

KA•GE

A SURVIVAL GUIDE TO AN IMPOLITE SOCIETY



SUMMER 2055

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2nd Quarter 1994

\$6.00



Greetings, Runners.

I know what you are thinking, '...why the drek did it take so long for me to get my magazine?!?!'. Well, there were some big changes made here at AWOL: our president, Jim Long, has stepped down to devote more time to other projects, I have purchased the majority of the stock in the corporation, and we restructured your sister organization, Mechforce North America. The change in ownership required the accountants and lawyers to 'freeze' the company for just over 3 months. After the dust cleared, we found ourselves 3 months behind in getting the issues ready for press (as well as with everything else.) **The next issue - Fall 2055 - will be on time.** Expect to see it around the end of October.

After the October issue we will change the format and the mailings a little. Instead of mailing on the 15th (or there about) we will begin mailing on the first day of the last month of each quarter. So you will now be receiving your issues around the first of March, June, September, and

December. This will help our mailing schedule as well as facilitating printing (this change in our deadlines will actually speed the production process.)

In the "no, we didn't jack up your rates without telling you" department, we want to apologize for the inadvertent error in the recent FASA product, **Double Exposure**. There-in, our recruitment form listed the Network membership price as \$25.00. This was incorrect. Worry not. Anyone sending in a membership application with that form will be given a credit voucher for the five dollars.

Seeing that my space is running short, and confident that you are ready for the conclusion of Mike Stackpole's fiction, I will end my ramblings. By the way, there has been some very strange items on the Net recently from Chicago. Something about Bugs, Insects, and Bug City ... end trans.

Rodney Knox
Publisher/ KA•GE



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>>>>[BreakBreakBreak: ---ssing i lost the black ice on my trail. These guys are fraggin' serious here. Managed to hack into AWOL's SAN and bug out with the following guide to their voicemail system. Am downloading this now so that if the ice gets past my persona then at least the data will be *&^%&^&^@!Yooo#@!|).... No Carrier.]<<<<

VOICEMAIL GUIDE

WARNING: AWOL STAFF EYES ONLY.

BOX# ...Box Title and Function

- 100**Introduction and Main Menu ♦
 - 101Rodney Knox: Publisher/C.E.O. ★
 - 102Kim Knox: Member Liaison/ Convention Coordinator ★
- 200**MechForce North America Menu ♦
 - 210Information on becoming a member ★
 - 220MNA Membership Questions and Comments ♦
 - 230BattleTech Game Questions Menu ♦
 - 231Ask a Question ★
 - 232Listen to Answers ♦
 - 240MNA and Mech Magazine Information Update ♦
 - 250MNA Sponsored Tournament Listing ♦
- 300**Shadowrun Network Menu ♦
 - 310Information on Becoming a Member ★
 - 320SRN Membership Questions and Comments ★
 - 330Shadowrun Game Questions Menu ♦
 - 331 Ask a Question ★
 - 332Listen to Answers ♦
 - 340SRN and Ka*ge Magazine Information Update ♦
- 400**Convention Information Menu ♦
 - 410Convention Listings ♦
 - 420GEN-CON Update ♦
 - 430New Convention Information ★
- 500**Current and Upcoming Releases from FASA and AWOL ♦
 - 510BattleTech Products ♦
 - 520Shadowrun Products ♦
- 600**AWOL Mail Order Menu ♦
 - 610Quarterly Featured FASA Products ♦
 - 620Questions and Comments Concerning Mail Orders ★
 - 630Place a C.O.D. Order ★

♦ Indicates a voice mail box that contains information, instructions and/or a menu.
You listen to these boxes.

★ Indicates a voice mail box in which you may leave a message regarding its topic.



From what I remember of the Grimoire, only 1 percent of the population is magically active. Now, admittedly the facets of life which runners interact with will have a higher percentage than that, but how high? The Grimoire also indicates that EVERYONE is a possible shaman or hermetic mage...they just have yet to discover their totem or put in the dedication to study, respectively.

One thing I've always disliked about most of the FASA adventures I've seen is that they seem to be over filled with mages and sams that sometimes push the envelope...even when they don't seem to be necessary. If mages are so rare, why does at least one seem to pop up in EVERY adventure? That would seem to indicate a much higher incidence than the few million worldwide that the Grimoire seems to indicate. Inquiring minds want to know...

—P.KIRKLAND

SR Adventures are rife with mages because player-character groups are. Its a balance thing. 1% of the population is magically active, though they may not know it. Of that 1% maybe only another 1% are trained to some level. So, 1 out of 100 are active at some level (though may not know it), and one out of 1,000 have some training. How many are full-blooded magicians? Say 25% of those (or so). It ain't a lot, but when you look at the whole population, the numbers do add up.

Ultimately, though, magicians are a greater percentage in game play than the "fiction" implies since

people want to play them and use them. Same problem with metahumans (hence the first edition metahuman's priority A requirement,) and attempt to keep the numbers down but changed since everybody whined enough.

I have a question about the healing spells in Shadowrun..It states that the target number for healing someone is 10 - Essence or 8 - Essence, also if that person has bioware you add half the Body Index rating (rounding down) to the target number for the person to be healed... Now, my question is - Could a mage have a target number of an 11 to heal someone with a Treat Spell. 8 Minus 0 Essence plus 3 for half the body index? or Would the Target number always be an 8 for a completely Cybered-Up person?

—M.DEVOS

Yes. A magician could easily have high target numbers for healing someone with high amounts of cyberware and bioware. There are no target number limitations on any spell.

Recently I was in a game where a Mage used his defensive spell to protect his focus. I thought this was blatant cheating and called him on it. It threw the game into a tail-spin and ended our session. What is your call on this ... just in case it happens again.

—S. CLARK

The mage's spell defense can be allocated to defend the focus

only if the mage is aware of the attack and can perceive the approach of the spell. (astral perceiving for non-manipulation spells, and aware and within LOS for manipulation spells). Spell defense does not apply against spirits or magicians attacking with foci or unarmed, even if using Sorcery instead of the Combat Skill. The defending magician can fight the spell if he is aware if it incoming *and* has delayed action with which to react.

I have some questions that came up in our most recent game. I will first explain the situation and then I will ask the questions I need answered :

Doc, a wolf shaman, conjures up a field spirit of force 2. He rolls enough successes to have three services. He uses one and asks the GM to have the spirit go on stand-by".

1] Does this "stand-by" spirit expire at sun down like any other spirit would?

2] Does the Shaman have to return to the same field or can he call the spirit from any field?

3] Can this Shaman conjure another spirit while he has the field spirit on stand-by?

—D. CASQUILHO

Q1: Nature Spirits always go home at sunrise/set. The "world" changes in the "shamanic" construct we put together for Shadowrun between night and day, and so the world in which the spirit was conjured passes away.



Q2: IN GENERAL, spirits of a place are local to that place. If I conjure a spirit from Cornfield A, and use a service to have it confuse pursuers who come after me (or attack them), then cross the road (which is NOT part of the domain!) that separates cornfield A from cornfield B, I would need to conjure a second Field Spirit to cover that field. I could only call on the spirit in Field A for another service by going back to field A.

Great Spirits - once conjured - could, it seems to me, be called on for services in any appropriate domain, even if it is not the one in which they were originally summoned. Their influence is more pervasive, more in tune with the idea of "Field" as an archetype. Even there, the GM has the option of personalizing Great Spirits when the situation warrants. If I conjure a Great Spirit of Mountains on the slopes of Everest, I am going to get a manifestation of the Mother of Storms, for example. Hopping a jet across the valley to Kangchenjunga, I would have to summon the Great Spirit of that mountain separately (I forget the nature of that peak, but it is very tough), for such unique locales give rise to Great Spirits who are personalities - I might even (as GM) make them Free Spirits, allowing no other Greats to be conjured within their realm without proper negotiation by the shaman.

Of course, some domains still allow lots of leeway. A river smuggling Shaman who calls a Great River Spirit on the Mississippi is going to have that aspect of the Father of Waters working with him no matter how far up or downstream his hotshot powerboat goes that day/night.

Q3: One Spirit from one Domain at a time. Per Shaman. And the same physical location cannot be used as, say, Sky and Forest. Either the Shaman's head is in the clouds, as it were, or his feet are on the ground. He cannot simultaneously identify with Forest as Forest and the woods he is in as simply ground beneath the open Sky.

He *could* set a Forest Spirit to confuse trackers, and then, crossing a rushing stream, set the River/Spring Spirit to hit anyone who gets past the Forest with a flood. (And then you could set a Street Spirit in the form of an 18-wheeler to run down anyone clambering from the overflowing torrent onto the highway; this would also be legit)

In our current game we have come across a dilemma and need an answer. I think this might have been covered before but I can't find it anywhere.

1) Could the magical Killing hands affect the Manifesting mage?

2) Can a Physical Adept (assuming he has access to the astral) do some of the meta-magic things?

We have sorta adopted some house rules and have been using them until we could get an answer from an official source :

A) Adepts can Initiate: but to practice any meta-magic he/she must have access to the astral.

B) Physical Adepts Can shield themselves but only by their Initiate grade only, again this is assuming they have access to the

astral (ie, a level 3 Initiate can use 3 dice to shield himself...call it focusing his chiao on maintaining control of himself.)

3) My last question is what about summoning/conjuring adepts, can they see astral?

- T. RUPE

Killing Hands cannot affect the visible image on the material plane - if the magician using killing hands went astral, then sure, but that is not the same thing. the image is just that - an IMAGE.

Physical Adepts can't do meta-magics, it seems to me. Maybe Centering for powers that require tests (again, sorta like focusing chi). But the others - do they apply?

Dispelling: nope. Only way a PhysAd can dispel a spell is to dismantle it (messily) in astral combat.

Centering: As aforesaid, maybe.

Masking: Hmmm - interesting. I don't see why not.

Quickening: Does not apply, since they can't cast spells.

Conjurors cannot perceive the astral. You *might* allow a limited adept, like an exorcist (who can only banish) a limited astral awareness of the presence of spirits and maybe the ability to communicate with them by using Conjuring skill in some simple ritual. But in the main, the BIG limit on adepts is that, except for astral adepts ("psychics," "clairvoyants") and the limited astral ability of PhysAds, they cannot function freely on the astral, and while some limited color changes to allow their powers to work more interestingly would be cool, giving them too much astral access makes them too powerful.



I want to take a minute to apologize to each of you for the delay in receiving your issue. The last set of issues went to print in February and you haven't seen us in six months. I owe you an explanation so here it is.

In March of this year, we were sitting at the conference table in the War Room, debating the direction and content of the magazines for the next two years when we discovered a problem.

For three years the organization had grown and developed. As it grew, the amount of time required to continue the servicing of the members grew also. Jim realized the organization was ready to evolve into its next stage in 1993. He confronted me at Gen-Con that year and I agreed to come into the company as the first official 'full-time' employee. When I arrived, we began to contact the members by phone, fax, surface mail, and electronic mail to let them know about the changes. Service began to improve and the membership began a new growth period. A couple of months passed, we put several new services into place, and things began to really take off. During this period of time Jim and his wife gave birth to a child and his career began to consume more and more of his time. We finished the First Quarter '94 issues and had to reevaluate our positions.

During the debate in March, Jim announced he had to become less involved with the running of MNA/SR Network. His career was

taking-off and he wanted to spend as much of his free time with his child as possible. Conversely, I had established solid relationships with many of the other FASA licensees and wanted to be able to make on-the-spot decisions concerning events that would directly effect the Shadowrun Network and AWOL as a whole. After discussing it, we both agreed that it would be best if I were to take over the leadership position at AWOL.

So, in April we began the transfer process. Everything was terrific until our lawyers realized what we were doing. As soon as the paperwork for the change of ownership went to them they froze all the assets of the company and stopped all production. It took almost four months for their vaulted legal minds to reach the conclusion that it was okay for the change of ownership to take place. That left us with just shy of two months to put the magazine together and get it to you. It seemed that the entire world was conspiring against us because problem after problem arose during July and August. Finally - just before Gen-Con - we went to press and set a mail date. What you now hold are the fruits of six months of very difficult labor.

We have not been inactive during the 'freeze', however; we began to negotiate with Absolute Entertainment, Activision, and a host of other FASA licensees to arrange discounts and limited-edition products for the members. To say

the process was successful is a grand understatement. In the coming months you will see fantastic discounts and exclusive products especially for you, the faithful network members...

This doesn't make up for the issue being late and I take full responsibility. You paid your money and we didn't live up to our end of the agreement. You have a right to be upset, but don't give up on us yet. I give you my personal assurance that the time you had to wait will become a faint memory after issue 13. I can't say more than that at this time.

So now you know the whole story. Jim is still helping with the magazine and he and I are still the best of friends. The issues are actually back on track as of issue 13 (which you will see almost exactly 3 weeks after you read this one) and the ability to go bi-monthly looks better and better each and every day. If there are still questions or concerns with your membership please feel free to write directly to me at our address. After all, you are the reason for the success we are currently experiencing.

Till next time, may all your runs be profitable!

Rodney Kroy



SHADOWRUN® – FIELDS OF FIRE™ Errata

Page 32 (Colt M-23 Assault Rifle)

Weapon statistics are fouled up. They should read as follows :

Type	Conceal	Ammo	Mode	Damage	Weight	Availability	Cost	Street Index
Assault	3	40(c)	SA/BF/FA	8M	4.5	6/36	950¥	2

Page 59 (BattleTac™ Integration System)

Replaces the final paragraph with the following:

"Using BattleTac™ requires Military Science skill, or preferably the Small Unit Tactics Specialization of that skill, and the Special Skill : BattleTac™ (acquired as per a General Skill (see p.190, **SRII**) after character generation). See also page 84 for more information."

Page 60 (Target Designators)

The range for the Microwave Designator should be 8,000m, and the range for the radar Designator should be 10,000m.

Page 74 (Ablative Vehicle Armor)

Price is **per point** of the vehicle's original Body. Also, a motorcycle can only mount up to one-half (round down) of its original body.

Page 76 (Jumping)

A character can standing broad jump a distance equal to one-half (round down) his Strength, minus his Body, for a minimum of one meter. If the character's strength is less than his Body, add +1 to the target Number of the Jumping test.

Page 81 (Off-Hand Training)

The cost of the Special Skill : Ambidexterity is equal to 2 Skill Points per Skill Rating. Also, in the example, the modifier should be +2, not -2.

Page 85-85 (Smartlink Level II)

Replaces the third paragraph with the following:

"Called Shots (p.92, **SRII**) are easier to make with the Smartlink Level II. Apply a +2 Called Shot modifier (instead of the normal +4) when using the Smartlink Level II.

Page 85 (Smoke Rules)

The rate at which a cloud of smoke dissipates in the wind is noted incorrectly in the second paragraph. The duration of a blowing smoke cloud is found by subtracting the result of the wind strength D6 from 7, and in turn dividing that number into the indicated duration for the smoke. (So for example, a smoke mortar round explodes. Scatter (wind direction) is determined. Then another D6 is rolled for the wind strength; the result is 5 (a strong wind). Therefore, the smoke will only remain, blowing and dissipation in the direction of the wind, for $7 - 5 = 2$, $4 \div 2 = 2$ minutes before it offers no modifier. Also, the table notation "In Minutes" should be under the third column, directly below "Duration".

Page 91 (Panther Assault Cannon Statistics)

The cost of the Panther Assault Cannon is 7,200¥.





Detail One:
Note the rhino horns – while the face definitely seems shark-like.



Here is your cruddy original. Yes, you may genuflect before my altar, puny one. I managed to get something out of this, thereby disproving the old adage: Garbage In, Garbage out.



Detail Two
Hopefully this is a smaller version, not progeny.

From: Saxton Darkbear, MD, etc.
To: Quirkster, runnin' ne-er do well

Lil' bro:

Per your request, I had my people clean up that godawful photo you sent me. What a fraggin' pain you are. No wonder Mom never liked you much.

Anyway, moving on.. (before you begin to pout), this is the best that we could do. As to verifying its authenticity? Har. Har. And again, Har. I had one of my grad students spend the better part of a day looking for the obvious traces, and after spending 8 hours worth of the institute's money, I can tell you this much: it does not seem to have any of the obvious signs of digital forgery. Not much of an answer.

Here's somethin', though. In the course of things, one of our interns saw the photo and freaked. Seems that she'd heard some poor unfortunate 'runner babbling during her ER rotation about the cause of his horrific wounds. She'd dismissed his garbled cursing of some "rhinosharkbear" as the products of death's little endorphins kickin' in. But now, however, well... Despite our zoologist's most ardent assurances as to this thing's impossibility – Tell me this is a joke, right?

See ya sunday for the big game, ya wussy

Big Bro



X19a.17

>>>>[I know that we specialize in providing runner's with the information that somehow always gets left out of "official listings" but even this one beggars belief. We debated long and hard about including this one, as the following 'netcerpts illustrate.)<<<< Quirk

IDENTIFICATION

One look at the artist's rendering (left) reveals this animals impossible taxonomy: shark, rhino and bear.

MAGIC ABILITY

Unknown

HABITS

Reportedly docile until aroused by the smell of blood. Supposedly moves in groups, avoiding human contact.

frenzy a shark experiences when it "smells" blood.

