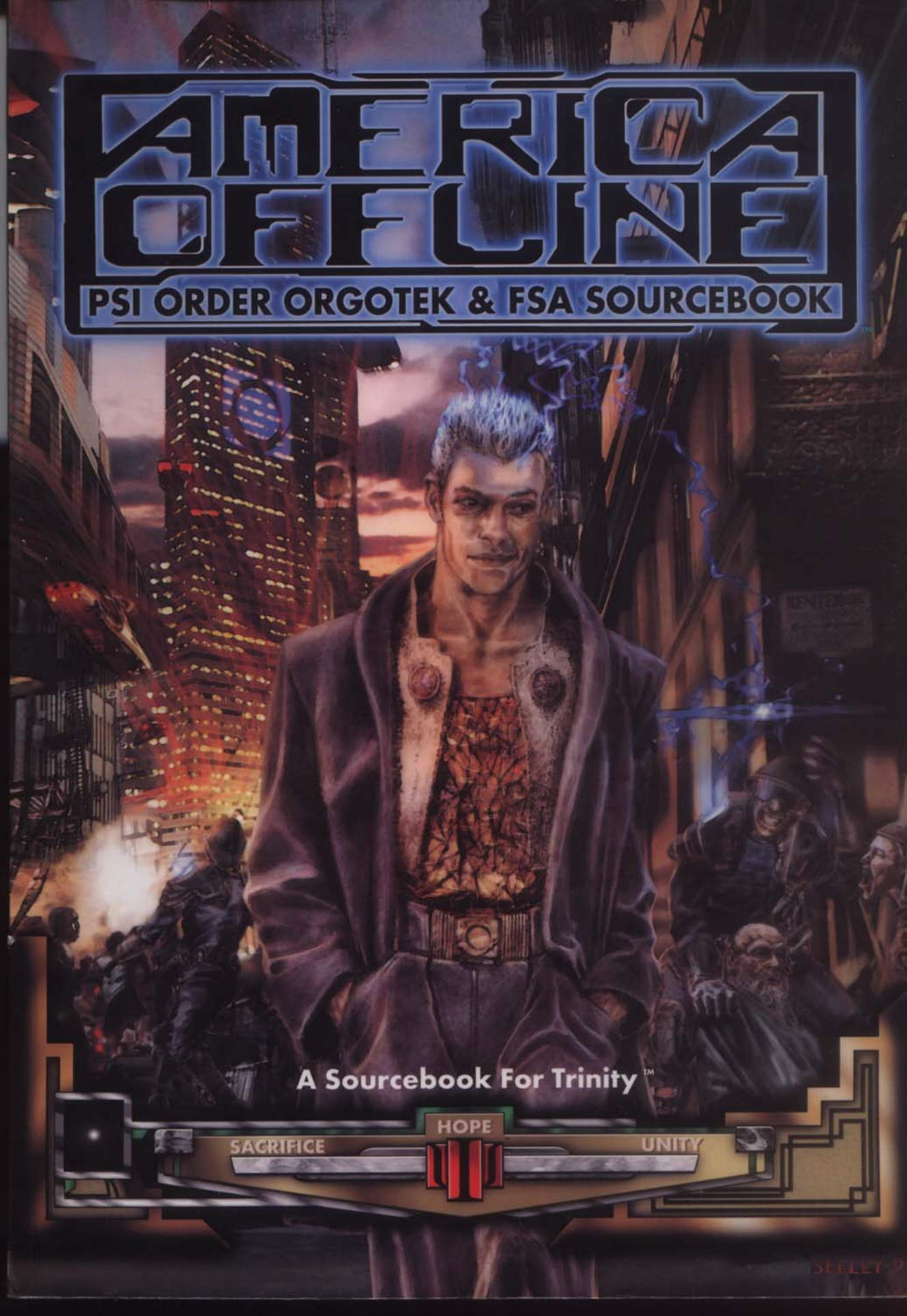


AMERICA OFFLINE

PSI ORDER ORGOTEK & FSA SOURCEBOOK



A Sourcebook For Trinity™

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>>> ARCHIVE UPDATE <<<

GREETINGS, COLLEAGUE

The Western world has changed greatly in the past two centuries. North America is no longer the land of hope and opportunity that it was when Maxwell Anderson Mercer established the Æon Trinity those many decades ago. Indeed, we Trinity members have become virtual strangers in the place where Æon was born.

The following files present an overview of the current situation in North America. Study them carefully. The Nordamerican theater of activity is one of the most complicated and dangerous regions in all of settled space. Even if you do not expect to spend time in field operations, you must understand the circumstances that your colleagues face there; the risks they face may well have impact on your own work. There are many socio-political circumstances at work in North America, and most find their origins in one of two sources. This pair of "watershed factors" is quite different from the other, but they both are of equal importance.

The first source is the psi order-cum-corporation known as Orgotek. Like all the proxies, Orgotek's leader, Alex Cassel, has worked closely with Æon in the past. Despite the close relationship we share with Cassel, there is much that we don't know about his agenda. While his actions seem to indicate a shared interest in the Trinity's goals, we cannot presume that every step he takes is admirable or even desirable.

The second is the Federated States of America itself. The FSA is a classic fascist regime: Under the military's umbrella of power, business interests direct the government to their advantage. The Trinity is thus restricted, less for the reason that our nominal headquarters are based in the Chicago arcology than due to strong philosophical differences. Æon, therefore, can influence the FSA only indirectly — through businesses, labor organizations, and other groups that share our concerns.

Tensions run high between Orgotek and the Federated States. Orgotek participates in the nation's economic and social growth, but there is constant conflict. Orgotek's corporate policies are noticeably more lax than FSA society is, making each Orgotek complex a kind of liberal oasis in a sea of fascism. Proxy Alex Cassel takes pride in his identity as an American, but he's one of the greatest public critics of the Federated States government (which doesn't help Orgotek's relationship with the FSA). After all, America's leadership has hated and feared psions since the Gifted first appeared. The FSA will not outlaw psions as long as orders remain useful in the fight against Aberrants...but America won't stop piling restrictions and complications on the Gifted, either.

As if ideological differences weren't enough, there's the industrial side of things. Despite the Federated States' loss of political dominance, it remains a significant manufacturing nation. Its hardtech development (often using licensed Nihonjin innovations) creates another conflict with Orgotek's biotechnological pursuits. The "techno" versus "orgo" battles are waged to varying degrees in settled space, but Nordamerica serves as the front line. The precedents set here echo throughout the civilized universe.

Again, problems facing these areas aren't exclusive to the Orgotek/FSA ideological split. Nordamericans of all backgrounds grow dissatisfied with their current circumstances. Insurgency, ranging from civil disobedience to minor terrorist incidents to full-blown civil war, keeps the Federated States' districts in disorder and uncertainty. Æon does not yet have a uniform policy with regard to these acts; operatives monitor the regions so that we may work toward resolutions that avoid all-out war.

For these reasons, we acknowledge with gratitude your service to the Æon Trinity in North America. We hope that the files enclosed here enable you to advance your specific missions and Æon's goals.

Marilyn Koziana

Deputy Director, North American Office

Æon Trinity

Hope, Sacrifice, Unity



PSI ORDER ORGOTEK PROFILE

>>> Æon Trinity Dossier <<<

These files were compiled to educate Æon Trinity field operatives on the agenda of Orgotek and on the capabilities of its psions, the electrokinetics. Orgotek has a way of deflecting even the most concerted interest — ironically, by having a very open public persona. The metacorporation has a PR machine as formidable as the one that Æon maintains. Orgotek's spin doctors are highly skilled at making a media event out of the most mundane occurrence.

Orgotek's strong public presence gives the impression that the psi order's operations are easily monitored, but nothing could be further from the truth. Press releases flood OpNet bandwidth and broadcast transmissions, giving equal attention to Proxy Cassel's visit to the Philadelphia Arcology Public Elementary #214, to the release of Tekne's Eisenhower v6.33 computer agent, and to Lumen's latest pan-corporate Summit on Methods and Implementation in Holo-Optical Storage Technology. Triton Division researchers dread being assigned to sift through the abundance of material that Orgotek pumps out on a daily basis.

spotlight, he doesn't notice what they're up to behind the scenes. Further, since Orgotek's media presence is so pervasive, Joe Hologram eventually tunes it out. Then, the company's personnel can go virtually anywhere and raise little comment.

This is not to say that Orgotek has no interest in pursuing financial gain or contributing to social programs. The organization is indeed unique among the psi orders in its dual mission: to defend humanity from threat of the Aberrants and to make a profit. As demonstrated throughout these files, Orgotek's two goals are not always mutually compatible, and various factions within the metacorporation assess their relative importances differently. These divergent philosophies seem to be the only chink in Orgotek's impregnable armor.

Otherwise, the metacorporation is a marvel of subtlety and bureaucratic efficiency, with long-term plans that even Trinity-affiliated clairsentients and telepaths can only guess at. Proxy Cassel is no doubt one of the most brilliant men in the Solar System, and his inherent powers and cultural status give him unrivaled influence over the unfolding fate of mankind.

Thus, operatives are strongly encouraged to maintain focus when dealing with Orgotek. The order isn't above constructing an intricate cover to accomplish simple actions. Only through diligence can we learn the true circumstances behind Orgotek's efforts.

Hope, Sacrifice, Unity
Neville Archer
Director, Neptune Division

TRITON ARCHIVE

ORGOTEK MEDIA SATURATION

— Analysis (Personal Addendum): Adele Phillips, Triton Division 12.13.2119

...we are doing the best we can to keep tabs on the zappers. Unfortunately, it all comes down to TMI — Too Much Information. They shoot out a release when a janitor puts a fresh roll of toilet paper in the bathroom. I exaggerate, but not much. I wouldn't be surprised if Orgotek has a series of computer agents whose sole purpose is to churn out all of this material.

I don't suppose there's a chance we could politely ask Orgotek to just shut the hell up for a couple of weeks while we catch up?

There is a shrewd method to the Electrokinetics Order's media madness. The constant public displays that Orgotek puts on serve as planned distractions. If Joe Hologram watches everything the electrokinetics are doing in the

TRITON ARCHIVE

METACORPORATION

— © Webster's Dictionary [update March 2116]

>>> audio pronunciation guide <<<

[noun] 1. A corporate entity that takes on responsibilities not directly related to profit-making, such as those obligations typically assumed by government bodies. 2. A corporate entity that achieves "celebrity status" among the populace due to extensive public awareness and financial influence. Also *metanational corporation*. (slang: *metacorp* or *metanaf*)

— Excerpt: Textfile conversion from Orgonet [Orgotek's internal interactive communications and data network] 3.18.2120

De Koenig: And so I told him that sure it was a decent offer but I wasn't certain I was ready to go independent just yet.

Williams: I've met Apoderado before. He thought you were just conning him to get a bigger offer.

McCasky laughs.

>>> Connect: **Ollinger** [San Francisco Training Campus] <<<

Ollinger: uh, hi? is this the way I do this?

McCasky: Hey, a trainee! Welcome aboard, Ollinger.

De Koenig: Srinivasan is allowing the newbies access to Orgonet? That's not like him.

Williams: Rumor is he's mellowed since you graduated, De Koenig.

Ollinger: this is really weird

McCasky: This your first time on Orgonet, Ollinger?

Ollinger: i think so. this isn't like the opnet at all.

De Koenig: How long since you went through the chamber, kid?

Ollinger: just a week, and I got here last night

Williams: You're in for a treat, then. Welcome to electrokinesis. Your world will never be the same.

Williams clinks a toast with **McCasky**.

Ollinger: i don't know how to make any of this stuff work. flecks of paper and lint keep sticking to me, i fried my roommate's datapad last night, and when i wake up in the middle of the night, the lights come on like arc lamps

McCasky: Heh, heh; get used to that for a little while.

Williams: Until you master the little stuff. Remember your preparatory training, Ollinger. You'll get all that under wraps soon enough, and then the fun begins. Were you a techie before you went through the tank?

Ollinger: no, i was in sales at orgosoft farms

De Koenig: Ollinger, I was trained out at San Francisco, too. Be careful; Srinivasan's a hardass. But he has to teach you stuff only once.

McCasky: You'll be on campus for another two months, and then you'll do an internship with one of the big subsidiaries or little spin-offs.

Ollinger: i feel sort of weird, like i might throw up, all the time, or like my foot's asleep, or my heart starts beating rreeaally fast, or something.

Williams: That's normal until you figure out how to regulate your internal currents, kid. Then you'll feel pretty much just like you used to. I think.

McCasky: Yeah, it's not like my sister said it was with ISRA; there's no transcendent change in your life, you don't ascend to a higher plane, none of that bullshit. We're all pretty much normal people.

Williams: Your sister's a clear?

McCasky: Yeah, she tested the year before I did. That's the reason I got tested myself.

De Koenig: Excuse the social hour, Ollinger; I think those two have a thing offline. There will be one change to your life; your earning potential about doubles from the get-go.

McCasky invites **De Koenig** to take a fantastic multimedia voyage inside his own body.

Williams: It sure does. You're going to see your base wage go way up here. Psions are in a whole different salary classification, according to human resources. We're valuable, and the other metacorps would really like to snag us.

McCasky: But personally, I don't think I could leave, even for a big offer from outside. I'm sure there's a lot of resentment and other bullshit at the other metacorps, especially the American ones.

Ollinger: sometimes i see things, shafts of light going from place to place, is that normal or am i going crazy?

Williams: That's normal. We call it 'spectrum sight.' You catch flashes of all kinds of energy, including bio-galvanic flows.

Ollinger: bio-galvanic? you just made that up to make fun of me, didn't you?

De Koenig: No, that's real; it'll be explained in your classes. It governs the relationship between living things and unliving things through psi particles.

>>> Connect: **Srinivasan** [San Francisco Training Campus] <<<

Williams: Oh, boy.

De Koenig: Mr. Srinivasan, hello!

Ollinger: eek

Srinivasan: Good afternoon, Jacob. Martha Ollinger, you are late for your photomanipulation lab. I am closing your network connection. It will remain suspended for two weeks.

>>> Disconnect: **Ollinger** <<<

Srinivasan: Good day, lady and gentlemen.

>>> Disconnect: **Srinivasan** <<<

De Koenig: Good-bye, Mr. — aw. Missed.

ORGOTEK

OVERVIEW AND GENERAL POLICIES

— textfile conversion, Arthur Bengali,
Neptune Division Associate

Orgotek is the best known of the psi orders. It has a large, well-funded PR arm that helps keep the group in the public eye. Further, Orgotek benefits from remaining on the universe's collective mind due to its for-profit status. This situation may seem dichotomous, but if you ask Prexy Alex Cassel — "prexy" is a blend of "president" and "proxy" (probably coined by one of his PR flaks) — he's happy to explain that the corporate model is a good match for his psi order. Orgotek maintains a diverse product line and employees pursue all manner of research and field work.

Orgotek is similar to other 22nd-century powerhouses like Banji or ABI, affixing its corporate identity to everything under the Sun. A brief overview of Orgotek's products covers the gamut of weaponry, personal-defense systems, computer agents, medical technology, psion-augmentation technology, and atmospheric and space vehicles.

Despite Orgotek's involvement in weapon production, it isn't part of the Federated States military-corporate complex. Orgotek sells personal-protection gear to individuals and psi orders, not to armies or governments. It maintains military and quasi-military vehicles and equipment for its own use throughout settled space. In areas that Orgotek doesn't own outright (such as some facilities in the FSA), it keeps out prying eyes by developing highly involved, expensive agreements with government officials. After all, Orgotek's equipment is to be used only in the event of interstellar emergency (an Aberrant or alien attack, for instance). Orgotek does not have world conquest on its mind — at least, not military conquest. Cassel strives to make it the penultimate metacorp in settled space.

Orgotek maintains humanitarian corporate policies that also take on a global perspective where possible, which may sound familiar, but the Aeon Trinity is an organization committed to humanitarian goals that cover a global perspective. The main difference with the Big O, of course, is the Big Green: money.

TRITON ARCHIVE

ANALYSIS: KNOWLEDGE IN MOTION (KIM) PROJECT

One reason that American citizens look favorably upon Orgotek is because of the company's Knowledge in Motion Project (began in 2114). Public data systems still lack significant information due to Kuwasha's destruction of the OpNet in 2061. So, KIM caravans roam across North America providing free mobile-education services. These traveling libraries have helpful staff and extensive computer databases full of subjects such as history, art, science, literature, entertainment and politics. Orgotek gathered the information on its own from many sources in settled space and the Aeon Trinity also supplied many files for KIM that were recompiled during Project: Rewrite.

The standard government education programs are presented in broad and revised fashions. Although people (and the FSA) were resistant to the idea at first, Orgotek pushed KIM as a merry pastime — free, wholesome fun. The Big O's well-researched information in artfully presented formats makes learning fun for most. And many areas outside the arcologies lack entertainment other than the authorized media channels, so KIM has even more appeal for these places.

The FSA is concerned that Orgotek uses the project for subversive ends. However, the metanat filed proper documentation to qualify KIM as a free entertainment service. The government's frequent spot-checks have yet to turn up anything illegal, though some data files have been confiscated due to "dubious content."

Triton Division observations indicate that Orgotek uses the KIM caravans for covert operations and to identify latent psions. Even the local FSM law enforcement is used to seeing the opalescent vans in towns for a week or more, so such subversive efforts pass unnoticed. Orgotek should be cautious about such endeavors, however, since a number of people frequent the KIM courses. A single clandestine mission gone sour could put many innocent people in danger.

Orgotek is best known for biotechnology products, of course. Orgosoft Farms, Orgotek's primary biotechnology division, leads the biotech revolution. Hardtech requires extensive manufacturing facilities, expensive automation, strict quality control, and an enormous outlay of capital. Biotech grows itself, in accordance with the matrix in its own genetic code. Yet, it is not perfect; it requires "food" and a certain amount of care, and it is vulnerable to many things that living beings are susceptible to. Quality control is also important: One misplaced strand could result in a twisted failure instead of a sleek suit of bioweave clothing. Even so, biotech possesses a distinct advantage over hardtech production since simple biomass provides its building blocks.

With the slow-growing acceptance of biotechnology and of revolution in manufacturing processes, Orgotek is trying to change the universe. And it's doing well so far.

GLOBAL RELATIONS

I doubt you need a report to know that relations between the Federated States and Orgotek are tense. As far as I can tell, the Federated Districts Board doesn't like the random element that Orgotek introduces to the FSA's governing equation. America's governing board is an authoritarian group; it's used to things working methodically. While I don't think that Orgotek deliberately works in unpredictable ways, I also don't think that the FedBoard has managed to wrap its collective mind — and I use those terms loosely — around the psions' mind-set.

Orgotek's popularity varies from district to district within the FSA, although it's certainly seen more positively by private citizens than by government stooges (at least, by those citizens who haven't bought into the fascist party line). Things are tense on the coasts (due to the strong presence of America's corporate partners, including L-B and Steinhardt). Reportedly, the Big O is losing its shirt in the East and South Districts —

although it's holding on in the West. Public relations (and the bottom line) are much better in most of the central districts: Great Lakes, Central and Tex-Mex. Tension is high in the Southwest, but the public there loves Orgotek, as it devotes time and resources to help all Americans. Yet, Orgotek's efforts are most recognized in the mid-continental regions; its mobile-education centers and Blight Project research garner the largest amount of positive press.

PUBLIC PERCEPTION

— Joyce DuPree with Ellayne Cassel, *Business Beat* © 2120 MMI

Joyce: Why does Orgotek continue to focus such a large portion of its business on the Federated States, despite the negative reception it receives from the American government?

Ellayne: I'll be honest, Joyce. The Federated Districts Board has made no secret of its dislike for us. But the people of the FSA are freedom-loving and law-abiding. We know that the board respects the letter of the law enough to not outlaw Orgotek. After all, we're not doing anything illegal.

Joyce: Hopping through all of that red tape must cut into your profit margins.

Ellayne: Yes, it does. We have to walk a thin line, and when there's a choice between obeying the law and making a profit, we choose the law every time. American consumers are smart; they're loyal to quality products and they know when they're getting more than just a good deal. Our North American market share increases every quarter.

Joyce: So the focus on the FSA is just sentimentality?

Ellayne: Not at all. But my husband and I are both proud to say we're Americans. We'll never leave, and we'll never forget where we're from.

— Excerpt: Textfile conversion from Orgonet [Orgotek's internal interactive communications and data network] 1.05.2120

Yorba: You watching *Business Beat*? Ellayne didn't answer the damn question!

Lynds: Of course not. The answer is that her husband still thinks controlling the American marketplace helps you control the rest of the political pie.

AC [NYC]: <droll> Really? I wasn't aware that I did. </droll>

Lynds gawks at the Prexy's sudden appearance. "Ah, I just meant that there are a lot of factors involved."

AC [NYC]: Hey, no big deal, Ray. You're welcome to your opinion.

Lynds: Yessir; thanks.

Orgotek's standing improves elsewhere in the world. South America offers a fertile competitive plane for Orgotek products. The Big O faces tough competition between (if you pardon my saying so) the drugged-out computeristas of Apoderado and those Norça lackeys over at BioSystems. Still, I'll give the Sudamericans this much credit: They don't have any idiotic regulations on biotech like you see in the FSA.

Like most of the orders (particularly the Æsculapians, the Legions and ISRA), Orgotek is helping to get the European Commonwealth back on its feet. This aid makes Orgotek look good to most Europeans, even if the majority of them can't afford the company's products. It's worth noting that Orgotek's greatest sales numbers in Europe are from its personal-defense gear.

Despite the continued unrest among the Northern African countries, the United African Nations enjoy one of the most vibrant economies in human space. Orgotek established its Cairo headquarters to benefit from that wealth. Cairo makes for a convenient staging point for Orgotek's bioVARG testing

and for patrols into the fractious Middle East.

Isolationist sentiment hinders Orgotek's activities across much of Asia. Nippon is hostile to the introduction of biotechnology, but Tekne hardtech products sell well. The Psi Nippon enclaves support Orgotek enthusiastically and contribute latent recruits with little effort on the Big O's part. Anima culture is quite popular throughout the Indian League and the small Asian nations, giving Orgotek a convenient entry into those markets, with its bangboards and advanced computer agents. Bangkok and Xianggang are strong markets as well.

The Cassels are celebrities in Australia, held in far higher esteem by Aussie media than in America. The Outback and the Legions give Orgotek a willing consumer base. While the Electrokinesis Order's presence is less obvious in Australia than elsewhere due to the Legions' high profile, be rest assured that there are plenty of teks Down Under.

OFFWORLD ACTIVITY

Most of Orgotek's profits come from up the gravity well. Offworlders have a greater sense of adventure than us "grounders" — at least, that's what they tell us. Space is home to people who are willing to take chances and to give innovation a chance. Although biotech is strange to many, most offworld colonists care little about what something's made of as long as it works.

As always, Orgotek's sales are strong on the Moon and Mars. Sporadic Aberrant activity helps sales due to the rapid response of Ops teams — there is never going to be another *Esperanza*. The Mars Terraforming Project continues on schedule, although the recent destruction of Summit Center as a supposed terrorist act hurt relations with China.

The order's influence and sales in the outer planets are light due to the low population of colonies in far space, but per capita,

ORGOTEK

Orgotek's doing quite well out there. Outer colonists seem to be more conscious than grounders of bioware's utility and are less squeamish about using it. Orgotek's far-space patrols, supplementing Legion and UN sweeps, show positive results. An Ops team hit a pair of Aberrants in Venusian orbit back in January, and we haven't seen any others since.

Then there's the research angle. Lumen's work with the UAN on the *Tooci* project continues at a steady pace, which brings about better communication with the UAN. I know that Jomo [Jeff Kenyatta, Operations Director] wants to put a few comm/patrol satellites around the plane of the ecliptic. He's right; it's silly to assume that, when and if they ever get here, the Chromatics or Coalition will waste time with the outer planets before hitting Earth. There aren't enough manned sensor stations out there; the automatic ones keep getting destroyed by the damn Abbies. I don't know if we need the three dozen that Jomo proposes, though (then again, I'm not as paranoid as he is).

ORGANIZATION

While Alex Cassel, the President, CEO and Proxy of Orgotek, is the top level of leadership within the metacorp, second in line is its Board of Directors — which, in typical tongue-in-cheek fashion, Cassel calls “the Round Table.” The six members of this group (Cassel himself and the directors of each of Orgotek's five primary subsidiaries) have known each other for more than 20 years. In that time, they've learned each other's strengths, weaknesses and foibles well enough that they function as a single entity.

There are two separate-but-equal levels beneath the Round Table in Orgotek's hierarchy. The first level is the division managers, who report directly to their subsidiary's director. There are about 20 people in this group, all top-level executives — and only about half are psions — with years of experience. The group has

TRITON DIVISION

Subject: Next Four Years

From: N. S. Lingon, Orgosoft Farms

To: Anya Lingon, Kleinfeld Data Research

Encryption: SPE

Transmission type: holofile

Date: 22:43:09 5.4.2119

Hello again, Mom. Some things have come up in Intern Land since my last message. Did I tell you about Cassel's Profitable Hobby Award? Once you get some seniority, you have time off each month to work on your own pet project (Orgotek gets first dibs on production, copyrights and patents, of course). Once a year, Cassel picks the best for the PHA — or “Hobby,” as they call it.

Two of the senior scientists in my division were sure they were up for it. Gipson had some super-secret gizmo that he bragged about as much as possible without spilling the beans. Stumart had a theoretical assemblage that she proclaimed was beyond the understanding of anyone who wasn't Gifted. Typical blank-psyq bickering, really.

The announcement came and — surprise! The Hobby was awarded in our division, but to some guy named Thomas. Most of us never even heard of him, but I'll get to meet him — I've been tapped to work on the new project. I guess now-Project-Director Thomas asked for me personally! We're working on a new, faster method for force-growing bioapp organs, individually tailored so there's no rejection stress.

I'm leaving for Cairo in three days to program the production matrices! I know it's even farther from home than here, but this is a big boost for my career. And if I left Orgotek, I'd likely have to freelance somewhere a lot more dangerous than Cairo. But I should get vacation around the New Year to come visit.

Love,
Nala



quarterly corporate-management meetings for which Cassel has to rent a large auditorium just to have room for the egos. Unlike the Round Table, which embraces Orgotek's twin goals of profitable industry and protection of humanity, managers tend to favor one goal over the other. Of course, this difference causes conflict. While the Prexy is fond of saying that "conflict creates quality," the directors (and Cassel) aren't afraid of stepping in to declare a compromise when things stray too far off-track.

The second management level reports to Cassel. This group consists of special operatives and managers in whose work Cassel has taken special interest, such as the deans of the company's three training campuses.

Each Orgotek subsidiary has its own internal hierarchy.

Cassels at Australian Open

— Dazyl Grenich, *Lifestyles* © 2120 MMI

Perpetual honeymooners Alex and Ellayne Cassel were spotted down front at the Australian Open this weekend, where local girl Kim Carroll beat Argentina's Elena Escobar in straight sets. My sources tell me that the Cassels were inseparable, holding hands and chatting through much of the championship match. When I spoke with the lovebirds last month about the possibility of children in their future, they said that they didn't feel they were ready yet. They may not be, but Oman certainly is. The gambling capital of the universe is taking bets on everything from time of conception to date of birth!



THE CASSELS RELAX AT THE OPEN > © 2120 MMI

ORGOTEK DIVISIONS

Orgotek is divided into five major subsidiaries: World Enterprises, Inc.; Orgosoft Farms; Tekne Group; Lumen; and Orgotek Operations. Each subsidiary is divided into smaller organizations, but Orgotek rarely bothers concealing the relationship between itself and its children corporations. The metacorp encourages an overall family identity.

Of the five primary subsidiaries, only Orgosoft, Tekne and Lumen are profit centers. WEI breaks-even on paper by selling management consulting (although it actually runs a budget deficit subsidized by other divisions), while Operations holds its own by selling security consulting (and electrokinesis applications). The rest of Orgotek's subsidiaries form WEI and Operations' primary clients, although both groups' services are available to other corporations and private-interest groups.



WORLD ENTERPRISES, INC. (WEI)

Most of us in Orgotek consider WEI to be pretty dull. The folks here don't poke around in organic computers nor do they find new and interesting ways to use electromagnetic fields. Instead, WEI handles all that administrative stuff that's so damn important to a multibillion-dollar — sorry, *yuan* — corporation. Sure, most of it's boring and high-pressure, but if it weren't for WEI, we wouldn't have Orgotek.

Cassel's lovely wife Ellayne helms World Enterprises. She takes care of the details of running the business of Orgotek, leaving the Prexy to focus on more psion-specific concerns. WEI covers human resources, searching for and testing prospective psions, handling new psion placements, and taking all the flak the FSA and other anti-psion or anti-Orgotek groups throw our way. You wouldn't (or at least shouldn't) work for Orgotek if you're not into business with a heart. WEI is how we keep the heart beating.

Most of the people in WEI are neutrals. Gifted work there, but there's plenty that a neut can do just as well — you don't need psi powers to write a legal brief. And that leaves us psions more time to develop new bioware, to beat away Aberrants, and to do other fun stuff.

The logistics required to make WEI work are impressive. There are over 100,000 people working for Orgotek, remember, and keeping tabs on all of them is not easy. WEI handles transportation, billing, data entry, resource management, public relations and legal for the other divisions.

That's not all, though. WEI coordinates recruiting new psions (latents and actives from other orders) and directs the Ops strike-team efforts. Plus, there are other fill-in-the-blank duties such as tending biotech testing gear, giving tours to recruits and handling press releases with local media. It's seldom the same thing twice.

As I said, there are psions here; most hold positions in recruitment and testing. In fact, WEI and Operations have the greatest number of psions from other orders since the two cover the most ground (duty-wise). We've got telepaths in PR, docs in the infirmary, psychs in security, clears in the strike teams, and shifters in — well, sometimes it's hard to tell.

ORGOTEK

ORGOSOFT

ORGOSOFT FARMS

Of all of Orgotek's divisions, Orgosoft is in many ways the purest expression of Cassel's ideas in action. Headed up by capable Jennifer Lehoczky-Elliott, Orgosoft Farms is the source of Orgotek's incredible bioware empire and is where ideas of "orgone" find their source.

Orgone

— Corl Heisler, *The Painful Truth* © 2118 MMI

"Orgone" is the Proxy's term for the energy that electrokinesis evokes. He has also called it "bio-galvanic flow." Some think that Cassel coined these terms as a subtle dig at Proxy Matthieu Zweidler for such labels as "Æsculapian," "iatrosis" and "Prometheus Effect." Anima culture has latched onto the terms, though, and expanded their use to describe the energies powering any joyful act of creation, from artistic expression to sex.



Back in the Star-Saddle Again

— *Newsflash*, © GN 10.2119

The third wave of human interstellar exploration began today with a trial run of Orgotek's new Leviathan-class frigates. These "jump ships" incorporate bloenergetic engines called "Tessers" that allow the ships to travel between star systems without benefit of true teleportation.

"It's exciting," said Jennifer Lehoczky-Elliott, CEO of Orgotek's biotechnology division, Orgosoft Farms. "We're glad to provide a pleasant surprise after the tragic shock of the Upeos' disappearance. Once more, the great frontier — stellar exploration and colonization — is wide open for the people of Earth. This time, it won't close so unexpectedly."

The Leviathans are just the latest in a string of attempts on the part of humanity to move beyond its native system. The first to succeed used conventional fusion spacecraft piggybacked on the outgoing Lito Comet, and it established the Khantze Lu Ge colony orbiting Alpha Centauri's star, Er. Such chancy extrasolar transport was rendered obsolete with the Upeo wa Macho teleporters. The Teleportation Order's unexplained disappearance in 2114 initiated the development of the Æon Trinity's jump-ship program, of which Orgotek is an integral part.

"While I don't consider the ships my children," Lehoczky-Elliott said of the massive Leviathans, "the feeling is much like coming home to find that my cat had kittens. Giant, space-faring kittens. It's hard to describe. Let's just say I'm very proud and surprised."

ORGOTEK

The "Big Farm," as Orgosoft HQ is called, is located in the Southwest District, New Mexico, of the FSA. This historic site is where the first bioware matrices were infused with biomass — the birthplace of the first bioapp. Orgosoft runs tours (9 A.M. and 3 P.M. local time), but they cover only the basics. To see the really good stuff, you need an inside contact.

Orgosoft Farms' employees — "farmers," we call them — are some of the most enthusiastic folks I've ever seen. They seize upon interesting and challenging ideas: obsessing, twisting, changing and expanding them to the fullest. That is, until they come across something new. The gang in Tekne says the only thing worse than attempting to keep a farmer's attention is trying to distract him.

Don't think that Orgosoft is full of flighty obsessive-compulsives. It's more that biotechnology draws in people with voracious, all-encompassing interests. They have a strong thirst for knowledge. The farmers put in so many late nights, the joke goes, that Lehoczký-Elliott is placing divorce-counseling booths at every facility. The division's indefatigable drive results in an incredible number of innovations. Consider that Alchemy, BioSystems and TechnoDyne *all* consider Orgosoft Farms to be their primary competitor, and the place still has the largest portion of biotech market share.

All is not perfect at the Big Farm, of course. Lehoczký-Elliott is obsessed with the Leviathan Project and farms out most of her management duties to Mark Rickard, her top VP. Rickard is bright, but young. He doesn't have the experience Lehoczký-Elliott brings to the table, and Orgosoft's machinations suffer from a lack of coordination and oversight. BioSystems is working hard to take advantage of this opportunity. It will be interesting to see how much of the biotech market the Colombians carve away before Lehoczký-Elliott comes off the Leviathan Project.

TEKNE

GROUP

TEKNE GROUP

Tekne Group is the "odd unit out" in Orgosoft: In a conglomerate driven by visions of soft technology and integration, Tekne aims for hard technology and precision. Laments that technokinesis really ought to be part of some other aptitude emerge from both Tekne and the rest of Orgosoft now and again. Cassel's annual reports constantly emphasize that Tekne is a valued Orgosoft division. Despite these frequent pats on the back that personnel receives, grumbling within Tekne continues.

There's the joke that technos like computers because they prefer to spend time with family. It's true that many Tekne employees aren't very socially adept. Even so, this fact has a certain logic to it. Most humans' strongest sense is sight, so the visual world dominates. Experienced technos are bound more deeply to a "machine awareness" than to sight, so that awareness rules their world. And humans adjust to the dominant social climate — basic cultural dynamics. Well, the "people" technos spend their time with run on rigorous logic, clear definition and repeatability (although the computer agents that technos use are pretty personable).

It doesn't help that Tekne's ESI (Extra-Satisfactory Intelligence) Project, one of its oldest undertakings, has been less than successful. The ESI Group supposes that technokinesis can create strong AI-level computer intelligences (although even the most fanciful noetic theorists deem this impossible). Despite a decade of research, Tekne's efforts here are inconclusive at best. When Orgosoft consolidated its Lunar holdings to reduce overhead last year,

the whole project moved from its original Moon site to Tekne's main HQ. The project's sudden relocation back home was thought by many to be the first move to full cancellation.

Kevin Labak, the man in charge of Tekne, is gregarious for a techno. It might have something to do with his latent status. Despite Cassel's urging, Labak never underwent the Prometheus Effect. Labak claims that staying a neutral makes him exactly that — neutral — and thus better able to perform his duties. There's no arguing with his results, either. Labak and his introverted crew designed and incorporated every aspect of hardtech that interfaces with bioapps.

Tekne Central is in Diamond Craters, on the east side of the Cascades close to the West/Central District borders. It's in a place that is more like the Moon than anywhere

else on Earth: excruciatingly dry and covered with ancient lava flows. *Nothing* grows here. This is where the problem with silicate dust (ubiquitous on Luna) and its tendency to get into *everything* first came to light. The early Orgos, members of Tekne, cured the problem for lava-tube colonists on the Moon and points beyond.

 TRITON ARCHIVE

HARD TECHNOLOGY IS OUR FRIEND

— Orientation lecture, Wesley Kevin, Assistant Chief Operations Officer, Tekne Group

This is it, folks. This is where we're building the future. And I mean *building*. If you want to *grow* things, go see the farmers. Around here, we appreciate tools and devices that don't drag three billion years of genetic code behind them. We like to make new things, not to spend all of our time trying to write patches for "version 6.02 x 10²³" of God's own operating system, thanks very much.

 TRITON ARCHIVE

Subject: take a guess
From: Kevin Labak, Tekne Group Research Director
To: Alex Cassel, Orgotek President
Encryption: DSE
Transmission type: textfile
Date: 16:01:23 1.29.2115

Alex, we've been over this a hundred times since '03. No matter what kinds of assurances you give me, no matter how many times you graph out the equations, the fact remains: You don't know I won't lose something if I go through this process. Look at what happened to Shockey. Sure, he recovered with psychotherapy, but I am pretty damn happy with my head screwed on like it is.

We both know my work isn't suffering from my being "merely" a normal person. Please, just drop it.

The actual HQ is different. I've heard it called a "robot diamond," and I can't think of a better description, so I'll swipe it. The buildings are all reworked lava materials, melted down and recast into rods and planes for geodesic domes, and laced with fiber optics pulled from some of the Aberrant-crushed ghost towns of eastern Oregon and Washington. HQ is surrounded by a swarm of mini-assemblers and robots, something like 20 ROVots to every techno. To the Tekne crew it's like being able to spread your senses for kilometers around; to the rest of us, it's sort of like watching the lava bed come alive because most of the machines are dusted in lava-gray layers of melted dust and ash.

ORGOTEK

LUMEN

LUMEN

Lumen was known as the "Frost Group" for the first few years, referring to its director, Ashley Frost. She insisted that its name be changed when Lumen was established as an independent subsidiary in 2110. Many of Dr. Frost's core group of scientists and engineers still call it by the old name.

Lumen was planned to be an R&D house to develop laser weapons, solar-sail vehicles, sensory-enhancement bioware and so on. Such research would then go to Orgosoft or Tekne for implementation. Additionally, a sizable proportion of Lumen's R&D budget was devoted to "blue-sky" projects — side undertakings for researchers that might never show a profit. The idea was to maintain morale and to allow for possible development in unexpected areas. It worked.

Since the Chromatics came on the scene in 2113, Lumen's Xenology Research budget increased annually, which is balanced by growing pressure to show results in the form of weapons and defense systems. Some researchers left the company due to this increase in pressure, but many remain on good terms with their former employer.

Lumen HQ is located in the New York Arcology, adjacent to WEI's headquarters. It serves as a central data repository and communications center, as Lumen's production and research centers are scattered all over the Solar System.

Lumen is involved with the *Tooci* solar-sail project near Jupiter's moon, Io. While Cassel has his doubts that light-sailing will ever show a profit, Dr. Frost is personally

Vulcan Station

— Report excerpt: Dr. Alexander Kalinsky, 2.1.2120

This close to the Sun's photosphere, it is easy to detect neutrino flow. As Orgosoft's tests with the CCl₄ and the Compressed Nucleotide tanks show, solar neutrino output dropped to half of its average over the last decade.

The next three months are devoted to exploring Dr. Patrick's theory about quantum black holes in the photosphere. Clarise Danauer of ISRA arrives soon to begin probes to the Sun's interior in an attempt to confirm Dr. Mbele's theory that the Sun's core has stopped fusing. My feeling is that this drop in neutrino activity may be part of a cycle whose entire period we have not yet observed scientifically. Remember, humanity's 700 years of astronomical study is but a heartbeat for the Sun.

It would help immensely if we could obtain use of a Leviathan. Viewing a second star up-close, as a control to these experiments, would at least reassure the rest of the astrophysical community and provide us with vitally important data.

devoted to it out of her love of sailing. The Prexy is willing to indulge her as long as Lumen keeps turning around profitable ideas.

The Holographic Nanotech Group is on *Orgulho de Céu*, working for the past year with a select group of Norça. They're developing crystalline machines as biotech-designed satisfactory intelligences. The group proposes that an SI could be distributed throughout a piece of biotech, giving the item a computer's control structures without having a single critical point of vulnerability.

The Chromatic Countermeasures Group digs into evidence gathered on our violent alien opponents — to see how we can eradicate them more effectively. (Group head, Daniel Toth, is harsh and not known for his tact.) The CCG isolated many of the structures in the Chromatic body that are used for photokinetic channeling,

 ORGOTEK

with an eye toward creating dampening devices useful against the aliens. There are rumors going around that Lumen may have cloned some Chromie organs with a little help from Orgosoft personnel. Theoretically, this cloning could result in alien bioapp-power sources — or weapons. I haven't received any confirmation on this yet, but I'll continue checking.

The newest project is *Vulcan Station*, which is dedicated to delving into photospheric research on the Sun. This endeavor is quite recent, based on unusual energy readings we've been getting from old Sol.



OPERATIONS

Officially a subsidiary of WEI, Operations (Orgotek's "hands" and "brain") is an independent security corporation. Cassel believes in having a central authority, so the security guards you see in Orgotek facilities all work in Ops. However, Cassel also believes in checks and balances, so it is administration — WEI — that tells Ops where to go and what to do.

Operations' overarching duty is to serve as a comprehensive security and defense resource; this function is divided into seven main sections. The first provides regular self-defense training to all Orgotek employees. Staffers must report to basic two-day self-defense courses once every four weeks. Although these times are not

frequent enough to evolve strong skills, the majority of Orgos enjoy the courses enough to sign up for weekly or bi-weekly programs.

Ops' more intensive duties are split as follows: Aberrant Defense is well-known from action vids; this group's strike teams join the Legions on the front lines to battle Aberrants (like the force that tried to stop the *Esperanza* disaster). Site Security handles protection on and around Orgotek property, including the neighborhoods surrounding Orgotek sites. Personnel Security is a lot like Site except that it focuses on guarding specific Orgotek staffers. Data Security is Orgotek's crew of "data cops," keeping the order's vital information systems safe from tampering and intrusion. External Operations acts as a combination of Site and Personnel Security, with companies that contract Orgotek's services; sometimes agencies that bring in Orgotek researchers never know that they get ExOps security as well. Xenology is the smallest department, which is not surprising since it handles surveillance of alien races like our friends, the Qin — although Xenology could grow if things work out with the Coalition, or somehow with the Chromatics.

Ever since I started here, I've heard rumors of a secret eighth section, a supposed "final option" group. It apparently reports directly to Cassel and takes care of things too grim for the other sections to handle. There are stories about this phantom squad — corporate moles being hauled from their apartments in the middle of the night, disruptive personnel getting transferred out and never being heard from again, sensitive information disappearing from databases without a trace. But they are always in a "heard it from a friend" fashion. Despite some admittedly tentative probes, I haven't found any hard information yet. I'm not sure I want to, either. Not because I'm afraid of disappearing, mind you; rather, because such a hush-hush organization shows a much darker side to Orgotek than I care for.

ORGOTEK

SPIN-OFFS

Aside from the official five divisions within Orgotek, the company has spawned a number of spin-offs and competitors. It provides an Industry Development Slush Fund for low-interest capital loans to former employees who want to start their own concerns. Approval is an involved and difficult process since Cassel wants the money to go only to those who show promise in pushing technology in new directions.



BIOCRAFT, INCORPORATED

This company was one of the first recipients of IDSF money. Its founders were interested in refining biotech vehicle-control systems, and they have. Biocraft developed systems that Orgosoft has yet to match, and it saw immediately that it could make more money by long-term licensing the components to the entire biotech industry than by selling the design to Orgotek. The savvy little company paid off the IDSF disbursement before going public with its advances. Now Biocraft controls a small but lucrative niche in the biotech vehicle industry.

TRITON ARCHIVE

Subject: Competitive Outlook Report
From: Matthew Crowley, WEI CIO
To: Orgotek Board of Directors
Encryption: DSE
Transmission type: textfile
Date: 07:52:02 1.12.2120

It is unlikely that more than half of today's AAM top-40 metanational corporations will maintain their current configuration for even another five years. With the ongoing Aberrant threat, the return to the extrasolar colonies and the ever-steepening technology curve, it's very difficult to make predictions about the market's future direction. Orgotek's strategy during this time of massive transformation is to maintain a stable foundation, yet to retain flexibility to take advantage of changing circumstances. The enclosed report outlines how to best implement this plan.

>>> file enclosed <<<



AEROWING ENTERPRISES

By contrast, Aerowing is still under Orgotek's thumb. The Big O retains 20 percent ownership in the company's research into minimally powered flight. Aerowing hopes its designs will be useful on Earth, Mars, and the Jovian upper atmosphere.

TAGGAC CORPORATION

Paul Oleson, an electrokinetic dissatisfied with Orgotek's pace of bioware development, established Taggac as a small biotechnology firm. At this point, I'm not certain what sort of research Oleson devotes himself to since Taggac has yet to release a single product after 18 months. Although Taggac keeps up its payments to Orgotek, it's due for a visit from the FSA's Biotechnology Assurance Testers. These are the folks who make sure that biotech "abides by acceptable legal, ethical and moral laws." Meaning, they don't want anybody brewing up some kind of killer virus or Anthrax Omega in a basement somewhere.



PHOTOWARE COMPUTING DYNAMICS

Along with Biocraft, Photoware is a successful Orgotek spin-off corporation. Longtime Lumen researcher, Alana Daley, saw the profit potential in applied quantum electrodynamics relating to computers' holographic matrices — in other

words, improving computer storage and processing media by orders of magnitude. Rather than take the project to Dr. Frost, Daley gathered a group of skilled holo-optical physicists from some of the finest universities in America and Europe, and she started Photoware. Although incorporated only eight months ago, the company already competes with Alchemy, Lumen, Steinhardt and Wazukana.

DATA HOUNDS

DATA HOUNDS

This loose collection of former Orgotek employees hires out its services to computer networks — private corporate systems, OpNet nodes, even Orgotek's own Orgonet — for variable terms. The Data Hounds, all technokinesis specialists, can be hired to protect a project database for a few weeks, or to stay on indefinitely. They roam the network with customized agents and safeguard its integrity against outside intrusion and internal corruption. The agents report any found anomalies to the psions (sometimes referred to as "Net Cops"), whose responses vary from simple to complex, depending on the contract specifics. An intruder who is discovered in the network might find her agent suddenly disconnected — or infected with a customized virus that contaminates all the files in its base computer. The more involved processes cost more, but they dissuade potential hackers who know the Data Hounds are on the job.

NEPTUNE DIVISION

PSI ORDER ORGOTEK: PROGNOSIS

Alex Cassel takes great pains to maintain relations between his organization and the Æon Trinity. He encourages his staff to do the same. Associates of this sort (like the helpful Mr. Bengali) are forthcoming with information, but their loyalties obviously lie with Orgotek. Luckily, those teks who join Æon full-time show themselves to be behind the Trinity's goals.

Although Cassel maintains a constant dialogue with the Æon Council, there's no denying that the Prexy pursues nothing without an agenda. Put bluntly, we believe that Cassel works with the Trinity only because he thinks our organization can give him information and services to further his own goals. And those goals undoubtedly extend beyond simply protecting Earth from Aberrants or of being the "premiere biotechnology company in settled space."

This statement may sound sinister to some operatives, but remember that the Æon Trinity follows a similar path. We live in very interesting times. We must take advantage of every resource at our disposal if we are to guide humanity successfully into the future. Of all the psi orders, Orgotek seems to understand that importance most clearly.

And that also makes it the most dangerous.

EXTERNAL RELATIONS

Felding: The other day I heard one of my Ops team's old-timers talking about the raid on New Delhi, back during the Chib purge.

Chapman: Oh? Can't leave us dangling like that, Felding.

Felding: I'm getting there. She said that her team was prepped and ready 24 hours before they got word to go, and the Orgotek Ops teams were fighting in the streets of Delhi and Madras for two hours before the Legions showed up. I guess Cassel had it in pretty bad for this Bhurano chick, huh?

Murabi: I'm sure your friend exaggerated. All the reports say that Orgotek and the Legions hit ground at the same time, with the Ministry and the Norça shifters right behind them. It was a coordinated effort.

Felding: That's not what she told me.

Eaken: Cassel didn't have it in for Bhurano. They were close friends.

Chapman: Oh, come on, that's crazy! Bhurano was nuts, everyone says so.

Eaken: Just saying what I heard.

Murabi: Any other unsubstantiated rumors while we're killing the few minutes until shift change? Eaken, Felding?

Felding: Well, the same old-timer says she was part of the group that tried to defend *Esperanza* back in '13. Her squad was scrambled to a ready position in low orbit two hours before the Aberrants appeared, but they were never told why.

Eaken: That one I hadn't heard. Don't know anything about Cassel and the Teleporter Proxy, Bolade Atwan, either.

Murabi: I remember when I was a kid that a lot of the tabloids connected Atwan and Cassel romantically. Looking back, I think it was because they're both black.

Eaken: That's idiotic!

Murabi: I know. From what little I heard, if the two ever got along you would never have known it. Constant friction.

