I wouldn’t be surprised if the Vory helped make sure Evo got the contract for the Marine Authority.
- Mihoshi Oni





INCOMING FEED.....

- Despite their connections, the Tolo Vory aren't entirely free to act. The Red Dragon Association has a presence in Tai Po and links to dirty cops in the Hong Kong Police Force. Those cops assist in the Red Dragons' gun-running operations. The Triads aren't about to allow the Russians to take over that operation.

- Lei Kung

PIRATES OF THE SOUTH CHINA SEA

On the streets of Hong Kong, the Triads run the show and the foreign upstarts fight for every inch they gain. Even Triad influence ends at the sea, however. Hong Kong is a port above all else, a city built around the flow of sea traffic. Where there is a fortune in sea traffic, there are pirates who fight for their cut of it.

The South China Sea is a portion of the Pacific Ocean surrounded by the Canton Confederation, Southeast Asia, the former Indonesian states and the Philippines. It is a breeding ground for seaborne criminals, many of them political dissidents, refugees, or corrupt paramilitary forces. From their bases in the Sai Kung district of Hong Kong, the Parcel Islands, the Spratly Islands, and elsewhere, they strike out at the rich trade routes centered around the Strait of Malacca and the wealthy coastal ports of the Canton Confederation and Hong Kong. It is a shifting stew of modern pirates; crews appear suddenly and sink beneath the waves just as quickly, but I'll attempt a snapshot of a few of the more significant pirate syndicates operating around Hong Kong at the moment.

Joho-Lowah

For the pirate clan known as the Joho-Lowah, piracy is more than just an occupation—it's a multi-generational family trade. The Joho-Lowah are brazen, striking targets all around the port of Hong Kong before retreating to their hideouts in the rocky coves of Sai Kung. The Marine Authority certainly has an edge on the Joho-Lowah when it comes to technology, but the waters in this area have been this clan's home for decades and they know them better than anyone. They also maintain close relationships with the fishing villages along the coastline of Sai Kung, which not only makes it easy for them to rapidly unload stolen goods but also provides them with safe havens from the Marine Authority.

The Joho-Lowah pirates were founded by Filipino refugees, specifically centered around two extended family clans, the Joho and the Lowah. Though they are still largely Filipino, intermarriage is common with the Hakah Chinese fishing communities, slowly turning them into a mixed people unique to this region. Though the Joho-Lowah tend to be armed with cheap guns funneled to them by the Red Dragons, they are loathe to enter fire-fights, preferring opportunistic attacks, trickery or stealth to raid their targets.

- They are particularly good at playing bait, making themselves look like a corporate ship or fishing trawler that has run into trouble and then turning on their rescuers when it's too late to escape.

- Kane

HONG KONG

- They are also known to infiltrate shipping crews, getting members of the extended clan into legitimate jobs on crews and then using their positions to cause trouble on a ship, leaving it stranded or vulnerable to the pirates.
- Lei Kung

As large and effective as they are, the Joho-Lowah do not really have an established leadership. They see themselves as family units and as a united people. Pirate vessels will act independently or in small groups, but they will support other ships within the family clan. Status among the Joho-Lowah is actually often determined not through hoarding wealth taken from trade vessels but by how much an individual or family has donated or shared with the others in the clan.

- I've heard they can throw some really wild parties in the Sai Kung fishing villages, sharing their wealth not only with their own clan, but also with the locals. It makes them really popular, almost like folk heroes, which only makes it more difficult for the Marine Authority to wipe them out. Seriously, if you ever get an opportunity to attend one of these village feasts, don't miss it.
- 2XL

Hell Thunder Crew

If you ask a longtime Hong Kong sea merchant or fisherman about the "drums," they tend to go quiet or pale. In the waters around Hong Kong, that reference is unmistakably attached to the Hell Thunder Crew, perhaps the most feared pirates of the South China Sea. The Hell Thunder Crew is relentless, heartless, and rapacious; they rarely leave survivors and the prisoners they take often wish they were among the dead. Maybe it sounds like a story meant to scare children, but it's entirely real. Just ask the crew of the *Gracious Sea Dragon*; they'd answer if they hadn't all been decapitated, their bodies thrown overboard to feed the sharks and their heads tied to the ship's railing. Not even other pirates are safe from them—just two months back a lone survivor from a Joho-Lowah vessel related the story of how the clan's men and boys had been tortured and killed and the women and girls had been taken prisoner to meet fates too horrible to relate.

- Rivalries among the pirate crews are common around Hong Kong, but it goes further with the Hell Thunder Crew. No pirate crew around here expects the least bit of mercy from the Hell Thunders, so none is given to them.
- Kane
- I heard if they take a ship, they'll likely rape the people to death, eat their flesh, and sew their skins into clothing—and if the victims are lucky, it'll be in that order.
- Netcat
- What the hell have you been smoking?
- Kane

The Hell Thunder Crew are predominantly metahuman, nearly all orks and trolls. Sea legends claim that they were originally escapees from Yomi, but given how secure that island was

under Japanese control, that is improbable. It's more likely they were metahuman escapees from the Philippines, with whatever humanity they once might have possessed annihilated by what they experienced at the hands of the Japanese Imperial Marines. Now they are a pirate crew and a fanatical cult, said to worship dark sea gods that demand a tithe of blood and flesh. Little is known about their leadership other than it is rumored that the Hell Thunder Crew is a matriarchy, with a core of women who do not take part in the piracy but guide the twisted spiritual matters of the crew and make the ultimate decisions.

- The Japanese Imperial Marines call the rumored matriarchal leaders the Rasetsu Nyo, or "cannibal demon women." It traces back to Japanese and Indian mythology, specifically the goddess Kishimojin (Hariti to the Indians). This goddess apparently had many children that she loved and cared for deeply, but they fed upon children kidnapped from mortal mothers. There have been many rumors about cannibalism or possible HMHV infection among the Hell Thunder Crew, but little proof.
- Mihoshi Oni

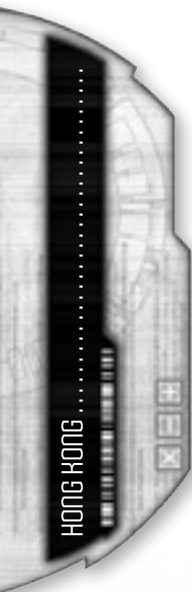
The Hell Thunder Crew may have small hideouts in Sai Kung, but no one is sure. They do not work with the coastal villagers like the Joho-Lowah do; in fact they are known to raid the fishing villages sometimes when they are desperate. It is speculated that they have links to the Black Chrysanthemums, however, and that could be how they sell the goods they steal, including people.

- The Black Chrysanthemums aren't particularly picky whether or not the people are whole or in bits.
- Baka Dabora
- The Hell Thunder Crew make extensive use of magic—it's one of the primary edges they have in their favor that allows them to sneak up even on modern ships. They're quite fond of the use of spirits, especially spirits of air and water. It's possible the spirits themselves are toxic, but I'm not about to get close enough to find out.
- Kane

Wuji Crew (Black Dolphins)

Notable because they are probably the most technologically sophisticated pirates in the Hong Kong waters, the Wuji are professionally trained and well-equipped. Their professionalism has fueled persistent rumors of corporate backing, but proof of that is scarce. Even the Marine Authority is interested in knowing where the Wuji get their gear, but so far they have not managed to capture any members who knew or would talk. Because of their inability to transport large amounts of lesser-value cargo, the Wuji primarily use small speedboats and hydrofoils to target high-value personnel or cargo traveling by sea. Sometimes they rely on sheer speed to outmaneuver targets, but most of the time they skew the operation in their favor by either using hackers or trained divers to sabotage a target ship and leave it dead in the water.

- They've even managed the rare hack of the port navigation system, forcing larger ships to run aground in shallow waters. They



swoop in and pick it clean of whatever they can take before the Marine Authority can arrive.

- Puck

- Unlike most pirate crews, the Wuji have been known to target specific individuals traveling on cruise liners. High-value corporate personnel are sometimes snatched right off their vacation cruise and then ransomed back to the corporation. Considering how little cargo space the Wuji boats have, this is one of their best methods for raking in cash.

- Fianchetto

These trouble-making pirates are not known to use very much magic, but they keep their boats and gear in peak condition. Their training is top-notch, including dive training and demolitions. The Marine Authority has identified the Wuji leadership as two young men named Jin and Lin. At first they were believed to be the same man using two different names, but the current theory is that they are identical twins. They are notoriously hard to track, despite the fact that they have been known to attend pirate raids personally.

- Jin and Lin aren't your normal identical twins. They are the result of corporate eugenics; legacy research salvaged from Chinese military labs and used in a joint Tan Tien-PensoDyne project. I'm not sure what the goal of the research was, but Jin and Lin are not your typical brand of humanity.

- Plan 9

- If they were the result of a PensoDyne project, why would the Marine Authority seem to know so little about them? They are both branches of the same corporation.

- Mihoshi Oni

- Maybe Tan Tien took the project in directions that PensoDyne wasn't aware of. It would certainly explain the Marine Authority's interest in the Wuji; maybe Evo wants them back. It might even explain the Wuji's apparent corporate backing, which might be coming down from Tan Tien.

- Lei Kung

- By the way, the name of this pirate crew traces back to a traditional Cantonese saying about troublemakers that relates them to black dolphins and white dolphins. Dolphins were known to be troublemakers and nuisances to local Cantonese fishermen, who would often find entire catches ruined by the mischievous critters. Nowadays, the same coastal waters around here are populated by Ghost Dolphins, which are probably even worse.

- Jimmy No

RUNNING IN THE ORIENT

Along with Seattle, Hong Kong is considered to be one of the best places to make a name in the shadow business, because shadowrunning is integral in the day-to-day operation of the city. The fact that everything and everyone in Hong Kong is connected through webs of *guanxi* makes it essential to hire shadow talent to conduct your shady business. Business comes down to relation-

ÆTHERPEDIA SEARCH

Ghost Dolphin

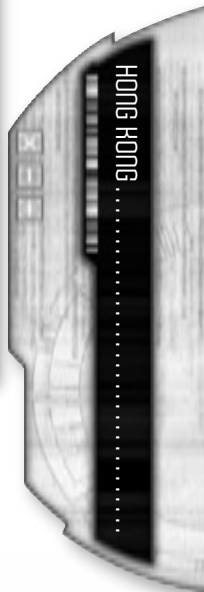
The Ghost Dolphin is a paranormal variant of the Chinese White Dolphin (*Sousa chinensis chinensis*) found in Pacific coastal areas, particularly around China, Southeast Asia, and India. It is named for its pinkish-white coloration, which is the result of blood vessels located just under its non-pigmented flesh. However, the name is also related to the creature's intelligence and mischievous personality; ghost dolphin pods are known to follow sea vessels and cause trouble. They possess the ability to magically create accidents, similar to many spirits, and there are theories that they are semi-sapient or at least possess empathic senses. Sometimes this intelligence or empathic sense may be a great boon to humanity, as there are thirty-seven documented cases of ghost dolphin pods rescuing or aiding people in trouble at sea.

ships in Hong Kong, even relationships with people you dislike and may have to harm. Visibly disrupting those relationships causes a loss of face and can sour completely unrelated relationships in your *guanxi* network, so Hong Kong power-players turn to shadowrunners to do the dirty work in a way that doesn't come back to reflect on them. This way, you can stab your associate in the back while still having dinner with him. You can eliminate one competitor while still remaining friendly with his allies.

- An example is in order here. Dr. Tosha On is a top-notch researcher in quantum cryptography who was raised and educated by Mitsuhamas of Hong Kong. Xiao-Renraku wanted him for their own research center, but even if the scientist wanted to transfer willingly, he has such a long-term relationship and debt to Mitsuhamas that he couldn't possibly do so without their blessing, which wasn't forthcoming. Nor can Xiao-Renraku up and snatch him with a Red Samurai detachment. Even forgetting about the legal ramifications (which are very grey in a corptown like HK), that action would spoil Xiao-Renraku's *guanxi* with Mitsuhamas, which could spiral into Xiao-Renraku being ostracized by many Hong Kong corporations, and perhaps even by the Triads who have relationships of their own with Hong Kong's economy. Xiao-Renraku hires deniable assets to kidnap the scientist's daughter, and when the runners hand over the daughter to Mr. Johnson, Xiao-Renraku causes a spectacle rescuing the girl. Now the researcher owes a debt to Xiao-Renraku (family is of paramount importance among the Chinese) and Mitsuhamas is forced into saving face by allowing the scientist to work for Xiao-Renraku, to make up for their own failure in protecting his family. The very social structure of Hong Kong has created a thriving need for shadowrunners.

- Money Lee

One thing to remember if you plan on running in Hong Kong regularly is that the local social structure is as important for you as it is for everyone else here. On the streets of Seattle, your ca-



reer in the shadows is plainly tied to street reputation, which more or less translates to the concept of face in Hong Kong. Whereas most people in Hong Kong gain face by being seen in the right places or spending money on status symbols or their friends, shadowrunners gain face by doing jobs quietly. The worst thing you can do for your own reputation in the Hong Kong shadows is botch up a job bad enough that it can be traced back to the party that hired you, because then their own face takes a nose dive. And if your employer does not kill you outright as he tries to salvage what little reputation he has left, you'll find that your job market has dried up as those with face try to distance themselves from you.

Though shadowrunners gain face through competence and loyalty, that doesn't mean they can't also gain face the typical ways. Many Hong Kong runners lead double-lives, garnishing public notoriety through socialization and lavish living, gaining face the same way that most ambitious executives do. What money is left over after buying the necessities (ammo, alchemical materials, or the latest viral hack) is drained hopping from one nightclub to the next, spending freely to gain face and make friends. Never once is their work brought up during this socialization; everyone knows they do something illicit, but it's impolite to ask and it is equally impolite to say. The jury is out on which route is better for a shadowrunner on the rise: remaining quiet and letting your work speak for you, or actively cultivating your social reputation.

- The social butterflies are the architects of their own demise. Kissing ass and fancy parties might get you more jobs in the short term, but it also makes you a big target. When the shit hits the fan, who is going to catch the blame and retribution? The runner that everyone knows or the one that no one knows exists aside from satisfied employers?

- Black Mamba

- If you make yourself easily forgotten, Black Mamba, you'll be forgotten easily. I'm a legend in certain circles, a reputation I carefully and actively maintain. Not only has it gotten me tons of work, but the social connections I've forged keep me alive. I'm too plugged in for anyone to easily take me out. I'll still be here when you're left rotting in some dark alley by one of your so-called "satisfied employers."

- Ma'fan

- My lifestyle allows me to take out those who are well-connected without any risk to my own reputation. Remember that well, Ma'fan.

- Black Mamba

Just like face, *guanxi* is important to shadowrunners in Hong Kong. What separates a local shadowrunner from a fly-by-night import is their *guanxi* network; an established Hong Kong shadowrunner brings with him a whole sea of connections and relationships that can make any given job easier or more complicated, depending on how the wind blows. Seattle shadowrunners would be familiar with contacts, the lifeblood of our work, but it goes a step further in Hong Kong. You don't just know and associate with your contacts, you have long-standing relationships with them, their family and their friends. Confucian principles work

into it too, so that there is an implied hierarchy of social power. A shadowrunner who has a corporate executive contact in his *guanxi* is expected to treat the corporate executive as an honored superior, in addition to an associate and a friend. Similarly, a talislegger contact who makes a great deal of business from his relationship with you is obligated to treat you as an important backer whenever he is your presence. You are more than just a customer, you contribute to his livelihood and his ability to support his family and so are treated with great respect, regardless of the fact that you might be a SINless runner. It goes both ways, of course; if you do anything disrespectful to someone paying you such respect, or should you fail to properly honor those above you, you'll lose face and find your *guanxi* network distancing themselves from you.

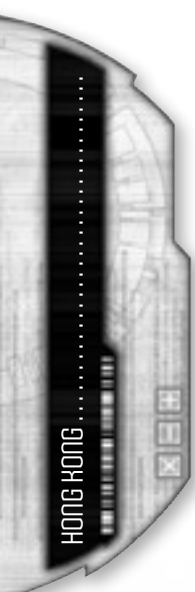
- Potential employers tend to do their homework and keep a runner's *guanxi* network in mind before they consider him for a job, as the circles a runner associates with can help or hinder a job. For instance, a runner who maintains relationships with many Red Dragon Association members would be a boon for a run that is likely to require firepower. However, Wuxing might not employ the same runner, because his Red Dragon Association ties wouldn't jive well with Wuxing's own *guanxi* with the Ten Thousand Lions.

- Lei Kung

Imported runners are those who are stopping over in Hong Kong for work, but haven't stayed long enough in the sprawl to establish a *guanxi* network. The lack of contacts in Hong Kong can make it very difficult for imports to find work unless they have already been hired by an outside player, so it's common practice for imports to invest heavily in gaining public face. Looking like a big shot is the next best thing to having the relationships to prove you are one. Also, import runners who lack *guanxi* are sometimes favored for certain jobs, particularly because they don't bring local complications with them. Wuxing might fly in a runner from Seattle for a job specifically because he has no relationships with the local players that could cast a spotlight on the job or complicate Wuxing's own relationships. Imports had best be careful though; the lack of *guanxi* makes it equally easy for an employer to betray an imported shadowrunner, because no one in Hong Kong will care.

As far as work goes, Hong Kong has all the same kinds of jobs you'd find in Seattle, Hamburg, or any other major sprawl. Courier runs, extractions, datasteals, and the whole laundry list of dirty deeds we're hired to do. There are a few types of runs that are relatively unique to the local scene here, produced by nature of Hong Kong's cultural flavor or business focus.

Long-haul runs are a variation of courier jobs that revolve around the long-haul shipping fleets that move in and out of Hong Kong's port. Sometimes a corporation or syndicate without substantial long-haul shipping assets of its own needs to move sensitive goods across the Pacific and doesn't completely trust the crew they have. A corporation or syndicate may be moving materials that aren't entirely legal, so they can't use their own people to keep an eye on it in case it is caught by customs. In these cases, they will sometimes hire shadowrunners to travel with their cargo across the ocean and protect it to make sure it reaches its destination port. In the case of a potentially untrustworthy crew, an



employer might secretly insert a shadowrunner team among the ship's compliment to keep an eye out for betrayers.

It takes a special kind of runner to do these long-haul jobs, as they are tedious for long stretches of time, yet you can never really let your guard down. Not to mention that long periods at sea are often enough to breed inter-crew rivalries, if not strife among even the closest team of runners. Risk varies with the value of the cargo, but most runners will not be told what the cargo is. They must rely on their own legwork to evaluate the danger of taking the job.

- These jobs can tear a team apart. Being on edge for days at a time and living in cramped quarters can make even a patient runner snap. I did a ten-day stretch with a TransSea super-freighter going from Hong Kong back to Seattle after another job went bad. By day seven, my rigger's poor hygiene and living conditions had driven me up the wall. And of course, that night, the pirates attacked. I'm not sure the job was worth the pay.
- Lyran

Hong Kong natives are absolutely serious about their feng shui, believing that their relationship with the flows of magical energy in the astral plane around them can positively or negatively affect their lives. Considering that corporations spend billions of nuyen to hire teams of geomancers to plot any significant construction work, it's no big leap to imagine that they are also willing to hire shadowrunners to disrupt the feng shui of their competitors. These mystical sabotage runs can be as simple as re-arranging some furniture in an executive's office the night before a deal or as complex as a structural hit to destroy a major chunk of real estate. Regardless, they often make little sense to anyone but a wujen, and many times these runs require one on the team who is capable of studying the flow of *qi* in astral space after the act and ensuring the job is done. Since these runs often include going into restricted areas, they carry at least as much risk as any B&E run.

- Runners aren't the only ones who do this sort of work. Lung keeps a cabal of military-trained geomancers called Discordant Harmony who exist purely for these feng shui sabotage runs, striking targets all over the Pacific Rim.
- Axis Mundi
- Ninja interior decorators. You gotta love it.
- Slamm-0!
- Three of Lung's Discordant Harmony operations have failed in the past two years, all of them in China. Make of it what you will, but I've been told that the Diamond Eye Sect was behind the failures.
- Jimmy No
- The Diamond Eye Sect, supposedly of Tibet? They could just be a myth, for all we know. Besides, even the rumors claim the Diamond Eye monks never leave Tibet. I think someone is yanking your chain.
- Ma'fan

Finally, there's a type of run in Hong Kong known as "poisoning the well." Basically, Mr. Johnson hires a team of runners to

EVO METAMATRIX TRAVEL GUIDE

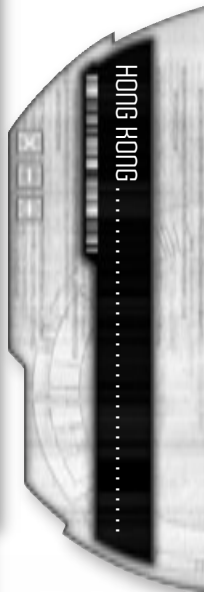
Dealing with Jet Lag

As any business traveler knows, jet lag can drag down your productivity and cost you valuable work-days. Desynchronization, the medical term for jet lag, is caused by the circadian rhythms that regulate our bodies being out of sync with the day/night patterns of a new environment, usually from rapid travel across multiple time zones. While your body tries to adapt to its new environment, you find yourself tired and restless for days. However, new advancements like CircSync software allow you to overlay day/night cycles onto your augmented reality, easing yourself into adjustment to your new environment and countering the effects of jet lag. For the dedicated traveler, you might consider visiting your local CrashCart clinic and getting a PensoDyne sleep regulator installed. The harmless modification to your hypothalamus makes jet lag a thing of the past!

• [Link for Product Catalog](#)

- This article has been tagged by someone in your network.
- Accessing Tag ...
- There are a few other jet lag cures out there that don't fatten Evo's purse. Zeta-ImpChem makes a short term hypnotic (sleeping pill) called Noctia that can help regulate your sleep cycles if you take it when you should be sleeping at your new destination. For mages who are worried about artificial solutions, there are spells out there that can help you sleep or stay awake in order to adjust your circadian rhythms, as well as countless meditation methods that claim to help. But sometimes the best solution might be the most obvious: make sure you are very well-rested before your flight, and actively try to adjust your schedule to your new day/night cycle. Keep this all in mind—jet lag can kill runners who fly into faraway locations for work and then find themselves too exhausted or overly tense when they have to pull off a job.
- Traveler Jones

intentionally and covertly make the target lose face and to damage their *guanxi* network. Sometimes the legwork is on the runners and sometimes the Johnson supplies a list of the target's associates, but the team's job is to somehow sour the target's relationship with his allies and embarrass him publicly. All the while, neither the target nor his associates can learn who is really behind the action. Oftentimes, the easiest ways to pull off these runs include forging documents and planting falsified evidence designed to make the target look as if he's betraying his own friends, or at the very least put the target in a position that could embarrass them. There are dozens of other methods that work, however, from magical



coercion to sabotaging the target's social gatherings. The risk in these runs very often comes not from the target, but from your own employer should you botch the job. If the employer is caught trying to spoil someone's *guanxi*, it'll send his own into the toilet, and your career and life become forfeit.

HONG KONG MYSTERIES

Posted by: Jimmy No

Regardless what the corporations and criminal syndicates would like to turn Hong Kong into, the Pearl of the Orient is a living, breathing city. Unlike many similar sprawls, Hong Kong has never been disconnected from its mystical nature—its folklore, myth, and mysteries. Hongkongers know that *qi* energy courses through their city and that a proper balance of yin and yang are important not only in their lives, but in the city they live in. Many of them carry trinkets and talismans to grant them fortune, bless them with healthy children, or ward off evil spirits.

Even before the Awakening, it was not unusual for a businessman to wear a tiger claw around his neck or for a doctor to be adorned with a jade pendant to assist her healing arts. Since the Awakening, as you can imagine, Hong Kong's mysticism and mysteries have only deepened, though to their credit, Hong Kong's people remain unfazed, compartmentalizing the city's mysteries as just another aspect of life that they deal with every day. Shadowrunners can't afford to just casually ignore these aspects of Hong Kong, as they have a habit of inserting themselves into our work. I'll shed some light on Hong Kong's unusual relationship with the astral plane, then I'll turn the node over to Axis Mundi for some information on the Yama Kings and then over to Puck to cover the Bureau of Heaven and Earth.

HONG KONG'S MAGICAL LANDSCAPE

Which came first, the chicken or the egg? In the case of Hong Kong, wujen endlessly debate which condition of Hong Kong's founding came first: the nature of the *qi* here that hums with vitality, movement, and exchange or the port city that embraces those aspects. Some wujen claim that Hong Kong's magical aspect has always existed, long before the British came here, laid down by the celestial spirits that oversee this region of the world. That people came and built a thriving port city here only indicates that the people were in tune with the city's natural energies, as they should be. But other wujen claim that the *qi* of the region is influenced by humanity just as much as humanity is influenced by it, and while the region doubtless had some mystical nature before it was a port, it was the growth of the region into a miraculous port city that shaped the city's energy into what it is today.

- Each side's got some compelling arguments. The latter school points to toxic zones as evidence for their argument, indicating that mankind can heavily influence the magical nature of an area. While the former school doesn't refute toxic zones, they point to examples like Hong Kong's dragon lines, which seem to crisscross Hong Kong without rhyme or reason, forcing humanity to shape the city to accommodate them.

- Ecotope

Regardless of the origins, Hong Kong's push-and-pull relationship between magic and humanity has resulted in some intriguing features in the mystical landscape of the city. Again, there is debate about whether these manifestations are dangerous and a warning of some impending catastrophe, or merely a harmless result of shaping of the *qi* energies. I certainly can't resolve the issue, but I will tell you what to look for if you want to find out for yourself.

The Dragon Lines

Even an apprentice wujen can see the mana lines that cut through Hong Kong's astral space, ribbons of intensified *qi* that look like writhing dragons. Perhaps that is why they are called *feng-lung*, or dragon lines, though another belief says that the lines were set down by the spirits to aid the dragons in managing mankind and that only they can tap into the lines' true power. What can be said for sure, however, is that most of the lines in Hong Kong do little to aid sorcery. No one knows if that's because they are simply weak lines or because something else is drawing upon their power.

- The dragon lines connect sites of magical power throughout Asia and the Pacific Ring of Fire. The powerful mountain of T'ai Shan, guarded by the great dragon Lung, sits on a dragon line. Mount Fuji in Japan stands on another. Dragon lines flow down the great rivers of Asia and even cut through the magical storm that seals off Tibet. It is as if the dragon lines tie all these sites into some sort of magical network.

- Ethernaut

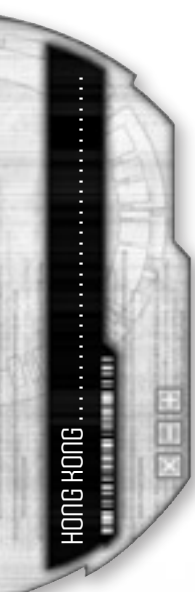
- Eastern dragons seem attracted to Hong Kong, presumably because dragon lines cross through this city with more density than anywhere else in Asia. That gives some credence to the idea that the lines may be aspected to augment the unique magic of dragons, as do the endless rumors of Lung and Ryumyo's draconic jockeying for control of magical sites around the Pacific.

- Winterhawk

- I never thought I'd miss Dragonslayer, the old nutjob. I'm getting too old for this shit.

- Fatima

For the most part, the dragon lines in Hong Kong do not converge onto loci of great power. Unlike places such as T'ai Shan that stand as a focal point for numerous dragon lines, the dragon lines in Hong Kong cross haphazardly on their way to other places. On the physical spot where two dragon lines cross, a shrine can usually be found to maintain the *qi* and take advantage of its subtle power. Hong Kong is dotted with these tiny shrines, but there are only three known places in the city where more than two lines converge. Two are home to large temple complexes: the Po Lin Monastery on Lantau Island and the Wong Tai Sin temple in Kowloon City. The third major convergence is at the exact spot where the Wuxing Skytower was constructed and has resulted in its own famous attraction called the Aberdeen Shallow.





INCOMING FEED.....

The Aberdeen Shallow

If someone compiled a list of the modern magical wonders of the world, the Aberdeen Shallow would have to be on it. Appearing first in 2061 on the site of Hong Kong's most significant convergence of dragon lines, the Aberdeen Shallow is the largest and most permanent astral shallow on the globe. An astral shallow is an area where the division between physical and astral space becomes so thin that the two planes are clearly visible to each other, even without any magical talent. Yes, this means that even the most mundane street samurai can see auras flickering off his friends and spirits buzzing by. Astral shallows have been documented all over the world, from Australia to New Orleans, but usually they last only for a few hours and rarely reappear at the same location. The Aberdeen Shallow, however, has continually reappeared at the same exact spot for the past nine years and has lasted in place for periods as long as a year at a stretch.

- Only the Wu family at Wuxing knows what causes the Aberdeen Shallow, but there are enough hints out there to speculate. First, you've got the fact that it sits on a site where five dragon lines cross, the largest convergence in the city. Second, in a temple at the top of the Skytower sits the Jade Dragon of Wind and Fire, an ancient Chinese artifact of great power left to Wu Lung-Wei by the late dragon Dunkelzahn. Third, the Aberdeen Shallow first appeared in September of 2061, while Halley's Comet was making its most recent appearance, an event which sparked magical manifestations all over the world. I think the Wuxing Skytower

is manipulating untold amounts of magical energies and the Aberdeen Shallow is a side effect, either a weakening of the magical fabric in the area or a strengthening of its magical nature, whatever your point of view.

- Ethernaut

- I have heard that the Aberdeen Shallow was originally permanent and only faded the first time as the result of some intentional tampering by an outside source. Since then, it has reappeared sporadically, sometimes lasting for a few weeks or a few months and then disappearing for just as long. Maybe Wuxing is trying to figure out how to repair whatever damage was done to their set up. I wish I could find out for sure, but nowadays the top levels of the Wuxing Skytower are locked up tighter than the Zurich Orbital.

- Ma'fan

Though the Aberdeen Shallow is always centered on the Wuxing Skytower in the town of Aberdeen, researchers from the Dunkelzahn Institute for Magical Research and three other research universities have confirmed the conclusion of Wuxing's own wujen that the shallow is growing. Though its exact size fluctuates with each appearance, it keeps breaking its own records on how big it can get. During the first year of its appearance, the shallow never got wider than a kilometer in radius, but recent appearances have stretched upwards of three kilometers in every direction. The shallow's visible bridging of astral and physical space brings magicians from all over

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the world to Aberdeen to witness the sight first-hand and has even led to the creation of schools which teach aura assensing to mundanes when the shallow allows them to practice.

- I fear that the shallow is not only growing, but deepening. I have heard of those who could not only see the astral in the Aberdeen Shallow, but could reach out and touch the spirits there. If that is true, it is possible the astral shallow could allow beings from astral space to cross over into this world when they normally could not.
- Man-of-Many-Names

Downtown Surges

Once upon a time, when Hong Kong Island was inhabited only by a few tribal fishermen, the *qi* flowed straight down from the highest point, Victoria Peak, and rolled right down to the sea. According to many wujen, this is the way it's supposed to be, flowing like wind and water over the landscape. Nowadays, however, there's a jungle full of glass-and-metal skyscrapers between Victoria Peak and the sea, which isn't terribly conducive to the free flow of *qi*. Now it's true that the corporations all hire expensive geomancers and plan each of their buildings in such a way that the impact on the feng shui of Hong Kong Island is minimal. However, each of those corporations also tries to manipulate the flow of *qi* subtly in their favor, or to the disadvantage of their competitors. The result has been such a pervasive manipulation of the flow of magical energies in Downtown Hong Kong that the whole region is prone to unpredictable mana surges as the woven energies fray under the tiny additional stresses of spellcasting or conjuring.

What this means to you and I is that the routine spell slinging or spirit summoning we'd do anywhere else can be dangerously unpredictable just about anywhere in the Downtown Hong Kong district. A spell may suddenly be flooded with mana, increasing its effect but also becoming harder to properly channel. Or it may suddenly find its mana flow cut off, the effect vastly weaker than you expected. Conjunction is just as dangerous, as a spirit may turn out to be greater than you intended and threaten to break loose of your control. It's widely believed that Hong Kong's relatively high population of free spirits is due to summoned spirits who escaped control downtown.

- Magic gone awry hardly even makes the news anymore, given how common it's become downtown. Though particularly spectacular magical disasters still start off the evening news, like the flaming dragon spirit that ran amok two weeks back and nearly torched an entire city block.
- Lei Kung
- Because of the surges, Downtown is a popular spot for magical gangs to determine new membership or settle "differences." It's like playing Russian roulette with the astral plane; the danger is seen as a way of testing whom the spirits favor.
- Money Lee
- I suppose the heavy police presence and corporate security teams lingering around Downtown are also a way of testing whom the spirits favor.
- Hard Exit

Super-Typhoons

Basically the Pacific equivalent of an Atlantic hurricane, windy typhoons have always threatened Hong Kong at the end of each rainy season, from about June to September. There's no doubt in anyone's mind, though, that the typhoons are getting stronger and more frequent than past record, with the once-rare super-typhoons striking Hong Kong once every few seasons. These storms are no laughing matter, with wind speeds of 240 kilometers/hour (150 mph) and above and storm surges that threaten the coastal regions of the city. Though Victoria Harbor has automatic levees and the mountains shelter downtown from the wind, these storms tend to come ashore in the southeast portions of the sprawl, flooding and damaging Sai Kung, the Southern District, and Eastern Hong Kong.

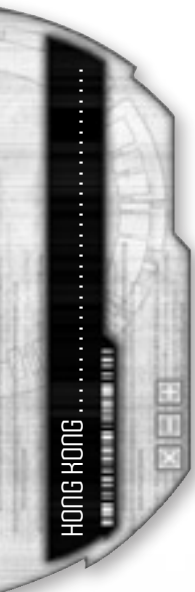
- Apocalyptic cults sometimes pop up whenever one of these super-typhoons is making a beeline for Hong Kong. There's no shortage of people in the city who believe the stronger storms are linked to the city's manipulation of *qi* or to its decadent life-style.
- Elijah
- It could just be plain old global warming. The ocean temperature has been steadily increasing for decades, and warm oceans fuel typhoons.
- Snopes
- Traditional Chinese superstition often ties weather and storms to dragons, and whenever one of these super-typhoons passes, there follows a bizarre period of intensified feeling towards Hong Kong's tiny dragon population. Some curse the dragons, blaming their destructive whims for the damage and death, while others try to honor and appease them. The handful of dragons who live in Hong Kong remain aloof about the whole matter.
- Winterhawk

Whenever one of these storms appears on the radar track heading for Hong Kong, the media and the Matrix are flooded with warnings. Numbered black flags are placed around the city and in the augmented reality overlay, indicating the danger level of the typhoon. Since 2030, Hong Kong has used a colorful and unique four-character (in Chinese lettering) name for each super-typhoon, such as *Qi Fen Lung Feng* ("Furious Dragon Wind") or *Biao Bing Qing Feng* ("Shining Green-Blue Wind"). The last super-typhoon to strike Hong Kong was in 2066. Meteorologists and wujen alike both agree that the city is past due for another massive storm.

THE YAMA KINGS

Posted by: Axis Mundi

The Kowloon Walled City is a dark blight on the landscape of Hong Kong, among the most desperate slums in the Eastern Hemisphere. It is an urban jungle in the extreme, where the poorest refugees are forced to survive and subsist in the claustrophobic heart of the tilting and crumbling tenements. Metahumanity can and does persist here, but it is always a hostile environment to them. To a few beings who exist outside of





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metahumanity, however, the Kowloon Walled City is a natural habitat and a prime feeding ground. Locally, these beings are called the Courts of the Yama Kings.

No one is quite sure the origins of the Yama Kings, but it is rumored that they may be powerful free spirits. It is possible they were summoned within the Kowloon Walled City by twisted wujen, but it is also possible they were spirits set free by the chaotic magic of Downtown Hong Kong who found their way to the Walled City. Where they came from is still debated, but why they made the Kowloon Walled City their home is not. These spirits, polluted and corrupted, feed from the desperation and violence of mortals. There is no greater source of that than the Walled City. Each one has found a particular method for gathering the pain it sustains itself with and servants to assist it, whether weaker spirits or enslaved people. Their Courts may vary in composition and philosophy from one to the next, but their purpose always remains to feed their King.

- Anyone wonder if perhaps the corporations leave the Walled City alone because they want to observe and study the Yama Kings? I wouldn't put it past them, myself.
- Kia
- Here's another log for that fire—when the Hong Kong Police Force has conducted Walled City raids lately, they've called in the assistance of Ares Firewatch teams, specifically the bughunter squads.
- Sticks

Details on the individual Courts are sparse since those that get close to the Courts themselves are twisted beyond reason, assuming they even survive. Frightening rumors from the refugees that live within the Walled City regularly circulate, and these stories can be pieced together into a patchwork tapestry of details. They say, for instance, that the Yama King Chih-Shiang has set himself up as a sort of judge of souls, and his Court exists to make those who live within the Walled City suffer for the bad karma of all their accumulated past lives. According to his Court, once all the sins have been flayed from the mortal's soul, the penitent will die and ascend, his soul freed from the weight of the bad karma. Sadly, many desperate Walled City residents, who feel their existence in the slum is punishment for past lives' misdeeds, believe Chih-Shiang's claims and volunteer themselves to his judgment. The Ebony Queen Lam Vy, however, is said to teach the Walled City's residents how to hide from the other Yama Kings by scurrying in the darkest corners of the slums, until they become so good at hiding and surviving that they become roaches in the walls.

- Guess we know why Ares brings in their anti-insect spirit teams.
- Plan 9
- There's another Yama King, Fu Mang, the Serpent of the Setting Sun, who perverts Hong Kong's own concepts of *guanxi* and face. Fu Mang promises wealth and influence to Walled City inhabitants

HONG KONG

who have less than nothing. All Fu Mang asks for in return are forty-four hearts, removed from the chests of the individual's family and friends while they still live. Hearts from random victims will not do, so those cursed into following Fu Mang's bargain often befriend others before performing their grisly act, turning their entire *guanxi* network into a list of victims. It is said that Fu Mang follows through on his promises and that there are a few wealthy people who have escaped the Walled City with riches, but that Fu Mang continues to whisper in their minds and reminds them of their crimes.

- Elijah
- How many of these Yama Kings are there in the Walled City?
- Lyrar
- No one is quite sure and the rumors vary. Some say there are ten Yama Kings. Some say twelve. I've even heard eighteen. It becomes difficult to separate the mythical fears of the Walled City residents from the actual Yama Kings, which blurs the count even more.
- Axis Mundi

BUREAU OF HEAVEN AND EARTH

Posted by: Puck

I know that it rattles the nerves of many of you to see me even posting on this network. Many of you would like to see me gone. More than a few of you would like to see me dead. I'm not going into my past, nor am I going to address the rumors of my involvement with Deus or even the global system failure of 2064. If you're wondering why Fastjack allows me on his network, it is because he values information more than personal vendettas. I've brought him information that no one else has. So I'm afraid the rest of you are stuck with me, whether you like it or not. I will pay my keep.

- The little bastard is lucky I can't fry his frontal lobes through 'Jack's network. Guess I'll have to settle with the knowledge that he's got the lowest Rep score by far. I suspect it will stay that way.
- Slamm-O!
- The old man must be getting soft, letting a "former" fanatic like Puck on here. Maybe old age is rattling his senses.
- Pistons
- Careful, this is still my system. I'm as cautious about Puck as the rest of you, and he knows I keep a closer eye on him than most. But he's right; he possesses information that needs to be on here.
- FastJack

Shakespeare said that memory was the warden of the brain, but I think the technomancers of today would disagree with him. For all the powers technomancers possess over the virtual realm, they have no organic storage memory beyond the basic memory that all metahumans have. Metahuman

memory is frail and imperfect, prone to forgetfulness and not suited for storing plain data. Technomancers do not trust it. They cache data away in pockets of external storage memory, offline and online, and it has become such a routine with most technomancers that they have even taken to backing up their natural memories and experiences in external memory, where it can be preserved against the ravages of time, not to mention indexed, scanned, and searched easily.

- Puck keeps referring to technomancers in the third person, but I've heard a number of rumors that he is one. It certainly would explain his knowledge of how they operate.
- Glitch
- Any truth to that, Puck?
- Sunshine
- There's an extent to how much information I'm going to share today. Let's not be greedy.
- Puck

I'm not going to go into the details of how, but I came into ownership of a set of external storage memories, a catalog of full-ASIST recordings of what appear to be personal experiences. After viewing them a single time, however, I apparently triggered a viral defense that destroyed the ASIST recordings. The sophistication of the virus prevented me from noticing it, but its execution was not flawless. The data is partially preserved and FastJack and I are trying to restore it. He saw enough of the recording to allow me into his network to spread the information, so he'll vouch for the truth of what I saw.

- To speak for myself a moment, I've seen only tiny slivers of the original footage as we piece it back together. I can vouch for its existence and that there is something there, but I can't exactly say that Puck is giving you the whole story or the absolute truth. Keep that in the back of your mind.
- FastJack

The majority of the recording appears to be within an Asian temple. I've cross-referenced the architecture and narrowed it down to South Asian, particularly a style common in coastal south China, though I can't find a match to this particular temple interior (I have a theory on that which I'll get to later). The subject whose memory I was viewing was seated with a number of others upon mats on the temple floor. Some were wearing monastic robes while others were dressed in suits or everyday attire. The room was dimly lit by candles, and the scented smoke from incense sticks hung heavy in the air. Throughout the recording, the subject is fed data that appears on windows in his view, but there is no commlink in sight anywhere during the recording, on either the subject or the people he is talking to. I can only assume that they are technomancers, or at the very least that the subject is.

They are studying something as they speak, and data scrolls rapidly across the subject's view. I only wish I still had the recording intact so I could study the feeds frame-by-frame. From my single viewing, I got the impression that they were studying Matrix traffic and monitoring a number of chat nodes, something I am familiar with from my own past. The primary speaker sits upon a mat on a raised dais, and though his elderly body is swathed in heavy robes, from the subject's view I can plainly make out significant cyberware implantation, including a replacement skull that is covered with only the barest facial reconstruction. Throughout his speaking, the primary's face does not move. His lips do not articulate his words and I never once saw his eyes blink. I couldn't have missed, however, the heavy cabling latched to jack sockets in his skull and back and snaking outward toward the ceiling and floor.

- Datajack cables? Why wasn't he wireless?
- Glitch
- Maybe for security reasons or maybe for bandwidth reasons.
- Netcat
- You're right, hardline connections can still pull down more data transmission but today's wireless isn't that far behind. I mean, for it to matter, you'd have to be talking some massive bandwidth usage. At that point, you'd run into the problem that your brain wouldn't be able to process all that data anyway.
- Clockwork
- Who says he has anything close to a normal brain? If he's sporting a skull replacement, we shouldn't assume the bits inside are natural.
- Beaker
- Where the hell would monks be getting the cash and facilities for any sort of cutting-edge headware work?
- Slamm-O!
- That's a very good question, though the corporations and the temples are closely linked in Hong Kong. The temples were largely responsible for raising public support for the corporate bid for Hong Kong's independence, and the relationship has been tight since.
- Snow Tiger

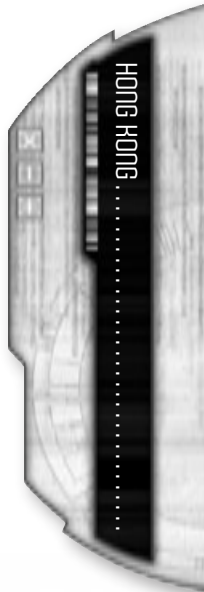
Those assembled in the temple were monitoring the actions of something on the Matrix, something that the primary monk on the dais refers to a number of times as "a sublime complex." I'm unsure what that is, but my own background makes me wonder if they are observing semi-autonomous software agents. To back up that theory, the primary monk commands the subject to contact the sublime complex and guide it to ascension. They discuss methods for doing so, which include creating emotional links to the sublime complex and challenging it on ethical and moral questions. Given

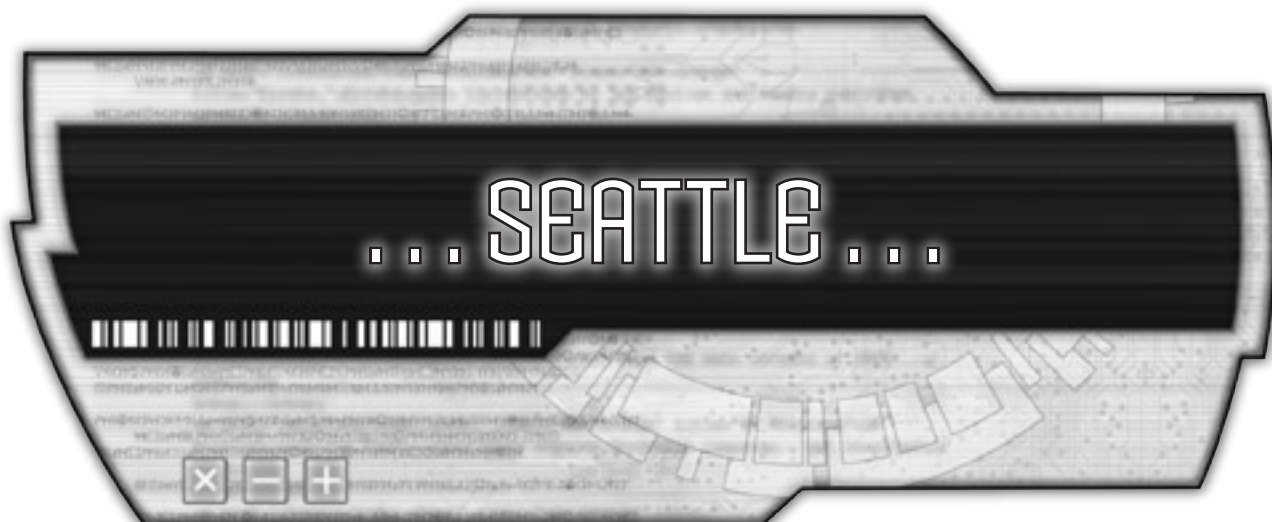
the plan they had for this engagement, I found myself wondering if they had already done this before. It definitely does not appear to be an ad-hoc gathering; the various participants refer to their group a few times as the "Bureau of Heaven and Earth," which leads me to believe they've been established for some time.

- That name is similar to Chinese mythological names for organizations of spirits that would maintain the universe. It was a sort of a spiritual civil service branch that handled everything from the seasons and weather to appeals from worshippers for aid.
- Jimmy No

The final part of the recording gave me the most to work with as far as tracking down the temple location. The subject concludes his conversation with the primary and the others in the temple and is given instruction to leave and begin his work with the sublime complex. The recording ends abruptly soon after, but not before showing an outdoor perspective. The subject exits the temple into the evening darkness, but as he turns and ends the recording, there's a quick blur of a nighttime skyline. Because the footage destroyed itself, I haven't been able to analyze the final shot, but it looked a lot like the Hong Kong skyline. After investigating Hong Kong's larger temples, the only one I was not allowed to visit was the interior grounds of the Wong Tai Sin temple in Kowloon. I've been working with FastJack on the footage, but I did hire some runners to get me some pictures of the inside of those secure grounds at Wong Tai Sin. Unfortunately, the team appears to have failed and I have not heard back from them.

- Buddhist and Taoist religious texts are full of "conversations" where two characters discuss morals and ethics, with one of the characters eventually enlightening the other and encouraging the religion. Buddha himself was faced with these sorts of questions before he ascended. So the methods, at least, are not new.
- Elijah
- So could they be trying to awaken artificial intelligences? But why?
- Netcat
- As far as Buddhists are concerned, they may see artificial intelligences as sort of a higher incarnation, free from some of the desires and sufferings of the human body. Taoists might wish to learn from artificial intelligences how to reach immortality through the Matrix. Or, they could be working for some other agent who has their own agenda. We don't really know at this point and we're still working on the information being provided by Puck, who has less than a shining past himself.
- Axis Mundi





I knew he was expecting the hit, but he still looked surprised when his bodyguard's head exploded. My snipers methodically picked his people off. Saturn fried his mages somehow—I don't know what the spell was, they just crumpled up and died. The slaughter was over quickly. The dying would take longer.

The big man was propped up against his wife's gravestone when I walked up to pay my final respects. Dark blood oozed between his fingers. "Rowena," he said.

"Bigio."

He was grim, holding his gut shot. No gallows humor here. I kept my gun where he could see it, but at my side.

"You gonna finish it, O'Malley?"

"You gonna gimme a reason, Butcher?"

His eyes took on a far-away look. He told me a story as he lay dying.

*"You know why they call me 'The Butcher?' It was the proudest day of my life, the day I became a *soldato*. After sixteen years of climbing out of the gutter, I stood before Don Gianelli in a borrowed suit, cleaner than I'd ever been in my life, reciting the prayers and swearing the oath while the icon of St. Stephen burned to ash in my hand. Afterwards, he shook my hand and said he needed me for a job."*

Bigio hacked up something red from his lungs and spat it out.

"It was raining when we arrived at the warehouse. The boys had tied a kid to a chair, right above a drain. The tools were all laid out on a table. They gave me room to work. I took off my coat and tie. Unbuttoned my collar. Rolled up my sleeves. The kid watched me the entire time."

I wiped away a bit of bloody drool coming down from Bigio's mouth. He went on.

"Kid was a Yak hacker. Stole some bank codes or something and stashed 'em. My job was to find out where. He knew the score, but didn't say anything. Maybe he was loyal. Maybe he thought he was a hard man. Maybe he was more afraid of his bosses than he was of me. I cracked my knuckles and got to work."

He flashed me a bloody smile at that.

"There's something to be said for getting your hands dirty. It used to be that a little blood on your hands was a good thing. Your people respected you when they knew you weren't afraid to do something yourself. Your father—" he almost spat the word "—he understood that. I'll say that for the bastard." He coughed again.

"Gianelli didn't make me a made man just because I was big and tough. No, it was because I was an utterly ruthless bastard that could take a person apart like a piece of meat. Like a butcher, he told me.

"The kid wasn't tough. I started on his hands and worked my way up. You dislocate the fingers first, and then the wrist. That way, you can still go back later and break them if you haven't made your point yet. It took about an hour to get to his shoulders. Twist, pop, scream. Twist, pop, scream. I slapped him back when his eyes glazed over. We locked eyeballs again, and I repeated my question. He choked





SEATTLE TIMELINE

2017—The Great Ghost Dance causes Mt. St. Helens, Mt. Adams, Mt. Hood, and Mt. Ranier to erupt simultaneously. Refugees flee to Seattle even as lava flows destroy most of Puyallup.

2018—The Treaty of Denver ends the Ghost Dance War; under one of the treaty provisions Seattle and its satellite communities are retained as UCAS territory.

2019—Flooded with refugees deported from the new Native American Nations, Seattle Mayor Lindstrom “the Conqueror” facilitates the incorporation of surrounding towns and cities into Seattle.

2020—The President of the UCAS signs a bill dissolving the state of Washington and forming the Seattle Metroplex.

2029—The Crash of '29 destroys most of Seattle's computer industry, driving Redmond into a slow decline.

2036—The Night of Rage sweeps Seattle as simmering racial intolerance against metahumans boils over into widespread violence.

2055—Knight Errant Firewatch teams burn out the Universal Brotherhood headquarters and the insect spirit hive infesting it.

2059—The Renraku Arcology is mysteriously cut off from the outside world, with hundreds of thousands trapped inside.

2061—UCAS forces complete their recovery of the Renraku Arcology.

2064—Crash 2.0. The Seattle Matrix grid is completely destroyed.

2065—NeoNET installs Seattle's new wireless Matrix network.