WEAKNESS

Unknown

POWERS

Bloodlust: It seems to exhibit the same

GAME INFORMATION X19a.17

B	Q	S	C	I	W	E	R	Attacks
5	3x5	8	-	2/4	3	(6)	6	Unknown

Initiative Dice : 2D6/3D6

Powers : Mostly unknown. Bloodlust as a shark, which increases initiative from 2 to 4 and initiative dice from 2D6 to 3D6.

X19A.17

Taxonomy: None

HABITAT

Unknown

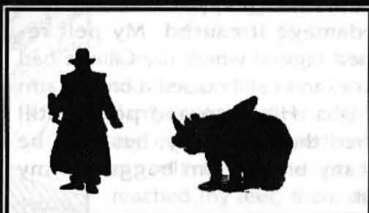
RANGE

Theoretically Pacific Northwest

RANGE



SIZE COMPARISON



>>>>[How can you waste our time with this? Whoever drew this obviously knows nothing about bio-engineering.]<<<< Bojack (20:27:13/6-18-55)

>>>>[I concur. But imagine if it were real? Taking some of the nastiest predators on earth and sea and mixing them together.]<<<< Steef (20:31:02/6-18-55)

>>>>[I don't know. I heard a lot of weird stuff about Daxson-Chromos... that before they went under, they were working on some pretty major stuff, that would have blown the 'majors' away.]<<<< Westerberg (20:32:49/6-18-55)

>>>>[I've run with a guy who used to work for D-C...he told me that when they decided to shut down, they just turned off the lights and left. He wouldn't go into it, but said that there were lots of things just left behind.]<<<< Carson (21:10:13/6-18-55)

>>>>[Somebody got this from their legal representatives: "The legal firm of Carstairs, Davis and Eagleheart unequivocally deny the assertion that this animal is a product of the firm of Daxson-Chromos.]<<<< Bostvix (20:11:17/6-18-55)

>>>>[Yeah. That and a 20 nuyen'll buy you a ticket to the grassy knoll.]<<<< Stone (21:12:42/6-18-55)

>>>>[I saw one! No kiddin' man. I swear! He and Elvis were getting out of a cab in the Barrens.]<<<< (21:13:15/6-18-55)

>>>>[On that note... we'll close for now. Any who see this beastie, be sure to post here.]<<<< Sysop Quirk (21:14:32/6-18-55)



If as beast you don't succeed...

(...continued from Ka•ge 11)

The Old One doesn't view killing as performance art, but he did leave a number of abstract sculptures in the apartment's hallway and yard. Most were still identifiable as human and, no, not *everything* tastes like chicken. In fact, a couple of the chromed guys tasted like Harley-Davidsons in sore need of an oil change. Regardless, the Old One boiled through them before most had drawn their weapons — which he took as great evidence of his skill, but I put down to misguided orders to take me alive.

The Old One's transformation had not healed the wounds I had taken from earlier. While the transformation did fracture bones and knit them back together, the process could only heal the damage it caused. My pelt remained ragged where the Gillette had cut me, and I still nursed a broken arm and ribs. His rage and power still pushed the pain away, but even he kept my broken arm hugged to my chest.

We bounded up the stairs to my apartment so quickly we didn't even pause to snarl at some of the neighbors sticking their heads out of the doors to see what was going on. Someone said something about calling Animal Control, but that just made the Old One howl with glee. I saw images of him summoning a grand canine army to storm through the concrete forest of the metroplex, and part of me liked the idea of being Napoleon Roverparte.

Half-man, half-wolf in form but fully lupine in spirit, we recognized and sorted out the various scents still lingering in my home instantly. The

musty smell I knew as the odor of a Troll — the tall thing that had originally tossed me about. At once I felt fear and anger: fear because they are purported to be hideously powerful creatures of a particularly malignant bent. The anger came because the Troll's scent mixed with and masked Lynn's scent. The co-mingled scent trail lead to the broken out window, showing me how the Troll had gotten out of the building while I raced up the stairs.

Beneath the Troll's scent, I discovered that of another foe, and hackles rose on my back. Charles the Red had been in my domain. He had undoubtedly orchestrated the earlier ambush and this battle under orders from Mr. Sampson. My bestial mind did not concern itself with why Charles had been here, or what he had hoped to accomplish, it only cared that he and the troll had taken Lynn. The Old One demanded that both of them die quickly, and I was ready to taste their blood.

Under the Old One's tutelage, my decisions were easy. Like a gargoye, I perched for a moment in the moon-washed hole in my apartment's exterior wall, then leaped into the night and stalked my enemies.

Their scent trails died at the street where a vehicle picked them up, leaving me no clear way to follow them. Whereas a man might have been frustrated by this, the Old One was a consummate hunter. He started us loping in a big circle around the apartment house and halfway through it, we cut across a fresh trail containing the acrid edge of extreme nervousness. We followed it like a shark trailing a bleeding fish. I wanted to hurry to catch and de-

stroy the person, but the Old One held us back.

He knew we were following a Halloweeners and as we trailed him I managed to intellectualize what the Old One had picked up by instinct alone. The lack of spectators in my neighborhood meant either nothing was going on, or people had been frightened back into their homes. The Halloweeners had obviously stationed lookouts in various places who then tipped Charles and the Troll to my arrival. The lookouts took off, their role in the events finished, and I had managed to find one of them.

At the entrance to an alley that led to a warehouse I knew from previous encounters with all sorts of low life scum, we lowered our muzzle to the ground. Yes, *Charles is here. Lynn is here.* My heart started beating faster yet than it had before and I crept forward.

Through a rent in the corrugated tin wall I saw Charles addressing two dozen Halloweeners — including two Ogres. Their presence — and the addition of a Troll — meant that Mr. Sampson had brought some serious power to the Halloweeners. We had no idea what his game was, or why he was using the Halloweeners as a power base, but I got the distinct feeling he wasn't some exec. slumming for cheap thrills and a flea bite or two.

The Old One snarled, fending off my attempt to insert reason into his thought processes. *He* had come to kill those who had stolen my bitch. He considered thoughts about *why* the Weenies were present to be a matter for forensics experts to piece together later. He wanted to create a crime scene and rescue Lynn, and he didn't



see the need for rational thought in accomplishing that end.

Unthinking — a state in which the Old One operates most comfortably — he sprinted us forward and through an open side door. Announcing me, he howled in a low and cruel voice that brought all of the henchmen around look at us and drained the blood from many of their faces at the same time. Charles looked about ready to stroke out and took several steps back away from me.

Only Mr. Sampson, looking self-possessed as he stepped from the small office in the corner of the warehouse, did not seem shocked or even surprised. He gave me a perfect smile. "Ah, our guest has arrived. Welcome, Kies. Your woman lives."

The Old One bared our fangs, giving me a chance to croak out a sentence. "She'll be the exception to rule here in a minute!"

The Old One launched us into the knot of gangbangers and ripped away with ecstatic abandon. My right hand punched through the chest of a Weenie and ripped his heart out. I crushed it in front of him, all before his eyes had informed his brain I had closed to striking range. I slammed my left elbow against a Gillette's face and felt his facial bones crumple beneath my blow. My right paw flicked out again, shredding another man's face. He reeled away, desperately trying to piece together the fleshy puzzle I'd made of his handsome looks.

The Halloweeners had just enough brains to recognize the fluid their buddies were leaking and broke. Charles tried to stem the tide of their retreat, then allowed himself to be swept up in it and carried back toward Mr. Samp-

son. The Ogres, befuddled and surprised, backed away faster than the Halloweeners and took up positions behind their leader.

Mr. Sampson looked at his cowering henchmen, then at the bodies lying at my feet and clapped his hands like a theatre patron applauding a virtuoso performance. "Excellent! I will have to determine the magicks that let you do



that transformation. Brilliant." His face lost all the joy it had just showed. "Golnartac, deal with our guest!"

I never would have forgotten the troll.

The Old One had decided he would save him for last.

Those who would be last were put first, and that put us in a world of hurt. The troll came in from behind and moved with a speed that should have been impossible for such a massive creature. I spun, but only barely got my right arm up in time to block the

punch that would have taken my head off. The Troll's fist smashed my arm back into my head and I saw stars.

Snarling wildly, I launched myself and buried my fangs in his forearm. My teeth sliced through dry, leathery flesh, but the troll didn't react. I bit harder, hungering for his blood and a cry of pain, but I got nothing. Furious, I tore at the troll, ripping my head to the right in an attempt to take a hunk of flesh out of him.

I succeeded and defiantly spat the mouthful out, but it made no difference. I looked up at the thing looming over me and saw only amusement in its dull eyes. I felt Golnartac's left hand close like pliers on the back of my neck. The troll plucked me from his arm as if I was an insect. Effortlessly he hurled me across the warehouse and into a shipping crate.

I don't know what was in that crate, but it was a tad harder than my skull. Mr. Sampson's laughter ringing in my ears, I struggled to free myself from the crate. I reached my feet, then, as the troll eclipsed the overhead lights, his fist surged in and bashed me into unconsciousness.

IV

You never forget the taste of your own blood, especially when it's bubbling up from inside with each painful breath. Charles the Red pulled his right fist back, then drove it down onto the left side of my chest. My body heaved backward with the impact, as it had with every other punch he'd thrown, lessening the effect of the punch somewhat, but that mattered little.



With the two Ogres holding me in place, he could make up in quantity what his punches lacked in quality. At least he hadn't popped another rib.

Mr. Sampson tangled the fingers of his gloved left hand in my brown hair and tipped my face up toward the warehouse's ceiling. "You're making this much too hard on yourself, Kies, and back in human form you can't take it. Just tell me where Dr. Raven makes his home and I'll end your pain. If you don't tell me, I'm sure Lynn Ingold will."

I wanted to give him my top of the line nasty stare, but having both eyes all but swollen shut precluded that. I thought about spitting at him, but split lips make it damned tough to pucker. I decided to go with my fallback plan. I had nothing to lose because I knew he never intended to free Lynn or let me leave the warehouse alive.

I let my body sag in spite of the pain that shot into my upper arms when the Ogres tightened their grip. My hair pulled free of Sampson's hand and I purposely hung my head in defeat. I let blood and saliva drool to the floor in glistening ruby ropes. I mumbled something in a voice barely audible over the rattle in my chest.

Even as Sampson bent over and asked, "What? What did you say?" I knew what I was about to do was stupid and foolish. I already had at least two cracked ribs, a broken arm, blood seeping from the slashes on my right flank, and my left lung had partially collapsed. I desperately tried to concentrate enough to reach inside and touch the wolf spirit in me to boost my reflexes and give me more strength, but the burning pain in my chest and the lighting stabbing through me with each breath denied me the willpower to reach the Old One.

Still, no matter how foolish it seemed, I had to do something. I knew, if they continued, I might give

up Raven's secrets, but even doing that wouldn't save Lynn. If she was lucky Sampson would turn her over to La Plante to win some favor with the crime boss. If she wasn't, Sampson would use her to verify what I had told him, and since she didn't know where Raven lived, she'd go screaming to her grave protecting a secret she didn't know.

I couldn't allow that, and not just because I loved her. It was my fault that she had run afoul of the Hal-loweeners, and it was my duty to get her to safety.

Mr. Sampson brought his head down toward mine as I started to mumble again. Suddenly I snapped my head up, clipping him in the chin with the back of my head. Stars shot through my vision with the blow, but the sharp click of Sampson's lower jaw smashing into his upper teeth more than compensated for the pain.

At the same moment I gathered my feet beneath me and shot upward. My right fist came up and around, bashing one Ogre's adam's-apple. I tore my right arm free of that Ogre's grip, then pivoted around on my left foot. I jammed my right foot into the other Ogre's groin. Slipping my left wrist from his grip, I sidestepped to the right as the behemoth collapsed screaming in a soprano voice.

Bloodshot tunnel vision only allowed me a hazy glimpse of the Hal-loweeners. They looked stunned and shocked, more worried about the fact that Sampson was reeling away with both hands pressed to his mouth than that a barefooted, badly-beaten man was loose in their midst.

A heavy hand landed on my right shoulder and latched on with a grip somewhere between that of a leech and a Hoovermatic industrial vacuum. The second I felt the gritty flesh rasp against mine and the railroad spike talons rake my skin, I knew I was in

deep trouble. I tried to spin away, but the pressure on my shoulder increased and forced me to the ground.

The Troll. How could I have forgotten the Troll?

Pinned to the ground on my back, I struggled hard and snorted explosively, clearing my nose of the blood that had caked it since the beating had begun. Instantly the dry, musty scent filled my head and started my sinuses bleeding again. I tried to force my body backward in a somersault motion to kick the troll in the head, but he just grabbed my right ankle in his free hand, then stood and held me dangling like a child.

Hanging there, upside down, I saw a real live Troll from a perspective that I hope never to have again. Nearly 11 feet tall, the creature looked like something cooked up in an industrial genetics vat. I'm not sure what all they used to make it, but I do know they added ugly until it overflowed. Its black mane had been braided into a long queue that snaked down over one shoulder. The dry, dusty part of the Troll's scent came from the fact that most of its skin was flaking off like the outer layers of a sandstone onion. His dark marble eyes burned with malevolence seldom seen outside the ranks of drill instructors or kid-hating, spinster ladies with yappy dogs, and he tightened his grip on my leg just to let me know my assessment was not off the mark at all.

The troll grabbed my other leg and turned me around so I could face Mr. Sampson again. Sampson's kick landed over the fractured ribs and I screamed. A fit of coughing shook me and I tried to hug my chest, but I couldn't find the strength to lift my arms. Blood, fresh and coppery-tasting, coated the inside of my mouth and ran in slender ribbons up to my hairline from the corners of my mouth.

Mr. Sampson snapped his fingers and the lightweight quack mage he'd



had working on me all night dropped to his knees beside me. I felt the warm tinkle of a diagnostic spell ripple over me and the pain slackened as my body prepared for a healing spell. Under normal circumstances one followed the other, but these circumstances were beyond strange.

The medic looked up at muscle-bound blond. "He's bleeding inside. His lung is collapsed and three ribs are heavily bruised or broken. His arm is broken, his nose is broken and he'll lose some teeth. What do I fix?"

Sampson dabbed at his split lip with a white handkerchief. "Stop the bleeding temporarily. Open up at least one of his eyes. I want him to see what we're going to do next. Charles, bring the woman here."

The sellspell hit me with the same bargain basement spell he'd used all night to keep me from dying. It plugged holes and patched leaks, but repaired none of the structural damage they'd done to me. It strictly ignored anything that was causing me pain and I knew, with the next kick or punch to my chest, the busted spurs of rib would open my lung up again.

As the swelling around my eyes went down, I practiced my nasty stare on him. "I'll remember you."

He didn't look impressed. "I've heard that before. I still sleep nights."

Sampson snapped his fingers again and the man withdrew. Back up and almost back to their normal, off-green color each of the Ogres took one of my ankles from the Troll. They started pulling in opposite directions as if they were planning to make a wish, but a sharp command from Sampson stopped them when they got my legs out at a 150° angle.

He nodded and I heard a muffled rumble of thunder as the Troll sank to one knee behind me. "Golnartac, despite his size, has an exquisite sense of delicacy. You

won't know when, but at any one of a dozen prearranged signals he will hit a portion of your anatomy with a swift, precise blow. He'll only use one finger, but you will find the blows most painful. He may stab a talon through a nerve center, or he may shatter a vertebrae."

Pain sharper than a scorpion's sting lanced through my left thigh. It shot in both directions along my leg and up into my groin. I writhed with the agony, prompting the Ogres to pull on my legs to prevent me from slipping free. I felt a grinding in my hips, then they let me slip down again.

Sampson smiled in the same way the school disciplinarians had years ago. "You need not endure this agony, Wolfgang. All we want is Dr. Raven. Here we've gone and chased you all over Seattle and put a great number of people to incredible inconvenience, not the least of whom is you. Give us Dr. Raven."

"No 'or else?'"

"You won't like my 'or else.'" Sampson looked back to where Charles came bearing Lynn's limp body in his arms. "If you decide to resist me yet, I will awaken her and she will take your place. You will watch as she will suffer more trauma than if she fell from the tallest building here in Seattle. Give us what we want. She will not be harmed and your pain will end."

I sighed heavily and tried to ignore the agony in my lower limbs. "This 'your pain will end stuff'

you've said that plenty since I've been here. You can come up with something more interesting, can't you?"

An eyeblink later it felt like the Troll shoved a molten sheet of glass through my right knee. I cried out in pain and despair. The Troll's hoarse chuckle sounded akin to a car being crushed in a wrecking yard and, suddenly, the whole hideous ordeal collapsed in on me. In the past dozen hours I'd been hounded through Seattle, had escaped traps and ambushes meant to maim, capture or kill me. The troll had defeated me three times and I'd had been worked over by individuals who wanted to see torture made into an Olympic sport.

As the edges on the pain crumbled away, I held my right hand up. "Wait, no more."