Chapman: And not in a good way. I

heard that as well, Murabi. We had a bunch of Fifth Legion Aussies here a couple of weeks ago, though. I should've asked them; I bet they'd know where the teleporters went.

Felding: Why would the Legionnaires know?

Chapman: Well, I don't know. The guys were arrogant enough, they gave the impression of knowing everything.

Eaken: Legions are okay; we had a strong cryo in here helping us with some superconductor research a while ago. He wasn't your typical brash ass-kicker, although he slipped into the role from time to time. Legions aren't as bad as the Norça. God, what a bunch of assholes.

Murabi: You aren't kidding. And some of them are real freaks physically. I think they revel in it. Thank God they don't get up this way very often.

Eaken: Here's a good unsubstantiated rumor: I heard that the last time AC went to Beijing he and Bue had a little fling. He likes Asian women, you know.

Murabi: Oh, you must be kidding. Sure, his wife's of Asian heritage, but so what? All I ever see is how inseparable they are. Where'd you hear something like that?

Chapman: I'd believe that, Joan.

Eaken: I can't say where I heard it. I know a guy in Beijing.

Felding: Next you'll be saying he goes to Zweidler for romantic advice.

Chapman: Now I *know* those two don't like each other.

Felding: Yeah, I heard the same thing, which is why I made the joke. I've got a couple of rexs as friends, though. They're not too bad overall.

Murabi: I don't know any rexs. Buddy of mine's a clear, though. He's gotten weird since he was triggered. Acts like he's always trying to remember something.

Chapman: I don't trust clairsentients. I always think they're hiding something.

Eaken: They *are*, Chapman, they *are*.

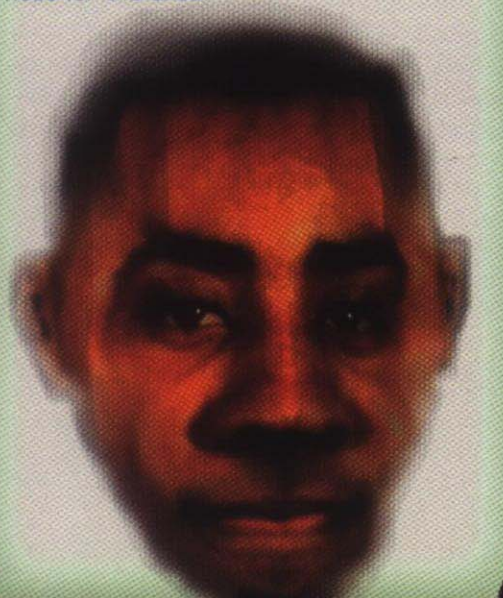
Orgotek: A Historical Overview

Most of Orgotek's history is public knowledge. Yet, this history is generated by Orgotek itself. Even the Æon Trinity has difficulty finding out anything about the psi order that Cassel doesn't want known. The organization's psionic data-manipulation abilities are second to none.

Despite a command of information that is the envy of many Triton Division operatives, Orgotek is not invincible. The following historical analysis of Alex Cassel and the empire he created is supplemented by data unearthed after much intensive research by Æon personnel.

Alex Cassel: Early Life

Cassel was fortunate to come from a family of old money that avoided the worst of the Aberrant War and the subsequent Crash. His mother, Imogene, was comptroller for the medical arm of SanAlf. His father, Jacob, was a teacher of Hamitic languages at Hunter College. As a boy, Alex was indulged as freely as the realities of the North American Aberrant Reconstruction allowed — the experiences from this period that most influenced him were family vacations to Southwest District. The freedom and sense of unlimited possibility on the great Southwest plateau were extremely exciting for the arcology-raised youth, and he retains a fondness for the area.



While Cassel did well throughout his schooling, he didn't pay complete attention. Other students remember him passing on brilliance alone. In contrast, an overheard remark might send Cassel researching an obscure subject exhaustively. He is said to have spent more time studying for classes that he never took than for the ones he attended. His classmates remember him as a charismatic eccentric: in turn, wildly engaging and intensely brooding. Cassel often indulged his friends, which is a habit that continues to the present.

In college, he designed holosim adventure games for his friends' enjoyment, then he'd wipe the program instead of submitting the concepts to DataWarp or Orchidware. Alex used his trust fund to throw lavish parties to celebrate his friends' special personal accomplishments, but he refused to lend anyone money. He even talked his classmates into going on whimsical, dangerous adventures in the industrial wilds that spread between the Hartford and Boston arcologies.

Cassel disappeared for days after each escapade. The few times friends saw him in these down times, Cassel was uncommunicative and unsure of his surroundings. He always returned as full of energy as before, though. Despite this odd behavior, even Cassel's closest friends never thought that he might be unbalanced. "Hey, it's just Alex," was the typical thought.

He also engaged in practical jokes and friendly dares. What was to become Orgotek was incorporated as a joke in 2102. The basis of the joke is lost to obscurity, overwhelmed by hundreds of apocryphal stories. Research shows that Alex was still in college (computer programming, economics and philosophy — graduating later with honors in the latter) when he filed incorporation papers for World Enterprises, Incorporated. Cassel put his circle of friends — including his new girlfriend, Ellayne Chen — on the board of directors, to their surprise and amusement.



WE

Subject: The Phantom
 From: Alex Cassel
 To: Ellayne Chen
 Encryption: SPE
 Transmission
 type: textfile
 Date: 21:37:02
 11.07.2102

I'm not going nuts, but it sure feels like it. The contacts from the whosits I've labeled "the Phantom" never come while Jeff's home, never while you're here, never while I'm checking my email in the middle of a card game. They come only when I'm alone. Doesn't matter where I am or what system I'm on, either. And I haven't been able to save them — not in data form, not in printouts, nothing. They pop on my display, flicker for a good 10 seconds, then vanish.

I can't be seeing things; it must be just a highly sophisticated agent. The Phantom may think he's pretty clever, but he has met his match. You know me, hon', it doesn't pay to underestimate ol' Alex Cassel.

The Messages

The influence of Cassel's friends and family, while considerable, is less crucial to Orgotek's creation than the development of Alex's psionic abilities. Without electrokinesis, it would have been impossible for the corporation to transform the science and industry of biotechnology.

In private records, Cassel refers to an anonymous contact made through the OpNet. It's unknown what the specific contents of those messages were; presumably, they promised some kind of power to Cassel. The Aeon Trinity never found conclusive evidence of the existence of any unusual messages sent to Alex Cassel during those months from late 2101 to 2102. They seemed real enough to him, though.

Although convinced initially that this was junk mail or some kind of hoax, Cassel played along. His curiosity is legendary, but he also likely wanted to flush the prankster out. As subsequent messages came — all screen-break announcements, apparently — Cassel developed tracker computer agents to hunt down the source.

It took him weeks to develop adequate agents, but in early 2102, he had them ready. When a message came through, the agents triggered automatically and traced it back through the OpNet to its source. The discovery left Cassel more puzzled and curious than he when he started; he found that the messages came from an old, unused satellite uplink router. It used to connect Earth's OpNet to LunaNet and the near-orbit networks. Strangely, the uplink dish was dismantled years before.

More weeks of this frustration grew to be more than Cassel could take. His grades suffered. He got on academic probation, and his friends were concerned for his health. It

CONFIDENTIAL

THE ORIGIN OF THE PROXIES

Aeon Trinity General Announcement, Neptune Division, 07.21.2112

Data on Alex Cassel's transformation into proxy is exceedingly scarce (as with the other proxies). Aeon investigations suggest it's unlikely that they developed psionic abilities spontaneously. Although each proxy speaks of receiving some kind of bizarre contact later attributed to psionic flux or spillage from fellow proxies, this simultaneous gestation indicates some kind of trigger event.

Triton Division's probability research has narrowed the possibilities of such a catalyst to the three likeliest factors: a covert human agency, an alien influence, or the proxies themselves projecting back in time. The Aeon Council keeps further details locked down until such time as it feels confident in putting forth the single most probable circumstance. Operatives are strongly encouraged to report any information they discover, however dubious, regarding the proxies' origins.

seems likely that Cassel's burgeoning ideas regarding biotechnology developed then as well, thus contributing to his distraction. His notes tied easily to concepts being pursued by S. K. Bhurano; they later laid the foundation of 22nd-century biotech research. The strange messages were Cassel's primary passion, however. Aeon discovered one final post to Ellayne before Cassel's mysterious trip to Olympus.

"I must find out who's behind this. I won't allow anyone to think they can out-program me. The messages keep talking about the Moon, about 'others.' Looks like I'm going up the well."

The Birth of Orgotek

Records indicate that Cassel made a trip to Olympus. If Zweidler's memoirs or Herzog's *Reflections of an Ordinary Man* are any indication, Cassel met with other proxies at an undisclosed location. When he returned from Luna weeks later, he contacted his college friends who made up the board of directors of their "corporation" (WEI) and Cassel told them that he was endowed with extraordinary abilities, and that he could similarly gift those with the potential. Of the 12 people in that lengthy meeting, only three were convinced of Cassel's sanity: Ellayne Chen, Jeff Kenyatta and Kevin Labak. The remainder broke off their friendships with the bizarre quartet and left. The "lost nine," as Cassel refers to them, probably spent the last two decades pondering the wisdom of their decision as Orgotek attained ever-greater status.

Cassel had ambitious plans from the beginning that his trust fund wasn't big enough to cover. Indirect evidence points to Cassel's early use of his psi powers to explore the OpNet, possibly obtaining inside information from stock exchanges. There is no denying that Alex increased his financial holdings in an amazingly short period of time — from ¥17.3 million into 12 times that

Subject: Network Intrusion
From: Ken Hokuri, Data Security Director, Multi-National Stock Exchange
To: Staff
Encryption: SPE
Transmission type: textfile
Date: 06:14:51 6.7.2103

Network security personnel report an unauthorized intrusion in the system early this morning. We are certain that the intruder did not tamper with any of the data stored online, or alter any prices, or manipulate any of our connections to external networks. It seems that the raid's purpose was merely to observe. Our preliminary investigation indicates that it could not be an ordinary hacker with a software agent, and it is not consistent with methods used by government agencies, either. We are pursuing the matter with extreme diligence.

In the meantime, the system is undergoing a fail-safe upgrade, which should negate any future attempts. Until that software is installed, please remain alert to the possibility of a hacker on the network. Contact Netsec should you suspect any unusual activity.



Coincidence? We Think Not!

— Gordon
Bartlett, © *Global
Watchdog*, January
2115

Notice how NO ONE has pointed out that the *Esperanza* attack and the Upeo vanishing both happened when the Chromatic raided Karroo? No one finds this the least bit disturbing? No one sees the connection? Lemme run something past ya.

Cassel, loyal toady to the Chromatics — who are just the next generation of Aberrants — gets word that Aberrants are going to whack the *Esperanza* while the Chromatics teleport to Earth to whack our teleporters. Why? To keep us all stuck here while the Aberrants prepare their full-out assault. Teleport Proxy Atwan learns this news — and remember that she and Cassel NEVER got

amount in under four months, all on extraordinarily well-timed stock purchases and sales.

This matter triggered a flurry of comment in economic arenas — and was the FSA's first look at the man who would become a longtime adversary. However, the government found no evidence of illegal activity. The money went toward hiring staff, constructing research sites and building the equipment necessary to construct the first biotech matrices. Orgotek was underway.

Psi Order Orgotek

Cassel expanded his psi order under the auspices of the Operations division of World Enterprises, Inc. and he made initial selections by hand. He knew he had to build the psi order and the corporation around the same core, and at first he selected only people who excelled in both areas. Among the first recruits were the two remaining members of Cassel's Round Table — Jennifer Lehoczy-Elliott, a junior partner at a Philadelphia law firm, and Ashley Frost, an astronomer at the Kinnerson Observatory on Luna — followed by others, including Debbie Lawrence, Director of Human Resources for Porter-Andersen; Steven Rothery, a biotechnology theorist from Williams College (Cassel's alma mater); and Marcus Srinivasan, a neurological specialist at the Mayo Clinic. With their latency (in some cases, quite minimal) established, each emerged from the Prometheus chamber to join Alex Cassel in building the future.

Orgotek focused on research and development contracts in its early days, unveiling its new "bioapps" only after the psi orders unveiled their existence in the aftermath of Sydney. Initial sales were slow, but sizable contracts from the Legions and Chitra Bhanu added to further research contracts kept Orgotek going in the early years. Once the psions publicly proved their worth, people grew used to the services and devices that Orgotek offered.

As the corporation burgeoned through offworld sales and development, it divided into the familiar five subsidiaries known today. None of the subsidiaries ever went public; Cassel seems unwilling to jump through the hoops that the Federated States requires before issuing an IPO (Initial Public Offering). More importantly, keeping Orgotek private

along — and she challenges Cassel and his bed-buddies Bue and Larssen to come to Africa for a face down. Sure, that sounds crazy, but Cassel was READY TO DO IT! I have proof! I have damn clearances, schedules — things I shouldn't have — showing dozens of Orgotek Ops teams. Ministry thought-police and Legion strike forces about to hit the Upeo when the *Esperanza* went down.

So the teleporters slam Chromie-world while the Chromatics are off attacking us with the Aberrants. But the lightshow freaks get back home before the Upeo were done and throw them all into some kind of Aberrant "negative zone." Since the teleporters escape, Cassel pulls his guys off Africa and sends them to *Esperanza* instead to keep plausible deniability — while Bue and Larssen say "to hell with it" and go home.

That's how it really happened.



enables the Prexy to retain full control behind the scenes.

The organization continues expanding, in the areas of biotech research, sales, and the defense of Earth. Orgotek's 100,000 employees wage war against commercial competitors such as Alchemy and TechnoDyne, as well as against physical menaces, including the Aberrants and Chromatics.

Orgotek Today

Alex Cassel continues directing Orgotek's course with the same exuberance he showed in his college days. Some people think him to be a charmer who helped invent modern anime culture and who offers a role model to the youth of the galaxy. Others call him a scheming manipulator who took some friends and a few million yuan and shaped one of the most powerful companies in human space.

Neither view is far from the truth. Love him or hate him, everyone who has met the Prexy admits that he is a riveting personality — possibly the most brilliant man alive. Cassel even seems set apart from his fellow proxies. He is genuinely good-natured; he truly means it when he says trite things like, "I want to unify humanity." But within the bounds of that good nature, Alex Cassel applies his intellect in ways others might deem ruthless.

Orgotek has the personnel and resources to provide Cassel with a very powerful tool for change. We can only hope that the Prexy's vision of unity is consistent with the one that we all share.



Unification

— Jarvis Maiken with Alex Cassel, *On the Hot Seat* © 2014 Stahu Entertainment

Maiken: In an interview for *AAM's Business Monthly* last year, you made an offhand comment that one of your goals was to unify humanity. Can you tell us what you meant by that, and how such a thing could possibly be accomplished?

Cassel: (chuckles) Well, I wouldn't presume to think I had the only answers, Jarvis. Churches and similar organizations have been trying it for thousands of years, and I'd hate to step on their toes. But c'mon, humankind has fought amongst itself for 6,000 years now, and it's such a waste of resources. Cuts down on profit margins, you know? (smiles)

Maiken: Plenty of arms suppliers would disagree with you. And Tekne and Orgosoft Farms, both owned by you, make a healthy profit out of war, don't they?

Cassel: Not out of war. Neither Tekne nor Orgosoft deals with governments or armies. They provide materials to the other psi orders and sell weapons to individuals to defend their homes and property. These are dangerous times, Jarvis; perhaps you've heard that the Aberrants are back in the Solar System? (smiles)

Maiken: A rather subtle distinction, if you ask me. But let's get back to the original question: How do you propose to "unify" humanity?

Cassel: These days, I think that all we need is education. Consider the vast differences we perceive between people today; imagine the rift between the poorest, most ignorant transplanted French refugee in the Outback and, say, Kostbaar. This difference is nothing compared to that between the Chromatics and humans. I think that a lot of what we must do is just to remind everyone that, in the cosmic scheme, we're fundamentally not much different from one another.



NORTH AMERICA

— Analysis: Phyllis Poe,
Æon Trinity, Triton Division

North American operations present unique challenges to Æon operatives, our associates in the psi orders and elsewhere. North America is the great bastion of tyranny in the 22nd century: a genuine "evil empire," presiding over a continent with a combination of ruthless determination and sheer brute force.

The Federated States of America styles itself to be the manifestation of the United States of America. But the USA, for all its failings in nearly three centuries, was not the sort of tyranny the FSA has been from its inception amid the chaos of the Aberrant War. Nor is the FSA in any sense a legitimate successor to the 21st-century governments of Mexico or Canada. The Federated States absorbed the top and bottom of a continent through military might, justified in terms acceptable only to those who already believed in the FSA's legitimacy.

As an independent organization that nonetheless plays a sustained part in political affairs, the Æon Trinity occupies a delicate position. We do not and cannot condone the FSA's many misdeeds. But neither do we have the luxury of simply dismissing them and sitting by on the sidelines. We have influence to wield and we seek to make as constructive a difference as we can. We believe that North America suffers less than it would without us, and we look toward the future for continued improvement.

Government

We've all heard the joke that the Federated States is like a schizophrenic hydra. It's true enough. The FSA has many heads, in the form of the district boards and government offices (most notably, the Federated States Military and Central Security

TRITON ARCHIVE

ANALYSIS: FSA GOVERNMENT OFFICES

The policies established by the FSA's governing boards are implemented by seven major offices. Each office's federal level coordinates communications and funding between the FedBoard and district levels. Every district has its own office that carries out policy in that region.

Federated States Military

FSM consolidated the former United States' military branches under a single administrative command. This office defends the nation's integrity from armed threats, whether internal or external.

Central Security Agency

CSA was reconfigured from 21st-century intelligence organizations. Its goal is to protect the country from acts of subversion and treason.

Office of Administration

The catch-all, Administration coordinates inter-office efforts, handles budget issues and reviews policy concerns for various offices.

Office of Business

Business regulates matters of employment (wages, hiring, firing) throughout the nation and it monitors corporate activity and investigates breaches of FSA corporate guidelines.

Office of Education

Seriously under-funded, this office handles the FSA's public-education budgeting and policy issues. Education reviews private schools in much the same manner as Business watches over corporate activity.

Office of Justice

Criminal and civil offenses not deemed acts of treason fall to this agency. Justice conducts trials and sentencing and maintains jail facilities for convicted criminals.

Office of Recreation

Recreation monitors Americans' "social resources" — parks, amusement centers, media. It makes sure that all FSA social options, whether domestic or international, fall within approved government guidelines.



Sling Slang Slung

— Calvin Nagi, *Informal Travels Through True America* © 2120 Eclipse Media

If you really feel you must roam the FSA, it helps to know the local lingo. Careful, though; some residents don't take kindly to tourists who walk around trying to talk like locals.

ABCs, the: The military triumvirate that serves as the *de facto* ruler of Tex-Mex District; Generals Alisanne, Banks and Carlyle.

Big O: Refers to Orgotek and to EK powers. Big O started as internal slang, but is now almost a cultural standard.

brain cop: Anyone with telepathy, even if she is not a member of the Ministry. People with more time on their hands or education that requires them to use multiple syllables say, "thought-police."

clip: The standard unit of the underground economy (seen most often in Tex-Mex and Southwest). Refers to pistol clips, not carbine — bigger weapons are too conspicuous for one's health. Also, Americans often insist on going for loud and messy weapons (autopistols) rather than quiet and efficient ones (lasers). Someone who wants to trade in clips usually signifies his intent by rattling empty shell casings. See also

>>> ylnk <<<.

[cough-cough hacking cough sounds]: The Blight Zone. Shortly after the explosion, cynics started referring to the area as Wy-[cough-cough]. It shortened over time to a series of gut-tearing coughs.

KIM: Originally shorthand for Orgotek Knowledge in Motion portable-education caravans. As a byproduct of this program's success, "to kim" means "to explain fully."

Nagcee: Standard pronunciation and informal written version of the NAGC, the Native American Gaming Council.

nlnny: Derogative slang for the New York arcology and one of its residents, from the official initials ("NNY"). If you want to

start a fight with a New Yorker, it's the quickest way.

Nordamerica: Easier to say than "North America." Naturally, Sudamerica lies just to the south.

Nork: In true American fashion, residents often mispronounce "Norca's" proper soft and sibilant "c." Even people who don't mean to be rude say "Norka." "Nork" and "N-word" suffice for those who don't care about being polite.

paw-paw: Contemptuous slang for a Legionnaire, from the rank tattoos on their heads. Legionnaires use the term among themselves, but if you're not in the Legion, forget you ever heard it because it's in the running for the Word-Stupid-Dead-People-Used-Once-Too-Often. See also

>>> psycho <<<.

plisson: Texan for "psion."

pspecial: Of or pertaining to psions; pronounced "puh-special," with a breathy "puh." Psions with a sense of humor use the word.

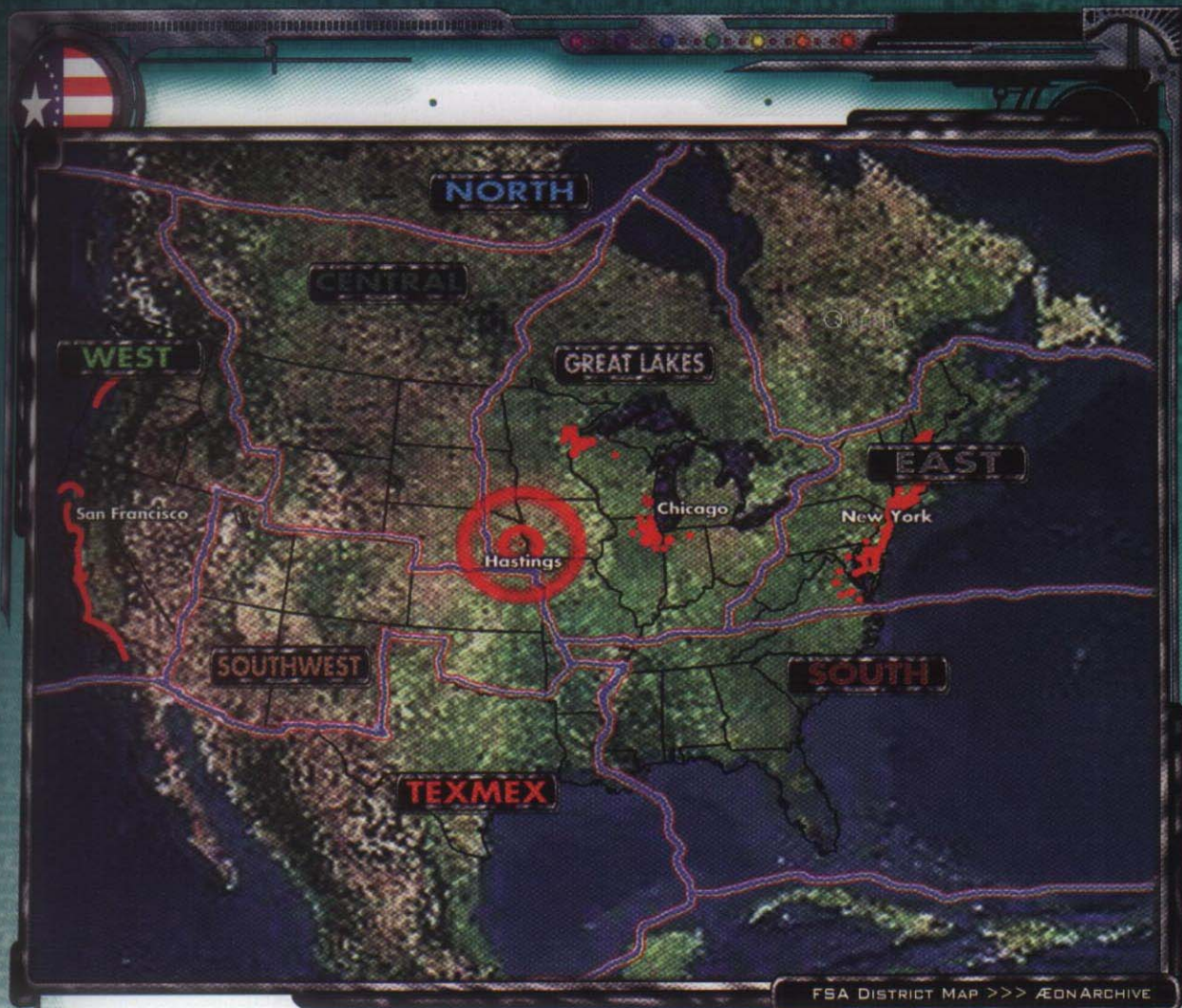
squid: An Aberrant.

The Second Coming: In the Christian Heartland, this phrase refers sarcastically to the Aberrants' return.

Troomers: Shorthand for the Trumericans, a.k.a. True Americans. It's not an official political movement or a religion, but it might as well be. These folks try to soften the FSA's fascist stance and push for a return to the original United States Constitution. Most Troomers hail from the Great Lakes, Southwest and Tex-Mex Districts.

turtle: Slang for a minicomp. The compact, shell-like shape of many computer models bears a vague similarity to a turtle.

ylnk: Stands for "yuan-not-clips," which is underground-speak for those who want to do business in yuan or American new dollars instead of in weapon clips. It's usually repeated several times ("ylnk ylnk ylnk!"). See also >>> clip. <<<



FSA DISTRICT MAP >>> AeonArchive

Agency) each with its own distinct personality and agenda. The Federated Districts Board, or FedBoard, is an attempt to keep the hydra's heads on the same leash.

Each of the FSA's eight districts — East, Great Lakes, North, West, Central, Southwest, Tex-Mex, South — is run by its own district board. A representative from each sits on the FedBoard, along with a delegate from the FSM and the CSA. These 10 individuals oversee policies that affect the entire nation (extranational threats,

intradistrict commerce, federal funding). Otherwise, each district operates much on its own. Local boards within each district handle issues on a state and city level.

While this setup enables every district to run relatively smoothly, most cross-district efforts devolve into power struggles and exercises in one-upmanship. Each district looks for the best deal it can get; assisting a fellow district is a distant second priority. Although the FedBoard was established to address these problems,

the board members' primary loyalty remains with their respective districts, not to some abstract of a "united America."

The FedBoard's military and intelligence representatives' cross-jurisdictional power adds to the divisiveness. FSM military bases across the country are supposed to follow their districts' directives. The recent appointment of three FSM generals to run the Tex-Mex District's board is a telling statement to the power that the military still wields in government. The Central Security Agency,

while keeping a low public profile, makes no pretense of district loyalty. The district representatives know that, fundamentally, their jobs — indeed, their *lives* — are in the hands of the FSA's military and intelligence agency. The board members are very cautious about crossing these offices.

Although the FSM and CSA are committed to maintaining the nation's integrity against threats, each has its own idea on how to do so. Entire districts feel the repercussions when these agendas conflict. Again, Tex-Mex is a good example. The military finally pushed through its plans to mount a direct offensive against the Mexican rebels; however, it took years of political struggle with the CSA — which wanted to undermine the revolutionaries' efforts covertly, restricting Brazil's influence on North America in the process — to accomplish it. This lag in time gave the Mexicans an opportunity to build up their resources even further.

It's worth noting that even when a military policy succeeds over an intelligence scheme (or vice versa), the "losing" office usually follows its own agenda anyway by modifying it enough to get around the other office's plan. But the FSM and CSA are quick to join forces against district efforts to undermine the two agencies' authority.



East District

As home to four of the American "Big 40" corporations (HLY, Orgotek, L-K, and ClinTech), as well as to the nominal seat of the Federated States government, East District should be one of the most prosperous regions in settled space. Instead, it shows the legacy of the Aberrant War's devastation — an obsolete governing system and splintered urban zones dominated by corporate interests. In this case, our interests lie less with the major population centers than with influential metropolises.

As the northernmost of the district's three major corporate arcologies, Hartford is the corporate domain of HLY National Finance. The metanational corporation provides financial and investment services to the FedBoard and to specialized corporate groups. The smallest of the four top-tier financial metanats, HLY thrives on its interplanetary leadership in insurance (except the private insurance arms of the *zaibatsu*) and

on its willingness to work with governments and corporations. HLY is a primary lender to a number of credit-starved colonies, arcologies, nation-states and extranational groups. The corporation has even pursued an aggressive program of banking acquisitions in Québec, becoming that nation's dominant financial provider.

L-K and ClinTech, entrenched in the Baltimore-New DC arcology region, are intricately bound to the military-corporate complex that

TRITON ARCHIVE

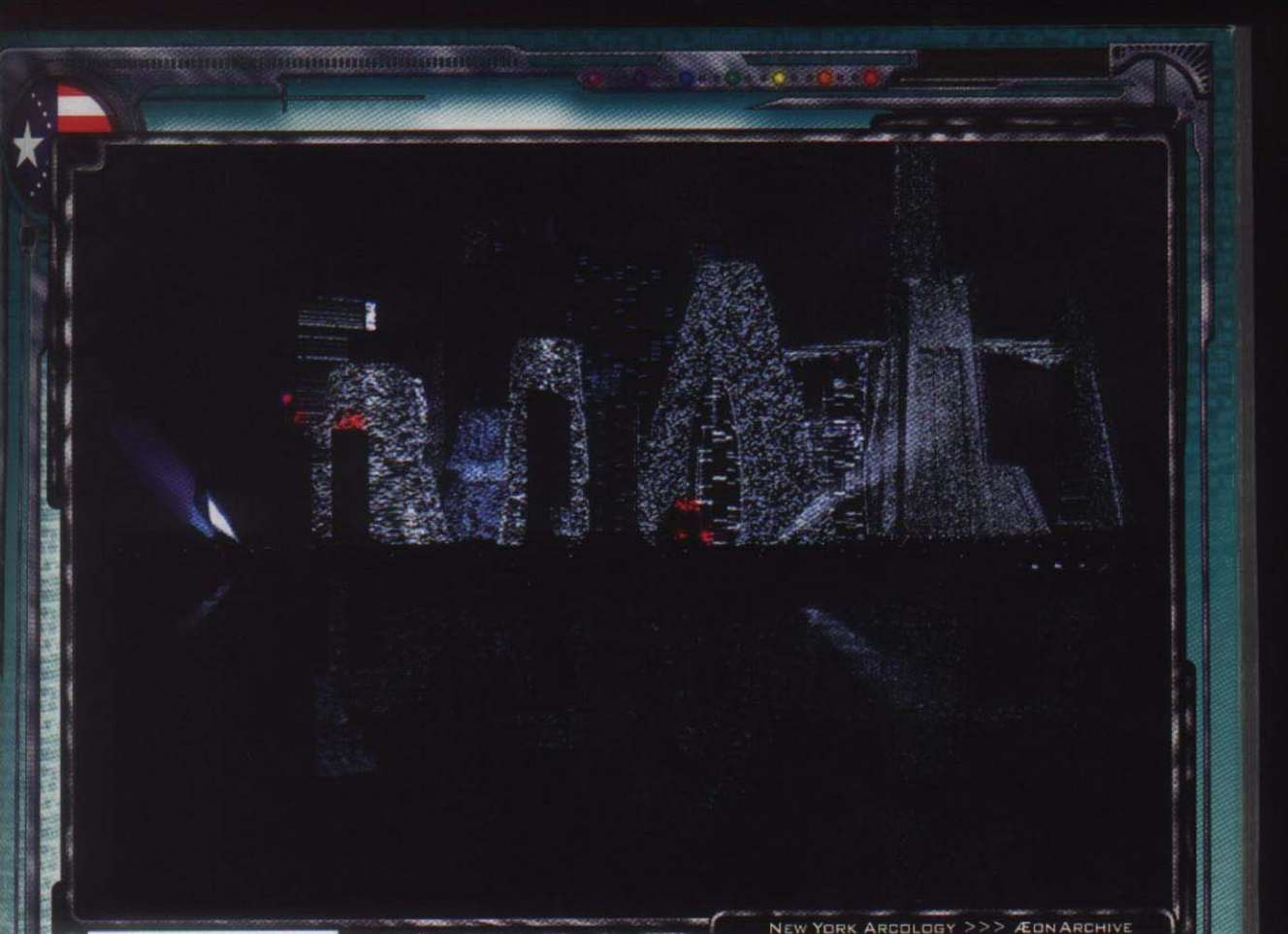
Subject: Currency Timetable
From: Alexandra Schmidt, Zone Manager, Montreal
To: Policy Commission, Hartford
Encryption: DSE
Transmission type: holofile
Date: 10:01:06 3.09.2120

Gang —

Good to see everyone at Tanglewood last week. I find the retreats a welcome chance to stay in touch with you all, as well as to keep abreast of company gossip. Montreal is a nice town, but it's still not home, yeh?

Anyway, I'm writing to check up on how the currency unification is moving along from your end. I know it's a potential PR hurdle if the Frenchies get word of it, but we lost almost a billion last year on processing time converting transactions between the dollar and the franc. There's no need for them to have their own money.

Keep 'em flying,
 Allie



NEW YORK ARCOLOGY >>> AEDN ARCHIVE

makes up the Federated States' real governing apparatus. Insurgents dream of shutting down New DC and stopping the heart of the entire military-corporate beast in one fell swoop. So far, few have been brave enough to try and none have come close to succeeding.

New DC was built explicitly with security in mind. As such, it is nearly impregnable — a monolith straddling most of Chesapeake Bay amid the remnants of old Washington DC, Baltimore and Cambridge. An inordinate number of citizens are employed with weapons contractors or the Federated States government — or both. Due to the wealth such positions bring in, many of the Baltimore-New DC residents enjoys a superior standard of living. The

arcology's exterior is stark and featureless, but behind the safety of multiple physical- and electronic-security measures, the internal areas are spacious and aesthetically pleasing. There are even spaces set aside for parks and artificial ponds for those who don't have time to jet up to Vermont.

The space between the New DC and New York metroplexes is a wasteland of slums, derelict industrial parks and failed suburban experiments. The entire area is a gutted memento of the many sacrifices the old United States made during the Aberrant War.

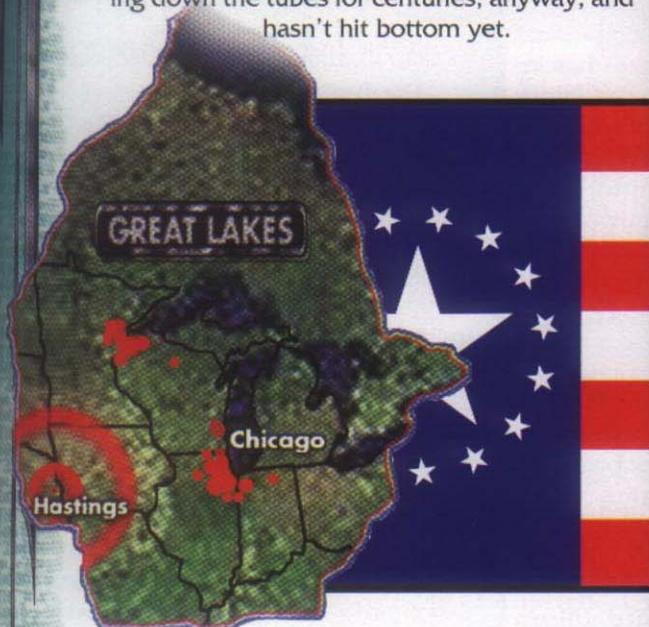
The "New New York" arcology (commonly called "New York" since most think the extra "New" sounds idiotic) is one of the largest artificial

urban complexes on Earth. Visitors from Luna are surprised to find that New York is more Byzantine and cramped than Olympus. New York is too huge to manage adequately. In fact, budgeting goes only as far as repairing problems (fusion-grid breakdowns, magtrain congestion, structural repairs). An attempt to generate income by selling "shares" of the Big Apple was a disastrous failure because the corporations and private citizens who paid-up expected preferential treatment in return. This matter still causes conflicts with city officials regarding matters of legal jurisdiction and social accountability.

Even the arcology's world-famous luxury districts (the so-called "up-

the latest anonymous flatworks from Turkish authors. New York shows a willingness to embrace diversity.

Conservative elements in the FSA see a rampant growth of detrimental social ones in New York. Orgotek's visible support of this diversity only exacerbates the view, due to the ongoing friction between the "EK Company" and the Federated States (and those metanats allied with the government). Much of the populace cares little for the politics involved. Loyal New Yorkers point out that the place was going down the tubes for centuries, anyway, and hasn't hit bottom yet.



Great Lakes

The best parts of this district are rural; thus, they are outside the Blight Zone and in areas where the Canadian Resistance doesn't cause too many problems. Great Lakes was home to the rushed research to adapt crops that would survive the Blight during the war. This district's residents stopped starving earlier than the rest of the country. Since that time, most people focus on making sure the crops keep growing. It's not particularly dramatic, which is just the way the locals like it.

The ultimately doomed Great Lakes arcology strip, begun in 2102, was an attempt at 22nd-century urbanization. It was never completed due to bureaucratic problems that left the project wide open for disaster. The pre-existing Chicago and Minneapolis-St. Paul arcologies served as anchors, with the in-between cities of Madison and La



The LAST Zone:

The Legion Aberrant

Suppression Treaty Zone

— Calvin Nagi, *Informal Travels Through True America* © 2120 Eclipse Media

In 2110, the FSA and Fifth Legion met in private meetings moderated by the Aeon Trinity. The purpose: to arrange for the Legion to take over patrolling the region devastated by the Aberrant Wycoff's blast over 50 years previously. On the surface, embracing psions suddenly seems out of character for the FSA. Let's look beyond the obvious, though:

The Federated States was in conflict with rebels in the Tex-Mex District — ever since it took over half of Mexico. Although not as well organized as its southern counterpart, the Canadian Resistance was likewise a problem. The FedBoard spent much of its resources watching the Blight Zone for those infrequent times when Aberrants popped out. This concentration limited the FSA's ability to focus on its border problems.

Back then, official Legionnaires were allowed in North America only as private security, which limited their influence. But the Fifth Legion had proved itself in South America by assisting the Norça in eradicating Aberrants hidden in the vast Amazon. Much as the FSA disliked the idea of armed psions inside its borders, it wanted Aberrants loose even less. I'm sure the FedBoard also believed that if psions and Aberrants are busy fighting each other, then they're not going to bother with the FSA. Best of all, the FSA could redirect funding to its borders.

With that in mind, enter the "Legion Aberrant Suppression Treaty," designating the inner Blight area as the "LAST Zone." The FSA left a handful of personnel who acted as advisors (and spies, I imagine) to the Legion. No one knows the treaty's conditions, but the Legion certainly acts as if it owns the area outright. Within the Blight region's "inner circle," the Legionnaires conduct complex military maneuvers and anti-Aberrant suppression missions.

Crosse upgrading to arcology status. Multiple magrail lines linked them all.

Self-serving politicians and contractors abused the project funding and parameters, however. After years, the maglines were finally completed, La Crosse arcology was barely half-finished and Madison's shell was only partially constructed. Madison's citizens and officials, renowned for their fractiousness, used every skill and trick possible to delay production and to maintain the old city.

In 2111, explosives planted by Canadian extremists tore apart six magtrain terminals, killing hundreds, causing mass destruction and bankrupting the arcology project. Families of the bombing victims — and those who lost their homes when the government initially bought them out for the project — filed lawsuits. Some cases were thrown out and a few remain in court. Yet, the sheer cost of handling the reparations, settlements and court fees left nothing with which to continue the project.

Almost a decade later, frameworks and building segments still litter the 500 kilometers between Chicago and Minneapolis-St. Paul, scattered around the reconstructed magline like a shed skin. Locals scavenge debris to use it in other construction.

The northern shores of the Great Lakes suffer from their own unrest. The Superior Uplands' "Civic Stability Zone" bears a suspicious resemblance to a big outdoors prison camp. It's eerily reminiscent of Europe or Japan just after

World War II, but with Midwestern terrain as the backdrop. The region is meant as an object lesson to dissuade Canadian rebels, and it seems to do the job (at least, partly). There's much resistance to the FSA in the northern half of Great Lakes, but it's not as effective as the Mexican freedom-fighters in the south. There sure are many bodies turning up at the CSZ, though.

Great Lakes has industries with conditions that match surrounding cities; DataWarp is a good example. Conceived as a showcase for the triumph of fascist ideology applied to high-technology, it instead produces huge, buggy programs that need constant maintenance and customized technical support. Also, the programs don't compete well with those from Tokyo, Shanghai or Cairo. The district board thinks DataWarp is too important to fail, though, so it keeps getting high-paying government contracts, which drains off a hefty flow of money and resources from other, more successful ventures that could use them productively.

Ironically, about the only calm portion of Great Lakes is the Blight Zone. The constant threat of Aberrant attacks from the heart of the region is mitigated by the many Fifth Legionnaires who patrol the area. Orgotek and the Æsculapians established

a Blight Project to study the area as well, adding to the security factor. The farmers, homesteaders, assorted communes and businesses that occupy the fringe are comforted by Legion patrols stopping by or flying overhead.

TRITON ARCHIVE

ANALYSIS: EDUCATION IN NORTH AMERICA

The Federated States talks about "the importance of education for the citizenry's evolution within public and private spheres." The FSA's Office of Education even constructed elaborate guidelines for adolescent and college public education for all districts. Ironically, Education spent more on these guidelines, known as the Public Education Agenda (PEA), than it spent on public education itself in the following four years.

Federal funding for public schools goes to those districts with greater political (or military) clout. Arcologies and large cities in the East, South and West Districts have decent public education programs. Central, Great Lakes and Tex-Mex get by with marginal federal budgeting. North and Southwest fight over the scraps. Each district also has its own annual budget, but the funds can be pitifully small. Most cities and towns rely on home education or on Orgotek's Knowledge in Motion Project.

Official FSA public schools focus on technical subjects connected to local industry and on each arcology's technical requirements. Broad subjects such as history, literature, and political science tend to appear in FSA-approved microbytes or they fall by the wayside.

Private schools provide much more comprehensive programs, naturally, but only the small percentage of upper-class citizens can afford them.

North District

Most of this region is a war waiting to happen. The Canadian Resistance, disorganized as it is, finds plenty of places to hide up here. The FSM roams in its assault skimmers across the deceptively peaceful countryside, ready for combat at the slightest provocation.

At most, what happens is infrequent and mismatched skirmishes between the rebels and the FSM. Although normal folks who just try to get by sometimes get caught in the crossfire, this isn't the worst of it.

Remember the old USA's military buildup back in the late 20th century? It set up a whole mess of secret nuclear-missile silos and chemical-weapons test sites in what used to be Canada and Alaska (part of the USA's "war of deterrence" against hostile nations). When Kuwasha destroyed the OpNet and officially set off the Aberrant War, most of America's records on those sites were lost. The FSA recovered a few, but there are plenty more out there.

So-called "tundra enclaves" have found some of them, too. They're content to sit on their prizes for the time being, but most of these people are ciphers. No one knows what the

enclaves' agendas are, although Triton admits that they have the potential to present a serious organized challenge to America.

Despite the Federated States Military patrols and satellite sweeps, there is simply too much terrain to cover for them to be completely effective. Aeon needs to know what the enclaves are doing in order to help — and to defuse potential crises. If handled properly, the Trinity could unite the fragments scattered across the Arctic Circle into a force for positive change, instead of being the radical unknowns they currently are.

The problem is that these folks are very committed. Triton's job is research, not trying to talk down a zealot with his finger on the button. Send in Proteus; they like dealing with this sort of thing. I don't want to be around when the nerve gas and the battlefield fusion warheads start flying.

Information in the FSA

— Dr. Keiran Baxter,
The Technological Age ©
2110 Walkabout Press

The Federated States has a love/hate relationship with computers. The government likes keeping track of everyone, but it doesn't like anyone else doing the same. It's similarly leery of people sending information through channels that the FSA doesn't control. Computers encourage the hoarding and spread of information, after all.

FSA favors big centralized computer systems such as those that longtime contractor Steinhardt provides. These kinds of systems show end users what the FSA approves of, while allowing end users to put in only what it wants to accept. This method helps the nation keep its control of the information flow.

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West District

The Pacific coast has long held a tradition of being the "opposite pole" of North American social life. San Francisco, Los Angeles or

PROTEUS ARCHIVE

BREMERTON QUARANTINE

—**Transcript: Bremerton Naval Yards internal security monitors, 9:17:22 7.4.2051**

>>> static <<< Perimeter alert! Perimeter alert! C'mon, guys, pick up the damn line!

This is unit four, north fence! We've got an Aberrant coming down the Sound! Big guy, bright green, he's got a... sword or something! He's — son of a bitch, he just cut a cruiser in half!

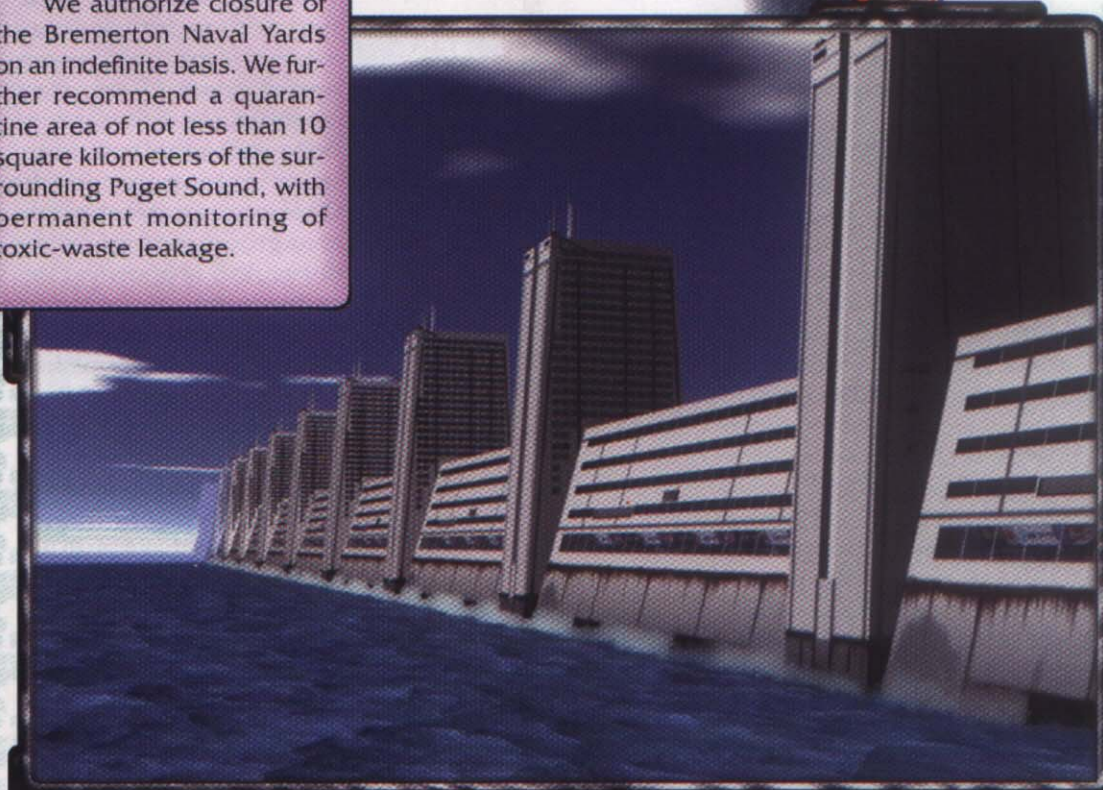
>>> static <<<

—**Summary: Naval Infrastructure, 8.7.2051**

We authorize closure of the Bremerton Naval Yards on an indefinite basis. We further recommend a quarantine area of not less than 10 square kilometers of the surrounding Puget Sound, with permanent monitoring of toxic-waste leakage.

Vancouver arcology residents insist they still hold America's cultural "edge," ignoring the cultural epicenters that have sprung up in the Central and Southwest Districts. West's best creative days may be behind it, just as other parts of the country have fell into stagnancy in preceding centuries. But you'll never hear the locals admit it. They might grudgingly say that Central and Southwest offer worthy competition.