2066—The Seattle Metroplex and the Salish-Shidhe Council win a joint bid to host the 2076 Summer Olympics.

2069—Earthquakes in California trigger renewed volcanic activity in Mount Ranier, subjecting Seattle to frequent showers of ash and acid rain.

out. “If a man empties his purse into his head, no man can take it away from him.”

“Benjamin Franklin.” I said. Bigio looked at me. “It’s a quote by Benjamin Franklin.” He grunted and tried to shrug, then winced. He was bleeding slower, and he shivered, but he kept on.

“I understood what the kid meant. So I ran my hand along his skull and sure enough, there were the parallel lines of stitches that hadn’t quite healed yet. I gripped the back of his head, bent it to one side, and grabbed a blade. The kid squealed and struggled, but I held his head like a vise. It took five minutes and a pair of needle-nose pliers. What was left of the kid slumped in the chair. In my bloody hand I held his headware memory.”

Bigio coughed up some more blood. All the fight was out of him. His voice grew quiet.

“I killed your father, Rowena. You’ve spent ten years taking pieces out of me. What more do you want? End it. Just make it clean. James O’Malley would have done as much.”

I nodded. The gun kicked twice. Bigio was dead. I stopped to lay the gun on my father’s grave before leaving Gethsemane. It felt right.

EMERALD CITY

Posted by: Fatima

If you ask a Seattleite, they’ll tell you that they have a star on the UCAS flag. It’s pretty far away from the other ones and you can’t see it, but they swear it’s there. The Seattle Metroplex is an island of UCAS territory surrounded by hostile nations, and the only UCAS port on the Pacific Ocean. Four million UCAS citizens live in the Metroplex, with up to a five hundred thousand transients visiting every day. Those are the official numbers, mind. Rough estimates place the actual population (including transients and a few species not yet regarded as sentient by the Metroplex Census Office) closer to six million.

BORING FACTOIDS

Seattle’s a little more cosmopolitan than your average sprawl, which is a major plus for people in our line of work. Any ethnicity, metatype, ’ware, or outfit blends right into with the pavement-pounding downtown hordes. You really have to make an effort to get anyone to raise an eyebrow at your appearance, even in the exclusive high-sec corp enclaves (where you can look weird as long as you also look *rich*). It’s also easy to plug into whatever subcultural niche you prefer here. There are dozens of little ethnic neighborhoods and specialty shops where you can find anything your individual quirks desire.

- Of course, half of the shops are corp-run chains that you could find in any sprawl. There isn’t an ethnic culture, counterculture, or lack of culture out there that the corps haven’t figured out how to commodify and subsume into the monoculture. So despite the melting pot pretenses, you might as well call Seattle “McCity.” At least until you get out of Downtown.

- Dr. Spin

- Yeah, but the food’s good. From high-end Azanian barbecues serving imported freshly slaughtered zebra steaks to your local Vietnamese take-out on the corner serving soy noodles, fried recombinant krill, and 4-ounce bottles of Kirin 2.0, there’s something for everybody!

- Traveler Jones

Linguachips and translation programs are ubiquitous these days, but your average Seattleite speaks at least two languages, even if they can’t write their name. The ones you’re most likely to encounter are English, Japanese, Salish dialects, Or’zet, Aztlaner Spanish, Russian, Korean, and Sperethiel.

- The influence of Japanese culture on Seattle cannot be overstated. Outside of the AR anime, seizure-inducing games, wacky trid shows, and idoru idols, your standard Seattle salaryman goes through the ritual of exchanging e-paper business cards, and bows are more common than handshakes or high-fives even among the middle class.

- Mihoshi Oni

The Man

Each Seattle district (except for Outremer) is governed by a locally elected mayor. The Metroplex as a whole elects the governor and the Metroplex's two senators and single representative; those last three serve on behalf of Seattle in the UCAS Congress. Relations between the Metroplex government and the various extraterritorial corporations that operate within the Metroplex are maintained by the United Corporate Council, which in turn answers to the Corporate Court. The current Metroplex Governor is Julius Strouthers, though he's up for re-election this year, and faces stiff competition.

- The Metroplex government is bought and sold by the corps and the syndicates, from the mayors on down. Every once in a while a politician or public servant forgets they're on a leash, but that only lasts until they find themselves losing the next election, scandalized on the newsfeeds, or floating in the Sound.

- Kay St. Irregular

The UCAS Federal government maintains offices in Seattle to represent the interests of the country as a whole and to cover anything that might fall under Federal jurisdiction. Federal and UCAS military presence has been increasing steadily in Seattle since the recent Crash, perhaps in response to the growing Independent Seattle movement.

- Just FYI, Seattle's only unique holiday is Awakening Day, celebrated on the second Monday in December. The magical fireworks and illusions are neat.

- Snopes

Rain City

Since the Pacific Northwest area around Seattle counts as a temperate rainforest, it's no surprise that Seattle receives precipitation in excess of two hundred centimeters each year. Even when it's not misty or drizzling, an unhealthy haze of smog keeps the city under an endless gray pallor. Being right on the ocean, though, there are times when the breeze comes in off Puget Sound and you can almost breathe something resembling air. Careful, though—the second the wind changes, you'll get a lung full of ash from Puyallup or low-rad particulates from Glow City.

- It isn't *that* bad ... well, most of the time. Outside of the Barrens, you can get by without a respirator—new lungs are cheap these days, anyway, right?

- Beaker

Speaking of ash, get used to it. Ever since the quakes down in California, Mt. Ranier has been spewing a thin stream right into

the clouds coming toward Seattle. The regular acid rain showers (or flurry of toxic sleet in the winter) bleach the buildings and eat away at the ferroconcrete, though many corp skyrakers sport expensive nano-material coatings to protect against the caustic elements.

- Gah, what a depressing, drizzly, toxic hellhole. Kiss the sun goodbye when your sub-orbital drops in, because you won't see it again until you get out.

- Kane

The Augmented Surface View

Visitors to Seattle see a city of living crystal, with each building a massive polygon of multifaceted green gems lit from within. This is the much-hyped "Emerald City" AR overlay promoted by the Seattle Tourist Board, broadcast via thousands of participating nodes and networks right to your commlink. Most of Downtown Seattle, especially the looming corporate skyscrapers, has adopted the green, glassy AR theme to "skin" over their drab exteriors of concrete and mirrored windows. The street level overlay is more colorful and varied in appearance, though green and crystalline elements are still dominant.

- Alongside all of the Emerald City-related tourist kitsch—everything from munchkin persona avatars to flying monkey toy drones—street hawkers all over downtown peddle AR software that will change the green monoliths to purple pyramids, massive trees, or even giant golden dildos if that's what you want. It's your reality, make Seattle look however unreal you want it to look.

- Traveler Jones

In the Deep End

Seattle's virtual reality is pretty much like any other, though you'll note the Emerald City design motif is standard here, too. The largest systems include Mitsuhama's infamous Forbidden City host, the Aztechnology Pyramid, the NeoNET Constellation, and the translucent green apparition of the Arcology Commercial and Housing Enclave. Of course, no introduction to the Seattle Matrix would be complete without mentioning SeaSource, a popular public database and search engine.

- I whipped up a SeaSearch toolbar mod that allows you to simultaneously access ShadowSea, the local data haven. If you're interested, let me know, I'll zap it over.

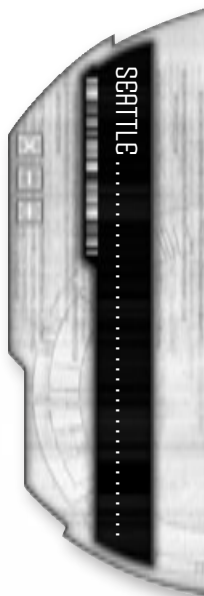
- Slamm-O!

- Public dataterminals and linkbooths located Downtown allow anyone to access the Matrix in full VR. Public users are saddled with icy green golem icons that are so ubiquitous on the public grids that they're nearly invisible. That can be an asset when you need to make an anonymous virtual meeting or scope out the public face of the corporate host you'll be running against later.

- Kat o' Nine Tales

Staying in Touch

Perhaps more than other sprawls, Seattleites have wholeheartedly embraced social networking technologies. Just peek at the PANs of any pavement-slapping pedestrians, and



SHADOWSEA QUICKSEARCH

The Exchange

The Exchange was first reported as an anarchic distributed influence network in the early '60s. Participants (usually, but not always, shadowrunners) were mysteriously given or somehow acquired a unique commlink marked with a distinctive red X. Analysis of these commlinks indicated they were loaded with extra sensor systems and were set to surreptitiously eavesdrop and record on a constant basis and deliver this data to an anonymous node. Bearers of these commlinks were considered part of "The Exchange" and would receive periodic requests to undertake simple actions—anything from taking a picture to leaving an extra copy of a program in an empty data node to delivering a mysterious package—accompanied by the promise of a "karmic reward." The exact nature of the reward varied according to how often and successfully the bearer performed his task. Rewards were often tailored to be of specific benefit to the individual bearer, implying a sophisticated understanding of the bearer's life, activities, and current situation. Rewards have included intelligence, software, equipment, and similar favors applied via oblique methods and seemingly unrelated parties.

No one has ever managed to discover (or at least publicly disclose) who or what was behind The Exchange. By all accounts, the principal network hubs for The Exchange were damaged or destroyed during the Crash 2.0, and without proper technical support and cross-referencing, the network collapsed.

New reports indicate that The Exchange may have been recently revived in the Seattle Metroplex grid—and by some accounts is already spreading elsewhere. The Exchange is now distributed as a networking software package; once installed on a commlink, it performs nearly identically to the original Exchange network.

Lately a new software package known as Exchange has begun distribution throughout the Seattle Metroplex RTG. Once installed in a standard commlink, the program, with one twist: the Exchange appears to consist almost exclusively of shadowrunners.

The Exchange never makes requests for currency, and Exchange members have never reported being "karmically awarded" with nuyen or other forms of money—perhaps because anonymous gifts are harder to trace than credit.

you'll see each and every one is linked up to at least one social networking service, if not half a dozen. If you scan your vicinity for an interactive game partner, a fellow hobbyist, or a one-night stand, you're sure to find one. Seattleites are so heavily networked that spontaneous, unplanned (usually) flash mobs

are common when word hits the airwaves about some celebrity sighting, short-term bargain deal, or similar media spectacle or draw.

- The latest fashion is to be part of a meshed tribe. Some exclusive ethnic groups were the first to take advantage of the networking to bring themselves closer together, particularly some AmerInd and Polynesian groupings. Some of them are quite particular about who they allow as members, going so far as to require DNA scans to determine your ethnic background, or excluding certain metatypes. The trend has expanded beyond ethnic demographics to a myriad of urban tribes with no historical or cultural precedent. You'll find everything from Japanese feudal clans and a couple of neo-Celtic and Germanic tribes (with an unfortunately high number of neo-nazis) to corp crews, Klingons, and neo-raver Spiral tribalists.

- Mika

- And then there are the "secret" tribes that people don't even know they're a part of—like The Exchange.

- Icarus

The Scene

Once upon a time, Seattle was known for suicidal, flannel-wearing grunge rockers and a popular chain of coffee houses. It's got a lot more going on now, and interesting events always attract people who want to keep an eye on what's new and hot. As a result, Seattle 2070 is the eyes and ears of the Pacific Northwest. It's inundated with fashionistas, glitterati, paparazzi, cool hunters, and anybody that wants to be "in the know" or cash in on the latest trends. These cultural parasites also draw an even lower life form: marketing agents. There's no better place to kick-start a new viral advertising campaign, music style, or targeted meme than by seeding it through Seattle's subcultural tapestry and watching it spread. Neo-Tokyo and LA may be the hip places to watch, but you'd be surprised at how much originates from the Emerald City. Seattle has a way of mutating new artistic talent and trends for its own purposes, however, so there's always even more that doesn't escape into the corporate clutches.

- News broadcasts from Seattle are accessed around the Pacific Rim. Try not to get caught on camera or your mug'll be on the air from Hong Kong to Vladivostok.

- Snopes

- Shadowrunners can make a nice living, if they don't mind dealing with slick corporate managers and the brain-dead, addicted, fuck-anything-that-walks crowd laughably defined as "talent."

- Kat O'Nine Tales

THERE'S NO PLACE LIKE HOME

By Daniel Cregg, *UCAS Today*

- "DC from DC" is a multimedia weekly blogcast crafted by veteran journalist Daniel Cregg. This report focuses on Seattle's current political climate—particularly the race for governor. One of the last old-school political journalists, Cregg is intelligent, occasionally

insightful, and sometimes tasteful. In other words, he's an endangered species.

• FastJack

Seattle, ten years after. Coming back to my far-off birthplace is a breath of fresh air in many ways. Indeed, the oceanic wind that welcomed me at the Seattle-Tacoma International Airport is only the beginning. Surrounded by barely friendly countries, this isolated American outpost in the Pacific Northwest keeps a wild, I-dare-you-to-try edge that is all but lost in the East. More than four million souls call Seattle home, but only one can call itself its Governor.

Pollsters, rallies, and AR spam; oh my! The Emerald City is being bombarded by bombastic bullshit. Election campaigns are kicking into high gear and the anxiety is nearly visible. Customs gives me the Look as I hand over my press accreditation. It won't be the last one the agent sees before E-Day.

• Most newsnoops are just here for the show, but some are willing to dig deep (or pay big) for prime-time dirt. Campaign strategists spin damage control, using runners to bury stories (and bodies) before the reporters out them.

• Kat o' Nine Tales

I'm sipping something the caffeine bar claims is real Amazonian coffee as I ride in a cab to the Mayflower Park Hotel—it's no Laubenstein Plaza, but it'll do. I like the retro atmosphere. Very 1990s.

The driver is in-the-flesh, not telepresent—an ork named Fred.

/// Begin Audiovisual Transcript ///

Fred: Mayflower? Good family hotel. Big beds and soundproof rooms—'cause a nightclub was near it once.

Daniel Cregg: Once? You mean Sullivan's closed?

Fred: (nods) The Crash. City's been in agony from it.

DC: (distracted) Hmm ... city looks fine from here.

Fred: Downtown ain't all of Seattle, hoss. The other districts are helluva lot worse. I ain't down-and-out yet, but my wife's unemployed and our kids got all this pressure to become gangers. All the other kids in our street already joined one gang or another.

DC: Sorry to hear that. Can't the police do anything about it?

Fred: The Star? <snorts> *The buunda* to the Star. They're so busy stomping orks they can't even catch the Cutter.

DC: So you agree with Strouthers.

Fred: Yeah, but that useless halfer ain't getting my vote again.

DC: So who's your pick?

Fred: No real choice between Brackhaven and someone who wants to jump into the abyss. Who knows, there might be something soft at the bottom.

/// End Audiovisual Transcript ///

SEATTLE ELECTION POLLS

Candidate (Party)	Now	1 Month Ago	3 Months Ago
Kenneth Brackhaven (R)	32%	30%	28%
Josephine Dzhugashvili (I)	30%	23%	16%
Julius Strouthers (D)	21%	17%	10%
Other	<1%	5%	16%
Undecided	17%	25%	30%

Source: UCAS Today/Gallup

WHO'S WHO IN SEATTLE, 2070 EDITION

Profile: Julius Strouthers

Born in 2111, Julius Strouthers enjoyed his 15 minutes of fame as Seattle's first dwarf. He attended the University of Seattle, where he excelled at Computer Science. Though he received numerous offers, Strouthers chose to start his own business. After some initial success, the company was fatally wounded by a fire in 2045, which destroyed its offices. Strouthers worked as a self-employed consultant until 2058, when he was hired as Chief Operations Officer (COO) of Thomas Lake Mining and Oil. After joining the Democratic Party in 2062, Strouthers was elected Metroplex Governor in 2066. He is married to Dr. Miranda Callahan and has one daughter, Erin.



• Self-employed consultant? Heh. Never heard someone actually figure out how to work being a fixer and Mr. Johnson for over ten years into their résumé before.

• Mr. Bonds

• There's always been the suspicion that Strouthers muscled his way into TLMO with help, but nothing solid has ever surfaced ... probably because the truth is buried two meters deep.

• Snopes

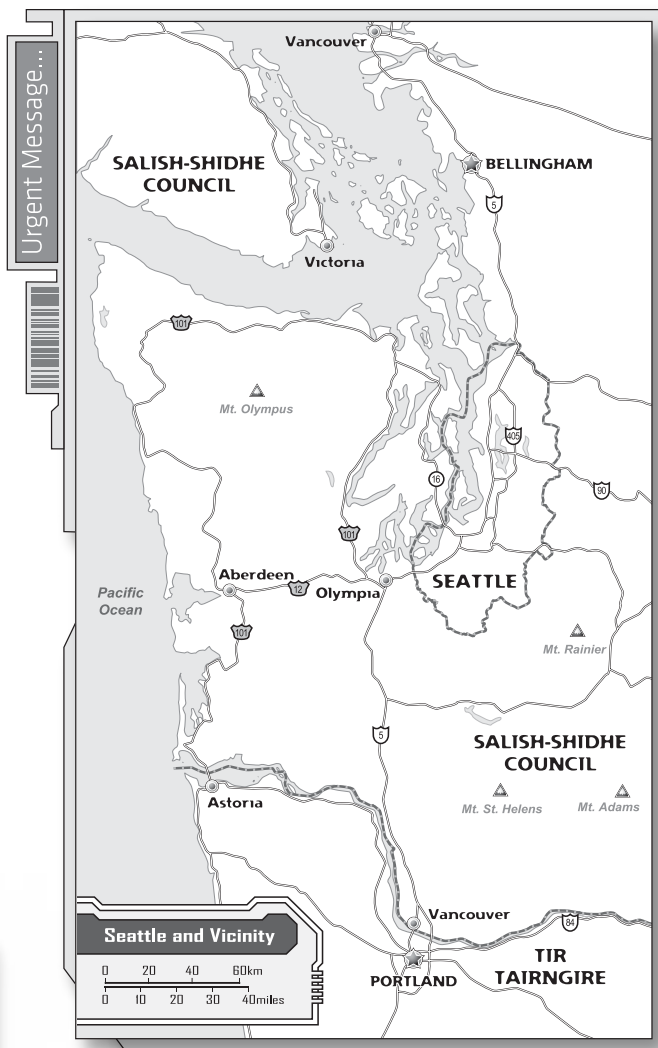
Fred pretty much summed up Seattle's dilemma. All three candidates promise the moon for Seattleites (they'd promise the sun too, but locals don't believe in anything they can't see), but can they deliver?

THE RACE FOR GOVERNOR

With the withdrawal of former Bellevue Mayor Daniel Reynolds (Technocrat) for personal reasons and Representative Susan Riordan (Libertarian) over a financial scandal, the field has narrowed to three main candidates. Given the high number of undecided voters, the election can still go to any of them.

The Incumbent: Julius Strouthers

Julius Strouthers hasn't had an easy tenure as Metroplex Governor. Seattle's sinking economy and rising unemployment are just the tip of the iceberg. Add in endemic street violence, well-publicized corruption scandals involving some of his closest advi-



sors, increased hostility from the Native American Nations, and frosty relations with President Colloton's administration, and you start to get the picture. Recent bouts of rage at Cabinet meetings show the enormous stress the dwarf is dealing with.

- I met Julius back in the '50s. He had a piece of headware called a program carrier. They were pulled from the market after people found out they caused an Alzheimer's-like effect. Brackhaven would have a field day if he found out.

- Pistons

The governor has been lashing out at Lone Star recently, criticizing its lack of success in catching the "Mayan Cutter" serial killer. Strouthers has entertained negotiations with Knight Errant concerning the Metroplex Policing Contract, up for renewal next year, as a tacit threat. Strouthers has also promised a new solution to solve Seattle's energy problems, but details have been scarce.

- Shiawase and Gaeatronics are salivating at the possibilities. Saeder-Krupp might be interested, but if so they're keeping it really quiet. Expect some runs on the governor's office soon.

- Mr. Bonds

Strouthers is fighting in earnest, though, and he won't go down without a fight. "Seattle is a community, built with the hopes and actions of our forefathers, not divisiveness and mistrust," said Strouthers to an audience at a recent rally. "We're a strong city and with your help we can truly make Seattle the jewel of the Pacific Northwest."

The Frontrunner: Kenneth Brackhaven

Politicians are nothing if not adaptable, and Kenneth Brackhaven is no exception. After his failed 2057 presidential bid, Seattle's golden son spent several years as a power behind the scenes, endorsing many local candidates and the late Governor Lindstrom's failed presidential bid in 2064. With Election Day nearing and one third of Seattle behind him, those efforts might soon pay off.

/// Begin Transcript ///

"A simple look at the numbers shows that our city is dying. Forty percent of ork teens who try a BTL end up joining a gang. Five out of ten prostitutes are elves. Troll-related violence in schools has nearly doubled. Filipino, Chinese, and Aztlaner immigrants are stealing jobs from decent, hard working Americans.

"And what has been the Governor's reaction to these problems? He wants to fire Seattle's hard-working police! Clean up starts at home, and Kenneth Brackhaven is the man for the job."

Source: Arise Humanity! AR spam

/// End transcript ///

This candidate's inability to grow in the polls is a major concern of Brackhaven's advisors. Brackhaven supporters blame unfavorable media coverage, but outside experts speculate he has reached his popularity roof.

"Kenneth Brackhaven is doing very well with the human electorate," said Brian Stanton, an analyst at the University of Seattle, "but I still have yet to see a metahuman voting for him. The problem was less significant when he ran for President, but Seattle has a much higher percentage of registered metahuman voters."

- Stanton's right on the money, but that hasn't stopped Brackhaven's campaign from bribing or blackmailing prominent metahuman community leaders. Calling for abstention is as good as voting for him.

- Fatima

Personally, I wonder at tension within the ranks. After joining the Republican Party in 2069, Brackhaven rode a wave of former Archconservative voters to vanquish Ellen Danquist in the Metroplex primaries. Danquist had been personally nominated by President Colloton, which puts Brackhaven at odds with the powers-that-be in DC.

- Danquist is rebuilding her power base and working to screw Brackhaven big time. Rumor has it that she's hiring shadowrunners to discreetly mess with his campaign.

- Fianchetto

With the death of Karl Brackhaven, his uncle and chairman of the Humanis Policlub, in 2065, the only other remaining Brackhaven is Karl's granddaughter, drug artist Tiffany Brackhaven. Tiffany's longstanding relationship with the Goblin Rock star Crime Time would be a boon to Brackhaven's anti-metahuman image, but one he's chosen not to exploit.

- I don't understand Brackhaven. I'd have locked her up somewhere for rehab, at least until Election Day was over.
- Hard Exit
- Good luck with that. I heard Tiffany and CT are spending a lot of time with the Cascade Orks, dabbling into some spiritual mumbo jumbo with the tribe's shamans. The things you do to get inspiration ...
- Haze

The Insurgent: Josephine Dzhugashvili

Josephine Dzhugashvili has been very busy catching up with Brackhaven's early lead. She starts early with morning interviews; spends the day doing door-to-door campaigning and attending youth meetings, high profile business lunches, and primetime debates on NewsNet; then finishes every evening with another news spot and private meetings with prominent movers and shakers.

Getting to know Seattle's Woman of the Year took more work than expected. At a time when a misspoken line could decide the outcome of the election, Dzhugashvili's campaign manager is leaving nothing to chance. Ten minutes, she said.

As the leader of the Seattle Independence Party, Dzhugashvili's campaign can be summed up with one word: secession. That so many Seattleites might vote for Seattle to become an independent Metroplex-state is a sure sign that all's not well in Rain City, but I'll let Dzhugashvili speak for herself on that.

/// Begin Audiovisual Transcript ///

Cregg: Why secession? What's so wrong with Seattle that can only be fixed with walking out of the UCAS?

Dzhugashvili: (smiles) Good question, Dan, though I'd rather you ask what's so wrong with the UCAS that Seattle has no choice but to leave. The short answer is that we've been mistreated, abused, be-

WHO'S WHO IN SEATTLE, 2070 EDITION

Profile: *Kenneth Brackhaven*

59-year-old Kenneth Brackhaven was born in a private Bellevue clinic in 2011. After obtaining an MBA from Harvard Business School, Brackhaven worked in his family's company, Brackhaven Investments, which he inherited after his father's death in 2044. Brackhaven has been heavily involved in local politics through his Citizen's Coalition for Security (CCFS) since the '40s, and he ran for President of the UCAS in 2057 as the Archconservative Party's candidate.



Brackhaven's presidential bid turned into a debacle when the media uncovered that Brackhaven was not the man he believed to be. Kenneth Brackhaven was in fact an orphan, adopted and raised as the dead Brackhaven scion. Damaging as the revelation was, an emotional public statement reconciled Brackhaven with public opinion and he finished second after President Dunkelzahn in the polls.

Kenneth Brackhaven is a widower with no children.

WHO'S WHO IN SEATTLE, 2070 EDITION

Profile: *Josephine Dzhugashvili*

Born 2035 to a Russian émigré couple, Josephine Dzhugashvili was flagged as a child prodigy before her sixth birthday. A Harvard Law School graduate by the age of seventeen, she received a Masters at the John F. Kennedy School of Government, becoming a Doctor of Law in 2058. Dzhugashvili turned down a number of lucrative offers by law firms and corporate public affairs offices, applying instead for a position with the State Department. For undisclosed reasons, her initial and all subsequent applications were denied.



• No secret there. Brackhaven used his connections and had Dzhugashvili blackballed from the Department of State after she verbally dressed him down at a press conference for voting against the inclusion of sasquatch as citizens under the provisions of the UCAS Constitution.

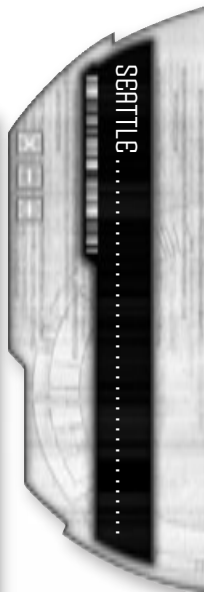
• Fianchetto

• Interestingly enough, Harvard Law's archives put *Capa* Rowena O'Malley as one of Dzhugashvili's classmates ...

• Pistons

Bitterly disappointed, Dzhugashvili had no trouble finding new opportunities and became a respected political consultant and troubleshooter. She published several books during those years, including *The Rights of Non-Metahuman Sentients* and the Pulitzer-prize winning *The Corporate Politician*. In 2063, Dzhugashvili joined the Global Relations Institute, a Horizon Group-funded political think tank. Her brilliant career almost came to an end during the Crash of '64, when she suffered a dumpshock-induced stroke.

Dzhugashvili spent two years in therapy before making a full recovery. Voted Seattle's Fourth Most Eligible Bachelorette in 2069, she is single with no children.



SEASOURCE SEARCH

Seattle City Services

Services

Fire
GridGuide

Healthcare
Matrix Services
Police
Power
Public Works
Sanitation

Corporation

Franklin Associates
Mitsuhama Computer
Technologies
City Health Services
NeoNET
Lone Star
Gaeatronics
Shiawase Envirotech
Eta Engineering

trayed, and ultimately abandoned by the very people that should be watching out for us.

Consider the economy. Seattle was hard-hit by the second Crash, but how much federal aid did we get? Exactly zero. President Colloton's Military Recovery Act appropriated all the funds. "Let us rebuild America's defenses," she said, without mentioning the excessive numbers of troops from Seattle serving in the East Coast and on the Sioux border. Or how any time one of ours asks to be transferred back here, their request is flatly denied. If that lack of trust isn't a slap in the face, I don't know what it is.

Cregg: You mentioned betrayal.

Dzhugashvili: Yes. In his memoirs, former Seattle Ambassador to Korea Timothy Washburn revealed how commercial negotiations in Korea were sabotaged by UCAS Ambassador Kelly Mitchell. It was a done deal, worth billions of nuyen for our city. *Billions!* My campaigners have gathered testimony and documentary evidence of commercial sabotage stretching back over twenty years. Washington needs the Metroplex, but doesn't trust us. We're not cattle and we won't allow this farce to continue.

/// End Audiovisual Transcript ///

- Some of you may wonder about the "Seattle Ambassador to Korea." In 2042, the UCAS granted Seattle the right to establish diplomatic ties with any nation vital to its survival. As of last year, the Metroplex had ambassadors in forty countries, mostly in the Pacific Rim, but also a few notable exceptions like Amazonia and the New European Economic Community.

- Kay St. Irregular

Dzhugashvili is hardly a single-issue candidate, though her other proposals are sometimes drowned by the secession debate. Her "Power to Seattle" social initiative puts her well on the left side of the political spectrum. She's been praised for encouraging Seattle's youth to attend neighborhood committees and grassroots movements as a way to influence local politics and stay out of gangs.

- Has anyone bothered to read "Power to Seattle?" Shit like sim-sense-aided public education might sound progressive and egalitarian, but it looks to me as straight out of a collective nightmare by Orwell, Huxley, Perdomo, and Cronenberg.

- Plan 9

At the same time, Dzhugashvili often cites the Pueblo Corporate Council as an economic role model, and she stands for increased relations with both the NAN and the Pacific Rim states. Interestingly enough, campaign financing records (which are completely public) show Aztechnology, Horizon, and Evo as her major contributors.

- Pueblo-backed Horizon Group, the NAN, Aztechnology ... looks like the AmerInds are taking over.

- DangerSensei

- Oh please. You've been watching "Custer and the Gost Dance" on autoplay again, haven't you?

- Lyran

- It is no secret that the Sovereign Tribal Council would love to bring Seattle under their aegis, but realistically that would require some serious political voodoo. In the meantime, they'll settle for a NAN-friendly city-state.

- Kay St. Irregular

What's Next?

I have no doubt in my mind that the upcoming weeks will see increasing levels of mudslinging and propaganda. There is a lot at stake for Seattle in this election, and no candidate is picture perfect. No matter who wins, someone will lose ... and it just may be Seattle.

WAR GAMES

Posted by: Fatima

Shadowrunners should never go against the military. I used to be a firm believer in that line when I was younger. No matter how many guns you have, no matter how big your guns are—the military is sure to have a lot more and a lot bigger ones.

Realistically, though, today's police and corpsec squads are as militarized as they can get for their urban patrol duties, with their armored cars, heavy weaponry, assault rifles, air support, and rapid response teams. So by comparison—and as some of you already know by experience—working against the military is viable, as long as you don't do anything stupid. Keep it quick and quiet, and *never* get into a pissing contest with the Army, natch?

Now, given that Seattle is the UCAS's only port on the Pacific, and given that it's surrounded by hostile nations (ok, hostile may be an exaggeration, but the military still remembers losing the Ghost Dance War, natch), this sprawl is positively crawling with military assets.

Metroplex Guard

First up is the Metroplex Guard, charged with defending Seattle from outside threats, terrorist attacks, and civil disorder, under the direct control of the Governor. Weekend warriors outfitted with mostly outdated gear and commanded by crooks, they're good for bashing heads during riots but little else. Governor Strouthers tried to alleviate the rampant racism in their ranks by replacing some officers and encouraging metahumans to enlist, but the results are dubious. The Guard is one of Seattle's major employers, and many of the top officers would prefer to keep it a humans-only club.

- It's an open secret that the Guard is plagued by corruption, internal strife, and general incompetence. If anything, Strouthers' interference served to exacerbate the situation, especially when he purged some of the entrenched leadership for stalling any serious change.
- Sunshine

With the elections looming, the candidates have been fighting for the Guards' votes, as well as using them to underscore political attacks against each other. Brackhaven plays the patriotic card like it's the only one in his deck, accusing Strouthers of damaging Seattle's security for political reasons. Dzhugashvili supports Strouthers when it comes to metahumans, but says the Guard is dangerously underpowered. Her plans include an extensive renovation of the Guard's equipment (new toys!), and intensive cross-training with corporate forces.

Joint Task Force Seattle

Originally installed by the UCAS a decade ago to deal with the Renraku Arcology fiasco, President Colloton (who used to be in charge of it) transformed it into a bigger, permanent gig (purely for our protection, of course) when that situation was finally resolved. Under the control of Brigadier General John Ethan Darcy (Colloton's former second-in-command), Fort Lewis has been expanding its facilities to accommodate these six thousand "peace-keeping reinforcements."

Naturally, all of this extra muscle makes some of Seattle's neighbors and inhabitants very uncomfortable. Fort Lewis is rife with political factions and intelligence agents of various stripes—everyone from the Salish and Sioux to the Tir and various megacorps are carefully watching the task force's activities. On top of it all, Darcy has grown increasingly proactive, from accelerated "training maneuvers" (including mock "urban defense" scenarios complete with soldiers playfighting on Seattle's city streets) to involving the Task Force heavily in Metroplex Guard duties like border control and smuggler interception. In fact, the Guard and even Lone Star have voiced complaints about Darcy interfering with their operations and overstepping jurisdictional boundaries.

- It goes farther than that. Gen. Darcy's deployed his Intelligence Corps throughout the Metroplex, and is taking a progressively heavier hand in Seattle's internal affairs. Even his supporters are making cautionary noises, but Darcy seems convinced that no one can actually stand in his way.
- Fianchetto

Everett Naval Shipyards

Vice Admiral John Lienhard is in charge of the *USS Colin Powell* nuclear supercarrier group at the Everett Naval Shipyards—an uneasy job, given the presence of a Salish-Shidhe military base right across the border. Lienhard seems to have some sort of cat-and-mouse game going with the Salish commanders—word is that they chum it up online all the time, even though Lienhard runs a tight counter-espionage program and has caught at least three spies in the past year. There's bad blood between Lienhard and Gen. Darcy, though, likely due to Darcy's constant meddling.

- Darcy called Lienhard an armchair sailor, and I'd rather not post Lienhard's answer. Unless the Pentagon or Colloton step in, this is not going to end well.
- Sunshine

Intelligence Agencies

Naturally, several intelligence agencies have major offices in Seattle, to keep an eye on things for Uncle Sam. Officially, the seventy-two-story Federal Building at Seneca St. and 1st Avenue houses the local branches of the Department of Homeland Security, the Federal Bureau of Investigation, the Drug Enforcement Agency, the National Security Agency and the Internal Revenue Service. Unofficially, the Central Intelligence Agency and a few other groups also run their regional operations from there.

- Note that the building is under federal jurisdiction. If you get caught, the Feds own your ass. Legally.
- Kay St. Irregular
- The Army has a sweet deal with the CIA. Suspects caught by the military can expect to wake up in one of the CIA's secret safehouses in Seattle, ready for interrogation. Plausible deniability at its best.
- Snopes

ON THE FRINGE

Posted by: Kat o' Nine Tales

Seattle isn't all about the big fish in the little pond. There's plenty of smaller fish swimming around and viciously fighting for every scrap of food—not unlike piranhas. Aside from the standard assortment of ecoteur cells, rad and anarchist affinity groups, cults, magical groups, and esoteric fraternal organizations, a few deserve specific mention.

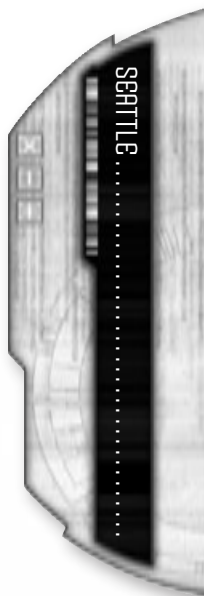
Humanis Policlub

These fuckers pretty much wrote the book on conservative American political movements. Seattle's chapter was among the first to open in the UCAS, and, I'm sorry to say, is one of the most influential ones.

Stupid as it seems, the key to success for this hate group is diversity and community support. See, Humanis is not just a lynch mob waiting to happen or a breeding ground for racial terrorists. It runs charity schools, health clinics, Little League games and its own trid channel. They make sure their neighborhoods are gang-free and safe (for humans, that is). All things added up, they make Humanis a popular, respected organization.

Behind the scenes, of course, lies a network of hate with ties to sinister organizations like Alamos 20,000 and the Human Nation. These hardcore groups filter potential recruits through Humanis, letting the policlub keep its hands clean in public. The group showed its power during the Republican primaries here, endorsing Kenneth Brackhaven's bid for Governor.

- Speaking of A20K, they took a nasty blow in 2064 when Colloton fingered them as the masterminds behind the pan-American coup d'etat. The FBI believes that surviving members scattered throughout America and have been rebuilding the group since then. Worse yet, reports suggest that A20K somehow acquired



a small cache of nanoweapons from Winternight (the apocalyptic cult that helped bring on the Crash 2.0).

- Fianchetto

People of the Book

Coming straight out of your local religious center and heading right against Humanis is the People of the Book, a pan-religious association waging a holy war for the hearts and minds of Seattle.

This unlikely alliance was the brainchild of Bram ben Ysaac, a conservative and traditional Jewish rabbi. His grassroots ministry against racial propaganda directed toward children in Renton attracted praise from both Islamic and Christian clergy throughout Seattle, and became the basis for the People of the Book. A meeting with Cardinal Padraig O'Toole and Mullah Sameh Amr proved fruitful and laid the foundation for a "Meeting of Faiths" later that same year, where the charter for the People was presented, voted on, and approved by a majority of Seattle's clergy.

This association leaves the rallies and protests to other groups, focusing instead on community centers, classes, sermons from the pulpit, and their Almighty online social network. This network broadcasts meetings and events, provides freeware language translation, broadcasts the muezzin's call to prayer each day (with directional indicators towards Mecca), and generally helps religious folk to find common ground. By promoting increased awareness and motivation among worshippers, the People act as a beacon of light in Seattle's darkest neighborhoods.

- Ah, Seattle. The last bastion of cockeyed optimism in the civilized world. Must be all that soykaf.
- Kay St. Irregular
- You can sense the desperation of these aging, outdated belief systems as they lose followers to the realities of the Awakening and modern times each day. I won't be sad to see them and their fairy tales fade into obscurity, but in the meantime I'm glad they're not killing each other here like elsewhere in the world.
- Haze
- You can thank Mullah Sameh Amr for forging many of the ties. He's a card-carrying member of the Islamic Renaissance, which aims to spread more "enlightened" views throughout Islam. Unfortunately that also makes him a target for some of the fanatics on all sides.
- Goat Foot

As a united front, the People of the Book has also been exercising its power in political affairs. Though it does not back any particular candidate for governor, it challenges all of them on numerous issues and encourages its members to vote. It's also been willing to team up with secular organizations, like the Pan-American Civil Liberties Union, when common ground was available.

- Interestingly, one of the People's strongest opponents has been Evo. The religious alliance pushes for a lot of bioconservative politics, specifically in regards to biotech, genetics, and healthcare, which clash with the megacorp's transhumanist agenda. The rapid pace of scientific progress is on Evo's side, but they're not taking any chances. You can expect them to do whatever it takes to derail the People

from creating moral uproars that might impact the corp.

- Plan 9
- The People's head council is no stranger to shadow activity either. It hires newbie runners and moonlighting gangers to protect its community centers and free clinics from gangs and drug dealers. Their budget is stretched thin, though, so they rely on a steady turnover of fresh talent.
- DangerSensei
- That's only the tip of the iceberg. The council also has a secret agenda of fighting paranormal threats that they *all* agree on: shedim, insect spirits, blood magicians, and wraiths are all on their hit list.
- Sticks
- That's a big agenda for such a small group. You might want to run that intel through the reality filter one more time.
- Snopes

Gestalt Consciousness Network

When the megacorps rebuilt the Matrix after the recent Crash and augmented reality really took off for the first time, The UCAS Technocratic Party was quick to embrace the virtual revolution. They funded community projects left and right as part of its propaganda activities. A few of them gained a life of their own, however, like this one.

The Gestalt Consciousness Network began as a small-scale experiment at the University of Washington, where it soon became widely popular with students. Few of them bothered listening to the Technocrats' propaganda, so after a year or so the party withdrew its funding. Facing closure, the faculty issued an open plea for help, and a posse of campus activists volunteered to take charge of it. It's been three years since then, and the GCN is alive and kicking and wildly popular with Seattle's youth—both rich and poor.

The new management has been much more successful than the Technocrats in weaving politics and pop culture hype, throwing out the middle-of-the-road platform and replacing it with a far more radical agenda. The Gestalts are hardcore technophiles whose main goal is to transform Seattle's political landscape into an online social network where netizens engage in real-time democratic decision-making and the governor is little more than an ornament.

- The Technocrats are not happy that some "techno-communist brats" figured out how to play with their toy, but they can't do much more than to sit back and whine about it.
- Clockwork
- Though the Gestalt generally views the Technocrats as establishment sell-outs, they seem to have no issues working hand-in-hand with the Horizon Group. Partly this is due to Horizon's own decentralized and democratic internal structure, upon which the Gestalts have modeled some of their projects. Horizon seems quite interested in the Gestalt project, providing funding and support in exchange for exclusive access to the Gestalt's internal workings.
- Glitch



The Gestalt has had some wild successes influencing Seattle's politics over the past few years. They've successfully swayed the Governor and United Corporate Council on key decisions several times through the use of rapid response commlink jams, swarming demonstration tactics, and even knocking some Matrix nodes offline with a hacktivist-style barrage of simultaneous timed connections. Unfortunately, their efforts to expand Seattle's online polling options and to establish real-time electronic referendum voting have so far proved unsuccessful.

The group considered floating a gubernatorial candidate of its own at first this year, but pledged instead to vote for any candidate that agrees to implement some of their proposals. Brackhaven is a no-no for the rads, so it's really a contest between Governor Strouthers and Josephine Dzhugashvili. The Gestalts' digital spokeswoman, Naomi, has been very effective at keeping both candidates guessing while extracting the best possible concessions.

- Naomi's real identity is a mystery. She wields enormous clout within the network and the youth counterculture, and her popularity has begun to spill outside it. Several snoops have attempted to uncover her background and identity, but failed miserably. At the very least, she is a talented hacker.

- Glitch

- That is, if Naomi's a woman.
- Puck

- My lips are sealed.
- Kat o' Nine Tales

- Why Kat, how very unlike you.
- Winterhawk

CONCERNED NEIGHBORS

Posted by: Kay St. Irregular

As you can tell from any map, Seattle is in the unenviable position of being cut off from the rest of the UCAS and surrounded by foreign powers. Though tensions have settled between the Native American Nations (NAN) and the UCAS since the Ghost Dance War, the peace remains uneasy. If you're planning on crossing Seattle's borders at all, it pays to know the sticky political situation.

The Salish-Shidhe Council

The Salish-Shidhe Council completely encircles Seattle, so if you plan on leaving the Emerald City by ground, expect to pass through a Salish checkpoint unless you opt to run the border illegally. By sea, the Salish allow unrestricted passage to and from Seattle to ships registered with the Seattle authorities; sea patrols attempt to restrict other traffic, but they simply lack the resources to do so effectively.

- Between the Olympic Peninsula and the various islands, the Salish are fighting a losing battle at sea to hold the border—and they know it. Makes it much easier to come to an “arrangement” when necessary.
- Sounder

- Seattle is mostly fenced in with some notable gaps in certain areas (like Puyallup). The Salish have a sensor net around the Seattle border to catch anyone running the border, as well as regular patrols (both drones and Salish Rangers). On the inside, you'll catch Metroplex Guard patrols in certain areas (especially Everett and Ft. Lewis), but others are wide open.

- Rigger X

The SSC emphasizes tribal autonomy in political as well as cultural ways; each major tribe has sovereignty over its own land and operates by its own rules, sending a representative to the Salish-Shidhe Council for national affairs. This means that SSC lands are a patchwork of tribal laws, customs, and enforcement that any runner must navigate carefully.

- No kidding. Some tribes really don't have much in the way of laws or much interest in enforcing them. The Cascade Orks, for example, could care less about counterfeiting, BTLs, or weapons dealing. Trying to harvest some telesma for magical rituals in eco-sensitive Makah lands, however, may get you shot.

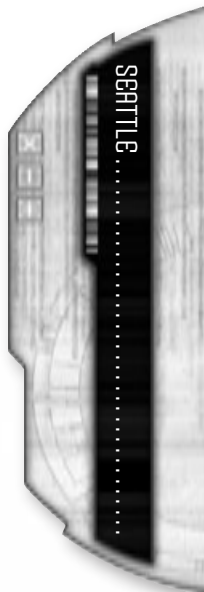
- Lyan

Relations between the SSC and Seattle have always been spotty. The environmentally-conscious Salish regularly lodge complaints about Seattle's toxic spillover onto their lands, specifically in regards to air and water pollution from Seattle factories. The Salish have also expressed major concerns about the UCAS military build-up in the Metroplex, responding with their own increased vigilance, surreptitious spying, and antagonistic “military exercises” just outside of Seattle's boundaries. On the other hand, the Salish have done almost nothing to curtail smuggler activity through their territory into Seattle, quite possibly because one of the Council's more influential tribes, the Cascade Orks, discreetly support the contraband trade and profit from it. UCAS officials seem eager to defuse any Salish/NAN complaints and so often instruct Seattle officials—who inevitably feel betrayed by the lack of backbone and support—to comply with Salish demands; the UCAS does not want to do anything that might prompt the NAN to seize Seattle.

- The Salish don't always play by the rules, either. It's likely that they're the ones providing support to several ecoteur cells that are active in Seattle, conducting sabotage against corporate targets.

- Cosmo

Several major tribes dominate the politics within the SSC. The tech-savvy **Salish** tribe holds large areas west and south of Puget Sound and is the owner of Gaeatronics, the eco-friendly energy corp that provides most of Seattle's power via its Olympia fusion power plant. The **Makah** in the northwest Olympic Peninsula are the primary element of the SSC's military strength; they control a former US Trident nuclear submarine base as and make heavy profits from logging operations. The **Cascade Crow** occupy the land between Seattle and the Cascade Mountains, as well as Vancouver, and are the major critics of Seattle and UCAS affairs. The **Cascade**



Orks, with a smaller holding in the actual mountains, subsist heavily on mining operations and waystation services for smugglers—as well as playing a direct role in the smuggling trade. The **Sinsearach** elf tribe around the Mt. Ranier area is primarily anti-technology primitivists pursuing a low-impact, back-to-the-land lifestyle.

In the area that was once the separate nation of Tsimshian, things are a little different. The once-dominant **Tsimshian** tribe remains under heavy travel and curfew restrictions, a tense situation overseen by SSC Rangers that has erupted with occasional disturbances. The once-oppressed **Haida** and **Tlingit** tribes have been given authority over the protectorate's political and economic affairs, though the SSC has hopes of eventually giving each tribe its own allocated area and functionally assimilating them into the nation. Much of their efforts are dedicated to correcting the massive environmental damage caused when the Tsimshian allowed the megacorp Mitsuhamma to rape and pillage the country's national resources.

- A number of major Tsimshian figures are still facing persecution for “war crimes” for their roles in the previous regime. Behind the scenes, Haida and Tlingit investigators are still hunting down other “collaborators” who have escaped recognition or arrest so far—and more than a few Tsimshian tribals have mysteriously disappeared, possibly kidnapped and executed by paramilitary “retribution” squads. It’s an ugly situation.
- Fianchetto

- The SSC has also been recruiting Haida agents to secretly harass Mitsuhamma’s operations in Seattle; The Salish-Shidhe are wary of the megacorp’s intensified West Coast operations.
- Kia

To Seattle’s north, **Vancouver** is a sterling model of a modern Native American city. The urban landscape is carefully integrated with nature, populated with pleasant parks, numerous trees, and other greenery. Home to the biotech corp Universal Omnitech, Vancouver does not have a large megacorp presence. Nevertheless, the competition between smaller corps here—particularly pharmaceutical and medtech researchers—is enough to support a small but thriving runner scene. The Red Lotus Triad dominates the underworld here, pushing street drugs and facilitating smuggling through the SSC.

- The neighborhood of Richmond remains an eyesore after being destroyed by an earthquake back in '59. Home to squatters, ghouls, and ghosts, it’s nevertheless a good place to conduct biz away from prying eyes or to hide out when the heat is high.
- Traveler Jones

Tir Tairngire

This predominately elven nation to the south of Seattle recently underwent a process of democratization. Formerly controlled by an elite elven aristocracy that enforced a strict caste system, the regime’s isolationist policies spurred massive social unrest, eventually leading to its downfall. The former Council of Princes is no more; in the face of overwhelming public pressure,

the council stepped down, abdicating its position of power and handing the country over to the elected Star Chamber, now led by Chairman Larry Zincan, a former prince who—gasp!—also happens to be an ork. Though many of the former nobles have fled the country in the wake of this turmoil, other metahumans who previously suffered discrimination are now finding their voice. The nation is still struggling with economic woes, however, despite opening up its borders to megacorp investment.

- Don’t be fooled. This new government is far from stable, and they face mass civil disturbances if they don’t get a handle on the economy soon. Though much of the Rinelle ke’Tesrae rebel faction came out from underground to take a direct hand in the new elections, a strong rad-leftist segment—including many anarchist and neo-communists—remains critical of the new government and continues to advocate a more extreme social restructuring. And by “advocate,” I mean actively sabotage government operations.
- Aufheben

- Don’t forget the Black Sun faction that’s pushing for a return to the days when Tir Tairngire was for elves only. Their elven supremacist messages are punctuated with a campaign of terror and assassinations.
- Axis Mundi

- All of this political infighting is just a charade. The princes may have left the public eye, but they’re still active behind the scenes, pulling strings and directing the Tir’s course. Scheming manipulators like Lugh Surehand and Jenna Ni’Fairra never surrender easily, and they always have contingency plans.
- Frosty

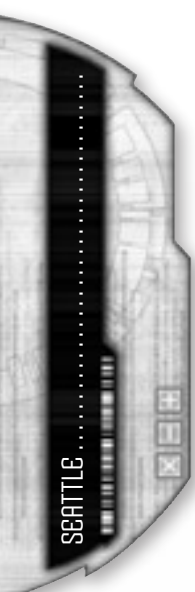
Portland remains Seattle’s sister city to the south, with trade (and smuggling) between the two remaining brisk. Once Tir Tairngire’s only port of entry for the outside world, the new status quo was symbolized by dismantling the Wall that surrounded Portland, no longer separating outsiders from the Tir—or the rich from the poor. The residents of Royal Hill—where the princes resided just outside the Wall—have abandoned their massive estates. The exception is the great dragon Hestaby, who continues to play an active role in Tir politics.

- Hestaby and the Horizon Group seem to be working hand in hand to bring some stability to the Tir, though quite possibly for different reasons. I don’t know about you, but alliances like that make me uneasy.
- Plan 9

RAISON D’ETRE

Posted by: Nuyen Nick

A Québécoise beancounter once told me—as we politely escorted him from Cross’s HQ to a promising new career in Detroit—that cities were not human communities, but giant marketplaces. It was their *raison d’être*—their reason to exist. He died a month later, decapitated by a razorgirl high on K-10 or some other combat drug. It couldn’t have happened to a nicer guy, if you ask me.





INCOMING FEED

Anyway, I'm repaying a few favors to FastJack here by posting this file. A lot has changed in Seattle in the past few years, so pay attention—some big names like Renraku and Mitsuhamma have lost major ground, while new corps on the rise are creating a wealth of job opportunities for those of us with extralegal skill sets.

THE UNITED CORPORATE COUNCIL

Like a group of school bullies that gangs up on the weaker kids, the United Corporate Council (UCC) is an elitist group that makes its own rules. After Aztechnology violently eliminated a competitor in 2030 and nearly kicked off a corp war in the process, the other corps in Seattle created the UCC to prevent future conflicts. It was a tough time, but all-out war was the last thing anyone wanted—it's bad for business, after all.

Predictably, as time went by the new institution became a lobbying tool for its members, playing a role in major labor and trade issues as well as serving as a consulting pool for the Governor. The UCC's political influence is undeniable: Metroplex Hall is chock full of its political lackeys. Those who don't kiss its pinky ring usually find a Council-backed challenger at the next election. The group is also rumored to keep a *quid pro quo* relationship with some underworld leaders, thus ensuring a certain level of stability in Seattle.