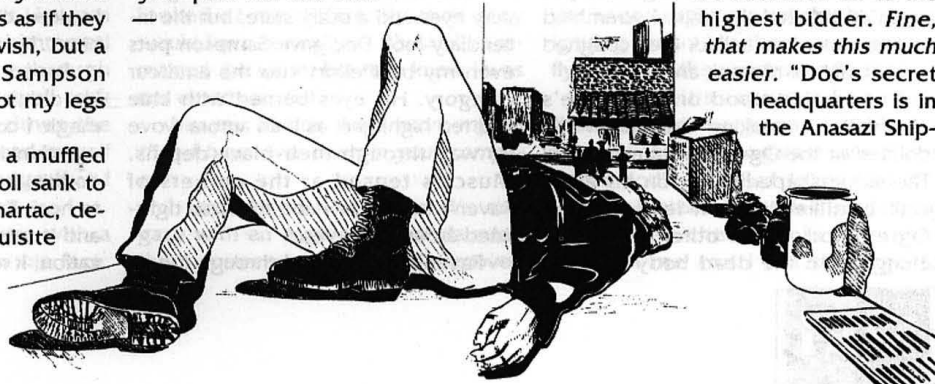
I took a deep breath. "I give you Raven. You let her free, really free, right?"

Sampson settled a mask of superiority over his features. "You can trust me, Kies. You are but a means to an end, and she is a means to get to you."

I shook my head to clear it. Up beyond Sampson's head I saw something flit through the darkness. I tried to focus and identify it, but I couldn't. I was too far gone to make sense of anything but ending the pain. "You make sure she's okay?"

Sampson nodded solemnly. "She shall not want."

I knew in that instant Lynn would be auctioned off to the highest bidder. *Fine, that makes this much easier.* "Doc's secret headquarters is in the Anasazi Ship-





ping Company warehouse on pier 27."

Sampson looked up at the troll. "Overhand blow, shatter his pelvis, then break his spine one bone at a time. Charles, use the woman as you will, then have Golnartac dispose of her."

Behind me the troll chuckled with evil delight.

"You're much too trusting, Wolf." Sampson dabbed at his split lip again, then spat on me. "I'll be sure to let Raven know who his Judas was..."

The troll loomed up over me but as his fist began to descend, the Ogre holding my right leg began to jerk and spurt blood from a string of holes linking his navel with his forehead. Crimson liquid sprayed the wall behind him, then the whole of his head above his glassy eyes disintegrated. As he toppled backward, his lifeless fingers let my ankle slip free.

The other Ogre, who had increased tension in preparation for the Troll's punch, whipped me out from beneath the Troll's falling fist. I felt the warehouse floor shudder with the blow and Golnartac's enraged scream shook the corrugated tin walls like a summer storm. Another screech, this one of ogre-pain, sang out in counterpoint to the Troll's cry and the pressure on my left ankle evaporated.

Suddenly I found myself tumbling and rolling across the concrete floor. I landed on my left shoulder and felt a grinding crackle in my ribs, but I used the pain to force my body to react. Adrenaline flooded through me yet again and dulled the pain. I scrambled to one knee, fists balled, then coughed a wet laugh of triumph and joy.

Kid Stealth stood on one Ogre's back with his smoking Kalashnikov still pointed at the Ogre he'd blown away. The sickle-shaped claws on his artificial, birdlike titanium legs dripped Ogre blood — the other talons just clung on to the dead body beneath

him. He'd been what I saw moving through the girders above the warehouse floor and he'd nailed the one Ogre while dropping down to rake his claws through the second.

The Troll remained down on one knee, cradling his broken fist to his chest. Above the hand, right over where the Troll's heart should have been, rode a red dot. Back by the warehouse's side door I saw the stocky outline of Tom Electric. The laser-scope on his armor-piercing rocket launcher twinkled reassuringly at me.

Behind and above Tom four more people appeared. Two were local Gillettes I'd taken to calling Zig and Zag. Armed with Kalashnikovs they flanked the most beautiful member of Raven's crew, Valerie Valkyrie. She looked over at me with horror on her face, while the two soldiers covered the Halloweeners. Plutarch Graogrim, an ork, moved away from Zig and Zag, keeping his pistol trained on Charles the Red.

I saw Sampson go pale and I knew Raven had arrived. I looked over at Doc as he stepped from the shadows. The blackness rippled off his coppery skin reluctantly and clung to him long enough to deeply score lines around his muscles. Tall, even for an elf, he looked human because of his extraordinary build and the high cheekbones his Amerindian blood granted him. His long, black hair fell down over his leather vest to mid-chest and all but hid his pointed, elfen ears.

I like to pride myself on having silvery eyes and a scary stare, but the incendiary look Doc gave Sampson puts even my best effort into the amateur category. His eyes burned with blue and red highlights as if an aurora wove its way through their black depths. Muscles tensed at the corners of Raven's lantern jaw and the flesh tightened around his eyes.

Raven's voice sliced through the si-

lence like a laser through cheap tin sheet. "You had a message for me?"

Those six words might as well have been .50 caliber slugs for the effect they had on Mr. Sampson. He shook his head violently and cursed. "No, dammit, not here, not now!" His hands flew up and around like snakes writhing in pain, then something flashed and Sampson vanished.

The Halloweeners started jabbering nervously among themselves, but the click-click-click of Kid Stealth's talons against the concrete as he ran over to cover them killed their conversation. "I have nothing on IR."

Raven stared at where Sampson had stood as if memorizing all that had just happened. He looked up and over quickly, back along the path Stealth had used to come into the warehouse, then nodded as someone yelped in pain. "He went out the way you came in, Stealth."

The Murder Machine smiled. "A strand of razor wire can cut you badly when someone boobytraps his back-trail."

"Time enough to track him later." Raven trotted over to where I knelt. He dropped down beside me and wove a quick spell that cut the pain at the same time as it told him what was wrong with me.

"Take it easy, Wolf. Nothing that won't heal in time." He gave me a smile that buoyed my spirits, but it sank into a thin line of concern as I reached out and grabbed his hand.

"Doc, I need some help, now..." I looked over at Golnartac. "I want him..."

Raven looked deep into my eyes. He didn't use any magic, at least any magic I could feel, but he knew what I was thinking. "Wolf, you don't have to do this. Lynn is safe. Give yourself time to heal. You know if I magic something and it sets wrong, or there is a complication, it might stay that way."



He looked over at Kid Stealth. "For him, for any of the others, the possibility of replacing a defective part mechanically is there. For you, for me, that option is not possible."

"You heard Sampson, Doc. You heard what they were going to do to Lynn."

"That was their fantasy, but we have stopped them, my friend. I only deal in realities, and reality says she'll be fine."

"Yes, but I won't be." I pointed at the troll and he sneered at me. "Sampson called a tune, and the troll would have gladly played it. Well, I've got a variation on a theme to teach him."

"This is stupid, Wolf."

"We're here, Lynn's here, because I was stupid. I want to spend the rest of my life with Lynn but to do that I need to know I can keep her safe. He always had an advantage over me, and now we're just about even. I have no choice, Richard. I have to do this."

I saw the lightplay in his eyes quicken. I only called him Richard when it was truly important, but he still did not want to damage me permanently. "Wolf, there has to be another way."

I shook my head. "Don't fix anything. Just kill the pain long enough for me to reach the Old One."

Raven stood and helped me to my feet. "And if the troll kills you?"

My eyes narrowed to silver slits. "Don't worry about it. You only deal in realities, remember?"

As Raven's spell washed over me like a warm, spring shower, I retreated deep into my heart of hearts. I swam through lines of pain that shimmered like heat lightning playing through dark thunderheads, but the spell took me beyond its touch. At times the going felt difficult, but I forced myself on, haunted by the knowledge that I had almost gotten Lynn killed.

The Old One regarded me with a eager look of bloodlust on his face.

"Leave it to me, Longtooth. Give yourself to me and I will destroy the troll."

"No. I gave myself over to you and your powers meant nothing without intelligence guiding their use. I need everything you are, but I must have it on my terms, under my control."

The wolf spirit yipped high laughter. "You are in pain and are weak. What makes you think you can control me now?"

My anger and outrage at having failed to keep Lynn safe tightened around him like a net. "It is enough that I know I *must* control you. I need your speed and your strength. I need your heart and your endurance. You will meet my needs in my way. You failed, you owe me the chance to put it all right. It must be a man who destroys that Troll, and I will be that man."

The old wolf tilted its head in an attitude of curiosity. "But you are not a man — you are more."

I ground my teeth together. "Tonight I will settle for being just a man."

The Old One sensed my need and my pain. "Very well, I acquiesce without condition. This is my gift to you, Longtooth Man-warrior."

The warehouse swam into focus again but the renewed senses made it all seem as if I had never been there before. I smelled terror from the Halloeeners and death rising from the Ogre bodies. I watched tremors threaten to tear the sellspell medic to pieces as I looked at him. All of Raven's aides looked at me differently than they would have normally — physically I remained the same, but they knew I was not exactly myself.

No, my friends, I am more myself than I have ever been in your company!

I turned and met the troll's evil gaze with an eagerness that daunted the monster ever so slightly. I moved

away from Raven and into the center of the warehouse's open floor. I forced my left hand into a fist and bit back a cry as bones ground together in my forearm. Pointing at Golnartac, I waved him forward. "Come here, you. You're mine."

His laughter had the same grating quality as fingernails being raked across a chalkboard. "Little man will make little smear."

The troll lumbered forward but I struck with a speed powered by my anger. As he swung a ponderous fist through where I had been, I darted forward and drove two punches and an elbow in the muscles bunched above his right knee. My blows crumbled flesh to dust but the creature's rock-hard muscles absorbed the impacts more efficiently than a black hole sucking in photons.

A roar of outrage started in Golnartac's belly and began to work its way up to his throat. He planted his left foot and tried to pivot back toward the right. I dropped low and spun in the other direction, giving the Troll a tantalizing glimpse of my unprotected back. Both his arms swung over my head as a second and third punch missed me, then I sprang up and smashed my right fist into the back of its left hand.

Pain overshadowed outrage in the Troll's bellow as my punch further splintered broken bones. Unthinking in his agony, the Troll backhanded me with that same hand. I saw the blow coming and rolled with it enough to soak off some of the force. Even so, the swat caught me on the left flank, igniting fire in my chest, and sent me flying across the warehouse floor.

The Troll's renewed scream drowned out my groans as I hit and skidded to a stop against one of the ogre's bodies. I rolled to my feet, but as I straightened up I felt something give in my chest. More pain shot through me and I felt the urge to



cough because of the blood seeping into my lung. I remained half-hunched over and gritted my teeth against the pain. Hooking my hands into claws, I waved the Troll forward.

Golnartac started toward me, but he limped slightly because his right leg failed to respond as it should. I swept in, flicked a glance at his broken hand, then again directed an attack against his right knee. Jamming my left elbow into the joint, I felt Golnartac's kneecap shift sideways and an agonized roar quickly followed. Exultant, I slipped right and stabbed my right fist upward into the Troll's stomach.

The Troll reacted to the blow instinctively. His right hand slapped my back and smashed me face first into a wall of rock-hard abdominal muscles. Dazed, I rebounded, but hesitated too long to escape him. Golnartac's right hand closed over my head and he unceremoniously hauled me off the ground.

"Like an egg!" he shouted victoriously and started to apply pressure.

Pain shot temple to temple, forehead to spine, but I refused to surrender to it. My hands hooked up over the troll's wrist and, despite the tearing pain in my chest, I whipped my right foot up in a savage kick that locked the monster's elbow. Uncoiling my body for a second, I brought my feet up again and this time drove them through the elbow.

When I heard the sharp crack I couldn't tell which had broken, my skull or his arm. Then the vise that had trapped my head slackened. I dropped toward the ground and launched another quick attack by driving my right heel down on top of the troll's foot. More bones broke with the pop of a

gunshot, and this time I knew I was the damager, not the damagee.

I heard the troll shriek with pain, but it did not matter to me in the least. The second I regained my balance, I whirled around in a circular kick that blasted my left foot through Golnartac's right knee. The leg bent to the side with a wet tearing sound. The Troll began to flail about wildly, his battle now waged against gravity, not me.

Golnartac lost his fight and began to sag to the concrete floor.

The fury in my heart did not allow

troll's neck cracked as a vertebrae crumbled under the pressure.

Head lolling uncontrollably, the dead Troll crashed to the ground.

I landed a second later on very unsteady feet. Pure agony told me I'd destroyed my right foot, and black pain exploded in my ribs. For a half-second the Old One let me view my fallen foe, then he, too, abandoned me and I slumped to the floor, unconscious.

V

Leaning heavily on a swordcane that had not seen use since The Silicon

Wasp had died, I watched from afar as Dr. Raven shook hands with Phil Ingold at the base of the RJR Nabisco-Sears tower. The parting seemed amiable, though Phil looked stiff and turned away slowly to walk back into the building. I didn't sense hostility

in him, only sadness and resignation.

Phil moved as if he hurt on the inside the way I hurt on the outside.

A fiberglass cast encased my right foot. A similar one sheathed my left arm. Stitches pulled the flesh together on my right flank and bandages helped hold my broken ribs together on the other side. My nose still hurt when I sneezed and the bruises all over my body had gone from purple to a uniform shade of brown, with jaundice yellow highlights.

I looked up as Raven came over to me. "You explained everything?"

Raven nodded solemnly. "Lynn is recovered from her ordeal and wants to see you. Neither she nor her mother understand why you won't be coming around again. Mr. Ingold does understand, but I think he feels his daughter's pain at not seeing you now more than he fears what might have hap-



me to show him any mercy.

He would have killed Lynn. And he would have enjoyed it.

Emotions gathered in me like a storm. I took two steps forward before the troll had even begun to succumb to gravity's relentless attraction. Defying the elemental force that was drawing him down, I leaped into the air. As the troll's head came into striking range, my right foot flashed up. The ball of my foot hit Golnartac square on the chin, shattering his jaw and smashing ivory teeth into splinters.

Golnartac's head snapped back as if someone had grabbed his long, black queue and jerked hard. The thick, corded muscles of his neck stretched taut, thrusting his adam's-apple out like an alien creature fighting to win its freedom. As powerful as they were, even those muscles could not fully absorb all the energy in my snapkick. The



pened in the future."

I shook my head. "He sees future danger as hypothetical, but you and I know it is reality."

"Do we?"

"Sampson went after her once to get at me, he'd do it again. Breaking it off with her and getting her a transfer out of Seattle is the only way to keep her safe. We both know that."

"It's not the only way. Stealth would have killed the Halloweeners for pocket change."

"Slaughter of Innocents."

"And we will deal with Mr. Sampson." Raven's eyes drew distant and the colors in them swirled into a vortex. "Oak Harbor provided some interesting clues about him, as did his display of magick a week ago. His days as a threat are numbered."

"And in single digits, too." I sighed heavily. "Still, if it isn't him, it will be someone else. The person I would have to be to protect Lynn is a person she would hate."

Raven looked over at me as we wandered off along the street. "You're saying that as if she's incapable of changing and accepting the risks a life with you would entail. She was more concerned about your injuries than she was her own. Things might not turn out as you think."

"All dreams become nightmares, Doc, if you don't wake up soon enough." Deep down inside I wanted to believe what he was saying, but in my heart of hearts I knew I couldn't accept the level of responsibility caring for Lynn required. I'd helped hundreds of people like her and accepted responsibility for them because I knew that responsibility would someday end. With Lynn it would not, and while a life with her would be glorious, life without her, if she died because of me, would be unlivable.

Raven smiled slowly. "When you sent me your message, I had rejoiced in it because it told me you were will-

ing to shoulder a burden I have refused to accept. I thought you a better man than me in that, Wolf."

I blinked in surprise. "Me, a better man than you? Realities, Doc, not hypotheticals."

"I was certain then, my friend, and I am certain now I was not wholly wrong." He laid a hand gently on the back of my neck and squeezed. "Perhaps, someday, we will both be able to work past that final barrier."

"Agreed." I shook my head. "It's kind of funny, though, being willing to care for the whole world, but being unable to do it for one special person."

"It's a nightmare, really, Wolf." Raven shrugged easily, but his eyes burned with intense color. "But if we stick with it long enough, we can push on through to where it becomes a dream, and the dream becomes truth."

KA•GE AUTHOR FOCUS

Michael Stackpole

Michael has written and developed many of the current plots seen in BattleTech and Shadowrun. He has also written for almost every major company in the gaming industry. To say that he has made his mark in the gaming business would be an understatement. His characters, Raven and Wolf along with all of their shadowrunning cohorts, have been published in Challenge Magazine and in the Shadowrun anthology.

In his most recent venture, Mike has taken the next step in his career and has written an original epic fantasy adventure. "Once A Hero" is a riveting tale of a legendary human hero who in one life built a kingdom and who, 500 years later, must be raised from the dead to help save it. The book is a rousing adventure of mystery, magic, and swashbuckling adventure in the tradition of David Eddings and Robert Jordan. The book is action packed and fun to read. It will available in your favorite bookstore now.

"Once A Hero is easy to start, easy to like, and very hard to put down."

—Larry Bond

"What a magnificent tale! Scope and verve...an incredible tapestry...a page turner."