Parts of West District, cities including San Diego and Sacramento, avoided the lure of metroplex reconstruction and retain creative, experimental spirits. Of the arcologies, San



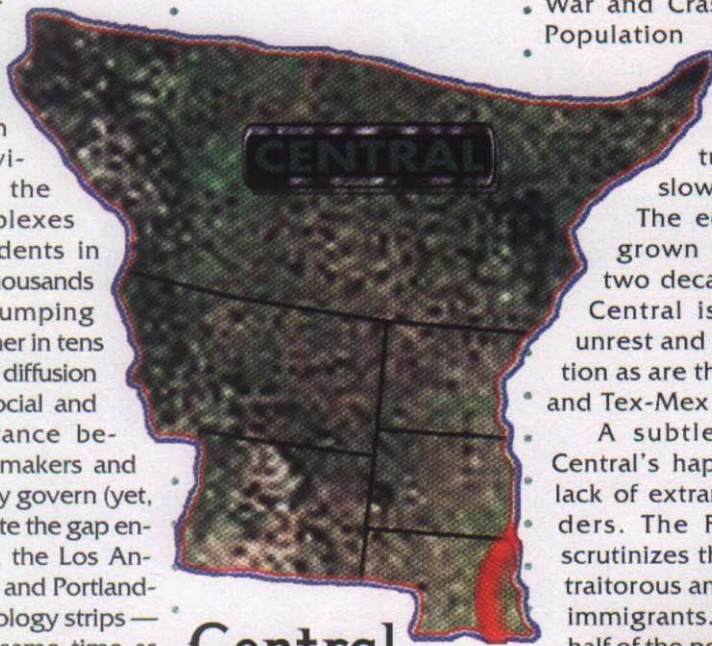
PORTLAND-VANCOUVER ARCOLOGY STRIP > Aeon Archive



Francisco and Portland most closely identify with these attitudes. Still, not everyone in West District styles themselves as rebels. Vancouver is a model of FSA conformity — which should not be surprising since it's home to Steinhardt, North America's last major computer-systems manufacturer. The metacorp provides mainframe systems and software tailored to the FedBoard's guidelines.

West's arcologies, though more numerous than those to the east, have a dynamic feel due to their small size. Stratification encroaches easily in an arcology environment, so the West metropolises disperse residents in hundreds of thousands rather than lumping them all together in tens of millions. This diffusion creates less social and physical distance between policy makers and the people they govern (yet, it doesn't negate the gap entirely). Further, the Los Angeles-San Jose and Portland-Vancouver arcology strips — begun at the same time as the Great Lakes' failed project — were designed to fit aesthetically with the countryside. The structures don't just shoot out of the ground in a series of massive spires like those further east. Instead, the designs follow the landscape as enclosed communities connected to one another over hundreds of kilometers by high-speed maglev trains.

Some of the worst Unapproved Urban Areas sprawl right outside West's arcology walls, particularly near Los Angeles. It's partly because of climate: The Pacific coast has milder weather than the other districts so people can subsist here with less effort than elsewhere. West District claims that other regions use that excuse to help ship troublemakers to its fringe slums. There's no hard evidence, but Triton Division believes that's not far from the truth.



Central District

This area lacks the undercurrent of tension one feels elsewhere in the Federated States. The FSA's iron gauntlet rests lightly upon Central. There's a minimum of revolutionary terror and counter-revolution, artistic innovation flourishes and people have time to relax and live.

The old image of the regions comprising Central District — bland places where nothing happens — exists even among other North American residents. Nordamericans presume that Central is "blighted," "barren," "boring" and "dead." Ironical, since the actual Blight Zone is actually delineated in the Great Lakes and Southwest Districts.

Of all the North American regions, Central weathered the Aberrant War and Crash the best. Population leveled off by the start of the 22nd century and now slowly increases.

The economy has grown for the past two decades as well. Central isn't torn by unrest and political friction as are the Southwest and Tex-Mex Districts.

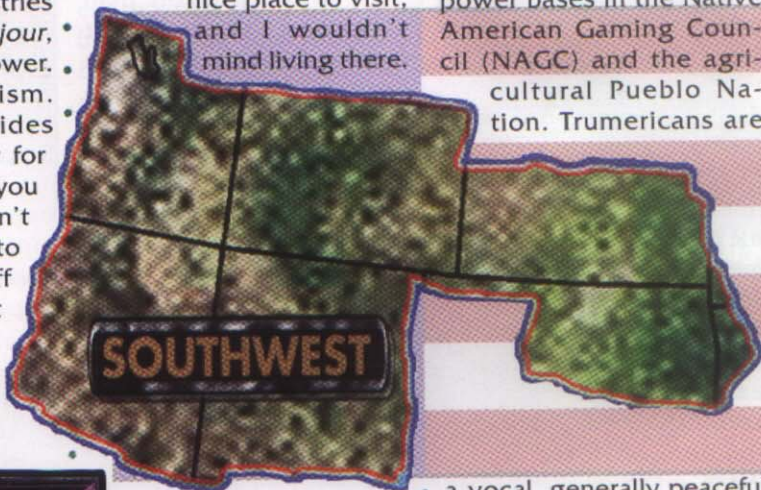
A subtler secret of Central's happiness is its lack of extranational borders. The FSA seldom scrutinizes the district for traitorous and dangerous immigrants. Central has half of the police and Federated States Military per capita compared to other districts — and less than a tenth of what Southwest or Tex-Mex has. That inequality means fewer antagonistic clashes between citizens and the law, so Central doesn't have the undercurrent of violence that its neighbors do.

The district government is dominated by agricultural interests. With the instigation of FSA's fascist regime, interior districts went through less governing shift than the coastal districts did. The pre-existing industries now simply wield *de jure*, as well as *de facto*, power.

It's still fascism. Central's Board decides where you can apply for work and how much you can make. But it doesn't pry so thoroughly into what you do in your off hours. That's why art flourishes here — artists who do their part as productive citizens

during the day can do much as they please at night (short of street theater involving incendiary devices). Political art and humor keep a low profile, but even here, the Central Board allows greater leeway than elsewhere. It's a nice place to visit, and I wouldn't mind living there.

the potential hotspot that the North could become, but it does warrant close scrutiny, which is due to the unified efforts of Native Americans and a sizable contingent of "Trumericans" in the district. The former have created two worthy power bases in the Native American Gaming Council (NAGC) and the agricultural Pueblo Nation. Trumericans are



Southwest District

FRINGE DWELLER
SAYS: WYCOFF LIVES!

— Kirby Kontz, interviewed for *This is True!* © 2115 Rafat, Inc.

The entire Blight Zone is an Aberrant, man. One huge dangerous Aberrant a lot bigger than The Colony. That's why the middle never went back to normal, yeh? Why plants don't grow right and f—s who go in there too long come down with weird diseases. That's why Aberrants can hide in there and even the clears can't find 'em. It's Wycoff, all sunk into the ground, the plants, the air itself — the entire place is alive!

As far as citizens from other districts are concerned, North, Central and Southwest Districts are little different. These regions encompass large rural expanses located in the nebulous midsection of the continent. None of them contains major population centers on the scale of the coastal arcologies. In fact, the three districts are called "America's Outback," which is a reference to the vast unsettled regions of Australia.

FSA residents may overlook these areas, but the government devotes a great deal of attention to both North and Southwest Districts. Southwest isn't

a vocal, generally peaceful group of Americans who call for a softening of fascist government and for a return to the old US Constitution.

Southwest is also home to Seatown, originally a penal institution in the 2030s and the first functional arcology. The Security Environs Arcosanti (SEA) Prison's inmates rebelled in the chaos of the Aberrant War. By the time the FSA collected Seatown back into the fold in 2097, the former inmates and refugees from around the nation had transformed the site into a rough-and-tumble city. Yet, it was surprisingly run evenhandedly. And Seatown's freewheeling residents provide the nearby NAGC's gambling resorts with enthusiastic patrons.

ANALYSIS: THE PUEBLO NATION AIRLIFT

A few thousand acres within the eastern portion of FSA's Southwest District were zoned for manufacturing development in 2093. The board never pursued expansion, leaving the fertile region unused. Locals, mostly Native American, used the NAGC's support to petition the Southwest District's governing board to change the zoning. After two decades with no adjustments, the collective moved into the region and began farming. Although it did not formally secede from the Federated States (and filed a business plan in full compliance with FSA law), the newly

declared "Pueblo Nation" was established illegally.

The Pueblo Nation blockaded the farms to resist efforts at forced removal. The military refrained from direct assault — due to noncombatants in the region and to NAGC's and the Aeon Trinity's threats of public exposure should the conflict be resolved violently. Although the "New Pueblos," as they called themselves, had sown fields and possessed livestock, they lacked sufficient power and medical supplies to resist a siege for long.

An Orgotek Ops team flew in under cover of darkness, defying FSM directives, to

supply power cells, medicine and food. While the situation was under negotiation, later mediated by the United Nations, Orgotek carried out a second airlift. Due in part to pressure applied by the NAGC, the Pueblo Nation was officially re-zoned as an agricultural combine in late 2116. With public opinion (encouraged by Aeon efforts) strongly in favor of Orgotek's efforts, the FSA did not apply treason laws. Yet, the metacorporation does face civil charges — that Orgotek has so far dragged through the courts for five years.



The Native American Gaming Council

Some 20th-century observers saw a link between the survival of the United States federal government and that of the remaining treaty lands occupied by Native American tribes. Much of these lands held valuable resources from which corporate interests were kept only through the threat of federal action. As the government became influenced more strongly by corporations, the tribal lands seemed in danger of falling victim to yet another "treaty revision."

Gambling was one of the — if not the — largest entertainment industries in North America by the early 21st century. It fed off of professional sports, entertainment, media,

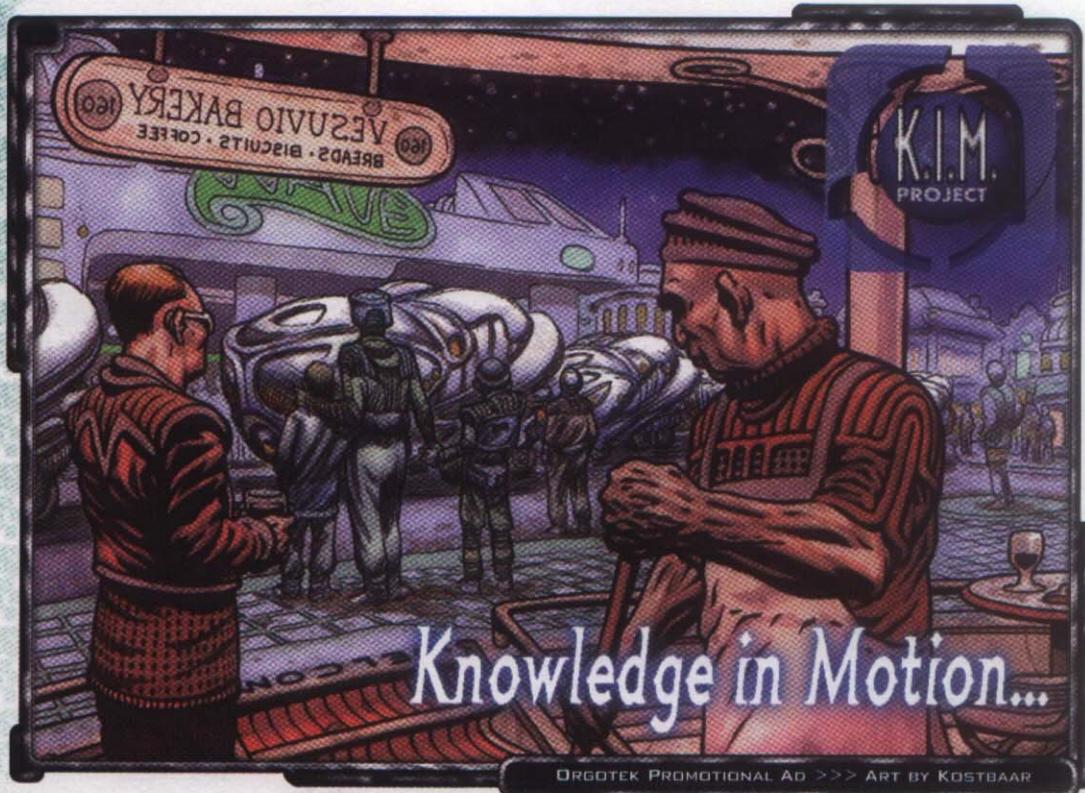
Aberrants and even itself. Established on tribal lands, Native American gambling casinos were free of the Byzantine federal statutes that regulate gambling operations.

As these casinos' public attendance and income skyrocketed, they ran afoul of the organized-crime interests that normally controlled the nation's major legal (and illegal) gambling venues. Native Americans formed a central organization of their own under the safety in numbers theory. Members of the Jamestown-Klallam of Washington State, the Oneida of New York, the Ojibwa and the Mohawk were among the first to cooperate with each other on a national scale, forming the Native American Gaming Council.

NAGC became a representative board open to all tribes that supported gaming

activities. By 2072, membership included all Native American tribes, even the Navajo, who had extensive non-gambling holdings. With strong financial resources to invest, NAGC obtained gambling rights outside the reservations and slowly but surely gained sizable interests in Vegas and Reno casinos. And the council established patents on online gambling.

Two factors helped assure NAGC's eventual dominance of Las Vegas, most of the Southwest District, various district lotteries and a lot of Nordamerican casinos. First, NAGC cuts deals with the fledgling Federated States government, much like Steinhardt and DataWarp did. NAGC worked to obtain exclusive contracts on official lotteries and sanctioned casinos — with the government itself retaining





a sizable chunk of those profits. Second, key elements of North America's crime organizations were involved in Aberrant affairs, which drew much of the syndicates' resources to deal with recruiting (or taking out of) Aberrants. NAGC slipped under the organizations' guard.

The council's clout is especially notable in light of the Pueblo Nation situation. Although the Aeon Trinity helped achieve an amicable resolution in that matter, it's doubtful that the Pueblo Nation would have been re-zoned officially without NAGC's influence.



Tex-Mex District

This region got hit hard in the Aberrant War. Its original economic base of large-scale agriculture, light industry and energy (petroleum) never fully recovered. Mainly through

sheer stubbornness, residents developed smaller farms to replace the bankrupt agriculture. The region's light industry weathered the war and the Crash intact, but petroleum went by the way of coal and the industry dried up with it.



On Guerrillas

— Jameson Stern, *Rapid Fire Ethnography of the North American Guerrillas*
© 2119 Stahu Entertainment

Anthropology suffers from an age-old problem: the representation of a dynamic time-embedded social process in a flat slice of time. In relation to the rebel factions on the Federated States' southern borders, this problem is hopelessly accentuated by the stresses and unnatural cultural gaps caused by war. The patterns of life and death in the rebel camps are as ephemeral as the motions of balloon animals in a firefight.

Before discussing the details of regional ethnography, I offer a quick compare-and-contrast between the warriors/*guerreros* of the New Mexican Revolution and the "Nordamerican" rebels of Tex-Mex District.

The Mexican *guerreros* fight for a dream they share with nearly all of their countrymen; the Texan guerrillas dislike having to share a bowl of soup.

The Mexicans enjoy the support of the populace; the Texans enjoy the illusion of supporting populist positions.

The Mexicans receive training and teamwork-enhancement drugs from the Norça; the Texans buy new drugs from the Norça, who check later to find out if the Texans survived.

The Mexican *guerreros* view drugs as a means to higher ends; the Texan guerrillas might start a revolution just for the right to take drugs.

The Mexicans are macho and enjoy playing with knives; the Texans are macho and enjoy playing with grenades.

The Mexicans have a fair number of psions sympathetic to their cause; the Texans pronounce psion as "piss-on."

The Mexican *guerreros* worry about the Federated States government a great deal; the Texan guerrillas worry about the Federated States' troops every once in a while.

Tex-Mex District got a boost from the invasion of Mexico. Economically, the invasion was a success. Access to Mexican labor, arable land and markets helped prevent Tex-Mex from becoming an economic disaster. But the government itself paid the cost: A succession of civilian district governors assumed that the threat of the Federated States Military would keep everyone in line as it did elsewhere in the nation. They made little effort to pacify the Mexican rebels, who made guerrilla strikes to take back their land.

It took years for the FSA to look at the situation seriously, and by then the resistance was quite strong. Establishing the LAST Zone with the Legions enabled the government to channel more resources to the south, but the freedom-fighters had covert support of their own from Brazil and Australia. The Norça took a personal interest in the Mexicans' efforts, and information suggests Orgotek also supplies financial aid. The Æsculapians in the area are officially neutral, simply caring for the wounded; however, they seem sympathetic to the rebels' cause.

The tide has changed in the past few months. The FSM discarded the illusion of separate government rule that the FSA normally maintains and instituted military rule with a triumvirate of career FSM generals. Alissane, Banks and Carlyle are putting the entire district in shape rapidly and have brought in heavy artillery, including two divisions of vacuum assault and reconnaissance gear (VARGs).

Tex-Mex's population (mostly rural or semi-rural) tries to ignore the ongoing warfare (except for those who are secretly part of the resistance). The main urban centers are on the Texas side of the Rio Grande: Austin, Dallas, Fort Worth, Houston, Phoenix. The entire region has only three actual arcologies: Dallas, El Paso and Houston. Even these differ from metroplexes elsewhere. They're more like castles from the European Middle Ages. These "fortologies," as the locals call them, offer exclusive neighborhoods in

ANALYSIS: THE 2118 "BORDER MASSACRE"

Mexican rebels spent eight months on what, in theory, was to be a decisive strike against the five FSM arcology garrisons of Dallas, El Paso, Houston, San Antonio and Tucson. The plan called for extensive subversion of key interior personnel and sabotage coordinated with synchronized dawn raids.

The first three sites weathered the attacks with relatively minimal loss of FSM lives. The three military governors — Alissane, Banks and Carlyle — each being posted at one of these garrisons certainly contributed to the sites' successful defense. San Antonio and Tucson were destroyed, however. Federated States propaganda labeled the event a "massacre," claiming that the Mexican rebels used tactical weapons to shatter each site.

Our research indicates otherwise. Although the freedom-fighters had access to such weapons, they were used only in support positions against FSM craft. Further, if that were the rebels' plan, the other three sites should have suffered similarly. It seems the Mexicans tried to avoid conflict with nonmilitary residents whenever possible.

From what we can determine, the San Antonio and Tucson garrisons were ordered to use "all force necessary" to stop the attackers once the freedom-fighters breached the defenses. The shattered husks of the two arcology forts are a testament to the effectiveness of this directive.



FSM BORDER ASSAULT FORCE >>> AeonArchive

the upper levels, with the lower ones devoted to space that is a point of refuge for locals who live outside the metroplex walls.

The Mexico side of the Rio Grande is a scattered collection of small towns; squatter's havens for nomads, rebels, and Aberrants; spare-parts depots run by independent entrepreneurs; temporary training zones for FSM urban assault teams and for rebels; and even trysting points for young lovers.



South District

South is where the fascist icon of the FSA is permanently entrenched, in the forms of the Federated States Military and the Central Security Agency. Both are headquartered here, along with more military support facilities than in any other

district. The formative Federated States government received its first support from the South, partly because it was a chance at order after Aberrant-induced calamities, and because

its combination of business drive and social order appealed to Southerners.

Residents in South suffered the Aberrant War's depredations equally, no matter what their respective ethnic or economic backgrounds. When the post-war reconstruction began, people of all races joined in



Understanding Florida

— Dr. Franklin Kohler, Neptune Division, Biannual Conference on Noetic and Aberrant Studies, Miami Conference Center, 2120

For years, the individual responsible for Florida's flooding and the reasons behind that tragic act were a mystery. We have finally put a face to the event, only to learn that, tragically, the Aberrant who destroyed Florida did so in an apparent effort to save it.

The Aberrant, previously designated as "Poseidon," was a young woman named Felice Taylor. She is the youngest recorded Aberrant of the class that the Aeon Trinity designates as "Prime Threats" — Individual Aberrants on a scale of power that is orders of magnitude beyond that of their counterparts. Taylor was only 19 when she (evidently by accident) flooded Florida. We don't know if Taylor's youth was a factor in the event. Certainly, other Prime Threats such as Divis Mal and Mungu Kuwasha were more precise in their efforts.

Although global warming wasn't an immediate threat by the mid-2050s — when Taylor grew up — notable environmental changes were occurring to parts of Earth. Taylor, a Florida resident, saw the increasing intensity and frequency of hurricanes and the shift in aquatic populations. As Taylor's journal notes, when she discovered she had an intuitive awareness of and an ability to control large-scale ocean movements, she felt a duty to improve conditions in her home state.

The Aberrant's initial efforts were well-planned. She refined her talents and studied oceanography. Her powers allowed her to modify properties of large bodies of water — temperature, electrical and acoustic conductivity, currents, turbulence. Florida's previous environmental changes were due to a weakening of the Gulf Stream from rising atmospheric temperatures blunting the ocean-surface temperature gradients, which is what Taylor's talents were well-suited to change. She hoped to stabilize the Gulf Stream by manipulating local magnetic fields, circulation patterns in the Gulf and the Caribbean, and thermoclines in the mid-Atlantic Ocean.

On April 2, 2058, Taylor set to work. The results were catastrophic.

The Aberrant's interference created separate resonances in the Gulf and Caribbean: Waves built up and cycled within Taylor's chemical and energetic confinement systems. By the time she noticed the resonance problem, the waves were 10 meters high in deep ocean, echoing off unprecedented turbulent areas 500 to 1500 meters below the surface. Closer to shore, waves rose to 20 meters and more.



MIAMI MEMORIAL, 2120 >>> AEDN ARCHIVE

Numerous holographic reconstructions of the disaster indicate the Aberrant tried damping down the resonance while simultaneously expanding the extreme-wave areas. Taylor probably hoped to spread the waves gradually, but as the computer sequence shows, she did not. The two confinement systems were separated by the mass of Florida and by a stretch of open sea about a kilometer wide on each side. In a matter of minutes, whatever Taylor had in place to separate the confined areas

failed. Waves ricocheted across the width of Florida from origins near the Louisiana coast to somewhere northeast of Cuba and back.

Florida was hammered by tremendous waves for six hours. Most plowed "only" a few hundred meters inland before drying up on the coasts they'd inundated. But more powerful waves broke all the way across the peninsula and slammed even the highest inland elevations. Millions of people died in the first few minutes, and the entire peninsula suffered brutally under the sustained

hours of devastation. The deep-ocean disturbances took longer to dissipate: millions of fish and waterlife were also killed. And although storms occur less frequently now, when they do, they sweep the area more severely than ever before.

Records indicate Taylor was on Florida's western coast when she triggered the disaster. It seems likely that, despite Aberrant powers of the first rank, Taylor was crushed in one of the first peninsula-crossing waves — thus, a victim to her own efforts.

the rebuilding. African- and Latin-Americans already made up a notable portion of military personnel, which paved the way for an even greater number of so-called "minority races" in all government offices.

South District was ravaged as hard as the rest of the continent during the Aberrant War (worse, if one considers Florida), but reconstruction concentrated on rebuilding existing cities rather than going the arcology route. As a result, the only true arcology in the district is Raleigh-Durham. It was the first in a new strip that would run from New DC to Atlanta, put forth by the South District Board to funnel income to board members' pet projects. The military, unused to dealing with political sleight-of-hand at the time, didn't derail the project until after the Raleigh-Durham metroplex was completed. Then the FSM initiated new cost studies, materials evaluations, environmental assessments and personnel reviews. These initiations have kept the rest of the South strip on the drawing board for 17 years, where it's likely to remain.

Much of South District's resources go to Florida now. Since the massive flooding in 2058, the peninsula was mostly uninhabitable. It would remain a bunch of small islands were it not for the fact that much of Florida is above sea level. It's taken years for the water to drain away, but the state has regained almost half of its surface area in clumps and slow-growing islands. Since the government actively resists Orgotek's offers of aid, as its terraforming systems would be more than helpful in mending the region, it will be a long time before Florida is fully restored.

Québec

Québec gained its independence when the FSA invaded Canada. A series of treaties — the first signed even before the First Omaha Declaration, the last after the announced termination of the North American Police Action — supposedly guarantee

TRITON ARCHIVE

THE FUTURE: THE FSA PERSPECTIVE

— Public address, Ford T. Fuller, Secretary of Administration, Federated States of America

The issue before us is a simple one: Shall we, as a people, as a continent, have order, or shall we have chaos?

As with previous generations at the helm of the FSA, with every decision we make, we must consider the horrible reality of anarchy. My predecessors dealt with the chaos that was thrust upon them, their choice between action and the dissolution of all remaining order. So they acted boldly, committed resolutely to the good of America. We have seldom needed such dramatic measures since the grim days of half a century ago, but we keep the lessons of the past foremost in our minds. What happened once can happen again.

Yes, the Federated States demands much from its citizens. We, this nation's leaders, demand much of ourselves as well. Our constant vigilance is necessary, for the alternative *is* chaos and it *is* unacceptable. The ship that is not steered correctly is already on course for a fatal collision. The American people lost one ship of state through lack of vision; it shall not lose another.

Your government, guided by our hands, creates the framework necessary for genuine progress. It is a path of growth bounded by concern for consequence and change within the needs of peace. We fight fiercely against threats to our rule because, without us, there is only chaos. Thus, our continued leadership is the foundation for every work, every dream to which you and every other American aspires to realize.

Québec's status as a sovereign nation...as long as it doesn't do anything to interfere with the Federated States. Secret clauses of this treaty give the FSA license to move troops through Québec and even to maintain permanent installations in the country where necessary. These clauses are ostensibly to "protect the integrity of the Federated States and its partners."

The nation of Québec, though independent by the letter of the law, is kept on a very short leash. Residents are bitter and resentful toward the FSA, seeing themselves as little different from the official American districts. The FedBoard privately refers to Québec as "the eighth district" or "the Québec District." Considering the FSM troops within the country and the nearby forces stationed in Great Lake's "Civic Stability Zone," though, there's not much that the Québécois feel they can do about matters without getting powerful new friends.

Mexico

The upper half is a hotspot of contention between the Federated States and Mexican freedom-fighters. The FSA claims the entire nation officially, although even the most optimistic mapmakers in the government don't bother showing regions south of El Dorado or Monterrey.

The eastern coast from Tampico to Veracruz is a collection of city-states that petitioned for FSA membership. It seems that the Central Security Agency has devoted resources to subverting the Gulf Coast region to the FSA's side. While residents offer significant resistance against joining America, with the FSM's renewed military offensive, it is unlikely the Mexican rebels will stop the annexation without further assistance from Brazil. If the FSA gains a permanent foothold further south, the resistance elements may be caught between American forces with nowhere to turn.

The Future: The Orgotek Perspective

— Cori Heisler with Ellayne Cassel *The Painful Truth* ©2118 MMI

CH: What do you feel sums up the biggest social issue for Americans today?

EC: I can give it to you in one sentence: "Who decides the future?"

On one side there are the people who're sure they know how we should live, and who'll do anything to make sure we live that way. On the other side, there are those of us who are trying to learn for ourselves, and who are working with others to identify areas of social improvement and innovation.

The Federated States government thinks it knows everything important there is to know. It wants to stop history, in any meaningful sense, and let things continue purely as it dictates. The FSA will keep everything nice and pretty and safe — and stuck.

CH: I get the impression you look at the future differently.

EC: Yes, indeed. Life is a cycle — not just the life of an individual, but that of society. It goes through good times and bad, and the one thing you learn is to address every circumstance on its own merits. Taking the same unchanging stance toward everything life throws at you is a sure-fire recipe for failure. Sooner or later something comes along that, no matter how hard you try, won't fit into your static view of the universe.

CH: You make it sound like there's a revolution coming.

EC: Oh, I'm sure I'm not aware of anything like that. Indeed, for all I know, the revolution's already begun.

ABERRANTS IN NORTH AMERICA

The first generation of Aberrants clustered in North America. Their successors haven't come here in such great numbers yet — North America isn't "the place to be" that it once was. But Æon observes more of them here each year, due to the strong concentration of taint found in the Midwestern Blight Zone. It offers Aberrants a viable warp point to Earth that is difficult to monitor through psionic means.

Due to the lingering effects of taint that remain from the Aberrant Wycoff's demise over 60 years ago, Aberrants can hide from psionic detection with relative ease. The entire region registers as a blank spot in the subquantum flux; only the largest warp points generated within the Blight are perceptible to psionic awareness.

Additionally, even though the full extent of the blighted area shrank rapidly (the entire Blight Zone is now not much larger than Wycoff's original blast), there are still hundreds of kilometers in which Aberrants can find cover. The FSA maintains a satellite watch, but the scans are notoriously difficult to interpret — perhaps yet another side effect of the Blight, possibly the result of new Aberrant efforts to shield the region from view. Nonetheless, the FSA is confident that there is perceptible activity near the heart of the Blight, which is borne by raids on the fringe by Aberrants darting out from the interior Blight. Psion efforts have helped contain Aberrant assaults launched from the Blight on the Nordamerican populace, however.

THE BLIGHT PROJECT

Organized in a joint effort by Orgotek and the Æsculapians, this project is a research endeavor. Findings have enabled scientists to discern key differences in the taint. Namely, whatever byproducts remain through use of Aberrant abilities (or even a powerful Aberrant's passage) bear similarities to residue of nuclear and cosmic radiation. Twenty-first-century scientists proposed this theory, but they lacked the technology to scan to the appropriate level of detail.

Like most irradiated sites, a tainted area slowly returns to normal. In the case of the taint, though, it seems that this process occurs quickly unless there's an active taint source — an Aberrant — around to maintain it. It doesn't appear

that an Aberrant must consciously give off this radiation; in fact, Triton Division theorizes that the opposite might actually be true. Whatever the case, this factor brings us one step closer to identifying the true source of Aberrant abilities, as well as to how to combat the effects of taint and taint-related diseases.

THE LAST ZONE

The Fifth Legion is currently our best defense against the Aberrants in the Blight Zone. Since the Legion established itself with the LAST Zone, it has mounted regular patrols and kept tight border security to make sure nothing gets out — or in. There have been a large number of conflicts inside the area over the past decade, but the Legions are loathe to let anyone besides themselves too far into combat. As a result, the Trinity has few details on how the conflict progresses, which concerns us because without constant updates, we may not know until too late if the Fifth Legion is overwhelmed.

Neptune Division continues negotiating with the Legion and the FSA to allow private observers along with strike teams. The discussions bear little fruit as of yet, yet Æon is confident that the groups will see the wisdom of allowing greater Trinity involvement. We must do whatever it takes to ensure the safety of humanity.

OTHER ACTIVITY

It is agreed that the Blight Zone poses a convenient and potentially threatening staging ground for Aberrant activities on Earth. Were Aberrants as coordinated in their efforts here as they seem to be in near space, Nordamerica and the rest of the planet would have a rough time of it.



Instead, the region seems officially off-limits to Aberrant incursion. The Æon Trinity's current theory suggests that the main force of Aberrants want to shut down all human extraterrestrial activity before assaulting Earth. If this is actually the case, it makes sense that they would restrict full-scale raids from the Blight.

As mentioned in previous reports, it is logical that the Aberrants want to spare Earth, if not humanity. It is nonsensical for slaving monsters to attack our Solar System indiscriminately. And, while insane, Aberrants are seldom stupid. It is likely that they are following through on Divis Mal's farewell message and have returned to claim Earth as their own. Thus, only a foolish Aberrant rains down destruction on the planet. We believe the Aberrants are pursuing methods of eradicating humans from Earth by means that will do minimal harm to the environment.

Of course, operatives at work up the gravity well should bear in mind that Aberrants don't suffer from such constraints in space.

If Æon's theories are sound (and, based on Aberrant activities since their return 16 years previously, the Trinity has modified its theories only slightly), North America's greatest threat comes from solitary Aberrants and subversion.

The former, called "glory hounds," are a part of the latest generation of Aberrants. They are even more warped and twisted than their forebears and determined to make their marks on the universe. They thunder out of the Blight—or appear from some hidden locale elsewhere

on Earth—and throw around power and destruction like the Aberrants of old.

These Aberrants are dangerous, but we have the edge on them. The glory hounds are seldom able to work together, and due to their grandstanding, they stand still long enough for psion and government forces to mount an effective counteroffensive.

The startled look on the "face" of the self-proclaimed "Beelzebub" is a fine example of humanity's effectiveness. The Aberrant evidently never expected that a Legion strike team supported by two VARGs could take it down.

The continent and, perhaps, the world face a terrible danger from those Aberrants who retain enough intellect to plan for the long-term. The Trinity has heard disturbing rumors from a number of areas (most notably, the resistance movements in the north and south) that Aberrants may be behind some recent actions. Although Æon finds it doubtful that an Aberrant triggered the 2118 massacre in Tex-Mex, Proteus Division cautions that Aberrants may be influencing the decisions being made by personnel within the government and resistance movements.

North America may seem turbulent enough with the conflict between fascist elements and freedom-fighters. Perhaps the Aberrants think these forces will do their job for them, leaving the creatures to mop up. Operatives are cautioned that Aberrants may be the obvious enemy, but humanity never lacks conflict with itself.



1969 — The United States of America puts the first man on the Moon.

2031 — Olympus colony is christened on Luna.

2049 — The UN declares war against Aberrants.

2049 — The Aberrant "Space Brigade" takes over Olympus.

2054 — The FBI attacks the Prophets of Jehovah sanctuary; Calvert Wycoff destroys himself and the agricultural Heartland of North America.

2055 — The "Blight," an after-effect of the Aberrant Wycoff's self-immolation, manifests. It spreads thousands of kilometers across central North America, making much of the region unsuitable for human habitation.

2055 — Federal intelligence agencies begin consolidating operations. This new organization becomes the Central Security Agency in 2062.

2056 — The First Omaha Declaration: The United States military declares political sovereignty to respond to the Aberrant menace. The goal is to assume "formal as well as practical responsibility for the administration of governmental functions throughout the legal possessions of the United States of America."

2057 — The North American Police Action. The Federated States Military invades Canada and Mexico. The continent's major population and industrial centers fall under United States martial law by the end of the year.

2058 — A special task force reorganizes the North American political structure into eight overarching governing districts.

2058 — The Aberrant "Poseidon" (Felice Taylor) floods the Florida peninsula.

2060 — The Second Omaha Declaration: The military and key corporate allies form the Federated States of America.

2062 — The 32nd Amendment to the Constitution. It claims, "The members of the governing board of directors as defined in Federated States of America charter are granted authority to make such modification of policy as may be desirable to promote the aims of peace and good government." FSA officials site this justification frequently to promote the new fascist agenda.

2092 — First rise in industrial output since the Aberrant War began.

2102 — World Enterprises, Incorporated is established. Originally a joke, this company forms the foundation for Orgotek.

2104 — The Aberrants return; the psi orders appear publicly.

2107 — First contact with the Gln. Orgotek promotes relations with the alien race almost immediately, applying Gln biotechnological theory to human biotech processes.

2120 — Present time; FSA remains a powerful military figure but holds little interstellar commercial or political weight. Most of the nation's resources go to the government's upper echelons and metacorporations, increasing the FSA's military strength and extraterrestrial development. Orgotek secretly encourages rebellion, and Canadian and Mexican rebels find increasing support from abroad.



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The Sierras Management Corporation thought Bengali to be a talented field engineer who'd quit a good position at Orgotek's WEI after arguments about politics. When SiMag contacted Bengali's listed references, they all gave SiMag an earful about "that talented guy with an absolutely disgusting liking for Big Brother." SiMag hired Bengali promptly and put him to work monitoring commercial-use equipment.

It was all true as far as it went. However, Bengali's resume didn't go into his connections with either Orgotek's Operations (ExOps) or Æon's Proteus Division. Connections that meant Bengali was still listed as a valued Orgotek employee in the Round Table's private roster. And connections that made him the likeliest individual to take a post at a company that both the Big O and Æon were very interested in learning about.

Bengali's position at SiMag let him spy on a cross-section of the Federated States' best and brightest...well, on their best toadies, anyway. He did work he enjoyed and he gave customers value for their entertainment dollar (the FSA kept the new dollar in typical American defiance of the ubiquitous yuan). It's just that some of these FSA stooges' secrets stayed when the tourists went home.

This month was Bengali's 13th at SiMag. It probably wouldn't last too much longer, especially since he just received a scrambled message from ExOps. It seems that Æon had word of not one, but *two*, potential CSA defectors in the West District. Since Bengali worked with the Trinity in the past, he was the best choice to bring the pair over.

Bengali knew the time was right to quit his current post. Orgotek and Æon both needed to know what the CSA was up to. Getting information out of the Central Security Agency was *hard*, though. Its anti-psion defenses were good against intrusion, surveillance, and agent infiltration, which is not surprising, considering the CSA was practically the Federated States' paranoia incarnate. These defectors would provide valuable information on the agency's operations.

It was almost too good to be true.

03.02.2120

Five days before the annual CSA Safe Retreat began — conveniently hosted, enough by SiMag — Bengali took a magtrain to San Francisco. As far as SiMag knew, this assignment was a routine purchasing run with an extra stop to pick up some experimental biotech gliders from Aerowing Enterprises for Bengali to try out. Bengali left out the extra stop he'd make that was down the street from Aerowing at Café De Re Korombu. He was to meet with Giles Tumulty III, a Proteus Division operative and Bengali's contact with Æon.

Bengali hated San Francisco. No, he hated urban life in general. But as overcrowded human zoos went, San Francisco was actually OK. Some of the old urban areas, muddling through the years as the arcology grew around them, weren't complete disaster zones. The magtrain wound through Berkeley, which seemed unlikely to ever be inhabited again thanks to a past altercation between angry Aberrant ex-students and National Guard units not careful with chemical weapons. Oakland, on the other hand, looked good, with real neighborhoods and volunteer police doing so well that the FSM's goon squad left it alone. Bengali imagined living in an Unapproved Urban Area like that, with old office buildings substituting for mountains to climb.

The San Francisco arcology towered above it all. It was beautiful: Composites and alloys shimmered in the morning sun, rainbows arcing through too-many-times recycled water jetting into the bay — all crowned by rooftop gardens. Four million people lived in the land that many would have required in a pre-arcology age. The arcology created less pollution than that generated by one million residents of the old city a century before.

But even from a distance, Bengali could see signs of social rot. Dirt, dust and ash clung to the windows in the first 20 aboveground levels. Lots of "public viewing areas" looked out at plastic riot barricades (tastefully decorated, by FSA standards, with propaganda murals), due to vague, sinister threats of mobs that never materialized. The FSM squads assigned to San Francisco maintained constant vigilance against all threats, real or imagined.



As the train approached the Bay Tunnel checkpoint, Bengali noticed fellow passengers seeming to shrink into themselves. Happy conversations turned somber and quiet; people hunched over their bags, opening latches for the imminent inspections; children who previously stared out windows now sat with heads tucked down. Nobody wanted to jeopardize his position, and the price of arcology heaven seemed to be the loss of all the joy that life in such places should have. *Don't make a fuss, don't stand out, don't think, just take orders, never mind the better life.*

Bengali hated that fear more than anything.

Inside the Mission/Castro/Richmond arcology sector, Bengali tried not to let his spirits sag too deeply. The low levels got worse each time he came here. M/C/R directors figured that their clout on the West District Board protected them from questions about substandard — or nonexistent — janitorial and custodial services. They were probably right about that. The workers who hurried around Bengali thought of the outside world as filled with ravening monsters, armies of Aberrants, and nihilistic anarchists just waiting to unleash doomsday bombs. Conditions here

would have to degrade a lot more before they would feel they had the worse deal. Bengali could shout the truth at them, but it wouldn't do any good: He'd simply be pegged as one more outside rabble-rouser and thus reinforce the illusion he wanted to dispel.

Bengali paced along quickly, trying not to look around too much. Up two levels, through United Sexualities Park, down three sublevels, into North Cooper Annex. In theory, skylights and light pipes kept all sublevels lit as brightly as ground level. In practice, dim pools of reflected sunlight needed a lot of augmentation. The arcology budget didn't cover things that didn't fit with the Master Plan, so the brightest lights hung on store fronts, set by customer-seeking vendors. At 10 A.M., SubLevel 3 looked like twilight.

Giles Tumulty III sat at a table out in front of Café De Re Korombu and gnawed on a shish kebap. Bengali ordered a three-rice, four-meat combo and made small talk until the order came. Then Tumulty switched on the anti-surveillance device built into his minicomputer.

"We still don't have full dossiers on either candidate," Tumulty began without preamble.

"That sounds bad," Bengali replied, not entirely surprised. Covert operations always seemed to work under incomplete information and backup plans. This was par for the course, really.

"It might be," Tumulty agreed, "but they still look genuine so far. Here's what we've got." The two linked minicomps, but Bengali indicated his contact should continue talking. He liked to hear a human being's summary before wading into tedious data on potential defectors.

"First up," Tumulty said, "Gabrielle Whitbloom. She's an analyst in the CSA's Noetic Affairs Division, specializing in Orgotek activities in West District." Tumulty laughed at Arthur Bengali's expression. "Yeh, if anyone has your file, it's probably her. You'll have to compare notes. Anyway, not much else of note except that she seems about a year behind the usual promotion schedule. We got two messages from her relayed through drops we stopped using last year. She used a cipher they cracked a couple of years ago. Whitbloom says she doesn't have anything against the FSA. She thinks Noetic Affairs is spinning its wheels rather than focusing on real, specific threats."

Bengali nodded. All rigid bureaucracies lose the loyalty of some of the best and the brightest. Then again, it closely duplicated Bengali's own cover at SiMag. "And the other?"

"We've got even less on this one. Chris Fortier. Also works for Noetic Affairs, monitoring Ministry activities in all districts. The CSA's multiple-blind record-keeping has us snarled. Haven't uncovered anything else worthy. There might be some disciplinary issues with him, but otherwise, he tells about the same story as Whitbloom."

That makes things sooo much easier, Bengali thought sarcastically. "So, what do the clears say?" It was the obvious next question. Orgotek never had enough clairsentients to go around, and Aeon's were involved in studying portents or other stuff. Defector cases took high priority, though.

"They sense something's wrong with one or both. They can't say for sure what, though they're fairly sure it's not a matter of setting up double agents. Might be problems around the transfer points, or something equally irrelevant."

Bengali groaned. "Great. So I'm operating completely in the dark, here?"

"At least you don't have to dig through a bunch of data on this one," Tumulty said. "Bottom line:

We found out they'll each be at the retreat in Yosemite, so that's the pickup site. You're the logical candidate to supervise the defections. It almost certainly means blowing your cover, but we can get someone into SiMag easier than we can get willing CSA people. Word is that Orgotek wants you back in the fold for something else anyway." Bengali didn't like the sound of that, but he nodded, aware of his status as mid-level pawn between a pair of cryptic kings.

"They each have the contact protocol designated in the file," Tumulty said, "and your Ops people agreed to handle the receiving site. That's about it." He stood, uncoupled his minicomputer and swiped his credit card through the payment slot on the side of the table. "Meal's on me, Arthur. Enjoy. And best of luck to you."

03.05.2120

Bengali liked this part of his job best. The Ahwahnee Hotel wavered in a slight haze 5,000 meters below. Just a bit north, Half Dome glinted in early afternoon sunlight. It had been a cold winter, and the waterfalls all ran thick and strong. SiMag vehicles shuttled around the traffic barriers that CSA demanded at these occasions — the intelligence agency's 400 analysts stayed in perfect isolation at the Ahwahnee while the rest of the valley lay empty for a week. This outing was probably Bengali's last free moment until after the retreat.

He floated on Aerowing's current project, a transparent airfoil that could become all but invisible thanks to an adjustable refraction. Pirated biotechnology made it work. Although Aerowing was still officially under Orgotek's thumb, the company apparently wasn't above selling out to the FSA. The Federated States, for its part, seldom made a fuss about intellectual-property theft when Orgotek was the victim. Aerowing didn't yet have an equally transparent tether system for its airfoil, but the control cords and the long ground leads that kept the airfoil anchored were milky white and a bit translucent. Complex biotech assemblies interpreted Bengali's tugs so that slight adjustments of fingers and palms sent the airfoil into elaborate maneuvers.

Bengali felt closer to true flight than ever before. No bird did the maneuvers he did now, although the detail and effort involved were quite similar. Birds trusted their reflexes in much the same way that Bengali found himself trusting the airfoil's controls.

But Bengali had other work to do. CSA scouts marked off the trails out of the valley. He used his compact binoculars to note the location of holocameras and perimeter tripwires. He had a different exit in mind, but it never hurt to be thorough.

03.08.2120

Bengali was bored. He'd already seen the two defectors, but he didn't have a strong sense of either one, which was good and bad. They weren't jumpy enough to tip off the plan before Bengali could set it in motion. On the other hand, he didn't see any signs that they'd developed a different philosophy from the rest of the CSA crew. He was lurking outside the "welcoming mixer," waiting for the right time to do a little more reconnaissance.

He glanced at his watch. Yes, it was after midnight. By now the CSA crowd had four hours of after-dinner boozing to soften. Time to mingle. For a while, Bengali just strolled around and listened to fragments of conversation falling like jigsaw puzzle pieces onto the table.

"...and the second one says, 'But I'm the chairman! You can't have a meeting without me!' So the first one says..."

"...last year we went on the Grand Orbital Tour, and I liked that more. Darren spent his time playing freefall games while I talked with surveillance people on *Eyrie* and *Neues Wilhelm*..."

"...haven't gone backpacking since this knee problem. Beloved supervisor doesn't trust the local rexs, so..."

"...not stupid enough to go for extraterritoriality. Look, I don't like the guy or his lightbulb crew any better than you do, but pretending he's dumb doesn't help..."

Bengali gradually went near to the tables where Gabrielle Whitbloom sat conversing quietly with colleagues. He thought about trying for a psionic appraisal of their computers, but he could feel attunement's buzz warning him that a few CSA psions were monitoring the building. Low-tech surveillance — eavesdropping — was the order of the day.

An hour passed and Bengali learned nothing. Rather, he heard a great deal of useless information. Tumulty would want it all written up — grand analysis requires a foundation of mundane insights — but this minutiae was *really* boring stuff: local office politics, affairs and flirtations and marriages, the travails of life in the middle tiers of Santa Barbara, etc.

Bengali used the mention of surfing near Santa Barbara to ease himself into the conversation. He'd lived in Santa Barbara and had developed a real passion for surfing. Bengali watched Whitbloom out of the corner of his eye while chatting. Was that a look of disgust at some bit of enthusiasm for FSA policy? Or an envious sigh at the freedom Orgotek employees enjoyed to travel to recreation spots? Bengali couldn't tell.

Around 2 A.M. Bengali excused himself and searched for Chris Fortier. Bengali found him sitting on a bench talking to colleagues. However, they were covering their predecessors' policy failings. Surfing was one thing; the balance of priorities among various means of remote real-time data analysis was another. Nor could Bengali readily join in to talk about the data-collection end of that; it would look bad for a SiMag grunt to suddenly reveal tradecraft. Bengali settled for listening and being unobtrusive. Fortier blended in with his crowd as much as Whitbloom did with hers. A hint of snippiness? Criticism of a goal as well as policy? Again, impossible to be sure.

The whole situation was getting to be a pain in the ass.

03.08.2120

Subject: Invitation

From: Arthur Bengali, Sierras Management Corporation, Yosemite Park

To: Leslie Contarkis; Chris Fortier; Gabrielle Whitbloom

Encryption: SPE

Transmission Type: textfile

Date: 08:19:31 03.08.2120

Greetings from your friends at Sierras Management Corporation! Each year we like to have special events for our friends in the Central Security Agency. This year we have brand new climbing and gliding systems to display!

We've selected your names at random from the list of guests. Please respond if you'd like to be the first to use our new systems.

>>> end transmission <<<

Fortier and Whitbloom accepted the invitation within an hour. Leslie Contarkis didn't. Since Bengali went through the guest list looking for agoraphobic guests, he wasn't surprised. Now he'd have some time alone with the potential defectors.

For a half-hour, he did exactly what SiMag expected him to. The "lucky winners" found the

biotech ascenders startling at first, then they grew delighted with the sensation of going hand-over-hand up sheer rock faces. Fortier wanted to know technicalities, so Bengali described how the cords' surface membranes turned them into something like conveyor belts, and how the skin-conductivity response systems tightened or released knots in response to climber panic. All three of them stood on top of Half Dome and admired the view of the valley.

Bengali cleared his throat and decided it was time. "You're both here because you contacted the Aeon Trinity about defecting from the Central Security Agency," he stated bluntly. He left them tense and nervous for a moment as they wondered if Bengali was himself a CSA spy set to catch them. Then he added the authentication codes. They relaxed...a little.

"If you're serious about going," Bengali continued, "this is your chance. We're not going back down, so if you brought data with you, great. We're mainly concerned with gaining your knowledge and insights, though."

Fortier answered first. "I didn't bring data with me. I've got a repository I can get to, or have someone else access later." Whitbloom nodded. *Better prepared than many defectors*, Bengali thought. He couldn't guess how many cases had gone awry because the defector wanted to bring all sorts of obvious and suspicious gadgetry. Still, they hadn't even reached the tough part yet. Now was not the time to relax.

"Okay, if you're going, let's harness up." As he helped Whitbloom and Fortier into the Aerowing glider rigs, Bengali couldn't resist indulging his curiosity so he concentrated his psionic awareness on each. Whitbloom's noetic aura blended with the surrounding environment, but Fortier's gave a brief, mild flare. *Hmm; might be a weak latent*, Bengali thought. *Worth checking out once we're home.*

Bengali focused on giving some quick guidance on the flying rigs' operation. Within minutes, the trio launched into the sky and the ground lines reeled out smoothly behind the rigs. The two defectors followed Bengali and Whitbloom experimented with a few moves along the way.