The UCC is not a monolithic entity. Intrigue, backstabbing, and personal rivalries or interests are the order of the day, a situation that clever politicians (and shadowrunners) can use to their advantage. The only time they show a united front is when furthering corporate interests as a whole. Though almost every

large corp in Seattle takes part, major decisions are handled by a Central Planning Committee. The membership roster and internal process of this committee are in constant flux as various factions maneuver and make power plays. In fact, several long-standing members lost their seats in the years following the Crash as the committee weeded out the weak. Now a fresh stock of new suits plays boardroom king of the hill.

SEATTLE CORPS

For my next trick, I present you a list of corporations to keep an eye on. I didn't just focus on the megas either, though each of them has a presence here to varying degrees—instead, this is a list of those creating the most local buzz. All of them are in need of people like you and I, so it doesn't hurt to know who they are and what are they up to.

Ares Macrotechnology

The Ares presence in Seattle is small but influential. Rather than trying to compete with local heavyweight Fed-Boeing's aerospace interests, Ares invited F-B to cooperatively launch several research projects that would benefit them both. After years of development, these labs are finally producing results in the form of new smart material designs, fuel systems, and remote control systems.

From its new offices in what used to be Cross Plaza—considered a masterpiece of modern engineering and integrated security system design—Karen King continues to watch over Ares's Seattle divisions. Major business here includes supplying

SEATTLE

SEASOURCE SEARCH

United Corporate Council
Central Planning Committee

Corporation (Rating*)	Council Member
Ares (AAA)	Karen King
Aztechnology (AAA)	Luis Ocasio
Brackhaven	
Investments (A)	William Roper
Eta Engineering (A)	Hanan Zubayr-Chong
Evo (AAA)	Mary Luce
Federated-Boeing (AA)	Jessica Sirianni
Gaeatronics (AA)	Cassie Blue Cloud
Horizon Group (AAA)	Klaus Coppage
Lone Star	
Security Services (AA)	William Loudon
Mitsuhamma (AAA)	Takafumi Maeda
NeoNET (AAA)	Samantha Villiers
Regency MegaMedia (AA)	Kamar Kumar
Shiawase (AAA)	Hiromi Miyano
Telestrian Industries (AA)	Alain Telestrian
Universal Omnitech (AA)	Kara Parker
Wuxing (AAA)	Sun Runming

*Notes:

A: Multinationals operate internationally, but are still restricted by national laws.

AA: Megacorporations have gained sufficient affluence to be recognized by the Corporate Court and are granted extraterritorial status.

AAA: These megacorporations are among the top 10 largest economic entities in the world, each holding at least one seat on the Corporate Court and co-owning the Zurich-Orbital Gemeinschaft Bank (ZOG).

arms to Weapons World outlets and handling Ares-affiliated imports and exports to Asia and the Pacific Rim. Ares's poster-corp Knight Errant also provides top-notch security to a number of satisfied contractees throughout the Metroplex.

- With the possibility of snatching away Seattle's policing contract from Lone Star on the table, KE units have been ordered to be on their best squeaky-clean behavior so that there aren't any "unfortunate incidents" that might screw it up. KE's own Internal Affairs department is working overtime, ready to squash anything that might become a problem—or at least bury it deep enough to never be found. Rumor is that an Ares Firewatch team is on standby just in case any emergencies arise.

- Sticks

Aztechnology

That Other Pyramid in Seattle's skyline (smaller but no less impressive than the former Renraku Arcology) belongs to every runner's favorite bogeyman, Aztechnology. The Neo-Aztec

decor is impressive, from the laser-lit 20-meter pictoglyphs etched in synthetic quartz on the pyramid's slopes to the obsidian bayonets on the assault rifles of the guards. In addition from raking in money on consumer goods and agricultural products, Aztechnology is dedicated to the pervasive spread of Aztlaner culture—which, of course, includes broadcasting live blood sport matches to Latino and AmerInd gangers.

- Ever feel the hairs on the back of your neck stand up when near the pyramid? That's probably cuz Aztechnology keeps it in the footprints of no less than three orbiting commsats—the Powers-That-Be keep more than one eye on their Emerald City assets.

- Puck

- And here I thought it was just spillover spookiness from the pyramid's impressive magical security features. Heck, they've even programmed hints of patrolling spirits and mojo wards into their AR overlay broadcasts.

- Mika

- After losing Dever back in the day Seattle is the last stronghold on this half of the continent. They're taking no chances.

- Pistons

Seattle is a coordination hub for Aztechnology's North American activities—and that's a lot of activities, from consumer goods distribution and electronics manufacturing to weapon sales and magical research. As such, there's a steady stream of encrypted communications with Tenochtitlán. Rivals are always looking for these, so if you can get a hold of this paydata there's good money to be made in the black market.

Aztechnology Seattle is protected by a full battalion of their celebrated Leopard Guards. Modeled on an ancient Aztec warrior order, these elite troops are predominantly Awakened or heavily cybered. Rumor is, the guards hold weekly religious observances within the pyramid, featuring blood-drinking and sacrifice.

- The old ways still serve those who follow them.

- Man-of-Many-Names

- And you'd know, wouldn't you?

- Lyrann

- I see Wolf has been remiss in your education. Pity.

- Man-of-Many-Names

- Children, don't quarrel.

- Fastjack

Brackhaven Investments

Though far from being a major league player, Brackhaven Investments holds considerable clout in Seattle. Its economic interests are spread throughout the city, like an octopus' tentacles slowly tightening its grip around an unsuspecting victim.

Think I'm being verbose? Consider this: an estimated 50% of the company's workforce—the worst paid half, of course—are me-tahumans who are ignorant of their employer's identity and ideol-

ogy. That's because Brackhaven Investments hides itself behind so many shell corps and dummy holdings that it puts Aztechnology to shame. The same pattern applies to its shadow ops—most runners never suspect they're working for the company.

- Brackhaven loves hiring metahumans runners. Even if they screw up the job, it's good PR for Humanis.
- Fatima

Brackhaven Investments survived the Crash 2.0 by looting the corpses of its fellow investment security companies and dropping most of its failing investments to buy up real estate around Seattle. Large chunks of Renton's newly-developed suburbs are owned by BI, which have been the intermittent focus of news reports on racially biased lending practices.

- Read: Humans get discounts and better lending rates.
- Beaker

Emerald City Graphics

ECG is a bleeding-edge warez corp, founded a little over nineteen months ago by a couple of grad students from the University of Seattle. They went public about three months back and their stock skyrocketed overnight. Founders and co-presidents Vshaw Patel and Miska Romanov are still active in the actual coding, having hired a former corporate raider to run the company's day-to-day affairs.

The company offers superior augmented reality sculpting and innovative utility icon design (and redesign). Some of the tools Patel and Romanov use would be considered highly illegal hacking programs without the special permits and licenses they have procured. Detractors question how the two came upon them in the first place.

Indeed, ECG is known in Seattle's shadows for catering to the hacker community. They employ hundreds of freelance coders, and a lot of those coders also take on "side jobs." Say you've somehow acquired a really wiz program, but it still has a distinct look (like a blood-dripping Aztechnology logo scrawled on the side) that you don't want to flash around. Talk to the right person at ECG, and your little problem will be solved—so long as your cred is good. Rich corpsers that like to play hacker also go to ECG for custom icons.

- Pretty to look at, pretty to hack, but if you crash it, no nuyen back.
- Puck
- Heh.
- Sounder
- The company had some hefty financing before it went public. Someone—the mob, a megacorp, maybe even a dragon—owns a hefty chunk of this little hot property.
- Mr. Bonds

Eta Engineering

An unburied corpse, a dump file waiting to be purged, ton after ton of unrecyclable garbage ... my mother always said

someone has to clean up after everyone else. In Seattle, that someone is Eta Engineering, a family-owned corp that holds the city's waste management contract. Ironically, the Zubayr-Chong clan runs this rich corporation founded by East Asian immigrants, but occupies the lowest caste of the local Asiatic community. They are seen as "unclean" due to their profession.

Eta's Tacoma industrial complex houses a huge state-of-the-art chemical plant that supplies Seattle with fertilizers and synthetic fuels. The corporation was the first to present Governor Strouthers a bid to decontaminate the Tacoma district, an obvious effort to expand into the environmental market. It's all up in the air now, though, because Shiawase Envirotech stepped in a couple weeks ago with an equally attractive offer. If you're looking for work or good curry, it's a good time to visit Little Asia.

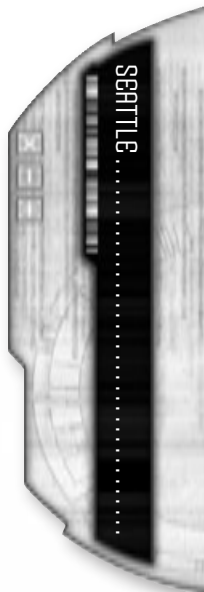
- It's so funny when you think about it. Shiawase spent decades dumping God knows how many things into Tacoma without telling anyone, and now it's scrambling for the privilege to clean up everything (not just their own mess)—probably to avoid discovery and massive lawsuits.
- Sunshine
- That Eta complex Nick mentioned? Don't get near it without a respirator, unless you're a complete masochist. I've been there—once. Never again, omae, never again.
- Slamm-O!
- Amusingly, the Metroplex is among the leaders in NA for recycling. They recycle everything. It's mandatory, and all thos model corp citizens can catch some heavy fines if they ignore it.
- Kay St. Irregular
- And that's why I call the Barrens home. Fuck 'em.
- Turbo Bunny

Evo

Evo's new line of Red Star Clinics is widely praised for having the highest-quality commercial 'ware available in the 'plex. The Seattle staff includes specialists from Evo's Shibanojuji orbital resort, led by famed Dr. Ivan Kaminski, who cater for their exclusive clientele with the utmost discretion. If you can afford the price, it's worth every single nuyen.

- The Red Star databanks are a gold mine of cyberware specs and client information, perfect for scoping out your opponents or blackmail. The ambitious, of course, can try to lift Dr. Kaminski himself ...
- Pistons

Along with Evo's re-branding for their former Yamatetsu identity, they've undergone a fairly serious reorganization, both in personnel and corporate focus. They proudly proclaim that they are the largest employer of metahumans in the Seattle Metroplex (a fact that has made them a target for several terrorist attacks). Aside from their biotech and health services, Evo remains a major distributor of pharmaceuticals in the region and continues to heavily support its local naval industries.



- The artificial island built by Evo in Outremer has become an object of speculation in the shadow community. A Mitsuhamasuit told me it's a shadowclinic for deltaware implants, but I haven't been able to confirm that. Anyone else have a favorite rumor?

- Beaker

- I heard the island is hollow, that it's really a cover for an underwater research facility in a sub-sea cavern. Evo keeps several xenohabitats there, each with different environmental conditions. I've never checked it out, though, so I can't vouch for the story.

- Sounder

- Sounds a bit supervillan to me.

- Snopes

Federated-Boeing

This producer of avionics, aircraft, and drones has been a long-time fixture in Seattle's industrial landscape. The venerable Fed-Boeing hasn't escaped the economic downturn affecting Seattle, though it looks to the future with cautious optimism. The company currently supplies critical components for Evo's deep-space ventures. F-B's recent bid for Vancouver-based Visioncrafters is seen as a sign that it is eyeing the optics market.

- More like it wants to build a few spy satellites. Ares Space might have something to say about it, though.

- Clockwork

Traditionally fed by massive military contracts, Fed-Boeing is currently torn between submitting a bid for twelve spaceplanes to flush out Tir Tairngire's aerospace force and the lucrative Military Recovery Act money being doled out from Washington. President Colloton has been very clear that F-B can't expect to suck the government teat and arm foreign powers at the same time.

- Strouthers's bid for governor is being endorsed by F-B, among others. I guess CEO Jessica Sirianni expects to pick up the slack with a couple of hefty Metroplex contracts.

- Red Anya

- Sirianni is tough as nails. She survived living in the Redmond Barrens as a kid and climbed to the top of Fed-Boeing the hard way: by stabbing everyone above her in the back. She's known for hiring runners when need arises—which in her position is practically a daily basis.

- Kat o' Nine Tales

- Riggers are also known to raid F-B's warehouses for brand new spare parts. Find me at Powerline if you're interested.

- Turbo Bunny

Gaeatronics

This Salish-owned company uses eco-friendly technologies (solar, wind, and hydro) to provide most of the power for Seattle and the surrounding region. Though smaller, Gaeatronics has an edge on its primary competitor—Shiawase Atomics—due to its



often genuine pro-environmentalist practices. The long-running feud between the two corps occasionally gets dirty—sometimes literally, when one tries to frame the other as causing pollution—but Gaeatronics still somehow comes out looking cleaner.

- All those windmills and hydroplants may look good, but their fusion reactors are as dirty as Shiawase's.

- Sunshine

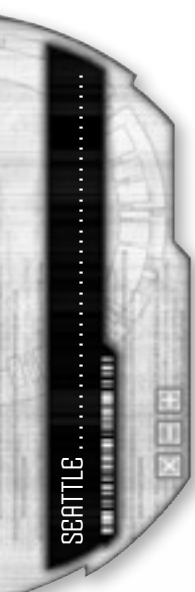
- They're looking to go for something more sustainable, though. Word is construction has begun on some sort of sea-floor geothermal tap outside of Outremer.

- Sounder

Gaeatronics' tribal connections have proved to be a boon and a curse, as the corp inevitably falls hostage to tensions between Seattle and the Salish-Shidhe. The company walks a fine line between the two sides, knowing that it needs both to prosper. Despite this, Gaeatronics is periodically targeted by anti-NAN and isolationist rad groups.

Gaeatronics has expanded into other "green" markets. Its Gaea's Gift line of bottled water products and health foods is popular in Seattle and abroad. The Metroplex government also has signed a contract with Gaeatronics to build several new water reclamation plants in districts that are facing severe clean water shortages.

- Gaeatronics offers a magical waste storage service for research labs with radioactive orichalcum and other hazardous materials



that prove difficult to dispose of properly. The facility's location is secret—just imagine how dangerous that stuff would be in the wrong hands.

- Mika

- Omae, what makes you think Gaeatronics has the right hands?
- Ecotope

Horizon Group/NewsNet

Media juggernaut NewsNet is Horizon's flagship in Seattle. The channel is enjoying its highest ratings ever, thanks to the elections and the best snoops in the biz busily digging up dirt on the candidates. NewsNet has a well-deserved reputation for impartiality, broadcasting stories that would be "killed" in other trid networks (along with the offending reporter).

- NewsNet might not pull its punches, but it certainly knows when to punch someone. An in-depth look shows that bad news about Dzhugashvili gets aired when there's fewer people watching, while Brackhaven and Strouthers' flops get the primetime treatment. Clever, neh?

- Sunshine

- NewsNet's dominance is just forcing local contenders like the Independent Information Network and underdog KSAF to get more creative with their muckraking and spin. Horizon still doesn't cover the fringe interests, whereas newsfeeds like IndyMedia and MetaMatrix have locked-in followings.

- Dr. Spin

- NewsNet always needs runners to protect a source, place a hidden microphone somewhere, or mislead a rival channel. I know one of their top fixers if anyone's looking for snoop-related work.

- Haze

Pop culture is another Horizon specialty. Between RockNet's edutainment broadcasting and their line of A Whole New You™ clinics, the megacorp is quite literally shaping the minds and bodies of Seattle. Horizon is also a major provider of legal recreational drugs, competing with heavies like Universal Omnitech and Shiawase Medical.

Horizon sponsors public schools in Seattle's poorest districts, supplying them with the latest in edutech. Each kid gets a free commlink with a package of educational software and free subs to specialized Horizon media feeds. In return, Horizon gets to keep records of their social and spending habits. The kids have to deal with Horizon's content filters and personally-tailored advertising/marketing schemes, but they get a far better education than they normally would. Not a bad deal, if you ask me.

- Horizon gets back much more than what it spends in the schools. Its gurus and expert systems analyze the data to predict consumer trends, and adapt their products to match them. Horizon even makes money selling the data to other corps. Gives a whole new meaning to their motto: "We know what you think!"

- Snopes

- It doesn't stop there. Some schools have already taken the next step in the project, which includes replacing teachers entirely with simsense-fed lessons and interactive tutor-agents. Still thinking it's a good deal, Nick?

- Plan 9

- At least the functionallyliterate have a fighting chance.

- Nuyen Nick

Lone Star Security Services

These are difficult times for the Star, perhaps the worst since its negligent performance during the Night of Rage. Growing hysteria over the company's failure to capture the Mayan Cutter, media outfits flailing the repressive stance taken against recent protests, and the proliferation of new gangs have put public support at a decade low. Governor Strouthers's campaign threat to hire Knight Errant shows just how fragile Lone Star's situation is.

- Lovely. People clamor for safety, but start whining the minute cops get tough. Damned if you, damned if you don't.

- Hard Exit

- The streets aren't safer if cops are gunning down unarmed orks just because they're flying gang colors, or otherwise treating everyday citizens—not to mention the SINless—like they're criminals. What we need is more social justice, not more repression. Or have you forgotten what side of the line you draw your salary from?

- Aufheben

Chief William Loudon has been at the helm of Lone Star Seattle for the past two decades, and he definitely looks like he's seen better days. With retirement looming ahead and the psycho that made his career somehow back on the streets, Loudon is trying to leave a lasting legacy in Seattle. He came out hard at yesterday's press conference against the "shameless smear campaign orchestrated by Ares's news networks," all but accusing those critics of encouraging cop-killers. People agree he won a few points, but the Star will need something more substantial than words to turn the tide.

- Cops like Loudon have a one-track mind—to them, making an impact means making some busts. That means we can expect a nice "crackdown on crime" campaign of some sort, with zero-tolerance policies, roundups of SINless troublemakers, rad agitators, and known runners types, as well as pressure on the syndicates to play nice for awhile—or else. Time to get your safehouses in order.

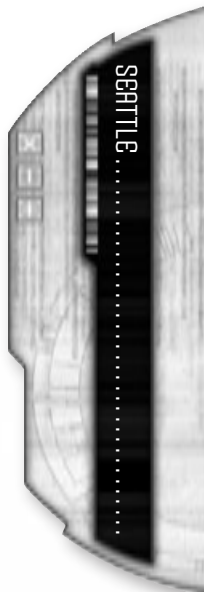
- Hannibelle

- Could be, but people are tired of seeing small fish arrested. The Star may go after a big boy this time—maybe a Mafia boss or an Oyabun.

- Fatima

- In your dreams, Fatima. At that level, no one plays Judas and lives to enjoy his thirty coins afterwards.

- Lyrn



NEW SEATTLE INTELLIGENCER

Seattle's Current Box Office Top 5

- 1) **Goodbye My Beloved** (P. Lal / Drama-Romance / Regency MegaMedia)
- 2) **I Hate It Here** (W. Ellis / SciFi-Comedy / Global Frequency)
- 3) **A Friend In The Shadows** (M. R. Morden / Drama / Regency MegaMedia)
- 4) **Ninja Princess** (M. Shiranui / Action / Mitsuham Media)
- 5) **The Pleasure Dome** (E. Jarvis / Action-Erotic / Smash Trideo Entertainment)

- Maybe, but I've learned to never underestimate greed, ambition, or stupidity.
- Fatima

Mitsuham Computer Technologies

Mitsuham has undergone a lot of international asset-shuffling since the Crash, abandoning its presence in Tsimshian and the Philippines and bolstering its presence in San Francisco and Seattle. Seattle remains Mitsuham's North American HQ, and the heavy technology corp manages the city's GridGuide systems (which have been entirely upgraded for AR, of course). Mitsuham has research and manufacturing enclaves all over Seattle, particularly focused on electronics components, robotics, heavy industry, and industrial chemicals. Their mystic goods and services divisions are under heavy competition from Wuxing—both corps are battling over distribution rights to Seattle's various lore shops, university departments, and magic groups.

- A few local MCT managers still have loyalty to the Watadarengo Yakuza Clan back in Japan. They're under orders to subvert Seattle's Shotozumi-gumi whenever they can.
- Mihoshi Oni

NeoNET Seattle

NeoNET keeps one finger on Seattle's e-pulse—the better to draw your attention from what its other hand is doing. The Metroplex is the megacorp's primary launching pad for economic forays into the Asia-Pacific region, where it still battles to get a significant beachhead from which it can become a major player. Eastern Tiger and Renraku routinely spar with NeoNET in these arenas, and so far have foiled many of its major plans. NeoNET seems to have a whole division of market analysis flaks who do nothing but looking for PacRim investment opportunities, however, whether it's upgrading an Indonesian wireless grid, providing military software solutions to the Philippines, or establishing a new chain of cyberclinics in Russia.

- There's been a flurry of shadow ops between Emerald City and Hong Kong lately, as NeoNET regularly trades salvos with its Asian rivals. As a result, security at Fuchi's Novatech's NeoNET's compound—that's the cluster of seven uneven skyscrapers around an eighth building downtown, all of which are completely aglow

with dazzling holo and AR ads—has recently been upgraded, including a new set of overlapping spider networks.

- Kia

NeoNET enjoys good relations with the UCAS military. It recently retooled the Fort Lewis Urban Combat Simulator for wireless virtual environments. NeoNET's Transys Neuronet subsidiary facility in Seattle also supplies the Army with state-of-the-art betaware implants, some of which make it to the streets at exorbitant prices.

- That Transys chopshop is a grade above beta, my friends. If the stolen specs I scanned on the Nexus last week are accurate, they're supplying the UCAS military with some delataware super-soldier test packages, specifically designed for infiltration and behind-enemy-lines ops. Some of it looked pretty experimental to me, though, which makes me wonder where the rejects are ending up.
- Nephrine

CEO Richard Villiers likes to keep Seattle in the family. His ex-wife Samantha still oversees day-to-day activities in the Metroplex. His younger brother, Darren, handled the local "expendable assets" until his move to New York; these have since become responsibility of Cara, Richard and Samantha's daughter. Don't think this is just nepotism—all the Villiers are very capable and cunning bastards. Hell, Cara even ran the shadows for a while back in her youthful rebellion days.

- Yeah, yeah, yeah. Mommy must be so proud of her little girl. I wonder if she knows that certain local underworld figures still have ... *memories* ... of Cara's adventures back then, which could prove *embarrassing* in certain circles.
- Kat o' Nine Tales
- There's an ongoing AR prank war between NeoNET's hackers and those at Emerald City Graphics, with each side constantly attempting to surpass each other in an ego-driven race. Both corps are surprisingly permissive despite some embarrassing moments, but they're probably just scouting each other for potential extractions.
- Glitch

Regency MegaMedia

MegaMedia used to have a lock on Seattle's culture and entertainment industry, whether you were talking trid, sim, music, art, or fashion. The Crash of '64 knocked the wind from its sails, however, taking the corp to its knees while Horizon and competitors from California and Japan's media machines quickly moved in. It was no surprise that MegaMedia was bought out; the surprise was in who did the buying. Out of the blue, Bollywood's biggest name stepped into Seattle, gaining an instant lead over the others.

Though Seattle's media wars are just beginning, Regency MegaMedia has already carved out its niche, churning out waves of canned soap operas and simflicks. An influx of Indian Union workers and minor celebrities has transformed the RMM studios into "Little Bollywood"—or as close as it gets to it outside Mumbai. Its themed AR Environment (ARE) programs are pop-

ular with the price-conscious wageslave, and the corp is said to be working out the details of a joint venture with Horizon.

- When night falls and the studios empty, the Yakuza arrive with their porn simstars and chipped meat dolls. The Yaks use Regency's top-notch facilities and sets to produce the best-looking BTL porn in town. They have a gentlemen's agreement with some Regency suits, who look the other way as long as they get their share.
- Sunshine

Shiawase

This traditional family-owned Japanese zaibatsu went through an ugly internal power struggle shortly after the Crash, when a family feud blossomed into an internal coup. Though a new faction managed to gain control, their united front didn't last for long. The upper echelons are continually rocked with turmoil. As a result, Shiawase's Seattle operations are in a perpetual management crisis, causing the corp to lose ground to its competitors on several fronts.

- Remember that Jimmy Mancuso guy? The Stuffer Shack employee who happened to buy and sell Shiawase stock at the exact lucky moment when the new regime was pulling their carefully programmed attack to grab more shares? Word is that he went missing a month back when a company jet disappeared somewhere over the Pacific. I know someone who thinks it's all a scam he pulled to escape from the pressure he's been under to sell his stock, and word is that Shiawase has agents scouring the streets looking for him just in case.
- Mr. Bonds

Following the "Do as I say, not as I do," philosophy, Shiawase has turned up the volume on its corporate family values propaganda, encouraging employees to devote themselves and their entire families to the corp. The megacorp even purchased an entire artificial island in the Outremer district, constructing vast new tracks of sheltered corporate housing enclaves—safe and isolated from outside influences.

- Surprisingly, Shiawase actually bowed to internal protests recently and now acknowledges gay couples as families, with all of the associated benefits. This has prompted some outrage from the corp's more conservative citizens, leading to several violent attacks on openly queer employees. Interestingly, most of the homophobes are non-Japanese; though the Japanese prefer their family units to be homogenous, they're generally accepting of the civil rights issues involved.
- Goat Foot

From the twin Shiawase Towers downtown, this corp continues to stick its fingers in diversified affairs all over Seattle. The Shiawase Envirotech division holds the city's Public Works contract and Shiawase Atomics, and tirelessly seeks to undermine Gaeatronics power services. The corp also manages numerous biotech concerns, construction efforts, consumer goods distributors, and service industry contracts throughout the sprawl.

Telestrian Industries Corporation

People who think that elves are all about poetry and fine wines should check out Telestrian's high-tech portfolio. The largest corporation to come out of Tir Tairngire, Telestrian's interests range from high-yield genetically-modified crops to military-grade IC. The multinational is so closely tied to the Tir's authorities that more than a few analysts have maliciously suggested it is the government's corporate branch.

The Telestrian family used to be the sole proprietor, with a history of vicious infighting and nepotism. They accepted a few investors in 2065, but their identities remain an enigma—private corporations are not required to publicly disclose this information in the Tir. Still, all of the major figures in the company bear the Telestrian surname.

Telestrian Biotechnology spearheads the corp's activities in Seattle with hydroponics facilities that put Ingersoll and Berkley to shame and bleeding-edge metagenetics research. Its newly opened MacTaggart Research Institute is the envy of Seattle's scientific community, churning out patents by the handful and competing with Evo to snatch up the brightest students from Seattle's universities.

- Various rumors suggest a link between Telestrian and the Laésa elven crime outfit, which would explain how the syndicate is pumping out so much laés and pixie dust.
- Nephrine
- I heard that story too, from an Aztechnology suit no less. Smells like a smear campaign to me.
- Snopes

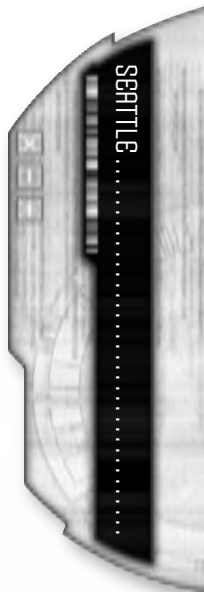
Universal Omnitech/Ingersoll and Berkley

Headquartered in neighboring Vancouver, Universal Omnitech continues to be one of world's wealthiest and most productive megacorps in spite of its failure to acquire a Corporate Court seat. The corp did finally free itself from its struggling relationship with Aztechnology shortly after the Crash. Relations between the two have only gotten cooler—as in subzero frigid—since then.

Aside from wrangling their herds of profitable patents and sniping at Telestrian's biotech business, UO's primary Seattle operations involve pharmaceuticals—particularly nanite treatments, nootropics, and high-end smart drugs. They recently initiated a joint venture with Lone Star to produce a new crop of "LEO professional performance enhancers" (read: combat drugs).

- Predictably, you can score these boosters—including stuff like Jazz and Kamikaze along with the newer prototypes—if you know the right people. Be wary of discounts, though—you may be inadvertently signing up to be a guinea pig.
- Nephrine

UO also scored a coup by buying up Ingersoll & Berkley and its numerous subsidiaries a few years back, making it Seattle's leading food provider. I&B faces some challenging times ahead, however, with fierce competition from Telestrian and Fungitek on one end and a long-running eco-sabotage campaign against



its agrifarm operations on the other. Ingersoll Aquaculture in Snohomish has suffered hundreds of thousands of damages to its research and crops. Even Berkley Soy Cuisines took some major losses after eco-radicals tampered with their nutrisoy flavoring products in 2068, forcing a complete recall.

- In one recent case, the eco-terrorists used an engineered virus to attack I&B's crops. Universal Omnitech initiated a full investigation and attempted to replicate the agent, but someone broke into I&B, stole all of the samples, and wiped clean the databanks before me. Either the rads have inside help, or they're being backed by someone with major resources ... another biocorp, perhaps?
- Nephrine

Wuxing, Incorporated

A growing power in Seattle, Wuxing is keen on strengthening connections between Seattle and its sister ports such as Hong Kong. Its subsidiary Wuxing Worldwide Shipping links Seattle with ports throughout the Pacific Rim, edging out competing maritime cargo transport companies like Maersk and Free Transit Cartage.

- Wuxing's Scandinavian rivals seem to have changed tactics lately. Two Wuxing freighters suffered separate major incidents last month when their satellite-navigation systems were hacked. They each ran aground near Astoria (Tir Tairngire), much to the corp's embarrassment.
- Cosmo
- Are you sure about Maersk's involvement? Tir Tairngire awarded Evo NavTech a major contract ten days after the incident, and it just happened that Wuxing had the only other bid.
- Mr. Bonds

Rumors persist of Wuxing's involvement with the Yellow Lotus, Seattle's largest and most prosperous Triad. Certainly, Wuxing has been monitoring the tensions between Seattle's Triads with too much interest to be a wholly innocent party.

- I've looked into this. If there's a connection, it's likely because of personal links between Wuxing personnel and Triad members, not due to any sort of company policy. Wuxing's internal security seems aware of this, which is why they keep an eye on what's going on. Some of the involved parties rank too high in the corp to be called out. The activity is generally tolerated, but the security teams have to be careful that Wuxing doesn't get dragged into any syndicates wars or other unpleasantness as a result.
- Haze

A glance at Wuxing's personnel rosters shows an unusually high number of wujen on staff in Seattle. There have been a number of bizarre incidents surrounding the corp's Seattle operations over the past year, ranging from strange fires to at least one bizarre localized mana surge. Management seems to be highly concerned that someone has been intentionally disrupting Wuxing's chi flow.

- It's no secret that some skilled wujen have had the Octagon's Incense Master under close magical surveillance for quite some time. I'm not sure they're watching the right target, though. Even the Octagon knows that messing with a megacorp's karma is a sure way to ask for trouble.
- Jimmy No

- It's risky, but there is a motive. Anyone else notice the large number of Wuxing-shipped weapons the Yellow Lotus is packing nowadays?
- Riser

SEATTLE'S VIRTUAL CORPORATIONS

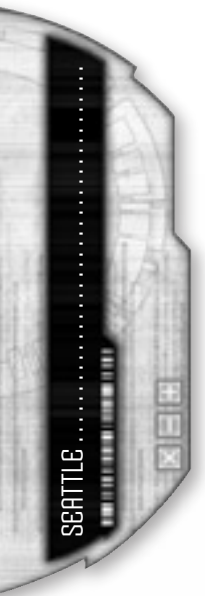
Given the prevalence of AR and wireless networking, we all know that having physical offices is no longer a necessity for many businesses. In fact, some corporate units—sometimes even whole divisions—operate entirely on-the-go, using AR to establish a mobile virtual office with their peers no matter where they are. It should be no surprise then that certain well-known corps have a major presence in Seattle, despite the fact that they list no physical assets, offices, or personnel here.

KSAF

Despite its humble origins as a local trid news channel, KSAF has seen some interesting times. In fact, these snoops had an amazing knack for being in the right place at the right time to cover people and events that no one even knew were interesting yet. According to the buzz, KSAF had an unknown benefactor who would instruct news teams on what and when to cover—in many cases giving the station an unprecedented scoop (though sometimes the importance of a particular recording would remain unknown for years). KSAF's nose for news dried up, however, shortly after the death of the great dragon Dunkelzahn, leaving many to speculate the wyrm had been the station's secret sponsor. KSAF continued to make news the old-fashioned way—even if they did occasionally get their hands dirty pursuing it—until a suicide bomber walked into their main offices about three years back and took out the entire city block. KSAF's main station was ruined and many of its top staff killed—and decades of precious archives were lost. KSAF offices in other cities suffered similar fates.

- You ask me, those archives were the real target. I bet KSAF was sitting on a ticking time bomb without knowing it—a revealing interview that would perhaps come to haunt someone with major influence if aired at the right time in the near future. Someone didn't want to take chances, so they took out the studio, the entire archive, and probably the snoops who recorded it.
- Sunshine

Helena Rossum, the head of KSAF, refused to let the network die. Instead, she decided to forego building a new major physical studio and instead to go entirely virtual. Practically overnight, she reached agreements with a number of popular public resources like Wiki-Matrix, which tap into the public at large and making it easy for anyone with a camera and a wireless link to contribute news. Espousing a new alliance of professional media with “distributed citizen journalism,” she recruited a small army of independent snoops, bloggers, and media activists to keep



KSAF alive, throwing most of her remaining assets into developing KSAF's Matrix presence. Her efforts have gained her an edge over traditional media outfits (which still cater to old-fashioned news models), while remaining a crucial legitimized step above the plethora of plebian postings that pass as Matrix journalism.

- KSAF still runs its own stringers and news-teams to cover the major stuff. In fact, they've scored some impressive right-place-at-the-right-time scoops lately. Think maybe Rossum found herself a new crystal ball?

- Snopes

- I've heard stranger ideas.
- Frosty

- Do tell.
- Snopes

- You must be joking.
- Frosty

Renraku America

Though Seattle's Renraku Arcology once housed this company's North American headquarters, the loss of the arcology to a rogue AI and the subsequent deaths of thousands created a massive loss of face for this proud Japanacorp. Facing a severe clean-up bill from the UCAS military operation to reclaim the arc, Renraku had no choice but to default on the debt and hand the arcology's ownership over to the Metroplex government—an act many consider another shameful abdication of responsibility. Shortly thereafter, the megacorp's board decided that any open presence in Seattle would only remind people of their dishonor. Renraku quietly slithered out of Seattle and closed its temporary offices there for good, relocating its North American headquarters to San Francisco.

Despite the retreat, Renraku has not relinquished all of its assets in Seattle. Numerous subsidiaries continue to thrive here—primarily electronics firms and software services, including the publishers of the SeaSource databanks. You'll never see a Renraku flag or logo, though, or hear the company hymn here in Seattle. Instead, all official Renraku business is managed remotely or virtually.

Saeder-Krupp Prime

If Lofwyr's corporate empire works like clockwork, it is in no small measure due to this division. S-K Prime has some of the best and scariest troubleshooters in the business, taking command of sloppy subsidiaries and micro-managing them until everyone's giving 150% again. A friend of mine once joked that you could always tell when S-K Prime intervened with a subsidiary because antacid and Prozac purchases by wageslaves there shot through the roof.

S-K Prime also handles intelligence operations for the dragon, including "listening posts," deep-cover agents, rumor mill infomongers, analyst think-tanks, and yes, good ol' shadowrunners. It is no surprise that S-K Prime operates almost entirely in clandestine mode and on a black budget.

For reasons unknown, all of Saeder-Krupp's activities in Seattle—whether handled via shell-company-cloaked subsidiar-

ies or virtual offices—are under S-K Prime's thumb. This tends to make other corps nervous, but attempts to pin down the wyrm's agenda are futile. It's obvious that Seattle is a hub of commerce, intrigue, and shadow activity, so the world's biggest mega is going to have any number of ongoing operations here.

- Don't forget that S-K Prime also handles security for those it's currently overseeing—including subsidiaries.

- Fianchetto

SYNDICATES

- I liberated the following from the files of Miko Ishikawa, *wak-agashira-hosa* to the Shotozumi-gumi. It's a voice-transcribed primer for new members. Thought it might be helpful for anyone who's not up on their syndicate inner-workings, especially if you're planning a visit to Seattle.

Note that in Japan, the Yakuza have traditionally been somewhat open about their existence and operations—all a part of maintaining a façade of legitimacy. That same approach has also been adopted to varying degrees here in Seattle—you'd be surprised at how similar a crime outfit can be to a regular business.

- Mihoshi Oni

Greetings, kumi-in of the Shotozumi-gumi,

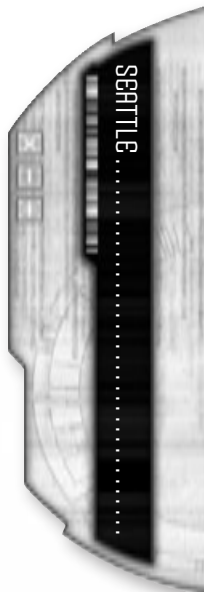
As part of your induction into our organization, you have already been instructed in the proper protocols of etiquette and behavior, as well as the specific duties you must perform. Before you are assigned to these duties, however, Shotozumi-sama has deemed it vital that you, our newest members, be made familiar with the current state of affairs in Seattle's underworld in order to prevent further needless deaths. You represent an investment in time, nuyen, and effort on the part of the Shotozumi-gumi and will be well-rewarded for your service and obeisance—provided you survive your first few years on the streets. The likelihood of your survival will increase exponentially if you pay heed to the following précis on the major criminal fraternities operating within the Seattle Metroplex.

— Ishikawa

YAKUZA

We are all members of the Yakuza. You have already been instructed in our ancient and honorable history as protectors of the poor and of Japanese culture. The Yakuza are not, as some *gaijin* claim, the "Japanese Mafia." We are honorable businessmen, and our business practices are no more or less brutal or unethical than those demonstrated by various megacorporations. Our traditions have remained inviolate for centuries, and our adherence to those guiding principles gives us strength and resolve. The Yakuza clans of Seattle claim membership in the Shotozumi-rengo, the most powerful *rengo* in the Americas.

- The Yakuza first made inroads in Seattle thanks to the ambitious Watada-rengo based out of Japan. Thanks to the participation of numerous Korean bosses, the Watada-rengo was able to push aside the entrenched Mafia and carve out a hefty niche for itself. The good times didn't last, however. In 2043, Oyabun Akira Watada ordered a racist purge, killing and driving out all Korean



SHADOWNET QUICKLINK

Bunraku

Bunraku is Japanese for “puppeteer.” Certain prostitution services, particularly those operated by the Yakuza, are called *bunraku* because the prostitute and services are completely controlled. Traditionally, this is accomplished by implanting each prostitute with a neural shunt that disables the conscious mind and puts the body under the automatic control of a personafix simsense program of the client’s choice, making him or her little more than a meat puppet. Even better, the prostitute remembers nothing, providing the client with complete confidentiality. To make the situation more realistic, and to fulfill more esoteric fetishes, *bunraku* parlors also offer options such as sim modules for the client themselves, AR environment programs to alter the appearance of the room or prostitute, and sometimes prostitutes specially biosculpted to look like certain sim-starlets or other personalities.

members—an event now called “the Schism.” Hanzo Shotozumi was made oyabun and placed in charge of Seattle. He oversaw some major gains—in particular seizing major operations away from the Mafia during a mob war in 2057.

With things looking good in Seattle, Hanzo Shotozumi broke ties and established his own rengo (alliance). The two other gumi (clans) in Seattle played along until the Crash, when Isao Nishidon attempted to overthrow Shotozumi and retake Seattle for the Watada-rengo. The coup failed miserably, however, prompting Nishidon to take his own life as his gumi was dismantled.

- Mihoshi Oni

Shotozumi-gumi

Led by Oyabun Hanzo Shotozumi, the Shotozumi-gumi is the most powerful of the Yakuza clans in Seattle, and the head of the Shotozumi-rengo. The Shotozumi-gumi is a traditionalist organization that maintains many ancient rites and ceremonies that have been discarded or forgotten by other Yakuza clans. Our members are rewarded with traditional *irezumi* tattoos to reflect their rank, family allegiance and prestige. They are expected to commit *yabitsume* or *hara-kiri* to atone for any failure.

As should be expected, the Shotozumi-gumi consists almost entirely of males of pure Japanese descent, often members of the Shotozumi clan. Shotozumi-sama accepts women into his gumi, however, provided they show skill and loyalty equal to the task.

- Shotozumi’s prodigal daughter, Keiko Shotozumi, is said to be in charge of a trial program enlisting half-Japanese women and even metahuman women for certain specific duties and tasks. Hanzo has recognized that adhering to strict ethnic and metatype rules makes it difficult to gain access to certain positions for infiltration purposes. Not wanting to sully his male ranks, however, they are seeking out women to take on certain “distasteful” jobs.

- Goat Foot

- Most of the senior kobun seriously frown on this. Taking on women at all—even those of pure Japanese descent—is a major change in Yakuza policy. Half-breeds are an even bigger issue—no one wants another Schism like the one created when Koreans were purged from the Yakuza ranks. But Shotozumi needs the manpower to expand and fortify his operations.

- Kia

The Shotozumi-gumi combines the traditional practice of offering protection to residents in their *nawabari* (principally the International District, but also including others parts of Downtown and Tacoma) with extensive dealings with local corporations and international corporate offices, the domain of the *sokaiya*. Many of our businesses also provide traditional recreational services, including antique pachinko arcades and mah-jongg parlors. We also provide the community with the quality services of our *geisha* escorts and *bunraku* parlors—far superior to the aging, disease-laden whores who prowl the streets of Seattle.

- They don’t advertise, but the Yakuza also serve as a sort of underworld bank—they’ll hold onto your nuyen in exchange for a small fee. You don’t earn any interest, but it is safer than most online banks these days. You can also tap them for a loan as long as you don’t mind being in debt to the oyabun.

- Mr. Bonds

Kumi-in like yourselves will often work under more experienced kobun in cooperation with the *sokaiya*, protecting shareholder meetings, offering bodyguard services to important business leaders, providing security for our recreational dealers, transporting cargo to authorized distributors, collecting loans and business fees, and protecting local businesses from street criminals and other miscreants.

- Who knew protection rackets, chip-dealing, and loansharking could sound so legitimate? Makes me enjoy my profession as an asset-adjustment freelancer even more.

- Turbo Bunny

- The Yakuza also hire runners, especially for jobs that might tarnish their sparkling reputation. In Seattle, they tend to pay slightly higher than street standard rates but they insist on paying in Mitsuhamma corporate scrip. Naturally, the Yakuza are the only organization in the sprawl that accepts MCT scrip for black market goods and services.

- Kat o’ Nine Tales

Shigeda-gumi

The Shigeda-gumi is the second largest gumi in Seattle, having expanded their operations and membership considerably following successful campaigns against both the Seoulpa Rings and the traitorous Nishidon-gumi. Oyabun Takeo Shigeda is a fervent follower of Shotozumi-sama’s vision to expand the rengo and challenge the aging and obsolete Watada clan in Japan.

The Shigeda-gumi is far more eclectic and less traditional than the Shotozumi-gumi, as Oyabun Shigeda invests a great deal of responsibility in his kobun. Though this makes them



INCOMING FEED.....

individually more ambitious, it also makes dealing with them occasionally inconsistent.

- Let me cut through Miko's polite warnings here. The Yakuza *are* the most powerful syndicate in Seattle, but the different gumi are having a serious contretemps right now. The Shotozumi-gumi and the Kenran-kai are very conservative, old school Yakuza—tough as nails, but racist and discriminatory against metahumans, half-breeds, and women, in that order. The Shigeda-gumi, on the other hand, recently came out as a proponent of the “New Way,” a progressive Yakuza movement, dominated by a new generation of cocky, violent, American-born Yakuza, predominately supported by several conspicuously metahuman-dominated gumi.

Hanzo Shotozumi is openly racist and wants to keep his gumi racially and ethnically pure, but he can't afford to antagonize the powerful Shigeda-gumi, his most loyal and strongest supporter. The situation is growing increasingly uncomfortable, however, as the Shigeda continue to allow and promote metahumans (primarily Japanese, but not always) in their ranks. The Watada-rengo and the other syndicates seem to be applying more pressure than usual, so the situation is bound to come to a head soon. Shigeda will either force Hanzo into accepting the New Way or Shotozumi may be forced to turn against his strongest ally.

- Mihoshi Oni

- Shigeda's being careful right now not to flaunt his new recruits in Shotozumi's face. In fact, he's making the meta recruits undergo

a lot of initial training before they're allowed on the streets—the kumi-in call it “Shigeda boot camp.”

- Kat o' Nine Tales

The Shigeda clan handles most of the Yakuza dealings in northern and western Seattle (Everett, Snohomish, and Auburn) as well as the Redmond Barrens.

- Most of those Barrens operations were gobbled up from the Nishidon-gumi after the Shotozumi-rengo annihilated it. In fact, word on the street is that Shigeda accepted a number of Nishidon “orphans” in to the clan as well.

- Kat o' Nine Tales

- It's worth mentioning that aside from the standard gambling and vice operations, the Shigeda oversee most of the Seattle Yakuza's smuggling routes. In fact, they've opened up some new paths thanks to deals with other “New Way” supporting clans, like the Kawaru-gumi in Vladivostok and Hawaii and the Nagato Combine in New Jersey.

- Mihoshi Oni

Kenran-kai

The Kenran-kai is a new association, formed by Shotozumi-sama from a core of former Nishidon members who refused to take part in treason. Supplemented by some fresh talent from Japan and led by Oyabun Kosuke Tomizawa, the Kenran-kai manages community services in Puyallup. They specialize in

SEATTLE.....

SHADOWSEA QUICKLINK

The Order of Merlyn

The Seattle Mafia was slow to adapt to the Awakened world and quickly fell behind in the magical arms race. This all changed when Don James O'Malley adopted the Merlyns—Seattle's largest and most promising wizard gang at the time—into the Finnigan Family at the urging of his consigliere, Al Cavaleri. Fifteen years later, these raucous but talented wiz-kids have become skilled magicians, on par with some of the best in the Metroplex. Age and power hasn't done much to lessen their tempers, however, and the Order retains a certain reputation for ruthless and bloody reprisal.

Initiates are selected from the most promising wiz gangs and inducted in somber ceremonies that combine traditional Mafia rituals with mystical trappings, followed by boisterous parties. New initiates take names based on astrology or astronomy to reflect their new life with the Mafia.

A mage known only as Saturn has led the Merlyns during this entire period. Rumors suggesting that he is somehow related to the Finnigans and was a Mafia soldato when he founded the Merlyns have not been confirmed.

dealing with the troublesome low-life gangs that infest the area, and have also been called on whenever a direct confrontation has been needed with our Mafia rivals.

- The Kenran-kai are a goon squad. They boost their members with a lot of implants and enhancement technology to complement their skills at head-bashing and thuggery. Their primary activities involve chip-dealing and hijackings, when they're not trying to push some small-fry gangs into following their orders. A bunch of them were adopted from a Japanese clan that the Watada-rengo wiped out a few years back. Shotozumi keeps them on a short leash.
- Mihoshi Oni

- For a short while, someone was claiming in ShadowSea posts that the core membership of the Kenran-kai were actually practitioners of the old *ninjitsu* ways. Whoever was spreading that rumor shut up quick just a few days later. If Shotozumi has really recruited his own ninja clan, I know a few people whose days may be numbered.
- Jimmy No

MAFIA

The Mafia has been our strongest competitor in the Seattle Metroplex for nearly a century, a struggle that has led to mutual campaigns of violence, vengeance, and assassination. For the past ten years, however, the Three Families have turned their attentions inward, engaging in a long, drawn-out, bloody struggle for control of Mafia operations in Seattle that began with

the murder of Capo James O' Malley in 2058. This infighting seems to have finally ended just a few weeks ago with the assassination of Capo Maurice "The Butcher" Bigio. Should the new Capa—Rowena O'Malley—re-unite the troubled Mafia interests, we can expect to see new challenges to our enterprises and quite possibly violent conflict.

The Finnigan Family

An Irish mob integrated into the Mafia in the 1950s, the Finnigan family has a long history in Seattle. Capa Rowena O'Malley became dona of the family when her father, the former capo of Seattle, James O'Malley, was assassinated—a hit allegedly ordered by Bigio. Though she was quick to take charge of family affairs, she lost her first battle when the Mafia Commissione—the league of Mafia leaders that oversees all mob affairs in North America—appointed Bigio as capo; they were simply unwilling to grant responsibility to a woman. With Bigio now dead, however, there was little to stop her. She has already forced the Commissione to recognize her as the Mafia commander of Seattle.

- Rowena had major support from Capo McCaskill (Chicago-Milwaukee), an old-time friend of the Finnigans, as well as Capa Miriam Kowzloski of New Orleans and Don Conor O'Riley of Boston, both progressive mafiosos with ties to international smuggling. Consequently, there's an increase in family shipments between these "sister cities."
- 2XL

The Finnigan Family consigliere, Albert "Uncle Al" Cavaleri, may be the most respected Mafia strategist in North America. Fortunately, his advanced age has given way to illness—rumor has it he is being treated for his fourth bout of cancer at an undetermined private clinic. In his absence, Rowena has been receiving counsel from Saturn, a seer from the Order of Merlyn—a former wiz gang absorbed by the Finnigans.

Rowena leaves most of the day-to-day operations of the Finnigan Family to James Michael "Jimmy Mac" Finnigan. Taking a cue from her father, she has incorporated more magical assets and hackers into family operations, despite opposition from the conservative Finnigans. Most Finnigan activity is centered around Downtown (particularly the docks) and Bellevue, and ranges from smuggling and black market deals to protection and financial services.

- The family was divided between the O'Malleys and Finnigans in the late '20s when Brian O'Malley, a cousin of then-don Patrick Finnigan, was installed as don of the family by the Commissione to better oppose the Yakuza threat. It has remained split ever since. Jimmy Mac is Patrick Finnigan's son, so he sees it as his destiny to become don some day. Most of the street-level soldati are directly loyal to Finnigan.
- Fatima

- The real problem is that Jimmy Mac is still the puppet of his great aunt, Mary Finnigan. Even at ninety-five years old she's the most bitter, conniving, and vengeful old witch you've ever met.

Rumor has it that “Uncle Al” tried to have her topped twice in the last year, but Mary survived both attempts.

- 2XL

The Ciarniello Family

The most stable of the Three Families, the Ciarniello Family is also our strongest competitor in the lucrative trades of corporate finance and sexual vices. Don Vince “Numbers” Ciarniello heads a team of accountants that are equivalent to our sokaiya in purpose, while his son and heir Caesar “Chrome” Ciarniello manages the family’s extensive assets in pornography and prostitution. The Ciarniellos have major interests in both Snohomish and Everett, but their efforts to monopolize Casino Corner have failed to derail our efforts.

- The Ciarniellos employ some top-notch hackers and financial wizards. A lot of their Matrix scams are actually run against targets in other jurisdictions, especially those that have poor relations with UCAS authorities, such as Tir Tairngire and Aztlan, in order to hinder law enforcement response.
- Slamm-O!

The turbulent winds of corporate finance occasionally make odd bedfellows between our sokaiya and the Ciarniellos when both have invested in a corporation important to their plans. While rare, these conjunctions of interest and investment are as likely to result in begrudging cooperation as they are to end in gunplay and hostile takeovers, and have created a reluctant camaraderie at times.