—Dennis McKleman



Trideo Sandwich Board Advertiser

"I know what you're thinking. Any troll who earns a living by meandering downtown streets, parks, and skywalks, while wearing two trideo television sets that just flaunts advertising, must not be too smart. Well, you're wrong. There are tens of thousands of unemployed people, including humans, orks, and elves, who would kill to get my job. After all, being a walking billboard sure beats working in some corporation cafeteria or mail room."

Quotes

"Look chummer, I just carry the ads."

"No, I ain't got no free samples."

"That woman? I see her and her seven iron-packing suits enter the Pan-American building at seven twenty-one every morning."

Commentary

Trideo Sandwich Board Advertisers are mostly trolls, as they can carry the large trideo screens an entire day without much fatigue. The "boards" themselves are two, flat liquid crystal trideo screens attached to a triangle frame, that has padding where it rests upon the user's shoulders. On the user's belt are a trideo compact disk player that contains a full day's worth of advertising, combined with battery packs that supply a full day's worth of electric power. This equipment is double insulated to prevent rain or dew from short-circuiting the boards.

Half of all advertisers demand that small samples of their products, (candies, beverages, and mouthwash), are given to anyone who looks like they have an income. About seventy-five percent of all these advertisers work

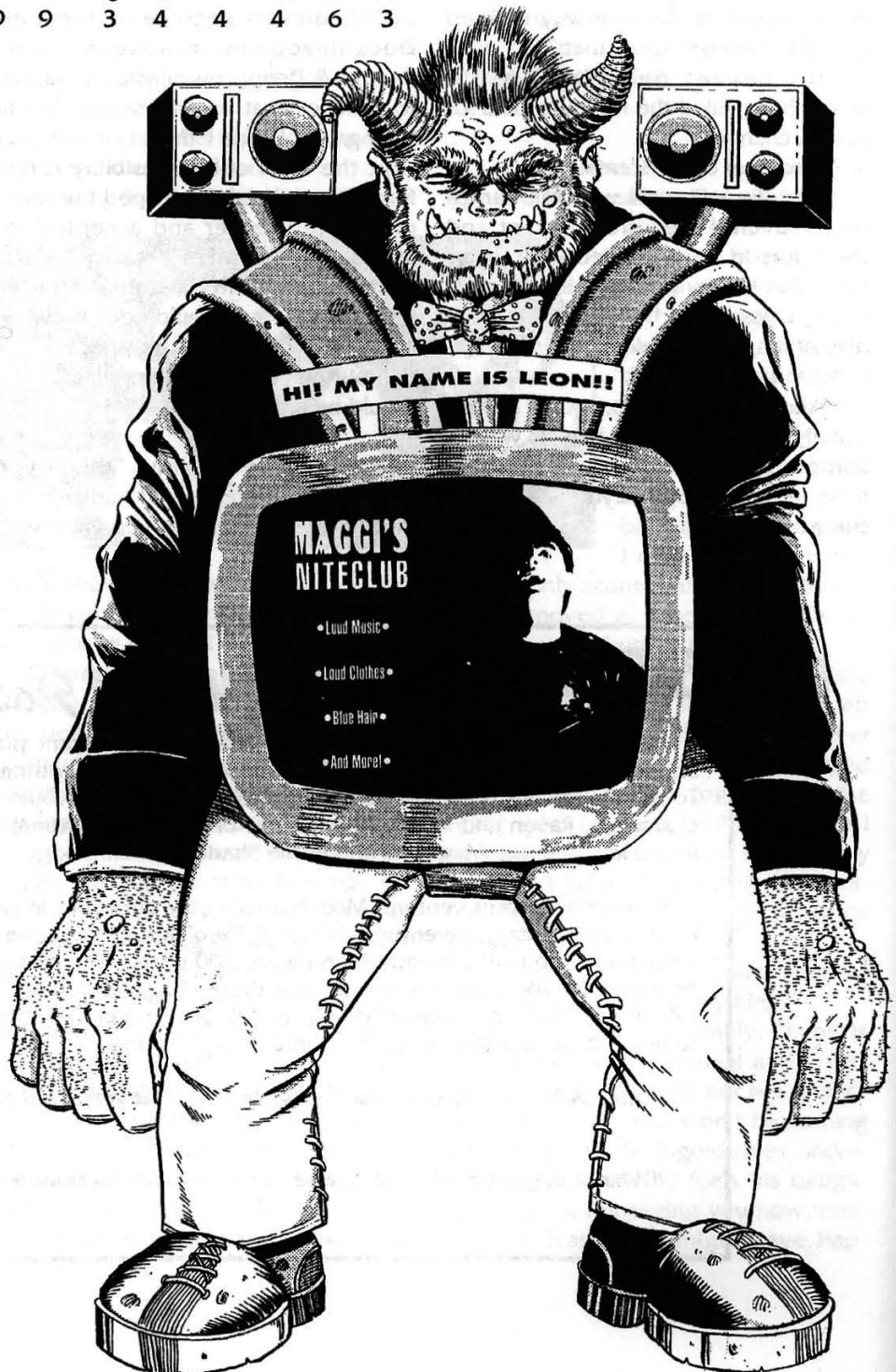
for corporations, the rest work as independent free-lancers. To protect their hardware, all Sandwich Board Advertisers carry pistols with a concealability of five or higher.

Attributes

B	S	Q	C	I	W	E	R
9	9	3	4	4	4	6	3

Skills

Etiquette (Street):	6
Etiquette (Corp):	3
Electronic B/R:	3
Unarmed Combat:	3
Armed Combat:	2





Geisha

"I love my career. Inside my teahouse, I am the center of attention, yet remain anonymous behind my face paint and professional name. Yes, I sometimes cater to a Yakuza Boss and his or her bodyguards. I understand that Yakuza can bring trouble to my teahouse, trouble like the police, Shadowrunners, and assassins. However, Yakuza Nuyen is just as spendable as corporate, tribal, or public servant Nuyen. Why all these questions about the Yakuza? Do you wish my services or are you trouble?"

Quotes

"I make sure everyone has a good time, in a very Japanese way, of course."

"I am an artist, not a Joy Girl!"

"Yes, Mr. Yamazaki was at the Golden Unicorn last night. Pass me three hundred Nuyen and I can remember to whom Mr. Yamazaki spoke as well as what was said."

Commentary

Geisha are humans or elves of Japanese ancestry who begin their training as teenagers or young adults. At that time they must find a wealthy patron; join a Okiya, or geisha house; become a younger sister to an experienced geisha; and be registered at an official Kenban, or geisha registry office. It takes between two to three years of intense training for an apprentice to become a geisha. An apprentice spends her time learning about the Flower and Willow World of geisha society.

Geisha and their apprentices work in teahouses from six p.m. to midnight, entertaining wealthy clients. Lifestyles range from middle to high.

Attributes

B S Q C I W E R
3 3 4 3/6* 4 5 6 4

* Street Clothing/In formal Kimono and white face makeup

Skills

Etiquette (Corp): 5
Negotiation: 3

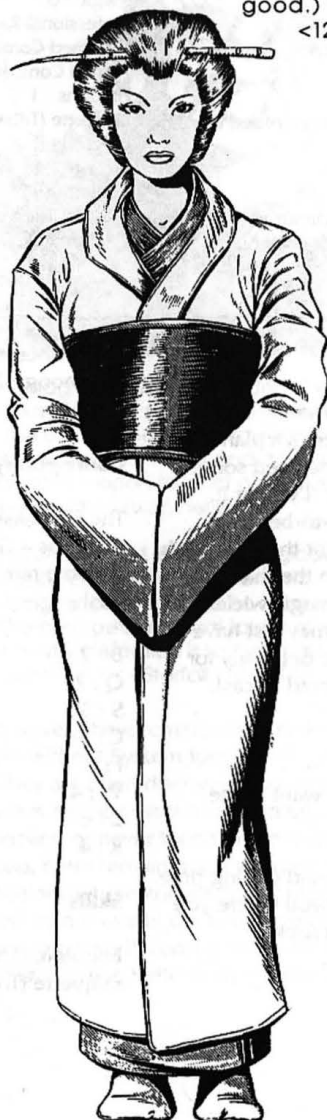
Special Skills:

Music: 6
Dance: 6

Special

Tea Ceremony: 6

>>>> (A few weeks back, our team made a run on a Yakuza Boss. Our shaman dressed up as a maiko, or apprentice geisha, and walked into the teahouse with all the other geisha. With a little magical help, this Yakuza Boss got drunk and then spilled some beer on his tie. Our shaman quickly volunteered to clean his tie for him, and while she did, exchanged his tie tack for one containing a voice-activated micro-transceiver. Soon, we had all the information we needed to take him and his gang down for good.) >>>> - Shadow
<12:56:15/03-03-54>





Conservationist/Environmentalist

"Man and nature can co-exist harmoniously, but for that to happen, man must first learn to stop abusing Gaea and her creatures. In many cases, this is where I step in. For some it takes little more than a trideo on animals and their young. For others, however, their education needs to be strongly enforced, and I see to it that it is."

Quotes :

"I could care less about the money you are offering me. Nature has provided me with all I need."

"Don't eat the speckled ones, they're poisonous."

"If you've got to go that bad, pick a tree."

Commentary :

The Conservationist / Environmentalist doesn't care about today's society, but if given the opportunity to either prevent

damage to the environment or to cause trouble for those who have blemished it, she will more than likely jump at the chance to do so.

B : 3
Q : 3
S : 3
C : 1
I : 3
W : 4
E : 6
R : 3

Skills

Magic : 6
Professional Rating : 1
Unarmed Combat : 2
Armed Combat : 2
Firearms : 1
Etiquette (Tribal) : 2
BioTech : 2
Biology : 4
Conjuring : 2
Magical Theory
Shamanic Design: 3

Special

Animal Training : 4



Herbalist

"Plants are great, Chummer. If you look hard enough, there's a plant for almost every need. You need something for a sick friend? I've got it. Something for a soon-to-be sick friend? Well, Bud, I got that too. Heh, and if you're a little on the thaumaturgical side - A.K.A. a magic wielder for all you mundanes - I may just have that special little piece of botany for that wiz spell you wanted to cast."

Quotes :

"The more exotic you want it, the more it will cost you."

"If you come back around closing time, I might be able to tell you where you can find the plant you seek."

"Why does everyone keep calling me a Talismonger?"

Commentary :

The Herbalist is as much an expert on plants as a Great Dragon is on magic. In some rare cases just as dangerous!

B : 2
Q : 2
S : 3
C : 3
I : 6
W : 4
E : 6
R : 4

Skills

Etiquette (Street) : 2
Etiquette (Tribal) : 4

Biology (Botany): 6 (8)
Magical Theory : 3
Conjuring : 1
Magic : 2





Neo-anarchist's guide: The Magician In Spite of Himself

>>>>>(This paper was written by the late, lamented Dr. Randall Garrett about a year before his untimely death in 2050. It demonstrates Garrett's thoughts about the effects of personal world-view on the manifestation of magical talent that later led to his theories on the origin of magical abilities. If you're wondering why it's being posted here, ask me again when you meet a self-proclaimed psionic while on a shadowrun. Know thine enemy.)<<<<< - Quirk (22:03:44/08-24-54)

The Magician In Spite of Himself: A study in awakened psychology

by Arthur Garrett, ThD., Chairman, Occult Studies, UCLA

It is important for those of us versed in the field of magic to remember that ours is a specialized knowledge. It becomes all too easy to forget that not everyone understands modern thaumaturgical theory today any more clearly than my father understood quantum relativity in his day.

The "man on the street" of the 21st century knows little more of magic than what is presented on trideo programs and taught (very basically and only in the last few decades) in public education. There remain numerous superstitions, folk tales and "urban myths" - both pre- and post-Awakening - which further cloud the issue in the minds of the population as to what is and isn't real about magic.

Magical talent and magical knowledge do not necessarily go hand-in-hand. I, for example, despite having earned a Doctorate in Thaumaturgy and the right to expound on topics such as this with authority, have not the ability to cast a single spell, nor conjure any sort of spirit. Conversely, it is also quite possible for a person to have magical ability without any knowledge of the nature of magic. Indeed, magical talent always precedes knowledge and training.

>>>>>(Not always. There are some whose Talent is awakened by studying magic in school or on their own. In general, however, Garrett is correct.)<<<<< - The Silicon Mage (13:23:38/9-11-54)

In most individuals who manifest some sign of the Talent, the path is often the same; that person is trained in the tradition of magic that he or she is most suited, either in an academic setting or a master/apprentice relationship, as practiced by many of the tribal nations and shamanic cultures. Magical talent is too rare to be wasted, so society carefully encourages those so talented to get education in the use of their gifts.



>>>>>(Magical ability is considered very valuable and there are plenty of stories on the trid of how some poor kid from the Barrens made his way out into corporate splendor with some magical talent and a lot of hard work in school. Not an option open to most of us mundanes, unfortunately.)<<<<< - Killroy (was/here)

>>>>>(Lots of street kids with magical potential are also conned by corporate recruiters into signing their lives away for a song, since they have no idea just how valuable they are. The corp gets magical talent at wageslave prices, which is why defection is so high among corporate magical talent.)<<<<< - Starfall (10:32:05/9-16-54)

However, there remain holes in the system. Firstly, many people without System Identification Numbers manifest Talent. They are often discovered by corporate or government recruiters and sponsored for training but just as many are overlooked or never found in the first place.

Also, there remain many areas of even the North American Nations where knowledge of magic is no more advanced than it was in the twentieth century, even a few where magic is still considered to be superstition or a "supernatural" force. Individuals manifesting magical talent in



such an environment might well have no conventional frame of reference in which to interpret their Gifts.

>>>>>[In some areas magically talented kids who display strange "powers" are still beaten to death in an effort to drive out the "demons" possessing them, often by their own parents. There are also plenty of places in the world where you can still get publicly stoned to death for using magic openly.]<<<<< - Talon (15:04:26/9-12-54)

Consider, then, the following premises:

1) While, we - as theorists - discuss things by set names, and as set concepts, individuals may well view things quite differently, based on their personal and cultural backgrounds. A Grade 2 Initiate may not call himself a Grade 2 Initiate - may not even be aware that he has undergone Initiation. Indeed, "magic" itself may not even be recognized as magic but framed as another force or ability.

2) A Shaman can follow a Totem that he does not embody as a Totem - or a Totem that is not a "classic" cultural totem of a shamanic tradition. While this can lead to jokes among my colleagues such as the Neil the Ork Barbarian Totem or the Ford Totem, there are also possibilities such as religious icons expressed as totems, as well as less savory concepts like the Jack The Ripper Totem.

>>>>>(Theoretical nonsense. The Totems may appear in many forms, but their essential nature is unchanged. If I see Cat as Bast the Egyptian Cat goddess or Tezcatlipoca the Aztec Jaguar god, I still draw power from Cat. Likewise a "ripper" totem is probably just a toxic version of Dog or Wolf.)<<<<< - Chess (09:18:30/9-12-54)

>>>>>(Oh? Then how do you explain the totems that some magicians follow that just don't fit into the established framework like certain anthropomorphic religious totems and some of the really twisted ones that are worse than any toxic ever dreamed of being?)<<<<< - Talon (22:34:42/9-12-54)

>>>>>(There is more to the ways of the Powers than most mortals will ever know.)<<<<< - Walker (18:45:10/9-13-54)

>>>>>(You can ask your "friends" at Aztechnology about that one, kitten.)<<<<< - Talon (21:33:14/9-13-54)

>>>>>(Too true.)<<<<< - Chess (23:56:17/9-15-54)

3) Various types of adepts may not think of themselves as "adepts" per se. A Physical Adept might use the oriental

concept of "ki" or "chi," as used in various martial arts traditions, to explain what he does rather than magic. An astral adept might think of himself as clairvoyant, or as a medium. A Conjuror might similarly adopt a mediumistic model (eg. classic spiritualism). Thus it is possible that the spirits manifesting to this magician would assume the form imposed by this belief pattern (Watchers certainly would - Elementals as well - even Nature Spirits within limits).

>>>>>(Wait a minute. I use my ki in performing aikido, there's nothing magical to it and I'm a 3rd dan black belt.)<<<<< - Kata (17:09:47/9-13-54)

>>>>>(Being a master of a marital art doesn't necessarily make you a physical adept, chummer. However, many physads are unaware of their true natures because they rationalize their abilities as talents, luck, training or ki. Maybe you should take a magical activity test sometime...)<<<<< - Talon (23:50:30/9-13-54)

4) A magician need not even be consciously aware of doing magic. He may call it the power of prayer, focussing ki, ESP, or even perform it on an entirely unconscious or subconscious level.

These premises add up to what my colleague Dr. P.R. Hume has termed "the magician in spite of himself" theory, where magical abilities manifest themselves outside of the normally accepted frameworks. The nascent magician is forced to interpret his abilities through whatever cultural framework is available and may therefore conceptualize his abilities in very different ways from other magicians. Since magic is very much a matter of perspective and worldview, these magicians can even manifest magical abilities that work in a different way than those of other magicians.