"Okay, here's the tricky part," Bengali said when they reached 5,000 meters. "We have a very narrow window of opportunity. I'll switch on a

comm jammer down below. Then we cut loose the ground cables, notch the gliders to full transparency and all head fast for Hetch Hetchy. That's 30 kilometers northwest. I programmed it into the rig's guidance chips, just in case.

"Ready?" Bengali asked. Each nodded. "Here we go, then."

Bengali focused his talents and psionically transmitted the triggering pulse on the jammer that Operations gave him last month. He hit the release catch on his rig and heard the others do the same. Thousands of meters of thin biocable fell to the ground below as Bengali directed his companions to turn up the gliders' transparency. While they did so, he slaved their rigs to his own to maintain formation — and to prevent them from wandering off. The gliders reoriented away from the prevailing southeasterly wind and sped silently away.

The next 20 minutes were nerve-wracking for everyone. The CSA surveillance teams reported the jamming signal and searched frantically for its source. The agency scrambled helicopters and hybrids to spot and to down any incoming aircraft, missiles, Aberrants — whatever hostile incursion there might be that the jammer was set up for. Even though Bengali doubted that three human-sized objects (the glider rigs were effectively invisible to radar) heading away from the valley would be noticed, he tuned into the CSA's radio traffic to monitor the patrol's progress.

The CSA's own paranoia worked against it. Personnel immediately assumed that they were under some kind of attack. By the time they agreed that there were no threats and started looking for missing persons, Bengali and his two defectors were long gone. The CSA's pursuit units didn't launch until Bengali and his companions touched down safely on the terrace at the Orgotek conference center in Hetch Hetchy.

As Bengali unstrapped his harness, he heard the distinctive click of a weapon safety being unlatched. Although he was certain he couldn't get the drop on whichever defectors was aiming at him, Bengali refused to be an easy target. He dropped suddenly, rolled sideways and came up with one hand crackling with electricity in anticipation. His compact biolaser rested, forgotten, in the pouch on Bengali's equipment belt.

Bengali was surprised to see the ugly Stavros 11mm autopistol in Fortier's grip turning to point

not at himself, but at Whitbloom. She was in the midst of undoing her harness. Surprise, shock and anger fought across her face. Fortier, in contrast, had an utterly blank expression.

Not a latent, Bengali realized, a victim of some kind of will control.

It was a gamble, but Bengali had no other choice. As Fortier brought the gun up, electricity shot from Bengali's hand and flickered over the unwitting assassin. Fortier jerked slightly — although not enough to reflexively pull the trigger. He staggered back.

Bengali lunged forward and tackled the stunned Fortier. The two men fell to the ground where Bengali disarmed his opponent. Seconds later, Orgotek security came in like the cavalry and restrained Fortier.

"Careful, guys," Bengali said as he got back to his feet. "Looks like the CSA has a few thought police on their payroll."

"Got it," one of the guards — Menken? Bengali wasn't sure — replied as they carried the silent captive away. She cocked a thumb over her shoulder. "You want us to take care of that one,

too?" Bengali saw that Whitbloom had fallen over while trying to struggle out of the flight harness and to avoid being shot. The former CSA agent was tangled halfway out of the rig's straps.

"I've got her," Bengali said, holding back a smile. "Look over your guy thoroughly; I wouldn't be surprised if he had some explosives hidden away to use after kacking us." He knelt down and tapped the central-release catch on Whitbloom's rig. "Looks like they'll have to make that a little more obvious, yeh?"

She sat up and tried to regain some measure of composure. "So somebody used telepathy on Fortier? I heard we — the CSA, I mean — had a few, but I thought it was just rumor."

"Looks like we can safely label that as 'fact' now, Whitbloom. Happens more often than you might think, too. We'll make sure you're free of any hidden thought bombs, don't worry." He stood and extended a hand to help her up.

Whitbloom gripped his hand for a moment and said, "Thank you...and it's Gabby."

Bengali flashed a grin. "Just part of the door-to-door service, Gabby."



Welcome to **America Offline**. You've already seen quite a bit of revealing information about Orgotek and North America, but let's take a moment to regroup before looking at what's going on behind the scenes.

Electrokinetics

These are the folks who ride the lightning. They can make your nerves jump, they can dazzle you with holographic trickery, and they can reprogram your computer just by looking at it. The teks — Orgotek, really — also cornered the market on biotechnology.

This isn't to say that electrokinetics run around throwing lightning at people, or that they're just wanting to set up an "Orgo Shack" to sell neat bio-gadgetry. These psions are just as committed to defending humanity as those of any other order. If they can make a buck doing it, well, that's okay, too. But for every psion who sits in a lab tweaking gene codes to make a better bio-mousetrap, there are five more in the field tracking down Aberrants or rogue psions.

Orgotek may be a corporation, but it's not interested just in the bottom line. Proxy Cassel wants his people to dedicate themselves to humanity's betterment — that goes for his neutral employees as well as for his Gifted ones. There are numerous forces out there that threaten humanity's future well-being, and teks are among the few individuals who have the skill and gear to stop them.

North America

Orgotek considers itself to be the champion of a cause; the Federated States government looks at itself similarly. The once-great nation has fallen on hard times — a victim of Aberrant destruction and political egotism. The ruling class of the FSA feels it knows the best way to lead the country back to socio-political supremacy. The citizens have different ideas on how to go about that, but their voices are difficult to hear over the grinding gears of the FSA's fascist machine.

Despite misguided efforts from the top and violent dissension at the bottom, North America retains a large amount of what made it great; it is home to many races, all joined

together to form a unique society. Unity found its first voice on a large scale in American culture. Although events have shaken the continent to its very foundation, the people are not beaten. They have courage and fortitude on their side, and they have strength to hold onto a dream, no matter the odds.

How to Use This Book

America Offline looks at Psi Order Orgotek and North America. This book is arranged in the following manner:

Setting

The full-color material you've already read presents an overview based on information known to the influential Æon Trinity, discussing what investigations reveal about Orgotek, as well as documenting significant parts of North America.

Rules

The black-and-white section takes a behind-the-scenes look at Orgotek and the North American continent.

- For Orgotek, find out how electrokinetics get recruited, read a further discussion of how teks see Electrokinetics, and discover new Electrokinetics powers.

- For North America, learn how Nordamerican society changed due to the Aberrant War and how the nation is reconfigured in the modern day.

- There's also a listing of new gear — innovative weapons, devices and vehicles.

- Finally, there's a section on teks and Nordamerican residents of note, including detailed character templates.

One Last Thing

America Offline is a comprehensive sourcebook, but it's by no means an exhaustive catalog of everything relating to Orgotek and the North American continent. Instead, it gives players and Storytellers a wealth of new information that adds richness to their series. Don't feel restricted by this material; it merely serves as the first step of a long trip deep into the Trinity Universe.

Late 20th-century convention has it that there are two kinds of people: "techies" and "people people." Ask a human resource manager what she wishes for most and the answer is that her technical applicants had better people skills, and that her socially talented applicants had a better grasp of technical issues.

In the early 22nd century, human resource managers at Orgotek are very happy people. Latent tendencies toward Electrokinesis do not discriminate based on a person's interpersonal skills. In fact, teks come from all walks of life and have as diverse a skillset as any employer might desire. This diversity is encouraged by Orgotek's recruitment of latent EKs from any and all departments at universities, and from skilled and unskilled labor pools throughout settled space.

Recruiting

While the uninformed neutral might tell you that ISRA takes anybody into its ranks, similar beliefs about Orgotek are absent — or at least, the product of FSA propaganda. For Alex Cassel's vision for humanity to come to fruition, he needs the best and brightest. Orgotek makes no secret of its recruits' educational pedigrees. Major universities in near space (although focusing in the FSA, Quebec and Nippon) get visits from Orgotek recruiters at least once a semester, and students at even tiny colleges receive invitations to what are jokingly called "scouting combines" in nearby arcologies.

That is not to say that Electrokinesis discriminates against those with less education; Orgotek employs thousands of workers with only technical schooling or high school diplomas, and they're all encouraged to be tested for latent EK ability.

Psi Order Orgotek does not hunt for candidates exclusively within the corporation and at universities. It explores all walks of life, including people at rival corporations, and it looks for those who fit its corporate

paradigm. However, strong latents have come from outside the corporate world, such as from the entertainment industry and the FSA government. In short, almost any early history you wish to develop fits into Orgotek. Part of the latency testing that Orgotek performs is a detailed psychological evaluation. Therefore, out-and-out psychopaths, obviously dangerous and/or insane characters do not become members of the Orgotek family.

Orgotek maintains a reciprocal triggering agreement with the other psi orders. If the Legions need to trigger a strong latent electrokinetic, they bear the costs, but they may ship him to America to experience Orgotek's Prometheus Effect. That individual is still associated with the Legions throughout the process and the subsequent psionic training. And once the new psion has proper control of his Electrokinesis abilities, he returns to the Legions.

This sort of "horse trading" is common among Orgotek, ISRA and the Legions. The Æsculapians and Orgotek trade grudgingly in a kind of "battle of bureaucracies." The Ministry recently joined in this trading program with the other orders, but the Norça stay out of it. The shifters were happy to take in any latent biokinetics sent to them, yet the orders learned that they don't get the psion back. Psions triggered in this fashion are often the ones sent out when cross-order teams are needed for whatever reason. They already have a passing familiarity with the other order's operations, which makes the interaction run more smoothly.

Any candidate for the Prometheus Effect undergoes an extensive testing regimen at Orgotek's New York facility. Some tests are typical to any hiring process, as they cover basic mathematical, spatial and language skills. Further, candidates are tested on their coordination and stamina, and they undergo detailed psychological scans, a personality profile, and a blood/DNA test (to look for any anomalies that might interfere with the process).

Double-Dipping

A player may want his character to gain multiple Aptitudes. After all, if going through the Electrokinesis chamber triggers that Aptitude, then also undergoing the Psychokinesis chamber should bestow those powers as well, right?

Wrong. Going through multiple Prometheus Effects (whether through the same chamber twice, or two different ones) kills the character. Flat out. The human body isn't genetically advanced enough to channel psi powers on its own — that's why the Prometheus Effect is required in the first place. Trying to trigger multiple Aptitude sequences overloads the character. Death isn't instantaneous, but it is horribly painful, gruesome and inevitable.

Candidates are also tested for subtler traits; a wallet might be dropped "accidentally" outside the test facility, or a fake recruiter from another metacorporation might offer the candidate money or favors in return for information about the Prometheus Effect. The psychologists who give these tests know what to look for. It's not impossible to get past them, but a "ringer" has to be on guard from the moment she applies for a latency test. An applicant who keeps the money from the wallet or agrees to sell out Orgotek isn't necessarily written-off, though. Instead, such choices indicate that the latent might be well-suited to a career in Operations.

Assuming the test battery reveals no insurmountable problems, the candidate is offered a contract with Orgotek. The contract stipulates exposure to the Prometheus Effect, a training period and internship, followed by four years of employment by Orgotek at fair market wages. At the end of that time, both parties may negotiate a new contract.



The Process

Irreverent Orgotek psions refer to the Prometheus chamber as "the tank." Before actually getting "dunked," a prospective psion takes part in a three-week preparatory course (along with 6 to 12 other applicants) to learn the fundamentals of noetic theory and the particulars of Electrokinesis. This introduction prepares the applicant for what she's likely to experience while undergoing the Prometheus process.

The applicants are airlifted in a windowless transport to the chamber site. Orgotek maintains a number of storage and ancillary facilities near the New York and Hartford arcologies. The chamber is hidden underground at one of these sites and is protected by a staggering amount of Operations personnel and powerful defense systems. The Federated States would be shocked to learn of the full extent of the chamber site's defensive capability.

Cassel no longer personally observes each triggering as he did in the old days, but he receives regular reports on these newly created psions. An electrokinetics' triggering takes a few hours and follows the description given in *Trinity* (page 39). Once the process is complete and the new psion's stability is confirmed, she is shipped off to her training post.

The Prometheus Effect alters each person differently. Unlike many of the other orders' Gifted, Orgotek psions do not describe an immediate change in their perceptions. A minority do experience a radical shift in perception from the moment they leave the tank, but teks' senses typically take time to expand.

The new psion's powers are often stronger than she anticipates. With the slow unfolding of these new perceptions, she could spend a few weeks unable to control her influence over electricity, light and technology. Orgotek training facilities are built with such power surges in mind.

Training

Orgotek's initial training program is a mixture of college and boot camp. The first phase covers the time up to the applicant's immersion in the Prometheus chamber. After the new psion exits the tank and undergoes supplementary

medical scans, she moves on to an intensive nine-week course of physical, mental and psionic training. There are three primary training centers: New York, San Francisco, and Olympus. San Francisco is the newest, and Orgotek-watchers see its establishment as another sign that the company will move the HQ out of New York in the not-so-distant future.

The training centers — called "campuses" — are laid out similarly to each other, but each has its own character. All three are reminiscent of universities: The new employees stay in comfortable dorm suites and eat in cafeterias, and heads of campuses are referred to as "deans." The three deans are described in *Dramatis Personae*, starting on page 123.

The campuses are excellent learning environments. After a trainee experiences the Prometheus Effect (or "gets dunked in the tank"), her greatest concern is managing her new powers and fitting into the company. About one-third of the people in any trainee class were Orgotek employees who'd gone through standard latency testing; the rest come in after visiting the company's public testing stations. It's common for a recruit to start off resentful of the campus' college atmosphere, but the structure is important. After being triggered, the candidate is like an infant with sharp knives — dangerous to herself and everyone around her. Once the new psion sees the benefit in increased control over her powers, she usually embraces the training structure.

The first week after the process is a combination of physical and mental training. Trainees go through an exercise regimen, which is a rude shock to those who come from comfortable, sedentary lifestyles. Afternoons are devoted to a brush-up of math, language and technical skills. Trainees then spend evenings in meditation and in getting their techniques under control. There are often rather comical (but minor) mishaps during this week; Storytellers who roleplay characters through the initial training may wish to inflict characters with unexpected misfirings of their new powers. Ironically, these sporadic flares can manifest in ways that trained psions find difficult to duplicate.

The remaining weeks are more structured than the rest, with an overall task for each week, backed up by classroom and practical work. Spending time in a classroom is difficult for those who lack experience and for those who thought days like this were behind them, but good trainee groups bond together with the more scholastic students helping the others.

Week-long tasks might include managing a simulated corporation (stock prices, different departments, managing employees, etc.); fighting holoprojected or simulated Aberrants (and usually losing); or lab work with any of the three Electrokinetics Modes to study the range of application of each. Training is a lot of work, but instructors have great latitude during this time. They control the entire day — even influencing the trainees' meal rations or springing a midnight drill (the "Return of Divis Mal" is a long-time favorite).

While each campus applies these methods differently, the general outcome is still a qualified, competent Orgotek employee. As this period encourages group bonding, a high percentage stays in touch afterward; some even have reunions or request former classmates to join them on new projects.

Internships

After completing the initial training period, new teks are assigned to an internship posting that lasts for six months. While WEI makes an effort to accommodate a new employee's internship request, desired postings aren't always unavailable, and some execs may ask for a particular intern (or reject one). Fundamentally, Orgotek's needs take priority over that of the individual.

Benefits

Orgotek is a family to its employees. Even neutrals who work for Orgotek know that they aren't just part of a for-profit enterprise; Alex Cassel and his workers are helping to *save the universe*. Such a high concept doesn't pay the bills, though, so the Big O financially compensates employees to an admirable degree.

Electrokinetics command tremendous salaries in the various high-tech industries. In comparison, Orgotek's salary offerings are actually at the low

end of the average range. The psions' overall benefits packages are outstanding, though, and workers have a fair amount of flexibility within their jobs. Each Orgotek psion (regardless of Aptitude) receives the following benefits:

- Four weeks of annual vacation after one year of employment, increasing annually by a week (to a maximum of nine weeks).
- 100% reimbursement of any education through an accredited institution.
- Full standard medical, optical and dental coverage for the psion and immediate family, as well as 50% coverage of any specialist care (75% if handled through *Æsculapian Order*).
- Retirement plan, including matching payment of up to 10% of the employee's annual salary.
- Free on-site housing for the psion and immediate family. Although the basic level is somewhat spartan, upgrades are available to those with seniority or for a pro-rated fee.
- Free meals 24/7 at on-site cafeterias (the psion has a ¥250 per month cafeteria allowance for her immediate family; any amount over this is debited from the employee's salary).
- Free passage on site-to-site transports for the psion, and a flat fee of ¥50 per adult/¥25 per child under 10 for immediate family members.
- Self-defense training two days a month for the psion and immediate family (combat pay for employees as merited).

Orgotek's sites, whether a small field office in Asian Georgia or the main HQ in the New York arcology, contain modern computer and communications gear. This gear is interconnected to Orgonet, the company's isolated intranet system, through redundant hookups to hard lines and transmitters. An employee's bioelectric signature is measured when he is hired, and his environmental preferences in everything from computer working setup to ideal air temperature and humidity are adjusted by environmental biotech at any Orgotek workplace — within specific limits of that facility. That is, if you want your workplace at 35° Celsius with 95% humidity and all computer output shouted in Proxy Solveig Larssen's voice, you can get it in a private office but not if you're at one of six desks in a shared office.

Working for Orgotek

Orgotek's testing and training regimen ensures that an overwhelming percentage of latents become capable (if not necessarily powerful) electrokinetics. After the internship is complete, the tek may have more than one position open to her in the corporation. Those with a scientific bent may be offered a move into Lumen or Orgosoft Farms. True "techies" may get a shot at Tekne, while those with strong public-relations skills or management experience can expect an offer from WEI. Operations extends invitations to psions with proven combat, intrusion and security skills.

The new zapper has her choice of placement, but she'd better be sure of her decision. The standard Orgotek work contract specifies a four-year term with extensive penalty clauses should either side terminate employment before that time. It's possible to move between divisions within the organization, but it's a time-consuming process. Orgotek takes great pains to place its people well and doesn't want flighty employees hopping from one job to another on a whim.

Each subsidiary has its own focus and, therefore, provides for different kinds of stories. A WEI suit should find herself in a firefight as often as an Ops agent should

be caught up in corporate intrigues. Career Options, page 66, lists each subsidiary's current areas of interest.

Fitting-In

The psi order does its best to help those with limitations to become viable members of the Orgotek family. Those lacking basic skills receive up to an extra two months of training time. Most people who suffer physical disabilities can get biotech or medical aids to compensate, making such conditions a minor obstacle at best. Emotional or mental problems that slip through the tests are hard to deal with. Even so, mental-health coverage is in the standard benefits package, and employees may receive time off for treatment.

Disciplinary problems are dealt with differently. Employees with unrestrained personalities are encouraged to transfer to Operations, where they have plenty of opportunity to work that energy off. In the end, though, Storytellers should remember that Orgotek does not cut loose a new electrokinetic just because that tek was a discipline problem. If reprimands and fines aren't enough to improve an employee's behavior, Orgotek always has *Romulus* and *Remus* Stations. The two orbital habitats serve as listening posts and defensive stations for settled space in the event of external attack — and as a place to put those people who just couldn't make it elsewhere in Orgotek.



Romulus Station, in Earth's L3 point, is a place of barely restrained chaos. The Big O's management considers a posting there to be the worst kind of penalty duty. The station has gone through three directors in the past year; the current director is Cory Bryanton. She has spent many hours in contact with Director Blasey of *Remus Station* in an attempt to emulate him.

Remus Station, situated out in the Asteroid Belt, is a wonderful surprise to the Round Table. Since his placement on the station three years ago, Scott Blasey built up morale, corrected discipline problems, and helped make *Remus* one of Orgotek's jewels in space. Those with disciplinary problems still go to *Remus*, but they are integrated into Blasey's clockwork routine and their behavior is soon straightened out. Cassel would like to promote Blasey out of there but is certain that *Remus Station* would revert to chaos if he did. Blasey wishes to remain on the station, anyway.

Freelancers

While a large majority of teks stay at Orgotek throughout their careers, some take jobs elsewhere (or even start companies of their own). Electrokinetics are valuable enough that international metacorporations are similarly willing to shell-out top yuan and benefits to lure one in. Not all teks who leave Orgotek do so for the money. Some dislike the company's size; it is one of the biggest metacorporations in human space. Others tire of the detailed management that Cassel and his Round Table maintain, while some employees develop a new technology of their own and see a profit center too bright to donate to their employer. Others are called to a religious or philosophical vocation that they cannot deny. And the rest are too impatient to rise through the management ranks, and they want to gain control and influence right away.

After voluntarily severing their association with the psi order, electrokinetics follow one of three paths: placement with a competing organization, full-time freelance work or entrepreneurship. Obviously, these choices are not the only options available; some teks work

Getting the Pink Slip

Not all electrokinetics leave Orgotek voluntarily. Those who don't shape up even after being sent to *Romulus* or *Remus* find themselves being escorted out the door. Employees who undermine Orgotek's goals, or who perform acts of sabotage or terrorism, are convicted of a felony while employed by the corporation. Those who reveal corporate secrets to competitors or hostile governments are terminated immediately — er, their employment is terminated, that is.

While ideas of independence and creative freedom permeate Orgotek, each tek must "pay back" the company for his initial triggering and training; payment is factored into a psion's four-year contract. It's possible to be released from this contract, but the clauses stipulate a full repayment of the "fair market value" of a psion's triggering and training. This amount ends up being whatever Alex Cassel decides it is. He has on occasion "waived the entire amount in return for a favor at a later date." The Prexy frequently nips ideas of rebellion in the bud by deciding the fair market value is a cool one million yuan. (While the specific triggering is difficult to quantify financially, it actually costs only ¥75,000 to train, house and feed a newly trigged electrokinetic.)

for the Æon Trinity, run for public office, further their educations, join the priesthood or wander like vagabonds throughout the Solar System.

A psion who leaves Orgotek for another company (such as Banji), for an organization (such as the Æon Trinity) or even for a government (the FSA) gains financial benefits, but she finds a chilly reception from some of her new co-workers. For every person who admires and appreciates a psion's efforts,

there is another who begrudges her talents. Longtime employees may envy the psion's quick rise or try to attach their own fortunes to those of the tek. Recalcitrant neutrals working for the psion's new employer may not cooperate with her unless they are ordered to do so. There are plenty of rational neutrals in the world, but not all humans have grown beyond petty prejudice. Even the *Æon Trinity* isn't entirely free of this limited thinking, although the majority of its employees are more enlightened than most.

Further, a tek shouldn't assume he can just gallivant off to do whatever he likes. These organizations expect results, and they are sure to have specific plans for their "shining" new employee.

A player may use his electrokinetic character's shift from Orgotek to another organization to justify spending experience on increasing the character's Resources. Increases in Allies, Contacts, Followers and Status Backgrounds are also available.

Some companies don't offer competitive salaries — or positions — to teks, however. Most notably, these companies have strong antipsion prejudice (such as L-K Arms) and they think all teks are Orgotek sleeper agents, (such as Alchemy Computer Corporation). In Alchemy's case, its founder, David Resnick, does not trust any tek who wasn't onboard with him before the company split with Orgotek.

Also, a character may choose to go into business for herself. Such an endeavor is likely rewarding and challenging. A Storyteller may even base an entire series on the creation of an independent company. New businesses are rarely profitable at the outset; a character in a new operation may have to take on side-work to supplement her cash flow — thereby providing story ideas. Promising new companies are frequent targets of metacorporate shadow ops. What would a character do if some unknown agency stole her computer records and prototypes? Even mundane concerns offer interesting roleplay. After all, an Ideological Purity Audit can make for a very tense couple of days.

Players should work closely with the Storyteller on details of the product or service

their characters provide. A designer-software company may provide a steady source of income but doesn't have the same kind of exciting roleplay as a computer-security consulting firm does. The former, then, might be touched on only in a behind-the-scenes fashion, while the consulting firm can serve as the staging point for many sessions.

While *Trinity* focuses on science-fiction adventure over extreme scientific detail, the Storyteller must be careful on what he allows to be scientifically possible. For instance, some new research the characters want to attempt (bioapps that increase Psi or Aptitudes, vehicles that travel faster than light without using jump ships, or technology based on taint or Aberrant powers) could seriously unbalance the game. Characters can try such endeavors, but the Storyteller is urged not to allow actual breakthroughs if she wishes to keep the game tied to *Trinity* cosmology.

To avoid some of the worst problems of new-company ownership, characters may solicit a wealthy investor or enlist the aid of a venture-capital specialist to bring investors onboard. These moves minimize the time spent operating on a shoestring budget, and prominent investors can generate business (and story hooks) just by being associated with a project. The downside is that an investor with a large share in the company can make characters jump at a moment's notice. Such a situation might degenerate into the very thing that characters wished to avoid — namely, working for someone else.

There are far too many variables to quantify the effects of going totally independent of Orgotek. A Storyteller may decide that those who operate without a wealthy primary investor find their Resources Backgrounds drop by (at least!). If they went into business to develop wholly new technology, it is reasonable to take the Device Background to represent prototypes of this technology (obviously, details should be worked out with the Storyteller). Dedicated employees of the new firm may be Followers, or even Allies, if they are competent enough. If characters have a wealthy benefactor, their Resources may not change; they may also purchase a high-level Mentor to represent that investor.



Electrokinetics who choose to go independent walk a risky road. They should have contacts that can provide them with regular work but must not get so tied to a particular organization that they lose their credibility in so-called “shadow operations” for other parties. Such an option gives a Storyteller a wide palette from which to paint.

Characters going totally independent can expect their Resources to drop at least . Allies, Contacts and/or Mentor — preferably ... or higher — are vital as well. A character must draw upon her Backgrounds to find substantial work if she doesn't intend to embark on a life of crime.

Rogue Psions

Some teks leave Orgotek without warning. Others leave on good terms but go on to engage in criminal activity. In either case, an Ops team is dispatched to retrieve the errant psion. Electrokinetics who use their technokinetic abilities to cause widespread distress (monkeying with the stock market, causing fluctuation

in power grids, rampant murdering) are targeted by one of the shadowy Option-8 teams — thus, sanctioned for immediate termination. These orders aren't traceable to Cassel or the Round Table, of course. Yet, considering that Option-8 reports only to the highest levels, there are few other places from which such directives could come.

Ops teams go after rogue psions from other orders if the rogues cross Orgotek's path. In these cases, the rogues are returned to their original orders. Rogues whose talents and temperaments seem well-suited to Orgotek, however, might be offered a position within Operations.

Backgrounds with Orgotek

The Big O does more than design bioware and create electrokinetics. Any character's Background could involve the order. Some of these Backgrounds (like Devices) go very well with Orgotek as written.

Yet, it's not hard to use Orgotek to justify other character Background Traits, and it can help the Storyteller find links between characters in a disparate group.

- **Allies:** Eliminating the obvious, it is very, very unlikely that even a character with five dots in Allies would have the Prexy as an ally. At that level, having another member of the Round Table isn't out of line, but the Storyteller should consider the repercussions before allowing it. Specific Allies can be anyone appropriate to the setting involved, although they should benefit a character (a Tekne computer hacker wouldn't be very useful in a deep-space campaign). Remember also that the ally need not be a psion; a character may know a neutral within WEI who could be useful when dealing with red tape.

- **Cipher:** A current or former Orgotek employee may have this Background up to five dots. But for Orgotek's own purposes, the character's Cipher functions at three dots lower for current employees and two dots lower for former employees. Cassel keeps Orgotek's central data files under close scrutiny, and even a powerful technokinetic would have a difficult time eliminating his records.

- **Citizenship:** Individuals recruited into Orgotek can take the FSA as a second citizenship (although the actual process requires tedious filing and meetings). Similarly, a character posted to another country who plans on spending any length of time there could also file for citizenship. Even if a character doesn't have Citizenship, she may still enter a foreign country as long as she has a valid passport.

- **Contacts:** Orgotek contacts may come from anywhere (an office worker, an assistant researcher, a security guard). The more highly placed a Contact is, the greater his knowledge — but the less influence a character may have over him. If Kevin Labak is a character's Contact, the character cannot insist that Labak provide information or assistance on-demand. Labak is held accountable

for his subsidiary's actions, and most of what he does is publicized by the Orgotek PR machine. He is unlikely to jeopardize his job to fulfill a request for someone he does not know intimately (that's what Allies are for).

- **Devices:** Orgotek is the home of the Device Background. It's simple to assume that a character has a prototype designed in an Orgosoft, Tekne or Lumen lab. Even characters associated with another order or with Aeon can get access to such a prototype. Orgotek may be interested in field-testing a new bioapp, with a character as guinea pig.

- **Followers:** These supporting characters can fill in any number of supplementary roles: the remainder of a research crew, fellow Ops team members, subordinates in an independent endeavor, secretary or bodyguard for an administrator.

- **Influence:** An Orgotek executive does not gain Influence merely by virtue of his status within the order. This Background specifically applies to the universe at large. The degree of influence varies depending on the environment, though. Since the FSA is at odds with Orgotek, this Background functions at one dot lower than normal. However, the psi order has greater prestige on Mars due to the Terraforming Project, raising the Background's effects by one dot.

- **Mentor:** Much like Allies, truly powerful Mentors require a valid justification. A character could have Alex Cassel or a member of the Round Table as a Mentor (due to her outstanding work in the past or from her having a "certain something"). Whatever the reason, the Storyteller should think carefully before allowing that level of Mentor. Such people are very busy, thereby limiting their usefulness to the character. Other viable Mentors can be division managers, investors, or veteran employees.

- **Resources:** A character's Resources indicate his general financial stability, but this term doesn't necessarily mean his readily

available cash. A starting Orgotek psion could justify two dots in Resources easily, while middle management rates three dots (or even four if he is a shrewd investor). Five dots should be reserved for upper management. While it's not impossible for a starting character to have that level of Resources (after all, Alex Cassel did so before he became proxy), the Storyteller must consider the repercussions before allowing it.

- **Status:** A psion fresh out of the tank should have no more than one dot in Status. After a year or so at Orgotek, a character could move up to two dots (or three, if she showed special promise). Three- and four-dot levels of Status go to those characters who've attained a high profile or long tenure within the order. One cannot attain five dots of Status within Orgotek; the Round Table holds that tier. (Although, if a character replaces a member during the course of the series, that move can justify the increase in Status.)

Career Options

An electrokinetic character who follows a career in Orgotek may join any *one* of its major divisions. The following section describes the division, Allegiance philosophy and Ability cluster available to members of each section. Allegiance represents your character's general outlook on his role in society — a shared philosophy of the group (*Trinity*, page 179). An Ability group covers main areas of training considered to be essential by the organization to which your character is involved (*Trinity*, page 166); in all likelihood, many of those skills are picked up during training and internship.

World Enterprises, Inc. (WEI)

Next to the Prexy himself, Ellayne Cassel, President of WEI, is Orgotek's chief spokesperson. She leads WEI by example, presenting the most important announcements herself. WEI employees seek to emulate Ellayne's sense of humor and unflappable professionalism.

This subsidiary doesn't have a glamorous role in handling human resources and administrative issues for the other divisions, but the staff knows the importance of these tasks. WEI's public-relations personnel travel all over settled space to represent Orgotek holdings. These efforts involve all manner of corporate and political scheming (struggling with China over the Mars Terraforming Project, uncovering a corporate traitor selling secrets to Alchemy, combating the Federated States' ambition to shut Orgotek down, etc.). Storytellers with a bent for moral ambiguity should remember that although Orgotek has humanity's best interests in mind, the ways in which the psi order sees to those interests can compromise legal and ethical factors. Even if Orgotek plans on covering up its defiance of FSA law, are the characters willing to go along with it?

Allegiance: WEI is Orgotek's brain; the other divisions are its limbs. The whole must work together, but WEI is the guiding influence. Only by following the plans that WEI lays out can Orgotek as a whole hope to achieve true greatness.

Ability Group: Bureaucracy, Command, Etiquette, Linguistics, Rapport, Subterfuge

Orgosoft Farms

Jennifer Lehoczky-Elliott, Director of Orgosoft Farms, is very much a people person. She manages engineers when she can make time. Some engineers and project-heads bristle at this micromanagement, while others sincerely welcome input from the very top.

Orgosoft Farms personnel mostly research and grow bioware; they have the greatest understanding of biotechnology and its applications of any human organization, as shown in the jump ships' development. Every psi order and government agency — not to mention the Aeon Trinity and the Qin — want the crafts for their own purposes, and most aren't above trying to steal Tesser technology. There's great tension surrounding the project since possible industrial spies and saboteurs lurk everywhere (there have

already been two sabotage attempts, not counting The Colony's raid in 2119, since the program began). Orgosoft teks are assigned to each Leviathan to maintain the ship's delicate systems. Although they are scientists and technicians at heart, workers must be ready for combat in case the hostiles get past the ships that guard the Leviathan.

Orgosoft faces problems closer to home. Its bioware research, from creating new taser designs to working on the Mars Terraforming Project, faces corporate espionage. A big part of this situation involves Orgotek learning all that it can of Qin biotech science. The aliens are exceedingly cryptic and resistant to divulging secrets, so Orgosoft employees must function not only as researchers, but also as diplomats and psychologists. Subtlety is often the key to getting through Qin defenses.

Allegiance: Humanity's future is bound to biotechnology even if the neutrals can't see that yet. This new technology will usher in a new age. Humanity must embrace biotech and its potential so that the entire race can progress together — which means that it must be available to humans in every form imaginable.

Ability Group: Engineering, Medicine, Meditation, Rapport, Style, Science

Tekne Group

Dr. Kevin Labak, head of Tekne, knows that he manages a collection of antisocial misfits (an unfortunate, yet apt description), and he does his best to humor his employees' various personality quirks. Tekne is a research group, and its advances are utilized to benefit the other divisions.

Tekne was vital to slipping into the FSM's database to find locations of each district's weapons stockpiles, and to cracking the Ministry's files to discover telepaths' plans to place covert personnel in every major government. Further, Tekne dipped into the Æon Trinity's Project: Rewrite files and learned that Æon had a much closer involvement with Aberrants in the 21st century than it claims. The group works feverishly to create a viable artificial intelligence as

well — so far, to no avail. For years, Tekne has used a combination of Electromanipulation and Technokinesis to develop "extra-satisfactory intelligence," but every artificial intelligence designed has digressed into catatonia or psychosis.

Despite their continual efforts for Orgotek, Tekne's employees (and Labak himself) feel slighted. There is tension between Labak and Cassel because the former wants to pursue large-scale hardtech production, while the Prexy wants to maintain focus on the biotech market. It's no secret that if Labak was to leave for whatever reason, his entire staff would go with him.

Allegiance: Most people think that dealing with the electronic world is just pushing buttons and regulating currents. Electricity is a vital component of the universe; without it, civilization would crumble. And, although the other divisions don't realize it, but without Tekne, *Orgotek* would crumble.

Ability Group: Academics, Engineering, Intrusion, Investigation, Meditation, Science

Lumen, Inc.

At heart, Dr. Ashley Frost, Director of Lumen, is a scientist, not a manager. While most of Lumen's research initiatives come directly from her desk, Frost leaves it up to her subordinates on how best to pursue them.

Much of Lumen's resources are devoted to the Chromatic Countermeasures Group, which tries to extrapolate useful information from Chromatic corpses and fragmentary tools. Other members of this group are interested only in taking what they learn of the aliens and using it to "shut the Chromies down." The xenophobia regarding the hostile aliens has grown in the past five years as many Lumen staffers consider it the challenge of a lifetime to put their own photokinetic talents against those of an alien being.

General photokinetic research fell by the wayside in favor of the CCG. The recent push with *Vulcan Station's* solar research and the *Toocilaser* array projects may broaden Lumen's horizons once again.

Vulcan Station

The fluctuations in the Sun documented by *Vulcan Station's* staff are a mystery. At the Storyteller's discretion, any or all of the following may cause the recorded drop in solar neutrino output:

- The Sun's core has stopped fusing. According to late 20th-century theories, the change in light and heat output from such an event might not be noticed for 10,000 years, though the corresponding reduction in neutrino output can be noticed at once.

- There are sporadic, microscopic black holes in the Sun's photosphere. Researchers who learn how to harness such occurrences could provide nearly free energy on Earth, or even faster-than-light communication independent of psionics.

- Extremely powerful aliens or Aberrants are manipulating the Sun. This control involves beings of tremendous power, so the Storyteller is cautioned as to the effects of incorporating such an idea into his series.

- Simply, these fluctuations may be all part of the Sun's natural cycle. Dr. Kalinsky is right: The Sun has been studied for less than one-millionth of its existence. The neutrino flow may fluctuate over a long period of time.

Allegiance: Fundamentally, the universe is composed of energy, and in pure form, energy is light. By manipulating it, one manipulates all reality. Humanity taps the barest fraction of its potential, but Lumen sees that there are no limits except those that we impose upon ourselves.

Ability Group: Arts, Bureaucracy, Engineering, Investigation, Medicine, Science

Operations

Jeff Kenyatta, Director of Ops, maintains an almost-military chain of command. The managers of Operations' seven subdivisions report directly to him and are responsible for their own employees; this model of command extends down through the ranks. Teams often do not consist of just electrokinetics, though psions typically make up the majority of Ops personnel. Ops teams follow Orgotek's official policy on psi power use (only in self-defense or when upholding the order's integrity), but they cannot officially act as law enforcement. Influence and Citizenship Backgrounds help on the occasions when they do run afoul of local law.

Teams are rotated through the various subdivisions so that all teams are prepared for any situation. The training courses that Operations conducts for other employees are likened to mini-vacations by Ops personnel. Aberrant Defense patrols are obviously more dangerous, as they take a team through the Solar System or to a specific location containing a suspected Aberrant hideout. Such teams become conversant with the numerous hidey-holes that can be found in the asteroids' orbits, and they are armed with the heaviest possible gear.

Site Security teams are responsible for keeping Orgotek installations safe for employees and for those who live and work nearby. A number of sites have been picketed in the last 15 years, with some protests turning violent; SiteSec quelled the riots quickly and efficiently — and without inflicting permanent harm. In dangerous regions, SiteSec patrols up to a kilometer around the Orgotek installation and keeps the peace where local authorities may not.

Personnel Security includes team and solo assignments, which are usually to protect ranking individuals (Round Table members, department heads, primary researchers), as well as important visitors. Cassel seldom has bodyguards in his immediate vicinity, although he has a plain-clothes team nearby at all times. Aside from basic bodyguard duties, Personnel Security squads also pre-check all sites off Orgotek grounds where their charges may go (public engagements, hotel rooms, transportation).

Data Security duty is considered “cushy” duty by Ops teams. The EKs’ software agents and Tekne staff do the real work. DataSec agents tend to sit around comfortable offices waiting for a network “cracker” to be traced. Once identified, they apprehend the individual and/or any pirated data.

External Operations is dedicated to interfacing with and protecting non-Orgotek assets. ExOps works with outside agencies to do so — although these agencies aren’t always aware of the psi order’s involvement. ExOps can be contracted by a third party to provide security in a straightforward fashion. An ExOps team may provide covert surveillance of assets unrelated to Orgotek. The assets may still be important to the Big O, but it does not want to admit interest in or involvement with them.

Xenology Division investigates Qin on Earth and works with Lumen to implement information learned about Chromatics. Xenology doesn’t bring in and interrogate Qin diplomatic staff; instead, teams observe alien activities and maintain comprehensive files. Xenology operatives are authorized to defend aliens against hostile attacks, but using only necessary force and departing the scene before Qin (or authorities) can ask questions.

Allegiance: There are a lot of threats out there. Operations must be prepared in any event and use whatever force is necessary to maintain the safety of Orgotek and humanity. This resolve has to be tempered with the understanding that Operations is not a law unto itself, but it must be ready to face the consequences of its members’ actions.

Ability Group: Athletics, Brawl or Martial Arts, Firearms, Intrusion, Savvy, Survival

Option-8

Option-8 is a secret “last resort” team. As Orgotek’s “black ops” group, it is designed to carry out the jobs too sensitive (or too disturbing) for the rest of the company to know about. The Round Table directs Option-8, yet select individuals are given authorization to request personnel should the situation warrant so (in these cases, they’re seldom called in — probably because only the Round Table knows the full extent of Option-8’s authority).

Few who work outside Orgotek even know of this phantom group’s existence. Its actions are held secret from typical employees. Psions in Operations might find out about Option-8 after a year (probably longer); the

secret section is not a part of the normal Ops rotation. Option-8 kept a remarkably low profile for years, but the recent exposure of illicit research involving corrupt Orgotek and Æsculapian psions drew the black ops teams out of the shadows. Cassel and Option-8 Director, Justin Hoffman, are working to keep any further attention away from the group.

Allegiance: Despite humanity’s efforts to reach an enlightened state, corruption continues to surface. If others must be eradicated to help safeguard humanity, then so be it. Hard choices are sometimes necessary to serve the greater good.

Ability Group: Firearms, Intrusion, Martial Arts, Resistance, Stealth, Subterfuge

Orgotek and Society

The Electrokinesis Order associates with numerous corporations, governments and special-interest groups on a daily basis. Ones described here have especially strong ties to Orgotek.

Æsculapians

The technokinetics and vitakinetics get along well professionally. Numerous rexs work for Ops and Orgosoft Farms; the former’s are parts of rapid-response teams and the latter’s are researchers. Far fewer teks work for the Æsculapian Order, though there are a couple of specialty vendors, such as Softshine and Vitatech, that make a living providing services to medical facilities. Such vendors are not Orgotek subsidiaries, but they are staffed by former Orgotek employees bitten by the entrepreneur bug.

The two orders’ proxies do not get along personally. Cassel considers Zweidler to be a self-important stuffed shirt who focuses too much on his own agenda and forgets the needs of his people. And, the Vitakinesis Proxy thinks that the Prexy is blinded by delusions of grandeur and that he allows youthful exuberance to cloud his judgment.

ISRA

Clears and teks cooperate rather well — most recently on the Leviathan jump-ship project. Yet, due to the brash attitudes of many EKs and the Orgotek PR machine, the public views ISRA as a “junior partner” of Orgotek.

This public perception is obviously wrong. Cassel has traveled privately to meet with Otha Herzog on the Moon three times in the past two decades. The two maintain regular transmitted



dialogues as well. The Prexy is ostensibly interested in the Old Man's advice, but it's no secret that Cassel's trips were in hopes of gaining access to the mysterious *Huruf al-Hayy*. Although it hasn't happened, Cassel's optimism is legendary. Numerous electrokinetics invest time and money searching for ISRA's secret base. Clairsentients have a knack for knowing when they're being investigated, though.

The Legions

Imagine the one-upmanship common between siblings and you have a good idea of the relationship between Legionnaires and Orgotek employees. Each group expends more resources than is necessary to show the other up. And like siblings, zappers and PKs jump to each other's defense when faced by an outside force.

Since 2115, Legions and Orgotek Ops strike teams have frequently joined forces. Psychs and teks in these squads have adopted an informal logo, which is a horizontal triple-jagged lightning bolt within an eight-pointed star. Operatives are recognized by both orders as among the toughest combat troops around.

Larsen's and Cassel's fields of interest and spheres of influence often overlap. The two respect one another's expertise and cooperate on a personal level when possible. Cassel is privately disapproving of Larsen's guileless demeanor and blunt honesty. The general, in turn, has expressed some distaste for Cassel's wheels-within-wheels machinations.

The Ministry

In 2118, Orgosoft researcher Diana Burnett released a paper analyzing latent noetic manipulation in vertebrates. Her thesis was that many animals could be trained to perform such manipulation *in extremis*. While her experiments were inconclusive, Ministry officers immediately publicized a previously untranslated paper disproving the existence of such abilities in vertebrates.

This cycle — one order's announcement quickly followed by parallel (sometimes contradictory) information from the other — repeated itself five times in the past year. Relations between Orgotek and the Ministry are currently tense at PR and R&D levels. Members of both orders who work at the operations level, however, are more able than before to put aside conflicting philosophies.

Proxies Bue and Cassel appreciate each other's company, though they do not travel in similar circles. While each one has great plans for humanity — and their goals have conflicted before — there is no hostility between the two. In fact, a subtle sexual tension exists between them (something Ellayne Cassel is not pleased about), as they banter back and forth while trying to determine the other's strategy.

The Norça

Giuseppe del Fuego's extended family works well with Alex Cassel's employees when the need arises. Although there is formidable tension since each order operates behind veils of secrecy, members from both sides dedicate themselves with professionalism toward common goals. This cooperative spirit is most effective when they work outward from their traditional spheres of influence — the Americas — and from outside commercial biotech markets.

The Prexy and *Pai de Norça* show grudging respect for one another as well. They recognize kindred spirits in one another; both have strong personal codes of ethics and feel protective of their followers. When these attitudes conflict (say, on how to handle Mexico's struggle for freedom), the two agree to disagree generally, and they don't take any maneuvers made against one another personally.

Upeo wa Macho

Individual psions within each order got along well enough. Orgotek was instrumental in helping the Upeo develop bioware enhancers — the basis for the jump-ship Tessers after the jumpers themselves vanished. This camaraderie did not reach the top levels, however.

Cassel and Proxy Atwan did not mix together well at all. The teleporter was blunt in her contempt for Cassel's scheming. She accused (sometimes publicly) the Prexy of manipulating her and other proxies to suit his personal agenda. Many of initially trivial disagreements between the two have escalated into shouting matches that forced other proxies to choose sides.

Chitra Bhanu

Alex Cassel has made few public statements about his role in the destruction of the Quantakesis Order. He sticks to the facts, such as Operations teams being among the first dispatched to India when the proxies rendered their Declaration of Dissolution on the Chitra Bhanu.

Privately, the two orders' heads were closest of all the proxies, except for perhaps Herzog and Atwan. Cassel and Bhurano shared a desire for knowledge; as Bhurano investigated the cause behind the Aberrant effect, Cassel became concerned for her but trusted her judgment.

By the time tensions in India escalated, Cassel had a dozen Ops teams on a rotating standby. He didn't know whether they would fight for Chitra Bhanu or against it, but in typical Cassel fashion, his contingency plan covered both options. When the time finally came to "put the hammer down," as del Fuego put it, the Prexy cast the lone dissenting vote. Although against the plan, Cassel immediately ordered in his teams (a notable contrast to Otha Herzog, who was all for taking action but didn't order his people into it).

Æon Trinity

Like all orders, Orgotek owes Æon for its successful integration into human society. Cassel feels some debt to the Trinity for its support and coordination in the early days. Orgotek makes large contributions to the Æon charities even now. Tension mounts between the two groups, however; Cassel and the Æon Council each has strong visions of humanity's future course, but with different ideas on how to make the dream a reality. While ideological clashes between the two have been verbal for now, physical conflict between Orgotek and Æon forces may occur in the near future.

The Federated States of America

Although carefully layered in doublespeak for public consumption, Alex Cassel makes no secret of his dislike for the fascist regime that rules North America. He feels that it is a decrepit remnant from the Aberrant War era — a time when Joe Hologram needed security more than he needed freedom. Those days are long past, though, and the Prexy hints behind closed doors that it may be time for a change.

In public, of course, Orgotek follows the letter of the law, giving the Federated States no cause to crack down on the EK company's pursuits. Despite the desires of many on the federal and regional boards, the FSA hasn't been able to pursue significant legal action against Orgotek. The Big O maintains a cadre of expensive and competent lawyers

to keep the FSA in line with the reams of legislation that the FedBoard pumps out. Also, Cassel has a number of moles sympathetic to Orgotek scattered throughout the FSA government.

When a new regulation passes into law, WEI Legal is already working on a press release that it fires out within hours to the OpNet, to the federal and district governing boards and to the media. The releases often describe the myriad of ways in which Orgotek already complies with the new law, or index a dated checklist of the methods that the company shall follow to come into compliance.

Cassel has no intention of fomenting or funding a civil war in North America. (Although, ironically, Proxy del Fuego would probably assist with such an effort, considering the Norça already support the Mexican rebels.) Something as crass as armed conflict doesn't fit with the Prexy's Master Plan. He prefers to win a war of public opinion. Cassel hopes that Americans will someday remove the governing boards, repeal the fascist laws and return the nation to the hands of the people — with him lending a gentle, guiding hand.

Given the strict nature of FSA anti-sedition laws, Cassel uses independent companies instead of Orgotek's own holdings to sow public seeds of dissension. Most of these groups are extranational, keeping them safely beyond the Federated States' reach. Many Australian and African electrokinetics are appalled at the restrictions that the psi order — and the American people — must operate under, and they are happy to subvert American media outlets with subtle anti-fascist messages.

Other Cultures

Orgotek is on good terms with most world governments, within the boundaries of the usual government-corporate relationship. There are restrictions in place to protect local goods against imports, as well as various levels of taxes. Relationships of note are described here.