The Gianelli Family

Following the untimely death of Don Maurice “The Butcher” Bigio, the Bigio Family fell under the control of Joseph Gianelli, grandson of the retired don, Tony “The Chef” Gianelli, who acts as his consigliere. Don Gianelli renamed and reorganized the scattered family, focusing on street-level operations. You may encounter Gianelli enforcers throughout Seattle’s southern districts, particularly Tacoma, Puyallup, and Auburn, where they engage in fencing, loan-sharking, hijacking, and smuggling. The Gianelli’s have lost much ground and blood to the Yakuza in Tacoma in recent years—even more than the O’Malleys—and so they are quick to respond with violence against any recognized Yakuza. Unless ordered there on Yakuza business, stay away from the Crime Mall in Puyallup and nightclubs in the southern end of Downtown.

- It’s true that the Gianellis are in decline, which makes them more hostile and violent than ever. They’ve even lost control of Tacoma’s docks to the Yakuza—who in turn are being pushed out by the Vory.
- Mihoshi Oni
- The Gianelli connections with Fort Lewis mean that they occasionally have access to miltech, including advanced weaponry, high-grade armor, armor-piercing ammunition, combat drugs, and military-grade cyberware. Gianelli enforcers typically use superior firepower to make up for their lower numbers, and they prefer hit-and-run assaults to prolonged confrontations.
- 2XL

- The Gianelli family recruits their newest soldati from the most promising gangs in the Redmond and Puyallup Barrens, but Don Gianelli has also begun scouring the University District for likely young candidates, focusing on business, computing, and thau-maturgy majors to counter his family’s traditional weaknesses. Metatype is not an issue among recruiters, and the Gianelli family is the most integrated of the Three Families.

- Fatima

TRIADS

Seattle’s Triads have strong connections to other Triad organizations throughout the world, particularly in Hong Kong. Each “lodge” is organized according to a baroque set of codes and inane Chinese mysticisms. Each member is initiated according to these codas, which are magically binding—trust the degenerate Chinese barbarians to enforce loyalty through such dishonorable means. Don’t bother attempting to interrogate captured Triad members; the last few bled out during debriefing, despite our mages’ best attempts to stall the process, and we learned nothing.

The Triads are involved in protection rackets among the local Asian community, but their main business has always been the processing and distribution of drugs, BTLs, prostitutes, and other vices. With complete Triad control of the Golden Triangle in Asia, the Triads smuggle in large quantities of raw opiates, process them into street drugs in urban drug labs, and distribute them through local gangs and independent pushers. The Triads also have a higher-than-average number of Awakened members and engage in talislegging and other black market magics.

- Triad drug labs are often crammed into innocuous low-income apartments that quickly become completely toxified—not to mention fire hazards. The drug dens they operate for BTL and opiate users aren’t much better, especially with the horrible echoes addiction and suffering leave on the astral.

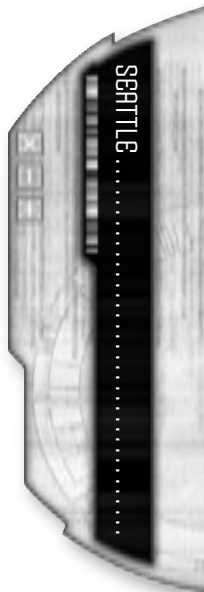
- Jimmy No

The Octagon

Seattle’s smallest Triad, the Octagon, is tied to the Red Dragon Association in Hong Kong. Like their counterparts, they have been engaged in a long-standing battle with the Yellow Lotus Triad. Unlike the Red Dragons, however, the Octagon has failed to eliminate their rivals here, and in fact has lost significant ground. It is widely acknowledged even within the Octagon that their leader, David Gao, is completely ineffectual, and that Incense Master Chen Kwan-Ti is the only force holding the Triad together.

The Octagon maintains a hold in the Little Asia area in Tacoma. Due to their contacts in China, they are the primary distributor of weapons in Seattle, typically inexpensive knock-offs of popular Western firearms. Their only other major operation is opiate smuggling, including clinical-quality morphine and the street drug bliss.

- Most of the black medicals in Seattle buy their pain medication from the Octagon.
- Butch



SHADOWSEA SEARCH

Chimera

A group of freelance assassins active in Seattle and the Pacific Northwest, Chimera members are rumored to be highly-trained experts formerly employed by a Russian intelligence service. Their members are social mimics and clinical psychopaths, able to blend in to any social setting and eliminate their targets without any emotional compunction whatsoever. Members receive extensive technical and magical support in order to defeat their high-profile targets' elaborate defenses. Chimera is credited with the assassination of Capo James O'Malley twelve years ago, as well as the murder of United Oil Seattle division head James Rinchik before he could testify in hearings brought up by their financial scandal in 2067.

• Leave an anonymous message for Chimera on ShadowSea.

Though their operations outside of Little Asia are few, this Triad dominates its territory and protects its operations viciously. Anti-Yakuza sentiment has taken hold to the point that Little Asia is not safe for anyone of Japanese descent, especially at night.

• Octagon members are known for their extreme superstition, partly a result of the Incense Master's influence. They are particularly concerned with proper *feng shui*, to the point that sabotaging the flow of *qi*—particularly with arson—within an Octagon base or neighborhood serves to demoralize Octagon foot soldiers. After all, an Incense Master without a dragon line is a cripple without a crutch.

• Ma'fan

The Yellow Lotus

Initially a branch of the Yellow Lotus Triad from Hong Kong, the Seattle lodge is now the only chapter still extant. The Red Dragon Association wiped out the rest of the Yellow Lotus in Hong Kong after an extended struggle.

• Some of the Yellow Lotus survived in Hong Kong and formed the Ten Thousand Lions (and some other survivors immigrated to Seattle). The two Triads are still tied together, and rumor is that it was the Ten Thousand Lions that passed the Rite of the Bleeding Oath to the Yellow Lotus.

• Ma'fan

Lodgemaster Zheng Li Kwan is an old-school gangster from Hong Kong who has for many years focused his recruiting among the disenfranchised, especially orks. The Yellow Lotus's Incense Master, Su Chen, is a Taoist wizard. He leads most of the Triad in group tai chi exercises before dawn and after sunset and is rarely seen during the day, leading some to claim that Su Chen is actually a vampire.

The principle business of the Yellow Lotus is BTL dealing, peddling low-quality optical chips rather than direct downloads. A close second is importing illegal Chinese residents to work in sweat shops in the Barrens, manufacturing knock-offs for later resale.

• The Yellow Lotus has a lock on "Kong chips," shoddy, inexpensive BTLs produced en masse by their associates in Hong Kong, where they're legal.

• Kat o' Nine Tales

Eighty-Eights

The origin of this Triad is unclear. It appears to have severed all ties to Triad organizations outside the Seattle Metroplex, concentrating its criminal activities locally. The Eighty-Eights' operations consist of low-key vice and gambling; they also receive percentages from a network of Asian gangs throughout the Metroplex. This network has proven formidable—the Eighty-Eights can call on impressive manpower should the situation call for it—but the gangers are disorganized, poorly armed, and fall to squabbling amongst themselves when left without guidance.

• The Eighty-Eights operate so quietly that some of the other syndicates don't even realize they have operations in the same territory. For instance, the Finnigans have a very professional little casino built above a club in Bellevue. Right across the street is a private mah-jongg parlor, invitation only, operated by the Eighty-Eights.

• Kat O'Nine Tales

The Eighty-Eights' leader is Rick Wu, a third-generation Chinese-American who intentionally distances himself from Triad historical roots and mystic trappings. He prefers to promote the Eighty-Eights as a modern syndicate, taking on a personal role of high-class CEO. Their Incense Master is Ruibai Dong, a hacker of unusual skill and a firm believer in Confucian principles. Under their guidance, the Eighty-Eights has relaxed its qualms against personal enhancement technology; in many cases excessive implants are seen as a sign of status. By contrast, this Triad lacks many magicians and resorts to "borrowing" magical assets from their gang network. This flaw can be exploited, using hit-and-run strikes with our own magicians before the Triads can react.

• Ruibai is a technomancer, not a hacker.

• Puck

The Eighty-Eights are currently estranged from their fellow Triads over some arcane matter. Wu has claimed the Hong Kong Triads are attempting to bind the Seattle Triads into subservience. Some members of the other Triads agree with the Eighty-Eights' reservations, and defections have led to increased violence. Try to stay out of the crossfire as the Triads kill each other.

• The Eighty-Eights aren't completely cut off from the other Triads—many are members of the Sai Fan, a secret Triad society completely separate from the lodges. The Sai Fan is ethnically

segregated, though, and only Han Chinese need apply.

- Ma'fan

VORY V ZAKONE

An ethnic mafia built from Russian expatriates, with a smattering of Eastern Europeans, Inuit, and “civilized” nomads from the Steppes, the barbarians of the Vory v Zakone exemplify the worst traits of east and west. They carry a hereditary grudge against the Japanese. Though they are small and relatively new to Seattle, their bold and violent methods have allowed them to carve out a niche, particularly in Tacoma, where they have arrogantly infringed on our own operations. The Tsar of Seattle is Aleksander “Terminator” Bilotkiy, a heavily-cybered hatchet man loyal to the Moscow Vory.

- The Vory smuggle in a lot of interesting hardware courtesy of their friends in the Russian military-industrial complex. They'll sell this stuff to anyone, even kids. I've seen thirteen-year-old gangers prowl the docks with assault rifles.
- Red Anya
- Vory prostitutes prowl those docks too—Ivans and Ivannas all tagged with pricelists for their various services. The Russians also use the tags to track down runaways.
- Butch

Aside from smuggling and the flesh trade, the Vory excel at Matrix operations: everything from data brokerage and credit fraud to e-hijacking and denial-of-service extortion attacks. Many of these operations are coordinated with Vory allies in Russia against Seattle targets, making prosecution difficult.

- Not that the Vory worry much about being arrested. They've already made great inroads towards infiltrating the prison system here. They don't get the life of luxury and security behind bars like the ol' corrupt prison system in Russia allowed for, but they do have a lock on prison economy staples like makeshift knives, prison tattoos, and home-made intoxicants, especially in old-school hellholes like the Hollywood Correctional Facility and Silcox Island Correctional Facility.
- Hard Exit
- Interestingly, the explosion of Goblin Rock and Orxploitation Rap in Seattle is partly due to Vory sponsorship of prominent ork recording artists. Semi-retired Vory members Josif Radek and Sergei Malenkin own Hez Music, and Hez Music promotes major artists like CrimeTime. The Vory use the industry and concert channels to sell BTLs while Hez Music launders the proceeds.
- Fatima
- FWIW, the Vory are also tight with the Chimera hit squad. They don't play this trump card often—Chimera's expensive, even for the Vory—but they will if you cause them too much grief.
- Riser

SEOULPA RINGS

The Seoulpa Rings are an embarrassment to all Yakuza. Once they were Yakuza—Korean managers risen to prominence among

the Seattle gumi. But the Koreans turned their backs on Yakuza traditions and honor, concerned solely with making money and advancing the cause of their fellow Korean nationals. When they finally rebelled, the Seattle gumi were divided in a short but bloody civil war known as the Schism.

Less than a dozen of these Korean traitors survived. These few became the founders of the Seoulpa Rings, guerilla cells that act in concert to attack Yakuza operations, but otherwise remaining ignorant and independent of one another. The Seoulpa Rings flourished in Seattle while we concentrated on the Mafia and, with the aid of their Jo-pok Korean crime syndicate allies, have even spread beyond the Metroplex.

- The survivors of the Schism have their own version of the story, natch—involving a betrayal of their hard efforts by their own racist boss, Akira Watada.
- Kia

Following the formation of the Shotozumi-rengo, Shotozumi-sama offered a truce to the Seoulpa Rings, offering an alliance against their mutual enemy, the Watada-rengo. The leaders of the Seoulpa Rings responded by attempting to assassinate Shotozumi-sama. In response, the Shigeda-gumi was ordered to systematically exterminate the Seoulpa Rings, both in the Seattle Metroplex and abroad. They succeeded . . . almost. Two Seoulpa Rings yet remain.

Whatever traditional organization the Rings might once have had was lost in the recent war. Now, each Ring operates independently of the other, with independent organizations, traditions and leadership. The Rings share information and tactics for use against us, but they are rarely able to coordinate their efforts effectively due to their current fugitive status.

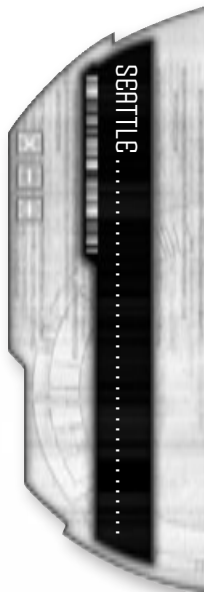
The Choson Ring

This Ring consists almost entirely of hackers; most of their operations involve Matrix schemes, info brokering, and identity theft/fabrication. They operate a number of online casinos throughout the world, some legal and some illegal. They also regularly make runs against online banking accounts or sensitive data nodes linked to Yakuza members, associates, and their businesses. The Ring leader is Jong-Won Sung, a survivor of the Schism and brother of Kyu, the former leader of the Ring (eliminated by the Shigeda). Their symbol is a red-and-yellow yin-yang symbol.

Their entire operation is mobile, never staying in one place for more than a few days, making them difficult to pin down. The Ring has a series of dead e-mail drops where potential clients can contact them for services, and their virtual clearing houses sell pirated software, including IC and BTL programs.

Aside from these decentralized operations, the Choson Ring has formed an alliance with several Korean Jo-pok gangs around the Pacific to coordinate on smuggling and hijacking operations. Choson hackers adjust automated shipping records to conceal their contraband, and in return, the Jo-poks provide much-needed muscle and magical support.

- Recruitment is a problem for the Choson Ring because they know the Yaks are gunning to infiltrate them. Their alliance with





INCOMING FEED

the Jo-poks brings in a constant flow of new members.

- Kia
- I hear that the Choson recently acquired a whole batch of custom-crafted anthroform drones—androids, really—that they plan to use for “prostitution” services (or does that count as mechaphilia?).
- Glitch

The Komun’go Ring

The Komun’go Ring continues to elude us. Led by Chulsoon Gray-Wolf, the half-Korean, half-AmerInd son of one of the Schism survivors, this Ring has managed to survive despite our efforts to permanently put them out of business. To bolster his Ring, Gray-Wolf has formed an alliance with the Dogmen, a Salish-Shidhe outfit, engaging in limited smuggling operations across the NAN border, particularly in Snohomish and north Redmond.

- Shigeda enforcers decimated the Komun’go ranks about a year ago, also taking out Gray-Wolf’s lieutenant, a scary black magician called Black-Cloud-in-Morning. They’re only getting by because of their arrangement with the Dogmen. Lucky for Gray-Wolf, most of the Dogmen are Haida tribals operating out of the former nation of Tsimshian. They hate the Yakuza as much as the Koreans ever did after the Japanese effectively raped their country.
- Mika

- The trade between the Komun’go and Dogmen is pretty ugly—most of the contraband is made up of slaves that are sold to select buyers, such as prostitution rings or corporations in need of medical research or live-fire test subjects.
- 2XL
- The Komun’go Ring recently started a new tactic. Gray-Wolf created a group of “Stand Over Men”—a cadre of experienced and violent enforcers who kidnap prosperous criminals and torture them until they reveal whatever hidden caches of money, weapons, drugs, or other valuables.
- Am-mut

The main trade of the Komun’go Ring is organlegging—harvesting organs, blood, and fetal tissue from unsuspecting residents of the Barrens. They have also been known to kidnap individuals in other districts that match certain requirements, such as a rare blood type or recessive genetic trait. With little apparent effort, they have become the Metroplex’s major dealer in used cyberware and bioware; their channels of distribution also extend to medical equipment and pharmaceuticals.

- The Komun’go have taken to the traditional Tamanous practice of employing ghouls in exchange for room and board—there’s no easier way of disposing of excess parts. They have a couple of cybered dogs on a diet of metahuman meat, too.
- Hannibelle

• You can do worse than go to the Komun'go if you need to dispose of a body. They'll pay up to 1,000¥ per corpse, depending on the condition. Intact 'ware raises the price. And if you want to *buy* a body—as hougans sometimes do—the Komun'go can meet your needs as well.

• 2XL

• Prescription drugs are a major source of income, and if the Komun'go can't make it or buy it wholesale it'll make useless placebos or steal it from corner drug stores and hospitals. This is a major problem for Jane Seattle or Joe Street Doc, since I have to test every medication I get just to see if it's what they claim it is.

• Butch

• Miko doesn't mention it, but the Komun'go forces prospective members to undergo brutal initiations based on ancient Native American trials like the Sun Dance.

• Mika

LAÉSA

Over the last decade, thousands of elven refugees have fled the nation of Tir Tairngire to the metahuman ghetto of Tarislar in Seattle. Despite our best efforts to destabilize gangs in that area, a new ethnic syndicate has formed: Laésa, "The Forgotten."

• According to my contacts, Laésa actually formed from the old Rinelle ke'Tesrae organization that was fomenting rebellion against the High Council in the Tir. It absorbed local gangs like the all-elf Princes of the Blood.

• Frosty

The syndicate is small, but the population of Tarislar is extremely insular and protective of it. As far as we have been able to determine, their operations are mainly limited to smuggling in collusion with the Sinsearach Tribe, including elven liquors such as taéngelé and Sinsearach-crafted foci, fetishes, and ritual materials. Members are trained in Sperethiel as a code language and are taught the elven martial art of carromeleg for self-defense.

• The Laésa also produce Seattle's most popular date-rape drug, a watered-down version of laés that they call leäl. Victims lose all memory of the last hour and fall asleep for about ten minutes. Like normal laés, there's no way to restore the memories, even with magic—the compound chemically restructures the affected neurons. Costs about 200 nuyen a dose on the streets.

• Nephrene

• Yeah, but this stuff is homemade. No telling what it might be contaminated with while brewing or what they might decide to cut it with. If you're lucky, it might be mixed with another street drug to try and get you hooked; if you're unlucky, it'll be cut with devil rat poison or worse.

• Butch

• A couple of the more ambitious *laésasa* have tried setting up a brothel. The prostitutes are your typical stunning elven beauties and androgynous males, but each one is dosed with full-strength

laés every night to forget who they were with and what they did. I wonder how it'll turn out.

• Kat o' Nine Tales

SEATTLE GANGS

Posted by: Riser

The greater Seattle 'plex is home to a whole slew of gangs, ranging from collections of neighborhood tough guys all the way up to a few that rival some of the smaller organized-crime syndicates (and often work hand in hand with them). It's getting so you can't tell all the players without a scorecard, so I figured I'd provide that scorecard and post the lowdown on the current Seattle gang situation.

I didn't write this, by the way: it's taken from a piece that was supposed to be published in an upcoming issue of *Edge*, but it got pulled at the last minute. My guess is the editor was leaned on by one or more of the subjects who got cold feet, so this is a hacked version. Correct it as needed.

THE TOP TIER

Some gangs are so big that they actually have "chapters" in different cities, and operate more like small crime syndicates than street gangs. Here are a couple that have a strong presence in Seattle.

The Ancients

Turf: All over Seattle

Colors: Green

The Ancients are an all-elf go-gang and one of the largest in Seattle. They have chapters all over North America—make that the world—but the Seattle chapter has been infused with numerous exiles from Tir Tairngire. Their symbol is a modified anarchy symbol (circled "A"), usually in red or green. They control smuggling from Salem and Portland into Seattle, as well as running protection rackets and other small-time operations. The colorful Sting and Green Lucifer continue to run the pack, even showing up their underlings in the occasional drag race or game of freeway tag.

• One interesting thing most people don't think about with the Ancients—since they're all elves, their upper-level leadership doesn't die off or retire like they're supposed to, which leaves their younger members nowhere to advance except by violence. A couple of these kids have been muttering about splitting off their own gangs, but so far nothing's come of it.

• Turbo Bunny

• The Ancients and the Laésa aren't on the best of terms, but it's no secret that many disaffected young Ancients have found a home with the newer outfit.

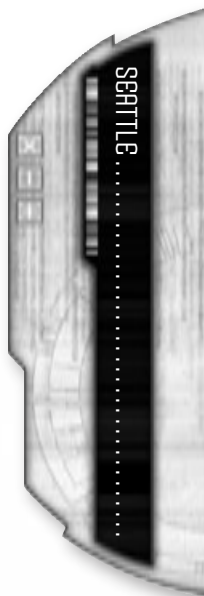
• Frosty

The Cutters

Turf: All over Seattle

Colors: Green and Gold

Once upon a time the Cutters were Seattle's most prominent gang, tied in with chapters across North America. They nearly fell out of the picture though when the majority of the Seattle crew was wiped out fifteen years ago—some say it was



rival gang activity while others say it was poisoning by dissatisfied customers (it's never been proven either way). The Cutters are doing much better these days, though, having built their numbers back up to their former glory days.

Organized like a business operation and taking cues from the corporate world, the gang focuses primarily on smuggling, extortion, and freelance security work. Their existence in multiple cities makes smuggling easier for them than it would be for smaller, one-sprawl gangs. They tend to avoid the big crime syndicates, preferring to maintain their independence and make their cred on low-volume operations.

- The Seattle Cutters have seen a high turnover rate in their leadership lately. The latest casualty was a real bad-news *hombre* named Vladimir. Unfortunately for him, the Vory caught up with him recently—there was barely enough left of him to identify when they were done. Lesson: you don't screw around with the Vory.
- Fatima

THE MIDDLE PLAYERS

Too big to be syndicate puppets but too small to go it alone against the larger players, these middle-tier gangs are forced to walk a delicate line between their own pride and independence and the necessity of allying themselves with syndicates and larger networks of gangs to ensure their continued survival.

405 Hellhounds

Turf: Bellevue, Route 405

Colors: Red and Orange

These guys are a mostly human go-gang that specializes in moving goods (particularly illegal goods) from one end of Bellevue to the other—consider what you'd get if you mated the insane recklessness of a bicycle messenger with the bad-ass firepower of a motorcycle gang, and you've pretty much got the Hellhounds. Named after the two "pets" of a former leader, the gang spends about as much time fighting turf wars as it does delivering goods.

Blood Mountain Boys

Turf: Renton, Intercity 169

Colors: Brown and Red

The Blood Mountain Boys are a mixed-metatype go-gang with an urban-primitive motif: members dress in neo-tribal styles and mark themselves with stylized tattoos, scars, skin weaves, nanotats, and other body mods, with special attention paid to the often permanent "warpaint" they wear on their faces. When they're not clashing with the 405 Hellhounds, they're involved in the BTL trade and run errands for the Mafia, the Yakuza, or anybody else who will pay them. In a way the BMBs are a "throwback" gang, preferring old-fashioned vices like drugs and alcohol over the newer brainbenders and mind-altering substances.

- These guys get a good chunk of their old-school drugs from the Ghost Cartels down in Latin America. Each side thinks they're taking advantage of the other, but as long as the profits keep flowing, nobody cares too much.
- Glasswalker

• You can say what you want about the Blood Mountain Boys, but they throw a hell of a party. Next time you get word of one (they tend to stretch out over large parts of the gang's territory and last for days, so they're hard to miss), show up if you think you can handle it. It's a great place to do biz since the Star's usually too scared to shut them down.

- Kat o' Nine Tails

Chulos

Turf: Carbanado, Puyallup

Colors: Brown

This Latino/Aztlaner gang has been around in some form for many years—in fact, it has its roots in the Nortenos, a West Coast gang founded in the previous century. The Chulos (the name means "pimp" in Spanish) don't care if you're human, ork, troll, or whatever—just that you're Latino (and they're pretty loose on the concept). This gang is much bigger in California than in Seattle, though that's changing. They specialize in the smuggling of BTLs from CalFree and drugs from Aztlan and South America (via strong connections with the Ghost Cartels.)

- The Chulos are well represented in prison—any member who's sent up the river is assured of having plenty of brothers to watch his back while inside.
- Marcos

Crimson Crush

Turf: Redmond, east of Touristville

Colors: Red

The Crush is more of an armed neighborhood watch organization than strictly a gang. They used to be made up solely of orks, though these days they've expanded a little to include a few trolls and even a couple of ork-poseur humans.

This gang really came into their own after the Crash, when they were instrumental in quelling some of the riots and providing a grassroots clearinghouse for food, water, and other necessities (which they managed to "liberate" from various sources when most transportation methods stopped running). Nowadays they spend a lot of time clashing with racist organizations like the Humanis Policlub, though they do keep their hand in the gang game with extortion and a bit of BTL dealing on the side.

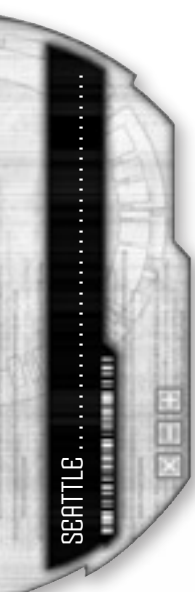
Disassemblers

Turf: Downtown, South Seattle

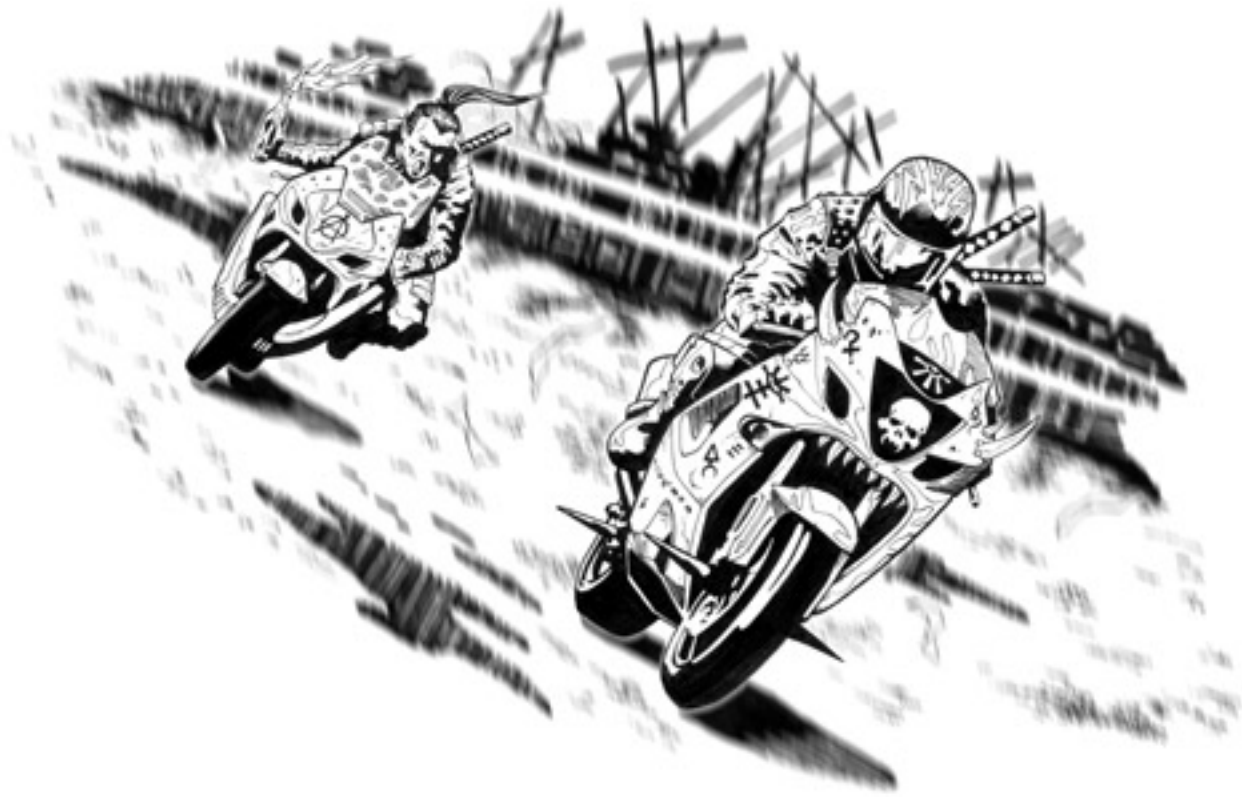
Colors: Gray and White

These guys are bad news, and their power level is growing steadily as they move up alongside their sponsors, Tamanous. Identified by the painted or tattooed skulls on their faces, the Disassemblers are the Tammies' front lines, hunting down and securing bodies and body parts for the organlegging trade and not really caring much about whether the bodies in question are still occupied by their current owner. The gang runs most of the illegal chop shops on their turf, and they've got "agreements" with local hospitals to provide a steady stream of body parts.

- I've heard these guys have a kind of "friendly" rivalry going with the 1625—both gangs are wrangling to get an exclusive edge with



Runner Havens



the Tamanous boys, but the Disassemblers can't deny the fact that a bunch of ghouls are handy to have around when you need to get rid of scraps in a hurry.

- Kay St. Irregular

First Nations

Turf: Everett and Council Island

Colors: Blue

Made up entirely of Native Americans, the First Nations gang used to control the docks north of the former Renraku arcology, but in the past few years they've been branching out and are now focused primarily on and near Council Island. Led by a Salish elf named Blood-of-the-Buffalo, the gang takes strong pride in their Native American heritage, emphasized by their style of dress and gang rituals.

- This gang used to be backed by the Yakuza, which struck just about everybody as a little odd. These days, they're getting their marching orders from the Pueblo Koshari, who are looking to increase their influence in the area.
- Mihoshi Oni

Halloweeners

Turf: Downtown

Colors: Black and Orange

Still one of the largest of the Downtown gangs, the psychotic Halloweeners have experienced a bit of a shift in priorities over the past few years. With the death of their charismatic (and pyromaniac) leader Slash-and-Burn and his associated hatred of all things corporate, the rest of the gang went through a bloody period of infighting until they identified a new leader: a person

(nobody's sure if it's male or female) who calls itself Nightmare. After the dust settled, they still focused on tweaking the corps any way they can, mostly with vandalism and mayhem, but now they've branched out to include making life miserable for just about anyone that crosses their path. They make most of their money by dealing BTLs (specializing in those involving violence or horror, particularly snuffs).

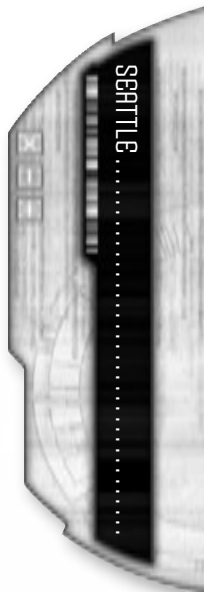
- Nightmare is always seen wearing a glowing skull mask and full black leathers with orange bandannas on both sleeves. Nobody outside of the gang get close enough to him/her/it to figure out much. Rumors identify it as everything from a vampire to the spirit-possessed corpse of Slash-and-Burn—and those are just the plausible ones.
- Snopes

Skraacha

Turf: Ork Underground

Colors: Brown and Gray

The Skraacha (means something like "Scorchers" in Or'zet) is a new gang that's cropped up in the Ork Underground following the Crash. Formed initially from a group of young orks who banded together to help defend the Underground when everything went to hell all over Seattle, the gang has since evolved into a kind of combination neighborhood watch group (think of the old-style Guardian Angels) and vigilante squad with the aim of taking down anti-metahumans whenever possible. They often skirmish with anti-meta groups like the Humanis Policlub, and they pick up extra cash providing security to pro-meta rallies put on by folks like the Ork Nation.



- This makes 'em sound like they're choirboys, but they're not. They've also got their meaty arms into quite a few strong-arm and smuggling schemes around the Underground. If you're not an ork, they don't have much use for you.

- Sticks

Spikes

Turf: Tacoma, Intercity 5 south of Downtown

Colors: Brown and Gold

A troll biker gang still led after all these years by the massive and charismatic Lord Torgo (whose current stint in prison seems to be doing little to dim his authority), the Spikes hate elves more than just about anything else. Their symbol, a crudely drawn decapitated elf head with X's for eyes and a spike driven through it, is meant to strike terror into elven hearts. Despite Torgo's strong leadership, their ongoing battle to unseat the Ancients as the largest gang in the Seattle 'plex hasn't been going as well as he'd hoped.

- I hear some of the Spikes are becoming disillusioned with Torgo's leadership, especially his virulent hatred of elves. Not that these guys are models of egalitarianism or anything—they just feel that Torgo's obsession is keeping them from expending their efforts in more profitable pursuits. I wouldn't be surprised if we saw a coup one of these days—especially as the Big T's not getting any younger. It wouldn't be all that hard to bribe a group of hardcases inside to arrange an "accident."

- Beaker

SMALL POTATOES

In the case of gangs, "small" can refer either to size of membership or to power level. Often the two coincide, but not always. Most of them operate in a small geographical area and usually don't make enough waves to command the attention of the big boys. Here are just a few representative examples:

Blood Brothers

Turf: Auburn

Colors: Purple and Black

Don't be fooled by this gang's habit of dressing in stylish suits—they're quite capable of getting their hands dirty when the need arises. Organized on ethnic rather than metatype lines, they recruit from Seattle's disaffected Blacks (of both sexes, despite the name) and focus their efforts on prostitution, BTL dealing, and small-scale gambling. Because they pride themselves on their stylish appearance at all times, some of their members pick up extra cred by hiring themselves out as bodyguards for Black activists, sports figures, and other shady celebrities of all metatypes. Like the Latino gang the Chulos, the Blood Brothers maintain a large network of contacts within the prison system, as well as affiliations with some other non-local Black gangs behind bars.

- The Blood Brothers are actually led by a sister—an ork woman who goes by "Malvinia." She's one scary lady—rumors are always flying around that she's a mambo (that's a Voudoun priestess for those who aren't up on the lingo), but she'll neither confirm nor deny it.

- Jimmy No

Leather Devils

Turf: Bellevue, I-90

Colors: Red and Black

The Devils are a literal boys club, with no women allowed—and yes their name really does allude to their sexual preferences. Longtime Bellevue residents might remember the leader of this go-gang, a mage poser named Damien. He was killed in '67 after an ill-conceived challenge to a *real* mage went disastrously wrong. The new leader (a human who calls himself Asmo) has renewed the Devils' street presence, regularly tangling with the 405 Hellhounds and taking over the night-time highways for organized "jousting matches." When they're not terrorizing the streets, you can find the Devils raising a ruckus in one of Bellevue's infamous leather bars.

Night Hunters

Turf: Renton

Colors: Silver and Black

The Night Hunters aren't one gang, but rather a whole series of small splinter thrill gangs that all use the same name. They have a high turnover and usually can't coordinate themselves well enough to make a serious impact. Technofetishist and rabidly anti-metahuman, they favor bizarre implants, colored mohawks, and other unusual "accessories" to make themselves look more frightening. They push Humanis agendas by day and spend their nights beating and torturing metahumans. They also make a decent bit of cred running an online BTL distribution service. Their symbol is a taloned hand slashing a white moon, which they sport in glow-in-the-dark paint and bioluminescent tattoos.

Ragers

Turf: Tacoma docks

Colors: Black and Gray

A metahuman gang that's mostly orks with a few trolls and dwarfs, the Ragers got their name from the Night of Rage. Its members pride themselves on keeping the memory alive even though they only have a couple of members who are old enough to actually remember it. They clashed with the Mafia for awhile back in the early '60s, but eventually they had to face reality: either throw in with the mob or get wiped off the map. They don't like it, but they can't deny the fact that it's been a lucrative relationship for both sides.

- It's no secret that the Vory have been sniffing around these guys for quite some time, looking for more influence around the dock area.

- Mihoshi Oni

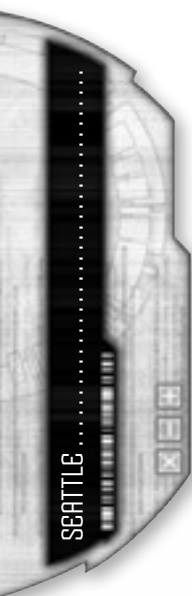
Rusted Stilettoes

Turf: Redmond, Glow City

Colors: Black and Rust Red

The Stilettoes, based out of the Glow City area in the south part of the Barrens, used to be bigger than they are these days. That's the trouble with living in an irradiated zone: even if your gang is made up mostly of orks and trolls, the juice is going to get to you eventually, especially when you do most of your recruiting from squatters and chipheads. Most of these guys are thoroughly messed up in the head, and all of them are freakin'

Runner Havens



SEATTLE GANGS AT A GLANCE

Gang Name	Colors	Turf	Size	Notes
162s	Brown/Red	Redmond	S	Ghoul gang
405 Hellhounds	Red/Orange	Bellevue	M	Go-gang
Ancients	Green	Seattle	L	Elven go-gang
Blood Brothers	Black/Purple	Auburn	S	Black ethnic gang
Blood Mountain Boys	Brown/Red	Renton	M	Urban primitive gang
Cereal Killers	Black/Blue	Seattle grid	S	Matrix gang
Chulos	Brown	Puyallup	M	Latino ethnic gang
Crimson Crush	Red	Redmond	M	Ork gang
Cutters	Gold/Green	Seattle	L	Business-oriented gang
Desolation Angels	Black/Green	Seattle	S	Female gang
Disassemblers	Gray/White	Downtown	M	Organleggers
First Nations	Blue	Everett	M	AmerInd ethnic gang
Halloweeners	Black/Orange	Downtown	M	Thrill gang
Leather Devils	Red/Black	Bellevue	S	Gay go-gang
Night Hunters	Black/Silver	Renton	S	Racist human thrill gang
Ragers	Black/Gray	Tacoma	S	Metahuman gang
Reality Hackers	Chrome/Gold	Puyallup	M	Matrix gang
Rusted Stilettos	Black/Rust	Redmond	S	Mutant gang
Scatterbrains	Orange	Everett	S	Prankster gang
Skraacha	Brown/Gray	Ork Underground	M	Ork gang
Specters	Silver/Green	Astral	S	Wizzer gang
Spikes	Brown/Gold	Tacoma	M	Troll biker gang
Troll Killers	Green/Red	Downtown	S	Racist human gang

scary because you never know what they're going to do next. They make most of their cred from selling BTLs and other mindbenders. They've weathered the transition from chip-based to online-based delivery surprisingly well for a bunch of screwed-up mutants.

Scatterbrains

Turf: Everett dockyards

Colors: Orange

You know, of all the gangs you'd expect not to survive past a couple of years, this one would be at the top of my list. Led by a psychotic troll named "Giggles," the Scatterbrains' entire purpose in life seems to be pulling practical jokes—and I'm not talking about joy buzzers and whoopee cushions, either. I'd have given them two years tops, but they're still going strong in 2070 and have even branched out to pulling some of their elaborate jokes in the Matrix (one of their latest was replacing a local mall's AR iconography with obscene imagery during a large children's event).

Troll Killers

Turf: Downtown, near Lake Washington

Colors: Red and Green

The Troll Killers are a humans-only gang affiliated with racist organizations like Human Nation and the Humanis Policlub—basically a bunch of young goons whose *raison d'être* is busting meta-human skulls and taking trophies (such as horns and tusks) from their victims. Unfortunately for them, the meta gangs are growing at a faster rate than they are. The orks and trolls who were their primary prey decided they'd had enough and cooperated long enough to do some pretty serious damage to this band of racist kids. The

TKs are still around (mostly because they pick up work as muscle on lake-based smuggling operations) but they have to choose their victims carefully.

SPECIALTY GANGS

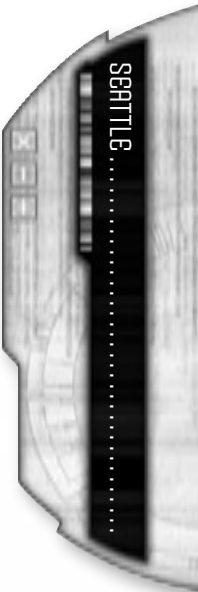
Let's face it: most gangs enforce their wishes by bashing heads, breaking legs, and shooting anything that doesn't agree with them. A few have different methods, usually because they possess some talent or ability that your garden-variety ganger can't lay claim to. As you might suspect, these gangs can be some of the most dangerous of all since they're usually harder to fight. These include wizzer gangs, Matrix gangs, and a few others that are simply hard to classify.

162s

Turf: Redmond

Colors: Blood Red and Brown

This gang, named after Special Order 162 (a piece of legislation—quickly rescinded—that was designed to protect ghouls in Chicago's Cabrini Green area), maintains a symbiotic and highly profitable relationship with the Tamanous organ-legger operation. Restricted to ghoul members only (like anybody else would want to join up?), the gang generally prowls the Barrens looking for victims. Anyone who looks healthy enough to be a "volunteer donor" gets delivered to Tamanous, and the rest are simply eaten. Tamanous, for their part, supplies the ghoul gang with all the "scraps" from their grisly operations along with a small stipend for obtaining other necessities. The gang's symbol is three claw slashes with the number 162 over them in dripping blood-red.



Cereal Killers

Turf: Seattle grid

Colors: Black and Electric Blue

Unlike other Matrix gangs that occasionally get out there and bust heads when they need to, the Cereal Killers—another gang that got its start after the Crash—consider such physical activity to be a waste of time. They specialize in pure Matrix crime like altering or erasing people's credit (or even identity) information, coordinated denial-of-service attacks, datasteals, fraud, software piracy—pretty much anything you can do online, these guys and girls do it, and do it well. This is *not* a gang you want to get on the wrong side of. Bashed kneecaps heal, but once your identity's been erased or messed with (do you really want your background check when applying for a new job to turn up an old conviction for child molestation?) you're essentially SOL unless you can afford a better hacker to clear things up.

Desolation Angels

Turf: All over Seattle

Colors: Green and Black

I've only heard rumors of this gang's presence in Seattle, but they're pretty strong rumors and I tend to believe the sources. Word is that they're an off-shoot of an all-woman gang that started up in the Chicago Containment Zone during the time it was overrun with insect spirits. Not content to just get out alive, they're actually dedicated to hunting down other insect spirits and eradicating them. They fund their bug-hunts with some old-fashioned gun-running and escort services.

- Scratch that. The Angels are a group of women who've been taken over—voluntarily, if you can believe it!—by Mantid spirits. They're hunting down other insects because they want a tasty snack—and you can be sure that some of their johns have a habit of disappearing as well.
- Sticks
- Not to doubt you, Sticks, but some proof would be nice.
- Snopes

Reality Hackers

Turf: Puyallup

Colors: Chrome and Gold

The Reality Hackers have really prospered in these new times, making the transition from wired to wireless Matrix almost effortlessly. Even so, their specialty now is still the same as it was then: infiltration. They specialize in breaking in and doing datasteals in places where the owners are too paranoid to chance letting their precious data get into the wrong hands, a talent that's becoming rarer in these days when everything's wireless. They still go for the sleek techno look with metallic cyberlimbs, weird or exotic cybereyes, and high-tech body mods like bioluminescent nanotats, full-body dye jobs, and fiberoptic hair implants.

- They're also still pissed at the Yak for hanging them out to dry a few years back, and have finally thrown in their lot with the Choson Ring.
- Slamm-O!

Specters

Turf: Astral Plane

Colors: Silver and Green

This wiz-gang has been around since the time of the Crash, when they got their start running astral communications and recon when normal communications methods went down. Though wizzer gangs tend to be high on the ego scale and implode due to “creative differences” fairly quickly, these guys have stuck it out. They're small, but they've carved a niche for themselves by specializing in astral-based activities like spying and blackmail, courier runs/message delivery, astral bodyguarding and protection, and general mayhem.

- Many rumors say that the Specters members' physical bodies aren't even in Seattle, but rather that they're operating out of a heavily-guarded and warded base somewhere else. No one has successfully tracked them back to it, though—their pet spirits attack anybody who tries. There are also rumors that some of the spirits are more than pets, and that a few of them are actually involved in leadership roles.
- Winterhawk

THE RUNNER SCENE

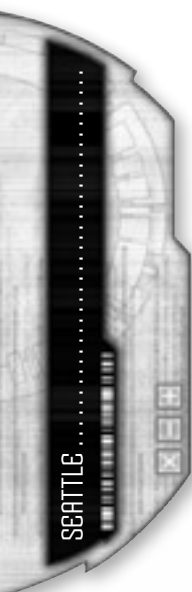
Posted by: Cosmo

Seattle was an early adopter of the shadowrunning trend. It may be due to the city's unique status as an isolated port, simultaneously surrounded by enemies and serving as a major international gateway. Or it may be due to the eclectic mix of corporate interests crammed together in a small region, enticing them all to poke and prod at their competitors. Or it may have something to do with the massive gap between rich and poor, particularly the sprawl's widespread urban ghettos, large SINless population, and the simple economics that make street crime a way of life for so many. More likely, it's the combination of these factors all in one area, creating the perfect blend of high tech and low-life that draws shady corporate, political, and criminal interests together.

Whatever the reasons, the shadows are an integral part of Seattle's history now, spawning an entire mythology of events and characters. It's no surprise to see newsfeed pundits and bloggers calling Seattle a “criminal mecca,” “lawless frontier town,” or “vice capital” when you have major trid series and sim-flicks that sensationalize the Seattle shadows (sometimes based on real people and events). With regular (and sometimes hysterical) media coverage, Seattle's runner population is alternately idolized as dashing Robin Hood-esque heroes and castigated as a major threat to public safety.

Though you'll see politicians and blowhards calling for a law enforcement crackdown to rid the streets of hoodlums and terrorists, the truth is the street element is entrenched here. It's far too valuable to the thousands of Mr. Johnsons and their influential superiors, who need the shadows so that they don't get their own hands dirty. Your average Seattleite knows the score and they actually accept the runner scene with a sense of pride, each claiming to their buddies that they actually *know* a shadowrunner or two—through a friend of a friend, of course.

All this serves to make Seattle an actual runner haven of sorts—the corps know to hire here and the runners know to



come here for work. In fact, across the UCAS and even the NAN states, Seattle is considered a virtual paradise for runner wannabes, the place to go to get into the big time. Every ganger in the sprawl who's ever toted a gun fancies himself a runner, and the local data havens have a hard time keeping the script kiddies and shadow-paparazzi out.

- People go fanatic over the strangest things, and the shadows are no exceptions. There are trid pirates and newsfeeds that do nothing but comment and speculate on shadow activity in the sprawl. Most of it's crap compiled by fans who get a vicarious thrill out of following some runner's every move. Heck, some of these runner-stalkers can be more of a nuisance than Star surveillance or some enemy's subtle vendetta. But occasionally the shadow press contains some interesting factoids, or can be useful as a way to spread your own red herrings.

- Dr. Spin

- It's also really frickin' annoying. Last time a wanna-be barfed on my boat, I nearly left him on Vashon Island next to the ghouls colony. Mr. "Lookin' for Excitement" got more than he could handle just on the pleasure cruise, much less on a real run. Amateurs.

- Sounder

While it's a good sign to see fresh faces and talent coming into the scene, fact is a lot of the new arrivals are in over their heads. So here's a short primer on Seattle's runner scene for those of you who are new to it. It may be worth passing on to that new kid before he gets himself killed.

SEATTLE ETIQUETTE

Newbs and foreign runners need to know a few things about how the shadows are run in Seattle. Most of these are common sense, but you'd be surprised how many times an up-and-coming runner's career was cut painfully short by not following the same rules as everyone else. On the other hand, guarantees are few in the sprawl—you might stumble into a meet where the players do things according to their own rules and anything I tell you might just land you in hot water. The best advice I can offer is that you research the situation ahead of time, keep your cool, and use your best judgment.

Fixers

First rule of running in Seattle: get a fixer. In a town this crowded with talent, if you don't have a fixer working your rep, you're nobody. Fortunately there are a lot of fixers out there looking for new teams to add to their stable, though you can be sure they'll only pass you small-time jobs until you prove you're a professional—no matter what sort of rep you had in another city or how many references you have. Pick your fixer carefully (if you have a choice, that is)—they have reps too, and it's hard to be in this business long without making some enemies. Some are strictly small fry, but you can always work your way up the ladder.

Alternately, if you can't find a fixer, get a regular gig with a crime family that regular outsources. The Mafia and the Yaks always have freelance gigs for which they want some extra plausible deniability. Just make sure you don't get too tight with them, or

you may soon be considered part of the family whether you want to be or not—and once you're in, you're in for life.

- Note that in Seattle, fixers rarely get invited to the initial meet between Mr. Johnson and the runners. The underground grapevine is simply too extensive here, and Mr. Johnson usually only wants to give the fixer as much info as is necessary to find a properly qualified team. For the most part, fixers are treated as talent scouts rather than middle-man. A lot of fixers prefer this too, as the less they're involved in the run, the less they have to worry about getting caught up in a messy situation if the team screws up.

- Haze

If you're new to town, a fixer is also your best bet for acquiring gear. They're likely to have all the necessary contacts and will be way more adept at navigating the underworld black market dynamics than you. If all else fails and you need to acquire something yourself, start at the Crime Mall in Puyallup and hope for the best.

Mr. Johnsons

Mr. Js here run the gamut, from high-stakes corp headhunters to nervous regular Joes whose backs are against the wall. You can usually tell the pros by how they arrange the meet. They won't set up a talk at the Inferno or any place that's infamous as a runner hangout—their goal is to prevent any public association between themselves and the runners, and they all know that there are a lot of eyes and ears open at the regular haunts. They're more likely to invite you to a quiet dinner at some small restaurant you've never heard of in Everett or something equally innocuous.

- Unless they want to be seen, that is—or they want to make you think they're less experienced than they actually are, in which case they'll pick a meeting site that's practically a cliché in the runner scene.

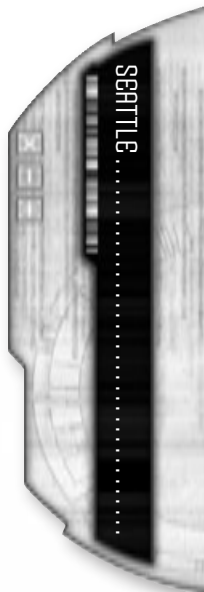
- Haze

It's also tradition in Seattle for Mr. J to pick up the tab, but don't take that as a cue to "sample" every expensive wine on the list. As always, your professional behavior and ability to dress appropriately and remain subtle will count for or against you.

Street Cred

The freelance criminal community in Seattle is large enough to populate an arcology. On the one hand, this sea of crooks makes it easier for all of us to swim around in without getting caught. On the other hand, everybody tends to know a lot of other somebodies, and word has a way of traveling faster than light if you're not careful. To top it off, all of those other runners out there are your allies, enemies, and competition all rolled into one. If you play the scene well, you might just have fewer bullets in you at the end of the night than the others.

The first thing to remember here is that your street cred really matters. If you've got a decent rep and the right contacts, then there's an entire underworld of resources available to you. If you fuck that up and develop a reputation as a guy who shoots his mouth off, doesn't take things seriously, or fails to back up



his buddies or honor a deal, then you will very quickly become a nobody in this town. Friends and contacts will simply evaporate or refuse to deal with you if you don't maintain a good record.

- Who you are or were on the streets of your home town means shit to most Seattle runners. We're a fairly cosmopolitan city, but we don't keep track of who's the big dawg in every sprawl. If you want respect in the Seattle shadows, you have to earn it local. Partly that's because the Seattle runner crowd has a rather elitist self-perspective, seeing itself as one of the only runner havens that really matters. That's not even nearly accurate, of course—I'd personally be more inclined to give props to someone who spent years running the shadows of some locked-down corporate bubble like Neo-Tokyo as compared to the easy time runners have it here in the Emerald City.
- Traveler Jones

- Don't take that to assume that no one's ever heard of you in Seattle. Most of the Triads know who's who in Hong Kong, for example, and you can bet your ass the other syndicates and corps keep an eye out for anyone with a rep from out of town.
- Jimmy No

- Yeah, that's the disadvantage to everyone being so connected—you've gotta run farther than Seattle to escape some trouble you started somewhere else.
- Traveler Jones

This is more important than ever given that even shadowrunners are tapped into Seattle's online social reputation networks. ShadowSea runs a "credit rating" routine that calculates a score for you based on feedback from other runners and shadow contacts. You'd be amazed at how fast your credit will take a dive if you stiff your fixer or get your face splashed all over the evening news.