>>>>>(What did he say?)<<<<< - Spyder (21:25:56/9-11-54)

>>>>>(Mundanes (sigh). Okay, listen. Garrett's basically saying that when it comes to magic, your point of view and beliefs are just as important as any kind of "objective" reality. The abilities and limitations of a magician are determined mostly by what is believed possible and how the magician sees the universe. That's the difference between a mage and shaman; how they see things. If you were magically talented, and saw things entirely different from both mages and shamans, you'd be something else, like the manifestations that Garrett describes.)<<<<< - Talon (00:14:20/9-12-54)

>>>>>(What if you were a magician and believed that you could do anything?)<<<<< - Mischief (03:44:45/9-12-54)



>>>>>(You probably end up in a straight jacket in a padded room, talking to yourself and being treated for severe megalomania, chummer.)<<<<< - The Silicon Mage (12:05:11/9-13-54)

A particularly horrible example of this theory can be found in the case of the psychotic serial killer known as "Astaroth" who was active in California several years ago. Astaroth proved to be magically capable. He invented a personal mythology and his Totem was drawn from within that framework. He self-initiated to the point where he could sever the astral trail on his cell samples, making ritual sorcery useless as a forensic tool (one of the earliest difficulties in capturing him). His spells and rituals were part of the ritual (in the psychological sense) pattern of his crimes. Astaroth was himself totally unaware that he was a magician and instead believed his uncanny ability to carry out his grizzly crimes without being captured by the authorities to be a manifestation of some kind of favor from the bizarre entities that inhabited his personal delusions.

Less tragic examples of this theory are magicians who follow an alternate conceptual model of magic (which they may not consider to be "magic" at all).

PSIONICS

The term "psionics" was first coined by John Campbell, editor of the magazine *Astounding Science Fiction*, in the 1950s. The term came to be adopted by researchers into parapsychology to refer to the hidden powers of the human mind. They believed that these abilities could be isolated, studied and explained according to the scientific method.

After the Awakening, it was demonstrated by modern magical theory that parapsychological research had simply touched upon early manifestation of magic during the rise in the mana ambient. The concept of understanding magic

in terms of science was all but abandoned, and parapsychology was tossed onto the theoretical rubbish heap along with the phlogiston theory.

"Paranormal powers" or "psionics" were a topic of scientific study for over a century before the Awakening. Parapsychology researchers postulated that the human mind had untapped powers that led to such feats as telepathy, psychokinesis and extra-sensory perception (ESP). What the researchers did not know was that they were actually studying the early manifestations of magical talent.

After the Awakening, parapsychology and psi research was virtually abandoned. Where parapsychology re-

searchers were once scoffed at by the scientific community, now they were also scoffed at by the magical community, who found their attempts to synthesize a scientific theory to explain magic laughable.

However, psi research did not entirely die out. It remains in the 21st century as a "fringe" collection of theories to explain the nature of magic in scientific terms. One of the most famous proponents of the "psionic" theory of magic is Peter Isaac. His book *The Reality of Magic*, was a popular best-seller, despite its being panned as nonsense by the magical community. The public, however, found Isaac's statement that there was

a rational, scientific basis behind magic to be reassuring because it made magic seem less alien and frightening.

This paradigm of "magic as psionics" has had some impact on the magical community as well. Not all magically talented individuals are oriented towards the sort of worldview required even by a hermetic magician. They refuse to believe that there is any reality other than the material world, all of which is scientifically explainable.

Such individuals do away with all magical trappings ("mumbo-jumbo" as some call it) and work magic solely by the exertion of the will upon the mana. Such "psionics"





produce effects almost identical to the classical psi abilities that were categorized by parapsychologists.

Most self-proclaimed psionics have abilities like those of Sorcery adepts, although a few have the powers of full magicians. Conjuring is a rarely seen ability for psionics, although it does appear to be responsible for some "poltergeist" phenomena. Typical "psi-powers" include spells such as mind probe, control thoughts, various illusions and telekinetic manipulations and a variety of detection spells classed as "ESP."

>>>>(Wait a minute. I thought that magic and psionics were two different things.)<<<< - Tangent (20:14:25/9-10-54)

>>>>(And what's the difference? They're just two names for the same thing; the ability to alter reality with the Will.)<<<< - Kazuo (22:45:17/9-11-54)

>>>>(If they're the same, what's the big deal over what it's called?)<<<< - Tangent (01:05:41/9-12-54)

>>>>(Like I said before, chummer; world-view.)<<<< - Talon (20:53:02/9-12-54)

RELIGION

When the Awakening came in 2011, religions around the world were rocked to their foundations by the implications of it. Confronted with positive proof that magic existed as an active force in the world caused many churches to reevaluate their long-held beliefs about it.

Most religions were able to reconcile their doctrines with the existence of magic and welcome the Awakened into the fold, such as the Catholic Church did with the issuing of the papal encyclical *In Imago Dei* ("In the Image of God"). However, the transition was not always an easy one, and some religions refused to change their traditions and beliefs regarding magic.

Despite their arguments to the contrary, these religious sects are as prone to magically-gifted members through birth and accident as any other segment of the population. The difference is that these latent magicians are taught that magic is evil and unnatural, a tool of moral decay that brings all who use it eternal damnation.

In an environment such as this, most potential magicians suppress their Talent, building psychic blocks which cut off access to their magical abilities. Such people are almost totally untrainable and lose their gift forever, baring some major trauma to release it again. The Gift is not so easily denied, however. In many cases of magically-active people who suppress their talents, another avenue of expression is

found.

Some magicians raised in this environment express their magical abilities through the focus of their religious beliefs. Their religion serves the same psychic-focus role that as a Totem does for a shaman.

>>>>(Christian doctrine draws a careful line between magic - a tool of Humanity - and miracles, which are the province of God alone. In fact, the Order of St. Sylvester is specially devoted to investigating "miraculous" incidents to determine if they are true miracles or manifestations of the Magic of the Sixth World. Don't ask me how they tell the difference.)<<<< - Archangel (14:20:24/9-10-54)

>>>>(Of course, there's always the possibility that some of these guys really are performing miracles.)<<<< - Fritz (03:54:27/9-11-54)

>>>>(Could be. I've seen things from time to time that didn't look like any kind of magic I know.)<<<< - Talon (21:33:07/9-12-54)

>>>>(The very concept of which makes some theologians a little green around the gills. How do you tell a "real" angel from a fiery spirit that looks just like one? What are angels really and what's the difference between them and spirits? How many Nature Spirits can dance on the head of a pin, etc. etc.)<<<< - The Silicon Mage (12:03:54/9-11-54)

Religious trappings are always used in conjunction with this type of magic. Spells take the form of prayers and invocations, often spoken in an arcane tongue such as Latin or Hebrew. Holy books and religious symbols find use as fetishes and in a few cases have even been unconsciously enchanted to serve as foci. Salt, wine and holy water serve as ritual materials and expendable fetishes. Geasa are also bound up in religious imagery, using holy symbols, prayer, ancient languages, fasting and the limiting of magic to holy ground such as a church or mosque.

Initiates are rare in this style of magic but have been known. They are nearly always self-initiated, and initiation usually stems from some greater spiritual enlightenment, fasting, prayer and vigil that serve the same function as or deals in common initiation rites.

>>>>(This is by far the minority manifestation of magic in religion, by the way. Most religions and religious people recognize a separation of magic and religion but combine them harmoniously. For example, the aforementioned Order of St. Sylvester consists mostly of Catholic mages and adepts. In their view, magic is a tool and a blessing, but it is not miraculous. Many other religions, like Wicca and Voudoun, incorporate magic into their structure as part of their worship.)<<<< - Starfall (18:16:31/9-11-54)



THE "NEW AGE"

In the latter half of the twentieth century, there was a resurgence in alternate consciousness and "mystical" modes of thought. This explosion of pop-occultism was alternately known as the "Age of Aquarius," "The Free Thought Movement," or simply the "New Age."

While the new age movement did revitalize popular interest in ancient traditions, it also unleashed a flood of books, tapes and films that were intended solely to take advantage of the popularity of the genre and which drowned valuable occultist literature under a wave of banality. Worse yet, some new age material contained valid magical theory mixed in with utter absurdities.

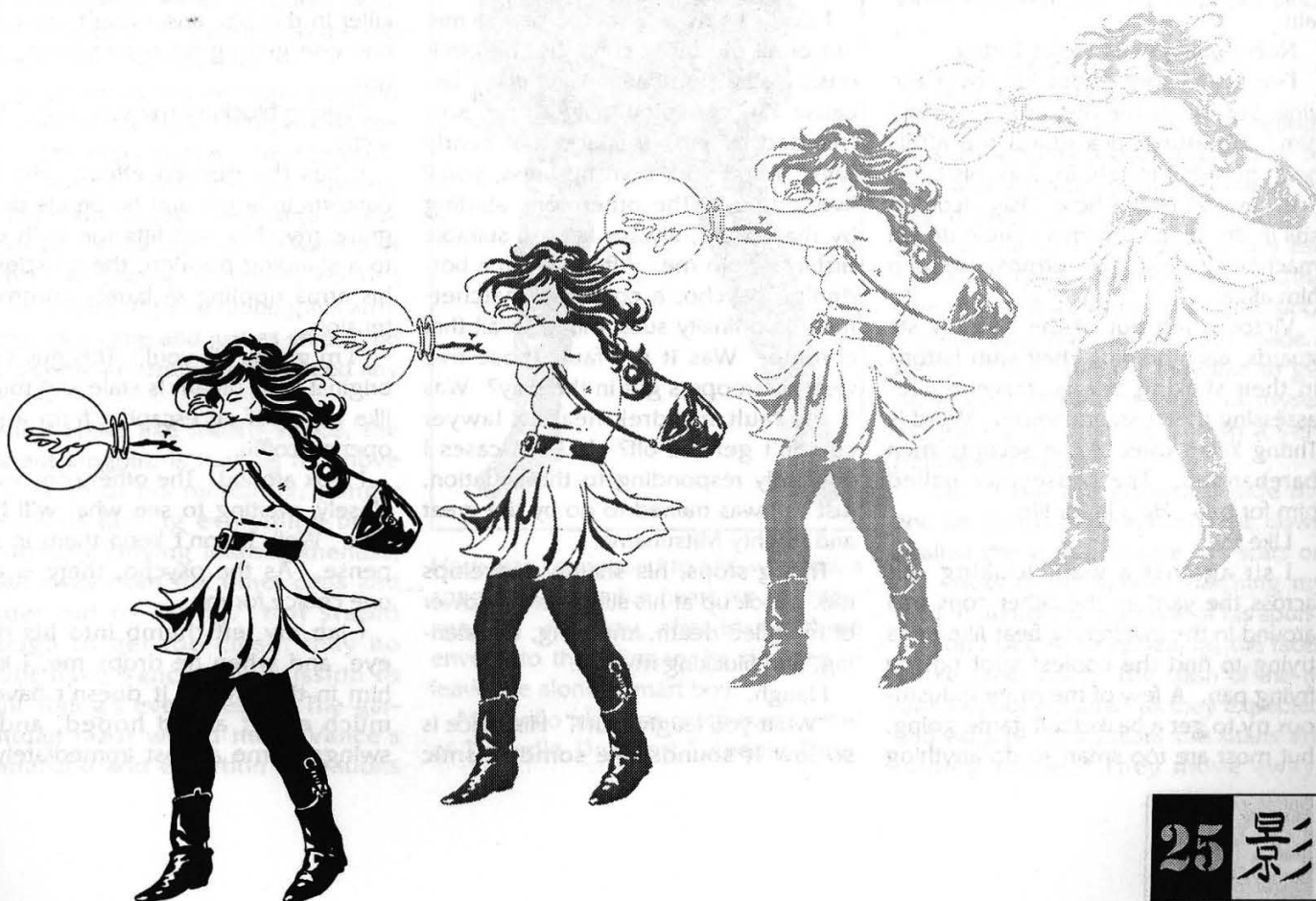
In the years leading up to and following the Awakening, many magicians struggled to liberate the kernels of their traditions from the chaff of the New Age. Valid magical theories emerged, were tested and codified by scholars whose work continues even today.

Something interesting did develop out of the New Age, however. In the fact of the return of magic, some sincere devotees of New Age philosophies proved to be magically talented and manifested their abilities within the frameworks of those philosophies, generally as adepts. Thus while the majority of the magical community looked with

disdain on such bygone ideas as past-life regression, trans-channeling, creative visualization and aromatherapy, those same "crackpot" ideas became systems of Power for some budding magicians.

>>>>>(Garrett's letting his prejudices show a bit here. It's not all of the New Age that's looked on with disdain but how most of their ideas were presented. For example, there's much magical value in the runes and Tarot cards that became so popular at the end of the twentieth century but not when they're packaged with a little instruction book and sold as parlor games for \$19.95 at your local bookstore. Likewise, many Native American traditionalists weren't very happy with all of the wannabe Anglo writers who where churning out volumes of their "ancient secrets" for big royalties.)<<<<< - The Silicon Mage (15:01:53/9-11-54)

>>>>>(That tradition of the New Age (junk occultism) is still going on. Just watch "Doctor" Arnold Ledbetter offer the "Secrets of Ancient Atlantis" for a 25¥ "donation" on the Ancient Wisdom Channel some Thursday night. Worthless trinkets, charms and "how-to" manuals of magic are also how Talismongers make ends meet. Selling only genuine magical gear to real magicians would be a pretty specialized and limited clientele and a losing business proposition, considering the amount of work that has to go into each one.)<<<<< - Talon (23:06:37/9-12-54)





Angel

This guy's huge. I've never seen anyone, outside of trolldom, as bulky and monstrous as Victor Thring. He looms well over two meters tall and has to weigh around 200 kilograms. And that's 200 kilograms of rock-hard - most-likely implanted - muscle. His legs are as thick as my waist, his arms corded and dangerous. His bald head, poking out of his bright orange shirt, is the only small thing about him; it's disproportionately tiny for his huge frame, like some doll's shaven head glued down on a mannequin. His eyes are beady and black, squinting against the harsh glare of the fiery noon sun. His ears are lobeless but prominent, his mouth large and filled with dirty and chipped teeth. He looks like some comical Saturday morning virtual villain.

Nobody laughs at Victor Thring.

I've heard a lot about him over the vine, but this is the first time I've seen him. He attacked a guard the afternoon he was brought in, and this is his first day out of the hole. His victim is still in the hospital with a couple dozen machines doing their utmost to keep him alive.

Victor is led out of the hole by six guards, each holding their stun batons in their shaking hands, fervently re-assessing their career choices. Word is Thring killed three Azzie security men barehanded. The prosecutor nailed him for two. He's in for life.

Like me.

I sit against a wall, looking out across the yard as the other cons mill around in the sweltering heat like eggs trying to find the coolest spot on the frying pan. A few of the more industrious try to get a basketball game going, but most are too smart to do anything

but stand around and sweat. The heat-distorted figures of the guards on the far walls, wearing their internally-cooled uniforms, pacing back and forth, look like wavering ghosts.

The giant walks stiffly out into the yard, the guards leave quickly. Seeing him pass the other cons, everyone getting out of his way, I laugh. All these tough blades in for murder and mayhem back down, from someone like Thring. Someone who has the skill and fury to kill trained guards like so many gnats.

Someone like me.

Thring heads straight for me like I'm some kind of magnet. He doesn't look away at the dozens of cons glancing fearfully at him. He keeps his eyes on me. I keep my eyes on him.

I don't know why he comes at me, out of all the other cons, but he obviously has a purpose. Maybe it's because I'm conspicuously alone, surrounded by empty space that nearly says: "Mind your own business, you'll live longer." The other cons abiding by that axiom, always keep a suitable distance from me. After all, I'm a borderline psycho, a corporate hatchetman who finally succumbed to all that chrome. Was it my fault those five Georgia troopers got in the way? Was it my fault my drek-headed lawyer couldn't get me off? In both cases I was only responding to the situation, just as I was trained to do by the great and mighty Mitsuhama.

Thring stops, his shadow envelops me. I look up at his silhouette, a tower of modified death, imposing, threatening, and blocking my sun.

I laugh.

"What you laughin' at?" His voice is so low it sounds like some seismic

rumble burrowing up from the depths of the earth. It's an incredibly deep, gravelly voice, something that commands respect and obedience from a listener. It matches the body, but not the diminutive head.

I ignore him and watch the dust devils thrown up by the struggling breeze against the prison wall. The other cons watch, wait, and hope that Thring kills me and I kill Thring. After all, they want to be safe in prison.

Thring places his hands on his hips and bends down. I see his few rotten teeth, sticking out like tombstones in his mouth. Apparently he never goes in for dental work. He licks his lips.

"I'm talkin' to you, runt!"

It's time to put this guy in his place. I'm the resident psycho and ice-cold killer in this bin, and I don't want anyone else getting his nose into my routine.

"You're blocking my sun, trog," I say softly.

It has the desired effect. His face contorts in anger and he bends down, grabs my shirt and lifts me with ease to a standing position, the muscles on his arms rippling in barely controlled tension.

"I'm gonna kill you!" This guy's real original. His breath is stale and musty, like a puff of air escaping from a just-opened coffin.

I look around. The other cons watch closely, waiting to see what will happen. Well, I won't keep them in suspense. As the psycho, there is only one choice for me.

I jab my left thumb into his right eye, and when he drops me, I kneel him in the groin. It doesn't have as much effect as I'd hoped, and he swings at me almost immediately. I



duck low, give him a glancing blow to the jaw and a solid kick to the knee. He goes down to one leg. I jump behind him and deal out two swift rabbit punches.