Orgotek channels what money it can to the Canadian and Mexican Resistances, but its finances are under such tight scrutiny that such funds are minimal. Cassel specifically prohibits fronting the rebels with Orgotek-made bioapps; that's all the excuse the FSA needs to destroy the Big O.

It has a strong product presence in India and Funan (formerly Vietnam) due to the strong anima subculture in both places. Although not a region of strong sales, Operations teams patrol the fragmented Middle East. As a result, locals view Orgotek favorably; when a dangerous situation erupts, the Ops teams' quick responses enhance their reputation as professionals who care about the average person.

Australia, Europe and offworld colonies all have consumers who avail themselves of Orgotek's personal-defense technology, increasing the acceptance of biotech as a whole. South America has enough of its own biotech manufacturers that Orgotek has made little impact there. Thus, the order finds little welcome south of the Panama Canal.

Other Corporations

Orgotek faces competition from Alchemy, Apoderado, Banji, BioSystems, DataWarp, L-K Arms, Orchidware, Steinhardt, TechnoDyne and Wazukana. Any of these corporations is likely to be the target of Orgotek covert operations (and vice versa). Covert operations do not always imply obvious activities such as stealing or destroying data and prototypes in another corporation's facilities, though such things do happen (and make for good adventures). Covert ops include long-term infiltration of rival corporations for information or morale-destroying purposes; luring key personnel to Orgotek from the competitor; subtly derailing long-term research by providing flawed data and substandard materials; and spreading harmful rumors in the financial and corporate communities.

Apoderado and Alchemy are two special cases, however. Apoderado is on good terms with Orgotek. Both compete in a friendly fashion, and the companies' employees have an admiration for each other. Alchemy's relations with Orgotek are quite the opposite, though. They compete fiercely for market share, resources, and employees. The personal animosity between Resnick and Cassel is well-known, based on Resnick's theft of significant bioware resources.

Alien Races

Orgotek learned a great deal from the Qin immediately after their arrival on Earth in 2107, and the relationship between the psi order and the enigmatic aliens has remained strong in the subsequent decade. The Qin are closed-mouthed about their technology, but in many cases, Orgotek researchers need just an idea of Qin designs to reverse-engineer similar processes. Likewise, the aliens are interested in learning about human technology. Orgotek is only too willing to trade secrets.

Orgotek has three goals regarding the Chromatics. First, figure out how to defeat them in battle; second, learn how to communicate with them; and third, figure out how to duplicate their abilities. As most of the Chromatic subjects are all dead (the aliens are notorious for committing suicide rather than being captured), the second goal is especially difficult. Lumen xenobiologists have identified basic processes, including those Chromatic organs that produce light and those that absorb light, as well as some that do both. Although Chromatic genetic material is vastly different from that of humans, Lumen has cloned some of the alien organs with the hope of producing new bioware.

Orgotek has virtually no data on the Coalition to enact any but the most rudimentary plans. The order is prepared to fight, though Cassel wants to learn more before taking any hasty steps.

Aberrants

Orgotek's official policy regarding Aberrants is simple: They are to be killed on sight, and their bodies are to be brought to the nearest Orgotek or Æon Trinity facility for autopsy. Most Ops teams follow this directive, especially when a battle takes place in a public area.

More experienced teams endeavor to subdue the Aberrants whenever possible. After all, though dangerous, a live captive gives much more information than a dead one. Such prisoners go to remote facilities hidden away in orbit — on Luna or Mars. Orgotek is very cautious about conducting research on Aberrant captives, but sometimes the investigators lose sight of their goals. The Huang-Marr Project, outlined in detail in the **Darkness Revealed** adventure series, is a prime example of what can happen when scientists put ethics aside in search of ultimate knowledge.



As explained in *Trinity*, Electrokinesis involves sensing and controlling the movement of electromagnetic radiation in various ways. It lends itself to a wide range of applications, some of which can create difficulties for players and Storytellers. This chapter covers the use of Electrokinesis, including new uses, fresh insights about existing techniques, and some guidelines for avoiding its abuse.

A World of Light

The true nature of light is a mystery of quantum mechanics. When we interact with light in a certain way, photons — the basic units of electromagnetic energy — behave like waves of energy. But when we interact with light in other ways, photons behave as individual particles. Fundamentally, light is neither wave nor particle, but it possesses both qualities. An electrokinetic lives with, and even embraces, this dual nature. His Aptitude gives him an intuitive grasp of the truth beneath the wave/particle duality that is difficult to articulate for others.

An electrokinetic can adjust his perception psionically to sense and manipulate this energy. Even without that shift in senses, though, the tek is constantly aware of the background hum of electricity and the luminous and subtle qualities of light. His universe is alive with the vibration of the electromagnetic spectrum. It speaks to him in a constant whisper.

The feeling of riding the fringe of the EM wave is like a caffeine buzz or adrenaline rush — a slight but continual zing. Most EK psions adjust to this feeling readily compared to clairsentient or telepathic psions, some of whom never get used to the vast new perceptions that flood their awareness. Even so, the fluctuation of waves and particles, the ebb and surge of light and electricity, are impossible to ignore. Electrokinesis encourages a mind-set that recognizes and resolves contradictions. In time, an electrokinetic may take a spiritual or reductionist view of his powers and place in the universe.

To the spiritualist, truth lies beyond appearances. A spiritually inclined electrokinetic speaks of the “world of light,” where all substance dissolves into flowing fields. He may link this world with the visionary traditions of Christianity, Buddhism, shamanism and other religions, or he may favor the secular visions of universe-in-unity laid out by Paolo Soleri, Frank Tipler, and others. In spiritual thinking, every either/or eventually becomes a both/and. Light is particle *and* wave, and something greater; space-time is space *and* time, and something greater; humanity is matter *and* spirit, and something greater; and so on.

To the reductionist, on the other hand, the apparent complexities are merely illusions born of misunderstanding. Light is light and has no philosophical significance. In such rationalist thinking, ecstatic experience of mystical union is just a matter of neurochemistry. There are no truths beyond the physical to be learned through Electrokinesis. This rationality does not deny its potency, however; a reductionist still feels that the Aptitude makes astounding applications of human will and intellect possible.

Most electrokinetics, however, emulate the dual aspect of wave particles. They feel both moods from time to time, and they generally fall somewhere in the middle of the two views. It's hard not to feel something greater than one's self when tapping into the electromagnetic spectrum; however, most teks are of a more pragmatic mind than to think they're touching God. Orgotek managers do their best to keep those on the extremes away from each other: Both types are useful to Orgotek, yet they tend to be explosive in close proximity.

Alternate Electrokinesis Powers

Electromagnetism is among the fundamental forces of the universe (along with gravity and the strong and weak nuclear

forces). Electrokinesis brings it into the realm of conscious human control through the subquantum medium. The range of potential applications is nearly infinite — as diverse as the manifestations of light itself. Cassel and his fellow electrokinetics are aware that they stand at the beginning of a long, long course of discovery, learning how to apply existing techniques in new ways and how to manipulate light and electricity through wholly new techniques.

The techniques listed in *Trinity* (starting on page 208) are the ones most thoroughly understood, for they are the starting point for mastery of the Aptitude. But as a psion masters each level within a Mode, she may also learn the variations of the primary effects.

Learning New Techniques

An electrokinetic's player may purchase any of the following techniques instead of buying the psi power of equivalent level listed in *Trinity* (page 168 has character-creation costs, while page 172 lists experience-point costs). However, the character must buy the primary technique before buying a higher dot in the Mode — the primary techniques listed in *Trinity* lay the conceptual groundwork for further development.

For Example: *Janice McCaskey's player spends three points during character creation to buy Electromanipulation 3. Static Shield is the standard three-dot power for that Mode, but McCaskey's player takes Higher Consciousness, the new three-dot Electromanipulation power (see listing). Before raising McCaskey's Electromanipulation Mode to 4, though, her player must first round out McCaskey's training by purchasing Static Shield.*

The Storyteller should require the character to seek training from a more experienced EK before spending points on new techniques. Since the character has already mastered the principles of Electrokinesis by this point, study should take no more than a week or two per dot — less at Storyteller discretion. The Storyteller should incorporate training into the story if possible. Developing new insights and abilities has dramatic potential, and in any event, the demands of study should affect the rest of the character's life.

Although both the powers in *Trinity* and those described here cover a wide range of applications, they are not intended to be exhaustive. The Storyteller should feel free to work with players to develop new techniques, but he should be careful to set dot levels and Psi costs that don't make existing techniques pale in comparison; as Storyteller, consider whether a desired effect can be handled through one of the existing powers.

Basic Techniques

Electrocosm: This technique is part and parcel of the subquantum linkage between teks and the electromagnetic spectrum. All electrokinetics learn early on to sense the general nature and strength of light, electricity, and magnetism around them. Electrocosm is not a substitute for Control, Spectrum Sight, or Interface. Those powers provide a great degree of detail, while this one gives the psion a general sense of things. The further removed a frequency is from the visible spectrum, the harder it is for Electrocosm to sense it.

System: Roll Psi; if successful, your character can sense radiant energy beyond the visible range. Frequencies outside the visible spectrum manifest as heat mirages, distortions and ripples in the air, which do not allow your character to identify the specific wavelength. However, the electrokinetic can distinguish tightly channeled beams from broadcast fields and ambient radiated energy. Strong currents running a few centimeters behind a solid surface may also show up as a haze across the substance's surface. Electrocosm lasts for the duration of the scene.

Electromanipulation

According to *Trinity*, Electromanipulation deals with the electrical impulses within living organisms. This statement is true, but it also illustrates the difficulty of classifying psionic Modes with clarity. Living creatures can be affected by powers within the Biokinesis and Vitakinesis Aptitudes, but neither can do what Electromanipulation does. Similarly, this Aptitude is confined to effects relating specifically to an organism's electrical and electrochemical aspects. In addition, some Electromanipulation techniques affect inorganic targets. Noetic theorists are divided in their consideration of Aptitudes as a result.

Some propose that the Aptitudes are simply aspects of a greater whole, like electricity and magnetism, or the Modes within an Aptitude. There are essential divisions between them due to humans' limitations in adequately channeling psi energy on a broad scale. It is predicted that, within a few generations, psions will expand their capabilities enough to not only be able to manifest abilities without aid of the Prometheus Effect, but also regardless of Aptitude distinctions.

Others say that the divisions between the Aptitudes reflect fundamental subquantum realities. The apparent strangeness and overlaps between some Aptitudes reflect our incomplete understanding of the very new science. These theorists believe that although humans may someday manifest psionic abilities spontaneously, the race will never fully exhibit cross-Aptitude powers.

• **Sense Bioelectricity:** By focusing psionically, a psion may use this technique to see the electrical behavior of plants, animals, and sentient beings as patterns overlaid on their normal images. Brains and central nervous systems glow faintly, while muscles and other tissues spark distinctively.

It takes experience to learn how to interpret the results. But once familiar with a target, a psion can distinguish healthy behavior in a subject from the effects of various kinds of injury, illness and other biological malfunctions.

System: This technique doesn't require spending Psi, but you must make a standard Psi roll. Each success conveys a greater degree of information on the subject's current electrochemical state, as indicated in the following chart. Your character must focus on a single individual, but the range extends a number of meters equal to his Psi score. The effect lasts one minute per dot in Electromanipulation.

Successes	Information learned
One	Basic condition ("healthy" or "significantly damaged")
Two	Degree of health (number of Health Levels down)
Three	Details of physical condition (whether adequately nourished, rested, etc.)
Four	Long-term condition (physical maturity level, presence of chronic disabilities)

Five General mood and alertness ("calm" "distracted")

•• **Quantum Sight:** Living creatures affect the electric fields in the environment around them; Quantum Sight allows a psion to draw information from current field conditions to gain knowledge of living beings' recent activities.

System: Spend one Psi point and roll permanent Psi. Successes determine the degree of detail learned of events in the area within the last 30 minutes, as noted on the following chart. The aural sensed do not impart an actual physical image. Instead, your character senses residual traces of any living beings' bioelectric auras. With a high number of successes, a tek can differentiate individuals and sense each one's physical condition at the time.

Your character may choose to sacrifice clarity to sense farther back by spending a success for every 30 minutes longer. The passed time to be reviewed must be determined prior to rolling; if you don't get enough successes, your character cannot differentiate the bioelectric traces from the ambient environment.

The effect lasts for the remainder of the scene, although the tek must concentrate to maintain it (+1 difficulty to all other actions). If your character loses focus, Quantum Sight dissipates. The effect covers an area around your character at a radius of one meter for each permanent Psi.

Successes	Detail sensed
One	Presence or absence of living creatures
Two	General identity (humanoid, large, small)
Three	Overall physical condition (healthy, damaged, dead) at the time
Four	Changes in the being's overall condition (damage taken, death during the time studied, falling asleep, waking up)
Five	Detailed information (current Health Levels, age, gender, psi use)

••• **Higher Consciousness:** Consciousness depends not just on electrical activity, but also on the chemical processes triggered by nerves' electrical impulses. Electrokinetics are working on ways to reduce the importance of the chemical side of thought. Although it has a tongue-in-cheek designation, Higher Consciousness is an early breakthrough because a

psion can briefly spread his brain's electrical field throughout his whole body with it. A tek can then maintain consciousness through circumstances that might otherwise knock him out.

System: Spend one Psi point and roll. Your character spreads his brain's bioelectrical impulses through his entire body. During this time, all efforts to affect your character's mind (using psi effects, drugs, even repeated blows to the head) operate at +1 difficulty per success on your Psi roll. Although your character is unaffected by Dazed or Unconsciousness effects (see *Trinity*, page 246), physical damage still applies normally. Higher Consciousness doesn't make your character's head any more resistant to punches or laser fire.

Electrical attacks that strike your character do one extra level of damage while Higher Consciousness is in effect. After all, your character is voluntarily increasing his entire body's bioelectrical flow, thereby making it more vulnerable. This effect lasts a number of turns equal to your character's Willpower score.

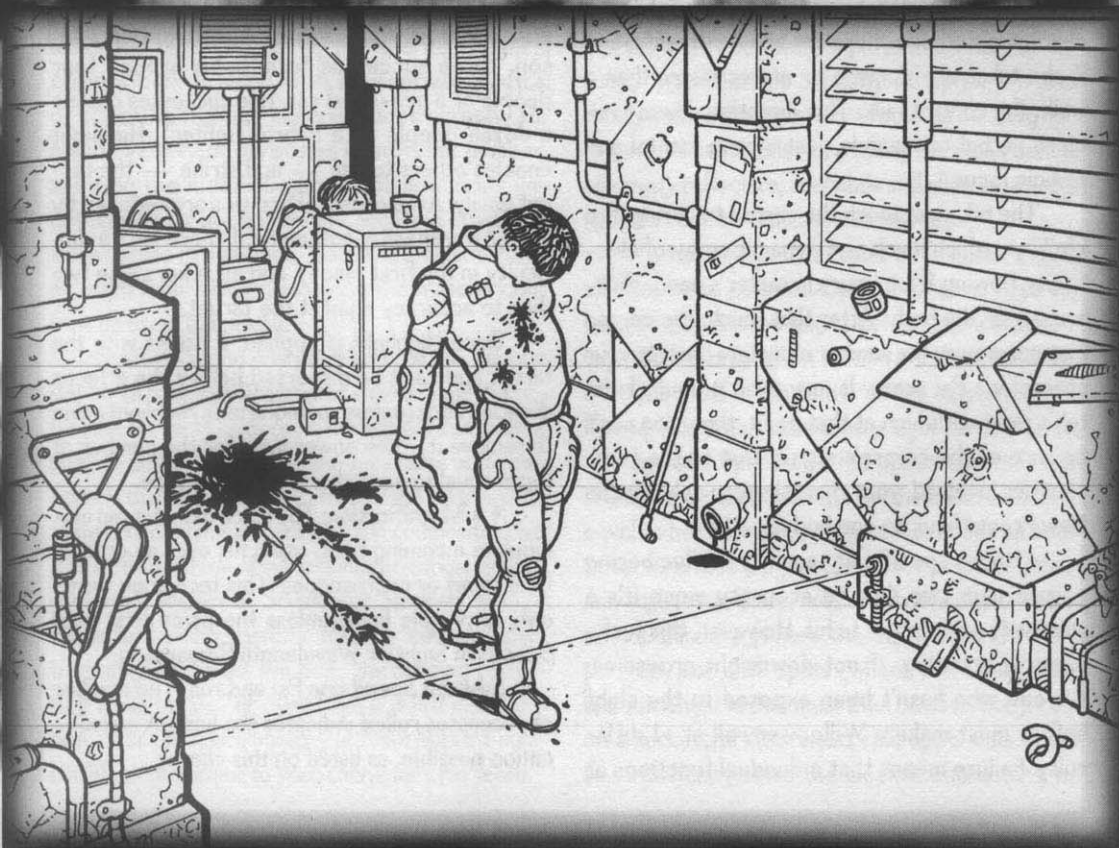
••••• **Neuro-Acceleration:** This technique allows the electrokinetic to increase the efficiency of the target's nervous system, and it requires the psion

to manipulate numerous bioelectric elements (ion release rates, cell-wall conductivity, synapse firing rate). Further, Neuro-Acceleration isn't perfect — the subject's body wears down quickly as the effect ends.

System: Spend two Psi points and roll. Each success equals one dot that the subject can use to raise a Physical or Mental Attribute. Once the duration ends, the target takes one level of Bashing damage for each dot gained through Neuro-Acceleration. The subject need not spend every dot gained (essentially "bleeding off" the excess psionic energy that your character bestows).

This technique may be used on a single visible target within the number of meters equal to your character's Psi score. Its application registers a visible effect as well; electricity flickers from your character and plays over the subject for an instant. The modification lasts for the remainder of the scene.

••••• **The New Prometheus:** This power's official name is a reference to the subtitle of Mary Shelley's 19th-century novel and is the other designation for the technique: Frankenstein. This disturbing power was developed from the realization that dead bodies don't immediately cease all biological activity



after brain death. Many cells remain active for hours or even days. Thus, an electrokinetic can channel bio-electricity through the subject's body, literally making the dead walk (if only for a short time).

System: Spend two points of Psi and roll. Your character can animate a recently dead body for the number of turns equal to your character's Psi score, plus one for each success rolled. The initial Psi roll suffers +1 difficulty for each scene that passed since the body died and cannot affect someone who has been dead for over one day.

The corpse is mindless (zero to all Mental and Social Attributes and Abilities) and weak (all Physical Attributes and Abilities are halved [rounding down] and it moves no faster than half of walking speed). Extra successes can raise Physical Attributes on a one-for-one basis instead of maintaining the animation for further turns. The corpse does not have Health Levels as such — it's already dead. Instead, the Health Levels are considered to be the amount of damage a body can sustain before it's too pulped or torn apart to move. Health Level penalties don't apply, though.

Your character must direct the corpse's every movement as if it was a remote-controlled device (since that's basically what it is). Your character's other actions are at +2 difficulty, and if she takes any damage or moves faster than a walk, the control fails. This direction doesn't require verbal commands, just strong mental and psionic focus.

The tek must touch the corpse to "bring it to life" — which involves a dynamic spray of electricity flowing from your character's hand, flickering over the body. After that touch, the corpse may move away the number of meters equal to your character's Psi score. It may even go out of the tek's sight, although at that point, the psion can't be sure of the corpse's status. Due to the complexities involved, your character can only use the New Prometheus on one body at a time.

Attacks specifically against the lumbering corpse gain two dice to accuracy since it's a relatively easy target to hit. However, this technique is startling, if not downright gruesome. Anyone who hasn't been exposed to the sight before must make a Willpower roll at +1 difficulty. Failure means that individual functions at

+1 difficulty to all rolls for the remainder of the scene, thanks to the distraction of being around moving corpses.

Photokinesis

Photokinesis deals with the "raw substance of light," as Dr. Frost says — that is, not confined by living tissue or machinery. This Mode's techniques do not deal directly with physical targets, but with a subject's perceptions and environment. Photokinetic specialists can develop a certain detachment from the physical world; light is more real and immediate to them than anything tangible. They come to see physical objects as interference — obstacles getting in the way of the important part of the universe.

- **Highlight:** This variation on Control Illumination enables the psion to intensify light around a subject. Tekes use this effect to outline targets in combat, or to act as rescue signals.

System: Spend one point and roll Psi. Each success outlines a target with a bright nimbus, from up to five times your character's Psi score in meters away. The size of the Highlight varies with successes rolled, starting with a rough meter area (one success covers most of an average person, three successes form halos around four people or a mid-sized car, five successes outline a dozen people or a hybrid fighter). Highlight enables others to see — and strike — the target easily. Awareness difficulties are reduced by two (Awareness is automatic if there isn't a difficulty in the first place), and attackers gain two dice to accuracy against the target.

Once Highlight is applied, it sticks with the target and can't be dispersed before the effect's duration ends (unless someone uses Highlight again to remove it). The power lasts for the number of turns equal to your character's Psi score.

- • **Magnification:** The electrokinetic can manipulate incoming light, using his eyes as organic telescopes or microscopes. This technique works only on visible light, unless the psion first uses Spectrum Sight or Wavelength Remapping.

System: Spend one Psi and roll. The number of successes rolled indicates the limit of magnification possible, as listed on this chart.

Successes	Magnification
One	x50
Two	x100
Three	x250
Four	x500
Five	x1000

If used for telescopic vision, your character's difficulties due to range drop by one for each success rolled (applying mostly to Firearms and Pilot rolls, but possibly relating to other abilities involving long-distance perception, at the Storyteller's discretion). For microscopic vision, each success adds one die to Investigation rolls (again, the Storyteller may include it for other abilities involving close-up examination).

Your character can go from telescopic viewing to microscopic enhancement to normal sight (and back again) with additional Psi rolls. Failure leaves the setting as-is, while a botch disperses the carefully composed light lenses. The upper magnification at either end remains limited by the successes on the initial Psi roll. The effect lasts for one scene, although your character can cancel it at any time.

••• **Spectrography:** The electrokinetic can perceive the frequencies of light reflected and absorbed by an object to analyze its chemical composition. A psion with appropriate medical or scientific training can use Spectrography for a wide variety of purposes: identifying poisons, spotting the metabolic traces of infections *undetectable by normal means*, locating structural weaknesses in buildings, isolating one isotope of an atom from others, assaying the mineral content of ores, and more.

System: Spend one point and roll Psi. Success displays a basic spectrographic view to your character (the elements composing the subject that is being studied and the nature of the molecules and compounds that unite them). Each success adds one die to determining the target's specific composition and status (through use of subsequent Investigation, Engineering, Medicine, Science or Survival rolls). A character lacking scientific training may use Spectrography to at least see that "the building's structure looks brittle" or "you have a weird discoloration." A single Spectrography attempt lasts the number of minutes equal to your character's Psi score.

•••• **Wavelength Remapping:** It works much like Spectrum Sight (Trinity, page 211). However, this technique affects all of the light passing through a volume of space, enabling others to see EM waves.

System: Spend one Psi and roll. With each success, your character can tune into one range of frequencies (radio, microwave, infrared, visible, ultraviolet, X-ray, gamma, cosmic) and modify the wavelength to make it visible to anyone within sight. Although it doesn't change the effects of weapons or ambient radiation, it makes otherwise invisible wavelengths visible. Making infrared light visible exposes reality-grade holograms; making ultraviolet light visible reveals night scopes; making gamma rays visible exposes harmful radiation.

Wavelength Remapping affects a spherical area of up to three meters in diameter, plus the number of meters equal to your character's Psi score. Your character can create it in a space up to five times his Psi score in meters away. With a successful Psi roll, he can move the sphere up to five meters per turn (stopping and starting or changing direction requires a new roll). The power lasts for the rest of the scene, although your character may cancel it at any time.

••••• **Optical Cloak:** With this power, an electrokinetic can warp light to make herself virtually invisible. It's a highly complex process, though, since the psion must focus on bending light around herself, while not making the cloak dark or obviously reflective, *and while still allowing enough light through so that she can still see.*

This technique is a result of Orgotek's study of Chromatic corpses. Optical Cloak is kept top secret since it gives teks a distinct tactical advantage. So far, only select Lumen personnel and Operations staff even know of its existence; the Round Table maintains a very tight control on it.

System: Spend two Psi points and roll. Your character is nearly invisible for the number of turns equal to her Psi score; each success adds an additional turn. The Optical Cloak isn't perfect: Others may make Awareness rolls at +3 difficulty to notice a faint shimmer (where the Cloak doesn't refract perfectly) or dark spots (where the Cloak allows too much light in that must then be absorbed). Even on a successful Awareness roll, opponents attack at +1 difficulty since the cloaked character's full



dimensions remain obscured; on a failed Awareness roll, attackers are at +3 difficulty to hit for close combat and +4 difficulty for ranged combat.

Your character has very little light inside the Optical Cloak; all rolls involving visual detail are at +2 difficulty. She can move at half-normal walking speed without penalty. Walking the full movement rate in a turn requires a standard Psi roll. Running requires a Psi roll at +1 difficulty (your character cannot sprint with the Cloak up). On a botch, the Optical Cloak falls, but your character does not realize it. Enough light comes in to make her visible to others, but she still filters enough to think she has remained invisible.

Technokinesis

Technokinesis deals with electromagnetism put to work in machinery. Like Electromanipulation specialists, Technokinesis aficionados think as much of the objects through which light flows as of the light itself. Those who pursue this Mode's full potential prefer the seemingly orderly structure of hardtech over the apparent random chaos of biological constructs.

- **Initialize:** The electrokinetic can reset a machine to its default configuration. Storage media gets wiped clean, active memory clears itself and software switches return to their initial settings. At higher levels of Technokinesis, the psion can even reset hardware switches.

System: Spend one point and roll Psi in a resisted action against the target device's fail-safe rating (a standard Psi roll is sufficient to affect a target lacking a fail-safe). If successful, your character clears all of the machine's software contents back to whatever state they were in when they were first activated. Any and all data accumulated since that time is wiped clean. If your character has Technokinesis 3 or above, he can also psionically nudge internal and external buttons, toggle switches and the like into default positions by manipulating the flow of current.

Your character must touch the target machine to reset it, although he may use Transmit to connect to it (see **Trinity**, page 214). Bioware is different enough from hardtech that this power functions at +1 difficulty when used against it.

While Interface (*Trinity*, page 212) lets your character modify (even rewrite) current functions, Initialize specifically resets machinery to fresh-from-the-factory status. Security devices retain no record of anything they've ever observed, bioware loses its formatting, electronic locks hang open and uncoded, databases purge all documents, and computers lose all settings — and viruses. This technique is a quick-fix to getting through security locks, but characters should be cautious about wiping out data; information is an extremely vital commodity, especially since the OpNet crash that triggered the Aberrant War.

Initialize takes a single turn for simple systems (locks, recorders) and up to five turns for complex systems (computers) to complete. If your character loses his connection to the device before the wipe is complete, it may be possible to retain a portion of the lost data. The specifics of what remains is up to the Storyteller.

•• **Tap:** The electrokinetic can interpret the flow of information through electronic equipment. He cannot affect the flow in any way (as he could with Interface; see *Trinity*, page 212), but he can monitor it with ease.

System: Spend one point and roll Psi against the difficulty equal to the target device's fail-safe rating (if it has no fail-safe rating, only one success is required). On a success, your character monitors all information passing through the machine he is touching. He must make a Linguistics roll to understand information in a foreign language, or an Intrusion roll if the information is encrypted (or both if it's foreign and encrypted).

Data flows much faster than normal thought, but your character "hears" it as if listening to a conversation. He must concentrate to keep pace with the Tap; if he pauses to discuss what he's learned so far, he loses whatever passes by while he speaks. Otherwise, he can focus exclusively on the Tap until he gets what he needs, then summarize the information afterward.

A standard Psi roll is required to maintain the Tap if distracted. The Tap fails automatically

if your character loses contact with the target (unless he has Technokinesis 3 or higher, in which case, a successful Psi roll maintains the connection as long as your character goes no farther than the number of meters equal to his Psi score). Tap lasts for the number of turns equal to your character's Psi score, plus one turn for each success on the initial roll.

••• **Data Transfer:** The electrokinetic can transfer the structure and contents of one computer onto another. Theory-minded technokinetic specialists explain that this transfer involves creating a subquantum field map of the source and imposing it on the target. Others generally don't care how it's done.

System: Spend a point and roll Psi in a resisted action against the system with the higher fail-safe rating (if neither has a fail-safe, this is a standard roll). Your character should evaluate both the source and target computers' storage capacity, memory, and system resources prior to performing Data Transfer. Once the transfer begins, your character can't reverse the process, and if the target system can't adequately support the source's contents, key elements are lost in the transfer. The evaluation requires a standard Engineering or Interface roll.

As long as the target system has a greater capacity than the source does, your character needs only one success on the Psi roll to transfer the system's entire contents. If the target's capacity is less than that of the source, he transfers random portions until the target system reaches its capacity. Your character can use any extra successes to determine specific portions of the content to transfer first (communications software, word processing, holorecordings), allowing any excess to be lost in the switch.

Both systems must be no farther from your character than the number of meters equal to his Psi score. Data Transfer takes 10 turns to perform; each extra success reduces this time by one turn. If your character is distracted, any data not yet transferred is lost unless he makes a standard Willpower roll.



•••• **Recharge:** This effect lets the tek focus ambient electromagnetic energy to power an electrical device. Recharge is valuable for those teks in the field without solar collectors or other means to keep vehicle batteries or communications gear powered up.

System: Spend two points of Psi and roll. The number of successes needed to perform an adequate Recharge depends on the device involved, as indicated by this list (in general, larger and more complex devices require a much more massive power influx than others).

Success	Device
One	Lamp, flashlight, watch, phone
Two	Minicomp, laser pistol
Three	Small vehicles (cycle, car), all devices on a house circuit
Four	Large vehicles (truck, ATV, aircraft)
Five	Building, spacecraft (hybrid class)

This technique is not a backdoor route to Static Burst or Power Surge, and it cannot harm the target device via electromagnetic surge. Your

character subconsciously analyzes the target's power demands, with power collection running below a safe threshold.

Your character must be within a meter of the target device to funnel the energy effectively. The power condenses and enters the device through its usual connections, even if it is unplugged. Once Recharge is complete, the equipment functions normally for the remainder of the scene. Your character may increase the device's battery power for an additional scene with each extra success rolled. Still, he must first get the appropriate number of successes to power it up in the first place.

••••• **Subquantum Interface:** The electrokinetic uses this technique to create a kind of "subquantum link" with a specific computer. By psionically manipulating electromagnetic impulses, the tek can communicate with a system over vast distances without need of conventional transmitting equipment.

System: Spend two points and roll. Each success rolled establishes an interface between your character and a computer that lasts for the number of days equal to the successes rolled; this time may be increased by

another day for each additional Psi point spent. Your character effectively uses psion particles to translate electrical impulses, transferring data directly between her own mind and a computer system.

Your character must have authorized access to the system she wants to link with; otherwise, she is subject to the hacking rules (see *Trinity*, page 236). Her own minicomputer is the usual choice. She can use the computer's full capabilities as if she were actually there inputting commands. With Subquantum Interface, though, your character simply focuses on the connection (+1 difficulty to all other actions while doing so) to interact with the system. A distraction may break her concentration but won't negate the connection. The remote connection remains operational up to 100 times your character's Psi score (in kilometers away); any further and the link dissipates.

Psionic Dysfunction

The Modes that comprise each Aptitude are very tightly integrated. The division of each Aptitude into three distinct parts is more of a classification scheme for ease of scientific reference than a fraction of the reality psions actually experience. The Modes share a common source, and related techniques reinforce each other. The condition that noetic scientists call "psionic dysfunction" sets in when a psion pursues one Mode to the exclusion of others, developing a skewed, limited perspective on his art.

Psionic dysfunction occurs when a psion buys one Mode up to the five-dot level, while keeping one or both other Modes at one dot (or at zero). The overemphasis on one aspect of the Aptitude breeds psychological stress and behavioral anomalies — the psion's whole worldview twists under the weight of too much of one kind of noetic perception. The dysfunction remains active until the psion develops two more dots in other Modes (two dots higher in one Mode, or one dot each in two Modes).

The Storyteller may reduce the dysfunction's severity when a character raises another Mode by a single dot, but it doesn't vanish completely until he develops the second dot in one of his other Modes — or even taps a previously unused auxiliary Mode.

- **Electromanipulation Dysfunction:** A character with too much Electromanipulation becomes compulsive about manipulating ambient electromagnetic energy. She has no concept of personal space

since bioelectrical energy flows through all things. The psion won't hesitate to get right in someone's face, touch others at inopportune moments, and generally be too touchy-feely. A character requires a successful Willpower test to resist performing such breaches of etiquette. Further, if a character has one or more points of Psi to spend at the start of a scene, she must make a Willpower test to refrain from doing *anything* with Electromanipulation — even if it's zapping something with Stun just to see how resistant it is to bioelectrical manipulation. If a dysfunctional psion resists using Electromanipulation, she feels listless, unmotivated and cut off from the rest of the world.

- **Photokinetic Dysfunction:** A character who buys too much Photokinesis to the exclusion of other Modes gradually loses the ability to focus on just one part of the electromagnetic spectrum. Fascinated by the diversity of sensory input available to him, he grows impatient with the limitations of the normal human eye. While in the grip of this dysfunction, he receives an entire extra section of spectrum free when using techniques that require him to specify a spectrum range. In contrast to this benefit, however, he must make a standard Willpower roll to ever extinguish illumination or to shut down his own enhanced perceptions for whatever reason (stealth maneuvers, social functions). He may seek out bioware enhancements to permanently extend his perception without the annoying complication of a technique wearing off.

- **Technokinetic Dysfunction:** A tek with too much emphasis on Technokinesis takes on more and more of the nature of the machines with which she works. She favors logic, structure, predictability and controlled variation. The unpredictable, chaotic, and altogether messy nature of organic life becomes repellent. Her emotional and intuitive skills atrophy. All Social rolls are at +2 difficulty (except when dealing with other dysfunctional technokinetic specialists). A dysfunctional psion feels very uncomfortable around living beings...and bioware. She must make a Willpower roll to remain in the company of others (or to use a bioapp). If successful, she interacts, but grudgingly and with little emotion. If the roll fails, she retreats from the group and immerses herself completely in whatever hardtech she can get her hands on.

The long-standing image of the Western Hemisphere as the cradle of modern culture took its toll when the Aberrants appeared at the end of the 20th century. These enhanced humans did more harm (intentional and otherwise) in North America and Europe than anywhere else on the globe. Other countries cut ties with America to protect themselves. With Aberrants able to destroy an entire revenue source by obliterating a block, or to compromise a covert operation by flying overhead, or to expose confidential information by imprinting electronic data on every computer in the city, other nations and corporations believed the United States to be an "unreliable resource."

The US government pressed ahead on space development during this time. Authorities sought spectacles, and extra-terrestrial programs provided them — and occasionally offered measurable scientific and economic benefits. Asteroid-mining kept the teetering economy running, but precious metals and other rare raw materials became harder to get in terrestrial trade. Olympus Base took on particular importance in America's national mythology as the thing that *worked*. The Space Brigade's seizure of the Moon in 2049 was a shattering blow to public confidence. The sense of futility and desperation that arose from this seizure laid the groundwork for the rise of the Federated States of America.

The Aberrant Calvert Wycoff's suicide in 2054 added to it, as did the resulting blight across the North American Midwest. Even though America's agricultural center suffered a devastating blow, had the country been in good shape, it would have recovered. But North America hadn't been healthy enough for a long time. There were no agricultural reserves. Efforts to ship surplus goods to Blighted

communities failed due to a poorly maintained transportation infrastructure, internal corruption, scattered record-keeping and looting.

The Coup

The US Armed Forces did not set out to establish a new government. As one civilian agency after another lapsed into infighting, the military established increasing control as an alternative to leaving vital services to perish altogether. Emergency response, public works, education, tax collection...gradually, most of what had been civilian responsibility was, in part or whole, under military management.

The Omaha Declaration on May 1, 2056 was the public debut of a new fascist regime. It was led by the armed

Fascism

Fascism emerged between World Wars I and II as a synthesis of socialist economics and nationalistic politics. In theory, committees representing major manufacturers, unions and the government oversee each sector of the economy. Everyone willing to play along is welcome. Fascism isn't anti-union, after all. Together these groups set goals for production, distribution, and pricing...and the public sits back and must enjoy what it gets. In times of crisis, fascism appeals to many people who want leadership and a clear enemies list. It provides a direction — a focal point that the nation can channel its energies toward. Elements of freedom and individual expression fall by the wayside, but that's the price one pays for security.

forces, with the support of key government officials and corporate personnel. Establishing a fascist regime enabled the military to deal effectively with the Aberrant threat and to provide relief for the populace.

The North American Police Action

The fascist regime recognized that the United States lacked the resources necessary for recovery. But North America as a whole, while still deficient in some areas, was in a much better position than the US. Conquering Canada and Mexico was to provide much needed resources.

The Federated States Military, which consolidated the major armed forces as well as local police and militia under unified military direction, was established as part of the invasion agenda. The actual invasions commenced on April 17, 2057. It's worth noting that the FSM retained a small collection of "safe" Aberrants — individuals sympathetic to the government — that it used for covert actions, including the invasions. These Aberrants, along with special strike teams, assassinated or ambushed key personnel in Mexico and Canada.

Neither defending government developed an effective response to the invasionary actions, but local groups did what they could. The continued Aberrant threat made these defensive actions much more difficult, though the FSM had an advantage with its prior planning and Aberrant assistance. Although mop-up operations continued throughout the 2060s, by the end of 2057, the continent's major population and industrial centers were all under United States martial law.

A task force reorganized North America. Existing state and province borders were left alone for the most part, but eight overarching governing districts were set up. The group also identified 98 "Highest Confidence" businesses; 61 joined a National Charter Preparation Committee in 2058. In the end, 48 corporations avoided purges for classification breaches, treason and other charges. This gathering of "loyalists to the new regime" became part of the first oversight committee.

The war against Aberrants remained the top priority. Martial law brought cohesion but not victory: Deranged individuals can move faster, more quietly, and less predictably than an institution can. Much of the military planning was self-deluding since it started with, "once we take care of the Aberrants" — yet there was no prospect of actually doing so. Had the Chinese not made its ultimatum, the United States' fascist regime would have collapsed by the mid-2060s.

The Federated States of America

The reorganization task force designed a decentralized government. Central offices set overall policy, but the districts handled the practical details. The name "Federated States of America" appeared in the task force's 2060 sessions and became part of that summer's public-relations drive.

The public viewed the announcement of a "Federated States of America" with varying degrees of hope and skepticism. What was once supposedly a stop-gap military government became a true fascist state. Even so, some districts saw noticeable improvement as the FSA set to guide the nation through the post-Aberrant Crash.

Through trial and effort, the district boards brought peace, if not actual tranquility, to the Federated States; however, this peace never reached much of Mexico and Canada. In some ways, the FSA was very much like the systems under which people had lived for generations — merely labeled differently and with different uniforms on the enforcers.

Within the FSA, social stratification set in hard. The wealthy lived well in the arcologies. There was some concern after the invention of grav-crystals since many affluent families went up the gravity well. The FedBoard declared explicitly that district and local boards must do business within the airspace of their jurisdiction to prevent executives from ruling from afar.

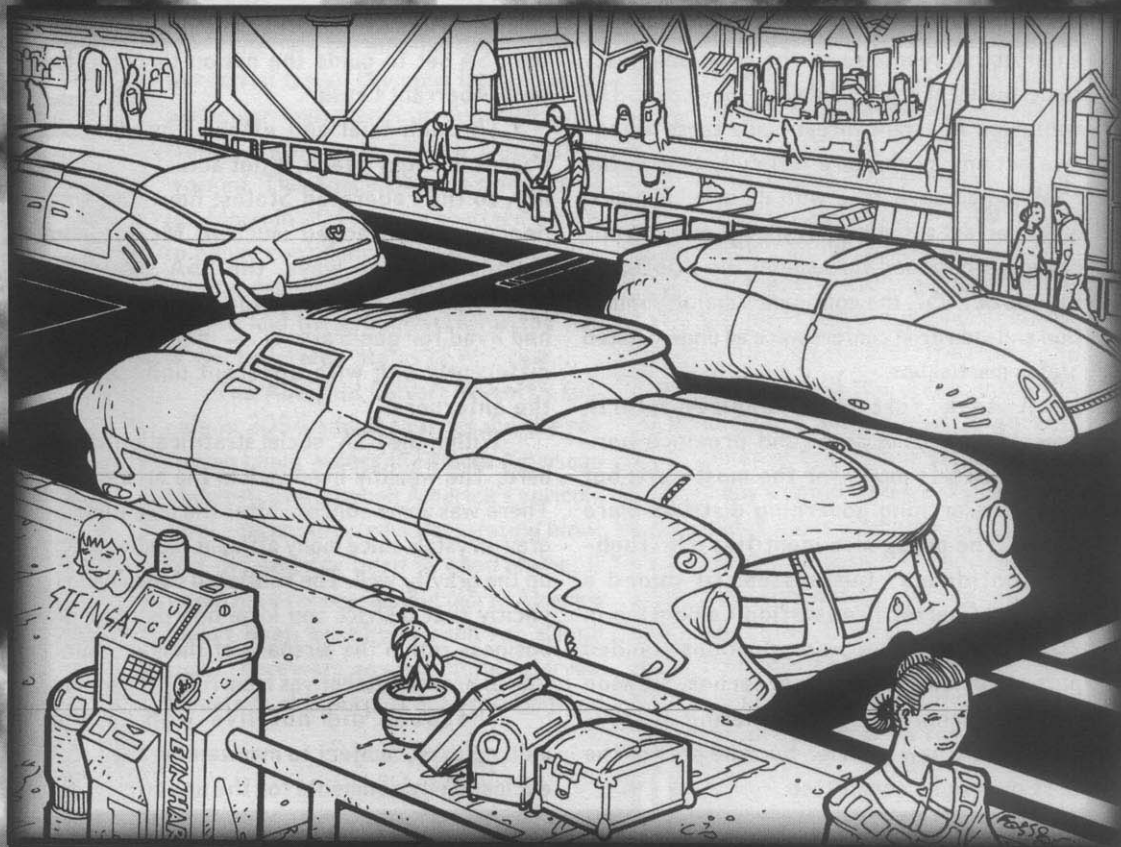
The poor did not live well in the metroplexes. Subject to maintaining the self-enclosed environments for the upper classes,

they lived under regimented routines. Since dissent threatened the well-being of the whole, arcology boards felt justified in meting out harsh penalties for labor resistance. Fear of the lawlessness rampant in the Nordamerican interior helped keep the lower classes in line. Attitudes changed over time as the poor started to accept the situation as being "the way things were." The arcology was ideal for social organization on fascist lines: big enough to minimize its dependence on outside resources, compact enough to be micro-managed.

In the Nordamerican Outback, roving gangs ruled for years before the government and military forces established authority. The large bands were brought down by the turn of the century, but small gangs travel throughout the nation's central regions even now. Rural and small urban areas were rebuilt slowly, and law followed. Although times are certainly less gentle than they were 50 years ago, life grew safer on the whole.

The Noetic Era

The early 22nd century is one of the great thresholds in human history: First, the Aberrants returned, then the psions appeared. It all added up to trouble for the Federated States. Master Plans require a predictable future, and neither Aberrants nor psions are very predictable. Aberrants were at least a known enemy; the Nordamerican government wasn't sure what to make of psions. Cassel showed himself to be a subversive early on, though he set the FSA's course thereafter. The government spent the intervening two decades trying to co-opt, to ignore, then to contain and regulate psions. The government still hasn't made a final decision on how to deal with the Gifted, and psions gain increasing public support as a result.



Modern North America

The Federated States of America is less a nation than it is an empire, at least in the traditional sense of the words. It consists of a central authority that sets overall policy and gives supreme leadership, but with regional authorities doing the day-to-day work of governance. As long as the local regions don't get too far out of line, they can operate as they like.

The FSA has regulations that are consistent throughout the seven districts. These laws, the governing boards agree, are vital to maintaining the Federated States' integrity and will lead to the nation's return as a dominant political power.

The Boards

The FSA divides power along lines taken from corporate examples — not surprising for a government trying to run itself like a business. While each board has a leader who is designated the board's coordinator, the board acts and issues directives in the name of the board as a whole. FSA policy frowns on “cults of personality” — one of many objections it has regarding Orgotek and Alex Cassel.

Board members serve three-year terms. One-third of board seats come up for election each year, with any “extra” seats (however many don't divide evenly into thirds) voted on in the third year of the cycle. Board coordinators are chosen after each election. In practice, the board member who got the most votes holds the position for the duration of her term. She presumably holds the approval of the largest corporations in the area (otherwise, she wouldn't have been voted in), and they do tend to get what they want.

Board members can be removed for either of two reasons:

- **Incapacity:** Any board member who misses three meetings in a row may be voted

The Constitution

The Federated States makes extensive use of the United States Constitution. Documents and speeches refer to it constantly. Textbooks feature it. The iconography of the Founding Fathers shows up in many works of public art.

It's just not allowed any influence in actual affairs of state.

One of the new fascist state's first acts was to establish the 32nd Amendment. It effectively allowed the government to modify policy however it saw fit, ostensibly to promote “the aims of peace and good government” — not to mention a fascist agenda.

The Charter

In the beginning, the FSA charter was a compilation of military procedures modified to cover a wide range of civilian operations. By 2120, the charter wasn't a single document, but countless blocs of cross-referenced databases, procedural guidelines, case histories from military and civilian courts, memos, evaluations and reports. No human being can know its entire contents, except in general terms or in limited detail. The FSA depends critically on computer agents to retrieve and sort information regarding a topic under discussion.

For this reason, the FSA has careful restrictions on the OpNet. Hackers could do catastrophic harm to the guiding document behind the Federated States of America.



"incapacitated" at the fourth. If a two-third majority agrees, the missing member is replaced by an appointee chosen by the coordinator and ratified by the rest of the board. Voters choose a replacement at the next election. The replacement serves a two-year term; after which, the regular cycle resumes.

• **Treason:** A board must vote unanimously to condemn a member for treasonous activity (defined in FSA penal code as "anything deliberately promoting dissent among the social units represented in FSA government or advancing the interests of enemy forces"). That broad definition covers almost anything; it gives boards the lever with which to topple any individual who becomes too prominent, too popular, too unpopular, or anything else that is at odds with the Federated States' goals.

The FSA charter used to include a third category, "Insufficiency," which covered routine incompetence, corruption and the like. The districts agreed to fold it into the treason rationale in 2092.

The Federated Districts Board

Insofar as there is a national government of the FSA, the FedBoard is it. It includes one representative from each of the eight districts, the Central Security Agency and the Federated States Military. Since the 10 members deadlock, the FSA charter specifies that in the event of a tie, the wishes of the CSA and FSM take precedence.

There is no public record of disagreement between the CSA and FSM delegates on any final vote; their quarrels are always settled privately. The two groups see one another as necessary evils, though, and outright contention is avoided whenever possible. The FSA is far too fragile for anything other than "low-intensity conflict," a persistent state of sabotage, misinformation, and guerrilla operations. Rather than risk losing out to some third party exploiting overt discord, the two present a united front against all outside challenges.

The FedBoard meets biweekly to review overall policy and to issue directives when its members feel the need. Corporate members

of district boards cannot be expelled without FedBoard approval, though they can be denied the opportunity to propose resolutions or to vote.

"Policy" for the FedBoard primarily means "keep the hostiles out, the citizens in line and the corporations happy." The primary reason that the FSA exists is to keep conflicts civil, or at least manageable, by offering a forum for resolution — and to provide the threat of united opposition to any individual organization running amok. The FedBoard deals with specific problems as they arise, then it tries to formulate general rules to let low levels of government deal with them in the future.

The District Boards

Real authority rests with the district boards. Representatives from the district-level offices, appointed by the FedBoard, coordinate matters within the district. "Corporate partners" — powerful metanationals such as Steinhardt, L-K and Orgotek that influence citizens and provide significant revenue sources for the government — have seats in the districts where they maintain official headquarters. Major labor organizations also make appearances on the boards.

District boards meet daily for three-week sessions, with a week off to consult with major voting blocs. During the off-week, a board member can issue an emergency decree through the administrative staff or call for the members to return.

The boards deal with every aspect of life: maintaining employment quotas, arbitrating labor disputes, moving eligibility, new housing, criminal and civil justice, health and safety, education, recreation — in short, whatever affects the prosperity, safety and happiness of voters.