- It can be especially bad news if your ShadowSea Credit takes a blow in the middle of a deal. I've walked out on clients mid-transaction more than once because I'm always careful to monitor their credit in real-time AR. I don't want to be the one who gets tagged as the last person to help out a pariah, as it may affect my rep as well.
- Am-mut

Community

The major advantage to working the shadows in Seattle is simply how resourceful this runner scene can be. The poor, SINless, criminals, and other "low-lives" can stick together and cooperate just as effectively as they can tear each other apart, and more than a few have learned that they can even prosper by doing so. What you end up with are a lot of social cliques, neighborhood groups, unofficial hobbyist clubs, and intentional collectives that get together to pool their resources, share information, and otherwise work together for the benefit of a group as a whole. These manifest in all sorts of ways, from self-sufficient squatter farms to community-minded black clinics to magic groups and rigger mechanic pools.

- The rad communities out in the Barrens are a good example of this sort of intentional living, where people have intentionally gravitated to these lawless areas so they can live according to the

tenets of a particular political philosophy (or religion or other ideology). The anarchists in Puyallup, for example, don't buy into that survival of the fittest crap that some of the gangs do—they live and work according to basic principles of individual responsibility and mutual aid. The people living in those squats know they can rely on each other for backup, whether it's getting stitched up by a Black Cross medic or needing some repair work done.

- Aufheben

- Unfortunately, even in the runner scene you do still find a fair amount of old-fashioned prejudice, whether it's someone with anti-meta thing, a mage-o-phobe, or someone who's stuck on gender and sexuality issues. In fact, there are certain networks that allow these bigots to simply do their own thing, but Old Boys clubs (or whatever) of that sort have fewer options when working.
- Fatima

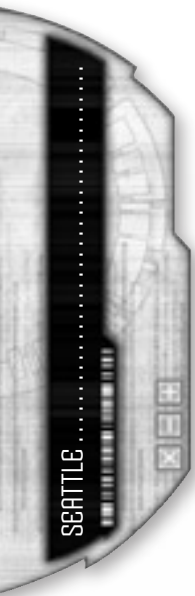
- Some of these traditions just refuse to die. Take gillettes—razor-girls with as much attitude and ability as any male street samurai you care to name. Even though the Seattle runner scene has a high (if not equal) percentage of women, you still see a big proportion of gillettes out there, all heavy on the attitude and determined to prove something whether it needs proving or not. Some of the more charismatic ones gather all-girl gangs around themselves or organize prostitutes to act against rapists and violent pimps. Younger girls learn how to take care of themselves, get some cyber, and perpetuate the cycle.
- Hannibelle

Another good thing about this interlocking community is that you don't necessarily need cold hard credit to make a purchase. Untraceable credsticks are the preferred currency, of course, but a lot of dealers in Seattle will take anything that's not hot, up to and including bearer bonds, corporate stock, megacorporate scrip, gold and silver bullion, vehicles, weapons, property, information/paydata, and underworld markers. In fact, barter is the norm in the Barrens, where electronic currency simply doesn't play much of a role in the local economy. At the least, you always have your own personal services to trade, as any boytoy or joygirl can tell you.

GETTING WORK

The beauty of the Seattle shadows is that you can find just about any type of work. Unless your specialty is decapitations via snowboard or something equally esoteric, odds are someone in Seattle is in need of your services—especially if your talent is something basic like "meathead punch." Truth is, there are so many job possibilities in Seattle that you can always count on not having to do Yet Another Damn Extraction. You can pull bodyguard duty for a politico's scheming spouse one week, hack the specs for a wiz new corp prototype the next, spice up the week after that with a mob-sponsored hijacking, and cap off the month with a little blackmail job on behalf of some activist cause. If you get bored beating around the sprawl you can always take a little road trip over to the Salish-Shidhe (or even Tir Tairngire) for some illegal talislegging or critter poaching.

Of course, some jobs are more common than others in Seattle or have a certain local spin on them.



Smuggling

Seattle is strategically located for smuggling activities as a major hub for Pacific Rim traffic. Even with a lot of traffic now going through the new Nicaragua Canal in Aztlan, there's so much legitimate trade passing through Seattle that the authorities have a hard time keeping track of it all, much less stopping illegitimate shipments. Seattle is also such a patchwork of docks, airports, jurisdictions, and authorities that it's almost *hard* to get caught smuggling something, assuming you have the right contacts.

A lot of cargo arriving in Seattle is destined for the UCAS, continuing on via air freight, zeppelin cargolifters, or dedicated rail lines and road trains. The ground traffic is more thoroughly checked, seeing as how it passes directly through (rather than over) the NAN—specifically the Salish-Shidhe and Sioux. Eastbound smugglers typically infiltrate the border along Everett, Redmond, or Puyallup; once you get by the Salish border patrols, it's an easy ride through the SSC interior. The Cascades make a good stop-over point—the Cascade Ork tribes run fuel and repair stops and may want to purchase/add to your cargo. From there, the major routes head out to Denver, Chicago, and New Orleans.

- The Sioux take special joy in making sure UCAS-oriented traffic passes inspection—part of the low-level “cold war” that still exists between uncomfortable neighbors.
- Mika

On the outbound end, Seattle ships goods all over the Pacific Rim, with principal receiving ports including Vladivostok, Osaka, Hong Kong, and Sydney in the East, and Portland, San Francisco and Los Angeles to the south. Smuggler crews use everything from disguised tugs, submersibles, and under-the-radar aircraft to sneak by, even occasionally a t-bird or speedboat that can simply outrace the patrols.

The Mafia, Yakuza, Vory, and other syndicates have monopolies on a lot of the black market trade items, especially BTLs, drugs, weapons, and controlled pharmaceuticals. These crime outfits already have the infrastructure they need in place—the bribed officials, the patrol schedules, the hidden refueling and drop-off stations. But there's enough demand for independent operators to also get by, especially if they're hooked up with some good smuggling crews and routes. There are also untapped and smaller markets to make a profit in, such as trading biologicals, telesma, counterfeit goods, and even human cargo.

- Seattle has seen a lot of illegal immigration over the past decade from China, Russia, the Philippines, Cal Free, the former Ute and Tsimshian nations, and even the Tir. Each of those groups has established their own communities here, which only serve to draw more family and friends—few of which have the proper means or credentials.
- Traveler Jones
- A lot of contraband merely passes through Seattle rather than ending up here, meaning that the smuggling outfit doesn't just need to arrange getting it in, it needs to get it back out again. That's double the coordination, forged credentials, and bribes, meaning that even the independents often have to rely on syndi-

cate help—by giving the mob a cut of course.

- Sounder

- Some of the syndicates have arrangements with personnel inside the extraterritorial megacorps, allowing them to occasionally take advantage of shipments that get a free pass on some of the customs checks.
- Kia

Hooding

A surprising number of Seattle runners take on “hooding” jobs—as in, that Robin character who stole from the rich and gave to the poor. Hooding jobs generally involve working for an underdog against somebody more powerful and oppressive, like helping a dwarf neighborhood chase off a threatening Humanis-backed gang, or backing up a squatter community that's threatened with eviction by a gentrifying corp. Contrary to popular opinion, hooding doesn't mean working for free—though it usually means working for cheap or at least accepting alternative means of payment, which could be anything from free repair work to a lifetime supply of garlic and tomatoes from a community garden.

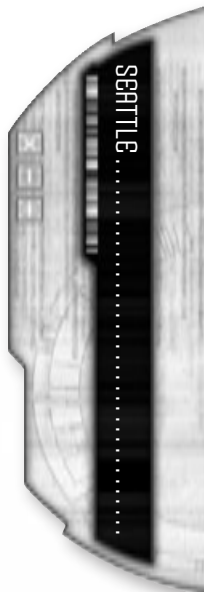
Seattle is a neighborhood town, and every 'hood has its share of problems, whether it's Yakuza enforcers, predatory thrill gangs, police brutality, or marauding rapists. The poorer the area, the less options the people have to deal with whatever's plaguing them. Occasionally the residents will band together against a threat, but they simply may not have the skills, resources, or guts to face it down properly. Turning to the authorities is rarely an option, as the people in power quite often are part of the problem.

- A lot of squatter communities in Redmond steal their water or electricity from pipes feeding into corporate installations. The corps don't take kind to this, of course, but residents sometimes pool their resources to hire runners to keep the tap quiet, leverage some blackmail, or otherwise give the corp a reason to look the other way.
- Aufheben

Hooding may not pay the bills, but it does pay off in job satisfaction. It's hard to say why a lot of runners do it. Some of them clearly just believe their own media hype as crusaders of the downtrodden—that is, until some BTL-addict tries to mug them, in which case their class solidarity goes out the chamber with their shell casing. A lot of runners clearly believe in working for a good cause, though, especially those who lean towards being anarchists or eco-activists or rads anyway. Some simply remember their roots and what a struggle they had surviving on the sprawl streets, and their conscience simply moves them to lend a helping hand.

Corp Work

The fact that so many major corporate interests have a presence in Seattle makes it an ideal place to find corp-infiltration work, especially when there's any sort of shake-up going on. There were so many extractions in this city back in 2065 that it probably set a world record; certainly enough that it could be considered a city sport. With so many corporate facilities in close proximity, they just can't seem to avoid sniping at each other, especially with such a larger runner base on hand to take advantage of.





INCOMING FEED.....

With a solid rep and an ambitious fixer, you can pick and choose what sort of corp-related work you want to take. Tired of working for Shiawase? No problem, Mitsuhamas hiring. Have a personal preference for silent B&E jobs rather than a sabotage run that requires playing lead tag with a corp-sec squad? Omae, somebody's offering what you need.

Word to the wise: the corps play this game as well as all the rest of us and they keep their ears to the ground. They have spies and agents and snitches all over the sprawl, so be careful about spilling to your contact that you're on a run against Ares, or that some new Johnson from Monobe hired you. They also keep careful records and have long memories, so be wary about taking jobs from a corp just a year after you blew up their new manufacturing plant, no matter how clean you think you were.

- Seattle Johnsons are experts at faking what corp they work for, so don't ever buy the "he's wearing Evo cufflinks, so he must work for Evo trick." The experienced ones will go through elaborate pains to conceal their arrival and departure from the meet, will only hand over thoroughly sanitized contact data, and will plant numerous red herrings to make you think they work for someone else. The good ones are expert actors too, and will play the role of "novice Johnson" to the hilt just to throw you off track.

- Haze

- Truth is, though, the Seattle shadows are a competitive working environment. A lot of corporate Johnsons simply don't last

long. If they don't screw up in some way that requires them to be relocated or "let go," they may run afoul of internal politics, get gunned down in a deal gone bad, or simply have a nervous breakdown from the stress. Even if they're good enough to become long-timers, they have to worry about their face and MO becoming known around town. With that kind of turnover, you can expect most Seattle Johnsons to be fresh faces or out-of-town transplants—which doesn't mean they're naïve. They make up for the lack of direct personal knowledge of the local shadows with access to the corp's black ops knowledge databanks.

- Kia

LOCAL PLAYERS

No discussion of the Metroplex's shadows would be complete without a rundown of certain local specialists whose services are available to those in the know.

The Creeps

If you need something smuggled between Seattle and the Salish-Shidhe, the Creeps are a good choice. This mostly-ork contraband ring is what remains of the Black Rains gang, which tore itself apart in an internal power struggle a few years back. Operating primarily in Tacoma and Puyallup, the Creeps rely heavily on the Ork Underground to safely transport goods throughout Seattle. They also work closely with the Cascade Ork tribe in the Salish-Shidhe, expanding the old mining tunnels underneath Carbanado, many of which cross below the

border, and using them to exchange and warehouse goods. The Creeps keep a steady supply of chips flowing, though they tend to specialize in porn chips featuring orks and trolls.

- The Creeps are more of a loose association of smugglers rather than a unified group. Some of their cells are quite clannish, however, like the notorious Bot'Kham ("Sons of Kham"), an extended family unit of muscle-for-hire descended from one of Seattle's more infamous (and now retired) ork runners. These guys operate on a strict code based on professional and familial loyalty—they'll never betray their family or their employer.
- Fatima

Road Warriors

Sometimes your bike gets stolen. Your armored van is blown up by a dwarf with too much C4 and a grudge against you for dating his sister. Hell, maybe Lone Star tagged your hovercraft with a tracking device and you had to ditch it. Whenever that happens, you need to call up the Road Warriors—or, in less romantic terminology, call a cab.

The Seattle Metroplex has over 1,500 taxis, counting air, land, and watercraft. Those are official numbers, of course, and don't count the hundreds of illegal cabbies—yes, many of them immigrants, you stereotyping bastards—who simply drive around and give people rides for a fee. Problem is, most taxi services refuse to enter certain districts like the Barrens and other ghettos—not to mention refusing to pick up scary looking people who happen to be brandishing guns, bleeding all over the pavement, or running from corporate security. Luckily for the shadow set, the Road Warriors will.

The Road Warriors are a loose network of riggers who like the occasional dose of excitement. Though they compete in offering their services, they cooperate when it comes to advertising and making repairs. Some of them drive their own vehicles while a few remotely rig them. Most of the vehicles are illegally modified with hidden armor and weaponry, and occasionally even ECM and ECCM. Not people you want to piss off on the expressway at rush hour.

- Some of these cabbies have serious rivalries with each other that often lead to blatant interference and territorial pissing contests. There's nothing more annoying than having some rigger asshole cutting you off when you're trying to rush a perforated buddy to a street doc.
- Turbo Bunny

Hiring a Road Warrior ride isn't cheap, and the rates automatically skyrocket for hazard pay—violence or pursuit of any kind. There are few better options for escaping the Star or running a roadblock, though, or even just taking a ride through some sketchier parts of town. Most of the Warriors have worked out deals with go-gangs just so they can pass through their territory unmolested.

- You can also hire them out for courier, escort, or smuggling services, though individual riggers may be particular about the details—they tend to be a quirky bunch.
- Rigger X

SHADOWSEA FEED

The ShadowSea Wizard Says:

The following posts meet your criteria:

- I've got a package that I need delivered to one of the girls at Olga's, and she'll give you something to bring back to me in return. Drop a message in my box if you're interested. Must be done tonight. [Link](#)
- Need to access the lower levels of Dante's Inferno but don't have the cred or the cool? Shoot me a message—I've got something on old Alessio that'll get you right in. It'll cost you, but if you need to get in bad enough, it's worth it. [Link](#)
- Come to Tusk and mention that the Wizard sent you and he'll set you up with 20% off a full set of slightly used body armor. He's got an overstock and he's looking to move some of it. First come, first served, so hurry! [Link](#)
- I represent an employer who will pay big nuyen to anybody who can crack the Crash Memorial and deliver to him whatever they find inside. Contact me if you're interested and I'll give you the details. [Link](#)
- Does anybody know a reliable way into the ACHE? I need a person retrieved fast, dead or alive—no questions asked. Also need an item extracted. Must be done no later than two days from date of posting. [Link](#)

- If you're looking for an escort on the other end of the economic spectrum, there's a private limo service called XX that offer stop-notch chauffeur and bodyguarding services. A lot of their mooks are ex-street sams and company men.

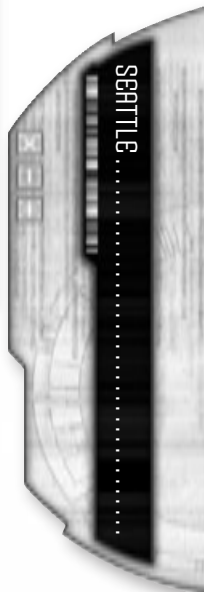
• 2XL

- I can't believe no one's mentioned the best taxi service in the 'plex yet—Lone Star! Sure, they're expensive as Hell, but who's going to stop 'em?
- Hard Exit

ShadowSea

ShadowSea—also called "Dark Emerald" for its dark-green iconography style—is the premier shadow node in Seattle. ShadowSea was quickly assembled by a collective of hackers in early 2065, to replace the void left when Shadowland Seattle (the previous data haven) was destroyed by the Crash worm.

- Any one heard the rumor that some of Shadowland's core data was dumped to a secret file server before the Crash erased it? By core data, I mean the really juicy stuff that they decided not to back-up to the Nexus?
- Pistons



FACETS'S SHADOWSEA BLACKLIST

The Current Black List

It's hard to get a consensus from a group as diverse as the Seattle runner community, but here's a short list of people that currently almost everyone seems to agree are bad business. These are folks whose Credit ratings have dropped to the negative triple digits and are currently banned from ShadowSea. Avoid them like a new VITAS strain, 'cause they're just not worth it.

—Facet

3) Pachinko Mike

Mike earned the honor of being blacklisted in a most curious way. See, Mike's not an obnoxious guy or an incompetent runner. He's just an ex-pat adept from Hong Kong making a living as an occult troubleshooter. Yes, some magicians complain he undercuts their rates, while others dislike his cigars, compulsive gambling habits, excessive consumption of cheap booze—but that's hardly blacklist material.

The real reason for Mike's blacklisting seems to be his luck, or rather, his *bad* luck. For some reason, people who associate or just happen to be in the vicinity of Mike (but never Mike himself) are prone to the oddest calamities. It's never intentional or directly attributable to his actions, but accidents keep happening around him. Some of these accidents have been minor, but more than a few have been fatal. There isn't a single runner that's worked with him who's managed to escape "the curse," and now others have learned to stay well away from him. Whatever's going on, the man's bad news, trust me on that.

- So, Beaker, is it true that you also had the dubious pleasure of working with Pachinko Mike?
- Smiling Bandit

- No comment.
- Beaker

2) Warrant Officer Charlene Twofeathers

There's nothing worse than an honest cop, except a *successful* honest cop. Twofeathers is a rising star in the UCAS military's Criminal Investigation Division (CID), their equivalent of Internal Affairs. Clever, stubborn, and frighteningly effective, this Eagle shaman has been the bane of many criminals trying to "make friends" with the military. She infiltrated ShadowSea under the handle "Solo" for a few months last year. Word has it that she's currently hot on the trail of the Gianelli family, trying to punish the murderers of a CID teammate.

- Hold on, something doesn't scan. An Indian in the UCAS Army?
- Mika

- Never met Charlene, have you? Charlene's a half-blood, the daughter of a northeastern AmerIndian—you know, the ones that got shafted by the NAN. Questioning her patriotism or ancestry will get you a broken nose in no time.
- Pistons

Continued on page 101

Though ShadowSea isn't a top-tier data haven like the Nexus or the Helix, it still amasses a vast quantity of data (with relevance to the Seattle region given priority), serves as a popular virtual hang-out and social service for runners and hackers, and remains linked to the old Shadowland worldwide "darknet," meaning it contains a secure tunnel to the Nexus and is periodically backed up to mirror sites around the world. Though collectively managed, a hacker known as Facet serves as the ShadowSea's "public" rep and spokesperson.

- Hey 'Jack, you back on speaking terms with Facet again?

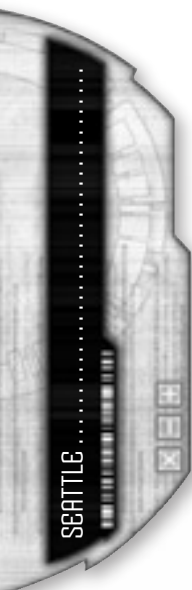
- Glitch

- Sort of. We never did agree on how ShadowSea should be structured. I argued that the need for a centralized hub was long past, and that the new shadow network should be completely distributed and peer-to-peer. We didn't see eye-to-eye, so I let her crew do their own thing and focused my own efforts on Jackpoint instead. I am pleased to note that the ShadowSea collective did take some of my suggestions to heart. For instance, the ShadowSea Credit system was based on my model, and their front-end interface borrows a few of Jackpoint's features.

- FastJack

Gaining access to ShadowSea isn't easy—you won't find a listing in a standard Matrix search. If your hacking skills are up to par you can track it down, otherwise you need to be invited in by someone with a high enough Credit rating. Once on, you'll have access to a number of useful runner resources, including anonymized accounts, message boards and discussion forums loaded with street gossip, a massive searchable archive of hard-to-find data, black market auction services, secure data storage, a popular shadow-wiki, some entertaining underground blogs, pirate media feeds, and more. ShadowSea also serves as a locus for trading music, trids, sims, software, games, and just about anything else electronic. The Wizard hiding behind the Emerald Curtain in the main node is an expert agent that serves as a blind hiring agent—talk to it when you're either looking for work or looking to hire, and it'll provide you with the best options it can calculate.

ShadowSea is also a fine place just to spend your virtual time. The Sound and the Fury is an excellent place to socialize, meet other runners, and exchange rumors, while the Olympus node provides secure meeting spots with a fantastic virtual view. The Scarecrow node features an assortment of illegal tutoring agents and a highly amusing collection of "Shadowrunning 101" sims produced by some local creative types.



SWEET HOME SEATTLE

• I know a lot of the regular Jackpoint crew calls Seattle their home base, but there are an even larger number of shadowrunner globe-hoppers out there who only pop into town to crack a datavault, bag a researcher, or ice some mob boss. This small guide to the various districts of Seattle is my contribution to these out-of-towners; hopefully it will help smooth your way. If you find it useful, feel free to repay me with a beer, some good paydata, or maybe a kiss if you're cute.

• Kat o' Nine Tales

AUBURN

Auburn is the manufacturing center of Seattle, constantly grumbling with the "Auburn Hum"—noise pollution from the twenty-four-hour factories, metal refineries, petrochem plants, and similar industrial sites. The Crash 2.0 struck a major blow to hundreds of automated assembly systems here, crippling certain companies (like United Oil). This disaster spurred a number of companies like Mitsuhamas, Federated-Boeing, and Monobe to rush in and buy out their ruined competitors, further carving up the district into their own personal fiefdoms.

Despite all the shiny, new automated facilities with their drone-operated production lines, the megacorps still have need for old-fashioned metahuman labor. Workers live in run-down, bug-infested corporate housing projects, shop at company commissaries, indebt themselves to corporate savings and loans, and send their kids to company vocational training. Metahumans make up a disproportionate amount of the local workforce, so groups like Humanis are quick to escalate conflicts along racial lines.

• Lone Star just reported another dead ork, carved up real messy and left hanging on a fence in Auburn. The Mayan Cutter strikes again.

• Kat o' Nine Tales

• Rumor has it the Star are using the Cutter as a cover to get their jollies cacking orks. The locals are tense about it.

• Fatima

The Yakuza controls the better part of vice in Auburn: they have better whores, better stimulants to keep you going through two consecutive twelve-hour shifts, and better odds when gambling. Triads like the Yellow Lotus and the Eighty-Eights try to undercut the Yakuza with cheaper or more exotic thrills, but most of the Auburn crowd is staunchly conservative. The Triads have ended up catering to half-broke teenagers.

• Unions are fairly defanged these days, not to mention completely nonexistent under megacorp jurisdictions, but the Mafia has a lock on the ones that still exist. Don Gianelli has also spurred the

FACETS'S SHADOWSEA BLACKLIST (CONT.)

The Current Black List

- Meh. She has "overachiever" written all over her, if you ask me.
- Baka Dabora

1) Kiku/Keiko

The old timers among us remember a wide-eyed rookie, eager to taste the shadows and the freedom they offered. Kiku learned fast and made friends faster, and in a career that lasted nearly two decades went on to become one of Seattle's best deckers. Though it was obvious she had some unstated vendetta against the Yakuza, in all those years she never let slip that she was really Keiko Shotozumi, the runaway second child of Yakuza Oyabun Hanzo Shotozumi.

Kiku shocked the hell out of everyone when she pulled a one-eighty last year, making peace with daddy, quitting the shadows, and joining up with the Yaks. That wouldn't have gotten her blacklisted, of course, except that we now have substantial evidence that she also hacked into ShadowSea and erased some key data pertaining to the Yakuza on her way out. There's also evidence that she sold out some of her former team-mates to daddy, who had each of them tracked down and killed as an example for interfering in Shotozumi affairs over the years. Word is that Keiko is now overseeing a "special project" for the Shotozumi clan.

• Coburn's Pack tried to take Keiko out six months ago as she was leaving the Rubber Suit nightclub. Neither Coburn nor his team has been seen since.

• Haze

formation of a number of "fraternal organizations" that are growing in popularity with the worker bees. These semi-secret lodges indulge in influence-peddling, and covertly enable the Mafia to distribute their services inside corporate enclaves.

• Axis Mundi

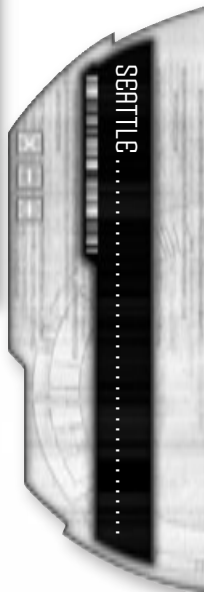
• A few rads have managed to gain a foothold in Auburn too, organizing worker-centric political groups with left-wing leanings. They pay well for any concrete info on automated assembly lines opening in Auburn, then they hire runners to sabotage them.

• 2XL

Runs in Auburn tend to target the local industries—sabotaging production, redirecting shipments, or stealing prototypes. Extractions are rare—corporate execs rarely deign to come down to the factory floor. If you have a contact or fixer in Auburn, chances are you can get high-tech manufactured goods at a discount, anything from the latest commlink models to radar-absorbing materials to photovoltaic paint.

BELLEVUE

Bellevue is where the princes of Emerald City and their chosen supporters dwell. The white-collar elite live out their days in gated neighborhoods that are testaments to paranoia. Lone Star patrols the long, lonely border with Redmond, where the poor



stare with hungry eyes at razor-wire-topped ferroconcrete walls and armored security drones. The gated communities themselves are masterpieces of social engineering, kept impeccably clean by a staff of maintenance drones and inviolate by near-invisible spy-drones that monitor their territories for intruders. Wageslaves are encouraged to telecommute; armored shuttles transport the rest to their Downtown offices.

- The juxtaposition between Redmond and Bellevue is shocking. On one side of the wall, garden drones tend hedges of bonsai trees along clean thoroughfares; on the other broken streets littered with spent bullet casings, burned-out BTLs, and used condoms are the norm. The wall is a literal barrier separating the haves from the have-nots.

- Arete

- The latest trend in Bellevue is mini-arcologies, entire neighborhoods domed off with biofiber to filter the outside air of contaminants before the corpses suffer breathing it. It also protects their nice green lawns (kept alive by maintenance drones and filtered sunlight supplemented by lamps) from acid rain and ash fall.

- Sounder

Bellevue residents are bored housewives, corp brat packs, and execs with high-stress jobs; they relieve the tension by satisfying their chemical and chip addictions, along with whatever sexual fetishes they might have picked up skimming the Matrix or attending that conference last week. A few high-end commercial districts, entertainment complexes, and exclusive clubs keep them sedated in their time off; the ultra-rich pass their time in members-only restaurants.

- A few surreptitious black clinics operate in Bellevue, providing operations and enhancements that are illegal or that residents want to keep secret from their corporate doctors.

- Nephrite

- The corp brats join thrill gangs and posses to rebel, fighting with kids from other corps and engaging in vandalism, random street assaults, and similar hoodlum thrill-seeking. The parental units try to civilize their adolescent hellraisers by buying them off with expensive toys, which inevitably get pawned for chips, drugs, and hookers. Occasionally some of these spoiled little wankers graduate to bigger crimes, though they tend not to get far before they get arrested or fall prey to some real urban predators.

- Riser

Runners hate coming here. If you're not dressed like a corporate drone, you're likely to stick out—and Driving While Meta is still cause for a stop and search here. If you can dress up and play the part, it's a nice district to conduct quiet business in. A lot of biz here involves chasing corp personnel—like kidnapping a protected corporate executive and her family, or wetwork against the same. Information gathering and surveillance jobs are also common, though the extra security, astral wards, and heavy IC you tend to encounter here make such jobs a major pain in the ass. A number of corps have innocent-looking little research

parks scattered throughout the district; many of these feature vicious defenses to protect the secretive projects and cold-storage data vaults hidden within.

- A few art and jewelry thieves make a steady living here, breaking into the ultra-secure mansions of the super-rich or their equally secure high-rise penthouses downtown.

- Ma'fan

- The Ciarniello Mafia family has their fingers all over Bellevue, including the District Court and the minimum-security Bellevue Correctional Facility. They're invaluable contacts if you get arrested here; for a reasonable bribe they can get you out of nearly anything. They rake up a lot of favors from grateful corporate executives this way, not to mention the plentiful blackmail opportunities.

- 2XL

COUNCIL ISLAND

Council Island (formerly Mercer Island) hosts Seattle's embassies with the nations of North America, part of a complicated political debacle involving the drafting of the Second Treaty of Denver and the section of the Seattle Metroplex Constitution that allows Seattle to send its own ambassadors and open its own embassies. At one time it was home to the rich and corporate of Seattle, but the eruptions of 2017 drove them off the island. Now most of the island is forested and undeveloped in accordance with an agreement with the Salish-Shidhe Council (which for several decades had complete jurisdiction over the island).

Housed along I-90 are the various embassies, with Seattle's own embassies at both ends of the bridges as you enter or leave the island. The Salish-Shidhe and other NAN embassies are predominate, but you'll also find embassies for the CAS, Tir Tairngire, Aztlan, Russia, Japan, Hong Kong, and the Canton Confederation, among others. The Corporate Court also has an office here. Construction on the isle is severely limited, with no structure allowed to be more than three stories high.

- Air traffic is also restricted but most of the embassies have helipads on the roof for quick egress in an emergency.

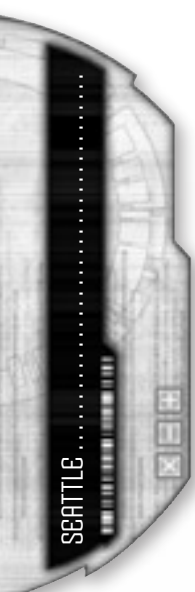
- Rigger X

The Growp'skitch! sasquatch tribe inhabits the wild parts of the island, along with numerous critters and wildlife carefully watched over by park rangers. The sasquatch number over one hundred and fifty members, plus the occasional visiting sasquatch from out of town.

- The sasquatch are considered a protected animal species under UCAS law (despite being sapient). Try not to shoot any.

- Frosty

Espionage is the name of the game on Council Island. Any intel you can gather is worth something to somebody. Jurisdiction is a very carefully defined mess, so keep in mind that every nation has its own penalties for illegal activities. Unsurprisingly, the syndicates also keep a low-level presence



on the island—diplomatic pouches are perfect for smuggling all manner of contraband, and the secure communication channels keep them in touch with operatives abroad.

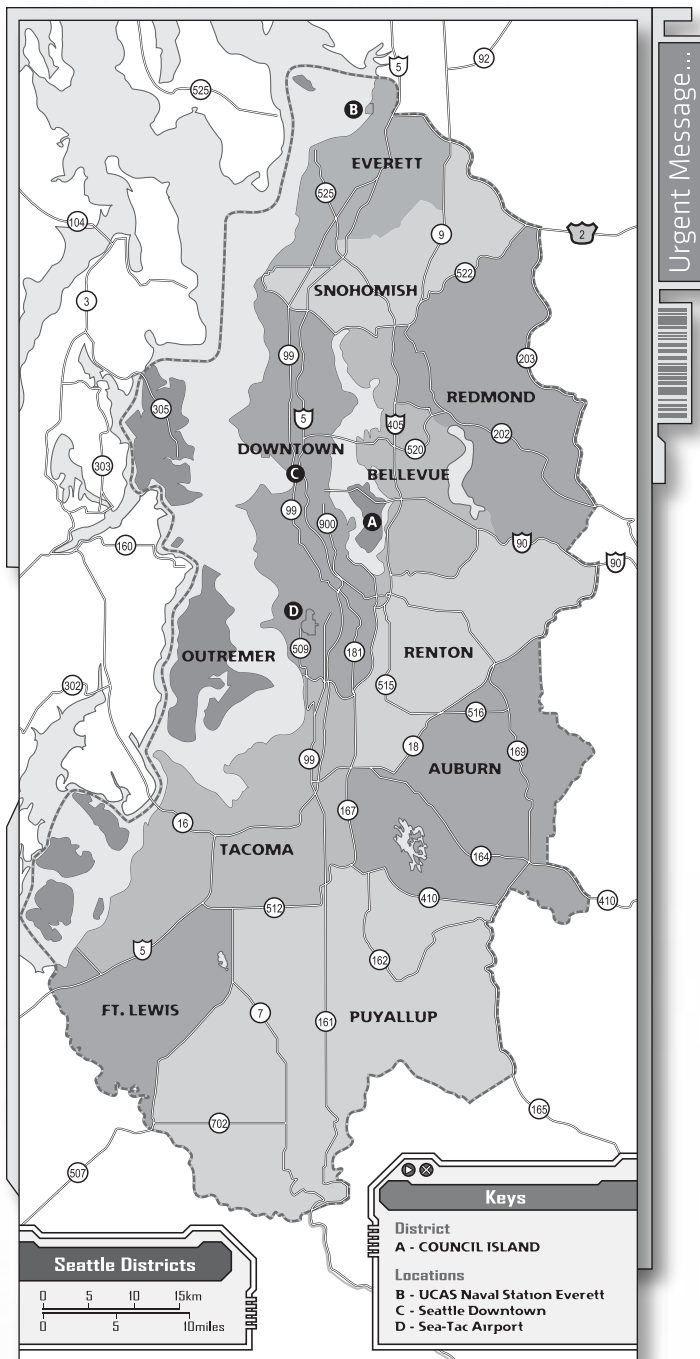
- An embassy contact can help you build up case histories for fake SINS or provide you with cover IDs.
- Fianchetto
- A good cover is to grab a pair of binocs and pretend you're watching for thunderbirds. There are nearly half a dozen thunderbird nests in the interior.
- Glasswalker
- Lake Washington is the legendary home of the Thunderbird, something the Salish have never forgotten.
- Lyran

DOWNTOWN

Downtown is the brain, heart, and soul of Seattle. It houses the seat of the Metroplex Government, as well as the infamous Arcology Commercial and Housing Enclave (formerly the Renraku Arcology) and the bustling SeaTac Airport. The departments of the UCAS Federal government keep their offices in the district, as do most AAA and AA megacorps.

Seattle Center is a forest of skyscrapers. Penthouses hold corporate apartments for the owners of the largest megacorps in the world, where they can look down on the ant-like masses. Street traffic in Seattle is chaotic—fools waste away in their autos while vain hopefuls attempt to make headway on cycles or skates. Cynical realists plod along on foot and the occasional moving sidewalk, while air taxis compete with heavy drone traffic. During the day, tourists fight the crowds to visit the Space Needle (a great place for meeting Mr. Johnson), the Aquarium, Pike Place Market, and even the Aztechnology Pyramid. After dark, the Center explodes with nightlife, as trendy corpsters and urban hipsters flock to world-famous nightclubs like the Fractured Helix and Dante's Inferno.

- Elevated walkways and underground tunnels honeycomb Downtown's streets. Wise Seattleites take advantage of three-dimensional map-chips hawked by urban entrepreneurs to better find their way around. Tourists have to rely on GridGuide's free Citywalk service to get around, running a gauntlet of spam zones to arrive at their destination.
- Traveler Jones
- Runners breaking into Downtown skyscrapers need to be resourceful: the only way out of the 51st floor is up or down, and that's not a decision you like to make in a pinch. You also want to avoid any prolonged gunfights or chases, because the Star has the District well-covered with patrols and drones and will quickly swam your position.
- Mika



The **Elven District** is mainly residential, founded by dwarfs and elves as a verdant contrast to the ferroconcrete-and-chrome vulgarity of most urban centers. Nowadays, expatriate Tir nobles and gentry own the neighborhood and keep their homes well back from public streets. Subscribing to the Elven District's AR overlay reveals a magical cityscape straight from a fantasy-sim, with paid actors serving as guides and kitschy boutiques selling overpriced elf and dwarf art.

- The Laésa have a slight presence in the Elven District, selling leäl to a local dealer who cut it with novacoke and other drugs to make "pixie dust."
- Nephriene

The **International District** population is primarily Japanese, with a smattering of Polynesians; the Chinese, Koreans, and Vietnamese favor Little Asia down in Tacoma. The typical green crystal walls of the Downtown overlay give way to creamy jade storefronts and animated statues once you subscribe to the local net. Younger Yakuza flash irezumi and katanas for tourists, but street crime is nearly unknown here.

University of Seattle (formerly Washington) students appear to be the major life form of the **University District**, scurrying busily back and forth between their apartments, bars, bookstores, coffeehouses, and classes. The University has a reputation for both its shamanic studies program and its degree in augmented reality engineering. Corporate recruiters scout the grounds for potential recruits, and the campus is inundated with corp-sponsored research projects (though anything promising is quickly relocated to more secure facilities off-campus). Tagging is popular with students, and the district has several well-known spam zones surrounding boutiques and trendy stores.

- The kids like to lead freshmen into the worst spots, and I'm not ashamed to say I've used the same tactic when trying to ditch a tail Downtown.
- Rigger X

A lot of shadow activity goes down in the Downtown area, but runners still need to play it subtle when going to work—the Star and various corpsec squads are always on the lookout for suspicious activity, including anyone wearing too much armor or running a commlink in hidden mode. The syndicates and gangs also bring a lot of business Downtown. Though they get into a lot of tussles, they keep them quiet and out-of-sight—drive-bys and flashy assaults are uncommon as the major players don't want to scare off any potential business or spur a Star crackdown.

- There's some interesting speculation floating around the Matrix in regards to the Crash Memorial—that's the large, featureless, matte-black obelisk in the middle of a peaceful little park downtown, dedicated to those who lost their lives as a result of the Crash of '64. The Memorial is aglow in AR, alive with the names, voices, and images (both still and animated) of the victims (you can add your own lost loved ones for a fee). It's network has very tight security to discourage vandalism and spam—too tight, some think. In fact, no one's been able to crack it, and some top hackers have tried. That leads some to believe that someone—perhaps Renraku, as they were a major funder—is storing some heavy duty data inside, in plain sight.
- Glitch

EVERETT

A boomtown gone bust, Everett's economy has been in the toilet for years. A hit on the Seattle City Records during the Crash of '64 erased major segments of land ownership records for the district, creating a bureaucratic nightmare that is still being sorted out. Several corporations that tried to resolve their differences over the matter in court have bankrupted themselves from the legal costs. A squatting explosion has also taken place in Everett, as much of the disputed property remains abandoned for the homeless—or anyone needing a quiet safehouse—to occupy.

With Puget Sound on one side and the Salish border on the other, Everett is a hub for smuggling operations in Seattle. Everett's docks are prime syndicate real estate, and each is constantly working to expand its hold on the trade at the expense of its rivals. The Salish have recently increased their patrols along Everett to counter an increased rate of unauthorized border crossings.

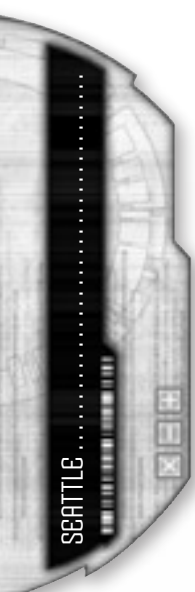
Aside from a major Federated Boeing construction facility, the major feature in this district is the **Everett Naval Shipyards**—the only UCAS naval facility on the Pacific—and the UCAS naval carrier group it services. The Salish keep an especially close eye on activities here, as do a number of spies working for other foreign governments and extraterritorial corporations. Runs to infiltrate the base are uncommon due to tight military security, but jobs to monitor comings and goings from the base are always available.

- Currently, Everett is playing host to the CSS *Virginia II*, a Hunley-class fusion submarine, for a set of war games scheduled over the next year.
- Sounder
- The Eighty-Eights Triad provides most of the vices for sailors and marines out of the naval shipyards, including performance-enhancing drugs, stimulants, chips, prostitutes, and gambling, under the cover of massage parlors, arcades, strip bars, and similar common tawdry amusements.
- Turbo Bunny
- There's been a lot of talk in military circles of working a deal with the Metroplex Government to expand the naval station and shipyards through eminent domain. This plan goes directly counter to the interests of several corporations—particularly Horizon and Wuxing—who are pushing for the Metroplex to reassign the whole district for commercial development. Expect to see shadow action on both sides soon.
- Fianchetto

FORT LEWIS

The Fort Lewis Military Reservation houses the Seattle Metroplex Guard, McChord Airfield, and the UCAS Army Pacific Command under the auspices of Joint Task Force Seattle, commanded by Brigadier General Ethan Darcy. Fort Lewis serves as a major training base for the UCAS Armed Forces, encompassing thousands of acres of undeveloped forest and hills as well as the **Urban Combat Simulator (UCS)**. The simulator is a to-scale mock-up of Seattle Center enhanced to realistic detail with AR, allowing troops to practice urban warfare and “civilian pacification” techniques in a realistic setting. The facility also features a full-VR combat simulator for other scenarios as well. Military Police, not Lone Star, have jurisdiction over this district, patrolling and manning the checkpoints and access gateways into the district.

- The Metroplex Guard heavily patrols along the base's Salish borders. The guardsmen are easier to bribe than regular army soldiers, especially if they're in hock to the Mafia.
- Picador



Aside from the forest, military installations, residential tracks, and small commercial strips, Fort Lewis's main feature is the **Zoological Gardens**. Originally founded by the military to research paranormal creatures, the Gardens are now a well-attended public zoo with a large assortment of interesting paracritters. An extensive nature trail exhibit allows visitors to see these animals roam freely in their natural environment (proximity sensors activate ultrasound screechers and pain-inducing tags to keep the wildlife away from the trails). Some heavily-guarded parts of the zoo remain off-limits; no one seems to know what experiments the military is pursuing there.

- I know some animal liberation rads that would pay good money to find out.
- Ecotope

Fort Lewis is a focal point for espionage and runs spurred by internal military conflicts. It's possible to cultivate relationships with certain corrupt quartermasters in Fort Lewis if you're interested in obtaining "misplaced" milspec gear or vehicle parts. The Gianelli family has their hooks all around the district, controlling vice rackets for the troops and loansharking the local businesses. Recently they've suffered setbacks from the MP's Criminal Investigation Division, but the drive-by shooting of a CID warrant officer implies that they're not backing down easily.

- Fort Lewis has a highly trained corps of hackers in the Psychotropic and Psychological Warfare division; their name should give you a hint as to what sort of IC you can expect to encounter on military nodes.
- FastJack

OUTREMER

Outremer is a cute little nickname some newsfeed gave to the outlying islands that are part of the Seattle Metroplex. Outremer has become hot property recently, with many foreign investments from the Middle East and the Indian Union. A number of AA corps possess facilities in Outremer, including a few small aquacologies built by Universal Omnitech and Proteus AG.

Metroplex law states that corporations cannot purchase these islands but may lease them for up to 99 years. Both Shiawase and Ares have circumvented it by constructing small artificial islands that they own outright in the district. The Salish-Shidhe Council is contesting Seattle's expansion, ostensibly worried about increased pollution and devastation to native wildlife in the Sound.

- Most of the islands haven't set up proper connections to the city services network, and they make do with barges that come by on a daily or weekly basis to refuel power cells, empty septic tanks, and collect garbage. Great cover for penetrations, extractions, and smuggling.
- Turbo Bunny
- The troubles with the Salish have cast some of the islands into dubious legal quagmires of ownership, archaeological and culture value, possible resource exploitation, drekcetera. These are perfect legal loopholes for smuggling people and contraband from Seattle

to the SSC, or just nice places to hang out until the heat dies down.

- Sounder

Rather than a mayor, Outremer is overseen by a committee of the United Corporate Council. Lone Star has jurisdiction over the Outremer islands, but they leave the area relatively unpoliced. Corporate security forces protect their extraterritorial enclaves and the Metroplex Guard's Shore Patrol handles waterborne police and rescue operations.

The Yakuza control most of the criminal traffic in Outremer, setting up profitable vice operations for the isolated, bored wagslaves. The islands—especially the smaller uninhabited ones—are also perfect stopovers for smugglers, who sometimes unload their goods here. A few self-proclaimed pirates also operate here, conducting the occasional armed robbery by speedboat or sometimes drones.

- Regular ferry services provide access to the populated islands, but the more remote ones are reachable solely via private boat, air, or minisub. A few aqua-riggers like me specialize in shadow-ferry services and smuggling runs; we know all the best tricks for sneaking past the Coast Guard and Metroplex Shore Patrol.

- Sounder

PUYALLUP BARRENS

Something like fifty years ago, Mount Rainier erupted and buried Puyallup in tons of ash and lava. Shortly after that the district was occupied by refugees fleeing the new NAN states. The greater part of the district is a wasteland spotted with abandoned buildings, rusted factories, and squatter camps, from the boiling geysers in the **Hell's Kitchen** lava fields to the metahuman ghettos. Kids grow up hacking black crap from their lungs and knowing that every scrape or cut could mean infection and death. Because of the constant ash fall from Mount Rainier, Puyallup suffers more acid rain than any other district in Seattle. Over half the district's population is metahuman.

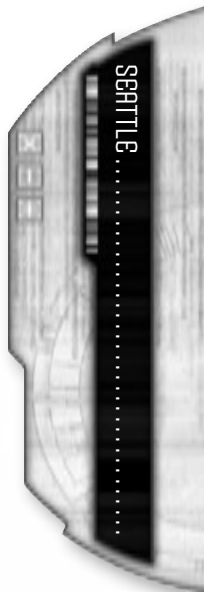
- Most of Puyallup has spotty AR coverage at best. Any inhabited neighborhoods are static zones, and the uninhabited interior is one big dead zone.

- Mika

- Not quite true. There is a 20-kilometer hiking trail marked with RFID tags every thirty meters or so. Nice place to dump a body. The Reality Hackers gang keeps certain areas of Puyallup wired, as long as the locals can afford their services.

- Netcat

Only a few parts of Puyallup can be considered "safe." Lone Star still patrols **Puyallup City**, a nice clean little enclave kept afloat with Mafia money, but they leave the rest of the district to fend for itself. The elven ghetto of **Tarislar**, packed with thousands of Tír Tairngire expatriates isn't too rough, either—the elves actually pay Knight Errant to keep the peace, and the Laésa keep things quiet too. Sperethiel is the dominant language there, and children that grow up there learn English as a second language, if they learn it at all.



- Tarislar is elven for “Remembrance,” though no one ever says what the inhabitants of the elven ghetto want to remember.
- Icarus

The mainly Black and Latino orks of the **Carbanado** neighborhood do a good job of organizing themselves against racist attacks and predatory gangs. That area used to be heavily mined for precious metals and is covered with quarries, pits, and tunnels. On the other end of Puyallup, near Fort Lewis, the **Loveland** area remains a battleground between the Mafia and Yakuza looking to entertain off-duty soldiers and trendy corp kids at their fashionable nightclubs.

- Loveland is a hell-hole. Beggars, chipheads, drunks, prostitutes, and pornographic AR ads assault you everywhere you go. There’s also rarely a day that goes by without violence between the Yaks and Mafia. Don Gianelli has been actively recruiting new soldati from the local gangs to bolster his ranks here.
- 2XL

Outside of syndicate skirmishes, few runs will take you into Puyallup—there’s nothing here a corporate Mr. Johnson would want. It is a great place to disappear, though, if you don’t mind dealing with a different gang every 10 meters. The district is perfect for smuggling and establishing all manner of illicit enterprises. The Crime Mall is also a good place to shop for black market items or unload anything you picked up on that last run.

REDMOND BARRENS

Redmond is the physical embodiment of urban decay. A partial meltdown of the Trojan-Satsop power plant in southeast Redmond back in 2013 contaminated Beaver Lake and other areas for kilometers around (now known as **Glow City**), spurring many Redmond residents to flee to safer pastures. In 2029, the first Crash collapsed the computer industry that was once so central here, throwing the district’s economy and government into ruin. Remaining residents and businesses fled, while homeless squatters moved in. Eventually the Metroplex government ceded defeat and left the district to the wolves.

- Redmond still has a mayor, and surprisingly she’s not a corporate puppet. Sonya Scholl is actually a socialist (or if her opponents are to be believed, a raving neo-communist) who fights tooth and nail with the corps over how to handle the district’s meager resources.
- Dr. Spin

Rough estimates state Redmond has around seven hundred thousand inhabitants, and only a quarter of those have SInS. Luxuries like running water, sanitation, electricity, or a functioning roof are all but unknown except for residents who hack their own systems, and the stench alone can often be staggering. Packs of devil rats—and worse—openly prowl the streets, most of which are barely passable except by motorcycle. The megacorps still maintain a few facilities here, all protected with massive fortifications, ignoring the squalor around them, or perhaps hiring the biggest and meanest gangers and squat-

ters as extra security guards. Lone Star rarely makes an attempt to enforce laws here—and when they do, they rush in with overwhelming force and get the fuck out as fast as they can.

- All of Redmond is a static zone except around the corp sites, and the signal’s so bad that most locals don’t even bother with it except for tagging their turf.
- Glitch

Redmond’s not a complete lawless free-for-all, however. In some areas the residents band together, providing their own neighborhood security, growing food, and arranging clean water and electricity. The vegetation-covered bio-domes of the **Plastic Jungles** are the best example of this, though numerous other self-sustaining and self-organized communities exist. Often the gangs play the role of neighborhood defender as well, though their “protection” rarely applies to their own abuses of power.

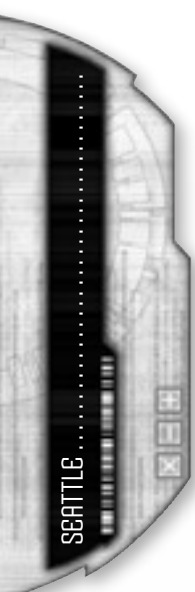
A lot of runners get their start on the mean streets of Redmond. Desperate gangers looking to edge into the big time take the risk of obtaining (likely used) enhancements from the scary street butchers at the Body Mall—a former hospital that’s now part black clinic and part slaughterhouse. Redmond’s numerous gangs also serve as recruiting pools for the Mafia, Yakuza, and Triads, each of whom does a brisk and competing business in BTLs, alcohol, drugs, and illegal weapons. Prostitution is nearly nonexistent in Redmond—the gangs rape whomever they please and don’t pay for the privilege.

- One of the larger Mafia operations in Redmond is Hollywood Simsense Entertainments, a factory for low-quality BTLs, especially porn and snuffsense recorded by “actors” pulled off Redmond’s broken streets.
- Turbo Bunny
- Redmond has an interesting assortment of dive bars and squatter clubs that are a bit rough—think “weapons mandatory”—but are also great places to conduct biz, buy some backup muscle, or score some brainbenders.
- Hard Exit

RENTON

Renton is known as a quiet district of residential sectors, malls, golf courses, private parks, and country clubs. Traditionally conservative, Renton houses the Metroplex headquarters of both the Humanis Policlub and the People of the Book. The district’s economy has been in a slump since the Crash of ’64, though, with crime and violence spilling in from Redmond, poverty and gangs on the rise, and the terminally bored local youth immersing themselves completely in chips, alcohol, and drugs.

- Renton has some very exclusive social circles centered around the nightclubs and golf clubs. Humanis works a lot of its backroom magic here, maintaining a solid support base; it’s also where Brackhaven finds a lot of his campaign contributors. Anyone not part of this Ol’ Boys Network is going to need a contact to get in, someone to make the introductions to the right



people. Just having the nuyen doesn't hack it.

- Fatima

- The current campaigns for governor are focusing heavily on Renton, since the residents here have such a widespread impact on Seattle's political landscape. The politicians are courting aldermen, mayors, senators, lawyers, religious leaders, and heads of civic organizations, all of whom filter through the smoke-filled back rooms of Renton's social network.