Unfortunately, he still isn't out of the game. He kicks out with his good leg and nearly catches me, but my wires are better than his. I bend and grab his left hand, pulling it behind him. Breaking two of his fingers I bring his arm up and around and drive my knee into his back.

"Listen up, Thring," I say evenly and clearly, to make sure the others hear. "My name's Ross Drake. I don't like being talked to. I don't like being looked at. I don't like being bothered by drekheads like you. When I let go of you I want you to ask around and find out what happened to the last corpse that blocked my sun."

I release him and walk off to the brown grass beneath the west wall. Everyone stares, slackjawed, as I pass. Chalk up another few points on the old psycho-meter for that one.

I sit again as before, legs crossed and arms in my lap, staring across the yard. The cons near my new location move away. The guards, having watched the whole exchange, think better of setting foot in the yard and go back to pacing. Thring is where I left him, standing and rubbing his arm. Strong as an ape and just as stupid; he could come in handy if I ever need any muscle.

But it looks like Marco Vance, the resident kingpin, is making his move first. Two of his recruiters, gangly drekheads lacking everything but a particularly cloying loathesomeness, break away from the other cons and jander out to Thring. Not stupid enough to get too close, they no doubt have Vance's permission to grant Thring's every desire. The gargantuan razor would make Vance's contraband and extortion operations

within the prison about as secure as Transys Neuronet's main CPU.

Vance tried to get me into his little cadre of criminals when I first hit this berg, but I don't play thug for a second-rate con. I think my answer ruffled his scales a bit too much, since he's tried to have me killed twice.



How was I supposed to know he had a special place in his heart for his messenger? Anyway, after losing three envoys to the infirmary he decided to leave me alone. Smart boy.

My audio pick-ups catch every word of Tweedle Dee and Tweedle Dum,

trying desperately to entice Thring to join them, extolling Vance's generosity to employees, and the unerring (with one exception) vengeance visited upon his enemies. Unfortunately Dee makes a social blunder, blissfully ignorant of Thring's waxing anger, and steps within the giant's exceptional reach.

In a mere fraction of a second Tweedle Dee is lying in the dust, now blissfully ignorant of consciousness. Tweedle Dum moves back slowly several meters before turning and scurrying off to the protection of Vance.

Thring glares at the other cons watching him and they quickly look away. He finally seems to come to a decision and walks toward me once again. This time his stride is less belligerent; with a little work it will soon be submissive. It seems I have acquired myself a henchman.

"Your name really Drake?" He asks when he hears me. He does not block my sun.

I don't answer.

"I got a message."

That gets my attention. Somebody outside sending a message to me by way of a gigantic goon. Whatever he has to say I want to hear. No doubt a promise of retribution from my old bosses at MCT. I've been expecting some kind of action on their part since my first day, but they haven't made a move. Odd. Usually they like to get rid of embarrassments such as myself as quickly as possible and in a very permanent manner.

"Sit," I pat the ground beside me and he lowers his massive frame down against the wall. I notice the scars on the backs of his hands, matching my own, marking the removal of his spurs.

Worry begins to appear on the faces of the other cons. The clash of the titans has not occurred as they expected and hoped. It appears the titans are joining forces. They move away,



grumbling and fearful, realizing it is only they who will suffer from such an alliance.

I turn to Thring. He smiles at me. It's a genuine, albeit ugly, smile and reminds me of a dog greeting his master.

Yes, it's very possible. Thring could easily be the kamikaze come to dispose of MCT's dishonor. A toned and tweaked killing machine, lacking any non-lethal abilities, would be just the sort of operative to sacrifice on such a mission. Time to find out for sure.

"The message?" I prompt.

"We're breaking you out."

"Why?" And I thought I couldn't be surprised any more.

"My boss knows about you. About your job."

Well, well. Not an MCT goon after all. There's a third player in town who knows about my last job. Even though my violent desertion from MCT never splattered the newsfaxes like my encounter with the Georgia police, it wouldn't take a great shadowplayer to learn that the seven million in illegal, Yak-laundered, totally untraceable UCAS paper dollars that disappeared with me was never recovered.

But, most players aren't renowned for their benevolence. "How much?"

"Huh?"

"What percentage does he want?"

Thring grins in realization. "Oh, that. All of it. Everything."

Whoever is pulling Thring's strings is a confident one. Of course, I can promise anything I want and just kill Thring and his boss afterward. I don't want to look easy, though.

"That's crazier than I am. I'll give him twenty."

"All."

"I don't like prison, Thring, but I'm not sure getting out sooner than expected is worth seven megs. Besides, I almost made it out on my last try. I could make it next time. He'll have to

take thirty, no more."

"All."

"Hold on, Vic," I don't want this to go on forever, especially with someone as dull-witted as Thring. "What's the lowest your boss said to go because I'm not going any higher than fifty percent."

"You owe him. He wants all of it."

"What do you mean? Who is this guy? Why do I owe him?"

"He got you your lawyer."

So that was it. I've always wondered how I managed to pocket the best defense attorney around, especially since MCT was doing its utmost to 'convince' any prospective counsel to pass me by. He said it was just because he wanted the publicity of my case, which was easy enough to believe from a lawyer. But he was paid, not well enough to get me off, but still paid. That eases my conscience a bit.

"That means drek. That idiot couldn't keep me out of here."

"He kept you alive," Thring says, with a surprising amount of wit, "and you repaid him by breaking his neck."

I want to answer, but I'm astounded at Thring's use of a cohesive multisyllabic sentence.

In any case, this offer is ludicrous and I could just refuse and keep trying on my own. I've tried to escape three times since I've been in, and each time some drekking little detail or happenstance fragged it for me. These walls are beginning to stifle me, getting worse than working for the Corp; going where they tell you, doing what they tell you, killing who they tell you. I tried to escape one prison only to land in another. I'm not going to let that happen again.

But then again, I do owe Thring's boss something for at least trying to get me off. I might as well go along with Thring and my unknown benefactor, at least until I have a gun in my hands.

"All right, Thring, it's a deal. I don't know how much longer I can take being locked up in this dump, and outside help makes it so much easier. So, when do I get to meet your Mr. Johnson?"

"He's no Mr. Johnson. He's Bill Ziebel."

* * *

I turn from the guard's body and look at the ancient, fire-engine red Oldsmobile convertible that Vic's accomplice has driven up beside the prison bus. With more chrome than the current Rambo incarnation, the car would be a teenager's dream machine.

"What the hell is this?" I demand, throwing the bloodied shovel into the ditch beside the bodies of the guards. "Haven't you guys ever heard of being nondescript? The cops will see this thing coming ten kilometers away!"

Victor bends down and removes the keycard from a guard's belt and promptly uses it to disarm his collar. "Let's go," he grunts and pulls me around to the passenger door. I see the other cons in the work detail sprinting to the cover of the trees despite the heat. In their orange uniforms they look like so many wisps of flame darting across the barren dirt fields. Of course, they won't get far. The signals in their collars will have the law on them inside an hour.

"Ease off!" I yell, as Thring pushes me into the car and steps into the back seat.

This is new. Over the past two months Victor never laid a hand on me. I've come to control the prison in that short time, after disposing of Marco Vance, and that was useful for my escape. But now, he man-handles me and won't follow my orders as usual. I don't like it. I don't like the convertible. I don't like Chester Gould.

Chester Gould. Now there's a shifty little backstabber if ever I saw one.



First of all, he's not even 150 cents tall, probably less than 60 kilos, and has about as much muscle as Vic has brains. His sparse, scraggly hair is pulled back from his sloping forehead, over his ears to a short pony tail wrapped in a red rubber band. The skin on his face and hands is also pulled tight and thin like a worn shroud, the veins bulging like dozens of long green worms. His protruding eyes, black and hardly visible beneath heavy lids, are set close to his prominent, aquiline nose. His small mouth is bordered by extremely thin lips which rarely ever close to hide his perfect teeth. A small, delicately maintained moustache completes this picture of deceitful sycophancy.

Whereas Victor reminds me of a troll blessed with a lack of warts, Chester looks like nothing but a diseased elf shrunk down to dwarf-height.

All I know is his name, which is bad enough, and his manner, which nearly makes me retch. But the fact that he picks the most easily identifiable car in the world doesn't do much for my confidence in him. Nor his boss.

Chester puts the car in gear and we speed off, large clouds of dust spraying up behind us, blocking the view of the carnage Victor and I wrought.

"Where we going, Chester?" I say, making sure that the stress on his name can be mistaken for nothing less than unbridled contempt.

"Well, Ross," he responds, exactly imitating my own voice, "we're going

to find your money and then to see Mr. Ziebel."

I grab him by the throat and yank him over to my side of the car, squeezing. Nobody talks to me that way. His face quickly turns redder than the Olds as Victor lunges for the wheel and we swerve crazily to a stop.

"Listen, you sawed-off little runt!" I growl into his fiery face. "You call me



Mr. Drake and take off this cuff now or I'll rip your larynx out!"

Chester can't respond, of course, because my grip is quickly crushing his asophagus, but Victor yanks my hands away and throws me out of the car like a lifeless rag doll. By the time I get up they are both standing, facing me, weapons in hand. Chester has recovered pretty quick from my attack, and he smiles reproachfully at me.

"Mr. Ziebel wouldn't like you choking me, Ross," Chester Gould's voice

is a model of honey-soaked false obsequiousness. While his smile and fawning manner convey a picture of the cowardly, bootlicking toady, the malignant lifelessness of his black eyes reveals his true nature: that of a ruthless killer who pulls triggers as much for perverse enjoyment as out of necessity. "But I do like that neck restraint. It completes that 'incarcerated' look those fine mandarin garments so subtly hint at. I suggest you refrain from future attacks."

Victor, looming beside him, grunts in agreement. That grunt has come to annoy me for the last couple of months as we waited in prison for the escape. That grunt makes up about fifty percent of Vic's vocabulary.

I move forward.

"Not any closer, Ross. I'm fully aware of your dislike of confinement, but don't let it force you into a suicidal position."

Standing side by side, in front of the car, they go together like sim-sense and dentistry. Vic, in his dusty orange prison uniform, stands like some ebony war

monument, his right hand dwarfing the .44 magnum it holds. Beside him, Chester dabs the sweat from his forehead with an orange handkerchief from the pocket of his pin-stripe suit. Unlike Vic, he's spotlessly clean; he has even straightened his tie.

I step closer.

Chester raises his gun, a Morrissey Elan, which looks like a heavy pistol in his small, effeminate hand. "You're not as crazy as that, Ross. In fact, you're not nearly as crazy as you'd



have everyone believe."

"You'll soon find out how crazy I am." Chester's Elan won't stop me, but Vic's Ruger certainly will, if I don't move fast enough.

"Ah, ah, ah. Come on, Ross, don't be stupid. Such aggressive behavior will only end up with you getting ventilated."

This guy is just as original as Victor. What do they do, get all their lines from the last century?

"You can't shoot. Ziebel won't get his money."

"Which you'll take us to right now, if you please. I don't have to kill you to immobilize you, so be smart." He replaces his handkerchief into his chest pocket and pulls out something else. The collar transmitter. "After all, what's a few million between friends?" With a flick of his thumb my neck restraint stabs me with electricity. My pain inhibitors take up most of it, but I'm still forced to my knees, gasping.

Chester wouldn't dare hit the detonator switch, but he is just the type to shoot off my kneecaps to get his point across. I know there is no way to win ... right now anyway. The time will come when I'll have the better of these two, and when that time comes I'll send them straight to Hell.

* * *

I have to empty the rest of the magazine into Victor and even then he still comes at me, stumbling lifelessly, grinding his teeth so hard they shatter. I push him down the shaft before he collapses. I watch his bulk plummet into the darkness of the pit. I wait ten seconds for the squelching thud of Victor's landing, but the only thing to rise out of the black pit is a muggy breeze. Hardly even that, more like a forced waft of sluggish air, the scent of which nags at my mind as something just beyond recall.

I go back to Chester's body. It took

only one bullet with him. He died pretty quick, only a slight red stain on his vest, a little blood trickling from his mouth and congealing in his moustache. His face hasn't changed much, except perhaps to look even more pale and skeletal. That annoying grin remains even in death.

The keycard and the carkeys are in his jacket. His red comb slips out as I take them. I leave it where it falls. That's all I need from Chester. After freeing myself of the collar, I lift him easily over my shoulder and send him after Victor.

"See ya, friend," I smile. When I placed the money here, in this old mine, I included a gun, never really expecting to need it. Of course, turning against MCT does tend to make one a bit paranoid. I had assumed that I would use the gun against some of their hitters. Who knows, maybe I did. Vic and Chester didn't fit the description of the average MCT man, but perhaps the corp had sent them to put me off-guard. It didn't work of course, and I thank heaven I was so cautious.

I move toward the unearthed crate and notice someone standing at the far edge of the lantern's light, motionless in the tunnel.

"Hello, Mr. Drake."

The Predator I hold is empty, the extra magazine in the crate. I haven't taken the time to replace it.

"I see you've taken a dislike to Victor and Chester. Too bad, they're a good team and I've come to rely on them. Perhaps too much. They'll have to be punished for not bringing you all the way to meet me as planned."

I straighten. Vic and Chester are about as far past punishment as you can get.

"Who are you?" I ask, holding the gun up at him.

He moves forward, his fair elven features now evident. He wears a pin-stripe, like Chester, although in a dark-

er hue of blue, almost black. He holds a hat in his hands, a red rose protruding from his chest pocket. His face is clean-shaven and smooth, no sign of facial hair, no sign of wrinkles. His hair is coal black and full, combed back with excessive care. His eyes are hidden behind dark shades.

"Come now, put that away, we both know it's empty," he motions his hat at the gun. His voice is smooth and even, never faltering.

I glance down at the case. I can have the gun loaded in two seconds and shoot him three times in one more. He is six meters away. The only thing to consider is the possibility of him being armed.

"Step away from the case, Mr. Drake," he orders, unbuttoning his jacket and pulling a Colt from his belt.

I do, also moving away from the shaft. I do not drop the gun. Bill Ziebel moves forward, smiling. He's come for his money.

"You're quite an efficient killer, Mr. Drake. Much better than Victor or Chester."

"Obviously," Ziebel is moving toward me, and closer to the shaft. "You should spend a bit more money and hire real talent."

"What they lack in skill, Mr. Drake, they make up for in loyalty. Victor and Chester never question orders, never complain. But now, of course, you are quite a bit more intelligent than both of them. Perhaps they can learn something from you."

"They're dead," I say softly.

"Don't you know me yet, Mr. Drake?"

This is getting wierd. I look down at the case, at the stacks of bills inside, and the gleaming magazine lying on top. If I lunge for it, with my heightened reflexes, I might be able to take him. Or not.

He blocks the tunnel to the exit of the mine. Behind me the darkness



hides a maze of passages and caverns, how deep and how many I don't know. Maybe there's another way out.

"There's only one way out, Mr. Drake, and that's with me."

Sorry, chummer, but that isn't likely. "There's the money, Ziebel! It's what you came for, isn't it? Take it, it's yours."

He smiles, "I am here for something, Mr. Drake, but it's not in that crate."

This guy is too far gone for me. The only thing of value in the mine is that crate's contents. Granted, paper money has inherent problems in the electronic age, but seven million is nothing to ignore.

Then again, seven million isn't worth my life. I can always make more, much more. I won't be able to use my old haunt of Atlanta. Dallas, maybe, or New York, even Seattle. It'll be like a wolf let loose on the lambs, the phoenix returning from the ashes.

Ziebel's still watching me, with a half-smirk cutting across his perfect features. The cut of his clothes, the part in his hair, the manicure: he's no match for an assassin like me. The Colt isn't a big caliber, and I give myself 7:3 odds that I can take him. He'll shoot eventually anyway, and a delay on my part brings me only closer to my death.

"But, Mr. Drake, you're already dead."

This guy is certifiable.

"Denial doesn't become you, Mr. Drake. I'm amazed you haven't discovered it earlier." He puts the gun away and buttons his jacket, now standing wide open to any attack. "Actually, you've been dead for quite some time and I must admit that I have been somewhat remiss in taking so long to collect you. My apologies."

Enough of this drek. If he wants to play his little mind games that's fine with me, but I have games of my own.

Much more lethal games.

I move, forcing every last gram of speed out of my wires, crossing the distance between us in an instant. My fingers strike infallibly at his adam's apple, delivering the fatal blow.

But he's not there. I stumble and nearly fall into the shaft. Catching myself, I spin low, scanning the cavern.

"Very well done," Ziebel stands next to the crate. "I must say you will make a nice addition to my collection."

This time my speed surpasses even my own expectations and I don't bother with the niceties of a single attack. Three times I strike blows that would kill three trolls. But each time I miss.

"That's quite enough, Mr. Drake," Ziebel is standing once again beside the shaft. He glances at the gold watch at his wrist. "I have other appointments, and I cannot spend all afternoon watching you display your considerable skills, impressive as they are."

I lunge, mustering all the MCT black ops training I've learned. This time Ziebel does not disappear. This time he blocks each of my attacks with inhuman ease, and retaliates with a single open-palm strike to my sternum.