Local Boards

Establishing the eight districts was an attempt to create localized governing centers that would enable the country to continue should the federal government somehow be destroyed. State and county borders

The Government at Work

From time to time government officials flex their power — usually, more to stave off boredom than out of megalomania. This power often manifests itself in a directive that orders civilians to stop — or start — doing something and not letting them resume — or stop — it until after a lot of paperwork is filed and many fees are paid. Federated States residents are used to bureaucratic intervention. Businesses, neighborhood associations, volunteer groups and other civic organizations try to maintain staff “fixers” who can resolve government interference (bribes and favors being the most common means).

Even when the boards aren’t busily proving their virility, citizens face a constant mound of paperwork. The FSA lives for documentation and demands files on everything, no matter how innocuous it may be. Even worse, regulations from various board levels and offices frequently contradict each other. Those people with the legal resources enlist the Office of Justice to resolve the contradiction, which can take years. The alternative involves bribery, which runs the risk of harsh penalties for everyone involved if internal-affairs inspectors choose to make a fuss (they can sometimes be dissuaded if they’re given a cut of the profits).

Orgotek enjoys popular support and corporate enmity in part because Cassel doesn’t go for maximizing bureaucracy. Orgotek companies run with far less paperwork than their rivals.

remained, although these sectors’ authority was greatly reduced. District lines divided some states, which the government addressed by simply designating the two parts as “East” and “West” states (or “North” and “South,” depending on where the division occurred). The Canadian provinces subsumed into the Central and Great Lakes Districts are states by these designations; the provinces that split off into North District consist of Alaska, Yukon and North Canada states.

Local boards oversee activities at the state, county and city levels. How much authority they have depends on how much their respective district boards reserve for themselves.

In East District, the arcologies consume almost all of the board’s attention, leaving the western counties to do mostly what they please as long as it doesn’t cause trouble for the district as a whole. These western counties have little representation on the district board, and conflicts naturally arise when the district acts in ways that make sense only for the arcologies.

Central, Great Lakes and South Districts strike a balance between district-board and local-board authority. The district boards are the real authorities, but there’s enough local variation that businesses and individuals pay attention to the local boards.

North District is populated so thinly that there’s just one board level beneath the district board. This level consists of state boards that monitor the Alaska, North Canada and Yukon regions.

Southwest and Tex-Mex Districts are severely decentralized. The lack of agreement among the corporations with authority in those regions leads to disagreement on the district board as well. The state and county boards end up with more power than their counterparts wield in other districts.

West District contrasts that situation because it is strongly centralized. The district

board handles all important policy in the region. Local boards theoretically exist to resolve local disputes only. In practice, they provide a convenient haven for bribery and corruption associated with smuggling and illegal border crossing. If caught, the local board takes the blame; otherwise, the district board gets a piece of the action.

Government Offices

The policies made by the boards get put into practice by administrative offices, heirs to pre-FSA departments and ministries. These offices are divided into seven major departments with counterparts on district and local levels. The FSM and CSA regional facilities report directly to their respective superiors on a national level, though. In this way, both organizations operate as individual entities with multiple power bases, rather than as eight disparate contingents trying to work together.



Federated States Military

This office oversees both military and law-enforcement activities within the country. Its primary mission is to protect the FSA from all enemies, internal and external. Since the government sees enemies everywhere, the FSM never lacks for work.

The FSM never completely integrated the old United States military forces into a single framework. Officially, the military is coordinated under a single administrative structure, but it retains separate internal divisions for Army, Navy, Marine, Air Force and Space Force. The divisions engage in constant infighting, and programs that might be handled by any several divisions can shift jurisdiction over the years. For instance, during the Aberrant War and the

subsequent Crash, there weren't resources to support redundant developments of separate Navy- and Marine-aircraft programs. Recently, the bureaucratic concern for gadgets returned with a vengeance. As much as one-quarter of the FSM's spending is wasted on duplicate ventures between military divisions.

The Federated States' board system exists mostly for the military's convenience. However, aside from monitoring (and controlling) civilian resources through the boards, the FSM maintains its own research, development and manufacturing facilities throughout the country. These covert endeavors account for almost 10 percent of the FSA's total industrial capacity.

The Army handles most of the FSM's terrestrial law-enforcement efforts, with the Navy covering coastal patrols and Space Force taking care of extraterrestrial sites.



Central Security Agency

The FSM acts; the CSA knows. At least that's how the CSA sees it.

Virtually independent of the Federated States' own creation, the CSA developed in the 2050s. The major American intelligence agencies found themselves all desperate for resources, and they reluctantly began to pool assets. The CSA as a unified entity is largely composed of the pre-FSA Central Intelligence Agency, Federal Bureau of Investigations and National Security Agency. It also includes pieces of the human and physical resources of at least 20 lesser agencies. In the 2060s, the CSA inherited part of the Defense Intelligence Agency and won itself a permanent place in the Federated States bureaucracy.

The FSA charter grants the CSA powers that are so broad that they basically amount to "whatever the CSA wants to do." It has free rein to gather intelligence on internal and external activity of known enemies of the FSA. Further, the Central Security Agency may gather intelligence about *possible* enemies and take action of a non-military nature to protect the nation from subversion and terrorism. It is skilled at interpreting these already-loose directives in the most expansive sense possible.

When Offices Collide

The charters of the Federated States Military and Central Security Agency follow very different internal protocols. However, each office has elaborate protocols that address when and why one office's agents must yield to the other.

The military is in charge during combat situations. Otherwise, the CSA gets priority status. As with all things bureaucratic, though, there are endless exceptions that take up almost a full data bloc in the FSA-charter database.

A clever character may use Bureaucracy and/or Savvy to sow doubt and confusion whenever jurisdiction conflicts arise.

The CSA maintains five divisions: remote-intelligence gathering, direct-intelligence gathering, evaluation, counter-intelligence and noetic affairs. Remote gathering covers everything from spy satellites to whatever telepaths the agency can get its hands on, while direct gathering focuses on the efforts of human beings who are present on the scene. Evaluators take the gathered data and try to make sense of it. Counter-intelligence aims at keeping others from finding out what the CSA (and, by extension, the rest of the FSA) is doing — tactics range from monitoring known agents to planting false targets to aiming covert combat missions at rivals.

The Noetic Affairs Division duplicates the activities of the four other divisions, with an exclusive focus on psions. The Federated States government believes that psions are a

new breed of less powerful, but more self-controlled, Aberrants. If they weren't so tremendously useful, North American psions would all be in camps or labs by now. While the boards and the Office of Business regulate psions' positions in society, the CSA's Noetic Affairs Division tries to keep track of known psions' activities. Many corporations that maintain psion staffs would be very unhappy if CSA interference made their psions uncomfortable or unproductive. But the metanats and CSA both push independent psions to join up with some organization approved by the FSA.

Aside from issuing identity cards and tracking changes in personal status, Noetic Affairs can perform an audit of a target's assets and liabilities in search of any evidence of wrong-doing. This audit is done in a random fashion unless another office requests one specifically. Further, this division secretly employs psions loyal to the government (and, more importantly, to the CSA).

The usual fees within the FSA for buying justice don't apply to the Central Security Agency; its agents may charge up to 10 times the normal rate — or refuse altogether. Agents must report any fees garnered, forwarding 25% into the general revenue fund.

The CSA is the best organized institution in the FSA. Superiors usually know what their subordinates are up to, thanks to a system of merit pay that rewards full disclosure and to redundant systems of employee monitoring. Orders get carried out almost all the time. Where the rest of the FSA, even the military, functions like a loose alliance of independent units, the CSA acts as a single entity. Since it preserves its internal secrets well, it presents an ominous image; most Nordamericans fear the agency, and try to stay out of its way. There's a CSA office — sometimes a building full of agents and equipment, sometimes just a handful of individuals in a rented office suite — attached to each FSA board. FSA employees should feel like they're under constant scrutiny by unseen forces more efficient than those they're watching.

Office of Administration

This office handles the general bureaucracy necessary to keep a community running on a daily basis. It enforces regulations, collects fees, maintains budgets, negotiates contracts, issues proclamations, develops propaganda and keeps the streets clean. If a task doesn't clearly belong to any of the other offices, Administration handles it. Further, it serves as a mediator between other offices when issues of jurisdiction and accountability come into play, and it coordinates efforts between multiple offices.

Office of Business

Popular images of the role of the worker and intellectual models of class relations both have roots in the 19th century. That era was rife with population growth. Managers could afford to treat all but the very best workers as disposable since there were always replacements. That attitude ceased in Europe after World War I and in North America a few decades later. Falling birth rates — and during the Aberrant War, rising death tolls — made labor scarce. Managers became the glut on the market, while businesses competed ruthlessly for skilled, or even trainable, workers.

The generals and executives who founded the Federated States knew of this situation. The coup gained early support precisely because it offered corporations a way out of the escalating loop of competition for good workers. Since the boards set employment goals, corporations needed only to beat out their rivals for influence on the boards to control where personnel were directed. It also allowed the corporations to cover the fact that they were desperate for capable staff.

Even in 2120, with birthrates once again on the rise, there were more jobs to do than there were people to do them. The Office of Business oversees the labor drafts held to fill crucial positions in loyal companies, and it mediates labor disputes and sets standards of pay and other compensation. A reason that Orgotek is in such disfavor with the FSA is that the Big O acknowledges the value that its employees

Knowledge in Motion

Orgotek's Knowledge in Motion caravans, though not associated with the Office of Education, provide great educational opportunities for middle- and lower-class individuals. Each caravan features a program of study available in one-, two-, and four-week versions, which are free to anyone who makes the commitment to finish the course.

The government hasn't yet determined if they should shut down the KIM Project — it's educating children and adults, which can give rise to free thinking, but research shows that the communities KIM visits are now more peaceful and productive on the whole. The FSA can't afford to be against education of its citizens, so it has tried to avoid publicly commenting on the KIM Project. Even so, government elements are worried, particularly since the biotech vehicles housing the priceless KIM units are reported to be heavily armed (to protect Orgotek's investment).

While the FSA's policy on KIM can be described as "unsupportive" at best, rogue military elements in Tex-Mex District figure that killing off a few KIM units and blaming it on guerrillas will increase their personal job satisfaction. Since the FSM maintains a high degree of internal communication, the idea quickly made its way north. Squads in North and Great Lakes Districts, disguised as Canuck rebels, have also started harassing KIM caravans.

Orgotek suspects the truth but has no proof as of yet. FSA officials are purposely dragging their feet in investigating the recent raids. There's no love lost between the FSA and Orgotek, after all, and if rebels are behind the raids, then at least they're not attacking loyal Nordamerican citizens.

represent and thus provides benefits out of line with the low ones that other businesses offer. More dictatorially minded companies see this matter as a form of "economic sabotage."

Office of Education

All levels of schooling, from daycare to post-graduate studies, come under this office's supervision. Even nominally private schools must submit curricula and staff appointments for review, with the FSA reserving the right to reject "latent subversion" wherever it appears.

Schooling is compulsory for children under the age of 18. Since this office receives the crumbs of federal and district budgeting, though, most scholastic programs are not very enlightening. The profession of school teacher is no job for the faint-hearted. Yet, thanks to advances in educational technology and mini-computer simulations, it's possible to conduct schooling in concentrated bursts. Children and adults sign up for one-week, two-week or month-long seminars.

Public schools focus on technical pursuits, which is the government's subtle attempt to build up the labor force. Private schools offer superior schooling, but less than 10 percent of the populace is wealthy enough to send their children to these places.

Colleges follow a similar paradigm, although study is optional, except when the labor draft applies. The draft, which can be initiated by the Office of Business whenever it feels the need, assigns (sometimes randomly) selected citizens to training programs to prepare them for important jobs that require staffing.

Office of Justice

Whatever cases the FSM or CSA don't claim for internal handling go to the Office of Justice, which is where citizens get whatever recourse they've paid for. Justice maintains jails (usually staffed by the military, though some jurisdictions hire private security) and oversees courts (small claims, civil and criminal). Standard procedure calls for a ruling by a judge, consulting previous rulings and policy databases. Most cases are tried within a week of the initial arrest; anything more complicated usually requires favors or payment.

Each governing board level has associated courts handling cases within its jurisdiction. The Federal Court hears cases at its discretion, and only when it feels an issue of fundamental policy is at stake. It's much like the 20th-century United States Supreme Court, but far more selective.

The FSA operates on the "Napoleonic Code," which presumes that if there's sufficient evidence to warrant arrest, the burden of proof lies with the defendant to show his *innocence*. How seriously a court takes the standards of evidence varies — as opposed to simply giving rubber-stamp approval to police actions. Courts need a great deal of convincing to show that the police should be held wrong in a particular case. The FSA does not provide legal assistance to those unable to hire lawyers. There are private groups that may lend legal aid to an individual that they consider deserving.

Federated States penal code favors restitution for cases for which the financial costs of a crime can be readily computed. Jail time is reserved mostly for cases in which the government was the victim. The FSA likes to isolate "anti-social" elements from the public.

Office of Recreation

This office combines the functions of interior, parks and media-oversight departments. All activities that FSA citizens engage in while not at work fall under its jurisdiction. Recreation's primary task is to renew the two-year contracts with which it assigns resource management to private firms. The quality of service they provide ranges from excellent (the Sierras Management Consortium keeps Yosemite and Sequoia Parks in far better condition than they were in while part of the pre-FSA National Parks System) to horrible (the Appalachian Trail Supervision Company has turned the crest of the mountains into a barren wasteland dotted by fast-food franchises).

The major media corporations either send representatives directly to the district boards or have tame contacts on them. The Office of Recreation has no real authority to do anything more than make requests about programming

and quality of service. Meaningful change happens only when a media corporation falls into disfavor. The resulting purges can involve shifts in overall policy, thereby sending warning messages to corporations not yet disgraced.

"Trumerica"

Many Nordamericans hold the idea of "A True America" almost as a religion. Trumericans feel that democracy is more than the passing phenomenon the FSA has citizens believe. The "Troomers" believe the original US Constitution deserves more respect than it's getting (though many are shaky on what they mean by that), and that independence, government by the people and for the people, and the right to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness are what truly define Nordamericans.

Naturally, there's a lot of tension between Trumerican ideals and the day-to-day realities of the FSA. The FSA has its own vision of a true America — a proto-fascist ideal at odds with the old America. In some areas (most notably, the Southwest and Tex-Mex Districts), working for the FSA and calling oneself a Troomer isn't self-contradictory. Many people want to work within the government to bring it back to the original Constitution. These individuals believe that the present state of affairs is still a military state of emergency — an unnaturally *long* state of emergency, yes, but not a permanent one.

The FSA hasn't figured out what to do with the Trumerican agenda yet. The government's main worry is that Troomers are proto-rebels, waiting for a spark (and it doesn't help matters that Orgotek seems to get along with them). The FSA's current response is twofold: It manipulates the media to paint Trumericans as hapless backwater hicks, meanwhile it uses covert CSA operations to discredit Troomer spokespeople before they achieve fame by their own actions. CSA operations have not succeeded in disrupting the Trumerican movement; the agency recommends purging FSA staff of all Troomers and eliminating key Trumerican figures.

The Districts

The Federated States districts share the government system described previously. They're subject in varying degrees to over two centuries of environmental problems. Even the transfer over to fusion and solar energy during the late 21st century wasn't enough to correct the widespread negative impact humanity has had on North American ecology. Central, East, West and Great Lakes Districts struggle the most to combat environmental adversity — and the damage remaining from the Aberrant War. Great Lakes and Central made great strides in new agricultural pursuits to help the land recover, while West had already initiated changes in groundwater management and waste disposal prior to the war's outbreak. Although much work remains for the nation, it appears that East District is the one with the furthest to go.

East District

When government leaders speak of the "real FSA," they usually mean East District. The federal capital is still here in the New DC arcology, and district holds one-quarter of the top-40 Nordamerican corporate headquarters. East is where popular support for the government is highest — an important distinction to South District, whose loyalty lies closely with the military (and intelligence) forces.

Despite — or perhaps because of — this significant political and corporate focus, East has a number of problems. The major arcologies, too big to operate efficiently, soak up the majority of resources that would otherwise go to urban renewal. Still, citizens slowly make enough headway to maintain hope that things will in time get better for everyone, which is something the government propaganda machine takes great pains to reinforce. Long-term deals with Québec and the rest of Nordamerica insure that raw materials are reasonably plentiful, and East's industrial base is in fairly good shape.

The *Esperanza* disaster was actually a boon for East District. With the European



economy shattered, transatlantic trade swelled. China, the United African Nations and Brazil still dominate commerce, but the FSA used the tragedy as an opportunity to strengthen ties with Europe once again. East and South became suppliers to the ailing continent. Central and Great Lakes' agricultural products mostly moved through East for consolidation, thereby enriching shippers, warehousemen and countless other middlemen. Small inter-district and international tariffs add up to huge bounties for East's boards, which in turn enables them to underwrite extensive new development (and propaganda) ventures.

The western half of the district is all but invisible. Here, a wide variety of alternative communities flourish, from Amish and Mennonite settlements preserving pre-industrial lifestyles to neophile micro-arcologies using biotechnology and hardtech that they develop underneath the FSA's sociopolitical radar. The CSA sweeps the area for obvious

dissent and subversion, but there isn't enough revenue potential to justify a larger involvement. Great Lakes rebels try to exploit this fact, but terrorists *do* attract massive retaliation, which is something the locals want to avoid. Armed rebellion is not a welcome concept in East District.

Great Lakes District

Great Lakes is what most people think of when they consider the FSA — Blighted, torn by active dissent, stratified, depressed.

The Blight is Great Lakes' albatross, but it seems the worst has passed. Many areas that Mother Nature herself hasn't reclaimed are helped along by research ventures like the Aeon Trinity-backed Blight Project. Only the innermost 350 kilometers hold serious mutations, damaging emissions and Aberrants and followers who keep a low profile.

The Great Lakes arcologies are less-than-shining examples of humanistic urban planning. They went up for defensive reasons ostensibly,

but petty politics took over and subverted the effort. The original planners wanted sites capable of repelling Aberrant threats and created them in Chicago and Minneapolis-St. Paul. Even so, these massive places are prone to social isolation and maintenance problems since they're too big for the available infrastructure. The half-finished, but functional, La Crosse arcology and the partial shell of the Madison arcology are testaments to the Great Lakes board's greed, corruption and selfishness.

Great Lakes industries have large centralized facilities, whether mining, manufacturing or food processing. Manipulating the district and local boards keeps big businesses from having to deal with nagging safety questions as well. In the depths of old urban Chicago and Minneapolis-St. Paul, some factories resemble Industrial Revolution sweatshops, yet there's no prospect of legislative or popular relief this time. Outside these hellholes, conditions are marginally better, but only at a handful of businesses that recognize that the labor draft only goes so far.

The district harbors rebel groups that are dissatisfied with social and political conditions. These Midwest revolutionaries often take their cues from the Mexican freedom-fighters, using sabotage and guerrilla tactics as their means of combating the system. The extreme groups hail from Great Lakes' northern half, which contains the largest (formerly) Canadian cities. There's a much stronger sense of Canadian identity here; many residents are still resentful of the "police action" that happened over 60 years ago.

The FSA is well aware of the tension in this area and employs policies to keep everyone in line with corporate agendas. The FSM maintains a strong show of units to enforce stability. Additionally, CSA agents spend a lot of time in Great Lakes gathering information on anyone with even a faint whiff of subversive ties. Some rebels cooperate with the Inuit arming movement in North District, but others see it as competition, and they try (so far, unsuccessfully) to raid Inuit stockpiles for their own use.



On the Québec border, a different set of tensions exists. In Great Lakes' southern parts, Nordamericans want more control over Québécois resources; in the north, former Canadians blame Québec for the FSA victory. (This belief isn't really true. Québécois assistance was useful but not decisive.) There's a high amount of spontaneous violence here, as well as calculated terrorist efforts, not all of which the FSA rushes to stop. After all, if rebels take one another out, that makes the government's job that much easier.

The Blight Zone

The FSA keeps a close eye on every research area around the Blight Zone. The joint Orgotek-Æsculapian Blight Project is the largest study of the area (detailed in **Passage Through Shadow**). The Fifth Legion monitors the inner region of the Blight, officially designated the "Legion Aberrant Suppression Treaty (LAST) Zone." Although the Federated States government follows a hands-off policy, it maintains representation to monitor all activity in the area.

Official FSM officers are assigned to advisory positions within the Fifth Legion. They maintain communications between the government and the Legionnaires' activities, but they seldom take direct action.

To monitor Blight Project activity, the CSA keeps agents in Worthington, Minnesota; Sterling, Colorado; Garden City, Kansas; and Chillicothe, Missouri. Worthington's project is described in **Passage Through Shadow** and is representative of the other sites.

Central, Great Lakes, Southwest and Tex-Mex all maintain board representatives in the area as well. The various boards abide by the FedBoard's desire: The psions have free rein in the zone as long as their activities don't threaten the safety of Nordamerican citizens or resources.

In theory, the FSA's representative takes precedence over all; in practice, *nobody* argues with FSM or CSA orders. The district agents put more attention into making sure they get their share of any graft than into issuing directives, so practical government is a matter for the local board to work out.

North District

North District is big and thinly populated, and it makes up what once was the upper third of Canada's southern provinces: the Yukon, Northwest Territories and Alaska. Only 140,000 people lived in the area at the time of the coup; about 80,000 live there now. Residents are scattered across more than three-million-square kilometers, mostly in settlements of a few hundred or a couple thousand people.

Two-thirds of the inhabitants are Inuit. The tribes range from ultra-traditionalist to completely modernized, with most of them favoring modern lives tinged by traditional practices and ceremonies. The Inuit people never liked the FSA — they didn't care for the Canadian government before and the new "masters" are even less welcome. The Federated States devoted significant resources in the late 21st century to bring the Inuit in line, without much success. The locals combined traditional survival techniques and high-tech arctic gear (and some military-surplus camouflage equipment) to fade into the wilderness.

The FedBoard admitted that the massive resources it was giving to this effort weren't worth the results being achieved. The hidden weapon silos and test complexes from the old US and Canadian days are of great concern to the FSA, though. The military now sends small teams to track down encampments. The CSA follows a similar tactic, although it doesn't try to reclaim the facilities; instead, it tries to map out the locations in preparation for one decisive assault.

The more modern Inuit tribes build weapons stockpiles by raiding the old bases and by trading with Asian arms dealers. For the moment, there's no open conflict. It's a tense waiting game punctuated by occasional skirmishes. The Inuit know that the massed force of the FSM would crush them, albeit with great cost to the FSA. The Inuit hope that they can win independence for their lands when the Nordamerican government starts falling apart. The FedBoard doesn't know the extent of Inuit preparation — the



CSA spies have had little luck penetrating too far north, so the government is dependent on remote surveillance.

Other Groups

The non-Inuit population in the region is a mixed lot. Small oil and mining concerns assign drillers and miners a six-month to two-year shift in the area. These workers deal very little with anyone outside their complexes and react unpredictably when locals clash with the FSA. They might assist one side, or both, or just sit back and watch.

The FSA disapproves of religions that promote duty to larger principles before duty to the government. Most organized religions maintain an uneasy truce with the FSA, but some groups (usually splinter sects) move to places they can follow their beliefs with little or no interference. North District fits that bill nicely, if one is willing to cope with harsh winters. These religious dissidents disagree with each other as much as they do with the FSA. Sects associated with Quakers,

Southern Baptists, Pentecostals, Wiccans, peyote cultists, Orthodox Jews and many others dot the landscape.

Like religious dissidents, some people just don't fit into the FedBoard's plans. Obviously harmful social deviants are tracked down, but for the most part, the FSA considers it cost-effective to let troublemakers slip to the north and cope with the wilderness. Some dissidents, realizing just how hard life is in North District, conclude that living under FSA rule might not be so bad after all. The ones who stick it out up there, though, are a tough, intractable bunch not to be crossed.

Good computing gear is hard to come by in North; even 22nd-century technology can't keep the cold entirely at bay. But privacy-conscious computer types, including programmers and pirate holo creators, come here. The FSA doesn't put much effort into tracking down hackers. Instead, the district board maintains watch on the southern border to keep hackers from slipping into West

District to pick up the latest upgrade or to peddle their newest underground reality-grade holoprojector. Some hackers conduct covert experiments in biotechnology as well; Orgotek gets enough return on investments to make it worth its while to secretly sponsor research.

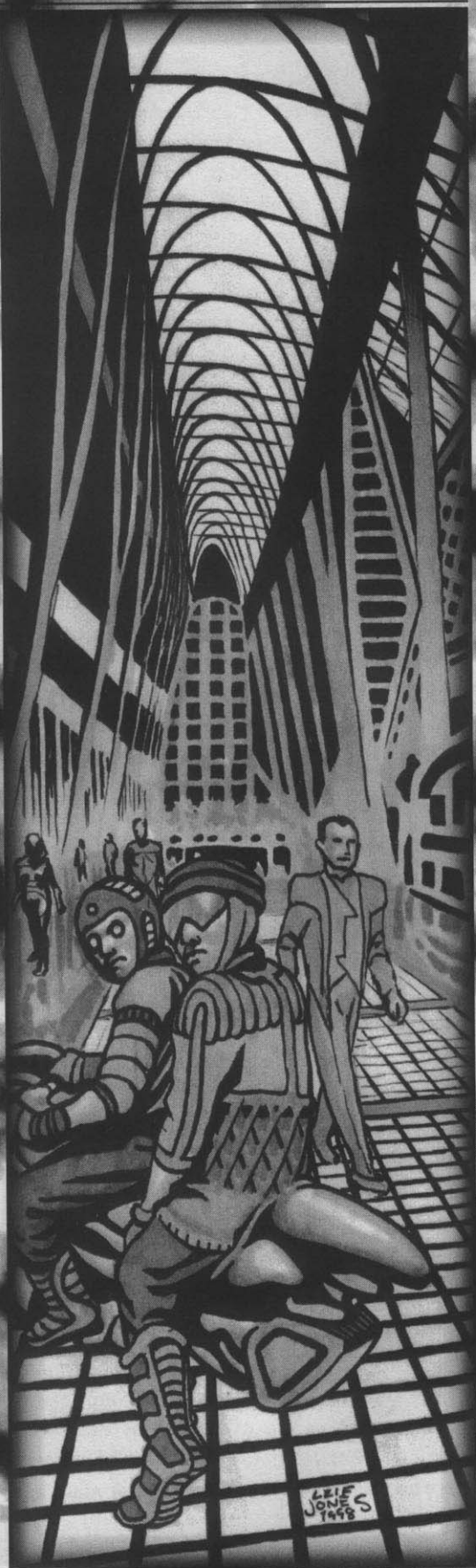
Camouflage techniques are the foundation of successful northern life. They've gotten much better since the psi orders appeared — biotech innovations pour forth from Orgotek, BioSystems, and TechnoDyne labs that cloak heat emissions, neutralize and diffuse waste, and enable food production on independent small scales. Many tundra-dwellers use mixtures of tightly beamed microwave relays, industrial-strength encryption and buried fiberoptic lines to maintain covert computer networks that the FedBoard would be interested to learn about.

The North District Board has a policy of quiet resignation. It mounts occasional publicized raids for media consumption and fakes statistics about production and other issues to maintain the pretense of an involved management. Otherwise, the board focuses on maintaining its borders and leaving the district interior to its own devices.

West

The Pacific coast is past its prime, but nobody there wants to admit it. The interior districts display just as much technical innovation (and a greater degree of artistry) as the rest.

The two West District arcology strips are clusters of small metroplexes, each with no more than 500,000 inhabitants that link up through magrail lines and strip-arcologies running between urban areas. The strips run close to the coastline, from 50 to 500 meters wide and from three to 15 stories tall. There are regular gaps in the strips to allow wildlife and ground traffic to travel between the shoreline and the interior. The total population of the strips is about that of the network of freeway-bordering towns they replaced from the



Outback Gangs

Nordamerica's Heartland — meaning, much of the Great Lakes, Central, Southwest and Tex-Mex Districts — has a number of small semi-nomadic bands that range from Troomer radicals to random gun nuts to occasional social visionaries who prefer violence to rhetoric. They tend to function more as bandits and less as soldiers and are types whose ideals are a convenient justification to rob people for selfish gain.

Even when their vision extends beyond committing random violence, these gangs lack organization and intelligence-gathering capabilities that could make them more than just petty thugs and killers. The groups have no real political players, just local noise with a couple of big explosions. It hasn't escaped the FSA's notice that the more powerful gangs move north or south to join one of the revolution movements.

previous century. From the air, the strips look like razor-thin lines that tie clustering bubbles together.

San Francisco and Los Angeles have the highest populations of West District. The two cities suffered from Aberrant attacks more than other coastal urban areas, so arcological construction got a headstart here. The pace of "arcologizing" was slower in Oregon and Washington due to less of a pressing need. Although the Portland-Vancouver strip follows the same design as that of Los Angeles-San Jose, the northern metroplexes are smaller overall.

The Federated States Military has its hands full in West District. The region is rife with smugglers, dissidents and rebels. Smugglers do good business less from exporting cutting-edge biotech and hard computing technology than from importing. Nordamericans are willing to pay dearly for officially banned holos, consumer goods that are unavailable in normal markets, produce and

meats the FSA deems "uneconomical," and countless other products. The FSA maintains underwater-, surface- and air patrols, but smugglers bring to bear significant resources and technology of their own to avoid capture. There's a constant covert war between military patrols and smuggler groups ranging up and down the coast.

West District has a notable contingent of people sympathetic to the Canadian rebels' northern efforts and the Mexican freedom-fighters' causes in the south. Small groups and individuals seek to get information, supplies and weapons to two zones of conflict. These groups often cross the paths of dissidents and fugitives fleeing from violence, making for a large degree of activity that conflicts with the FSM's efforts to maintain control of the situations.

As in North District, West's Pacific Northwest region hosted military bases and private facilities, some of which were destroyed during the Aberrant War. The FSA sealed a few off and left them, devoting its attention to more pressing concerns. Surveillance keeps the sites under watch, but enterprising smugglers and rebels raid the sites in hopes of big payoffs in equipment and weaponry.

With all of this activity, westerners live with omnipresent troop transports and the perennial hassles of soldiers on leave looking for opportunities to vent frustration. The FSA made a show of public executions during the late 21st century for those who upset the nation's guardians, but the West District Board persuaded the central authorities that it was counterproductive. Now troublemakers are taken for "questioning" or they disappear.

Much as the FSA's leaders want their continent to be self-sufficient, it isn't. Although East District strengthened European commerce (especially military production with Poland), most of the required terrestrial trade comes from Asia and South America. West is the logical choice to handle such commerce; ships, airplanes and

orbital transfer vehicles all frequent its big commercial facilities. The major ports, particularly San Francisco and Seattle, host public and covert agents to the numerous Pacific nations, where they're readily available to deal with FSA trade (or smuggling) policies.

The rest of the FSA believes West District to be most prone to outside influences. And, West sees the other districts as being locked in self-imposed ignorance rather than drawing on the best of the outside world to build a stronger nation.

Central

This region is the quietest part of the FSA. The Blight touched only its southeastern corner, and the damage there has been almost entirely healed. Rebellion flickers along the borders, but in the broad interior, people try to live in peace.

The FSA's policy of decentralization worked better here in Central District than anywhere else. Local businesses such as the Tau Ceti Development Corporation and Alchemy Computer Corporation slid smoothly into positions of influence. Citizens figured out early that if they made the right noises when officials were paying attention, people could continue living as they wanted the rest of the time. The labor draft and other features of FSA life can't be avoided altogether, but in Central, they are minimized.

The Aberrant War taught this region's inhabitants that centralization invites attack. Before the FSA was established, successful businesses already had plans to break down large facilities into tiny ones, which has worked very well — a side effect being that outside observers stand out since they have smaller crowds to hide in.

There are no arcologies in Central. Instead, the region restructured itself into a series of mid-sized cities containing between 20,000 and 50,000 people. These cities are small enough that



Aberrants searching for political-power bases to destroy don't consider them worth the time, but they are large enough so small that Outback gangs are just a minor irritant. Smaller social units are also less prone to the extreme social stratification found in coastal arcologies so there are fewer simmering class conflicts. Like any other district, Central still has small towns and villages that have survived since the early days of America. These places are frequently forgotten by the government but serve as the roving gangs' primary targets.

Communities near the North and Great Lakes borders feel tension due to the northern resistance efforts. The Free Canada movement is the best known group in the area, as its followers are prone to violent, overt acts. Its leaders were young radicals when the FSA first rolled in. Bitter about the failure of their fellow Canadians to rise up in mass revolt, they've turned to terrorism; they want to see *something* happen to brighten their old age, and many times, they don't care what happens as long as it's spectacular. Free Canadians bomb an FSA office or corporate headquarters at least once a month — sometimes a suicide run. It doesn't seem to make the masses rise up against the FSA, however, since Free Canadians pay little attention to civilian casualties. The public generally doesn't mind those FSA crackdowns that have the effect of protecting random bystanders, as is the case in anti-Free Canada measures. Like other violent groups, Free Canada uses a classic cell structure: Each member knows only three fellow cell members and one superior.

The Canadian Liberation Front is another violent group, but it is much less suicidal and has a younger membership overall than Free Canada. Both groups use Central District as their staging ground due to its lax military coverage. Most of the groups' strikes are on North or Great Lakes District targets.

The Canadian Renaissance Network is the major nonviolent, covert group in the region. Its members are nearly all young professionals who lead ostensibly normal lives and work diligently for local branches of the FSA. CRN members understand that no organization can be more effective than its information allows, so they quietly manipulate the flow of information within the FSA itself by distorting reports, destroying damaging data, substituting plausible but fake data, and arranging leaks of secret documents. Most members work alone — trading news and plans with low-power transmissions using heavy encryption, dropping off cryptic messages at pre-arranged sites, or concealing messages within innocuous OpNet traffic.

A new recruit is approached after months of being monitored to make sure that he is sympathetic to the cause of freedom and that he won't betray the organization. The recruit is set for a transfer just prior to contact; if he agrees to join, he starts his covert support at the new position, and if not, he doesn't have a chance to find out the identity of the person who contacted him. Face-to-face interaction within CRN is kept to an absolute minimum. CRN's goal is not to initiate revolution directly, but to make the FSA increasingly inefficient (wasting its resources, dealing with spurious targets, getting caught in over- and under-supply). CRN's efforts are a primary reason why Central District is so quiet.

Those committed to one style of resistance usually revile the other side. While the Free Canada leaders are old, most front-line activists in violence are young; they have no patience for the longer time scales that pacifistic resisters see as necessary. CRN, on the other hand, sees its violent counterparts as playing into the FSA's hands, offering justification for further oppression.

Southwest District

Southwest District is largely rural and small-town oriented, with urban concentrations around Seatown and Las Vegas. The district deals with overflow from the rebel conflict to the south, but it has nowhere near the same scale as Tex-Mex's near-constant warfare. Aberrants are a concern due to the overlap of the Blight Zone, although the creatures appear less often after the Fifth Legion set up its LAST Zone. The Pueblo Nation occupies a significant portion of Southwest District near the Blight anyway, which is a key reason the FSA didn't press the issue when the Native Americans moved here to establish their agricultural combine. After all, better to have Aberrants attack them than an FSA facility.

Southwest lays claim to the first functioning arcology and is home to gambling opportunities that rival Oman's. The arcology now known as Seatown was designed by Gaspar Forshaw — a Jamaican émigré who studied

The Prison Is Revolting!

The SEA's original builder cared more about experimenting with arcology technology than establishing a super-secure facility. Instead of housing maximum-strength offenders as originally planned, the SEA leaned toward housing nonviolent repeat offenders.

When the federal government went under during the Aberrant War, these "wimps" organized themselves and seized the opportunity for freedom. Considering the prison itself was a safer place than the outside world, the inmates set about restructuring it as an independent community. They enacted a near-bloodless coup; only the most obnoxious guards didn't survive the insurrection. The remaining administration was made part of the community, albeit with reduced freedoms for the first few years. Families and friends across the war-torn nation made their way to SEA as "penitentiary pilgrims." By the time the FSA set out to collect the prison, SEA was a viable city-state — and one that ignored its parent arcology.



architecture in Berkeley during the 21st century. His summer internship at the Arcosanti Project, a design for a self-sustaining community set in the Arizona desert, blossomed into a career. The original Arcosanti architect, Paolo Soleri, died a few decades before Forshaw's arrival. The project muddled along until Forshaw came.

Forshaw, considered Soleri's spiritual heir by many, shared Soleri's vision of an urban environment that could support itself, rather than relying on the rape of the earth. He sorted through Soleri's concepts and struck out in a new direction to avoid repeating the elder architect's design flaws.

Forshaw's efforts energized the independent project that continued after he left for an east coast architectural firm, where he gradually became a partner. When the federal government put out feelers for the construction of a new prison system, Forshaw made his move. After a whirlwind year of wrangling with Ministers of Red Tape, he took over construction of the new model prison...and he chose Arcosanti as the site.

Forshaw's Security Environs Arcosanti (SEA) was the first functional arcology. Drawing lessons from previous biosphere projects, Forshaw achieved a synthesis of the environmental ideals of sustainable living and of full recycling with urban population densities. The secure arcology suited the public's taste for putting criminals somewhere and then forgetting about them, but maximum security wasn't Forshaw's major concern. In fact, the system's poor security turned out to be a feature, not a bug, when the Abarant War hit SEA and prisoners and guards could join together to fight off the first Abarant reconnaissance.

While the SEA was at best an unstable penal environment, it was a successful demonstration of the viability of arcology design. It's worth noting that governments latched onto the arcology as more than just "the city of the future." The arcology is the best thing to happen to the field of social control since the computer.

The renamed "Seatown" now operates as the official capital of Southwest District. The district board enjoys the support of most of Southwest's residents, mostly because it has kept away most of the spillover from the southern border conflict. The board is quick to blame the Tex-Mex administration for any violence that occurs in Southwest.

In keeping with its scurrilous past, Seatown offers visitors a variety of experiences that aren't typical for FSA capitals. The Native American Gaming Council runs some small casinos (nothing to compete with establishments in Vegas and on the Navajo reservation). The in-town military forces spend as much time in civilian clothes as they do in uniform. Convict chic, a fashion style harkening back to Seatown's roots, encourages residents to tattoo themselves with prisoner ID codes and to dress in prison garb. Convict chic mostly wows the tourists; Seatown is one of the few alternative Southwest destinations for travelers making the pilgrimage to Vegas, and it's good to have a gimmick. Anyone who "goes outlaw" for real soon finds out that Seatown's police force dresses in civvies and carries Banji tasers, and they don't ask questions until suspects are in custody.

The Native American Gaming Council

The NAGC controls most legal gambling in the FSA (including lotteries), most of Las Vegas, and casinos in various districts. NAGC's seven-member board of directors is elected regionally to seven-year terms. NAGC manages its assets well, concentrating on strengthening traditional casino towns and opening up new markets instead of saturating all of North America with casino gambling operations. It is not as corrupt as the businesses and organized-crime interests it superseded, but it is not free of corruption. NAGC's more successful operations, all with their share of graft and personal politics, consist of local casinos, Las Vegas, the Luna Lottery and sports gambling.

NAGC likes to perpetuate the thought that casinos belong on Native American reservations. Reservations being "Casino Country"

NAGC Social Relations

Like other gambling businesses, NAGC likes to keep out of the public eye and to focus the spotlight on its product instead of its operations. When there's no choice but to occupy center stage, the council directs attention to its peripheral programs, such as Tradition Ways. This project subsidizes individuals and extended families of member tribes to learn their native tongues (sometimes with vocoder assistance) and to live completely archaic lifestyles. Only 2 percent of the eligible Native American population opts for Tradition Ways — there's more interest from the general Nordamerican public. The networks scramble to hire artists capable of sketching the Traditional Ways People, whose technology-free zones exclude cameras, holo devices and minicomps.

NAGC has flexed its political muscle to improve the status of Native Americans throughout Nordamerica. For example, although the Pueblo Nation is firmly a *non-member* of the council, it received strong support for its struggle for independence from the FSA.

Naturally, increasing tension with the FSA is likely to determine NAGC's future. For the first time, the council's seven-member operating board contains a *psion* — a Navajo clairsentient who maintains nominal membership in ISRA. If the NAGC's plans for a new Vegas casino that caters especially to the *psion* crowd go through, you can *bet* that NAGC's and FSA's cozy relationship will take a chilly turn.

helps the council keep all member tribes in direct contact with the central organization. It also employs people NAGC cares about most and funnels money directly into reservation economies. Not coincidentally, the decision to run casinos on reservation land maintains the casino gambling mystique that it is an activity worth traveling for.

Las Vegas is always worth that! As long as people visit safely and can gamble to their satisfaction, NAGC doesn't attempt to control Las Vegas' standard modes of cultural expression: neon, flash and flesh. Vegas isn't quite as wealthy as it was in its 20th-century heyday and certainly doesn't hold a candle to Oman's decadence. However, Las Vegas' sense of tradition makes up for any lack of luster. It is the "resort town" that Nordamericans travel to most frequently, especially since Atlantic City has decayed into New York's southern sprawl and since the council opted against rebuilding Reno.

The Luna Lottery is the FSA's premiere national lottery. Lucky winners move their entire family to Olympian Towers on Luna. Second and third prizes are consolation homes in Vegas. Olympian Towers is less than thrilled with the trend of "Nordamerican rich" joining its exclusive environment. There's a civil case pending in Lunar court regarding the choice of grand prize.

If it moves, you can bet on it. And if it moves only in a simulation, you can still bet on it; competitive fantasy sports leagues are one of NAGC's biggest coups. Sports addicts are willing to lay down steady sums to have a chance to beat other sports addicts to the pot of gold — and NAGC makes sure that a healthy percentage of that pot comes off the top.

New Plains

This thriving group of organic farms sits just outside the Blight Zone and south of the Pueblo Nation, near the Southwest-Tex-Mex border. New Plains started out in 2048 as a mystic religious commune run by an authoritarian visionary named Tadashi Shigeta. Ninety percent of the

original inhabitants were Nihonjin who left the Home Islands at the time of the Quarantine. The new Federated States government let New Plains remain since the collective was one of the first to maintain viable agricultural production.

In 2096, the community's Acting Council kicked Shigeta out and repudiated most of his teachings as paranoid fantasies. His son Aaron took over and has led the group without resorting to claims of mystical authority.

New Plains is one of the preeminent sites for Nihonjin who feel constrained behind the Electronic Curtain. By 2120, New Plains residents still consist primarily of former Nihonjin citizens who believe their homeland's isolationist attitudes are pathological in intensity. New Plains maintains its own cultural rigidity. Other nationalities are ostensibly welcome to join New Plains, but only Nihonjin is spoken publicly, making things difficult even for those who get black-market vocoder chips. Those unwilling to learn the language and join in traditional Nihonjin culture go through profound social isolation.

Since Aaron Shigeta's ascendance, New Plains has become a magnet for Psi Nippon enthusiasts who can clear FSA's immigration hurdles. Since these hurdles are set deliberately low to encourage immigrants to become part of a much-needed labor force, New Plains' population has grown quickly. New Plains does not consider itself an official Psi Nippon enclave, however, since this status might cause friction with the FSA. Even so, the government grows disturbed by the collective's psion-tolerant attitudes.

New Plains doesn't embrace all psions. The recent murder of Kumiko Bennett, a New Plains leader, seems related to bad blood with China's Ministry of Psionic Affairs. The homicide remains unsolved, but noetic evidence (inadmissible in FSA law) indicates involvement of a skillful telepath.

Tex-Mex District

If you paid attention only to its military budget, you'd think that Tex-Mex is the closest that the FSA comes to running a military police-state. The fact is that the district's huge military presence concerns itself with hunting and killing (or being killed by) actual rebels, and regular citizens enjoy a level of freedom that citizens of other districts wouldn't know what to do with. Ironically, this lack of oppression keeps the revolution from gaining more steam on the northern side of the Rio Grande.

Citizens don't know what all the fuss is about — life seems okay to them, and the government doesn't get in the way that much. Of course, this attitude would change in a hurry if the FSA thought that cracking down on the populace was the key to defeating the revolution. But so far, the military has tried to distinguish between civilian sheep and enemy rebel wolves.

Texan Rebels

Texas is more pacified by the military than most of Texas likes to admit. Most of the "rebels" who cry out for Texas' own independence (usually while waving sidearms) are nothing but psychopaths, losers, frustrated Troopers and pathetic outlaws. The most dangerous of the visible Texan rebels act like professional mercenaries, circulating between the fringe zones of the Blight and the southern border, and creating or joining groups that have shorter life spans than the groups' members (the lucky ones, at least).

There is a deeper truth that few realize (including the Federated States Military and the Æon Trinity): In Texas, effective guerrillas live out of sight. These hidden rebels have caused more damage to the FSA by tracking down and dispatching covert CSA agents than the government ever admits. The FedBoard suspects that it has a leak leading to some extremely dangerous enemies. Generals Alisanne and Banks would love to blame it on General Carlyle, but their suspicion is just that — a hunch without any facts.



Tex-Mex has regained the frontier feel of centuries past. The region contains hardy souls who strike out on their own — or at least, those who keep a low-enough profile to avoid FSA control. The government has its hands full with Mexican freedom-fighters and Texan rebels; independent communities that follow their own law aren't worth bothering with at the moment.

All significant decisions in Tex-Mex flow through the military triumvirate of Generals Steven B. Carlyle, Melissa Alissane and Peter Banks — known collectively as the "ABCs." To avoid presenting an obvious target for guerrilla activities, none of the three generals in the triumvirate has a permanent residence. Although they maintain headquarters in the Dallas, El Paso and Houston "fortologies," each prefers to operate in the field.

At present, Carlyle and Alissane are engineering a full-scale invasion, house-to-house cleansing and subsequent destruction of the San Antonio ruins in southern Texas. The assault is authorized because the destroyed arcology is a haven for religious rebels in league with Aberrants. Carlyle wants to satisfy his superiors who yearn for a chance to fire weapons of mass destruction. There's no point in staging what is a full-scale elimination of an arcology without first performing careful study, planning and evaluation of the effectiveness of different plans. The Æon Trinity knows little of the plan specifics, but it fears that the Federated States Military might be about to indulge in severe overkill. Æon hopes to discover details behind the project and leak them to the press if the FSM strikes innocent targets, such as the many tiny communities in south Texas whose residents try to live peacefully as fighting goes on around them.



South District

Much of this district consists of mid-sized towns built around military bases or intelligence facilities. These "factory towns" are eerily similar, constructed from select authorized templates. Residents work at the same facilities, join approved clubs and relax at select social spots. Dissension and unrest are virtually unknown in these places — as are individuality and creativity.

These grim template cities aside, South District retains much of the slow, unchanging attitude it has known for over the past three centuries. The more things change the more they stay the same.

One noteworthy change in South District is that race relations are good here, which is partly a legacy of the Crash: Resources and labor were so scarce that all races had to work together to improve their circumstances. The return of something such as general prosperity feeds a return to ethnic

tension, as there are more people seeking fewer openings, but the seed of bigotry hasn't reached full bloom yet. There are some single-race communities, especially in South's interior, but almost all of the old cities and boards are well-integrated. Federated States policy formally condemns racism as being economically unproductive. The FSA would rather unite its citizens against common enemies *outside* the nation than have them divide against each other.

Florida continues to recover from its flooding. Media stereotypes notwithstanding, almost half of the peninsula is now habitable and reclamation efforts continue. A few luxury settlements flourish in the shallow waters of flooded cities, while working-class communities encircle factories built in the drained marshes in the north. The total population is still just one-tenth of what it was before the disaster, but it's rising

steadily. Orgotek continues making proposals to the government to employ terraforming efforts on the peninsula, but FSA refuses. Anti-psion propaganda is so successful in South that citizens are fully behind the government's efforts to keep out "potentially dangerous biotechnology."

The CSA in the South

One of the facts of South life is the Central Security Agency. Its central HQ is in the Raleigh-Durham arcology, and the organization's five divisions maintain separate centers elsewhere in the district.

As noted above, the CSA stakes out entire communities for its operations. Its directors like the sense of security coming from having everyone in sight dependent on them, directly or indirectly; in some ways, it's easier to manage information flow on the community level than block-by-block. CSA communities include shopkeepers and entertainers and everyone else necessary to keep townspeople happy and provided for (or quiet at least). At least one million people in South work for the CSA in some capacity, from field operatives to cafeteria cooks. Fascism requires a great deal of investment in secret police.

Virtually all psions in the Federated States government work for the CSA. Although the general feeling is that psions are just a new kind of Aberrant, the CSA isn't worried. It worked with Aberrants in its previous incarnations (as the CIA and NSA), and if anything, psions are more manageable than Aberrants. As long as psions are useful, the CSA uses them. It particularly likes telepaths but takes anyone it can recruit.

Psion employment amounts to a kind of "special prisoner" status, however. Some Gifted are willing to take the trade of being constantly monitored by CSA for the chance to know the innermost secrets of the Nordamerican government's friends and foes. CSA has little luck recruiting Orgotek employees, but it never stops asking.