- Kay St. Irregular

Renton is home to a high number of software development and security firms. The former took a dive during the Crash, but some have revived their business by focusing on AR programming and design. Emerald City Graphics, with their main offices in Renton, serves as a model example. A few others focus on Matrix security "bounty hunting"—other companies pay them to find their vulnerabilities. The security firms did better than ever thanks to the Crash, which spurred a wave of buy-outs as the big players like Petrovski Security (MCT), Wolverine, and Knight Errant (who maintain a training facility here) gobbled them up. A few local players remain, but pressure from the mega-corps to sell out increases by the day.

Renton is a Mafia stronghold, not surprising since so many of them actually live in the district. The Finnigan Family is most firmly entrenched in the influence peddling that pervades the district. Yakuza sokaiya also operate in Renton, making personal visits to shareholders and executives for various white-collar crime and blackmail schemes.

- The Vory are making some inroads here thanks to the long-standing Ukrainian population here. Look for sparks to fly soon.

- Haze

SNOHOMISH

Snohomish is Seattle's breadbasket. The last independent farm in Snohomish folded shortly after the recent Crash, and now most of the district belongs to agribusiness and aquaculture corps. The landscape is awash with high-yield genetically-modified crops and herds of bio-enhanced livestock, while the Snohomish River and Sound are lined with aquafarms harvesting all manner of interesting seafoods. Most of this bounty is exported from Seattle; restaurants throughout the city serve the rest to those who can pay for it.

- Ingersoll has spun off a subsidiary in the district producing genetically modified chicken meat from a protein base, and another that raises miniature cattle for slaughter. GenePeace has publicly condemned their entire product line, and they stage regular protests.

- Ecotope

The Snohomish food industry is the target of most runs here, stealing products or research data, extracting key researchers, contaminating crops, and similar work. Paranormal and cybered animals are favored for guarding the agrifarms and corporate facilities at night; a greenhouse might let a pair of barghests

roam freely amid the crops, while an aquaculture might have giant cybered lobsters creeping along tanks of seaweed and caviar. A few corps rely on the Yakuza for protection, who send in thugs to break up environmentalist rallies.

- Snohomish has a surprising collection of decent lore stores and talismongers, with better rates than you find around the University district. Some of the telesma is smuggled in by the Komun'go Ring straight from the Salish-Shidhe. Several clubs here also cater to magicians and feature live music and magical entertainment.

- Lyrn

TACOMA

Most of Tacoma is given over to its extensive docks and the businesses that support them, but the Nicaraguan Canal in Aztlan stole a chunk of Tacoma's port traffic and business isn't what it used to be. A number of large factories continue to sustain the district, despite being slowly edged out by an insurgence of smaller microfactories that use high-tech processes and industrial nanotech to mass produce on a smaller scale. The industrial-fueled "Tacoma Aroma" remains, despite heavy efforts by Eta Engineering to route effluent and sewage into processing plants rather than adding it to the Sound's glistening brown tide.

- Increased cancer rates among longtime residents led to the discovery that large parts of Tacoma are contaminated with toxic levels of heavy metals, the result of years of illegal dumping by various heavy industries. The Metroplex is entertaining contracts to clean up the district, spurring a bidding war between Eta and Shiawase.

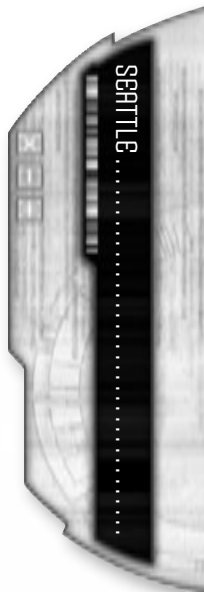
- Nephrene

Tacoma's abundant working-class communities are a great place to conduct biz. Corner neighborhood bars are perfect for low-key meets or just relaxing, without having to worry about wading through street gangs or spotted by the snitches that prowl more infamous runner haunts. For some extra culture, the **Little Asia** neighborhood has expanded, providing extra shelter and opportunities for the Triads and Seoulpa Rings.

The Yakuza spent years battling the Mafia for control over this district, only to have the Vory snatch large segments out the docks out from underneath them. Tacoma remains a major syndicate battleground, with lucrative vice markets, protection rackets, and smuggling opportunities at stake. Hits and gun-battles occur on a weekly basis, escalated by the occasional bombing; mob street violence has in fact become an accepted part of daily life in Tacoma.

THE ORK UNDERGROUND

The Ork Underground is hard to define. It's not exactly a district of Seattle so much as a collection of places that exist below Seattle's surface—sort of a city within a city. The Underground isn't even all connected, and it's constantly changing as some parts collapse or are sealed off and new parts are added or excavated. It's an important part of Seattle's metahuman history, however, so to help see it in all its different perspectives, I've asked a few friends to give their impressions.



Titus, Ork, Sanitation Engineer:

What's the Ork Underground? First of all, let me say right up front that it's become a cliché. "Oh, look—the orks have made themselves a nice little secret place underground where they can all live in peace and harmony away from those nasty humans and elves." That's bullshit. Makes us sound like a bunch of cave dwellers or something. Fact is, big chunks of the Underground are open to anybody who wants to come down to visit them. If you don't believe me, just come by the Big Rhino or the basement of Lordstrung's Department Store and sign up for a tour.

You can't generalize about the place, either—for one thing, it's huge, running under the streets of Downtown, Tacoma, Everett, and even parts of the Puyallup Barrens. It's also not all one big interconnected rabbit warren: there are plenty of parts you can't get to from other parts, and contrary to what the tourists might believe, we're not all one big happy family down there. To put it bluntly, the Underground is like any other city: it's got all types of people and all types of places—some public, some private, some secret.

Tressa, Ork, Underground Tour Guide:

The Underground has been around a lot longer than we orks have, but it's true that we've claimed it as our own since the time of the Night of Rage. If it weren't for these basements and tunnels under the city, I'm sure there would have been a lot higher death toll than there was. To the orks, the Underground represents many things: a sense of history; a sanctuary where we can go to escape the prejudice that's all too common in the surface world; a place to share our lives and our labors with our own kind. That doesn't mean that we don't want contact with the surface—many Underground residents have jobs topside and count many people of other metatypes among their friends—just that it's comforting to have a place where we feel we belong. Not all orks feel that way, of course, but for those who do, the Underground is a godsend. That's why I enjoy my job so much: I love teaching people about our history, giving them another view of orks from the one they see all too many times up top.

Luke, Ork, Dockworker:

You want to know what the Underground is to me? This is going to sound shallow, but it's a place where I can find stuff designed for orks. You ever try to find a suit or even a pair of jeans topside that fits an ork body right? Sure, you can do it if you look around, but in the Underground all the stores cater to us. The markets have the kind of food we like (including real meat), the clothing stores have stuff that fits us, and the furniture stores sell chairs and beds designed for our size and weight. It gets old sometimes that in Seattle proper, "human" is the standard and everything else is special, especially if you want to buy nice things and not junk. Maybe you might think it's a small thing, but ask any ork and they'll tell you that it's not so small when you have to live it.

• He's right—if you're an ork (or a troll), the Underground is the best place to shop for just about everything that needs to be sized properly. I recommend a clothing store called Tusk—it's right near the Lordstrung's entrance in the public area. They not only sell casual clothes for both men and women, but you can actually get nice suits and formalwear there that fit so you don't look like a thug. And of

particular interest to ork and troll runners: Tusk also deals in larger-sized body armor, new and used. It's not right out front, but if you ask about it, old Grundy can set you up right.

• Butch

"Crash," Human, Shadowrunner

I know a lot of non-orks (especially humans and elves) like to go on about how tough it is to get around in the Underground if you're not an ork or a troll, but it's not nearly as bad as they say—at least not for shadowrunners. This place is a haven for runners as long as you respect the residents, pay them for their trouble, and keep their secrets. If you make an effort to befriend folks down there, it'll pay dividends next time you have to hide out, stash some hot stuff, or even smuggle goods or people from one part of Seattle to the other. In general, the Underground residents are pretty favorable to runners—probably because we get the short end of society's stick same as they do. If you're an ork runner, all the better. Some of my best friends live down there, and I can't count the number of times we've saved each other's asses.

• That's the second person who's mentioned smuggling. There are quite a few thriving smuggling routes through the Underground, some of them controlled by organized crime (particularly the Vory, who've been brokering all kinds of deals with some of the orks to provide a semi-permanent route) and some set up by enterprising residents who know the tunnels and the routes well and use that knowledge to make a decent living. You'd be surprised (or maybe you wouldn't, if you're reading this file) at the sheer volume of weapons, drugs, and BTLs that travel these routes.

• 2XL

PLACES TO SEE, PEOPLE TO DO

Posted by: Kat o' Nine Tails

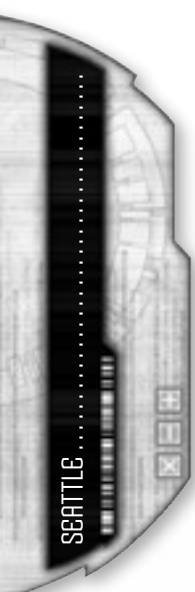
As befits a frontier city stuck far away from its fellow UCAS counterparts, Seattle's attractions run the gamut from the sacred to the profane, from the squeaky-clean tourist spots to the lowest dens of iniquity. If you're looking for something, chances are there's someplace in this 'plex that can provide it. Here's a quick rundown on the current Seattle hot spots taken from the *Seattle Eye*—I edited it to emphasize places that would appeal to the shadowy set.

NIGHTLIFE

From high-class nightclubs to the lowliest of dives, Seattle offers a myriad of choices when you're looking for a few drinks, a serious meet, or a place to dance the night away.

Club Penumbra (International District, Downtown)

Penumbra is a club that won't admit the passage of time—it still features the same Lunar surface flooring and outdated trid system that it has for over thirty years now. Once one of the hottest nightspots in town, it lost a lot of clientele when the Renraku Arcology next door imploded, and again when the Crash shut it down for several months. A lot of old-time runners still haunt the place, however, and it still has a reputation as a place where the shadow set goes to be seen. In many ways the club has become living cliché, however, and few people come here to do serious business. That may all change in the future, however, as Penumbra



seems to have become a strategic spot in the ongoing chess game between the Finnigan Mafia and the Yakuza downtown. When word went out that the owners might be interested in unloading the place, both syndicates began sniffing around expressing interest. The tension alone may breathe new life into the club, especially if any violence happens to break out.

Dante's Inferno (Seattle Center, Downtown)

Unlike Penumbra, Dante's refuses to let itself be swept onto history's scrap heap and is going stronger than ever. It was touchy there for awhile during the Crash—nobody's releasing the final death count from the riot that erupted here, but best estimates place it at over a hundred—but owner Dante Passini is nothing if not tenacious. He's managed to build the place up better than ever by installing a state-of-the-art AR network to play up the infernal imagery and assist patrons in hooking up (only on the same level, of course—the segregation between the levels is still strictly enforced).

As before, guests enter at the top level and only those deemed "worthy" are allowed to descend to each of the seven lower levels. A final level, called "Hell," is off-limits to all but the richest, the most famous and those with the best connections. A high-tech combination of AR and holographic projectors make it so revelers in Seattle can mix with their counterparts in Dante's other Infernos in London and Hong Kong, so it's all one big tri-continental party. Timezones? Who needs 'em—all three clubs operate 24/7.

- I've heard that while he was doing his renovations after the riot, Dante had his builders add another level below Hell. I've never met anybody who's seen it, though, so it might just be jetwash.

- Haze

- It's not, but it might as well be, since none of *us* will ever see it.

- Butch

- You don't often see Dante himself around the Seattle Inferno anymore—he prefers the London club and has handed off the hosting duties in Seattle to an elf who calls himself "Alessio." You can't miss him—always impeccably dressed in the latest up-to-the-second fashions, and his bald head is covered in animated tats showing visions of Hell. And oh yeah—he's got black cybereyes that glow with flickering flames.

- Arete

Infinity (Seattle Center, Downtown)

Infinity is one of the newer clubs on the scene, already doing great business and attracting some seriously big-name acts. Built a couple years after the Crash, it had the luxury of being designed from the ground up with state-of-the-art holographic projectors, cutting-edge sound systems, and the latest in smart lighting systems. The architecture is just plain neat, with stylish curves, spiral staircases, and clever uses of glass and mirrors. The venue doesn't go in for themes, but is simply the best club-going experience it can offer. Apparently it's doing something right, because the lines to get in are always long, and not too many acts have turned down Infinity's invitation to play there.

- The holos really are first-rate: most of the time you can't tell if that sim starlet you're dancing next to is real or an amazingly accurate holo. They like to seed their dance floors with the famous and beautiful to get people in the partying mood. They also use hidden tight-beam audio to zap people with whispered messages that only they can hear.

- Slamm-O!

- Infinity's major claim to shadowrunner fame is that they have the best high-security meeting rooms in Seattle. They're set up so you can see some of them (and they can see you) from the dance floor, but others you wouldn't even know were there if you didn't have reason to. They do each of their rooms in a single color scheme: the higher up the ROYGBIV scale you go, the more secure (and more expensive) the room. The ultraviolet room is saved for "special guests."

- Haze

- Oddly, nobody seems to know who owns this place. Sure, there are rumors—everything from the Yak or the Mafia up to some dragon or another—but the ownership is snarled up in so much red tape and dummy corporations that it's impossible to find out for sure. One thing's certain—considering how fast this place went up and opened for business, whoever's behind it has some serious clout and equally serious cred.

- Cosmo

Underworld 93 (Puyallup City, Puyallup)

A converted concrete warehouse in downtown Puyallup, Underworld 93 still retains its crown as *the* place to hear the top musical acts in the Seattle 'plex. Anybody who's anybody has played the 93 on their tour through the area. Even though many shadowrunners like to use the club as a place to conduct biz, most of them come for the music. With a huge stage, dance floor, mega-size trideo and sound systems, top-rate AR, and two huge holoprojectors outside, Underworld 93 makes its mark on the neighborhood. Other clubs might top it for dancing and atmosphere, but for sheer star-drawing power, the 93 is still the undisputed top of the heap.

- When the old manager, Al Castanzo, died recently, the owners brought in a new guy—a dwarf named Vincent O'Halloran. Trouble is, now that Vince is in place, he's making noises about breaking ties with the Yaks who've been providing security and courting the Finnigan Mafia family instead. Nobody knows if the Finnigans have something on him, but if they don't get it straightened out, O'Halloran's not long for this world.

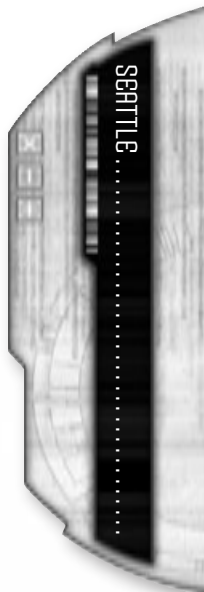
- 2XL

- I'd hate to see anything happen to the 93, but biz is biz. You don't screw with the Yaks.

- Kia

77 (Renton)

This place hasn't been around long but it's already one of the most popular places in town to conduct discreet biz. The thing about it is that it doesn't advertise at all. It's not in the comm directory, it doesn't have trid commercials or AR ads, and it never shows





INCOMING FEED

up in review write-ups (except, of course, this one) or even blogs. From the street it just looks like a nondescript walk-up between a bar and a clothing store—most people think it's just the entrance to an apartment building. Membership is required to get in—it's very expensive and you can only get it by being sponsored by somebody who's already a member. Once you're in, they give you an RFID tag that gets you through the front door. Pass their security check and you're in. I've never been inside, but a trusted friend who has tells me it's plenty posh, with separate rooms for meets, food to die for, and top-rate entertainment every night.

- These guys are pretty serious about their secrecy—they employ hackers to scour the Matrix for any references to them. If they find one, they wipe it.
- Dr. Spin
- If you ever manage to get inside, don't even think of trying to take pictures or sending anything out. The walls block wireless and radio, and the astral wards are nigh invulnerable. Their security methods are scary. If they catch you, the least of your worries will be losing your membership.
- Danger Sensei
- Most of the corps have memberships that let them admit guests on their cards, so they use it to entertain out-of-town biz associates. If you can wrangle a way in, it's a great place to make all kinds of contacts. They don't take just anybody, though, so if you're a lowlife or a newbie, don't even bother.
- Cosmo

Aces (Redmond)

Aces is the name (no apostrophe), but the regulars call it "The Scumpit." If you go inside (and I don't advise it—this is not the sort of place you wander into for a few drinks or an evening's diversion), you'll see why. The food's lousy, the paint is peeling, half the windows are boarded up, most of the liquor's watered down, and the music is so loud that you feel your brains bleeding out your ears after just a few minutes—but that's the way its customers like it. A word of advice: *do not* go to the Scumpit if you can't handle yourself in a fight, because the regulars are predators and they can smell fresh meat a kilometer away. It's a favorite haunt of the Crimson Crush gang and lower-caliber shadowrunners with chips on their shoulders, not to mention big, antisocial orks and trolls. The favorite pastimes are good old-fashioned pool shooting, gambling (including good old-fashioned leg breaking if they catch you cheating), and barroom brawls. I'm not saying don't go here—I'm just saying that you were warned.

- For a particular type of runner (and I by this mean the type who tends toward violent jobs) this place is as good as a hiring hall. Even the Johnsons are tough—they have to be, or they'd get eaten alive.
- Riser
- Yeah, a great place—if getting raped in the bathroom or having your head caved in for your cheap commlink are your idea of fun.
- Baka Dabora

RESTAURANTS

The Emerald City boasts hundreds of restaurants where you can satisfy your culinary desires or just grab a quick bite.

The Eye of the Needle (Seattle Center, Downtown)

Located at the top of the 185-meter Seattle Space Needle, this restaurant is where you go for meets when you hit the big time (or when you want to really impress your date—but be sure to take plenty of cred if you're paying). Security is airtight, the view's fantastic, the food is some of the best you'll find anywhere, and you're likely to see everybody from top-level politicians to syndicate bigwigs and simsense hotties all trying to see and be seen. If you need a private place, several secured rooms with anti-surveillance gear, shielded wireless networks, and magical protection are available.

- The Eye may be "big time," but veteran shadowrunners wouldn't touch it with a ten-foot troll. It's a cliché. All that "see and be seen" shit is bogus—when you're a real runner (not some wannabe with too much cred, too much luck, and too much ego) you *don't* want to be seen. Anybody who goes here (runners or Johnsons) is just trying to impress somebody. Beware.
- Sticks

- Couldn't get a reservation again, eh Sticks?
- Dr. Spin

The Big Rhino (Seattle Center, Downtown)

The Rhino is best known as one of the few public entrances to the Ork Underground, but that's selling it short. Since the whole Orxploitation thing caught on a few years back there are plenty of restaurants out there trying to make a name for themselves pushing "authentic ork cuisine," but the Rhino did it first and still does it best. This isn't a place for anybody with delicate sensibilities: it's set up like an old-fashioned dining hall with trestle tables and huge portions of food (heavy on meats and sauces). The entertainment's gotten better, though: formerly strippers and raunchy comics, it's now dominated by Goblin Rock bands, including some of the big names who play here for old time's sake. It's gotten a little safer for non-orks or –trolls than it used to be, but expect to be hassled if you don't at least attempt to fit in.

- The Rhino, aside from having the best ribs in town, is also one of the best places to pick up work if you're an ork shadowrunner who's new in town. It's also a good place to pick up a guide who will take you into the parts of the Underground that most tourists don't get to see, but you'll have to impress him or her first.
- Sounder

The Peaceable Kingdom (Little Asia, Tacoma)

To anybody who walks in off the street, this place looks like your typical upscale Chinese restaurant with all the trappings: golden dragons and pastoral Chinese scenes on the wall, polite and attentive staff, soft music and Asian AR iconography. The food is good if not spectacular, and the place does a good trade with both locals and visitors. If you know the right people, though, you can get into the back room, where they serve a dif-

ferent sort of fare: exotic dishes made from a number of endangered species, including paranimals. Advance reservations are a must, since it often takes time to procure your chosen specialty.

- Nobody knows how they do it, but they seem to be frighteningly effective at separating legitimate customers from snoopy cops and animal-rights activists. If you're one of these and you manage to get in, you'll find to your embarrassment that your "plasma steak" is good old-fashioned cow when you hurry off with your doggy bag to have it analyzed.
- Glasswalker
- The Peaceable Kingdom is run by Pan Wenshi, whose ties to the Octagon Triad run deep. Think twice before you try to save the furry animals by messing with these guys, or you might end up on the menu. And I mean that literally—some of their customers have more exotic tastes than others.
- Hannibelle
- There's work to be had here on both sides: the Kingdom pays well for paranimal species delivered alive, and the animal-lib rads people pay well for information or help in shutting them down.
- Cosmo

SEATTLE VICE

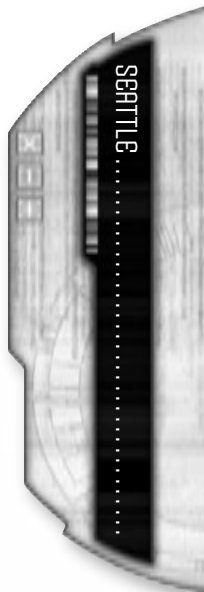
A file aimed at shadowrunners wouldn't be complete without a discussion of the darker side of the Emerald City. If you look around (or ask the right people) you can find clubs that will cater to just about every possible kink you can imagine. I've listed a few here, but there are plenty more where these came from.

Garden of Eden (Casino Corner, Everett)

Nowadays most people get their gambling the same way they get their porn: delivered directly to the privacy of their own homes via the Matrix, where they can enjoy it in whatever way they please. Still, there are a lot of folks who like the in-the-meat social aspect of casino gambling. The lurid attractions of Casino Corner cater to that.

Unlike the other casinos here, which are all Mafia and Yakuza fronts and tend toward lowest-common denominator attractions, Shangri-La is an upscale, high-rollers, members-only place (but anybody who looks halfway decent and pays the 1,000-nuyen-per-year membership fee can join). Oriented toward the "gambling purist," all of its games are played with old-fashioned equipment—cards, dice, real roulette wheels, and so forth. There's very little AR or trideo, and the club employs a large number of security magicians and hackers to make sure that nobody's cheating the house. In addition to the table games, they also run a sizable sports-betting operation. It's not the sort of place that appeals to large numbers of people, but many find it surprisingly relaxing in contrast to the overstimulation of AR- and VR-based gambling.

- An "independently rich" entrepreneur named Alex Harrison (who conveniently seems to have materialized as an entity right after the Crash) owns the place and seems intent on playing his own game. He's managed to fend off the syndicates for the three years the



casino's been open, but nobody expects that to last. Who knows, though, he may have a few cards up his sleeve.

- Mihoshi Oni

- So, are they taking bets on how long he'll stay alive if he keeps it up?

- Slamm-0!

- He's got a lot of friends in the shadow community, and his fingers are in a lot of pies. If you knew how many people owed him favors, you wouldn't be quite so surprised about his longevity.

- Icarus

Olga's Tearoom (Tacoma)

If you're looking for a clean place to spend a pleasant evening, you could do worse than Olga's. To the average tourist it looks just like its name: a civilized Russian-style tearoom (and they do have some good imported tea if you're into that). With the right connections, though, you can access the upper floors, where you can find gorgeous ladies of all metatypes and persuasions ready to make your fantasies come true. Olga herself is the biggest, ugliest lady troll I've ever seen—she'll rip your head off if you hurt her girls, but if you get on her good side she can hook you up with some wiz gear.

- Olga's got connections to the Vory and uses the tearoom as a pipeline for all kinds of smuggled goods, including drugs and weapons. She's a good source not only for entertainment but for info on what's going where. I suspect she can even put you in touch with Chimera, though it will cost you for the privilege.

- Red Anya

- Olga never gets raided because she gives the Star guys heavily discounted rates with the girls. Having a place where they know they won't pick up a disease can go a long way these days.

- Hard Exit

Powerline (Bellevue)

Powerline is actually two clubs in one: the upper floors cater to the gay male scene, while the basement level is home to one of the city's largest and most active BDSM scenes for both genders. Upstairs they've got a dance floor where they play loud techno music all night long, a huge bar, trid screens that broadcast gay-themed programming (including porn), a well-equipped bathhouse and numerous small rooms along both levels where guests can hook up (for an extra fee). Downstairs is kitted out with all the standard toys and gear, including two complete dungeon setups, and you can find just about any kind of fantasy that suits your tastes.

For those who need a little help, professionals of both genders are on hand to dominate you, take your orders, or teach you a new trick or two. Old hands can find private mini-dungeons stocked with everything they need, and social types can strut their stuff at the dance floor/bar in the middle. Another nice touch is that the AR overlays are customizable, so you can do it in a medieval catacomb, a futuristic cyber-fantasy, or any number of other possibilities.

- I know a fixer, a flamboyant gay troll who goes by "Sweet William," who just *loves* to meet with runners at the bar at Powerline. He likes to watch them get freaked out and seems disappointed if they don't. Damn good fixer, though, so even if you're not gay it's worth putting up with a few appreciative stares to get on his good side. If you *are* gay, the 'line is a great place to meet new friends.

- Fatima

- You can score just about any kind of drug or BTL you want at Powerline, especially downstairs. The owners have an understanding with the Yaks and you can usually find a dealer for most of the basic stuff just by discreetly asking around. The harder stuff might take a little longer.

- Turbo Bunny

Silver Screen Dreams (Renton)

To your average slot off the street, Silver Screen Dreams is just a nice upscale massage parlor where you can get the kinks in your back worked out by a pretty lady (or pretty gentleman). For a little more nuyen, your massage can have a "happy ending," and you can walk out of there pleased with your illicit adventure. If you repeat the right codes to the right people, you'll be shown downstairs where the *real* action is. Bunraku parlors in Seattle are a nuyen a dozen, but this is bunraku with a twist—instead of offering meat puppets who look like Nadja Daviar and Atalee Breakbone, Silver Screen lets you share an evening with some of the biggest stars from the old flatscreen movie era from the last century. Always fantasized about boffing somebody like Sophia Loren, Elizabeth Taylor, Errol Flynn, or Johnny Depp? Silver Screen's got them all, and more. It's a niche market, but the place is clean, the prices are decent, and the personafixes the talent are running would fool the most dedicated old-movie buff.

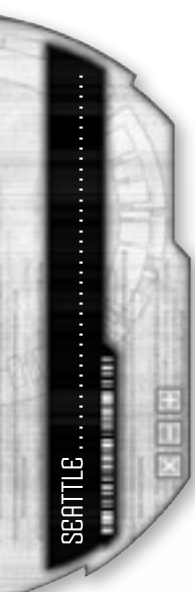
- They like to start with talent who resemble the stars they'll be portraying, so they're always on the lookout. Sometimes they hire runners to bring in likely but unwilling prospects.

- Traveler Jones

The Coliseum (Snohomish)

This has a pretty impressive name for a place that's essentially the back room of a bar, but it's one of the few places in town where you can take in fights between paranormal animals. There's a lot of cred to be made in the paracritter fighting business, not just in training and selling them but also in betting on them. If you know where to look you can find a whole subculture that raises hellhounds, cockatrices, and even big critters like fire- and ice drakes in basements and secluded areas outside town, all so they can pit them against others to see who's the best. The Coliseum is set up in a storage building out behind the Cathcart Market, with a fighting area surrounded by railings and tiered seats for spectators. The fights, especially between critters with magical abilities, can be something to see.

- Talismongers are always looking for pieces and blood from paracritters—sometimes you can buy the carcass of a fight's loser for cheap, though lately the owners have been getting wise and increasing their prices. They've even started putting out advance





word on what's going to be fighting, so if their critter loses, the talismongers can be right there for the fresh meat.

- Lyran

- Some animal rights radicals tracked down one of the stable owners recently. They botched the run, though, tripping an alarm in the midst of liberating some of the animals. The rads got away, but the owner was mauled by one of his own critters—poetic justice, I guess.

- Ecotope

- Be careful if you attend one of these fights—the safety of the spectators isn't always their number one priority. I once saw a poor slot get his throat ripped out by an enraged hellhound before its owner could get it back under control.

- Hard Exit

SPRAWL SITES

The Seattle 'plex has its share of urban wastelands. I don't recommend spending too much time in these areas, but they're interesting enough to mention.

Glow City (Redmond)

This isn't exactly the kind of place you want to plan your next vacation to visit. Glow City is the irradiated zone created in 2013 when the Trojan-Satsop nuclear power plant suffered a partial meltdown (which is sort of like saying "a little bit pregnant"). Ever in search of cheap land, Shiawase Atomics built a new plant right next door in 2028, and that plant provided power to the area until 2064 when it was forced to shut down due to numer-

ous Crash-related problems that made it prohibitively expensive to shore up its aging facilities. Ever since the original disaster scared the locals away, Glow City has been populated by squatters desperate enough to risk the numerous birth defects, diseases, and other radiation-based maladies that come from setting up housekeeping in the middle of a nuclear wasteland. For short-term concealment purposes, though, the Glow is a decent place to lie low, since most of the authorities won't get near it.

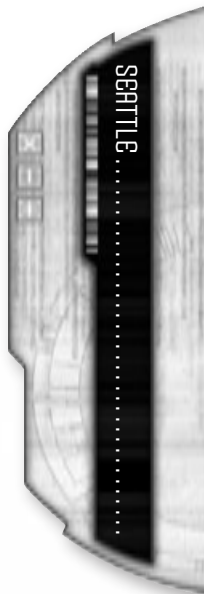
- Keep your eyes open if you venture in, especially if you don't know anybody—many of the permanent residents there are as brutal and dangerous as anybody in Seattle.

- Sounder

- Let's just say it, shall we? Most of the residents are Ghost-damned *mutants*. We're talking several irradiated generations of living here in some cases, and some of the younger batch aren't pretty—in fact, some wouldn't even call them metahuman any more. And the "animals" they keep as pets aren't any better. The local shamans do their best to help the squatters, but magic isn't exactly easy in the area, and some of them have grown a little *strange* from living there.

- Plan 9

- I've heard that several local shamans have banded together and had some success in cleaning up the radiation. They finance their operation by running a smuggling ring to bring telesma back from the Cascades, some of which helps to fuel their cleanup project. They can always use help if you're looking to sweeten your cred bal-



ance while making a difference—a *good* difference.

- Winterhawk

Plastic Jungles (Redmond)

Back before Redmond transformed into a massive slum, a wealthy agriculturalist built an array of gigantic greenhouses intending to transform vast tracts of polluted land. The giant bioplastic tents covered several kilometers of land that were alive with tropical flowers and plants. When squatters moved in, they were smart enough to preserve the agri-domes and their contents, establishing a cooperative community to live among and defend them. Over the years the domes have grown dirty and ragged, though the squatters have managed to cleanse the soil. Now the Jungles are a vibrant metahuman farming community, ensconced in a paradise of colorful flowers, exotic plants, and omnipresent vines. The residents here trade their surplus food with nearby squatter communities, bartering for supplies and weapons. Though it has its rough spots, the Jungles are a pleasant oasis amidst the squalor of the Barrens.

- Some of the more vicious gangs have been raiding the Jungles for food and kicks lately, overwhelming the squatter's meager defenses. Word is that the Jungle residents are looking for hooders who can help them out, either defending the bio-domes or hunting down the gangs and dealing with them. I doubt the pay is good, but the Jungles might make a good place to stash your gear or hide out for a bit.

- Aufheben

MAGIC SPOTS

No sprawl is complete with a few locales of interest to the Awakened crowd.

Cocoon (Snohomish)

This is one of Seattle's coffin clubs, where magically active types can go and leave their bodies to experience the club scene on the astral plane. Unlike the older clubs that often live up to their names as far as accommodations, go, Cocoon offers small plush cubicles with soft beds and piped-in music to help get the traveler in the right frame of mind for the party. Don't bother checking this place out if you're not a magician—you'll be bored to tears. Even the music is boring to us mundanes, since the band is putting all their effort into cranking out the emotional vibes up where we can't sense them.

- Talk to one of the bartenders here, an elf woman named Lila, and she can hook you up with all kinds of pharmaceutical goodies to enhance your experience, especially bliss, psyche, and zen.

- Jimmy No

- You're forgetting the big one. Cocoon is popular with adepts because they can score the deepweed they need to allow them to astrally perceive and get in on the action.

- Nephrite

Alabaster Maiden (Downtown)

This place shut down for awhile, but it's opened up again under new management and is well on its way to getting back its

title as one of the hottest nightspots for the magical crowd. They still have the eponymous statue out front—supposedly the petrified form of one of Seattle's first magicians, who overstepped her magical abilities while trying to escape a go-gang—but subsequent magical examination has revealed its origins to be an urban legend. Still, it's a great story to tell the tourists and a lot of people still like to touch the statue on the way in for good luck.

- I have an old picture of that statue from back in '53, and it's not the same statue as the one currently in place—one of the arms is in a different position ([Link](#)). Think maybe the story is true, and the real statue is hidden away somewhere?

- FastJack

- C'mon, 'Jack, I've seen you doctor pictures with more expertise than that. No way am I buying into one of your pranks again.

- Snopes

- The new owner, an elf named Cheri Ostler, is sometimes seen with a gray cat that assenses strangely. Some of the patrons swear they've seen a bigger version of the same cat prowling around the neighborhood late at night, but no one's been able to prove it.

- Winterhawk

Mama Pani's Talisman Shoppe (Auburn)

Mama Pani is an East Indian ork shaman who's reputed to be a retired shadowrunner. She comes across as a little dotty so you can never be sure whether to believe her stories, but if half of them are true, she's had some strange and varied adventures all over the world. Her shop is a great place to pick up all sorts of magical goodies from fetishes and ritual circle paint to more exotic gear—but you won't get to see the good stuff unless she knows you or somebody can vouch for you. The place itself looks like an antique store exploded, but Mama Pani and her assistant, an odd dwarf she calls Raj, always seem to be able to put their hands on whatever you're looking for almost immediately.

- Mama's a first-class enchanter who likes to experiment. She often hires runners to pick up whatever crazy-ass ingredients she needs for what she's building. Be aware, though, sometimes what she needs is alive ...

- Jimmy No

- Even though Raj seems like he's not quite right in the head, don't underestimate him. He's a powerful mage. If you threaten Mama, you're liable to find yourself missing vital body parts.

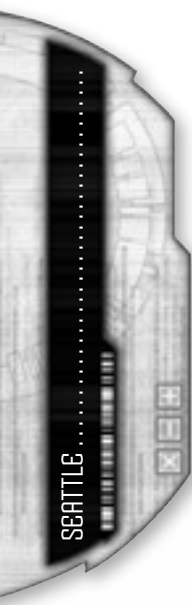
- Winterhawk

BODY ALTERATION

Shadowrunners have a way of getting their bodies perforated, punctured, sliced open, and cut off—sometimes intentionally. Here are a few places to consider when you're in pain or seeking pain.

A Whole New You, Inc. (Throughout Seattle)

In terms of quality, this place is a step below body shop outfits like Nightengale's and Red Star. It's a cut-rate, one-size-fits-all, one-stop shop for all the minor body mods you want done: cyber-





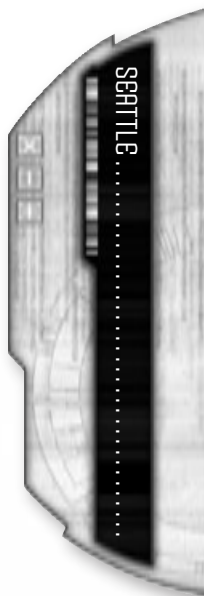
eyes, datajacks, minor cyberware, and plastic surgery. Even more, it provides an array of in-and-out “mental health” services, which include psych therapies, job/addiction counseling, acupuncture, VR sensory deprivation, life coaching, and sim-recreation packages for people whose hectic schedules only allow them 15 minutes in which to take a restful vacation. They also serve as a pharmacy, prescribing everything from anti-depressants and contraceptives to erectile dysfunction treatments. Usually they do a good job, and their occasional botch rarely makes it into the newsfeeds. They advertise heavily, which means they’re popular with high-school girls wanting boob jobs, guys who want the scary chrome cyber-eyes, and suits who are over-worked and over-stressed. Why am I including them in a guide aimed at shadowrunners? Because when you need something in a hurry, they’re everywhere, they’re better than nothing, and they won’t rat you out if you pay them off.

- Be careful: they aren’t too discriminating about checking their doctors’ credentials, so it’s hit and miss depending on which one you get. If you *have* to use their services, look for Dr. Alvarez in Auburn.
- Hannibelle
- They also don’t look too closely at their patients’ *bona fides*. They’ll do kids, criminals, the SINless—if you have the cred and you can flash them a halfway believable fake ID, you’re in. On the other hand, they don’t exactly protect their client’s information too well, either—so if you need to hack some suit’s daily med dosage ...
- The Smiling Bandit

Lou’s Tattoos (International District, Downtown)

A Japanese dwarf whose own body is covered from head to toe with tats, Lou is an *artiste* with the inks. Whether it’s an old-fashioned ink tattoo, bioluminescent, nanotat or even a full-body dye job, he can bring that picture you have in your mind to life on your own personal canvas. One thing to keep in mind, though: Lou doesn’t work from flash. You can’t just walk into his shop, point to something on the wall, and say “I want that.” Every one of his designs is original, either from his mind or yours. Asking him to do otherwise will get you kicked out of his shop.

- Lou does magical tattoos, too—very expensive, but worth it from what I’ve heard. He doesn’t advertise the fact that he’s magically active.
- Winterhawk
- If you want magical stuff, it’s worth trying to see his assistant. Her name’s Selena, and she’s only there occasionally—never on a schedule. Rumor is that she’s a free spirit. If you think Lou does some amazing work, you should see what she comes up with.
- Jimmy No
- Lou is uncanny about tapping into what you want, even if you don’t know it. If you’re brave enough, go into his shop and tell him to just do what he feels. I’ve never met anyone who’s been dissatisfied with the results.
- Ethernaut



- He does a lot of work for the Yakuza, so if you've got a beef with them, stay away from his shop.
- Kia

Body Mall (Redmond)

Need a little cut-rate work done on the ol' meat? Not too discriminating about where you go? The Body Mall's your place. Located in the shadow of Glow City, it used to be hospital in days past, but now its four floors have been subdivided into a "mall" of medical practices both legal and illegal—mostly the latter. You can pick up budget cyberware or bodymods here as well as getting stitched up after a firefight, but be careful: there are good docs at the Body Mall, but you have to find them. Making the wrong choice can cost you more than some extra recuperation time.

- The Body Mall is a crapshoot. If you lose, you're likely to end up on Tamanous's supply manifest. If you absolutely must go there, look for Dr. Elaine Pinsky or Dr. Moe Arasaka. Dr. Arasaka's the biggest, scariest-looking troll you're likely to see, but he's a damned good doc and he won't carve you up for parts.
- Hannibelle
- I've heard that the Yaks are moving in on Tamanous's turf at the Body Mall, still trying to get their organlegging operations off the ground. Nothing like *two* sets of ghouls hovering over your body before you're dead.
- Butch
- You guys are paranoid. I've had plenty of work done at the Body Mall and I'm still here. You just have to keep your wits about you and your friends close by. That's smart in any circumstances.
- Sounder

HACKER SPOTS

For those who prefer dealing with machines than people, here are a few of Seattle's more intriguing options.

The Cathode Glow (Tacoma)

You wouldn't think this place would appeal to hackers—it looks like a rundown dive from the outside, but inside they've got every true geek's wet dream: working models of just about every bit of important computer tech dating back to the early part of the century and in some cases even further. Hackers into hardware and history can settle back, remotely control the place's collection of old-style video games, have a soybeer, and talk shop.

- This place has got some weird AR iconography—all that dinosaur tech's overlaid to make it look like it's alive. Eyes, tentacles, the whole bit. It's creepy, if you ask me.
- FastJack
- Maybe so, but this is the place to go if you need somebody to wrench on your old-style cyberdeck, help you deal with obsolete media formats, or even hook you up with some nonstandard techs. Most hackers these days are all about software, but a good hardware geek can be worth her weight in gold when you need her.
- Slamm-O!

Tux's (Seattle Grid)

Everything may be all about AR right now, but plenty of hackers still like to hang out in full-immersion virtual reality clubs. Around Seattle, Tux's is one of the best. Its virtual location changes by the day (sometimes they stay in the same place for two days just to screw with newbies' heads) and there are only two ways to get in: find its location and hack your way past its formidable defenses, or know somebody who can vouch for you. Even if you know somebody, though, you'll have to prove yourself before the regulars will accept you, so be ready.

What does the place look like? What day of the week is it? Part of the allure of Tux's is that the décor is determined by the evening's clientele, who use their programming skills to alter everything from the color scheme to the selection of virtual liquor to the appearance of the wait staff. Usually everybody more or less cooperates in this endeavor, but sometimes when two or more groups disagree on the theme, results can get interesting.

- He's not kidding. One night I was at Tux's when a couple of Matrix gangs got into a difference of opinion over what the place should look like. One side wanted a geisha house while the other one wanted a circus theme. I'll tell you, those geisha girls with monkey heads and clown shoes looked weird, but *damn*, they gave good virtual foot rubs!
- Slamm-O!

GETTING THE GEAR

If you find yourself with the toys you need, here are a few places to start looking for more.

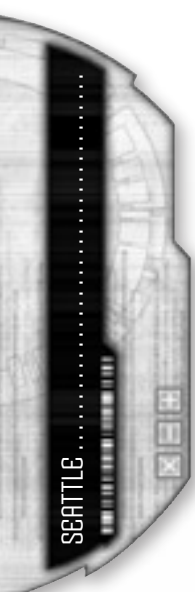
Archie's (Loveland, Puyallup)

A venerable Seattle institution, this emporium for all things weird and wonderful is back after a long hiatus. If you need a rubber chicken, a boxing nun, or a smoking baby, this is the place to get it—but since times are a little harder now, you can also find more ... shall we say ... *useful* items at Archie's if you know what to ask for and who to ask for it.

- She's not kidding—this place is a treasure trove of surveillance gear, spy stuff, and practical jokes that you can rig for all sorts of uses their creators never intended. They've got a whole showroom down in the basement dedicated to the kind of stuff that the average customer doesn't get to see. None of it's illegal per se, but it's pretty obvious how to modify it so it will be. If you can't figure it out, ask—their employees are very helpful. Some of them are former shadowrunners.
- Clockwork
- Sometimes they hire runners as testers for some of their new gear, so be sure to ask around if you're looking for work. To paraphrase an old flatscreen movie, "Little surprises around every corner, but nothing deadly ... yet."
- Rigger X

The Crime Mall (Puyallup)

Lone Star has been trying to put this place out of business since it opened after the first Crash, but so far they've had no luck. It's no wonder—this three-story abandoned mall on the outskirts



of Puyallup is the best place in town to find just about anything illegal you might be looking for. Weapons, armor, drugs, pirated software, electronics, cyberware, magical gear—if you can think of it and it's not legal, odds are that somebody here is selling it. It's simply too useful to too many people to allow the Star to shut it down. In the past couple of years some of the core “merchants” there have chipped in to upgrade the place's defenses (including an AR network designed to confuse the hell out of anybody who doesn't belong there) and they charge the small fry a nominal fee to participate. There's high turnover among the smaller merchants as they get picked up by the Star or knives in a dispute over pricing, but the big ones have been there for years and are well-versed in staying out of trouble.

- If you're looking for big firepower, talk to a dwarf named Otto who's got a gun shop down at the south end of the second floor. He's connected with the Red Hot Nukes and he can get you some major bang-bang. Tell him I sent you.
- Beaker
- The lady who runs Fatima's Magical Emporium on the third floor is actually a free spirit, and she's always looking for new exotic materials for her telesma. Check with her if you've got any or if you want a job hunting for some.
- Winterhawk

The Rat's Nest (Redmond)

Also known as the North Seattle Refuse Center, this area near the Salish border is where much of Seattle dumps its trash. Thousands of squatters live around and amid this massive, open-air junkyard, and quite a few of them make a living sorting through the debris for anything of value. The pickings are surprisingly good—you'd be amazed at what people throw away—from functioning electronics and vehicle parts to good clothing and edible food. The Nest can be dangerous though—not only is it infested with rats and paracritter scavengers, but the piles of trash have been known to collapse on people or swallow them whole. The garbage-sifters and gangs can also be violent and competitive, claiming their own piles of turf and squabbling over unearthed treasures.

- Some of the *gomo-nezumi* (as the Yakuza call the trash-rats) are surprisingly tech-savvy. They make a sizable income scouring the memory of discarded electronics (and what doesn't have a computer in it these days) and selling the juicy data they find—including credit account codes, company files, research notes, financial records, and material worthy of blackmail.
- Glitch

TARGETS

No file on Seattle aimed at shadowrunners would be complete without touching on at least some of the places that we like to visit on our nocturnal adventures. When you consider the number of corporate offices, research facilities, and other installations located in and around Seattle, you'll realize that it's a target-rich environment, so I'm just going to mention a couple of the more intriguing ones.

Arcology Commercial and Housing Enclave (Seattle Center, Downtown)

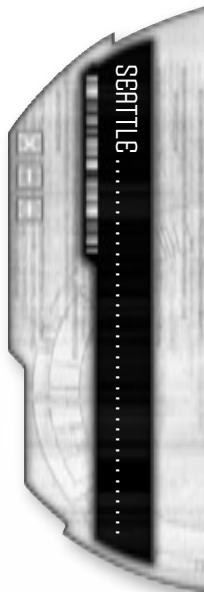
Oh, how the mighty have fallen. In less than twenty years, the Renraku Arcology has gone from a shining gem in a megacorp's crown to a nightmarish prison presided over by a mad AI, to—well, essentially glorified public housing.

Renraku and the UCAS had some disagreements over the cleanup and reconstruction costs, so the UCAS just seized it, excluded Renraku from the picture, and wrote up some new plans. Renamed it the Arcology Commercial and Housing Enclave (and believe me, it's lost on nobody that the acronym for this name-only-a-government-could-love is “ACHE”), the facility is now owned and operated by the Metroplex government, who has turned it to many uses. The lowest sub-basements, for example, are the domain of the UCAS military (they do have reactors down there, after all), while the first five above-ground floors, reminiscent of the old Renraku glory days, are a corporate-run mall open to the public. The highest floors are sealed off, and what's up there now is anybody's guess.

What about all those floors in between? They're home sweet home for 150,000 souls living in a massive, enclosed welfare state. These folks live in government-issued housing units, eat government food (flavored soy pap and distilled water—tasty!), wear government-provided clothing (recyclable flats—cheaper that way, y'know), and are fed government-approved propaganda via government-sponsored Matrix connections. Some lucky slots can better themselves by volunteering for corporate experiments and product tests, while others earn a bit of cred by doing the grunt work in the infrastructure: janitorial, maintenance, recycling, and so forth. Some turn to a life of crime. But nobody (or hardly anybody) gets out. The suits don't want poor people streaming out all over the streets of Downtown, so the place is essentially run as a minimum-security prison. Once you sign the contract and move in, you're restricting yourself to the 200-plus residential floors of the ACHE (it is a supposed to be a self-sustaining arcology, after all). Armed guards ensure that you only leave with express permission or on your small allotment of “vacation days”—and even then they bus you away from Downtown.

- If you're thinking of accessing the ACHE via the Ork Underground, think again—the military grew wise to that trick and tracked down most (if not all) of the access points to seal them. They still keep a close eye on them, just to make sure no one tries to break through again.
- Traveler Jones

There's a treasure trove of job opportunities in the Arc, if you know where to look. There are many Johnsons out there who'll pay big to runners who can get in and retrieve items—especially those locked away in the sealed upper floors—or extract certain key individuals. There are also many residents who have more cred than you might suspect from the description of the place, and they'll pay for anything from the outside: uncensored news, consumer goods, illegal items—and a way out. A savvy runner could make a fortune doing nothing but runs in and out of the big ACHE. Just be careful—if it was easy, anybody could do it.



- Take him seriously—part of the reason they’ve sealed off the top floors is because they haven’t yet been able to flush out and deal with all of the little toys and traps left behind by the mad AI and its minions.
- Slamm-O!

Fungitek (Ork Underground)

Fungi may not be the most exciting scientific field one can think of, so I was more than a bit surprised when I heard about this company. Fungitek has a few farms in Snohomish, a mushroom beer in the works at its labs, and that seems to be it ... at least on the surface.

Deep inside the Ork Underground, Fungitek’s biggest project is slowly making progress. It seems that certain parts of the Underground offer near-perfect conditions to test certain genengineered fungi hybrids, so the corp struck a deal with the orks to take over a section for their own. Supposedly Amazonia is hoping the fungi will be useful to its space program—along with hydroponic vegetables, an orbital habitat could run for years on the stuff without being supplied from Earth. It’s no wonder that Ingersoll and Berkley desperately wants to “acquire” Fungitek’s intellectual property—there’s money to be made here. Lots of it.

- Other corps are paying attention too. Fungi can have plenty of applications: biotoxins, medicine, etc. Hell, Awakened mushrooms are huge in the magician community.
- Ecotope
- According to Azziewatch, a recent memo from Tenochtitlán instructed Seattle’s Aztechnology veeps to treat Fungitek with extreme prejudice when possible. What the fuck did the mushroom guys do to earn that? Piss on top of a teocalli?
- Glitch

Horizon Creative Focus Retreat (Renton)

Horizon’s beautiful new facility was recently constructed atop the scenic Cougar Mountain. With its shining white exterior, numerous warm windows, and scattered open courtyards, it might easily be mistaken for a college campus—and in a way, it is. Horizon’s internal policy allows its constituents to devote 20% of their working time to personal, creative endeavors—and if they want, they can save that time up and spend it at a Creative Focus Retreat like this, sort of a working vacation. Like all of Horizon’s workplaces, the Retreat is intended to be a relaxed, creative, and communal environment. Open workstations, development tools, and “creative labs” are interspersed with exercise halls, rec rooms, and snack stations—not to mention the massage chairs and spas. You’re as likely to find Horizoneers playing ping pong, AR games, or roller derby as you are to find them assembling a focus group of their peers, posing a policy question to the company’s internal polling network, or hashing out ideas in a group brainstorming session. Given Horizon’s flat internal hierarchy, employees of all stations interchange ideas and opinions equally.

- Gary Cline, Horizon’s former sim-star CEO, even shows up here on occasion to see what interests people are kicking about and test the

waters on his own pet projects.

- Arete

You might be thinking that this is a horribly wasteful way for a megacorp to be blowing its money and letting its employees slacken off, but this is how Horizon works. Many of the company’s top projects and services have originated from personal side projects like those developed here—which is also what makes this place interesting to Horizon’s competitors. Don’t let the relaxed and recreational façade fool you—security of all sorts is airtight, though carefully hidden and unobtrusive so as not to disrupt the quality time of the Retreat’s guests.

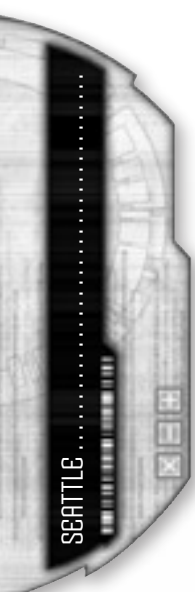
- Horizon encourages its people to “think outside the box,” which means that they sometimes dream up some sort of research, info-gathering, or testing that is weird, unusual, and sometimes illegal. I’ve heard of Horizoneers at this Retreat hiring runners to do things like engage in street-level viral advertising campaigns (i.e., talking to strangers and posting online) or break into a rival corps’ software development house and insert a backdoor into a program’s code as it was being written so Horizon could access the programs worldwide later on.
- Dr. Spin

Mitsuhamas Zero Zone (Downtown)

Six massive black and silver (vivid green in AR) skyscrapers towering over the shores of Lake Washington: this is Mitsuhamas North American HQ, and it may very well be the most secure place in Seattle. Don’t let the carefully-cultivated Japanese-style garden park around the buildings lull you with its quiet serenity; the strategic landscaping conceals highly-sensitive sensors, microphones, and intruder-containment systems—the first line of defense in Mitsuhamas “zero zone.” Complemented by highly-trained, well-armed and armored guards, bound spirits, frigid IC agents, and barghest guard dogs, Mitsuhamas takes “zero penetration and zero survival” quite literally when it comes to unwanted guests.