Impossibly, the blow sends me catapulting five meters back against the wall. I sink to the dirt floor, my limbs numb.

He removes his shades, glowing eyes bore into me. "It's over, Mr. Drake. You will be coming with me now," he waves his hat at me. I watch as the flesh on my hand greys and collapses, the meat muscles degrading, the metal muscles bulging out on my sunken flesh. I feel my skin sagging down over my dermal armor, my tongue liquefying in my mouth. A great weight descends on my chest, a penetrating soreness spreads over my body.

This can't be happening. I'm Ross Drake. I can't be... dead. Not with

seven million so close and freedom mine for the taking.

Bill Ziebel comes up to me and puts his hand on my shoulder. "I'm afraid that you will never be free again," he shakes his head. Not in pity, but in pride.

I don't answer.

"Shall we go?" He lifts me up, and I stand swaying beside him.

I can't resist, and my lifeless muscles respond only to Ziebel's will. We walk toward the shaft, the gleam from his eyes lighting the way, the fear in my chest burning like fire.





off the shelf >>>>(new gear)<<<<

The Executive Elect

So you enjoy tinkering with electronics? If you do, then the Executive Elect is the tool for you. The Executive Elect is an electronics kit designed to look like a pocket secretary! The hardwired "pen" serves several functions, from contact tester to soldering wire. The case lid can be removed and attached to the per wire so you can work on those difficult to fix chip-shots. Almost everything you can do with an ordinary small electronics kit you can do with the Executive Elect. Plus, you don't have the embarrassingly mundane kit to tote along. (Phone option available).

[GM will determine the Executive Elect's specific abilities when compared to an ordinary electronics kit.]

Executive Elect

Concealability: 3
Availability: 5/48 hrs
Weight: 1.5
Cost: 4000¥
Street Index: 2

>>>>(Who are you kidding? The real market for this kit is the person who needs to sneak around with an electronics kit.)<<<<

-Wiseguy, (11:01:02/6-4-54)



Chip Kicker

The Chip Kicker is the most revolutionary advancement in chip addiction therapy. Used at clinics like Crafton and Rauller Hills, these chips are helping thousands of people kick the BTL habit. the Chip Kicker deck reads the opening sequence of a simsense chip and then writes it into the Kicker Chip. When the patient plugs in, their experience is the start of normal addiction, but then a mild shock is received from the chip. Eventually an association is created between chip use and discomfort. The treatment is combined with supportive counseling and gives tremendous results in permanent recovery.

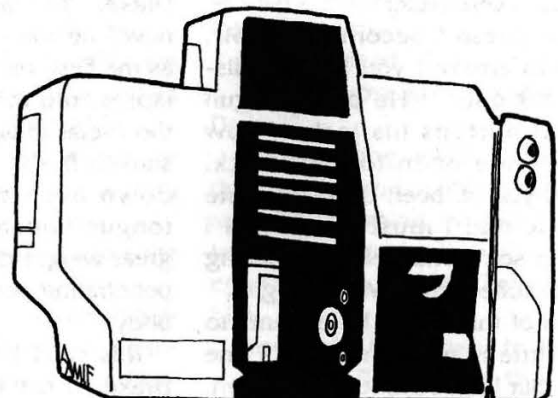
Chip Kicker Deck

Concealability: -
Availability: 7/14 days
Weight: 6
Cost: 20,000¥
Street Index: 2

Kicker Chips

Concealability: 8
Availability: 6/72 hrs
Weight: -
Cost: 50¥
Street Index: 1.25

>>>>(This must be on here for its darker use. The Chip Kicker can copy the beginning sequence of most chips, BTL or otherwise. You can then write it onto a modified Kicker Chip (upgrade the micro battery and cross a couple of the circuits.) the modified chip causes a massive electrical arc rather than a mild shock. The user plugs in and before he knows what is happening he's dead. It's not a pleasant sight.)<<<<
-Cable(1:42:56 /6-6-54)





Power Glide System

You've looked everywhere for the perfect fitness regimen. Well, look no further than the Power Glide system. The PGS comes with only three parts but is able to get you a fitness system to last a lifetime! You get a 1.5 x 3m section of PGS astroglide workout surface, the all important Power Glide shoes and an instruction trideo chip. The PGS shoes fit over your normal athletic shoes and have a special traction material along the inside edge. The outside edge of the shoe is smooth. By following the instructional chip, in a few short days you will master the gliding motion and be on your way to an awesome workout.

Power Glide System

Concealability:(PLEASE, they're white sock things that go over your shoes!!)
Availability: Always
Weight: -
Cost: 499¥
Street Index: 1

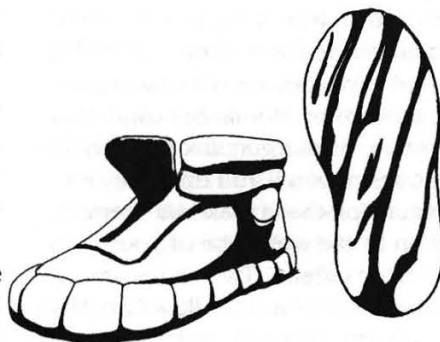
Special Rule:

The PGS shoes require Athletic Test of 4 each phase you choose to move. Use of the PGS shoes allow the player to move at a running rate +1 (i.e.: humans at x4). This can be increased like normal running, but adds 1 to the Athletics target # for each level of increase.

>>>>(Hey, don't laugh!!! Think this one over; since many buildings use a form of smooth tile these shoes can be

great. By practicing, you can learn to move around at tremendous speed. And when the surface is too rough to glide on, the softness of the slipover shoe makes your steps practically noiseless.)<<<<

-Baracuda(7:58:47 6-7-54)



Coventry 220ZX

Position has its privileges. Unfortunately, there are many undesirables who view your position in life with extreme animosity. They would like nothing more than to make you pay for those privileges, and pay dearly. Sometimes a bodyguard is not enough, and sometimes there isn't a bodyguard. That's when you need Coventry Personal Protection. Protection you can carry with you but which won't cramp your style. The first release of this line is the Coventry 220ZX, a 9mm light pistol which disassembles into five pieces. Each piece is designed to look like one of your accessories: a cigarette case, a pen, a lighter, a ring, and either a small broach or cuff link. The gun can be assembled in as little as ten seconds. Don't let some criminal corner you. Get protection. Get Coventry. Another

fine product from Advanced Weapon Systems.

Coventry 220ZX

Type: Light Pistol
Concealability: 10/5
(Disassembled/Assembled)
Availability: 3/5 days
Mode: SA
Ammo: 8 (m)
Damage: 6L
Weight: .75
Cost:
2000¥ Standard Design
3000¥ and Up for Custom Designs
Street Index: 1.25

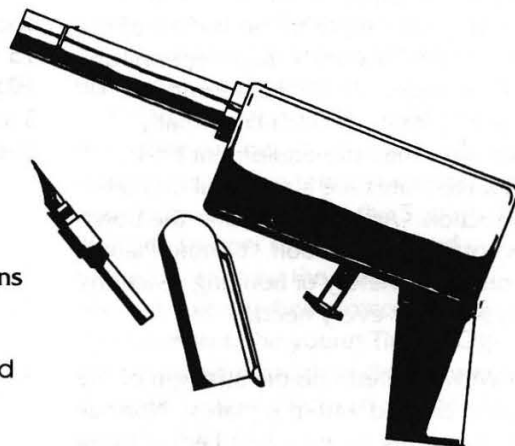
>>>>(This is hilarious! If a bodyguard isn't enough to stop the "criminal," who is going to give you ten seconds?)<<<<

-Deca< 6:27:49 /6-8-54

>>>>(In certain situation, 10 seconds is

all you need. As a person who rebels against the Corporate Structure, I personally find this item very useful.)<<<<

-ToMax (6:30:04 /6-8-54)





off the shelf >>>>(new gear)<<<<

Coventry Gloves

Gloves that pack a punch! The second release in the Coventry Personal Protection line provides you with the elegance of designer leather gloves and the power to take down an attacker. The gloves incorporate three firing tubes on the back of the hand. The tubes are loaded with darts containing Narcojet. You can fire one dart at a time, or all three simultaneously. You must have a smartgun link to activate the gloves. Even if you don't have a smartgun link these make the perfect addition to the wardrobe of your body guard or chauffeur. Two styles are available: Flare, which allows multiple firing without damage to the skin of the gloves or Elite which totally conceals the firing ports but tears the skin of the gloves upon firing.

Coventry Gloves

Type :Special
Concealability:7 Flare/10 Elite
Availability: 5 /6 days
Mode: SA
Ammo: 3 (m)
Damage: As toxin
Weight: .3
Cost: 1500¥
Street Index: 1.75

Special Rules:

Range is as follows:

SHORT	MED	LONG	EXT.
0-3	4-6	7-9	10-12

Unless player has smartgun link on both hands, the glove will only fire from the one hand. If all three darts are fired, they either all hit or all miss, one roll. The darts are loaded from the inside of the glove. Additional darts are available for 50¥ per 10 darts. This does not include the cost of the toxin.

>>>>(These are fantastic!!!)<<<<
-Deak (04:32:03 /6-8-54)



Granite Plates

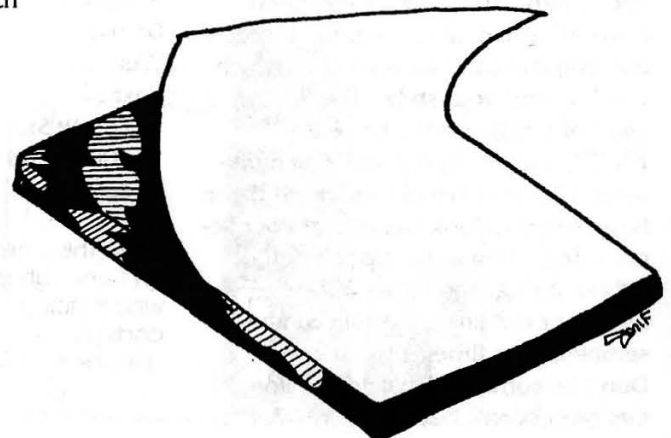
Each year you lose thousands to the theft of office equipment. With Granite Plates you can stop equipment theft dead in its tracks. Simply pull the protective wrapper off the 20 x 30 mm metal plate, apply to the surface of the desk and place the equipment on top of the plate. Within 30 seconds a bond is formed which is normally stronger than the equipment itself. Granite Plates are also useful for construction. Apply a plate and the bond is stronger than a bolt. Granite Plates come in a variety of bonding reactions to suit your every need.

Granite Plates

Concealability: 8
Availability: Always
Weight: .05
Cost: 30

second bond 5¥ each
15 second bond 10¥ each
10 second bond 15¥ each
3 second bond 20¥ each
Street Index: 1

>>>>(Granite Plates are great for sealing doors...just be forewarned that if you take the wrapper off a 3 second plate ... you better put it in place damn quickly!)<<<<
-Baracuda 'Nine Fingers' (2:11:09 / 6-9-54)



[GM will determine the strength of the bond created with the plates. Normally the plates create a bond equal to the object with the highest Body being bonded.]



>>>>(Hey, chummers, scan this. It was liberated at no small expense from a Seellie Court System in Tir na nOg. I think that you might find it of interest.)<<<<< - Killroy (was/here)

>>>>(How the did you get into the fraggin' Shidhe system!?! That place is a frozen maze.)<<<<< - Trouble (10:05:33/11-15-54)

>>>>(I didn't say it was me, now did I? And in any event that would be telling...)<<<<< - Killroy (was/here)

Faskit Code: goronagee-cela

Subject: The Knights of the Red Branch

Classification: Terrorist Organization

Directive: sallah

Overview:

The Knights of the Red Branch is a terrorist organization based in North America. Their stated goal is the destruction of the Court and the restoration of human rule in Tir na nOg.

Range:

Limited. The Knights operate mostly in the Northeastern UCAS, primarily in the metroplex of Boston, but evidence shows that they are also involved in supporting rebel and terrorist groups in Tir na nOg.

Distinctive Characteristics:

None known. The group avoids such distinction in order to mask it's presence. Many of the members are, however, known to frequent various traditional Tir na nOg modes of dress and manner (unfortunately a popular fad with Tir na nOg populations in North America).

Personnel:

The KBR is lead by a man named Ian O'Donnel, a former Tir na nOg citizen and known terrorist. O'Donnel is believed to have magical abilities that have allowed him to evade capture for this length of time. He is aided by a

close circle of associates, but their identities remain unknown. Most of the members of the organization consist of disaffected rabble recruited off the streets, usually Tir na nOg refugees and mercenaries.

Resources:

The Knights have made use of considerable technological resources in the past, including military quality weapons and explosives. The presence of these weapons suggests that they are supported by some outside group
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<data corrupted: continue?> (Y/N) Y

Activities:

Crimes against Tir na nOg include terrorist bombings, espionage, fomenting of sedition, riot and rebellion, attacks against allied persons and powers and violations of the rights and persons of innocent citizens.

Structure/Affiliations:

The KRB is set up in a cellular structure that has served terrorist and rebel groups well for centuries. Each cell is limited in what it knows, so the entire organization cannot be brought down if only one cell member or group is compromised. The cells take their orders from O'Donnel via a variety of media, including magical communication.

Analysis:

The Knights represent a distant, but real, threat to the sanctity of our Nation and all efforts should be brought to bear to neutralize them in such a manner as to make the most public example of the fact that war and rebellion are most expensive games to play.

The Knights of the Red Branch

The Knights of the Red Branch is an Tir na nOg-American terrorist organization devoted to the goal of overthrowing the Elven rule of Tir na nOg and restoring the original Tir na nOg government (as it was shortly before the Shidhe overthrow). The Knights collect all manner of intelligence on the Tir and use that data in terrorist strikes in an effort to force the Elven government to accede to their demands. They also support freedom-fighting groups in their homeland, supplying them with weapons and information about the Shidhe.

Leader: The leader and founder of the Knights of the Red Branch is Ian O'Donnel. A Tir na nOg national, O'Donnel's family was heavily involved with the Irish Republican Army and the unification of Ireland under home rule after the British relinquished control of Northern Tir na nOg in 2014. The young O'Donnel enlisted in the Tir na nOg Army in 2030 at the age of 18. Routine testing revealed that he was a physical adept, and O'Donnel was placed in a special forces training cadre. He was a young lieutenant when the Shidhe overthrew the Tir na nOg government in 2034 in a bloodless coup. O'Donnel abandoned his post in protest of the direction in which he felt his homeland moving.

O'Donnel became the leader of a resistance cell near his home in Ulster, leading his men in terrorist strikes against the Tir forces. In the Spring of 2035, O'Donnel's cell was wiped out to the last man by the TRC. O'Donnel was the sole survivor. Forced to flee his homeland, the young Tir na nOg-man escaped through underground channels to the UCAS - more specifically, to Boston.

In Boston, the charismatic young adept began to draw a core of followers from the displaced Tir na nOg pop-



ulation there. He formed them into a group to continue the effort to overthrow the fascist Elven government of Tir na nOg and named them after a group of legendary warriors who defended the Tir na nOg city of Ulster: the Knights of the Red Branch.

Membership: The Knights are organized into small groups called "cells." Each cell is made up of no more than a half-dozen or so members (usually Tir na nOg nationals or those sympathetic to their cause). No two cells communicate with each other; each receives orders directly from O'Donnel through a variety of channels, usually pre-arranged message drops, codes or watcher spirits (never via Matrix communication, which is too easily compromised). Typical cell members have some basic training in combat and small-unit tactics, and a few also have military experience (either as members of a corporate or national army). There are also eight members scattered among the various cells who have active magical abilities (other than O'Donnel): four physical adepts, a conjuring adept, two mages and a Celtic Druid (Wolf totem).

O'Donnel also has two close personal assistants. The first is Catherine Slaine, a Tir na nOg-American decker. "Cat" (as she is known on the streets) is a decker in charge of the Knights' intelligence-gathering operations. She is a young woman of considerable passion, raised in Boston by Tir na nOg immigrant parents. She has somewhat idealized notions of the Emerald Isle and is fiercely devoted to her Tir na nOg heritage, O'Donnel and the Knights, in that order.

Before joining the KRB, Cat was involved with an Elven blue-blood from a wealthy Beacon Hill family. When his parents forbade their relationship and he bowed to their wishes, Cat became rather bitter and developed a strong

dislike of Elven culture and arrogance. Real hard-core "Alfheim" types (like those from Tir na nOg or Tir Tairngire) offend her, but she has no problem with Elves as people. She also dislikes wealthy aristocrats and corporate fat-cats.

Cat is a vivacious Tir na nOg-American in her mid-twenties. She has blonde hair worn in a short, practical style and deep blue eyes. Her Matrix persona is a cat with glittering chrome fur and deep blue eyes rendered in super-realistic detail.