Québec

The one thing clear about Québec's status in 2120 is that there's nothing clear about it. Its efforts to branch out from the FSA fail routinely, due mostly to the CSA moles who riddle Québec's government and to the significant presence of FSM squads in almost every community.

Two factors complicate Québec's future prospects. First, the FedBoard (led by the FSM) makes ever-escalating demands for Québécois submission to FSA "needs." These orders fuel Québécois antipathy toward the FSA, with quiet but rising demands from citizens that Québec should stop honoring the treaty clauses that let FSA walk all over it. Within Québec's government, the National Renewal Party calls for publication of all treaty provisions, which the FSA has said would lead to it considering the treaties as nullified. The implicit threat is that invasion would follow. Québec's Integration Party, representing a still-small minority favoring overt union with the FSA, claims that this situation conveys the many advantages lost to the pretense of independence maintained now.

The second complicating factor involves French refugees, who include political and business leaders who have their own ideas about how Québec should be run. They tend to be overtly hostile to the FSA, less inclined to respect the secret clauses, but unimpressed with the National Renewal Party. The new French Heritage Party favors focusing Québec on European ties, using its resources to help in French reconstruction and, thereby, gaining influence with the other reconstruction partners. Most Québécois, however, feel that Québec can't neglect the FSA to the extent that Heritage activists claim.

Québec stands on the brink of a crisis. The FSA's internal instabilities feed pressure for expansion while Québécois voices for greater independence gain popular support. Aeon does not yet have a firm position on the

matter, favoring a "wait-and-see" stance as it gathers information and tries to settle specific conflicts as they happen.

Mexico

Mexico is a study in contrasts. The northern portion is rife with conflict between Mexican freedom-fighters and Federated States Military forces. The Gulf Coast is a political timebomb with FSA sympathizers requesting annexation (with subtle guidance by the CSA), while Mexican loyalists try to develop the region into a viable independent political entity. The southern half is a collection of small provinces and petty dictatorships at odds with one another over border lines, resource availability, religious beliefs and political ideals.

Yet, in the face of rampant disorder, many communities sustain quiet lives. These villages go on much as they have for centuries, ignoring the worst of the conflicts around them as best they can. Revolutionaries and counter-revolutionaries flow through like a tide, yet the villages remain. For residents, making sure there's food for the children is far more important than any abstract ideas such as fascism or democracy. Some towns fall victim to a charismatic military leader or an FSM "object lesson," but for the most part, they try to raise their families and ignore the madness rampant throughout the rest of the universe.

On the war front, the Mexican freedom-fighters receive significant funding from Brazil, Australia, Orgotek and the Norça. Intellectuals, rebels and psions from all over the world have joined the Mexican cause (at least for a few months). Unlike the Republican forces in the early 20th-century Spanish Civil War, the new Mexican guerrillas haven't alienated the populace by turning against the

clergy; the Catholic Church is still very strong in Mexico. Even the conservative elements of Mexican society are unhappy with the FSA.

The rallying point for the Mexican Resistance are the writings of Salvador de la Torre — a soldier/poet/activist imprisoned in Dallas for 10 years. De la Torre was presumed dead until he resurfaced in the Yucatan, which is part of the turbulent southern regions of Mexico still free from the FSA. De la Torre's writings speak of a Mexico where poor farmers, the middle class and the wealthy all cooperate to shake off the yoke of northern oppression. The loss of Mexico City reinforces de la Torre's notions that Mexico should develop via diffuse, regional organizations instead of putting all of its people into one easily destroyed or captured city. De la Torre's words influenced many Mexicans, and even many of the FSA's nominally Anglo-Saxon inhabitants, to take up arms against the Federated States.

Mexican guerrillas avoid attacks on Federated States civilians when possible — although they don't hesitate to defend themselves from threats, whatever the source. The Mexican strategy is to win the war by fighting the enemy, not by terrorizing the populace.

With the revolution against the FSA progressing as well as can be expected, de la Torre and his advisors have just turned to the question of what to do with Veracruz and Coahuila on the Gulf Coast — the provinces that petitioned the FSA for membership. De la Torre's desire to avoid targeting civilians is to be severely tested if the FSA's employment packages, arcology construction plans and military assurances succeed in playing the Gulf off against the people of the Mexican interior.

This chapter covers basic rules information and behind-the-scenes notes, mostly to help the Storyteller add further depth to a Nordamerica-based series. There is some information (data covering Aberrants) that is intended for Storyteller eyes only. Players who want to maintain their own sense of mystery about the Trinity Universe should skip this chapter entirely.

Citizenship

The FSA recognizes three distinct classes of people within its borders. The classifications defined here are obviously geared toward benefiting the wealthy and powerful. In an effort to streamline government and to direct its resources where they do the most good, the FedBoard feels justified in letting inconsequential members of society fall through the cracks.

- **Non-citizens:** A non-citizen is a foreign visitor lacking official dispensation from the government (usually given only to a dignitary). Basically, he has no rights of any kind. Citizens may arrange protection for a non-citizen, but FSA authorities can override this directive at will. A non-citizen who keeps his papers ready for inspection and who stays out of trouble seldom faces difficulty. He must tread carefully, however, since even a standard citizen (see listing) can make life rough for a non-citizen, with little provocation.

- **Standard Citizens, or Citizens Class 2:** A standard citizen is someone born in the FSA, to citizen parents abroad or one who is naturalized after completing the citizenship curriculum. A Class-2 individual enjoys a limited set of

Full-Citizen Costs

The following are typical prices that Class-2 citizens may expect to pay to gain specific Class-1 rights. Amounts are listed in yuan (¥) to be consistent with the form of currency most common in the Trinity Universe. The Storyteller can consider the prices in an equivalent dollar (\$) amount if he wishes.

- Issue warrant before a search: ¥100
- Protect personal property during an arrest: market value of the goods
- Protect personal property during legal proceedings: five times market value of the goods
- Trial before a judge: ¥1,000
- Trial before a jury: ¥3,000
- Requesting a specific judge: Add 25%
- Enforcing FSA laws and regulations against a non-citizen: ¥250
- Enforcing FSA laws and regulations against a Class-2 citizen: ¥2,000
- Enforcing FSA laws and regulations against a Class-1 citizen: ¥10,000+
- Enforcing specific laws and regulations in a given area: ¥25,000 per person or ¥1,000,000 (or more) per square kilometer, per week

Actual costs in practice may vary from the prices listed — by as much as 100% higher in big cities or arcologies (and for people that the FSA dislikes), but up to 50% less, or free (at least of *monetary* cost) in rural areas or for personal friends of officials. A character may try to get a break with standard Bureaucracy and Resource rolls. For each success on both rolls, the cost drops by 10%. If only one results in success, the cost remains the same. If neither roll generates successes, the cost rises by 10%. If either botches, it rises 20%, and if *both* rolls botch, the cost increases by 50%.

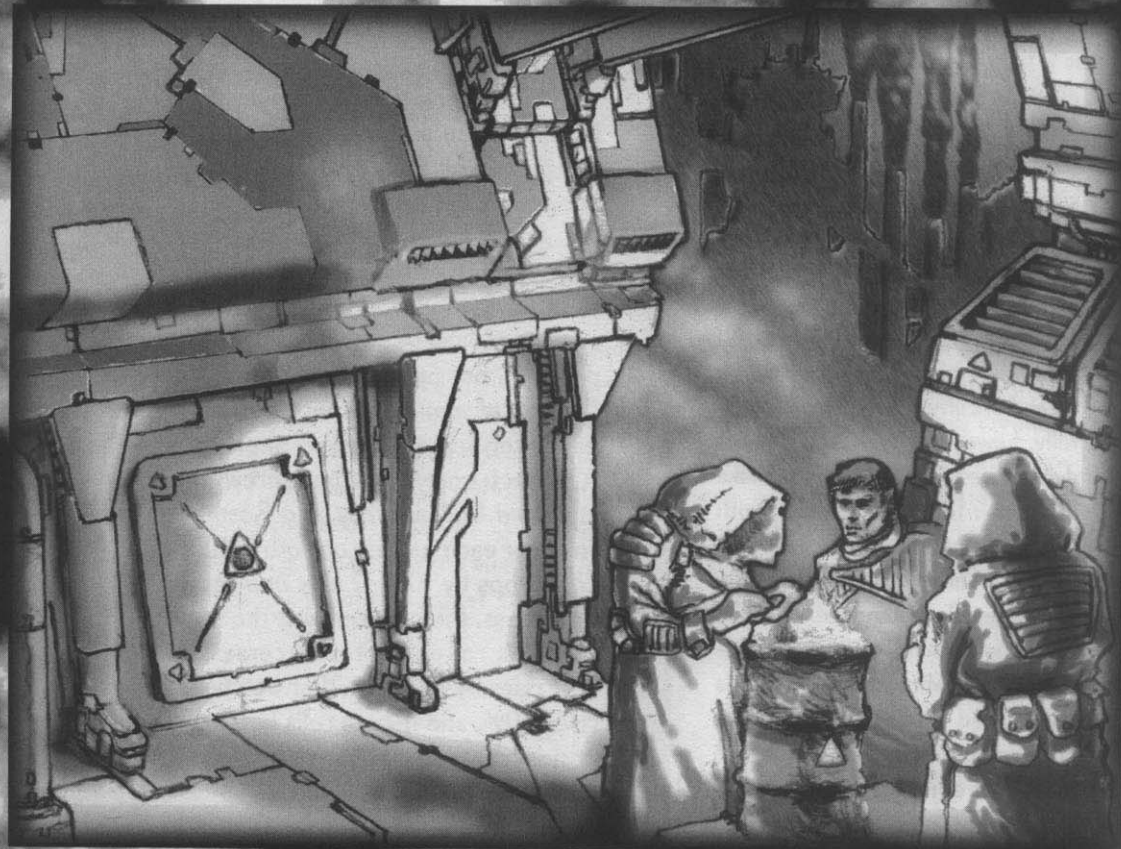
rights. Her person and property are secure against seizure and investigation, except if authorized by an FSA official (which may occur without a warrant). She may attend and speak at board meetings but cannot vote. She may request trial in FSA-approved courts for a fee and receive some measure of justice. A Class-2 citizen may buy Class-1 privileges on a temporary basis — generally ¥10,000 for one month of Class-1 citizenship. FSA policy allows the purchase of specific rights for shorter periods, but it leaves this discretion to neighborhood boards and agencies.

- **Full Citizens, or Citizens Class 1:** Pure and simple, full citizens earn their status through money. Every ¥10,000 paid in taxes each year gives an individual one vote. Someone with three or more votes gets the full panoply of civil rights under FSA rule: protection of personal, real and intellectual property; procedural justice; the opportunity to question and receive an accounting for FSA actions that affect the citizen.

Since corporations pay taxes and are “legal individuals” under codes that the FSA inherited from its previous incarnation, corporations also vote. This umbrella covers the upper tiers of a corporation — usually the president and board of directors. Therefore, the vast majority of votes cast in every election comes from corporations. Since the biggest companies make up the FSA’s core membership, the system keeps on working to their advantage.

Federated States Resources

As noted in *Trinity* (page 106), North America’s official Gross National Product is much lower than actual production indicates. Much of the profits and goods are folded back into the military-corporate complex itself. Aside from benefitting these select few, this keeps the vast majority of citizens close to subsistence level. By the FedBoard’s thinking, citizens too busy putting food on the table don’t have time to entertain thoughts of rebellion.



Kickbacks and sliding-scale economics doesn't account for all of the FSA's resource discrepancy, though. In truth, the Federated States channels much of its production into a plan to insure that North America will never again suffer the kind of devastation it endured in the previous century.

The Federated States took the threat of Aberrants return very seriously, even before the creatures came back. It figured China had the right idea with its 2061 Ultimatum, and the FSA works toward a similar solution now. However, the FSA isn't working with an outside agency, as China did in the 21st century. Although the Æon Society (as it was known then) provided China with vital assistance in forming its space fleet and orbital weapons platforms, Æon was in a prime position to dictate how far China could take its directive.

The FSA pursues its own research and development. It has top secret bases in North and South Districts, on Luna, on Mars and even in the Asteroid Belt. Resources are carried to and from these locations under cover of the FSM's numerous patrols (most people grow used to the constant traffic) or through dummy corporations (environmental groups, scientific expeditions, mining concerns, colonists).

These sites address not only weapons research and development, but also new colonization techniques and alternative propulsion methods. Two Asteroid Belt sites — one working with anti-matter, the other studying black holes — are dedicated to discovering a means of faster-than-light travel that does not require psionic energy.

The remainder of the FSA's military-corporate machinery continues as it has been, presenting North America as a struggling fascist nation concerned only with its own progress. In this way, those running this secret program hope that other nations will appeal more strongly to Aberrant — and other national — interests.

The full project is referred to only obliquely — “that thing we're working on,” “the issue we discussed,” and sometimes “the plan” — and is known to less than 250 people within

the entire military-corporate complex. They direct thousands of underlings who have no knowledge of how their work impacts on other secret projects. Those who even come close to tumbling to the truth are “taken care of” without hesitation — unless their worth is great enough, in which case they join the cadre of directors.

The plan shows great success overall. Although the FSA is undeniably a strong military power, they've proven to be a secondary economic and political power at best. The public maintains its attention on more prominent powers like China and the UAN.

It's obvious to other countries (and to the Æon Trinity) that not everything adds up in North America. The FSA is known to have secret plans in the works, but as yet no one has touched upon the truth of the matter. And that suits the FSA just fine.

Anti-Psion Efforts

In case it isn't obvious, the Federated States government has no great love for psions. The FSA's military and intelligence offices, which are normally political adversaries, work together to hinder psion activity.

Much of the FSA's concern is related to control. The government doesn't control psions. It has a few Gifted under its thumb, certainly, but the major portion of psi-powered freaks are running around loose. The FSA isn't worried that psions may become the “new generation of Aberrants.” Central Security Agency operatives have done enough research on their own to confirm the accepted view of noetic theory — that psions and Aberrants derive their powers from different energy sources. Further, the CSA is confident that psions cannot achieve any greater degree of power than they've already displayed.

The government privately sponsors a number of anti-psion groups, from concerned citizens to fringe radicals. If nothing else, the FSA feels that coping with such opposition forces psion attention away from other pursuits — such as trying to subvert the government. The

most notable groups are the Committee for Truth, a nonprofit social-awareness organization, and the Brotherhood of Human Purity, a dangerous collection of rabid psych-haters.

Additionally, the FSA pursues covert studies within its ranks to find means of detecting, dampening and/or subverting psionic abilities. The CSA just developed a hardtech device that senses subquantum waveforms. The gadget isn't terribly precise and requires a fair amount of power, but the intelligence agency is already installing the "psi sensor" in entrances of its sensitive facilities. The CSA is now developing a hand-held version.

In game terms, the psi sensor has a 5 Attunement rating. It is subject to backlash as well, although instead of suffering damage, the sensor overloads and falls offline for the number of minutes equal to the successes rolled for backlash (see *Trinity*, page 192, for more information on Attunement).

Aberrant Activity

Not all of the Aberrants left Earth in the Exodus. A few remained, hiding on the ocean floor and in the wastes of Antarctica...and in the center of the Blight Zone.

These Aberrants were too few to seize control of humanity — and frankly, they were afraid of human firepower. They loved Earth too much to leave, though; they were content to dwell underground and create an extensive tunnel system under North America. The Aberrants ventured out every so often to meet with Aberrant cultists still hidden among the human population. The followers provided the Aberrants with supplies, news and breeding stock, and the Aberrants bided their time, for they were certain that their powerful fellows would return.

The fringe of the zone recovered from Wycoff's blast over the next 66 years, but the central core still reeks of taint. This taint exists mainly because of the dozen or so Aberrants who scurry around their vast underground dwelling and poison the region with their very presence. These tunnels became a freakish subterranean city that was subject to

architectural plans designed by powerful and insane beings.

The secret city lasted so long because the Blight is a perfect hidey-hole for Aberrants wishing to evade psionic scans. The extensive taint makes it difficult for psions to sense new disruptions — such as Aberrant movements.

Conflict in the Zone

The LAST Zone is the central area of the Blight that still retains taint. It has gone from the FSM's simple containment to full-fledged conflict, with the Fifth Legion in charge of tending the core. Conditions don't allow for a standard war, however. Psions and Aberrants play a game of cat-and-mouse in the Heartland, using guerrilla tactics on one another in attempts to whittle down the enemy.

Aberrant raids from the zone have decreased since the Legion took over. The calm that the public sees is highly deceptive because much of the conflict takes place far in the LAST Zone's interior — underground. Legion strike teams serve as "tunnel rats" as they push Aberrants from one tunnel to the next, never quite delivering the *coup de grace*.

The Fifth Legion has no problem if more Aberrants venture into the LAST Zone. But it's determined that not a one ever leaves. The Legionnaires are confident in their ability to dispatch any of the creatures stupid enough to challenge them. And the ones smart enough to run are going to die tired. So far, circumstances seem to uphold this assumption.

The Fifth doesn't know how lucky it is. It does not face a coordinated group of Aberrants, but a loose collection that happens to use the Blight as a retreat. There is no cohesive social order at work here and no tactical method to these Aberrants' efforts.

This lack of order exists because the subterranean Aberrants receive no direct aid from their brethren from beyond the stars. The coordinated Aberrant forces consider Earth to be off-limits to direct attack, and those who've been lurking underground for decades can do what they want, but they'll get no help from

above. The Aeon Trinity is correct in its belief that the Aberrants have returned to reclaim Earth, but they don't want to rule over a cinder. Although the Blight Zone is a tempting staging point, the Aberrant forces don't use it for that reason; it's too obvious of a target, and if the Aberrants brought forces there, humans still have the resources to rain down a staggering amount of firepower.

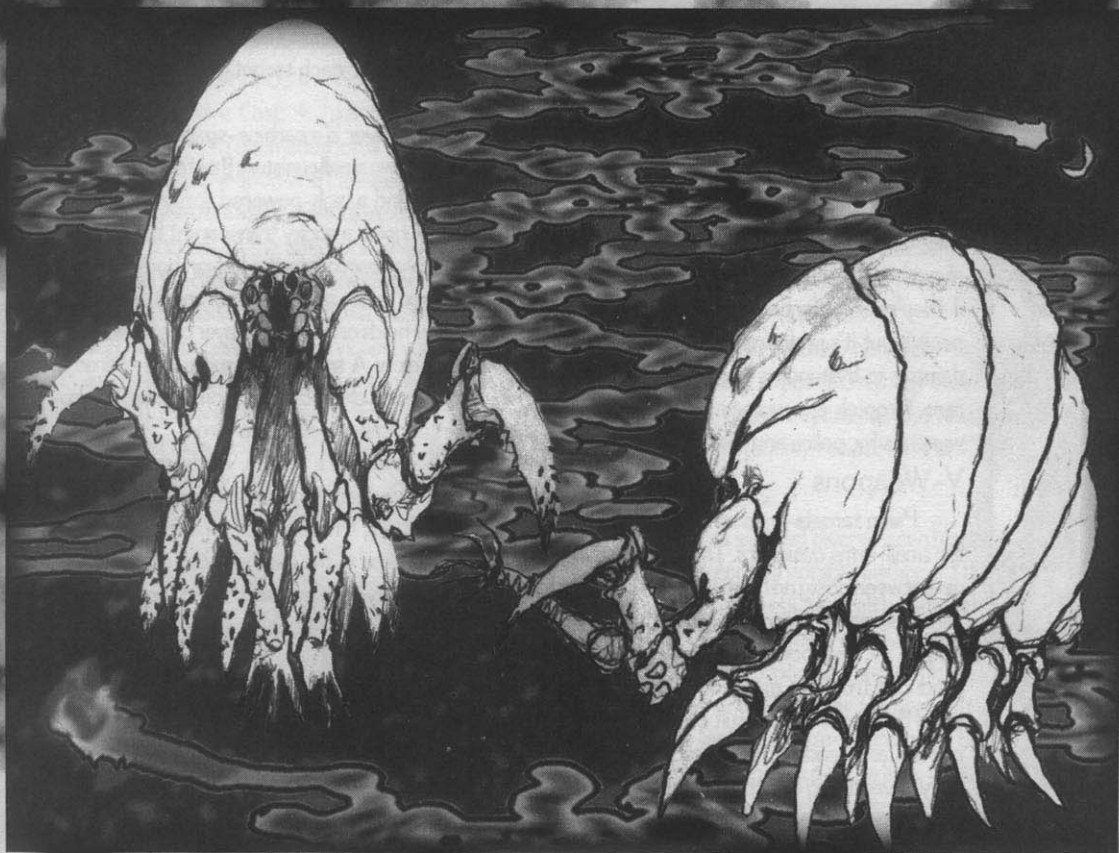
Rather than set themselves up to be knocked down, the Aberrant forces let the individual fringe elements occupy the Blight. The underground Aberrants weren't among the powerful representatives of their kind in the first place, and what offspring they had were even more warped than their parents. Such second-rate Aberrants, while not worth the main force's time, still serve as formidable opponents to humanity. The resources and personnel devoted to fighting Aberrants hidden in the Blight Zone are that much less directed toward the real threat to humanity.

The Subterranean Aberrants in Action

As these second-string Aberrants have no cohesive agenda, they hoped to be valuable scouts for the returning forces, but they found their brethren had little interest in what they had to say. The underground Aberrants attacked humans from the Blight to prove their worth. These sorry creatures are so twisted from their own atrophied powers, though, that they can't form a long-term agenda of their own.

These Aberrants venture out singly or in up to small groups of three and strike at random targets. Such attacks are devastating to the local populace, but without a unifying agenda, Aberrants have little sustained impact. Their main strength (aside from being Aberrants), however, is in their unpredictability. Even a seasoned military professional can't predict where these Aberrants are going to strike next.

The Storyteller should use the statistics listed in *Trinity*, page 303, for second-string Aberrants and make whatever modifications he feels are suitable for the story.



Although in the grip of fascism and a strained economy, Nordamericans still have access to modern products — although affording them is something else entirely. The FSA applies heavy import fees to foreign corporations, giving Nordamerican producers a definite edge on their home turf. (Europe is a notable exception. Western loyalties continue from generations past — with both continents still in dicey shape, they can hardly afford to cut one another off.) A character can buy a Wazukana minicomputer in a Chicago tech shop, but a similar computer produced by Steinhardt is generally less expensive. This business method caused a number of other Earth nations to apply similar tactics to Nordamerican imports, so most FSA commercial expansion takes place off-planet — on Luna and other colony sites. The profits go to lining the pockets of metacorp senior executives and FSA advanced officials, with little left to trickle down and improve Nordamerican society as a whole.

Some gear is flat out restricted or illegal within the FSA (as indicated by items' high costs). Still, just because a piece of equipment is not available commercially doesn't mean that characters can't get it. Finding such a device requires going through illicit channels, and it gives the Storyteller free reign to assign whatever cost he feels is suitable (or even to demand payment in favors or other gear, rather than cash).

Weapons

The weapons listed here are specifically designed not to kill, but to disable or incapacitate their targets. The FSA doesn't particularly worry about harm that might come to suspects (after all, if they're truly innocent, they wouldn't be suspects), but it's undesirable to dish out too much damage to bystanders who may be Class-1 citizens. Orgotek encourages the use of non-lethal weapons for police and civilian security work.

V-Weapons

Psion targets pose an interesting challenge for small-arms designers. There's a narrow margin between doing no harm at all and killing or terminally scrambling psionic ability. The vertigo-, or simply "v-," weapon is the first commercial effort produced from the minds of Tekne. These non-lethal devices are the result of an agreement between Cassel and Labak to test Orgotek's feasibility in venturing into the hardtech market.

Also known as "flash guns," v-weapons combine subsonic sound beams with patterns of light calculated to throw off equilibrium and induce mild seizures, thus disorienting psions so that they cannot focus on using noetic abilities. V-weapons also work quite well on normals.

• **Orgotek VP-2.** Tech: Ω , Accuracy: 0, Damage: 4d10*, Range: 20, Maneuvers: Tw, ROF: 1, Clip: 10, Concealability: J, Mass: 1.5, Cost: ••• (restricted)

• **Orgotek VG-3.** Tech: Ω , Accuracy: 0, Damage: 5d10**, Range: Special**, Maneuvers: n/a, ROF: 1, Clip: 1, Concealability: P, Mass: 0.5, Cost: •• (restricted)

*The v-gun is used like any other firearm. However, it doesn't actually inflict damage (and thus bypasses armor and soak). Instead, the target suffers +2 difficulty to all actions for the number of turns equal to the successes rolled on the damage effect. Psions also suffer an additional +1 penalty to all Psi rolls for the same duration. Opaque physical barriers (walls, large rocks) can block the flash gun's effect.

**The v-grenade functions the same as a v-gun, but it is thrown or fired at a target and covers an area of effect. Anyone within two meters of the grenade's explosion suffers the disorienting effects (roll the damage effect separately for each target).

Sprayers

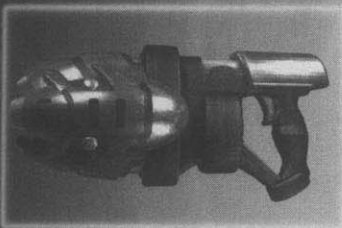
A sprayer is a carbine-sized weapon composed of two small canisters that feed into a compressor and a high-powered spray nozzle. One canister holds a sticky transparent fluid tailored to quickly absorb into the human body (through skin, hair, eyes, mucus membranes). The other canister holds one of the sprayer chemical agents listed below. A small pump sucks in a charge of adhesive and chemicals, and compressed air propels the combination at the target.

Sprayers are fragile. A character with a sprayer who gets hit must succeed at a standard Athletics test. On a botch, the canisters leak, inflicting a dose to the user for each one rolled.

The government keeps very tight restrictions on these weapons. Anyone caught using a sprayer without proper FSA or office authorization is incarcerated immediately. The individual is charged with anything from felony assault to treason (depending on the incident's severity and how the local prosecutor chooses to handle the case).

TEKNE

GROUP



"Protecting Humanity Humanely"

VP-2 is a non-lethal weapon that uses a chemical agent to incapacitate a target. It is designed to be used in situations where lethal force is not justified. The VP-2 is a versatile weapon that can be used in a variety of ways. It is a reliable and effective tool for law enforcement and military personnel.

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VP-2 The New Standard in Non-lethal Defence

• **L-K Sprayer.** Tech: Ω , Accuracy: 0, Damage: 7d10*, Range: 10, Maneuvers: n/a, ROF: 1, Clip: 25, Concealability: 0, Mass: 1.5, Weapon Cost: ••••, Adhesive Cost: • (per canister), Chemical Agents Cost: •• (each additional • increases the effect 10 turns), (weapon and canisters are restricted)

*Damage from a sprayer is unlike other firearms damage. Each success on the attacker's Firearms roll delivers one dose of the chemical agent. The target does not soak as normal but, instead, she must make an Athletics roll (+2 difficulty). Each success means the victim avoids one dose (by moving enough that it hit clothing or by wiping it off before it soaks in). Anyone within reach can try to help the target, yet she must make an Athletics roll at +3 difficulty.

Any remaining doses are absorbed at the end of the turn. There is a one-turn delay as the doses diffuse into the target's biochemistry, taking effect two turns after the target was first shot. Once active, each dose lasts for the number of turns equal to the successes the attacker rolls on the weapon's damage effect. Specific chemical agents and their effects per dose are listed below.

Sprayer Chemical Agents

• **Histamine trigger.** The target becomes red, flushed and itchy; any allergies active within the last day flare up again to maximum intensity. All

Dexterity-, Perception- and Appearance-related rolls function at +1 difficulty.

• **Neurotransmitter blocker.** This chemical agent acts on a combination of chemicals that relay signals between the target's nerves. The victim's nervous system becomes unreliable, putting all Mental-related rolls at +1 difficulty.

• **Neurotransmitter trigger.** The target's nerves fire more rapidly than usual, causing euphoria and confusion. Perception-, Dexterity- and Manipulation-related rolls are at +1 difficulty.

• **Porphyrin blocker.** Porphyrin binds with hemoglobin to carry oxygen. The many enzymes involved in binding and detaching can be neutralized, making all Strength- and Stamina-related rolls at +1 difficulty.

Computers

Orgotek's size and diversity can hinder it at times; the biocomputer is a notable instance. The Big O pursues many projects and although it researches biocomputer techniques, most of those efforts are geared toward incorporating organic interfaces in other bioware. Alchemy Computer Corporation took advantage of this fact and released innocuous hardtech software and peripherals to pay the bills, while focusing research on refining the biocomputer designs that it swiped

from Orgotek. As a result, Alchemy was the first biotech company to set foot in the computer market, providing a small selection of organic computer designs.

Referred to as "biocomps," these new minicomputers have processing speeds distinctly superior to hardtech minicomps. Orgotek has since released its own biocomps, but Alchemy still has a strong lead on the biotech giant.

Personal Computer Systems

A biocomp is significantly more responsive than an equivalent hardtech computer (interfacing with a hardtech system slows the responsiveness somewhat). In game terms, a biocomp requires one-fifth the number of turns to perform a task compared to a regular minicom (in many cases, the task may require only a single turn; some things are simple enough that the difference in response time is negligible). See "Finding Stuff" in the *Trinity Technology Manual*, page 77, for more information.

If a psion formats herself to a biocomp, she receives an additional die to all Engineering rolls related to using that computer. A character with Electrokinesis can noetically supply additional processing capability, increasing the biocomp agent's Performance and fail-safe ratings by one each.

- **Alchemy BiC-18:** Although its hardtech casing was stylish a year ago, the BiC-18 looks out of style for current buyers. Even so, the biocomp's interior systems run smoothly. For those who don't care about appearances and want a reliable system, the BiC-18 is a good choice. 3 Fail-safe.

Tech: Ψ, Mass: 1, Tolerance: •, Cost: •••

- **Alchemy BiC-20:** This second-generation biocomp refines many elements of the BiC-18, including its hardtech casing. In the few months since the biocomp's release, Alchemy has received a few complaints from customers that the BiC-20 occasionally runs random processes. Yet, Alchemy hasn't found any hard evidence as to the cause. Since these tasks don't seem to interfere with any other routines, the company hopes it's just a harmless byproduct of the enhanced bioprocessor system. 5 Fail-safe.

Tech: Ψ, Mass: 1, Tolerance: •, Cost: ••••

- **Orgotek Tortoise Minicom:** Orgotek unveiled its commercial biocomputer almost a year after Alchemy's BiC-18 hit the market. "The power of the mind in the palm of your hand" ads caught the attention of the hacker crowd, but it was the Big O's tongue-in-cheek campaign that brought the strongest response. It used the Nordamerican slang term for minicom — "turtle" — to emphasize its biocomps' strengths. The



"Most turtles are slow; meet the new breed" campaign shows Orgotek's biocomp outdistancing other companies' computers in a race, with the "Slow and steady doesn't cut it in real life" tagline driving the point home. Sales were high as a result. Yet, Alchemy began its own ad campaign that plays up the negative connotation of tortoises as being slow to hype its new BiC-20. Competition promises to get even fiercer.

The Tortoise uses a casing extruded from turtle genetic material that protects the computer's interior (for [2/1, 0] armor) and also gives it a pleasant pebbly exterior. Otherwise, Tortoise functions as reliably as Alchemy's BiC-20 or any hardtech computer on the market. 5 Fail-safe.

Tech: Ψ , Mass: 1.5, Tolerance: •, Cost: ••••

Computer Agents

Even the most advanced agents possess only "satisfactory" intelligence. They are not truly sentient, just specialized programs that give the impression of independent thought. Since the release of biocomputers, though, some consumers claim that their biotech agents could qualify as artificial intelligence. The public scoffs, and Orgotek's official reply is that this claim is still well beyond modern science. Independent tests seem to confirm Orgotek's assertion.

The existence of artificial intelligence would have profound repercussions for 22nd-century society. It seems unlikely that any company would announce (let alone, release) AI technology before it was studied thoroughly (unless the AI was clever enough to fool the company into releasing "just another SI").

- **Alchemy Familiar:** This default agent is included in all Alchemy biocomps. It projects a small, almost cartoonish head and has a pleasantly innocuous persona. The Familiar has limited capabilities, but it performs tasks with great speed. It is usually all that the average citizen needs. Tech: Ψ , Cost: •

Performance: 3

Applications: Administration 1, Intent 3, Mathematics 2, Quick Search 3

- **Alchemy Genie:** This advanced agent is highly responsive to the user and can adapt to multiple users' different styles in a matter of minutes. The Genie has no set shape, but comes with an image-projection template and tutorial that enables the user to design the agent's icon however she likes. Tech: Ψ , Cost: ••••

Performance: 5

Applications: Administration 2, Geography 1, Intent 5, Linguistics 2, Mathematics 4, Organization 3, Quick Search 4, Research 3

- **DataWarp "Workaday" Basic Agent:** The FSA recommends the Workaday for all citizens without specialized needs. The androgynous "Workie" has built-in protocols that prohibit it from attempting illegal commands, such as hacking. If a user issues such a command, the Workaday replies with a polite negative — and transmits a private alarm code through the OpNet to the nearest CSA post. A user may try to hack a system on his own without this agent's help, but any access to an FSA node by the computer triggers the same alarm code automatically. The Workaday is the default computer agent for all Steinhardt systems. Tech: Ω , Cost: •

Performance: 2

Applications: Administration 2, Geography 1, Mathematics 2, Quick Search 1, Regulations 2

- **DataWarp "Expert" Advanced Agent:** The Expert has greatly extended capabilities from the Workaday without losing the ability to send an alarm when a user attempts anything subversive. The Expert is available as a default agent in Steinhardt minicomps for a mere • at the time of purchase; otherwise, cost is as following. Tech: Ω , Cost: •••

Performance: 4

Applications: Administration 3, Business 2, Law 2, Procedures 3, Quick Search 3, Regulations 3, Linguistics 1

- **Orgotek Hare:** This agent's default projection is an animated rabbit designed to provide the user with a short, diverting performance of the tasks it is given (digging recklessly through a file cabinet when doing research, running around a globe to find a geographical point). The Hare is programmed with over 1,000 variations on its routine, and the user can also program it so the antics seldom get old. For those lacking a sense of humor, the subroutine can be shut down and the rabbit icon can be replaced by any other scanned image. The Hare is popular with children, but it has enough self-referential cleverness that adults enjoy leaving it on the default configuration. The Hare gives Alchemy's Genie a run for its money in capability and in user ease. Tech: Ψ , Cost: ••••

Performance: 5

Applications: Administration 2, Business 1, Geography 2, Intent 4, Linguistics 2, Mathematics 4, Organization 3, Quick Search 4, Research 3

Biotech Augmentation Device

- **Electrokinesis Enhancement Suit:** As its name implies, the EES boosts a psion's Electrokinesis Aptitude. It draws on ambient electromagnetic energy and on the tek's own bioelectric aura to power itself. A "sparkle suit," as it's also called, is a tremendous boon to electrokinetic researchers.

The EES adds four dots to your character's Psi for purposes of determining effect ranges and durations for all Electrokinetic effects. The bioapp also reduces Psi costs by one (to a minimum of one point). Additionally, the suit incorporates biocomputer circuitry so that your character can transfer the entire contents of his computer into it. While wearing the EES, your character can Interface with his computer at will. The psion can think his commands to the computer simply by focusing (+1 difficulty to all other actions while doing so). A distraction may break his concentration, but it doesn't negate the connection. The EES must be formatted to the user to provide these enhancements.

Popularized on the animated holosim series *Strike Team Psion*, where Doctor Sagar uses his suit to throw around lightning, the EES sees little use in the field. Only a foolish tek wears the suit into a potential combat situation. Even with the suit's ability to enhance the psion's defensive skill, a solid hit can cause a minor short or even a complete system failure in its fragile biocircuitry.

Each time your character gets hit while wearing an EES — even if she soaks the damage herself — reduce the suit's Psi enhancement by one dot. After four hits, the enhancement falls to zero, shutting down the entire bioapp. Before the sparkle suit becomes functional again, your character must return it to an Orgotek lab to realign the biocircuitry and repair any damage. Orgotek is working on a more combat-worthy version of the EES. Tech: Ψ , Mass: 6, Tolerance: ••••, Cost: •••••• • (restricted)

Transportation

See **Trinity**, page 279, for specifics on vehicle codes and formatting.

• **Orgotek Beetle:** This small-tracked vehicle can seat four snugly; it is designed for cost-conscious consumers, offering a reliable car at a low price. Descendants of the owners of the long-defunct Volkswagen auto manufacturer are outraged at the Beetle, claiming it is a blatant rip-off of a treasured design. Orgotek says any similarity is coincidental and adds that it chooses names for vehicles that best suit their appearances. Besides, how is Orgotek to know about some company from a century ago?

VT: Track
Tech: Ψ
CS: 95 km/h
TS: 140 km/h
Handling: +1
Mass: 1
Tolerance: •
Cost: ••••

• **Porter-Andersen Apex:** This Nordamerican vehicle manufacturer supplies the government with its non-military vehicles. The Apex is a compact auto assigned to low-ranking (local) FSA board and office personnel, and it also sees a fair amount of use by private citizens. Like the Beetle or the Shendai AirFoil, the Apex provides a no-frills means of getting from here to there.

VT: Wheeled
Tech: Ω
CS: 110 km/h
TS: 160 km/h
Handling: 0
Mass: 1
Cost: •••••

• **Porter-Andersen Horizon:** This top-of-the-line skimmer is used by FSA officials and wealthy Nordamericans. It can seat up to six people in relative comfort and has an innovative design feature: a maglev hookup. This hookup allows the Horizon to use magrails in an arcology and to easily switch to its own power for travel outside the metroplex.

VT: Hover/Maglev
Tech: Ω
CS: 130 km/h
TS: 240 km/h
Handling: 0
Mass: 1.5
Cost: •••••• • (standard), •••••• •• (armored)
Armor: 3 [5] (optional)

That's It?

Considering various commercial endeavors taking place across the continent, one might hope to see more gear than what is listed in this chapter. **America Offline** is dedicated to exploring the social and cultural aspects of Orgotek and North America. This effort inevitably takes up a lot of room, leaving little space for tools and gadgets.

For those readers who want an in-depth exploration of technological devices (whether from Orgotek or some other Nordamerican manufacturer), take a look at the **Trinity Technology Manual**. It contains a wide variety of weapons, tools and vehicles. It also gives a detailed discussion of how technology impacts 22nd-century society.

Proxy Alex Cassel

Saying that Alex Cassel is a complex man is putting it mildly. The Prexy has many layers to his personality, and his motives and goals sometimes interfere with those of his allies — and they even interfere with Cassel's own plans on occasion. There is a certain madness to his methods, but Cassel is not insane. He simply sees more sides to a problem than most people do (and a correspondingly greater number of possible solutions).

Cassel dreams of a human race prospering in every sense of the word: free of Aberrants and other menaces, expanding through the universe, living long, full, satisfying lives. Cassel wants to abolish tyranny and poverty and everything else that keeps people from fulfilling their dreams. To get there, he is willing to do almost anything.

Alex Cassel's moral code revolves around these long-term plans for humanity. Storytellers must remember that while Cassel condones subterfuge, theft and even killing, he is ultimately an idealist. The Prexy wants to build a peaceful, prosperous future; he doesn't sit back in the board room and declare hits like some crime boss. He is no comic book character. His motives are complex and, as mentioned before, some-

times self-contradictory. Cassel has heroic and humanitarian goals, though his actions may — his actions *should* — pose moral quandaries for his followers and allies, including characters.

Cassel's Agenda

Alex Cassel's agenda is more complex than Joe Hologram gives him credit for. The typical human of 2120 believes that Cassel wants to make a profit, like all the other metacorporate CEOs do. FSA propaganda encourages this belief, presenting the Prexy as a robber-baron.

A glance at Orgotek's profits and pursuits shows that this image alone is insufficient to account for Cassel's actions. Indeed, the Big O is actually losing money in the Federated States and has hit rough spots in the Luna market as well. Though still a powerful metacorp, Orgotek is at the point where its reach may exceed its grasp.

For Cassel, there exists something deeper than profit motives or even unifying humanity: Cassel wants to liberate humanity from the manipulation of outside influences. He wants people to make their own conscious choices about their places in the universe, without being subtly drawn in a particular direction by mysterious aliens or by manipulative humans. Although Cassel has details upon details on how to realize his dream, the overall agenda breaks down into four main watershed events — each of which the Prexy and his followers pursue with equal fervor.

- **Humanity must become unified.** For this goal to occur, cultural, religious and political differences must be minimized, while similarities have to be strengthened and emphasized. More of Cassel's resources are devoted to this pursuit than any other. He encourages trade and travel between all nations and colonies, and his agents in the FSA, Nippon and China work to undermine isolationist sentiments. Cassel does not feel ready to take action against the most divisive religious groups, but he monitors their actions.



There is danger here; Cassel does not want humanity in a state of mindless uniformity. That's a large part of why he contributes to the growth of anima culture — anima is inclusive, rather than exclusive. And, at its heart, it encourages personal freedom and initiative by encouraging the individual to consider her personal vision of the universe.

- **Humanity must grow, technologically and psionically.** This aspect was the first one that Cassel conceived clearly, and Orgotek drives this growth as best it can. The Prexy has a bank of SI's devoted to combing media reports of new technologies and to rating their potential impact on intersolar economics and culture. Although Cassel won't admit it, he is almost gleeful when Alchemy or Banji develops a new bioapp or weapon system because this innovation feeds competition and progress for all.

- **Hidden manipulators must be exposed.** This directive, along with the fourth and final one, treads on dangerous ground. The forces that influence human activity cannot — *must not* — remain in the shadows. Even those groups (such as the Æon Trinity) that have humanity's best intentions at heart should not. Cassel puts himself at risk for the sake of realizing this goal. He is not ignorant of the fact that Orgotek falls in this same category, too, and the Prexy is determined to stop the psi order's machinations when its influence is no longer needed. Time will tell if Cassel ever feels that point is reached.

- **Known manipulators must be defeated.** Until the powers that threaten humanity are destroyed or rendered harmless, humans will never develop a culture that is purely their own. Instead, like the nations of the Cold War, they will only react to other influences and never choose actions on their own merit. This last directive puts the greatest strain on Orgotek's resources; the Aberrants and Chromatics are unyielding foes of tremendous power. It is no coincidence that a great number of Orgosoft's bioware products are weapons and armor. Cassel wants Joe Hologram to be able to defend himself in these violent times.

The Round Table

Some of the people in charge of Orgotek's various operations have been with Alex Cassel since the early days. These friends called their group "the Round Table" even before Cassel's attaining the title of Proxy. Cassel brought them on "board" when he formed Orgotek. A large number of powerful folks operate under Orgotek's auspices, but the Round Table is the heart of the order.

Ellayne Cassel

Prexy Cassel describes his wife Ellayne as "the secret of my success." They met in college and have been inseparable ever since. Cassel's elevation to proxy 20 years ago was a rocky period in their relationship, but close friends say the two are more in love now than ever before. Ellayne's confirmed neutral status doesn't seem to be a problem, although the scandal media wonders if Alex's slower aging will create trouble in paradise. Ellayne doesn't seem to begrudge his retarded aging as a result of becoming proxy, though. She is in her mid-40s like her husband, and although her looks have matured, Ellayne remains stunning.



Ellayne's beauty is matched by her formidable intellect. As Senior President of WEI, she has used her business acumen to steer Orgotek's course in the public arena. She is directly responsible for the public-relations campaigns that maintain the Big O in the media spotlight.

Jennifer Lehoczky-Elliott

Jennifer Lehoczky-Elliott (known as "JLE" in corporate memos) was a junior partner at a Philadelphia firm and married senior partner Jasper Elliott prior to undergoing the Prometheus Effect. Her interest in law fell by the wayside after becoming a psion. She dove into Bhurano's noetic theory, computer software, and electrical-, hardware-, and genetic engineering.

Lehoczky-Elliott and Alex Cassel were responsible for many early advances in biotechnology. As Orgosoft grew, she found herself further removed from product development and wrangling with intellectual property issues.

She has devoted nearly all of her attention lately to the Leviathan Project. Rumors from Orgosoft Farms indicate that Lehoczky-Elliott is sorely missed there, both in a business sense and a morale sense — the work force at Orgosoft is probably more devoted to her than to Cassel himself. Her number two, Mark Rickard, is a capable guy, but he is a little over his head running a concern of Orgosoft's size.

Kevin Labak

Originally one of Alex Cassel's teaching assistants at Williams College, the two men became friends. Labak was named on Cassel's joke board of directors for WEI, and he was one of three people to stay with Cassel after

the proxy's revelation of psi powers. Despite being a strong latent, Labak resisted undergoing the Prometheus Effect. He has a keen technical mind, a strong business sense and an insightful creative streak — all of which Labak fears he may lose if he acquires psi power. Cassel strongly encouraged him to do just that for years, but he finally came to terms with Labak's resolve.

Labak heads Tekne Group based on his natural talents; his lack of active psi ability has yet to pose a hindrance. It's difficult to argue with Labak's results. He designed the interface that enables bioware to accept hardtech power sources. He shares a strong rapport with his personnel, knowing almost intuitively what is possible for his people to accomplish with psi.

This awareness heightens Labak's current dissatisfaction with Tekne's place in the Orgotek family; he feels that the division is a tremendous resource left unexploited. Labak suspects that Cassel may be snubbing Tekne as a subtle means of getting Labak to take a dunk in the tank. He hasn't confronted the Prexy on this yet, but the tension between the two is evident to the rest of the Round Table.

Dr. Ashley Frost

Cassel sensed Ashley Frost's potential shortly after meeting the other proxies and awakening his own psionic abilities. He returned to Luna after getting things started with Orgotek and offered Frost the opportunity to join his order. After the surprise wore off, Frost accepted. She was a born scientist, and psi promised to reveal frontiers beyond anything Frost previously followed in astronomy.

Frost is reserved and studious. Although her years as head of Lumen have given her a strong social presence, she would much rather be among her "own kind" in the lab or at a scientific conference. And, while secure in her sexuality, Frost keeps her lesbianism private, as she prefers not to mix her studies with her social life. The Chromatic research has left her little time for socializing of late, however. Luckily for Ashley, she feels as fulfilled by scientific explorations as by a personal relationship.



Jeff “Jomo” Kenyatta

Jeff Kenyatta and Alex Cassel were best friends since their first year rooming together at Williams College. Both men were exceptional students and athletes, and each has a sharp intellect and subversive (but nonviolent) tendencies. Neither lets outside pressure dictate his actions, although both consider such factors. And the two men met the loves-of-their-lives in college.

Despite the similarities, the two retain key differences. Kenyatta lets Cassel claim the lime-light; “Jomo” (a reference to his surname, shared with the UAN’s Jomo Kenyatta spaceport) prefers the background. He’s much larger than the Prexy (or almost anyone else), which is an odd contrast to his shyness.

Kenyatta is a skilled tactician and a versatile electrokinetic; his willingness to get his hands dirty is an important element of being Operations Director. His surface shyness is a front for sharp observation. He leaves strategic issues to his staff for the most part, but Kenyatta doesn’t hesitate to step in when necessary. He led the Orgotek strike teams to India during the Chitra Bhanu purge, and he personally oversaw the destruction of the Quantakinesis Order’s Prometheus chamber.



Kenyatta’s wife Catherine never really got along well Cassel. Jomo tried to encourage a friendship between his two best friends, but thus far, he must be content with peaceful coexistence. There is more tension recently since Catherine contracted what seems to be—a taint-related disease. Cassel personally authorized her transfer to Montessor, but despite the Æsculapians’ best efforts, her condition resists all treatment. Kenyatta doesn’t talk about Catherine’s condition and becomes visibly agitated at any discussion of her disease.

Notable Electrokinetics

Liralen Green

Liralen Green left Orgotek to head Tau Ceti Development’s recruiting process. She is a talented Photokinesis specialist who never particularly cared for Orgotek corporate culture. She doesn’t want to reform the world, she wants to build new ones. So, Liralen arranges multimedia extravaganzas documenting the wonders of the known extrasolar worlds and the thrills awaiting those willing to seek new homes for humanity. Her shows feature advanced, psionically manipulated holographic displays to invoke alien environments. Green enjoys the highest recruitment rate of anyone at Tau Ceti Development.

Debbie Lawrence

The former Porter-Andersen Director of Human Resources (and Great Lakes District Administrator before that), Lawrence brought with her a significant understanding of FSA regulations when she came to Orgotek in 2108. She was the necessary devil’s advocate during Orgotek’s rapid-growth years. Without Debbie to point out the pitfalls and loopholes inherent in the government bureaucracy, Orgotek would’ve never kept free of the FSA’s grasp long enough to consolidate itself. Lawrence has become a mole for the Central Security Agency. Her son, Chris, was apprehended as a member of the Free Canada movement, so the CSA blackmailed Debbie to provide sensitive information on Orgotek in exchange for placing Chris on probation for “civil discord.” She lives in fear and self-hatred, disgusted with herself for betraying her friends, but afraid her son will die if she doesn’t.