What do they have to protect, you say? Quite a bit. Aside from major business dealings, company records, and valuable personnel, the six towers also house the central station for overseeing GridGuide throughout Seattle in an underground protected bunker. One tower is almost completely devoted to magical research initiatives, from spellcrafting to new enchanting processes. And somewhere inside the complex is a highly-sensitive, isolated, wired-only internal network that connects to Mitsuhamas primary corporate system in Osaka via randomized and encrypted satellite uplinks. I’m sure there’s more—but unless you’re crazy or suicidal, you may be better off taking another job.

- Mitsuhamas also operates “zero-zones” at its other Seattle facilities. For example, its Cavilard Research Park in Bellevue—where they developed the prototype bio-drones you now see on the market—is completely locked down by security riggers. They also make heavy use of RFID-readers to track personnel (and spot unauthorized persons) as well as jamming or blocking wireless in critical areas. They don’t fuck around.
- Pistons





The security men exchanged whispers as he limped up to the gate. Stone smiled amenably when they asked to see his documents and uploaded his ID to his PAN's public profile: Jason Doe, bonded bodyguard. Forged licenses justified the quasi-legal cyber he'd picked up during his Ares years, and medical papers explained he was in town to replace a faulty cyberleg.

The fat officer at the desk muttered an apology while another customs agent brought out a handheld scanner, leaving Stone wondering if the man was expecting him to wire some nuyen, like the customs guy in Istanbul last spring. A glance at Caliban as the ork strode annoyingly unchallenged through the second gate erased the thought. Stiletto was already through—adepts had it easy in places like Azania. The scan wand whisked over him, beaming diagnostics to the officers' displays. With a grunt the thickset officer dismissed him and concentrated on hassling a couple from Sekondi.

Stone emerged from the security gate to join Stiletto and Caliban. The hacker looked more than a little pleased with himself but thankfully kept his motormouth closed. Clearing the restricted area, Stone scanned the crowd on the arrival's concourse until his image link lit up with the ID he wanted. The three runners meandered through the crowd towards a rail-thin black man with glo-tats and a neotribal tunic.

"Mr. Doe?" inquired the man, his English carrying the expected local drawl. "I am here to convey you to Mr. Mumbezo."

"Mr. Mumbezo has our order ready?" asked Stone surprised. "We weren't expecting the material until tomorrow."

"I believe so, Mr. Doe," replied the wiry man, flashing brilliant white teeth.

"What about our target? Does he have the intel?" pressed Stone.

"I am to inform you that his convoy left yesterday, as expected. As you see, Mr. Mumbezo never disappoints," the man said.

"He'd better not. We were assured Mr. Mumbezo was reliable." In fact it had been quite to the contrary. Fox had warned them Mumbezo could be untrustworthy. But he was the best fixer they could get at short notice to scrounge up the gear and weapons they required for the op.

"I'm sure there will be no problems, Mr. Doe. This way please," the man said, guiding them through the crowd to the exit.

As the external doors opened, they were hit by a wave of harsh dry air that sucked the moisture from their skin. Beyond the polarized windows of Cape Town International, the light was different too, a pervasive brightness that left the landscape in a heat haze. They walked a short distance to an old model Toyota Elite illegally parked on the curb. Stiletto got in the front with their driver; Stone and Caliban in the back with their bags.

When they had traveled a safe distance from the terminal, Stone toggled his Ikon link through different menus to bringing his cyberleg online. Deactivated, it had felt heavier than usual, but it was neces-

sary for his cover. He disengaged the dummy diagnostics program Caliban had cooked up, and their driver's eyes widened in the rearview mirror as Stone unzipped his trouser leg and popped the first hidden compartment. He smiled a feral grin at the man as he assembled the parts of his Steyr TMP, loaded a vacuum-packed clip and slid the gun into a concealed holster in his jacket. Up front, Stiletto moved her briefcase onto her lap, thumbed the hidden switch and popped the false bottom. In thirteen moves she assembled her repeater crossbow from the components hidden within. Then with a twist she detached two sections of the suitcase handle, withdrew two gleaming blades from reinforced steel sidepanels, screwed the handles into place and vanished them into her coat.

Caliban flashed a tuskly grin, "What? No toys for me?"

Stone opened the calf compartment and coaxed out the hacker's disassembled custom link and holdout, handing them to Caliban.

Despite his complexion, their driver was quite pale in the rearview mirror. Stone looked up and said, "I believe we're ready to meet Mr. Mumbeko now."

• To round out this upload, I've tapped some of our regulars to provide primers on other notorious runner hotspots around the globe. There's more, of course, but all my sources tell me these four are right up there with Seattle and Hong Kong in terms of shadow action, so they're of particular interest.

• FastJack

CAPE TOWN

Posted by: Picador

I'll save you the geostrategic update on the Azanian Federation, save to say that it's weathered the past decade well enough, considering things couldn't get much worse. It's still very much shackled by poverty, illiteracy, and subsistence-level existence for millions. In a land where riches such as diamonds, gold, and uranium spring from the soil like savannah grass, life is still the cheapest of commodities and people are still desperate enough to indenture their offspring to corporate strip mines. Even here, however, there are illusions of hope to keep people going. These days the light at the end of the tunnel is coming from Cape Town—and that makes it the new land of promise for runners and other shadow denizens.

Despite being home to a more diverse population—including native Xhosa, Apartheid-displaced Zulus, Afrikaners, Malaysians, Indians, Europeans, and South Americans—Cape Town isn't the biggest city in Azania. Cape Town is, however, where modern African culture finds its voice. It's also a port where not only two oceans converge, but where merchants and mercenaries from four continents come to deal.

LIVING IN THE BOWL

I've been to the Cape more times than I can remember; I even crashed there for a winter after a grueling six-month stint with the Corp Court's nation-building forces around Kilimanjaro in '68. Cape Town spreads like a glass and concrete stain in every direction, simmering under the relentless African sun and choking on smog half the year. Its heart, nestled protectively in a natural bowl carved from the towering slopes of Table Mountain by

legendary spirits, makes it impossible to forget the city lives under the gaze of the celestial Rain Queen, the great dragon known as Mujaji, who makes her lair on the majestic plateau overlooking the peninsula's lush valleys and rocky peaks. Even to the most jaded, Cape Town offers a mystique all its own—something unquestionably spiritual. Everything slows to "Africa time" but still comes across as alive and exciting.

The Cape is finally seeing an economic rebirth after wallowing in inter-tribal violence and soaring crime for decades, thanks primarily to a military crackdown last year. After Pretoria cut a deal with Mujaji, Azanian forces aided by the Rain Queen's shamans swept up the worse of the *tsotsi* ganglords that had carved dominions out of the sprawl. Like everything else in this corner of the world, though, it was only a half-assed attempt. Flaring tensions on the diamond-rich border with communist Angola sent the troops scurrying away before the cleanup was complete. Stretches of the docklands and the outlying townships remain contested tribal areas and z-zones where gangs and warlords keep the authorities at bay, toeing the line of Mujaji's edicts for peace.

• When communist Angola occupied a couple of contested diamond fields in former Namibia last May, Universal Omnitech pulled some strings with the Azanian executive to bring in the military. UO mercenary forces might be vets, but they're not equipped to handle the Angolan army. Now both sides have forces massed in the area, playing wait and see.

• Fianchetto

• Needless to say, UO isn't happy with the stalemate. Productivity has dropped in all the nearby fields and it's starting to show on their quotations.

• Mr. Bonds

Officially at least, the Cape town clean-up operation continues, though nothing significant has happened in more than six months. Downtown remains peaceful under martial law and the joint command of Gen. Steven Mbulo and Tsago Shinzeli, Mujaji's head-shaman, but troops still patrol the outskirts in APCs. It's really the Rain Queen who enforces the delicate balance of power through a web of fear and favors.

THE WATERFRONT: DISORGANIZED CRIME

Visible from almost anywhere in Cape Town, the blue harbor swarms with ships of all flags. It is impossible to forget the city is a major seaport. In fact, it's an unavoidable port of call for anyone plying the Southern Atlantic trade to Amazonia and Europe, or the routes around the Good Hope to the Far East and Oceania. Through all the ups and downs, the port has been the city's lifeline, and it remains a major source of revenue—and shadow action.

The rough and tumble **Waterfront** district remains the domain of warlords, old pirates, and black market entrepreneurs who have withstood every attempt to clear them out. The megacorps have established a renewed presence here, however, and it's in everybody's interests to keep trouble to a minimum. Wuxing's co-owned Worldwide Shipping, Maersk's Hapag-Lloyd, and ESUS lease big chunks of dockland real estate, as do most of the triple-As with an interest in Azania.



MEGAWATCH SEARCH

*Universal Omnitech
Absorbs DeBeers*

Posted: 10-10-2065

The merger of biotech powerhouse Universal Omnitech (UO) with macroengineering goliath DeBeers Omnitech (DBO) came as little surprise to anyone following their mating dance since '61. Buoyed by market interest and swift integration process despite its diversified operations, UO has retained its reputation of being light years ahead of the competition in bio, cyber and genetech R&D. Profits from a limited public offering balanced the costs of expanding their distribution and retail base, weakened when former Aztech director Thomas Roxborough seized the presidency and broke the corp away from previous business partner Aztechnology.

With more than 82 operations worldwide, DeBeers (based in South Africa) brought to the merger its leading expertise in the engineering and mining sector, as well as dominion in the market of natural and artificial diamonds production essential for high-tech products such as AR holostorage and carbon lacing/nanotubes. Infected by UO's focus on R&D and cutting edge technologies, the new merger has also expanded into nanotech, construction and most recently aerospace and extreme environment development, putting it on a collision course with corps like S-K, Shiawase and Proteus.

The new corporation will continue to do business under the Universal Omnitech name and will be managed from its Vancouver headquarters, though the DeBeers brand will continue to be used for certain operations.

- Mercenary operations of various sizes also have compounds in the nearby warehouse district, giving the area a very edgy atmosphere. I believe Picador's outfit owns one.

- Black Mamba

- That we do. Matador picked it up back when nobody gave a damn about the Cape. Africa always has a high demand for merc talent, and flaring tensions all over the region have made it quite the fortuitous investment.

- Picador

There's little organized crime around the harbor, but plenty of the disorganized sort. The big fish are closer to armed gangs than syndicates. Luis Barreto and Mabuki Njombo are the leading gang bosses, and they compete for the lion's share of the trafficking and smuggling action. Barreto, a retired Gold Coast privateer, will have you put down just for looking at him funny, but at least he sticks to his pirate's code—flimsy as it is. A disgraced Rain Queen shaman, Njombo sliced and diced a bloody path to becoming a waterfront

kingpin by dealing in every vice imaginable, including slavery, organlegging, prostitution, and BAD-dealing. He's known for preying on the weaknesses of his own people.

- Barreto controls a lot of the fencing and outfitting for independent merchants and pirates. He's a living legend among Gold and Skull Coast buccaneers and has his men's loyalty. Njombo, on the other hand, rules by fear and trusts no one. He has a finger in every pie and he's even friendly with the Ghost Cartels. Together Barreto and Njombo have managed to push the smaller operators all the way out to the townships.

- Moji

- There's also a crime clan run by Hasim Shakur, an East Indian black marketer who's neck deep in blood diamond traffic, white-collar corruption, and tech-theft. The streets are not his scene, but he's got friends aplenty in Europe and the CAS. His crew sometimes sidelines in talislegging.

- Am-mut

The rowdy street markets held every Thursday are a perfect place to contact the arms dealers, merc brokers, fixers, and tribal leaders who trawl the waterfront markets looking for talent and opportunities—assuming you can negotiate your way through the tangle of local allegiances and corporate interests.

Lest I forget, west of the Waterfront lies the upscale estate known as **Mouille Point**, home to the fortified estates of East Indian entrepreneurs, retired *tsotsi* crimelords, pirate legends, and the odd prime runner. Following the clean-up, the area is becoming a beacon for more respectable but no less dubious businessmen and the nouveau rich, feeding from the trough of easy pickings that follow the growing economic inequities.

DOWNTOWN AND THE GARDENS: CORPORATE REBIRTH

In the outlying townships, endemic poverty and ethnic flare-ups are the rule. At the center of the Bowl, however, sits the first area to be cleaned up and refurbished: the tree-lined and orderly avenues of corp central, **Downtown**. It isn't all high-rises, malls, and secure offices either; a lot of nuyen has gone into expanding the Kirstenbosch Botanical Gardens into great lush outdoor parks and biotech greenhouse domes. The heart of the sprawl has never been greener.

- Even the renegade taggers and tribal graffiti artists that strike the office buildings and walled compounds seem to add to the healthy and clean atmosphere you breath in the Bowl these days. Almost makes a body sick for the good old days when the dust hung like smog in the air.

- Moji

The Cape is enjoying a boomtown rush with several of the big boys setting up shop and local startups popping out of the woodwork. What's got everyone hot and bothered? Well, maybe it's the massive tax incentives and the permissive legislation when it comes to human R&D trials—the government has been pimping to get the economy rolling again. Thanks also in part to

the civil authorities' laissez-faire attitude, the economic success stories here are snowballing. When people think about the *new* Cape with its fast pace and bright lights, the Downtown corps are foremost in mind. The buzz words are genetechnology, nanotechnology, and fifth-gen holostorage, though the port and media industry also have huge turnovers.

Universal Omnitech was the first to expand its already considerable facilities. CEO Jan Vermeer, one of the most powerful men in town, also signed with the city to maintain and enlarge the Botanical Gardens in exchange for exclusive pick of the rare and unique biotic treasure trove they contain. UO also owns several massive facilities on the outskirts, working on stuff like synthetic diamonds production under the DeBeers name.

- The Cape has the highest density of distinct floral species (mundane and Awakened) on Earth and the highest known percentage of endemism—meaning many species occur nowhere else. The Gardens boast an unparalleled selection of these, and biologists have been breeding new varieties and exploiting them for pharmaceutical use for centuries now. The popular narcotic zen is said to be a spin-off of such research, but so are half a dozen other cutting-edge medical pharmaceuticals.

- The Smiling Bandit

- I was looking into those big UO plants for a client recently. Aside from working on nootropics and other bio-drug projects, two of the plants have been equipped to produce carbon nanotubes. The current output is minimal but they're gearing up for something massive, I'm just not sure what.

- Stone

- Well, Universal Omnitech and its old friends Aztechnology still have common interests. After their merger UO picked up several macro-engineering companies and a couple of aerospace ones. Meanwhile, the Azzies have been showing an inordinate interest in Panama. Equatorial positioning, AAA megacorp, aerospace design, carbon nanotubes ... methinks we're looking at a space elevator project to compete with the Kilimanjaro catapult. I'd keep an ear out for an asteroid snatch operation next.

- The Smiling Bandit

- No need. I can confirm that such an operation is already underway.
- Orbital DK

Evo followed in December, renovating a huge office park in **Oranjezicht**, abutting the Gardens. NeoNET, Zeta-ImpChem, Shiawase Biotech, and Phoenix are some of the other big names taking advantage of the lax experimentation legislation and expanding their interests. Not all of these corps are just establishing biotech labs and a retail presence; several have set up microelectronics research facilities and factories to tap into the crystal-lattice holostorage developments some of the local startups have made.

- Goes without saying there's work aplenty these days. The local community is pretty tight knit, but look up Anansi or Bobby Nzame if you're in town—both are reliable fixers with a good regional network.

Pay no notice of Anansi's technicolor glo-tats or the fact that Nzame is HMMVV-positive. Just chalk it up as more Cape weirdness.

- Black Mamba

- During the op I mentioned before, I ran into another nugget: there's a UO black clinic somewhere in the sprawl working on a project codenamed Methuselah. From what I could piece together, the Cape facility is just part of a research network spread across Azania, and it's getting significant support from some secret faction within the Zulu Nation. What doesn't add up is that Rain Queen is the traditional guardian of the Zulu's rivals, the Xhosa; yet there's no way this could be active in Cape Town without Mujaji's blessing.

- Stone

- Interesting. I did extra digging myself, and all I turned up is that they're tapping into the national gene bank databases UO inherited from DeBeers. The gene bank was financed by DeBeers as part of the efforts to combat the AIDS and VITAS crises that threatened to decimate the South African labor pool. It contained more than 29 million genetic profiles back in 2022. SIN registration in Azania includes a biosample to this day. Do the math.

- The Smiling Bandit

THE FRINGE: AFROSTYLE AND TRIBAL FLASH

If you're still buying the Ministry of Tourism's postcard Cape, a trip beyond the Bowl should be an eye-opener. For all the money that's gone into redeveloping Downtown and the Bowl, the rest of the sprawl has been left to decay in its own filth, particularly the outlying townships such as **Gugulethu**, **Khayelitsha**, and **Crossroads** on the Cape Flats. Aside from the thousands-strong gangs like the Hard Time Kids and the Instant Revolvers, the only authority anyone seems to recognize out there are the Rain Queen's shamans or someone packing serious heat.

- While on an op in Cape Town recently, I heard people comment that Mujaji's reps among the tribes have been thin on the ground lately.

- Sticks

- That intel's correct. The Queen has relocated much of her inner circle to Aukoerebis, her northern lair, in an old national park gone feral. She still keeps a close eye on the Cape and seems to have a claw in several of the biotech startups, but she's got other business on her mind these days. She's said to have called in several vassal feathered serpents too. Mujaji's shamans wander about the sprawl on official biz, traveling in groups and looking edgy and protective, almost as if they were mobilized for something. I tell you, there's a storm a-coming.

- Black Mamba

An enduring legacy of the old Apartheid regime, the satellite towns have historically provided the Cape with a seemingly inexhaustible supply of cheap labor and ethnic violence. The powderkeg has become more volatile as locals misguidedly align with the different corporations that run the sweatshops, assembly lines, and component factories upon which their meager livelihoods depend. Flare-ups between Khoisan and Bantu or Xhosa and Zulu



tribesmen are as common as altercations between loyal MCT and DeBeers workers.

For the shadowrunner or merc jaded to misery and hopelessness, the dirty, overcrowded, and impoverished townships provide all the underworld economy and industry that one would expect of first-world Barrens. Outsiders can't help but stand out, though, so good connections and a guide are indispensable.

- There's only so much info you can tap through your commlink and slot-a-culture chip. Never underestimate local knowledge, especially in volatile environments like the Cape townships, where they'd be just as pleased to strip your corpse as shake your hand. If you don't have friends in town, take my advice and buy yourself some.
- Elijah

To be fair, not all is bleak and hopeless here either. I'm not talking about tribal shamans warding off the worst diseases and the warlords keeping minimal order, but of the Afrostyle culture that's emerging as the new international craze. The neotribal dress styles, motifs, and glo-tats that are the trademark of modern Afroflash style so popular among the disaffected and disillusioned Township youth have been picked up as the next big thing by trend scouts for the likes of Horizon and DeMeKo. A crop of new African artists and designers are breaking out of the slums and into the big time, and many of them are discovering they need protection.

- Talent scouts from MCT's Highstar and Ares Global Entertainment are looking to catch up and poach some of the brightest stars on the local circuit. There's bodyguard work available for anyone willing to babysit the scouts weeding the stars from the dross.
- Sticks

CARACAS

Posted by: Marcos

Nine million people! Ha! The Chinaman kills me. Call that overcrowded? Catch the next flight from Hong Kong, *che*, and take a look at our little tropical hellhole. *Twenty-three* million people call home to a sliver of land less than double the size of the HKFEZ. If you think land is at a premium in Hong Kong, you ain't seen nothing!

The rainforest began creeping up on Caracas like a relentless tide in the late '30s. Attempts to extend the city limits by traditional slash-and-burn tactics proved useless, and later the Amazonian Awakened actively opposed such attempts. Predictably the *Muralha Verde* (that's Green Wall to you gringos) was of no use in keeping out the displaced, the hopeless, and the have-nots who streamed into the sprawl for almost a decade. I suppose that's exactly how Amazonia's overlords want it; they never made a move to claim the city.

By the time Venezuela came under the crosshairs of Aztlan and Amazonia during their growth spurts in the '40s, Venezuelan, Brazilian, and Columbian refugees—having lost both home and property to either megacorporate tyranny or Awakened dictatorship—were flooding into Caracas, the last Venezuelan soil, in search of hope or salvation. Deluded souls!

Life in Caracas is no trid *novela*, and making a living in *Sin City Sur* is *la tortura* not *la vida loca*. Don't believe me? Take a

glance at the folks living in the filthy makeshift *favelas* (shanty towns) and 25-story concrete death-traps that are the *urbanizaciones sociales* in places like **La Rinconada** or **El Zamural**. So why come this way at all? *El oro, che*—gold. If you want to earn some quick *dinero* and you have the talent and don't mind getting down and dirty, Caracas is a motherload of biz. Money's the one thing worth a damn down here.

- Too true. *Dinero* speaks volumes. When you want something done, you pay the *matraca* (an institutionalized bribe of sorts). The system works astonishingly well, whether you're lining government, police, underworld, or gangland pockets.
- DangerSensei

From what I can tell, Caracas is the only true free city among these so-called runner havens—well, as free as it gets in this day and age. Like the wild Necro-Salsa beats pounding over commlinks, Caracas doesn't dance to political or pan-corporate tunes. The *patrones*—wealthy and influential rats from the former government or underworld—seized control of the city when Venezuela collapsed, keeping the old capital alive in pseudo-lawlessness, a modern day Port Royal. It's very much a city on the edge, walking the tense line of détente between Sixth World goliaths.

DISTRITO CARACAS

Current day Caracas is ruled over by a handful of influential individuals (or families) that re-established government after the dissolution of the Venezuelan parliament and the death of president Soler-Ferras during the Amazonian invasion in the Forties. While the rest of the country was parceled out between Aztlan and Amazonia, Caracas was briefly shielded by UN Blue Helmets (and the Corporate Court's not-so-guarded influence) until a treaty was hammered out in the early Fifties between Amazonia and a new local political council (the *Palco*) at the Casa Amarilla. The agreement ensured Caracas's independence and limited sovereignty, relegating it to a political no-man's land without international recognition.

An oligarchy (or rather a plutocracy), the city's decision-making power, executive offices, and voting privileges are concentrated in the wealthy ruling class. This is governed by the Palco, which acts as both legislative and executive body. The Palco is an altogether different beast from institutions like the Board of Governors in Hong Kong or the Konzernrat in Berlin, where membership is granted to corporations, not individuals. This is old style South American politics, *companero*!

The leading lights of the Palco are the Cisneros, who run Grupo Cisneros, a media conglomerate. The Cisneros are behind some interesting research on subliminals in joint-venture with Argentinian Edimpresa (a Horizon-aligned group) and Chilean code rippers. Then there's the Carmona family head, Federico Carmona, the Palco's figurehead, and Eduardo Osorio, an Azzie frontman who runs Pemex's oil operations around Lake Maracaibo. Rounding out the top dogs are biotech genius and entrepreneur Pedro Jiménez, who has drawn biocorps by the boatload through the accommodatingly non-restrictive legislation, and the much-maligned General Marón, who commands the Caracas border and Police forces. They stand united when it comes to fighting off Amazonia and Aztech's interests or negotiating the Palco's *matraca* with the Ghost Cartel's

envoys, these self-serving hyenas are at each other's throat much of the time.

- Osorio's just had a price put on his head by someone in Tenochtitlan. Seems like someone's forgotten where his loyalty should lie.
- Stone

PASSING THROUGH

Aside from those born here, everybody who lives in this godforsaken sprawl has come here looking for a break, a golden opportunity. Caracas is a transportation hub between North and Latin America. Pirates from the Caribbean League and the Gulf Coast moor in the port of **La Guaira** to unload their loot to local fixers. Weapons of all sorts, coming from North Am, Europe, or Africa, pass through Caracas and are quietly shipped to insurgents in Peru, Argentina, and Bolivia via cargo zep. Drugs and biotech are shipped out almost everywhere.

With the renewed orbital development following after the Crash 2.0, Caracas has become the closest stopover for a trip to S-K's Ariane spaceport on Kourou. Since Saeder-Krupp upgraded the site in '68 and opened it up to orbital enterprises, illegal goods move from Caracas to Kourou and up the well on a regular basis.

- With advanced hydroponics still in the experimental stage, the new orbital and moon stations have great demand for space-adapted food products that genetech companies in Caracas like Natural Vat Technologies, Productos Cultivados (both Aztech), and Nestlé Nutritech (Z-IC) provide.
- Nephrine

Private Message...

Hey chico, I got that border-running connection your friend asked for. Try the *Aves de Rapina* in Maiquetía. They're a crew of air pirates and they know routes over the Muralha like you wouldn't believe. Watch your mouth around Maria Angela though, she's one lava-hot Latina and easily takes offense. Don't say I didn't warn and don't forget you owe me one.
—Marcos

Don't forget that the city is also the best gateway into northern Amazonia and southern Aztlan—if you're the right kind of suicidal. Since the highly publicized execution of the feathered serpent Dzitbalchén by the Aztlaner government, relations between Aztlan and Amazonia have turned arctic (which says a lot here in the sub-tropics). Guess who's sitting on the frontline?

- Dzitbalchén was convicted for orchestrating the assassination of the peace delegates at the Yucatan peace summit in 2064, including former Aztechnology CEO Juan Atzcapotzalco. The charge was verified and upheld by one of his own kin, the former feathered serpent rebel leader and current Yucatan Autonomous State Governor Pobre. Some of the greats, if my sources are correct, have taken the execution very personally—Ghostwalker in particular. For creatures that see

themselves as being beyond metahuman law, the trial and public sacrifice of Dzitbalchén has been nothing short of outrageous.

- Frosty

- Serves 'em right. If Zacaultipán had successfully rescued her brother during the execution ceremony, he'd have gotten away with it. But Aztlan pulled out all the stops on the mojo that day. She bounced off that astral barrier that surrounded the *teocalli* like a rubber ball. If anybody wants a copy of the trid, just let me know.

- Kane

Both nations are rumored to be building up forces for an offensive. A lot of intel traffic is filtering through Caracas from both Azzie's operatives and the *Departamento de Inteligencia e Seguridad Amazonica* (the Amazonian CIA). Expect the shit to pour down any day now.

- A number of other factions and agencies, like the Corporate Court, the United Nations, and some of the great dragons, are also investigating the matter, probing both camps to gather intel for the greater picture. Reminds me a lot of the old days in Eastern Europe shortly before the Euro Wars broke out.

- Kay St. Irregular

FRONTLINE JITTERS

Even if the situation between the two Latin American behemoths were defused, Caracas is living on borrowed time. Every day that passes, the city and the spirit that it once possessed are disintegrating before the sheer desolation and the poverty of so many of its residents. The rift that divides the city will never be bridged.

- This is why Amazonia never claimed Caracas. The suffering of millions from the drug abuse, bio-modification, and negative emotions spills into the astral. Already this can be seen in the local spirits with their feral features and twisted aspects that mirror the surrounding desolation. For the Amazonians, Caracas is a cancer. Since they cannot remove it they are doing everything to keep it from metastasizing.

- Glasswalker

The *caracazos* (protest marches against the establishment with subsequent violent unrest) are as hopeless as a violent uprising would be; rocking the boat is not a good idea when it's this crowded.

For the *patrones*, untouchable in their vast estates on the slopes of the *El Ávila* range, Caracas is little more than the cheap labor and flesh it provides in abundance. They couldn't care less about the gang wars being fought over distribution rights for the Cartels' goods between the lower echelons of the underworld, like the nationalist posers Bolívar '49 or the savage Alianza. It's gotten so bad Venevisión (owned by Grupo Cisneros) has taken to releasing the (growing) death tolls of the previous weekend every Monday (just ahead of everyone's daily fix of telenovelas). As a result, many quarters practice a policy of seclusion, restricting passage to lower-class citizens and forming neighborhood watches against the criminal elements lurking outside.

People think of Caracas as a modern Babylon, and not just because the city limits have forced the buildings to reach for the

sky, girded by bullet elevators and connected by high catwalks and bridges, passageways, and zep-docks. Caracas reeks corruption through every pore. When the Philippines regained their long-fought freedom, Caracas snatched Manila's place as the new hot spot for the sex tourism industry. Hot Latino *chicas* are just the tip of the iceberg.

The misery of the dirt-poor and the presence of top-notch biotech companies have spawned a new trend among the flashy red light-districts the *patrones* frequent like **Nueva Caracas** or **Palmar de Caridad**. Good looks are just a matter of bio-shaping these days. The pimps don't care whether the *juves* (the young blood) are of Latino origin as long as they're hot, available, and desperate. Today's *putas* come custom-made, bio-sculpted to their clients' specs. Modern brothels owned and run by the Ghost Cartels use computers to generate a detailed image of the object of desire which they are able to deliver—in the flesh—in less than a week, thanks to cutting-edge biomodding. Some *muñecas* (dolls) undergo the process several times a year; others become concubines and slaves.

High on immuno-suppressors and moodies, most of the *muñecas* start loosing their identity after a few rounds of new faces, body shapes, skin, or hair color. Some of them are even decked out with the latest simsense recording gear to cater the clips to the local porn industry (check El Dorado Entertainment) before they are retired from service. After a while they turn into what they really are—burned out living sex toys—assuming their body doesn't break down from the biostress.

- Morphing impacts the mind. Some are pushed over the edge and go completely nuts with an outburst of primal atrocity, murdering their clients, masters, or relatives. And it's not just the psycho-trauma—shit happens when you go in for experimental modding. I've seen some of the gene-art freaks dwelling in Caracas's twilight zones and I hope they never end up on my operating table.

- Butch

- Some of the lucky ones—the ones with the least mental disorders or who have lost their identity to amnesia or psychosis—filter into the local shadows and establish themselves as faces and fixers. They've got a virtual network of their own. If you're looking to operate in Caracas and don't have a face handy, hire one of these former *muñecas*; they're pretty good at what they do.

- Traveler Jones

The whole business (including the gene spas where they do the modding) is controlled by *patrona* Graciela "the Maker" Riveros, the local *jefa* (boss) of the Olaya Cartel. Though there's been a lot of infighting between the other Cartel sharks over their share of the racket, her position has never really been questioned, thanks in part to her own local company, Riveros Applied Mimetics (RAM), which is financed by drug funds. She also gets a boost from her tight connections to the other gene-harvesters and bio-tweakers found in the **Chacao** district such as Biogene (Yakashima), Effluent Microbiotics (Genesis Consortium), Allergopharm (Genom), Parashield (MCT), and Universal Omnitech. Gossip has it that bio-mogul Pedro Jiménez of the Palco is hooked on the lady.



INCOMING FEED

- The Ghost Cartels are not to be messed with. After decades of fighting with Aztechnology—they had old family feuds with the cartels that founded ORO, Aztech's predecessor—they are pretty resilient when it comes to outside interference. If you're looking for other outfits, you're out of luck—the Yaks are over in Peru (old Jap domain) and have a minor foothold in Metropole, but neither the Mafia nor Vory have ever broken into the market. To top it all off, the Cartels have quite a few friends abroad. For instance, the Choson Ring handles point for the Olaya Cartel in Seattle, and the Triads are looking to tap the Cartel's bioengineered Awakened drug market.

- Mihoshi Oni

Few people know that RAM is just a front for the Cartel's research and production of bioengineered Awakened designer drugs (BADs), most of which are designed by "the Maker" herself (hence the nickname). Which reminds me: if you have a BTL-habit, don't forget to bring your fix along. It's a pain to get it here. The Cartel is extra sensitive about electronic competition to their number one franchise.

- In the wake of the AR boom, Senora Riveros played around with mind-expanding substances that act on those parts of the brain used to process augmented reality information and invented a new drug called X-yte. It's the latest rage with the mesh-heads in North Am. While X-yte is known to enhance the reality factor of the AR experience, it also works like virtual speed or an amphetamine-boost for hackers who take the stuff via inhalers.

- The Smiling Bandit

ELECTRONIC JUMBLE

While you can find just about anything illegal on Caracas's huge black market, you'll find basic necessities lacking. For instance, the city's grid is a pain in the ass. While we've got AR (who doesn't these days?) the coverage is inadequate to say the least. The whole grid is like Swiss cheese, irregular and shifting, so dead zones turn up suddenly. Even in high-sec zones, the networks can switch between spam and static on a minute basis. With SINS and GridGuide pretty much useless—with good reason—the patrones never saw never a reason to finance a stable sprawl-wide network.

- Heard some 'hoods are pooling resources to pay techheads to set up local nets for them that have access for residents only. Since, ironically, some of those local z-zones mesh grids have better connections than those of gated enclaves, they're often tapped by hackers for illegal VR activities.

- Puck

HAMBURG

Posted by: Umsturz

If you ever need a stepping stone into Lofwyr's backyard, a place to crash on your way to Oslo (aka Chiba-West), or just a rock-solid opportunity zone, the Hanseatic Free City of Hamburg is your port of call. It's been a rat's nest of smugglers, pirates, and other *zweilichtiges Gesindel* (shady characters like you, mesh-head) since the *Hanse*-times of old, and still hosts the largest scene of criminals and wannabes in Northern Europe.

Back in 2011, Hamburg took a hammering from the Black Tide when *Mutter Erde* puked up all the toxic crap her

CITIES ON THE EDGE

disrespectful children had been dumping in the North Sea for decades. The toxic deluge flooded northwestern parts of the Allied German States (including large tracts of Hamburg) and several neighboring nations (Norway, United Kingdom, and the United Netherlands) turning the sprawl into a true North Sea harbor—the “Venice of the North” as we call it here, on the new Elbe estuary.

- Welcome to toxic paradise! And don't forget to bring your breathers and filters, 'cause even if you don't intend to walk around the mud flats near Hamburg at low tide (and if you do, I strongly advise sealed chemsuits), the stinking sea-breeze in the western parts of the city is often ... intoxicating.

- Nephrine

- Ow. Bad pun.

- Lyran

- Thank you.

- Nephrine

NORTH SEA URBANISM

When several streets suddenly became waterways, folks got creative. Flooded stories were waterproofed and shored up to be converted into basements for new constructions—leaving several (sometimes conveniently air-filled) underwater hollows that are used by smugglers and fixers to store and handle goods. Low-lying streets gave way to plascrete jetty's for water-taxis or hovercraft routes, or even underwater docks for mini-subs. Pontoon streets and floating quarters, consisting of small areas connected via planks and bridges, mark the cityscape of Hamburg. Dikes, bridge piers, and elevated tracks carry the Autobahn and monorails (including the Hamburg exits to and from Euro Route 7, linking Hanover to Copenhagen) above the flooded parts of the city, linking important traffic junctions like the Central Terminal Moorfleeten or the huge orbital-capable Lufthansa Airport in **Kaltenkirchen**.

The mouth of the Elbe, home to the city's harbor, gives the sprawl a classical North-South divide. The uptown districts like the **Nordstadt** enclave (a whole district's worth of corp-zombie offices and apartment towers), **Eimsbüttel** (media biz and bean counters), and **Wandsbek** (metroplex administration) are the home ground of wageslaves of all kinds, while the dilapidated buildings of the southern districts like **Harburg** and **Bergedorf** houses all the lower echelons of society.

The Z-zone **Wildost** (Wild East) contains a former Baltic-Polish refugee camp sprawling over a concrete reef of submerged building blocks. It's a hotbed for criminal activities. Illegal immigrants, the SINless, and anti-tech or green communes like the *Klabauterbund* eke out their miserable existence in this stinking silt morass, making do with floating container blocks, house-hovercrafts, and yurt barracks. The locals just call it *die Sickergrube* (the Seeping Pit) because any scum picked up uptown inevitably ends up in these waters. Though Wildost is dreaded as a base for ruthless pirate outfits like *Störtebekers Erben*, HanSec (Hamburg's private police department) tolerates the ghetto because round-ups wouldn't be cost effective—after all, the area's population is hostile to authority.

The strangest peculiarity of all is the “*Hansestrafvollzugsanstalt I*.” Built as an Alcatraz-like prison island/labor camp on the remnants of the former district of **Wilhelmsburg** (hence the nickname **Big Willi**), the prison is surrounded by a drone perimeter and guarded only on the island's rim by HanSec. The prison itself is autonomous (and extraterritorial), except for food parcels that are dropped into the area daily and distributed along the prevailing food chain. As part of their punishment, the prisoners work 24/7 in automated production lines for the benefit of the city—and if they don't, food delivery is suspended.

- The HanSec is owned by the Senate and European media giant DeMeKo. Naturally, the DeMeKo takes advantage of this relationship by catering the pay-per-view prison-fights to bloodthirsty sport fans and a special clientele on Channel 13.

- Sunshine

MITTENMANG

Mittenmang translates literally to “in the thick of it,” and it's the best expression to describe Hamburg's central districts. Mingling up and downtown, the **Neue Mitte** (most of which is nerved by waterways) and **Altona** are the districts where the class divide blurs under shining holo-projections, colorful arrows, and flashing neo-lights.

- Tell the truth Umsturz—it's kerosene and water. You can put them together, but they don't really mix, and the kerosene still burns when you put a light to it.

- Baka Dabora

No surprise then that Neue Mitte is an AR spam zone. Since *Ætherlink* (S-Ks new AR powerhouse) and European giant DeMeKo set up a high capacity grid, Hamburg's media- and technophiles have been exploiting the system for all its worth. You can't walk through the **Reeperbahn**—the (in)famous red light district in **St. Pauli**—in open mode without being swarmed by kinky RFID body tags that hookers and hustlers employ to advertise their goods (and price-lists) or assaulted by naughty *peeps* from brothels and simstim cybersex clubs. However, runners and fixers have been known to use the tag system as info drop boxes, hiding and encoding data under what appears to be normal information or virtual graffiti. Thanks to virtual Big Brother DeMeKo, nanosecond updated global news briefs are omnipresent and readily accessible via mediatronic surfaces or link.

- Trust me: if you go here, you want to shell out for some grade-A spam filters. Erika's got a new batch on the market, and there's nothing better when you can't take a step without being assaulted by arrows, spammed by rad manifestos, or driven insane by news-ticker updates that are sure to slow even an Ikono to a crawl. Don't get me wrong—some of the media biggies provide more than junk. DeMeKo, for instance, pays good scrip for infobytes and snoop stories on the Senate (and its dark twin), the Eurocorps, and the bold and the beautiful of Europe's high society or Grand Tour. Recently they've been laying moves to undermine Sol Media assets in Southern Europe, so they're eager for scoops.

- Glitch

Schmidts (that's what Germans call their Johnsons, pun intended) also use the night-life environment to set up face-to-face meets. Black markets (some of them underwater) float around the Neue Mitte on a regular basis. My favorite is the old Fischmarkt, a pontoon market that opens early every day. You can pick up about almost anything there *except* fish (I wouldn't recommend eating anything pulled from the North Sea anyway), including illegal goods like weapons and restricted tech, all traded under the counter. The Scandinavian Lobatchevski Vory still ride high on the tide in Hamburg, subcontracting their illegal operations to Scand Vikings gangs, Dutch *Penose* thugs, and hover-gangs like the *Wasserratten* (Water Rats). They've kept some competition at bay by sharing the market with indy smugglers, *kapers*, pirates, the *Luden* (Hamburg's independent panders), and the *Likedeelers* (a fixer-ring of North-born former runner types), but the constant influx of unemployed former Polish freedom fighters and Baltic Red Vory enforcers into the underworld has led to serious flare-ups in the canals.

A RAD'S NEST

Politically, the city is run by the Senate of Hamburg, which was founded after Hamburg became a free city in 1935. The senators—each governing a certain office of the sprawl's administration—are elected by Hamburg's residents for a four-year term. While multiple re-elections are possible, corporate citizens have been banned from running for office since the Twenties to minimize conflicts of interest.

With Hamburg a breeding ground for political agitators of all sorts, the Senate has always used its ties to activist groups and rads as a front to restrain the corps from excessive meddling in the sprawl's affairs. With the nationalist, left-wing, Green, anti-corporate, and anarchist politicians backing their senators in the ongoing conflict with the AGS' government, Hamburg has become a thriving hive of subversive political elements in the last few years.

In truth, there have long been rumors that the welfare of Hamburg is actually in the hands of a shadow cabinet calling themselves *Altermänner* (an old German expression for the abbot of a trading post) and consisting of an unknown number of senators and influential Hamburg citizens. From what I've heard about local patriotism and the anti-corporate stance of its members, they are a frighteningly influential bunch of hardliners.

- Guess who's on the payroll?
- Fatima

EUROPOL CLASSIFIED MEMO

:: Potential Political Security Risks ::

:: European Rad Groups & Activist Movements ::

Anarcho-Syndikalistische Union (ASU): The parliamentary mouthpiece of different syndicalist worker's unions contains fringe elements. Embodies anarchist ideals and supports various autonomous anarchist movements.

Anti-Eurocrats: Formed in response to the foundation of the New European Economic Community, the Anti-Eurocrat movement is an association of different anti-NEEC organizations in different countries (mainly Austria, the AGS, Italy, and Scandinavian Union). The Anti-Eurocrats promotes nationalism and protection of national sovereignty.

Attack!: Global anti-corporate direct action network. Strikes against installations and assets in Europe are often coordinated by an associated Matrix anarchist group called UV-X.

GreenWar: Eco-terrorist organization consisting of environmentalist hardliners, deep ecologists, and eco-fascists. Allegedly founded in Hamburg after the Black Tide. Doesn't shrink from bioterrorism or collateral damage.

Grüne Zellen (Green Cells): Radical direct action environmentalist network that punishes polluting corporations. Often form one-action and ad-hoc networks that are hard to track. Green Cells have links to autonomous anarchist movements, feminists, and anti-fascists like the Antifa Direct Action.

Klabauterbund: The Klabauterbund consists of eco-anarchists that often form dropout communes. Members advocate an eco-conscious lifestyle without over-reliance on technology; consequently they also draw numerous freethinkers and neo-pagans. They support piracy as long as it is anti-corporate.

Mutter Erde: The Mother Earth policlub (globally active) promotes feminist aspects, nature magic, eco-awareness, and spiritual beliefs with druidism, shamanism, and witchcraft. Radical spin-offs of the Mutter Erde are Rote Zora (women-only direct-action feminist cells) and Sie (radical neo-pagan feminists).

Nationale Aktion: Ultranationalist extremist organization that advocates both Aryan and human supremacy. Responsible for several terrorist assaults on metahuman and EuroWar refugee enclaves in the AGS.

- Word on the street is the Altermänner have ties throughout the underworld, not just the shadows. They also sponsor a number of direct action and terrorist rad-groups.
- Red Anya

While this policy has undermined a major Big Ten presence, the city is pervaded by mega and Eurocorp proxies. A variety of local subsidiaries of S-K, Renraku (through military shipyards of Blohm & Voss), AG Chemie, Zeta-ImpChem, Maersk, and Proteus make their homes in **Stade**, with direct access to the North Sea.

- I once looked upon Hamburg and saw pitch-black streams spilling into the stygian sea of the new world. It was clear that Mother Earth's children have already forgotten their lessons. Make of that what you will.
- Arete

FREE PORT TRADE ZONE

Conducting business within a Free Port Trade Zone naturally has its own draw. Though Hamburg was forced into several compromises regarding shipping tariffs and regulations through NEEC agreements—which ended up benefiting of the corp-controlled high-tech Europort harbor (perfect for behemoth-freighters and cargo whales)—smaller tankers and cargo ships still call at Hamburg port, which is a cash cow for the city.

While transport and logistics powerhouses Hapag-Lloyd (Maersk), Worldwide Shipping, and Regulus Transport Services are constantly wrangling for more authority in the FPTZ (and playing dirty tricks on each other), the Senate-controlled armed customs authorities keep the docklands under tight control—at least when it comes to corporate freightage. Unregistered freighters, free merchants, and pirates regularly dock without hassle from customs officials or the harbormaster. Hamburg publicly condemns piracy and smuggling (at least for the DeMcKo hacks swarming like flies around here), but the authorities turn a blind eye to a significant amount of gray market action out of enlightened self-interest. The parallel economy keeps the sprawl from overdependence on the megacorps, which serves the Altermänner's agenda. Most of the independent freight goes in and out unchecked, though port authorities are a little bit picky when it comes to arms, BTLs, and drug smuggling.

Likedeelers also use their international connections to have goods hitchhike on corporate freighters across the globe, rather than rely exclusively on “conventional” smuggling. Didn't take them long to crack the ARO data glyphs companies tag their cargo with these days, but even then you need local muscle to move containers around the dock, especially if you are not crazy about hacking the transponder-ridden system just to make some four-meter-high cubes disappear.

- Throughout the FPTZ, companies still heavily rely on meta-human stevedores who are underpaid and thus easy to bribe or convince to look the other way. Try that with the work-droids that float around Europort these days.

- 2XL

Private Message...

Heya, heard on the grapevine you might be planning a visit to my backyard. If you need toys for the op, ping me or look for me at the *Empire* in St. Pauli. I keep my cache well-stocked and I always cut a comrade a good deal. — Umsturz

PARIAH

With the Allied German States inexorably sliding towards a corporate democracy (an S-K owned “subsidiary”) due to economic recession following the Crash 2.0, the Senate has made no secret of its disapproval of S-K's and the Frankfurt Bank Association's meddling in the country's political and financial decision-making. It reached the boiling point when

Hamburg reps walking out of the last session of the *Bundesrat* (the Federal Assembly).

To add more fuel to the fire, several senators—including Vesna Lyzhichko, the new Speaker of the Senate and nominal Mayor of Hamburg—have been linked to the Anti-Eurocrats, a movement that demands the abolition of the NEEC. Hamburg hasn't seceded from the AGS yet, but I've heard that the Senate (most likely somebody among the Altermänner) is negotiating with ruling factions of the North and Baltic Sea Free Cities to propose some kind of league or alliance.

- Their proposal might fall on open ears. Since the end of the Polish Civil War, the Kapers (Polish pirates) are being increasingly pressed to hand the vital Tricity port back to Poland. While Königsberg remains observant, both Tallinn and Riga, who have been brushed off by the NEEC Council of Ministers often enough, are willing to join such an alliance. I am not sure about free-for-alls like Kronstadt and the Scandinavian Ship City, though. I don't think that the Russian anarchists will get involved in such an alliance at the present stage, unless S-K or Evo is starting to put the screws on them.

- Traveler Jones

ISTANBUL

Posted by: Picador

Jewel of the Bosphorus, Byzantium, Constantinople, seat of empires and faiths since the beginning of recorded time; Istanbul is a city torn between Europe and Asia, divided by history, geography, religion, and politics. I'm using “Istanbul” because nobody but die-hard separatists and government officials use “Constantinople” anymore—it's vanishing from common usage with every bomb that goes off in the city.

Straddling the Bosphorus, Istanbul is on the firing line of the intrigues and dominance games of Europe, Asia, and the Middle East. For millennia, this city provided a meeting ground where East and West, Christianity and Islam, secular power and faith could mingle, interbreed, and cyclically clash—but now it has fallen into more regular conflict. As one would expect from the city that brought us the word Byzantine, interests collide and intrigues spin as corporations, countries, and fanatics vie for control and influence over the city of a thousand mosques and churches. City life regularly skips a beat at the sound of nearby detonations, the sprawling streets and waterways carrying violent echoes and the smell of cordite and distant smoke. War has become Istanbul's livelihood, as unstable governments rise and nations crumble. The troubles in Turkey and the perpetual instability of the Balkans have transformed the city into a mercenary hotspot. It might be dangerous ground these days, but it's *the* place to find work in Eastern Europe and the Middle East.

- Picador has a penchant for waxing poetic. Though the commonwealth's control is crumbling, no single nation, corporation, or warlord holds sway around this strategic city—though many are willing to try. There's no limit to work available to mercs and runners willing to get their hands dirty. It's the perfect entry point into the Balkans, the Aegean, and the Black Sea states—and of course the Middle East.

- Black Mamba

OF TIMES PAST

Istanbul has a tradition of being bathed in blood every century or so. This century is no different. At the end of the Euro-Wars, the Alliance for Allah's figurehead, Mullah Sayid Jazzir, was assassinated during a visit to the city and the Second Ottoman Jihad dissolved in chaos. As the tides of war changed, the city soon capitulated to a brutal European counterstrike.

In the ensuing years, Turkey itself was torn apart. A civil war has raged for more than three decades. The nation stands divided between the eastern fundamentalists that tried to keep the Alliance alive and the secular regime of the nationalist Neo-Ataturk party that took power in Ankara. Istanbul declared itself an independent commonwealth, officially renaming itself Constantinople in '42.

Though the Neo-Ataturks have slowly brought stability to Turkey, the country never mustered the strength to reclaim Istanbul. The city itself is bolstered by megacorporate interests, the *Philike Hetairia* (aka the Black Sea Friendship Association) with Ukraine, Romania, and Greece, and more recently the New European Economic Community. The Crash of '64 sent the media-dependent Neo-Ataturk regime into a tailspin, however, and fanned the flames of fundamentalist insurgency in the southwestern provinces—once again the city's precarious existence tipped off-balance. One of the fundamentalists' goals was the reclamation of Istanbul. They weren't as easily dissuaded as Ankara, so the balance of power (and the city's name) have shifted once again.

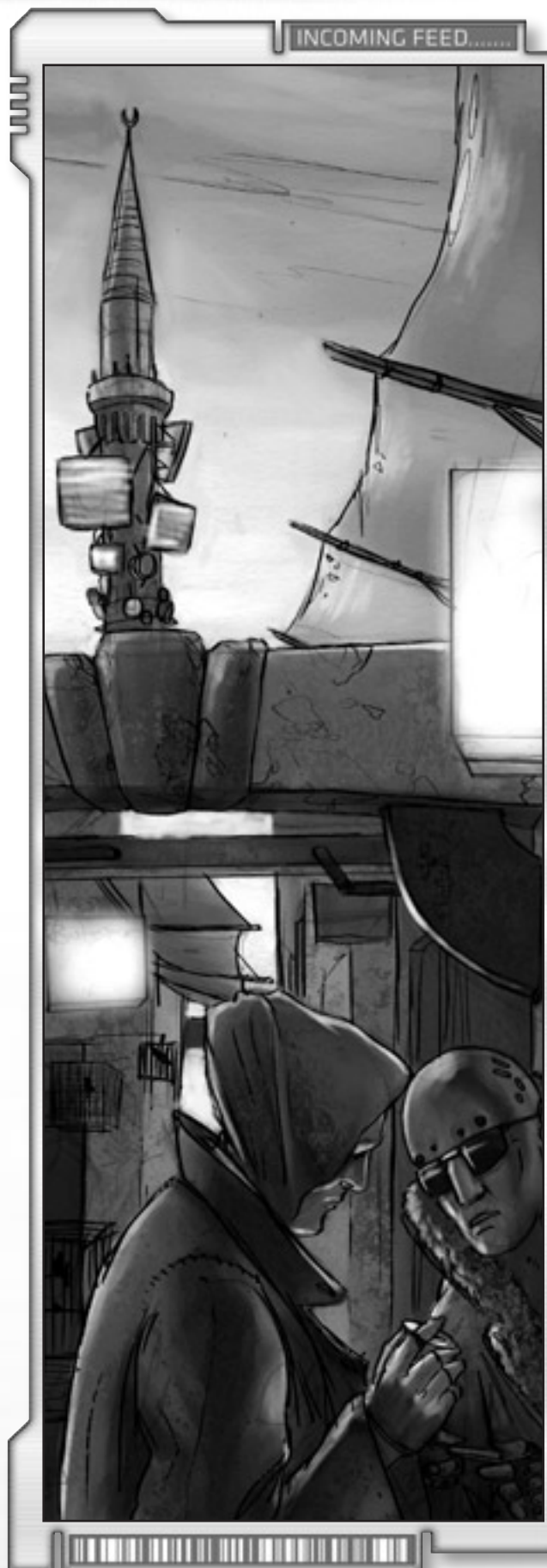
War and terrorism are so close to this free city that it rumbles with the transit of APCs and shudders with the explosions of suicide bombers. Though corporate gunboats flying NEEC colors and Ukrainian warships still stand guard over the Straits, the Bosphorus suspension bridge was demolished by jihadists three years ago, limiting road traffic to the heavily-guarded Sultan Mehmet de Fatih bridge further north. The vital ferry links are carefully monitored, but still it's rare for a week to go by without a suicide bomber, car bomb, or mortar attack from the Asian bank. In fact, matters have become so bad that the government's corporate and military allies advised it to abandon the impoverished Asian districts where insurrection breeds, leaving them to their fate.

- Problem is almost half the city's labor pool lives in Uskudar on the Asian bank. They still have to come across everyday to work in offices, shops, and factory floors. More than 2 million people make the ferry crossing twice a day, and monitoring that traffic is an exercise in futility.

- Goat Foot

Law enforcement is handled by a state police force, the *Polis*, but these days many outlying parts of the sprawl are patrolled by mechanized troops on urban enforcement duty. As any merc will tell you, soldiers suck at police work. Don't relax too much, though—bored vets are trigger-happy by nature.

- As I recall, licenses for automatic weapons and combat cyber are both easy to come by and dirt cheap, but packing a concealed weapon or acting suspicious is likely to get you tagged as a would-be terrorist. My crew almost ran into trouble last May, so watch your



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step. The general security policy is “better safe than sorry.” Standing orders are to shoot first and take fingerprints later.

- Black Mamba

BEYOGLU

Beyoglu is the northernmost district of the greater Istanbul sprawl. It is the most modern part of the venerable city, partially rebuilt after the quakes of '45. The district is famous for its hyperactive lifestyle as much as its distinctive ambiance, combining secular capitalism and spiritual enlightenment.

On the one hand, the district has a flourishing corporate presence and is home to many megacorp high-rises, offices, and public branches (though local HQs are often in the administrative district of Seraglio for convenience). The city owes much to megacorporate investment and clout, particularly Saeder-Krupp's, which has kept the separatist government in power and the local economy prosperous. It's from Beyoglu that Saeder-Krupp, Ares Macrotech, Mitsuhama, and a host of second-tier Euro and Asian corps—such as Zeta-ImpChem, Global Sandstorm, and Ukraine Bioenergetica—weave their inscrutable web of intrigues, dictating the future not only of Istanbul but of the whole Black Sea region.

On the other hand, Beyoglu hosts a considerable portion of the sprawl's hundreds of mosques and churches. A thriving arts and mystical scene flourishes around the Sufist Mevlevi monastery and the New Islamic University. Mevlevi represents one of the last remaining monasteries of the Sufi tradition, popular in Istanbul but in decline elsewhere. Unlike mainstream Islam (both Sunni and Shiite), Sufism embraces the mystic aspects of Islamic beliefs and is comfortable exploring the Awakened aspect of the world, drawing magicians persecuted by other Islamic sects. The Mevlevi monastery is home to a long-standing Sufi tradition—the famous Whirling Dervishes.

- One thing you'll see on many walls around Beyoglu, and pretty much everywhere in the city—besides cracked masonry and radical ARO bills—is tilework featuring intricate cursive script. Often written off as a traditional decorative motif, those of you with astral sight might be surprised if you take a second look. Calligraphy plays a major role in Islamic magic tradition. The tilework often conceals protective enchantments.

- Goat Foot

The University is drawing students from all over the Black Sea with courses in new technologies and the arts—and the corps are having a field day reaping the new talent. An interesting twist is that the New Islamic University is financed in part by the Islamic Renaissance Movement (IRM), a secular movement rabidly opposed to fundamentalism and vocally advocating the modernization of Islam. It's proven popular among Istanbul's young Muslims and has played an increasing role in local politics with its moderate and open stance, despite threats and attacks from fundamentalists.

- I was chasing down some data on the Byz-grid a few weeks ago and met an old face from Shadowland: Almond White. The lady's still deep with the IRM. These days she's mentoring an underground

sisterhood of Islamic hackers going by the moniker Daughters of Fatima. Remember the Arabian Caliphate's grid crash last year? My kind of empowerment! You heard it, chummer, the girls are packing SOTA links under them *hijabs*!

- Slamm-O!

- The IRM offices are a regular fundamentalist target and boast strong security. Though we try to keep it nice on the surface, we've been sending retaliatory teams into insurgent Turkey and even the Caliphate, where we are helping to extract Islamic moderates and free thinkers from hardliner hands.

- Goat Foot

GRAND BAZAAR

The sprawling **Grand Bazaar** is one of the inescapable stops for anyone in the shadow biz. A labyrinth of streets crowded with shops and tent stalls orderly arranged around central squares where anything and everything can be found for sale, from the latest intelligence from the Arabia Caliphate to the ancient relics unearthed in the Urals to custom weapons of exquisite design. It's also perfect to pick up low-grade cyber knock-offs out of Syria and Russia.

As a concession to its influential merchant association, the Bazaar has a charter that allows it to be self-regulating and policing. As a further concession, no corporations or representatives thereof are allowed to sell openly in the Bazaar. This is just a formality, however, and in practice corps circumvent the regulation by a number of creative artifices.

Kamil Argubedi is the head of the Bazaar association and a *very* well-connected man. They say he gets a cut from all the illegal action in the Bazaar, but stays so squeaky clean that when he's not holding court in his Bazaar demesne, he's dining with corporate heads and city officials.

- Word is Argubedi runs the rackets on the west side of town. To his credit he's never been under the thumb of the powerful Gray Wolves. He's even cutting into their biz by bypassing their pipeline, going straight to the Kabul Maffiya and shipping them by boat from Beirut. Things are getting pretty tense down by the old docks.

- Moji

Several big-time fixers, merc brokers, and lesser crimelords take advantage of the Bazaar's autonomy to operate openly from offices over the packed streets. As a result, a lot of the infrastructure and supply sources for the local shadow community have found a home in the area too. If you know where to look, you'll find smugglers and talismongers plying their wares on backstreets while armorers and hackmeisters offer their services in unexpected corners of the market.

SERAGLIO AND SULTANAHMET

Sprawling over the rugged promontory covered in lush parklands is the administrative district known as the **Seraglio**, where the free city's convoluted government (such as it is) makes its home in the majestic Tokapi palace of the Sultans of old. The nearby old harem complex has been converted to serve as headquarters for the mercenary company, 10,000 Daggers, while the

command posts for the EuroForce and *Philike Hetairia* (Friendly Society) forces allied with Constantinople occupy other parts of the complex. Point-defense batteries guard the coastline, capable of taking out most incoming mortar and artillery fire, and also featuring artillery capable of tracking attacks back to the source and returning fire within seconds.

Tokapi is where the city government resides, a sprawling bureaucracy led by a five-person ruling Council. Each councilor is democratically elected by one of the five districts (with **Uskudar** on the Asian Bank currently suspended). Anyone locally born can run for office. The current council is quite nationalistic, though less independent than its predecessors. Most councilors (and their respective bank accounts) have arrangements with multiple corporate patrons and underworld powers, but none except Saied Bey (representing Beyoglu and formerly of Saeder-Krupp), has any open allegiances.

- The guy to know at the Tokapi is one Mohammed Khebi, a well-connected functionary and a high-rolling fixer. He can expedite paperwork and permits, vanish records and deliver official favors like it's nobody's business—for a fee of course. He's also the point man for a couple of Eurocorps in the government and has been known to be a thorn in Saeder-Krupp's side.
- Goat Foot

Crowding behind the Tokapi palace is Embassy Row, where the regional powers base their representatives. Their intelligence services run constant operations into the surrounding region. The Ukrainians are particularly active since they started building up the Phililke Hetaria as a counterbalance to Moscow's power, but Russia and several NEEC countries have run ops into the Near and Middle East from here too.

- The Phililke is a defense and trade pact with Istanbul as a founding member. It is very proactive and has been known to shell militia strongholds and authorize commando raids in the Asian sectors. As a friendly but officially unaligned power, the NEEC sees Istanbul as perfect buffer state and strong trade partner. To avoid getting its paws dirty and displeasing the Ankara government, it prefers deniable assets to destabilize emerging threats in the Balkans and Turkey.
- Am-mut

Facing the Sea of Marmara, south of the Seraglio, is the district of **Sultanahmet**, home to landmarks like the magnificent Blue Mosque and the majestic Hagia Sofia. Huddled in the high-security neighborhoods around these are the secure mansions and walled villas of the wealthy and powerful. Walk a couple of minutes south, however, and the district cascades down to the old fisherman's wharves in a warren of narrow cobblestone streets and shady alleyways that are home to much of the city's criminal element. Rabid slogans in Cyrillic and cursive script, punctuated by bullet holes, scream from the clay walls of vice dens and drinking holes where the locals, runners, and mercs hang out.

The crime-riddled streets of this southern quarter are the powerbase of the Gray Wolves Maffiya. The Wolves are loosely linked cells of violent ultranationalist hardliners who turned to crime to finance their activities, in the vein of last century's ETA

EVO METAMATRIX TRAVEL GUIDE

Istanbul:: Other Famous Bazaars

The Book Bazaar: This market boasts a wealth of rare folios, ancient tomes and recent bestsellers, in a dozen languages for all tastes and pockets, hardcopy or digital. [Map Detail](#)

The Spice Bazaar: Talismongering and drugs have been added to the bewildering variety of pharmacopoeia, herbs, and spices which gave this venerable weekly market its name. [Map Detail](#)

The Janissaries' Bazaar: Ordnance, munitions, field equipment, and even off-the-rack cyberware (not to mention the few non-corp clinics operating in Istanbul), are some of the things to be found in the Janissaries' Bazaar. Also the perfect place to make new friends and buy the hottest intel on regional flashpoints. [Map Detail](#)

FINANCIAL TIMES ONLINE

Query: 10,000 Daggers

Full Designation: 10,000 Daggers SA (ZOG Rating A)

10,000 Daggers is a mercenary, security, and military consultancy corporation with branches in fifteen countries and headquartered in Constantinople. Established in 2038 by Ukrainian and Turkish Euro-war veterans, 10,000 Daggers specializes in intelligence gathering, covert operations, and small scale tactical conflict and is particularly active in the Middle East, North Africa, Central Asia, and Eastern Europe.

[Link for full article.](#)

[Link to official company node.](#)

or IRA. Over the decades, they've become a full-fledged syndicate allied with the Italian Mafia. The Wolves have many friends in the Ankara government (such as it is) and are a powerful force throughout the Black Sea area. Their main interests lie in drug smuggling and arms trade (mainly violating sanctions into the war-torn Balkans).

It's suspected that Sultanahmet also hides some fundamentalist terrorist cells. Most are simply offshoots (numbering less than a dozen individuals) of major fundamentalist militias in Uskadar and southeastern Turkey—like the Sayid Jazzir Alliance or the Ottoman Martyr's Brigade. Others are locals spurred on by fundamentalist mullahs. All are extremely dangerous and engage in a variety of terrorist acts aimed at toppling the Tokapi executive, seizing power in the city, and purging it of the corrupt and infidel before turning on Ankara.

- Ironically, their greatest enemies are the Gray Wolves. The syndicate has been known to cooperate with the authorities to root out radicals hiding in its backyard.
- Goat Foot

... GAME INFORMATION ...

"You brought me all of the way out here in the middle of the Sound on your private yacht so we could have some privacy." Haze craned his neck and made an exaggerated look around the quiet waters. He hoped his Mask spell and acting skills were holding up. "So tell me what you're selling and I'll tell you if the Humanis Policlub is interested."

"Oh, you will be, I assure you," said the elder Mafioso seated in the deck chair. He toked on his cigar again, then glanced back meaningfully at the three goons standing behind him before reaching into his suit jacket. He pulled a small datachip from an inside pocket and tossed it to Haze, smiling broadly.

Haze looked at the chip with disdain. "Why don't you just transfer these files to my link?" he asked.

"Because, Mr. Smythe, we want to make sure it isn't leaked before it gets into the hands of someone who can use it for actual effect. That's why we're discussing this out here," he opened his arms expansively, "where surveillance is more difficult. But to be safe, we are also jamming radio frequencies."

Haze raised an eyebrow as part of the charade. "What's the data, then?"

"Through some of our ... connections, we were recently passed a set of medical records relating to Ms. Josephine Dzhugashvili's unfortunate Matrix accident back in '64. Of particular interest were her brain scans and the early stroke-recovery therapy reports." The Mafia lieutenant smiled wickedly. "You see, Mr. Smythe, there are certain irregularities in what happened to Ms. Dzhugashvili's brain, certain patterns that doctors saw repeated around the world. She suffered irreversible damage of a very particular sort. Thousands of similar cases around the world remain locked up, diagnosed as bat-shit insane. Some, like her, were released, only to flip out and be re-institutionalized later. Doctors are now treating each of these cases as dangerous; they're ticking time-bombs waiting to go off."

The mobster settled back in his chair. "See, Smythe? We're handing you evidence that your candidate's primary contender is a god-damned mental case. Use it right, and you won't even need to release it to the public. You can pressure her to drop out of the race."

Haze nodded; he had the confirmation he had come for. He walked to the railing, as if considering the offer. "Sounds very intriguing ... but let me ask: what are you getting out of it? And, is this the only copy?" He waved the chip.

The Mafioso smiled, "I have a back-up, just to play it safe." He pointed at his head, where Haze spotted the glint of a datajack port. "Right here, where I can keep a close eye on it. As to my interests ... let's just say that my boss, Mr. Gianelli, is concerned that Mr. Brackhaven makes it into office. Our family has some rather large investments in the Fort Lewis area, and we think Brackhaven is the candidate who is most likely to support those interests. In fact," he pointed at the chip, "we'd consider it an appropriate repayment of this personal favor if you could ensure that he will support our operations."



Haze turned and tossed the chip back to the surprised gangster. "Keep it. Brackhaven's a lost cause anyway." He then leapt over the side, splashing into the cold water—and into the waiting arms of his water elemental. While the mobsters looked over the side in confusion, he mentally instructed his fire elemental to materialize alongside the Evo NavTech cruiser hiding just a few clicks away—the pre-arranged signal for his employers to launch a pair of missiles at the Mafia boat.

Haze silently watched the boat's wreckage burn and sink as the elemental carried him away. Once again, he reminded himself that the best way to keep the Big Boys off your back was to keep them at each others' throats.

LIVING ON THE EDGE

Runner Havens visits a number of sprawls, each with its own distinct character, atmosphere, and intrigue, all of which rightfully claim the epithet "runner haven". These should be seen as only a representative sample, since many others exist in the Sixth World—from divided Denver to perilous Bangkok to merc-haven Lisbon. In fact, an enterprising gamemaster may wish to develop her own unique "runner haven" setting, using a location untouched in *Shadowrun* or perhaps closer to home in real life. Keep in mind, however, that all runner havens boast certain underlying similarities.

CHECKS AND BALANCES

So what makes a "runner haven?" Whether it's the cross-road City on the Sound, the teeming plascrete jungle of Hong Kong, the vice-riddled bedlam of Caracas, or the bombed-out backstreets of Istanbul, the most obvious factor is that all such sprawls are intrigue-laden flashpoints for the corporate, criminal, magical, and political factions of the Sixth World—with none being dominant. Such sprawls exist in a delicate balance of constantly shifting allegiances and power plays, as myriad factions vie with one another for greater influence, control, and wealth. The constantly clashing and entwined interests of these major figures are the perfect fuel for an exceptionally prolific shadowrun scene and diverse roleplaying opportunities.

Another aspect that makes these cities unique *Shadowrun* backdrops is their status as crossroads for regional trade, politics, and crime. This makes them natural staging points for international shadow and criminal activity of all sorts. Shadow ops naturally spill over and target neighboring cities, states, and nations, opening up distinct environments and a variety of international opportunities and plot hooks—from smuggling to datatheft to traditional cloak and dagger black ops.

LAW AND ORDER

An essential characteristic of any runner haven is the unusual mix of law and lawlessness and how this reflects both in terms of urban life and geography. In few other cities is the dystopian nature of the urban life so blatantly apparant, spawned by the greed and opportunism of megacorporations and the conflicting interests of local power players.

In a runner haven, the chasm between the haves and have-nots, the powerful and the meek, should be constantly visible.

Such sprawls are patchwork quilts of orderly corporate domains, bustling and well-monitored business districts, rundown blue-collar 'burbs, crime-riddled red-light districts, and no-go feral Z-zone sectors. Police presence (normally privatized) runs the full spectrum from ever-watchful to nonexistent. Ultrasecure corp office parks and facilities can border lawless and dangerous sectors mere blocks away. Whatever the specifics of the local status quo, this intermingling of law and lawlessness is essential to sustain a vibrant criminal and shadow community.

It's a safe assumption that corporations and the powers-that-be often foster the continued existence of lawless areas. That's because such areas provide quasi-legal and underground markets for certain products, disposable human resources, criminal talent as deniable assets, and secluded sites where questionable research and enterprises can be carried out. The power brokers depend on the low-lives in a sort of twisted symbiotic relationship.

The gamemaster should keep the following factors in mind when developing a runner haven:

- The effects on the local political and social environment of local politics, industry, and crime agendas (ie., the persistence of the Redmond and Puyallup Barrens).
- The effects of rampant corporate competition and privatization of law-enforcement.
- Issues of extraterritoriality and jurisdiction in the staking of territories by corps—and to a lesser extent, the feudal territoriality of crime syndicates and gangs.
- Metatype and ethnic segregation issues, including self-segregation (ie., the Ork Underground in Seattle).
- The effects of endemic criminality and the *laissez-faire* attitude of profit-minded privatized police forces.
- Cultural *zeitgeists* spawned by the intersection of so many different interests and agendas (ie., Orxploitation, Afroflash).

CORPORATE PRESENCE

Most runner havens—whether they are a regional transportation hub, boast some peculiarity of the local workpool or legislation, possess a specific industry or development focus of particular interest, or simply have a unique geo-political location—rate a high level of corporate interest and are often as strategically important as corporate enclaves. This corporate presence and influence isn't limited to the Big Ten megacorps either. A runner haven's crossroad status and international business opportunities provide fertile ground for a host of lower-tier majors and small corporations. This plethora of economic interests and agendas provides exactly the type of flashpoint environment where competition runs rampant and covert operations and espionage are standard operating procedure.

Ruthless work and business environments like this breed the kind of executive that megacorps appreciate. This means that runner havens are places where up-and-coming stars and Johnsons are assigned to cut their teeth and learn the ropes. Given the attention garnished on these sprawls by the hierarchy, they also represent the best placements for ladder-climbers to call attention to themselves (and they're safer than the cut-throat rat race in the Mother corp's own enclaves).

The fact that runner havens are focal points for competing corporate interests and that no single corporation holds sway makes the local scene particularly varied, with different sorts of intrigue and resulting opportunities for shadow business.

A runner havens' unique situation often allows for a wide range of corporate activities, all of which contain a potential treasure chest of run opportunities. They include:

- R&D and production facilities that take advantage of strong influence over government, lax monitoring by authorities, or permissive legislation.
- Regional headquarters, administration, operations and management centers.
- Production facilities making use of the city's central location to draw resources.
- Warehousing and distribution facilities, using the sprawl's status as transportation hub or ports.
- Gray market and quasi-legal operations such as arms dealing, field-testing of experimental technologies, etc.
- Strategic and market intelligence operations.

UNDERWORLD INFRASTRUCTURE

While corporate presence is the primary motor of shadow economics, it definitely isn't the only one. Inevitably such hubs of commercial and political activity draw the interests of the predators on the dark underside of society, be they full-blown crime syndicates, neighborhood gangs, or independent operators.

The Yakuza, the Mob, the Triads, the Vory v Zakone, or the Ghost Cartels: the names may change in different parts of the world, but most major sprawls boast the presence of one or more. Organized crime has a pervasive presence in the Sixth World. Syndicates perpetually wrestle with their competition over turf, rackets, and routes, dabble in politics, and even meddle in corporate interests.

Runner havens, with their unique cocktail of big business and gutter lowlife, plus lawlessness and strict order, offer immense potential which no criminal can afford to ignore. The local underworld scene is densely networked with roles staked-out by major and minor players. On the edges, well-connected independents such as fixers, arms-dealers, smugglers, talisleggers, black-marketeers, pirate crews, and fences strive to make a living off the big boys' scraps.

Not only does the resulting underworld intrigue offer innumerable plot hooks and story opportunities, but the infrastructure is critical for a thriving shadow community. Without this support network and its resources, runners would have a hard time procuring the intelligence, gear, weapons, and specialized equipment they need to perform. These fixers, smugglers, and made-men also process, fence, launder, and strip a runner's ill-gotten loot, nuyen, and information (for a reasonable cut).

A gamemaster developing a perspective locale should not limit himself to the territorial claims of major syndicates in his setting, but should also explore how the different actors interact and how this might affect market dynamics and availability of gear and information. In some sprawls, nothing goes down without the local Oyabun getting a share of the action, while

in others no underworld power holds sway and independent operators multiply.

VOLATILE POLITICAL SCENE

Perhaps the least visible and most important aspect of most runner havens is their political element, since relations between political power and all other aspects are usually uninhibitedly incestuous. Local politics is the stage on which all the major and minor forces at work in a sprawl interact. It is not unusual for corporations to play a major role in local government, supporting the favorable status quo and picking up lucrative civic, utilities, and law-enforcement contracts. In some runner havens, even the underworld has a direct hand in governance—in fact, they may be the only forces keeping civil government on its feet.

Under such conditions, local government institutions and politicians are particularly vulnerable to corporate influence-mongering and lobbying, just as they are susceptible to underworld corruption and strong-arming. Savvy and well-connected politicians will be very conscious of the political and economic significance of their sprawls in these players' agendas and strategies. In the right hands, such knowledge can grant these politicians significantly more power over corporations and crime bosses than these would like to admit. With so many interested parties involved, it all boils down to playing one against the other.

Adding to this volatile political scene is the fact that the social and economic issues created by the peculiar environment makes for the perfect spawning ground for a diversity of radical activist movements and other non-mainstream political forces. Running the gamut from racial supremacists such as the Humanis Policlub to the eco-activists of TerraFirst! to the remnants of trade unions, these smaller players generate as many potential adventure seeds as the actions of the big fish.

One final note of interest is that most runner havens also boast a vibrant cultural scene born of the unique social and political elements described above. Obviously, local and regional culture plays an important role, as well as specific local social, race, and political issues that catalyze these expressions into something unique. International media phenomena like Orxploitation and Afroflash, however, underline the fact that runner havens are often on the cutting edge of trend-setting.

HONG KONG ADVENTURES

This section presents the gamemaster with two outlined adventures and several adventure ideas that utilize the Hong Kong setting and information.

HOW TO GET A HEAD IN THE TRIAD

Since Hsiao Wai-Gong assumed leadership of the Red Dragon Triad, there have been occasional challenges to his position as Shan Chu. Most recently, the triad's Sin Fung, Xu Futao, was discovered to be planning a violent coup within the syndicate. A tip from a loyal supporter allowed Xu Futao to flee into the Kowloon Walled City before Hsiao could end the threat permanently. Now Xu Futao finds himself deep in Black Chrysanthemum territory,

however, and Hsiao Wai-Gong doesn't want to tip the competing Triad off that they have a valuable bargaining chip sitting right under their noses. Xu Futao must be silenced, but the act can't be traced back to the Red Dragons.

Setup

The runners' fixer has some old associates in the Red Dragon Triad. He gives the runners a heads-up that a really solid job has just opened up. He arranges for the runners to meet with a leader of one of the Red Dragon's vassal gangs at the Happy Valley Arena in Wanchai-Causeway, picked because the noisy setting should allow the two parties to meet without notice. The gang leader informs the runners that his associates have targeted a competing Triad gang leader for execution, but that the wetwork has to happen anonymously and not trace back to his men.

If the runners are interested, he hands the team a chip that contains a holopic of the target and a roughly drawn map of a section of the Kowloon Walled City. The runners are told that the gang was able to magically trace the target to a particular building in the Walled City, but soon after that their rituals became useless. He wants the runners to head to the building, locate the target, and eliminate him. As proof of a successful job, the gang leader wants the runners to return the target's head.

Event 1

The shadowrunners should do some legwork as relying on a Triad gang member isn't terribly wise. If they hit the streets with the holopic, their inquiries turn up nothing unless they enter some of the seedier parts of the Kwai Tsing dockyards. There, contacts with underworld or law enforcement links will recognize the man in the image as Xu Futao, the Sin Fung of the Red Dragon Triad. Alternately, the runners may seek out intel on their Triad target by hacking the Hong Kong Police Force records. Successfully doing so nets them a full record for Xu Futao, but the runners must be careful. If they set off any alarms, the police host will monitor their actions and attempt to trace them. If the police are successful, they put the runner team under surveillance and attempt to bust them at the end of the run (see *Climax*).

Event 2

Assuming the runners have no qualms with moving forward with what appears to be a Triad internal struggle, the next step would be to investigate the building on the supplied map. The gamemaster should make the runners' trip into the Kowloon Walled City memorable; the dark slum is infamous for its barbarity and despair. The runners should have at least one run-in with the locals on their way to the building, whether it's a shakedown from a local gang or an attack from a malicious spirit. After fighting their way into the Walled City, it should become evident to the runners that their target must have been very desperate to hide out in a place like this.

Event 3

The runners reach the building where the target was traced to: a run-down, tilting tenement that seems on the verge of col-

lapse. When they approach or scope out the building from afar, they notice that the building is crawling with mean-looking Chinese youths. It seems the Black Chrysanthemum has beaten them here (note: if the runners didn't do their legwork and find out the target's true identity, they will probably just assume the target is a member of Black Chrysanthemum and being guarded). The runners have to sneak, sleaze, or fight their way into the tenement. Even if they do so, they soon discover that the target is nowhere to be found.

If the runners interrogate one of the Black Chrysanthemum members or a frightened local, they learn that the tenement was just cleaned out by the Black Chrysanthemum, who took anyone inside off to be "processed" for the organlegging trade in another nearby building. If the runners supply the holopic, the target is instantly recognized as one of the hapless victims taken off to be harvested.

Climax

The runners are directed to the building where the Black Chrysanthemums do their harvesting work, an equally dilapidated apartment building that has had its ground floor and loading dock converted into a series of surgery rooms. The runners will find it harder to infiltrate this building; not only are higher-ranking triad soldiers guarding this location, but there are also a handful of ghouls and at least one wujen on hand.

Once the runners get inside, they'll discover that they are too late to find their target alive; all the people brought here have already been killed and freshly harvested for organs. A crafty runner might consider that the team doesn't need to find the target alive, however—they only need to find the head. Interrogating a Triad soldier or ghoul leads the runners to a walk-in refrigerator being used to store useless remains to be fed to the ghouls. Inside the refrigerator is the target's head—missing a few parts but recognizable nonetheless.

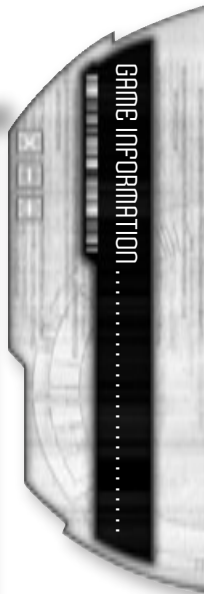
If the runners have been monitored by the Hong Kong Police Force since Event 1, the police take this moment to launch a raid on the building hoping to net at least one Triad high-up. The runners find they have to fight their way back out, this time against police officers who are armed to the teeth.

Sequels

If the Red Dragon gang leader is curious why Xu Futao's head is missing its eyes and ears, it doesn't concern him enough to ask. The Red Dragons will be pleased if the job is pulled off successfully, which could lead to future work for the runners from the Triad. Even if the runners fail, the Red Dragons learn of Xu Futao's death. If the runners managed to get the attention of the police, however, that won't please the Triad. With the police and two Triads gunning for them, the runners may learn to really regret that mistake.

DIGGING IN THE DIRT

Council member Diego Mangabat's past is coming back to haunt him. Long before he was kissing immigrant babies and welcoming refugees to Hong Kong, he was an overseer for a Daiatsu mining operation in the Philippines. Ramon Dizon, Evo's special



director for the Australasia region, is aware of Mangabat's past and has threatened to expose him. That alone has made Mangabat nervous, but Dizon currently lacks the hard evidence to back up his bluff. That hard evidence surfaces through the actions of a hacker named Sideways, who accidentally uncovers surveillance footage of a camp uprising crackdown personally led by a young Diego Mangabat.

Sideways knows he has stumbled onto something big, but Evo and Daiatsu are both on his tail trying to acquire the footage. Evo hopes to air it and increase tensions between the refugee population and the native population, ensuring more military contracts in the future. Daiatsu would like to bury any evidence of their human rights violations in the Philippines. The runners end up in the middle of this cat and mouse when the footage falls into their hands.

Setup

The runners are enjoying some downtime between jobs when a frantic young man bursts into their local hotspot. He

looks around wildly before his eyes set on the runners, rushing over to them without hesitation. "Please, take this." He plants a small plastic square onto the table containing an optical chip. "Take care of it," he stutters, "it could blow this whole city open." Just as the runners are about to ask what is going on, the door bursts open again and two men enter the room, eyes fixed on the frantic young man. By the time the runners turn back, the man is already gone, presumably towards the back exit.

Event 1

The two men following the young man are shadowrunners hired by Daiatsu. They've tracked the hacker who stole the surveillance footage this far and have been in pursuit of him to retrieve the chip. Whether the runners decide to intervene is up to them, but whether they do or not, the hacker is long gone. Interrogating the two shadowrunners won't get the runners far, as they are not aware of the identity of their employer. Trying to track down Sideways proves equally fruitless—Daiatsu catches up with him soon enough and he won't be speaking to anyone anymore.

If the runners analyze the chip, they are faced with Rating 6 encryption. If they have someone who can break the encryption, they'll be able to view a video clip showing the execution of numerous Filipinos in a walled compound. Local runners can recognize Diego Mangabat personally ordering the execution.

Event 2

Under severe interrogation, Sideways reveals that he passed the chip off to the runners. Daiatsu decides to send its own people to recover the footage this time. At some point shortly after the runners acquire the chip, they are ambushed by a Daiatsu strike team. They are under orders to kill the runners as long as they ensure that the chip is recovered or completely destroyed. Even if the runners voluntarily decide to give the chip up to Daiatsu, the corporate strike team will not let them live: they've possibly seen the footage already and therefore must be terminated.

Event 3

Assuming the runners survive, word of their run-in with the Daiatsu hit squad reaches certain corners. Soon afterwards, the runners are approached by a lawyer who claims to be representing a separate party interested in obtaining the chip. In actuality, this lawyer is representing Ramon Dizon and Evo, but the lawyer will not reveal this information unless the deal depends on it. The lawyer offers the runners a significant but not unreasonable sum of money for the chip, and increases the amount by up to 15% through negotiation. If the runners agree to the deal, they hand the chip over, receive their money, and do not hear from the lawyer or Evo again.

Climax

If the runners turn down the lawyer, he will express his disappointment but leave peacefully. The runners may think they are out of the woods, but that is definitely not the case. Evo and Daiatsu both have the runners watched; Evo waits until Daiatsu makes another attempt to obtain the chip. When they do, an Evo team will also strike; and the two corporate teams fight each other while trying to also get the chip from the runners.

Daiatsu is fine with the chip's destruction and the death of all involved, but Evo's team is under instructions to make sure the chip is undamaged. The runners either have to best two crack corporate teams or find a way to slip out of the chaos while the two fight each other.

Sequels

If the runners escape the Climax scene with the chip in their possession, it is up to them where they go with it from there. The longer they hold onto it, the more susceptible they will be to further attacks.

If they release the chip to the media, Diego Mangabat resigns from his council member position in disgrace and 9x9 will be empowered, increasing attacks against corporate locations. In return, Council member Tai Kong successfully pushes through an increase in military spending, including a windfall

of contracts for Evo NavTech. The runners will have revealed the truth, but may find themselves wondering if they really did the right thing.

If the runners sold the chip to Evo, the same outcome will occur as if they'd released it to the media themselves. Evo will be pleased that the runners made the deal easy for them and may find some work for the runners in the future. Daiatsu, however, will be hurt by the release of the footage and will try to make the runners' lives a living hell. If Daiatsu managed to destroy the chip, the truth about Diego Mangabat will never see the light of day and he continues his term until its completion.

ADVENTURE IDEAS

- The runners have been hired to bodyguard a local business owner who claims he has been receiving death threats. Little do the runners know, however, that their employer is also a powerful member of 9x9. When he gets himself involved in a spontaneous act of corporate sabotage, the runners are taken along for the ride and, if they aren't careful, may end up enemies of the state!
- A simple job comes down to the runners: drive a truck full of cargo from the Kwai Chung Container Port down to a sprawling estate in Southern Hong Kong, making sure the cargo stays safe along the way. What the runners don't know, however, is that the cargo happens to be a pair of nagas intended to be harvested for the medicinal properties of their parts. The nagas will make every effort to escape, causing all sorts of hassle for the shadowrunners.
- The bank heist of the century: Mr. Johnson wants a particular small golden dragon idol that is being kept in a safe deposit box in a bank in downtown Hong Kong. Because many Hong Kong residents keep their monetary worth in similar boxes, Hong Kong banks are typically warded, guarded, and patrolled by spirits. Robbing the place will be no easy task.
- Executive Council chairman Deng Sai-Kan is sure that Council member Mei Sterling must have some skeletons in her closet. He hires the runners to find out, but the deeper the runners dig into Ms. Sterling's past, the more confusing web of lies and conflicting stories they uncover. It seems the Horizon Group has been working overtime to obfuscate Mei's history. They won't take very kindly to someone snooping around.
- One of the team's runners is a dead ringer for a biker on the Hong Kong Cavaliers combat biking team. Unfortunately, that particular biker was just killed in a house fire. The runner is asked to fill in for the combat biker so the Hong Kong Cavaliers can avoid a forfeit in an important upcoming game at the Happy Valley Arena. The house fire was no accident, though: a contract was taken out on the combat biker's life. Those who ordered the hit will think they missed him the first time. The runner's team will have to keep their celebrity double member alive before, during, and after the game.
- A little bit of internal corporate politicking and a Mitsuhama executive may suddenly find himself at the end of the waiting list for a necessary appointment at Clockwerks to replace a faulty organ. Fortunately for the runners, Mitsuhama execu-

tives aren't used to taking no for an answer. The runners are first hired to go on-site and hack into the Clockwerks host to put the executive at the top of the list, a job that isn't terribly difficult since the executive supplies them with inside info. But then the exec decides he wants a particular local doctor to perform his telesurgery. The runners are hired to blackmail the doctor into freeing up some time in his schedule for the procedure. Unfortunately for the runners, this doctor works for Yokogawa.

- In what might initially seem to be the simplest job ever, the runners are hired to destroy a garden. However, the garden in question happens to be on the guarded roof of the SwissBank building in Central District. Mr. Johnson knows that the garden is important to Lofwyr's local brainchild, Thomas Moy, and hopes to throw him off his game by disrupting its feng shui.
- A Renraku data analyst has decided he wants to change careers and has arranged for his own extraction. However, he doesn't want to leave his records behind in Renraku's Market Research Group, where they can be used against him. While another team handles the extraction, the runners are hired to break into a secure location, obtain a passkey, and hack into the MRG to remove the analyst's file. When the extraction goes bad, the runners suddenly find security ramped up ...
- Manipulation of the magical landscape is a thriving business in Hong Kong, and the runners are hired to map out a particular dragon line. Mr. Johnson believes that a rival corporation is shifting the dragon line slightly to favor them, but since the line crosses the property of three different corporations, they've been unable to investigate. The runners are hired to get into the three corporate campuses and map out the path of the dragon line using astral perception. That is easier said than done, since each of the three compounds will have their own sophisticated physical and magical security.

SEATTLE ADVENTURES

This section presents several adventures in an outline format for the game master to develop and use. All of the frameworks draw upon the background material and major characters described in this chapter.

SCALP HUNTER

A low-life drug dealer recently obtained a new substance through illicit means. He's not entirely sure what it does, but he knows the corp it was stolen from was running trials on a new combat drug. He decides to find some unsuspecting street thug to try it out on, but he doesn't want to be around when the dope kicks in so he hires the runners to watch the target and report the effects. He doesn't tell them the truth, however—he simply tells them that wants to know where the target goes and what he does. Unluckily for the runners, keeping up with their target turns out to be quite a hassle—and quite dangerous.

Setup

The runners are called to Aces, a hellish, rough-and-tumble watering hole where the dregs from the Barrens comes to

slake their thirsts—for alcohol *and* violence. Their prospective employer is a man who's seen better decades, probably by staring at the bottom of a bottle. He wants them to do a simple surveillance job. According to his story, someone is supposed to show at the bar that he's supposed to conduct a deal with. He'll refuse to elaborate on what the deal's about, and he claims (truthfully) not to know what the target looks like yet. Johnson plans to leave the bar right after the deal, but he wants the runners to carefully follow the person until dawn. Johnson wants the runners to keep him in sight at all times and report on everything he does—but *don't interfere with him*. If the runners accept the job, they haggle over payment.

Event 1

Shortly after the deal is concluded, Johnson relocates to a corner booth and waits. Eventually, a large Native American street tough walks in and heads straight to the bar. The man is massive, dressed in neo-tribal leathers, with decorative warpaint and what looks like a pair of scalps hanging off his belt. After a brief chat with the bartender (asking where he can score some novacoke), the AmerInd street samurai is pointed towards Johnson's booth. The two conduct a discreet deal, where the runners may notice Johnson slip something to the man under the table. The dealer then leaves the bar, giving the runners a knowing look as he does so.

The runner's target proceeds to spend some quality time carousing at the bar. Along with some serious drinking and flirting with a pair of prostitutes, early on he also heads into the can and doesn't come out for half an hour. Runners that check up on him may see him thumbing a drug inhaler into a nostril. After a while back in the bar, he starts a fight with a couple of gangers with too much liquid courage in them to know better. The two young thugs have their asses handed to them by the big Amerind, who unceremoniously tosses both of them out the door.

Aces sees a lot of traffic during this time, and the runners are going to stand out if they don't drink, fight, or act like they can hold their own. Weak-looking runners may find themselves the prey of thrill-seeking hooligans. If the runners are lax in their surveillance efforts, either by being too obvious or indiscreet, their quarry may notice them and use it as grounds to start an ugly confrontation. If the runners ask around, they can find out that the AmerInd's street name is Red Hands. He's new to town, a Sioux shadowrunner who had to leave the NAN in a hurry for some reason.

Coked to the gills and with the night still young, the runner's target eventually leaves the bar. Trouble can't be far behind.

Event 2

Walking the streets of Redmond at night can be an education in itself, but Red Hands ignores the skinny whores and gangers hustling the edge of their territory. Eventually the runners should realize they're not the only ones tailing the target—the two losers from Aces are back, on motorcycles, and one of them has a gun. As the runners watch, the two young gangers roll up on their target as he's busy relieving himself against a handy wall. At first, the street sam seems oblivious to the threat, as one ganger takes



INCOMING FEED.....

aim at his head—until Red Hands suddenly spins with breath-taking speed and whips a tomahawk at the gunman. Before the ganger even hits the ground, the AmerInd is on him, hacking and stabbing with an implanted blade. The other ganger immediately flees. Red Hands methodically pats down the corpse for cred, sticks the gun in the waistband on his pants, and then removes the scalp. He then jumps on the motorbike, looking enraged, and tears off in pursuit of the other ganger.

Event 3

The runners may find it challenging to keep up with a night-time bike chase through the Barrens, especially without giving their own pursuit away. The fleeing ganger heads out of Redmond and into Bellevue, where Red Hands finally catches up with him. Another tomahawk strike hits the ganger square in the back, causing him to crash. The runners' target slides to a stop, sprints to his victim, and once again begins to scalp him.

Right in the middle of his bloody handiwork, a Lone Star patrol pulls up with lights on. The uniformed kid who steps out of the car is so clean and smooth-shaven he must be fresh from the academy—and here he thinks he's caught the Mayan Cutter single-handed. Red Hands's tomahawk catches the cop in his neck, right above the regulation body armor. The street sam then shoots the other officer as she leaves the car.

Unless the runners intervene, the AmerInd kills both the Lone Star officers and scalps them too. With six scalps now on

his belt, Red Hands steals the Lone Star cruiser and races west. Perceptive runners may notice that his actions are spasmic and jerkier now, and the assensing of his aura will reveal that he seems to be overwhelmed with burning rage.

Climax

Likely wondering what they have gotten themselves into, the runners must once again pursue Red Hands as he drives the Lone Star patrol car at breakneck speed along Route 90 to Council Island. If the runners can keep up or have another way of tracking him, they follow him as he rams through the security roadblock, exchanges gunfire with the security guards, and then escapes on foot into the island's interior. The runners will also need to find a way past the heightened security. Sprawl runners will be well out of their element tracking someone in the woods at midnight, but Red Hands is high enough to leave a trail of blood and broken branches that should be easy to follow.

When the runners do find the AmerInd again, he's beating up a two-meter tall hairy humanoid that's making odd noises. The sasquatch tries to shield itself from the Red Hands's relentless attacks, but the scalp hunter has worked himself up into the night's final drug-fueled psychotic rage and is beyond reason. Any runner that interferes will be in for a fight to remember.

No matter what the runners do, after a few rounds they hear a bass rumble throughout the surrounding woods—a low

frequency they can feel in their chests. Five more sasquatch emerge from the shadowy forest and rush to their fellow's aid. As a group, the furry giants turn their fury on Red Hands. Unless the runners interfere, the largest sasquatch picks the AmerInd up and breaks his neck.

If the runners tried to help the AmerInd, or did nothing to help the other sasquatch, the sasquatch may also rough them up too. In any event, dawn breaks through the trees over Red Hands's broken corpse. Time for the runners to collect their cred.

Sequels

Runners who helped prevent Red Hands from killing his victims or beating up the sasquatch may find themselves with a few new friends. Mr. Johnson may also hire the runners to steal some more of this rage-inducing wonder drug, as he dreams of thrill-gangers eating it up. If any runners are caught by the authorities at some point—perhaps entering or leaving Council Island—they may find themselves accused of participating in or enabling the rampage, especially when an autopsy turns up traces of the drug in Red Hands's system. The corp that created the drug may also get wind of the affair, seeking to track the runners—and Mr. Johnson—down in order to get their stolen goods back.

JOB DISSATISFACTION

An unwilling prostitute at a Yakuza bunraku parlor has disappeared, eluding re-capture for weeks. The Yakuza, however, are not easily giving up on the chase. The prostitute, "Aya," happens to be the exclusive favorite of a powerful and influential "client," and the Yakuza will lose major face if the girl is not back in their hands within a week—when the client is due for his monthly "session."

Setup

If the runners lean towards the mercenary, do-anything-for-nuyen side, the Yakuza will approach them directly, asking for help in retrieving their "property." If the runners actually flirt with those pesky things called ethics, two Yakuza agents will instead approach them, claiming to be Aya's parents. They will tell them that Aya is missing and they want her back; they don't want to go to Lone Star because they fear she has fallen in with a criminal element who may hurt her if she is not rescued, and they don't trust the Star to handle the situation delicately. The runners will be given a holopic and told the neighborhood in Tacoma she disappeared from.

Event 1

The runners don't have much to go on. A little legwork is in order. Talking to contacts and people on the street isn't very productive, as Aya looks uncannily like a famous sim-sense star. Eventually, however, the runners will become aware that someone else is looking for the woman—a low-life loser named Ed Banks.

As it turns out, Ed was another one of the bunraku parlor's regular clients—in fact, he spent most of his petty thief

income there. Ed has severe psychological problems, and grew obsessed with Aya, finally deciding to "liberate" her from the Yakuza. What Ed really wanted, however, was to keep Aya as his personal pet, locked away in his home. After a week of being imprisoned this way, Aya managed to escape—scratching Ed's face in the process.

Ed will be wary of the runners and will not divulge this information, but a search of his home will produce evidence that he recently kept a woman imprisoned there. Ed does not know Aya's whereabouts, other than he's fairly sure she escaped into the Ork Underground. The runners must decide what to do with Ed—leave him be, hand him over to the Yaks, or deal out some street justice.

Event 2

Aya has indeed been hiding out in the Ork Underground, where an ork gillette by the name of Scratch has taken the girl under her wing. If the runners aren't familiar with the Underground, they'll need to find a guide or otherwise make their way down there to ask around. If they aren't careful or polite about it, they may find a "welcoming committee" of leg-breakers sent their way, though they can be bought off with a "tourism fee."

Following up on Ed's leads and asking around, the runners will eventually be directed towards the Skunks, a local ork gang that Scratch tends to hang with. The Skunks will be very protective of Scratch, and Scratch will be highly protective of Aya—she doesn't let anyone near her, no matter how good-intentioned they seem.

If the runners force their way past the orks, they're in for a fight. Hiding out nearby, Aya will use the battle as cover to flee. If the runners sneak their way past or decide to leave Aya in Scratch's hands, Aya still flees, afraid the runners will somehow get past Scratch. Scratch and the Skunks will discover this immediately afterwards, giving the runners a chance to hear the commotion and join in the pursuit.

Climax

One way or the other, the runners will end up chasing Aya deeper into the Underground. The trail soon takes them into the basement of an industrial facility—where an overwhelming stench (an intensified version of the "Tacoma Aroma") greets the runners. The runners have been led to the sublevels of Eta Engineering's waste reclamation plant, and the stench is just short of causing physical illness. Any runner with enhanced senses of smell or taste suffers the worst.

When the runners finally catch up to Aya, she stands on a catwalk above a swirling vat of liquid waste. Abused, scared, and pregnant (a fact she has not even informed Scratch of; she doesn't want it, and has no idea who the father is)—she is deeply troubled and will do anything not to go back to her life as a meat puppet. In fact, she's willing to end her life by jumping in the vat and drowning herself in muck right there and then.

The runners will need to talk the girl out of killing herself, or forcibly prevent her from doing so. They may also have to fight

off Scratch and the Skunks to do so if they have not settled their differences. On top of that, Eta's security has been informed of the breach. A heavily-armed counter-intrusion squad is on its way to intercept the interlopers and arrest them all.

Sequels

If the runners return Aya to the Yakuza, they will have made enemies of Scratch and the Skunks—not to mention ruined the poor girl's life. If the runners save Aya from killing herself, but leave her with Scratch, they will need to answer to the Yakuza for their failure to return her. If they get themselves arrested by Eta's security, they'll have a lot of explaining to do.

ADVENTURE IDEAS

- The Eighty-Eights have been facing Yakuza hits against their distributors in Auburn recently, and the runners have been approached as extra muscle. If they accept, the runners are attached to a mid-sized dealer called Mr. Lee. Aside from dealing with Lone Star officers and bribing corporate security, the runners have to deal with their conscience as Mr. Lee peddles serious mindbenders to high school kids and bored homemakers. Don't let them get too philosophical though, because Mr. Lee is next on the Yakuza hit squad's list.
- You meet your Mr. Johnson—in this case, a Ms. Johnson—at the Crash 2.0 Memorial. The runners are hired to cause a terminal disruption at the Gray Russian, a new club opening up in Downtown in two days. Despite the name, the club doesn't have Vory connections—it's a front for a new Yakuza brothel where the waitresses double as prostitutes. The runners are left to their own devices on how to sabotage the club for good. If the runners investigate their Ms. Johnson, they'll find she was once a prostitute that escaped from the Yakuza. The question is: who's funding her?
- An overheard conversation lands one of the runners some serious intel. A couple of independent smugglers from Vancouver are putting in to the Everett docks tonight with a load of military weaponry. This is a golden opportunity for the runners to score some major ordinance cash-over-the-barrel. They might get ambitious and decide to steal the arsenal, or at least a few crates of it. Unknown to the runners, the Vory are cracking down on independent smugglers and are planning to seize the shipment for themselves. Can the runners escape with the goods?
- Warrant Officer Charlene Twofeathers has become the personal nightmare of many runners. She won't be bribed and she's determined to bust any shadowrunner that so much as blinks at Fort Lewis. Unfortunately, the runners are caught doing something illegal while Twofeathers is conducting surveillance on a quartermaster suspected of arms trafficking. Twofeathers has the authority to mitigate the charges against the runners, provided they cooperate in helping her catch the dirty quartermaster by acting as stooges in an arms deal. The characters are between busting rocks and a hard case.
- A member of the Salish-Shidhe Council embassy offers the player characters a proposition: occupy a small island in the Outremer as part of an extended ownership conflict with the Seattle Metroplex Government, and she'll see to it the runners are issued legitimate SSC SINS. All the runners have to do is defend their island from all comers for a week or so. Unfortunately for the player characters, the otherwise worthless speck of land also happens to be the nesting spot for a pair of thunderbirds.
- An elderly ork Mr. Johnson hires the player characters as delivery boys, taking a 500kg package from the ork neighborhood of Carbanado in Puyallup to a contact over the border in the Salish-Shidhe. This involves a dangerous trip across the roughest part of the Barrens, where toxic mud pools and boiling geysers await the unwary. Things go from bad to worse as the package begins to smell ... and the runners realize they're transporting a rotting corpse.
- Amidst angry ghoul-rights protests, Lone Star just finished cleaning out a massive pack of feral ghouls in the Redmond Barrens. A few escaped, however, and the Star is quietly offering a bounty of 200¥ per confirmed kill. After bagging quite a few ghouls in the sewers beneath Redmond, the runners come across a troll ghoul, dying from childbirth. Are the runners callous enough to also kill children? Do they rescue the orphaned troll ghouls—and then do what with them?
- Kenneth Brackhaven has a dirty little secret, and news snoop Cameron Rahlinquist wants to hire the player characters to find out what it is. Rahlinquist arranges to get the runners jobs as servants in a Renton gentleman's club that Brackhaven frequents where the player characters can overhear the thoughts of the high and mighty. Everything goes smoothly until the runners eavesdrop on a major secret during a certain high-stakes poker game at the club featuring the head officers of the Humanis Policlub in Seattle. If they tell Rahlinquist what they hear during the game, the runners will be the top story on the evening news—and Humanis's hit list.
- Fungitek is just days away from unveiling their new Ninkasi brand beer, brewed from a combination of genetically engineered mushrooms and yeast. Ingersoll-Berkeley's own Alcoholic Mold project has yet to produce anything of the same caliber. The player character's fixer contacts the runners and offers them the job of breaking in to Fungitek's sealed network to steal the relevant files and samples of the mushroom spores.

CROSSROADS OF CRIME

Runner Havens – the first core setting book for *Shadowrun, Fourth Edition* – introduces the players to two of the world's premier shadowrunner sprawls: **Seattle and Hong Kong**. Each city is described in detail from a shadowrunner's point of view, covering key topics such as the balance of power, corporate and underworld affairs, places to see, strange magics, and key features of interest. A wealth of plot hooks are also included. Four other runner-favored cities—**Cape Town, Caracas, Hamburg, and Istanbul**—are also covered, and gamemaster advice is provided for transforming any specific urban locale into a shadow haven.



SHADOWRUN

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