Steven Rothery

Rothery is a British émigré whose biotechnology theories led him to Williams College two years after Cassel left. The Prexy learned of Rothery through Cassel's own biotech pursuits (then done covertly, as the psi orders had yet to reveal their existence). Rothery came to Orgotek shortly before the historic Sydney Spaceport incident, and he was one of the other key influences in developing 22nd-century biotechnology. Rothery heads up the Mars Terraforming Project and coordinates efforts for the project's research and implementation departments, as well as for the Chinese government and the Qin.

Dr. Daryl Shockey

When Orgotek purchased the subsector in lower Ukiyoshi in which to build its Olympus training campus, Shockey asked to be tested for latency. He passed with flying colors and after undergoing psion training, he was promoted to Olympus Dean upon Cassel's personal recommendation. He runs the campus well. While not as strict as Srinivasan, Shockey allows his students fewer liberties than Tanner does.

Most individuals experience a mild personality shift as a result of the Prometheus Effect—they usually gain confidence due to the subquantum connection. Some, like Shockey, undergo a massive behavioral change. Previously friendly and easygoing, he emerged from the tank with a dark demeanor. A staff vitakinetic worked with Shockey for a few weeks and seemed to clear things up, but his problems have resurfaced in recent months.

Some instructors quit during the latest term as Shockey's behavior grew disruptively paranoid, but reports of it never reached New York. Deans have almost total control of campus communications, and Shockey himself "lost" the most damning messages. Private exchanges finally reached Cassel, and Operations personnel are investigating the Olympus facility.

Dr. Marcus Srinivasan

Srinivasan, a powerful Technokinesis specialist with a doctorate in education, is dean of the San Francisco psion training campus.

Srinivasan is an admitted control freak with comments on record in favor of FSA fascist philosophy. However, Cassel insists that Srinivasan is the best man for the campus, for "he is, at heart, a good man," though none of the San Francisco campus' graduates thinks he even has one. The FSA may want Orgotek shut down, but it might have a place for a man like Srinivasan. For his part, he isn't as pro-fascist as many think, although he's far from being a bleeding-heart liberal.

Jane Tanner

A longtime EK in her late-40s, Jane Tanner has been dean of the New York training campus for the past four years. Her policies are notoriously liberal; recent graduates lack discipline in their work and are criticized for their inability to function in a formal corporate environment. Tanner is now under investigation by the FSA for seditious acts, including shunting funds to "un-American groups" and sponsoring an unlicensed publishing house. Though Tanner doesn't promote dissidence, she makes no real effort to quell independent thinking. Cassel is content to accept the friction if it means he gains psions who are skilled in dynamic, untraditional problem-solving.

Tei Lu

A telepath rather than an electrokinetic, this former Ministry operative voluntarily subjected herself to telepathic memory erasure in exchange for coming to Orgotek. Tei was a field agent for the Ministry, and she worked in tandem with the Big O on occasion. She grew sympathetic to the Electrokinesis Order's philosophy and applied for resignation. The Ministry of Psionic Affairs considers all psions to be valuable assets, but it allowed Tei Lu to resign—only after ensuring she would not "accidentally" divulge sensitive information about her former employer. Tei works in Operations now and seems to have suffered no ill effects from the mindwipe, but she sometimes complains of irritating gaps (the Ministry was apparently very specific in what was deleted and left all memories of events but those related to Ministry operations). Orgotek wants to develop telepathy-based bioware to restore Tei Lu's memory—for her benefit and for the order, naturally.

Significant North America Figures

The “ABCs”

Generals Alissane and Banks toe the FSA ideological line and maintain an opportunistic stance toward other openings within the FSA’s hierarchy. General Carlyle likes carving his own maverick path over playing the FSA game. Generals Alissane and Banks might wish to act against Carlyle and install a more tractable third partner, but they fear acting directly — and for good reason. Carlyle is a capable military man with strong political ties.

He deviates from the FSA career officer norm; he’s extremely competent, charismatic and so devoted to the Tex-Mex region that he has no desire to move up the ladder. General Carlyle treats Texan rebels far harsher than he treats Mexican guerrillas, perhaps because he understands the Mexicans’ desire to determine their own fate. Simultaneously, Carlyle maintains good relations with the Fifth Legion at the LAST Zone.

General Margaret Beckenstein

Beckenstein heads the Federated States Military. Born in 2050, she carries early memories of destruction, suffering and loss. After

years in the private sector, Beckenstein became sickened by the continued discord she saw each day. She decided to set aside her own career to help build a safer society: She joined the military. In a few short years, she led front-line units in extended mopping-up actions in Great Lakes and West Districts and got her first media attention. By the end of the century, Beckenstein reached district-level command and became part of the national-level staff not long thereafter.

She joined the Joint Chiefs in 2010 after she led a campaign against covert disloyalty that ended with the expulsion of her three immediate superiors. None of the three was deliberately treasonous, but Beckenstein interpreted (and relayed) various battlefield failures as signs of insufficient loyalty. Under her leadership, the FSM is more efficient than ever. It’s still not as effective as she’d like, though. Beckenstein is driven to quell the suffering of the nation, with the military being her method of enforcing peace and prosperity.

Julius Alexander Hidell, Jr.

Hidell’s grandparents helped keep Boston from succumbing to the worst of 21st-century problems and, in the process, Julius rose from the upper-middle class to the very top stratum. Hidell grew up in an environment that assumed



that the good of the nation is always synonymous with the good of the Hidells.

Julius entered adult life as an academic, teaching history and philosophy at Boston University and sometimes consulting with the Central Security Agency. He moved up from "occasional contractor" to "full-time employee." In 2105, just after his 40th birthday, he underwent a religious conversion to Reformed American Congregationalism. Psions made their appearances shortly thereafter, and Hidell knew that they were the most serious menace facing the country.

He worked his way up the CSA hierarchy and became Director in 2118. He enjoys near-complete success in persuading the FedBoard and district boards to approve his spending requests, but Hidell leaves the day-to-day administration of the first four divisions to his staff. He devotes personal attention to developing the Noetic Affairs Division since it is instrumental in stopping psions before there is a repeat of the Aberrant War.

St. John Manet

Manet heads the Office of Recreation. Like a number of FSA leaders, he has a particular obsession and leaves other, less interesting details to subordinates. In Manet's case, it's wilderness. He has no deep ideological commitment to the FSA, but he feels that environmental protection depends on some central authority with power to impose wise policy. The major corporations seldom care for Manet's policy of environmental protection. Yet, some do recognize the profit potential in park management and in the wilderness as an environmental and entertainment resource. These supporters keep Manet in place to defend the ecology of North America.

Jay B. Morales

Jay is a mild-mannered Toronto author/programmer who created the Canadian Renaissance Network. Now 46 years old, he conceived the idea while in his 20s after intensively studying nonviolent resistance movements. Like many of his peers, Jay was repelled by Free Canada's violence — but unlike them, he realized the terrorists weren't bringing Canadian independence any closer. Morales set out to methodically evaluate alternative strategies. CRN was the result.

The public knows Morales to be a champion of Canadian culture in the face of American media onslaught; he organizes gatherings of Canadian artists and hosts FSA media programs to promote Canadian culture. He uses these opportunities to evaluate prospective CRN members and then pass recommendations to recruiters. Morales' sideline of computer agent development lets him process information gathered by CRN agents for anonymous release.

Morales purposefully knows little about how far CRN penetration runs. He makes informed guesses based on the information he has collected, but he is aware of the security dangers of knowing too much.

Character Templates

The following templates represent a small sample of the characters one might encounter from Orgotek or during activity in North America. They can be incorporated easily into a series — either as written or modified to suit the Storyteller's taste.



The Continental Operative

Arthur Bengali may come from Egyptian ancestry, but he is Nordamerican through and through. He grew up in the Pacific Northwest. His family moved from old urban Seattle to various arcologies and back again in search of a better life. Bengali shares his parents' restlessness, never living more than a few years in one part of the country. He has developed a great love for North America's great environmental variety, from the arid beauty of Tex-Mex (where there isn't a firefright in progress) to the picturesque countryside of Great Lakes (where radicals haven't blown stuff up) to the quaint communities of East (where some metacorp hasn't plunked down a massive arcology). The irony of nature being in conflict with human "progress" isn't lost on Bengali. In fact, it helps him keep a perspective on life and humanity's current state.

Bengali's parents were apolitical. He's not sure about the roots of his hatred of the FSA, but the government's heavy-handed treatment of the land — and the people — that he loves made Bengali lose all fondness for it. Ever since he was a boy, Bengali knew that working for the greater freedom of North America was his calling.

During spring break of his sophomore year in college (the benefit of parents who worked for Steinhardt), Bengali checked out a place he hadn't been yet: the Blight Zone. While snapping holostills of the zone fencing and a few warped plants, Bengali met a Legion patrol. During some good-natured ribbing, he noticed Legionnaires looking significantly at one another. Bengali learned that they sensed strong psi in him.

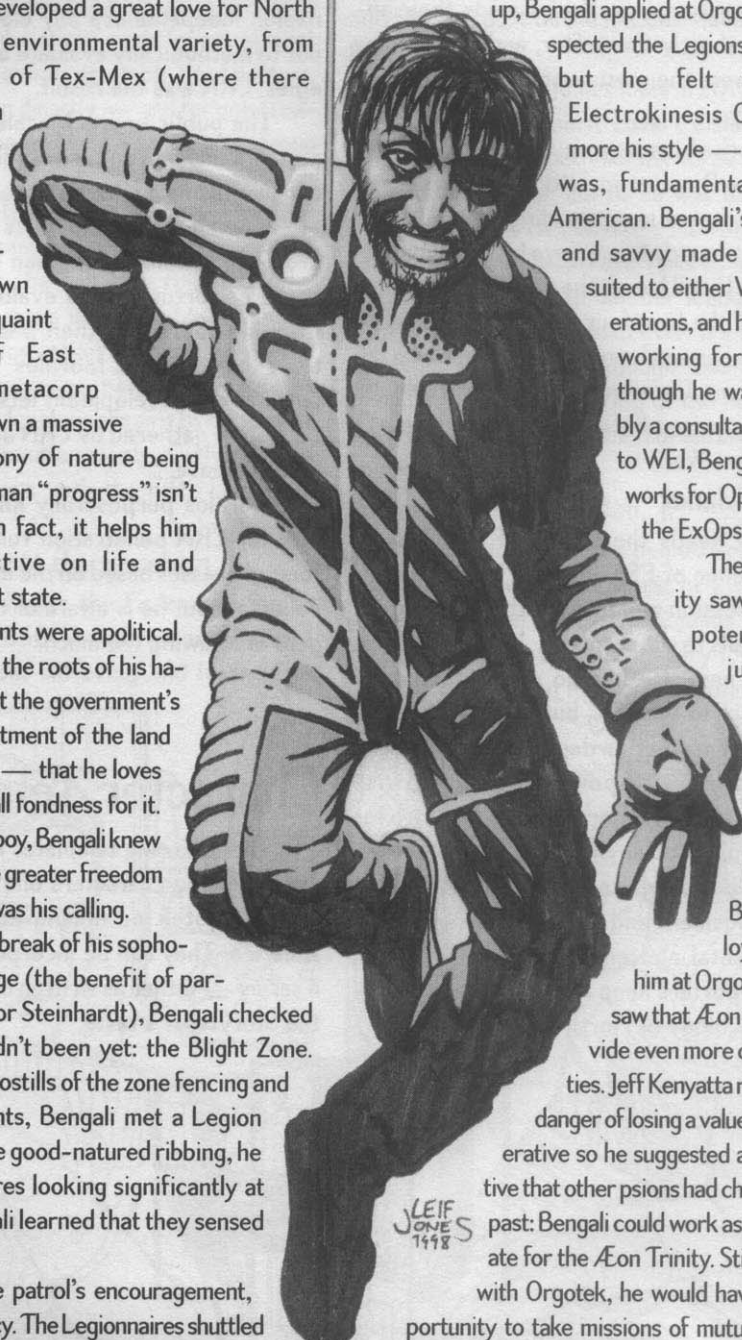
Bengali, at the patrol's encouragement, was tested for latency. The Legionnaires shuttled him to the LAST Zone main HQ — deeper inside

the Blight than Bengali ever dreamed he'd get — and they hooked him up to the latency tester. After an hour of wearing an odd helmet, of being poked with metal sticks and of answering seemingly nonsensical questions, Bengali was finished. A short while later, he learned that he was a latent.

Even though the Legions were eager to sign him up, Bengali applied at Orgotek. He respected the Legions' methods, but he felt that the Electrokinesis Order was more his style — and that it was, fundamentally, more American. Bengali's charisma and savvy made him well-suited to either WEI or Operations, and he ended up working for both. Although he was ostensibly a consultant assigned to WEI, Bengali actually works for Operations in the ExOps Division.

The Æon Trinity saw Bengali's potential after just a few field assignments and approached him to join. Bengali's loyalty kept

him at Orgotek, but he saw that Æon could provide even more opportunities. Jeff Kenyatta realized the danger of losing a valued field operative so he suggested an alternative that other psions had chosen in the past: Bengali could work as an associate for the Æon Trinity. Still officially with Orgotek, he would have the opportunity to take missions of mutual interest to Orgotek and Æon.



Orgosoft Field Agent

Janice McCaskey was born a few years before the new millennium in the “normal” town of Dempster, South Dakota in Central District. “Normal” meaning the city maintained a respectable local militia and could afford two full-time security officers — enough to keep all but the most determined Outback gangs away.

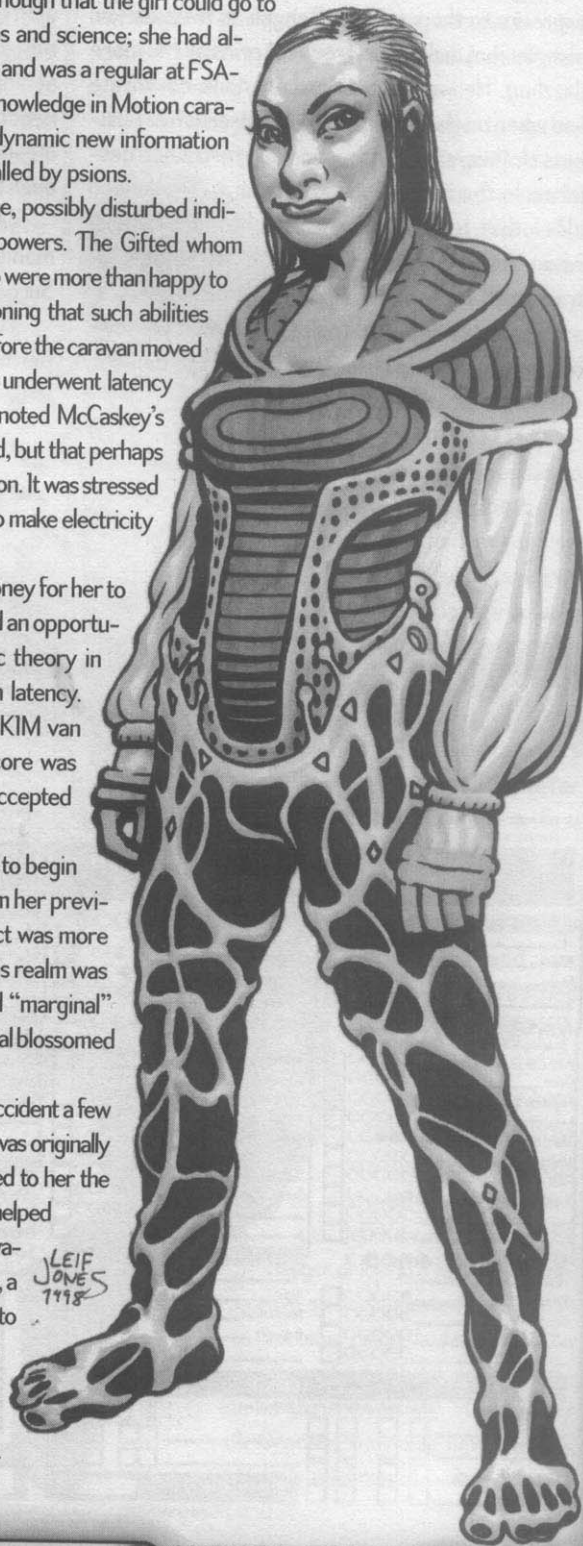
McCaskey’s family was financially secure enough that the girl could go to school full-time. She excelled in communications and science; she had already exhausted the contents of the local library and was a regular at FSA-approved OpNet sites when the first Orgotek Knowledge in Motion caravan came to town. Not only did she devour the dynamic new information available in the KIM van, but she was also enthralled by psions.

FSA propaganda described psions as strange, possibly disturbed individuals who were in debatable control of their powers. The Gifted whom McCaskey met were friendly, outgoing people who were more than happy to show some psionic tricks — all the while cautioning that such abilities took a great deal of time and dedication to learn. Before the caravan moved on, McCaskey and a handful of others voluntarily underwent latency testing. She scored marginally positive. The tek noted McCaskey’s disappointment and said that positive was still good, but that perhaps she shouldn’t set all of her hopes on becoming a psion. It was stressed that an education was as important as being able to make electricity dance across her fingertips.

Neither Janice nor her family had enough money for her to attend college, but she knew that Orgotek offered an opportunity to learn. She studied all she could of noetic theory in hopes of discovering a way to increase her own latency. McCaskey volunteered again for testing when a KIM van came through Dempster 18 months later. Her score was slightly higher this time than the last, and she was accepted into Orgotek’s training program.

Weeks later, McCaskey arrived in New York to begin instruction. She knew much of what to expect from her previous study, but experiencing the Prometheus Effect was more amazing than she’d imagined. It reinforced that this realm was what she was meant for — to hell with so-called “marginal” scores. She was proven right, as her psionic potential blossomed greater than the tests had predicted.

McCaskey’s dream was marred by a skimmer accident a few weeks later in which she lost the use of her legs. She was originally interested in a post at WEI, but her accident revealed to her the wonders of Orgosoft Farms. Biotech healing braces helped her limbs set in record time, and biotech muscle activators kept the muscles toned in her legs. Unfortunately, a biotech device didn’t yet exist that could enable her to walk; even the hardtech devices were bulky, imprecise and unattractive. McCaskey pushed for an internship at Orgosoft. She soon became a senior assistant field researcher, testing new bioware prototypes — including the biotech walker that she now wears.



Vengeful Guerrilla

David Ruiz never wanted much out of life, just a family and a means to support them. Even amid the constant battles that raged around his home of Santa Ana in Tex-Mex District, Ruiz kept a center of peace. He and his wife Amalie found freedom in marriage, and they let the rest of the universe go its own way. Ruiz had a small repair shop. Amalie worked as a caterer for her aunt. When Amalie got pregnant, Ruiz saw all of his dreams realized.

Then the nightmare began.

Four months into the pregnancy, Amalie collapsed while catering a party for Major Bergin, the local FSM commander (times were hard, and despite her aunt's misgivings, money was money). Amalie was suffering of complications beyond the local physician's ability to treat. The major offered to take Amalie to Tucson where the Æsculapians could care for her. Ruiz agreed but insisted that he go along.

Amalie had to remain in bed for the duration of her pregnancy. A week after baby Norah's birth, the three were startled by the distant sound of weapon fire. Though the sound was familiar from back home, it was out of place inside an arcology. Ruiz took his family out of a maintenance exit, past the panic and confusion in the clinic.

After an hour of running, they stumbled across Mexican rebels fleeing from an FSM assault skimmer through a parking facility. The soldier in the skimmer's turret sprayed heavy laser fire through the area, cutting the people down as they ran. Ruiz pushed Amalie back toward the exit. The assault skimmer's spotlight caught them just as they reached it. Ruiz yelled and clutched Norah tight as deadly beams seared the air.

Ruiz awoke two months later in a hospital room — an Orgosoft Farms infirmary. Orgotek was the first on the scene after Tucson's destruction; they'd rescued a number of Hispanics, fearing their treatment at the hands of the FSA. Ruiz was told that Amalie was dead and that their daughter was blind. It was operable, but the physicians had to wait until Norah was older. The anger that Ruiz had suppressed for years boiled to the surface. His peaceful life was no more.

Revenge fueled Ruiz's desire to recover; six agonizing months later, he was walking. The doctor later told Ruiz that they'd tested him for latency as part of normal procedure, and that he'd scored positive. Orgotek stated that it could use someone with Ruiz's drive and dedication if he wished to join. Ruiz accepted instantly — psionics could help him achieve his vengeance.

Ruiz didn't care that Operations had pegged him as a perfect new addition. As soon as he finished his basic training in San Francisco, he made sure that

Norah was safe in the Orgotek care facility. Ruiz recorded some images of her and left a holorecording of his own, then slipped south. He returned to Santa

Ana in the night, staying only long enough to learn where he might join up with the Mexican Resistance. His relatives barely recognized the hard-faced man, but they had heard of the massacre. Ruiz joined in the fight against the Federated States as if he'd been doing so all his life.



Image: Ruiz is a man aged beyond his years. Although in his mid-30s, he looks a decade older. His face still shows signs of smile lines, but his features now look shaped as though out of granite. Ruiz's eyes are deepset and stare blankly. He moves slowly, as if in a dream, becoming animated only in combat. No hint of life touches his eyes, except when he watches holotapes of his wife and daughter.

Roleplaying Hints: You wanted peace, but you could never escape conflict. Although you did your best, you couldn't save your wife or child from the horrors of war. You're through having others control your life. You'll show them what it means to

have someone take away the most precious of all things. You'll make them feel the constant pain that you suffer.

Aptitude: [Electrokinesis] Electromanipulation 1 (Stun), Photokinesis 3 (Control Illumination, High-light, Spectrum Sight, Electromagnetic Shield), Technokinesis 1 (Power Surge)

Gear: Aris SureSting flechette pistol, Voss 63K laser carbine, five extra clips for each, smoke grenades (3), fragmentation grenades (5), field camouflage (reinforced), satchel, compass, fieldkit, medkit, holorecorder and collection of personal tapes

NAME: DAVID RUIZ
SERIES:

ORIGIN: WORKER
NATURE: JUDGE

APTITUDE: ELECTROKINESIS
ALLEGIANCE: MEXICAN RESISTANCE

ATTRIBUTES AND ABILITIES

PHYSICAL

STRENGTH ●●●○○

Brawl ●●●○○
Might ●○○○○

DEXTERITY ●●●○○

Athletics ●●○○○
Drive ●○○○○
Firearms ●●○○○
Legerdemain ●○○○○
Martial Arts ●○○○○
Melee ●○○○○
Pilot ●○○○○
Stealth (Ambush) ●○○○○

STAMINA ●●●○○ (enduring)

Endurance ●○○○○
Resistance ●○○○○

MENTAL

PERCEPTION ●●○○○

Awareness ●●○○○
Investigation ●○○○○

INTELLIGENCE ●●○○○

Academics ●○○○○
Bureaucracy ●○○○○
Engineering ●●○○○
Intrusion ●○○○○
Linguistics (English) ●○○○○
Medicine ●○○○○
Science ●○○○○
Survival ●○○○○

WITS ●●○○○

Arts ●○○○○
Meditation ●○○○○
Rapport ●○○○○

SOCIAL

APPEARANCE ●●○○○

Intimidation ●●○○○
Style ●○○○○

MANIPULATION ●●○○○

Command ●○○○○
Interrogation ●○○○○
Subterfuge ●○○○○

CHARISMA ●●○○○

Etiquette ●○○○○
Perform ●○○○○
Savvy ●○○○○

HEALTH

Brused -0
Hurt -1
Injured -1
Wounded -2
Maimed -3
Crippled -4
Incapacitated
Dead

INITIATIVE 8
MOVEMENT WALK RUN SPRINT
5 15 29

COMBAT

ATTACK	ACC	DMG	ROF	FT	ARMOR	RTG	BULK	FT

EXPERIENCE

PSI ORDER ORGOTEK

PLAYER:

ADVANTAGES

WILLPOWER

●●●●●○○○○○

PSI

●●●●●○○○○○

ELECTROKINESIS

Electromanipulation ●●○○○

Photokinesis ●●○○○

Technokinesis ●○○○○

AUXILIARY MODES

●○○○○○

BACKGROUNDS

Contacts ●●●●○

Follower (daughter) ●○○○○

Resources ●○○○○

Status (Mexican Resistance) ●○○○○

The Woman in Black

Letitia Jackson comes from a long line of social activists (women's suffrage, racial desegregation, handicapped access, minority religious rights). Her parents and grandparents see her decision to join the FSA as a betrayal of her heritage. She thinks differently.

The first psions that Jackson saw in person were electrokinetics fighting the Aberrants who called themselves the "Southern Redevelopment Alliance." Yes, the psions stopped the Aberrants, but in the process, they did almost as much damage themselves — and the "Gifted" didn't particularly care. The Chitra Bhanu purge a few years later confirmed Jackson's worst suspicions: The psions may not be the same as Aberrants, but that didn't mean they weren't dangerous.

Jackson began her career as a social activist, speaking out against the danger that psions represented. She didn't want them eradicated, but Jackson believed that if psions were allowed to run around unchecked, humanity would someday face a situation no different from the Aberrant War. The "Gifted" must be brought under control and monitored by those who had the best interests of humanity in mind.

Her charisma and eloquence gained Jackson a number of followers from youth communities. She appeared on media programs and once debated an Orgotek representative to a standstill, countering his every pro-psion argument with her own well-reasoned anti-psion stance.

It was no surprise that the CSA approached Jackson. She was speaking out right in CSA's backyard; the agency could hardly not

hear Jackson's insightful commentaries. This first contact reminded Jackson of her original goal and how she'd strayed from it. She started out just wanting people to be careful of psions' possible danger, and she now spoke out for monitoring and tagging and isolation.

The CSA's Noetic Affairs Division assured

Jackson that they wanted a safety valve for psions — they didn't

want psions to be treated like pets or freaks, either. Jackson wasn't foolish enough to take this assurance at face value, yet she couldn't argue with the fact that psions operated in Noetic Affairs with no noticeable limitations.

The CSA told Jackson that it was committed to contain the psions' excesses, and loyal Gifted were encouraged to help. Other agents kept an eye on them in case psions thought they might be in danger of losing control. Jackson was a perfect fit for CSA's efforts; she could make a positive difference.

She harbored some doubt as to the absolute sincerity of CSA's claims, but Jackson's fear of uncontrolled psions was stronger.

She decided that a government post would enable her to help keep psions in line, and at least she'd be on hand if the CSA ever tried to step too hard on psion rights.

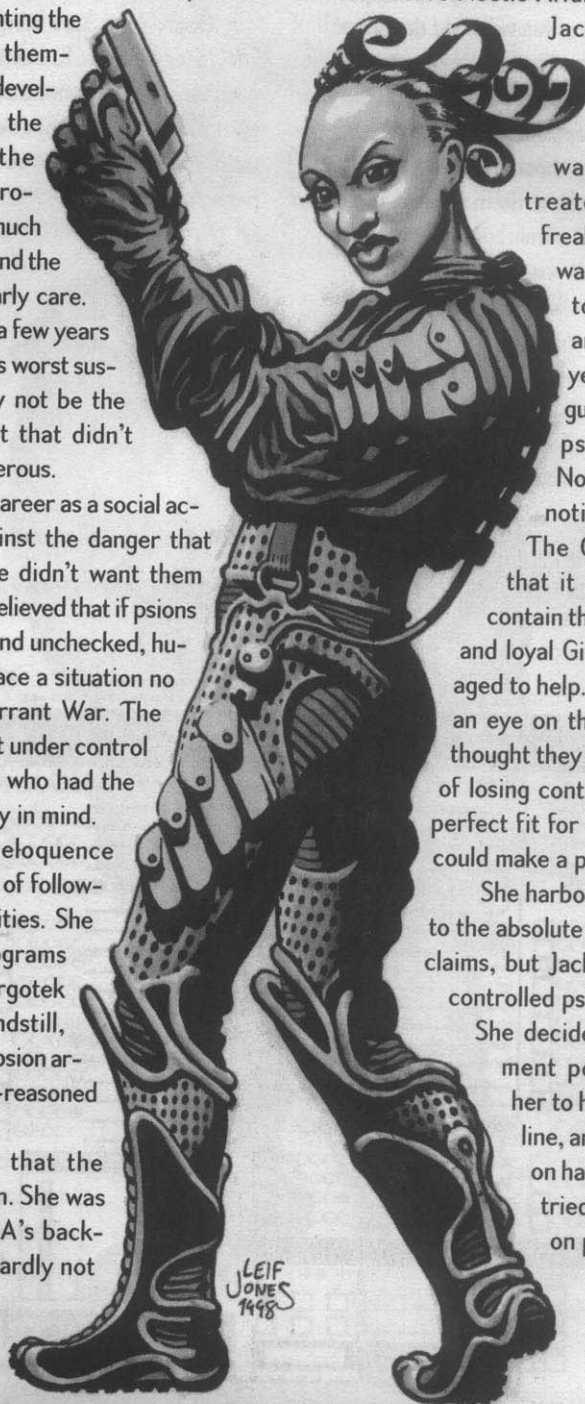


Image: Jackson is a small woman of average appearance. Her hair is her one affectation: She likes to have the latest style, preferably one requiring cutting-edge biotechnology for new effects. Years of fieldwork have taught her that sturdy sensible clothes should be the field agent's choice.

Roleplaying Hints: You're driven. You fear that a new generation of monsters is breeding in secret. You don't like or trust your employers, though you do enjoy mutual confidence in your colleagues.

You feel truly alive only while in the field — documenting psion crimes, fighting psions who turn against law and justice. You wish you could find others who share your awareness of the problem and a desire to change the FSA. Perhaps you will...someday.

Gear: Aris Whistler sonic pistol, Aris SureSting flechette pistol, rugged clothing (reinforced), Steinhardt VirtuX minicomputer (DataWarp Patton agent, cell link), bugs, computer detector, vocoder (Spanish, Chinese, Swahili, Portuguese)

NAME: LETITIA JACKSON		ORIGIN: ACTIVIST		APTITUDE: NONE	
SERIES:		NATURE: FOLLOWER		ALLEGIANCE: CENTRAL SECURITY AGENCY	

ATTRIBUTES AND ABILITIES					
PHYSICAL		MENTAL		SOCIAL	
STRENGTH ●●○○○		PERCEPTION ●●○○○		APPEARANCE ●●○○○	
Brawl	○○○○○	Awareness	●○○○○	Intimidation	○○○○○
Might	○○○○○	Investigation	○○○○○	Style	●○○○○
DEXTERITY ●●○○○		INTELLIGENCE ●●○○○		MANIPULATION ●●○○○	
Athletics	●○○○○	Academics	○○○○○	(persuasive)	○○○○○
Drive	●○○○○	Bureaucracy	●○○○○	Command	○○○○○
Firearms	●○○○○	Engineering	○○○○○	Interrogation	●○○○○
Legerdemain	○○○○○	Intrusion	●○○○○	Subterfuge	○○○○○
Marital Arts	●○○○○	Linguistics	○○○○○	CHARISMA ●●○○○	
Melee	○○○○○	Medicine	○○○○○	Etiquette	○○○○○
Pilot	○○○○○	Science	○○○○○	Perform	●○○○○
Stealth	●○○○○	Survival	●○○○○	Savvy	○○○○○
STAMINA ●●○○○		WITS ●●○○○		HEALTH	
Endurance	○○○○○	Arts	○○○○○	Bruised	-0
Resistance	○○○○○	Meditation	○○○○○	Hurt	-1
		Rapport	●○○○○	Injured	-1
			○○○○○	Wounded	-2
			○○○○○	Maimed	-3
			○○○○○	Crippled	-4
			○○○○○	Incapacitated	
			○○○○○	Dead	

COMBAT					
ATTACK			ARMOR		
ACC	DGM	ROF	FT	RTG	BULK

EXPERIENCE		

INITIATIVE			MOVEMENT		
WALK	RUN	SPRINT	WALK	RUN	SPRINT
6	5	15	29		

PSI ORDER ORGOTEK	
PLAYER:	
ADVANTAGES	
WILLPOWER	
PSI	
APTITUDE	
AUXILIARY MODES	
BACKGROUNDS	
Contacts	●○○○○
Resources	●○○○○
Influence	●○○○○
Status (CSA)	●○○○○

Hometown Rebel

Paul Gervase is not a complex man. He grew up in a working-class neighborhood in Montreal, Québec. His parents were politically active Québécois; his father was part of a trade union and was involved in a couple of labor demonstrations, and his mother lobbied the Québécois government to lower the country's trade restrictions with the FSA and Europe.

Accordingly, Gervase grew up with a sympathy for the workingman and with a distrust for the Québec and FSA governments. These sensibilities stayed with him even though Gervase grew distant from his parents after graduating high school. By the time Gervase was 20, he had a job as a construction worker in Québec. He had a few friends that he sometimes met up with at a neighborhood bar, but no romance and no long-term plans. Life went on, and Gervase didn't realize that he was bored to death.

In June of 2115, after spending his lunch hour idly watching a labor demonstration, Gervase made an off-hand comment to a co-worker, Philip Marcil, about the good old days when a demonstration didn't have to worry about "the man" coming in to break it up. Gervase was joking — he wasn't even born back in the "good old days" — but he didn't know that Marcil was a member of the Québec splinter of the Free Canada movement. The grizzled

old construction worker kept a close eye on Gervase from then on, at first to see if the young man was a government spy, then in hopes of bringing Gervase into the fold.

Marcil approached Gervase about making a little extra money. Construction work paid so well that Gervase wasn't worried about making ends meet, but he got the idea that the real thrust of what Marcil was asking him didn't involve pay. Out of curiosity, Gervase complied.

It turned out that the job required "roughing up" some off-duty Montreal police who were known to be FSA stooges. Nothing lethal, just a

few judicious knocks to show cops that citizens didn't appreciate being sold out to some fascist state. Gervase didn't care about the message, although if he thought about it, he

tended to agree. What he enjoyed most was the rush he got from the danger and the thrill of physical conflict.

Marcil was pleased with his protégé, and when more "physical labor" was called for, Gervase was contacted again. He accepted and soon became a regular bodyguard and muscle-for-hire as warranted.

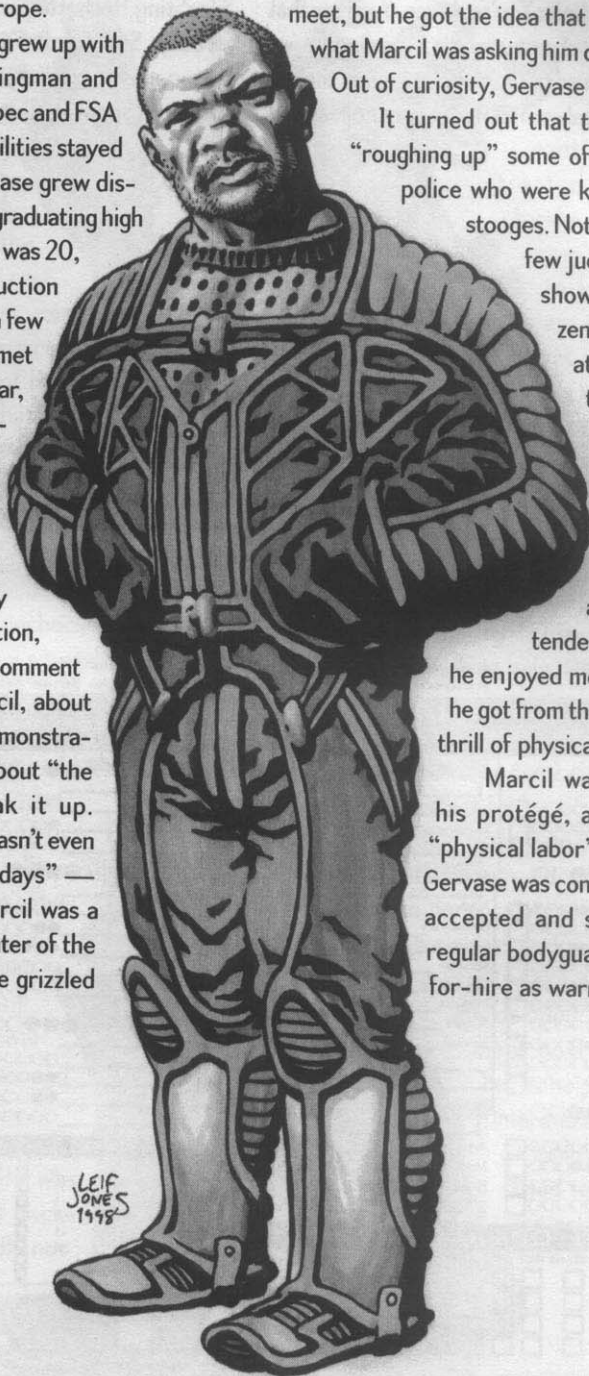


Image: Gervase is large and strongly built. His hair is light and cut short, and his dark eyes are set far apart. Gervase dresses functionally on the job, but in his off-hours, he prefers loose-fitting clothes. They don't disguise his size, but they conceal his thick muscles (about which he is a bit embarrassed). Gervase is most at home in his neighborhood tavern, happily joining in the crowd's noise and spending time with friends.

Roleplaying Hints: You don't have a lot of subtlety or subterfuge in you; you tend to say what's on your mind. If you were actually a Free Canada zealot, this characteristic might get you into trouble, but since you don't live and breathe the Cause, you have no reason to spout its dogma. You sympathize with the rebels, sure, but life is good enough for you that you don't really see what the big deal is. You're a part-time revolutionary — in it for the thrill.

Gear: L-K Avenger 11mm heavy autopistol, work boots, coveralls (reinforced), gloves

NAME: PAUL GERVASE SERIES:		ORIGIN: WORKER NATURE: THRILLSEEKER		APTITUDE: NONE ALLEGIANCE: NONE	
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ATTRIBUTES AND ABILITIES					
PHYSICAL		MENTAL		SOCIAL	
STRENGTH ●●●●○ (ripped) Brawl ●●●●○ Might ●●●●○ ○○○○○		PERCEPTION ●●●●○ Awareness ●○○○○ Investigation ○○○○○ ○○○○○		APPEARANCE ●●○○○ Intimidation ●●●●○ Style ○○○○○ ○○○○○	
DEXTERITY ●●○○○ Athletics ●●●●○ Drive ●○○○○ Firearms ●●●●○ Legerdemain ○○○○○ Martial Arts ○○○○○ Melee ●●●●○ Pilot ○○○○○ Stealth ●○○○○ ○○○○○		INTELLIGENCE ●●○○○ Academics ○○○○○ Bureaucracy ○○○○○ Engineering ●●●●○ Intrusion ○○○○○ Linguistics (French) ●○○○○ Medicine ○○○○○ Science ○○○○○ Survival ○○○○○ ○○○○○		MANIPULATION ●●○○○ Command ○○○○○ Interrogation ○○○○○ Subterfuge ●○○○○ ○○○○○	
STAMINA ●●●●○ (resilient) Endurance ●●●●○ Resistance ●○○○○ ○○○○○ ○○○○○		WITS ●●○○○ Arts ○○○○○ Meditation ○○○○○ Rapport ○○○○○ ○○○○○		CHARISMA ●●○○○ Etiquette ○○○○○ Perform ○○○○○ Savvy ●●●●○ ○○○○○	

COMBAT			
ATTACK	ACC	DMG	ROF
FT	ARMOR	RTG	BULK
FT	B	L	FT
EXPERIENCE			

HEALTH	
Brused	-0
Hurt	-1
Injured	-1
Wounded	-2
Maimed	-3
Crippled	-4
Incapacitated	
Dead	

INITIATIVE		MOVEMENT	
WALK	RUN	WALK	RUN
5	14	5	26

PSI ORDER ORGOTEK	
PLAYER:	
ADVANTAGES	
WILLPOWER	●●●●○
PSI	●○○○○
APTITUDE	
	○○○○○
	○○○○○
	○○○○○
AUXILIARY MODES	
	○
	○
	○
BACKGROUNDS	
Contacts	●●●●○
Mentor (Marcil)	●○○○○
Resources	●○○○○
Status (Free Canada)	●○○○○
	○○○○○
	○○○○○
	○○○○○
	○○○○○

This appendix includes various sources that influenced the writers in their approach to North America, Orgotek, Electrokinetics and other stuff that's crammed into this volume. Trinity is just a staging point for the imagination; these sources can provide you with even more inspiration for your stories.

Recommended Reading

Anthony Burgess — *1985*. The first half of this book is a critique of Orwell's 1984 (including appraisal of the context in which Orwell wrote and the effect Orwell's work had on events since then). The second half is a novella about what Burgess sees as concerns that Orwell missed (or that developed after Orwell wrote). The nominally left-wing future Britain that Burgess portrays was very much an inspiration for the structure of the FSA.

Stephen R. Donaldson — *The Gap Saga*. Schemers of the highest order manipulate humanity's destiny in the face of an unknowable alien threat. Sound familiar?

Halliday & Resnick — *Fundamentals of Physics*. H&R is widely accepted as the standard freshman physics textbook. Considering that we're talking science fiction here, it's worth perusing at least.

Friedrich Hayek — *The Road to Serfdom*. Written in 1944, this book is still a classic on the origins of fascism in good intentions gone awry. Chapter 10, "Why the Worst Come Out on Top," amounts to a guide for playing senior board members.

Larry Niven & Jerry Pournelle — *Oath of Fealty*. This book offers a good sense of what arcologies are like to actually build and live in. It's a good yarn about an arcology being built near Los Angeles, with unforeseen consequences all around. You can take or leave some of the social theorizing, but it's worth reading.

Kenichi Ohmae — *The End of the Nation State*. A detailed, very accessible work of real-world economics. Find out just why the FSA can't last, and get ideas for how regions within the FSA may prosper in spite of the boards.

Vernor Vinge — *Across Realtime* (collects *The Peace War*, "The Ungoverned," and *Marooned In Realtime*). Vinge's Peace Authority is what the FSA wishes it could

grow up to be. But Vinge shows how big stasis-loving institutions are vulnerable, along with a lot of neat social extrapolation useful for Trinity Storytellers.

Recommended Films

The Fifth Element, directed by Luc Besson. Okay, this isn't great cinema. But it's a lot of fun, and the spirit of getting by reasonably cheerfully in the midst of a sort of urban sprawl is very relevant. The Heavy Metal stories that inspired this movie used settings like this version of New York for grim, carefully calculated angst-ridden storytelling; Besson shows people living out their lives.

Trouble In Mind, directed by Alan Rudolph. A solid cast does a fine job in this story of future film noir. Rain City is the archetypal old urban area. Hilly Blue (a fine non-drag performance by Divine) is precisely the sort of sinister creep the FSA would give authority to. Mark Isham's soundtrack is moody and evocative. And look at the background touches, like the never-explained protests and demonstrations: That's the sort of thing characters should encounter in the FSA.

Recommended Comics

Terminal City, written and drawn by Dean Motter (Vertigo). This nine-issue mini-series (collected in trade paperback, and with a sequel also worth reading) is set in an alternate present, where the '30s vision of Technopolis came true and it wasn't immune to the usual forces of civic corruption and disinterest. Much of Terminal City's style is suitable to FSA urban planning, full of big projects not quite finished or run down after completion, with small people in the midst of looming uncomfortable design. It also has a spirit of fun and adventure in the midst of tough times.

Stormwatch, vol. 1 #37-50 and vol. 2, written by Warren Ellis, drawn by various artists (Image). Ellis took a pretty generic superhero series and turned it into a very tight, dramatic story about what happens when superheroes become part of the political process. Though about guys in tights, this is a model for the darker side of how the psi orders might deal with Æon and governments.

Credits

Writers: Bruce Baugh (Electrokinesis, North America), Rob Heinsoo (North America), James Kiley (Psi Order Orgotek)

Developer: Andrew Bates

Editor: Allison Sturms

Vice President in Charge of Production:

Richard Thomas

Art Director: Richard Thomas

Cover Art: David Seeley

Front and Back Cover Design: Jeff Holt

Layout and Typesetting: Jeff Holt

Artists: Langdon Foss, Leif Jones, Rob Dixon, Rich Thomas,



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GAME STUDIO

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This book uses science fiction for settings, characters and themes. All science fiction, geopolitical scenarios and psi-related elements are fiction and intended for entertainment purposes only. Reader discretion is advised.

Check out White Wolf online at

<http://www.white-wolf.com>; alt.games.whitewolf.com and rec.games.frp.storyteller.com

PRINTED IN CANADA

Author Dedication

Bruce Baugh: With thanks to the works of Friedrich Hayek for the process by which good intention becomes tyranny, and to Ed Schultheis for the conversations that led me to Hayek.

James Kiley: To my wife Ellen and son Jimmy, for the happiness they keep in my life.

Special Mention

Well, spring is in the air, and one's fancy turns to...conventions! Yup, once the weather warms up, the convention season swings into high gear. The White Wolf office is a-bustle with folks scrambling about, preparing for the big 'cons — GenCon, DragonCon, San Diego Comicon, Origins, Chicago Comicon — plus, all the mid- to small-sized conventions across the globe.

I couldn't tell ya who's gonna be where from the Wolf, but we try to send promotional support even if we can't attend ourselves. If you see some drunken fool raising a ruckus at a 'con, though, it's likely a White Wolf staffer. Well, it could be somebody else, but considering our habits, that's a slim possibility. Hey, why not buy that stranger a drink and find out?

— Bates

CREDITS

NAME:
SERIES:

ORIGIN:
NATURE:

APTITUDE:
ALLEGIANCE:

ATTRIBUTES AND ABILITIES

PHYSICAL

MENTAL

SOCIAL

STRENGTH ●○○○○

Brawl _____
Might _____

DEXTERITY ●○○○○

Athletics _____
Drive _____
Firearms _____
Legerdemain _____
Marital Arts _____
Melee _____
Pilot _____
Stealth _____

STAMINA ●○○○○

Endurance _____
Resistance _____

PERCEPTION ●○○○○

Awareness _____
Investigation _____

INTELLIGENCE ●○○○○

Academics _____
Bureaucracy _____
Engineering _____
Intrusion _____
Linguistics _____
Medicine _____
Science _____
Survival _____

WITS ●○○○○

Arts _____
Meditation _____
Rapport _____

APPEARANCE ●○○○○

Intimidation _____
Style _____

MANIPULATION ●○○○○

Command _____
Interrogation _____
Subterfuge _____

CHARISMA ●○○○○

Etiquette _____
Perform _____
Savvy _____

HEALTH

Bruised	0
Hurt	-1
Injured	-1
Wounded	-2
Maimed	-3
Crippled	-4
Incapacitated	
Dead	

COMBAT

ATTACK	ACC	DMG	ROF	FT	ARMOR	RTG	BULK	FT
						B	L	

EXPERIENCE

INITIATIVE

WALK RUN SPRINT

PSI ORDER
ORGOTEK

PLAYER:

WILLPOWER

○○○○○○○○○○
○○○○○○○○○○

PSI

○○○○○○○○○○
○○○○○○○○○○

POSSESSIONS

CASH

GEAR (CARRIED)

EQUIPMENT (OWNED)

APTITUDE

ELECTROKINESIS

BASIC TECHNIQUES

ELECTROMANIPULATION ○○○○○

PHOTOKINESIS ○○○○○

TECHNOKINESIS ○○○○○

AUXILIARY MODES

○
○
○
○

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

ALLIES

FOLLOWERS

CIPHER

INFLUENCE

CITIZENSHIP

MENTOR

CONTACTS

RESOURCES

DEVICES

STATUS



MERITS

TYPE COST

FLAWS

TYPE BONUS

APPEARANCE

Age

Hair

Eyes

Ht.

Wt.

Race

Gender

Nationality

Native Language

AMERICA OFFLINE

PSI ORDER ORGOTEK & FSA SOURCEBOOK

The Spark of Revolution

Electricity runs everything from computers to human beings. It's also the playground of Orgotek, the electrokinetic order. This multibillion dollar metacorporation employs people who can control electromagnetic energy through sheer will — psions. Headquartered in the heart of the fascist Federated States of America, Orgotek works to return the once-great nation to its former democratic and capitalist glory.

From the Mind of a Psion

In America Offline, discover the true agenda of Orgotek, the Electrokinetic Order. Learn how to control electricity — from hacking into a computer network to seizing control of a person's synaptic relays! See the extent of the Federated States government's iron grip on North America. Discover the rebels who work subversively within the system and through warfare to reclaim freedom from tyranny.

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- Detailed tips on playing an electrokinetic, including new psionic powers
- Revealing information on North American society and politics

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