O'Donnel's other close associate is his "secret weapon" in his fight against the Shidhe and has been a prime factor in his evading the authorities for as long as he has. One of the ill-fated members of O'Donnel's resistance cell in Ulster was a young street shaman who called up a Hearth Spirit to defend himself but was cut down before he could issue any commands to the spirit. The newly freed spirit had feelings of loyalty and sympathy for the resistance fighters. Too late to aid any but O'Donnel, the spirit used its powers to help him escape and remained with him afterwards. The Hearth spirit calls itself "Quare" and holds goals that match those of O'Donnel and the Knights. Quare has also hinted that he opposes the Tir for some other mysterious reason of his own that he refuses to discuss. Over the years Quare and O'Donnel have become good friends and the spirit has told O'Donnel his True Name as a sign of his trust (as well as a precaution, should it become important).

Headquarters: No fixed headquarters. The Knights operate primarily out of the Boston Metroplex area, but individual cells are scattered throughout the Northeast UCAS as well as a few cells or sympathetic supporters in England and Europe. O'Donnel and his close associates keep fairly mobile to

avoid detection by authorities. The group might operate out of any area that has a significant Tir na nOg population that might be sympathetic to "the Cause."

Common Activities: The KRB carries out a variety of activities towards the goal of ending Elven rule in Tir na nOg including weapon-smuggling, information brokering and datasteals, terrorist attacks against the Tir government and any other governments or corporations allied with it and media blitzes intended to expose the Tir government as oppressive and fascist. They also become involved in other activities that support their primary goals such as more mundane shadowrunning and theft for financial support. Many KRB cells also engage in acts of violence against symbols of Tir/Elven culture like festivals, cultural displays and popular Elf-owned businesses. A few cells (little more than street gangs) have been responsible for racial attacks on innocent Elves. O'Donnel does not condone this, but he also does little to prevent it from happening.

Things To Do

(in the next five seconds)

1. Take out the ork on the roof.
2. Disarm the door.
3. Pick up the mage who passed out (again)
4. Get the frag outta here before the whole thing blows.
5. Flip through all my sourcebooks looking for the right chants and numbers.

Right.

>>>>(Sounds like you need the newest download from the 'net. **Shadowrun Mastersheets**. Regardless of your specialty, we've got a mastersheet for you: **Weapons and Accessories**, **Rigger**, **Melee Combat**, and **Combat**. All the stats and figures you need, right there. No page flipping. Just paydata at your fingertips, and laminated in case your work gets a little, well, wet. For more information, access the Network Products page)<<<< Quirk (20:19:45/9-25-55)



Ian O'Donnel

B 5
Q 4(6)
S 3
C 4
I 6
W 4
E 5.5
M 10
R5 +2D6
Armor 5/3

Threat/Professional Rating: 6

Skills: Armed Combat (Spear): 6, Battle Rage (Centering): 5, English: 5, Etiquette (Military): 5, Etiquette (Street): 5, Firearms: 6, Gaelic: 5,

Leadership: 6, Magical Theory: 2, Negotiations: 4, Stealth: 7, Unarmed Combat: 7

Initiate Grade: 4

Adept Powers: Combat Centering, Enhanced Senses (Low-Light, Thermographic, High and Low Range Hearing), Improved Ability (Firearms) 2, Improved Quickness +2, Improved Strength +2, Increased Reflexes 1, Quickness Boost +2, Strength Boost +2,

Cyberware: None

Gear: armor jacket, spear (Rating 4 Weapon Focus)



Cat Slaine

B 2
Q 4
S 3
C 4
I 6
W 4
E 5.5
M 0
R 5(9) +1D6 (3D6)
Armor 4/2

Threat/Professional Rating: 4

Skills: Bike 3, Computer 6, Computer Theory 4, Computer B/R 6, Demolitions 4, Electronics

6, Etiquette (Matrix) 5, Etiquette (Media) 4, Etiquette (Street) 4, Firearms 4, Stealth 4

Cyberware: Datajack, Headware Memory (50 Mp)

Gear: Lined coat, Ares Viper, microtronics tools, variety of explosives and detonation devices.

Cyberdeck: Fuchi Cyber-6 with Response Increase 2. Programs: Bod 5, Evasion 6, Masking 7, Sensors 6, Attack 6, Browse 5, Smoke 5, Deception 5, Sleaze 6.



Quare

B 9*
C 11*
S 7*
C 9*
I 9
W 4
E *
M *
R 20(29) +1D6
Armor 9*

Force: 5

Spirit Energy: 4

Skills: Etiquette (Street): 3, Magic Theory 7, Sorcery 6, Unarmed Combat 4

Spirit Powers: Accident, Alienation, Aura Masking, Concealment, Confusion, Guard, Human Form, Immunity to Normal Weapons, Possession, Search, Sorcery

Spells: (Due to his Sorcery power, Quare does not take Drain). Manabolt 4, Sleep 5, Detect Elves 3, Detect Enemies 3, Mindlink 3, Mind Probe 4, Physical Mask 3, Treat 3, Armor 4, Acid 5, Mob Mind 4, Levitate Object 4.

Gear: Generally none.





1

It's a pretty straightforward courier job; your EBM[2] Mr. Johnson wants you to pick up a package from a contact in the Barrens and deliver it to a ship called the *Manannan Mac Lir* in the Harbor. You don't know what's in the case, but that's standard procedure, right? When you're a shadowrunner, you get used to working in the dark.

Quotes:

"What's in the package? Maybe I should find some more *professional* shadowrunners."

"You sell your lives cheaply, *makan-gee*."

BOOM!!!!

Notes: The Mr. Johnson actually works for the KRB and he has hired the runners to deliver a powerful bomb to a ship used by the Tir. The plan is for the bomb to destroy or damage the ship, the Danaan dignitary on board and the 'runners, leaving no witnesses or loose ends. More than likely, the runners will be caught by the paranoid Tir security forces on board ship and interrogated for all they know about the attempted bombing (which isn't very much). This is when the Knights will use the distraction to launch a second attack. The runners will then have to escape the damaged ship and will probably have the Tir after them as accessories to an attack they knew nothing about. (Isn't life as a shadowrunner fun?)

Archetypes:

Ship's crew: Use Corporate Security Guard, p.205, SRII.

Dignitary: Use Shaman, p.60, SRII. Give him 35 Force points in spells and a Rating 2 Power Focus. He is a Follower of the Path of the Steward (see the *Tir na nOg* Sourcebook for details).

2

You flinch slightly as the blindfold is pulled off, wanting to reach for your gun, but you've been paid a fair amount to put up with a some security paranoia. The room is dark save for a single, hooded lamp. The man who steps into the light is tall, with craggy features, red hair and a moustache. He speaks in an Tir na nOg-accented baritone about hiring you to find a friend of his... and kill him if need be.

Quotes:

"This is no ordinary person we are talking about."

"I don't want to destroy him, but he may leave me no choice."

"I'm sorry, Ian. I can't explain and I can't stop. You have to stop me."

Notes: Caitlin O'Byrne, an ambitious member of the Order of Etain (see the *Tir na nOg* Sourcebook) stumbled upon the existence of Quare and successfully went on an Astral Quest to learn the spirit's True Name. She has magically bound Quare and forced him to go rogue, making minor stabs at KRB targets as a test of her control. Caitlin plans to use the spirit to bring down the entire organization and present O'Donnel's head as a trophy of her achievement in defending the Tir, earning considerable acclaim.

O'Donnel cannot fathom why Quare would turn on him but cannot allow the Knights to fall. Unless the truth can be uncovered, he will be forced to try and destroy his friend, since he is the only other person who knows Quare's Name.

Archetypes:

KRB: Use O'Donnel and Quare.

Caitlin O'Byrne: Use Street Mage, p.61, SRII. She is a Grade 2 initiate of the Order of Etain and has 30 Force points in spells.

3

"It takes a thief to catch a thief." Or so the saying goes. That's probably why EBM[2] hired a bunch of shadowrunners to help protect a shipment of orichalcum that's going from the harbor to their R&D center in the Tower. It's a short trip, but it's through shark-infested waters, and these sharks walk on two legs and have guns.

Quotes:

"Just do as we say and no one will get hurt."

"Too bad you've chosen to work for the wrong side."

Notes: This time the runners are working the other side of the fence for a change. They've been hired to help guard a valuable shipment of orichalcum that is being transferred from a British ship in the harbor to the EBM[2] facility via helicopter. The KRB intends to hijack the shipment because the Duchess of Snowdonia - where the shipment originated - is a well-known British ally of the Danaan Families. If they cannot acquire the mystical metal for resale on the black market, the Knights will settle for destroying the helicopter and using the incident to damage trade between the corporations and Tir-allied groups. The runners will have to guard against a group of professional and ruthless terrorists supported by a free spirit able to possess people. Should make them more appreciative of the plight of the poor corporate security force they plowed through on their last run...

Archetypes:

KRB Team: O'Donnel, Quare, Three Mercs (p.58, SRII) and a Druid (use Street Shaman, p.62, SRII).



4

Magicians, who can figure them? This Elf mage wants a carved rock from the new museum display on Celtic Heritage and for the kind of nuyen he's paying, who the frag cares what he wants it for? Security is good, but nothing you can't handle; I mean, it's a fraggin' museum. What could be so tough?

Quotes:

"The item in question has great... cultural value."

"What was that noise?"

"Sorry, chummers, no witnesses allowed."

Notes: The runners are hired to heist a carved stone from a museum display on Tir/Celtic culture. Unfortunately, the KRB chooses to make an example of said display on the same night the runners make their move. While they're in the museum, the runners encounter a KRB strike team carrying explosives that they intend to use to blow up the display (and a good chunk of the building with it). Any kind of a fight will set off the museum's alarms and bring the cops running, not to mention the possibility of detonating the explosives. If the runners are careful and clever, they can accomplish their job and use the terrorist attack to cover their tracks.

Archetypes:

KRB Team: Four Gang Members (SRII, p.54) led by a Terrorist (Contacts Book, p.30).

Museum guards (4): Use Corporate Security Guard, p.205, SRII.

5

When there's something strange in the Barrens, who're you gonna call? Shadowrunners, natch. There have been reports all over the newsfaxes of ghosts appearing near the sites of the Bloody Tuesday riots in Southie for nearly a month. An MIT&M prof wants to investigate the sites and he needs to bring along some reinforcements... just in case.

Quotes:

"This is an excellent opportunity for study."

"Those who trespass here risk death! Go back while you can!"

"Bloody hell, isn't anyone afraid of ghosts anymore?"

Notes: The "ghost sightings" in the Barrens are actually magical illusions cast by a KRB mage. The illusions are intended to frighten people away from a gun-smuggling operation in the area. If the runners and the professor make their way past the harmless specters, they will run right into the middle of an arms deal going on between the Knights and the local Mafia.

When things look like they're about to turn to violence, there is a harmless (but loud) phantom explosion from a nearby building and the *real* ghosts appear. These specters of the riots have been disturbed by the magical activity in the area along with the professor's poking and prodding and they attack everyone present, causing general chaos and confusion. If the runners are quick, they might be able to get everyone out intact.

Archetypes:

The Professor: Use Corporate Scientist, p.17, Contacts Book.

KRB: Use full roster, plus three Gang Members (SRII, p.54)

Mafia: A Mafia Don (p.21, Contacts Book) and four Mafia Soldiers (p.22, Contacts Book)

Ghosts (4): p.224, SRII.

6

Some days it just doesn't pay to get out of bed. First a simple shadowrun gets caught up in some terrorist plot and now word is out on the street that these selfsame terrorists want to talk to you. Sounds like time to lay low for a while...

Quotes:

"We just want to talk."

"You firbolg have no idea what you have done."

"You have my thanks, so I'll allow you to live if you go now."

Notes: This adventure picks up where the last one leaves off. The shadowrunners discover that the Elven magician they lifted the stone from the museum for is in fact Malekare, a toxic Wolf shaman from Tir na nOg, who plans to use the stone as a focus from some twisted ritual back home. The Shidhe want the stone recovered and the shaman destroyed and, in a surprising show of good will, O'Donnel has agreed to help recover it (he no more wants to see his homeland poisoned than the Shidhe). The only lead both groups have on the shaman is the runners. Some fast-talking will be required to convince them that the runners are not in league with the toxic menace and helping to recover the talisman stone would go a long way towards redeeming themselves in the eyes of the Elves.

Archetypes:

Malekare: Use Shaman, p.60, SRII. Malekare is a Grade 3 Initiate and has 55 Force Points in spells. The stone the runners stole for him is a Rating 5 Power Focus.

KRB: Use full roster.



>>>>(Sometimes there is never a great spell to get you from the fire to kitchen floor. A Decker friend of mine pulled these files from some of the best Mages currently in operation. Knowing the joy it would give them to have their secrets spread all over the 'Net, I leave them here for your pleasure. Enjoy!)<<<< -Tracker(12:00:00\7/2/53)

Combat Spells:

Game Masters: Please note that these spells are very dangerous in the hands of player characters. Because the base damage is deadly, and because there is no way to stage this damage down, at high power levels these spells can be game warping, much like Assault Cannon or Rocket Launchers, despite the high Drain codes. Think carefully before you allow these in your campaigns.

StunLance

A bolt of Mana that does Deadly Stun damage to a single target.

Type: Mana
Range: LOS
Target: Willpower (R)
Duration: Instant
Damage: D
Drain: [(F/2)-1]D

ManaLance

A bolt of Mana that does Deadly Physical damage to a single target.

Type: Mana
Range: LOS
Target: Willpower (R)
Duration: Instant
Damage: D
Drain: [(F/2)]D

PowerLance

A bolt of power that does Deadly Physical damage to a single target.

Type: Mana
Range: LOS
Target: Willpower (R)
Duration: Instant
Damage: D
Drain: [(F/2)+1]D

FireLance

A bolt of Fire that does Deadly Physical damage and Elemental Fire effects to a single target.

Type: Mana
Range: LOS
Target: Willpower (R)

Duration: Instant

Damage: D

Drain: [(F/2)+3]D

SpiritLance

A bolt of Mana that does Deadly Damage to a single spirit.

Type: Mana
Range: LOS
Target: Willpower (R)
Duration: Instant
Damage: D
Drain: [(F/2)-1]D

Lightning Bolt

Damaging Manipulation

Type: Physical
Target Number: 4
Range: Limited
Damage Level: S
Duration: Instant
Drain: [(F/2) + 1] S

Notes: This spell makes use of the elemental effect of Lightning, and this can damage cyberware [see p.113, Grimoire]

Mana Donut

Combat

Type: Mana
Target Number: Will(R)
Range: LOS
Damage Level: M
Duration: Instant
Drain: [(F/2) + 2] D

Notes: This is an area effect spell that creates a torus (donut shape). There is an area in the middle that is unaffected. This area has a diameter equal to 1/2 of the caster's magic rating. Radius equals Magic rating in meters as per SR2 rules, and this can be varied as per normal.

Illusion Spells:

Camouflage

Illusion

Type: Physical
Target Number: Intelligence
Range: Limited
Duration: Sustained
Drain: [(F/2) + 1] M

Notes: This causes voluntary subjects within an area of effect to appear as part of the scenery, i.e. as trees in the forest, or as part of the wall in an arcology. The targets still SEE the subjects, they just think that they are part of the background. Add the number of successes to the Target's Perception TARGET NUMBER to notice the subjects, using the shotgun range table as a base.

Image Transfer

This spell "transfers" the image of the caster to his target and also "transfers" the image of the target to the caster. Those viewing the target or the caster may roll their Intelligence vs. the # of caster's successes in order to penetrate the illusion. The target must remain within line of sight of the caster for the caster to be able to sustain the illusion. This spell is ineffective against cameras and other physical surveillance devices.

Type: Mana
Range: LOS
Target: Willpower (R)
Duration: Sustained
Drain: [(F/2)+1]M

Image Transfer (Physical)

This spell "transfers" the image of the caster to his target and also "transfers" the image of the target to the caster. Those viewing the target or the caster may roll their Intelligence vs. the # of caster's successes in order to penetrate the illusion. The target must remain within line of sight of the caster for the caster to be able to sustain the illusion. This spell is effective against cameras and other physical surveillance devices.

Type: Physical
Range: LOS
Target: Willpower (R)
Duration: Sustained
Drain: [(F/2)+2]M

Illusionary Wall (Physical)

This spell covers an area with an illusion of a wall. It is usually used to cover an existing wall's doors, windows, and other openings, giving the appearance of a single solid wall. In this case, it automatically matches the current wall surface. This is a complex, highly realistic illusion, covering multiple senses and sensory ranges. The caster must touch the wall in order to cast this spell. Those viewing the wall may roll their Intelligence vs. a Target Number equal to the caster's successes in order to penetrate the illusion. This spell is effective against cameras and other physical surveillance devices. If this spell is cast in an area where an observer "knows" a wall should not be present, that observer gains a -4 bonus to his Target Number.

Type: Physical
Range: Touch
Target: 4
Duration: Sustained
Drain: [(F/2)]S



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New cardstock, heat-set cover featuring fantastic art by Eric VonHaas—a vampire ripping through the very cover of the magazine. Also first issue expanded to 52 pages. Includes the first installment of Michael Stackpoles' fiction "If As Beast You Don't Succeed" and new fiction by Chris Hussey "There Are Shadows And Then There Is..." Two new corporations, a new organization, as well as eight new pieces of gear.]<<<<

Only \$6.00

Catalog # ASR200 >>>>[Ka'ge Feathered Serpent T-shirt]

This 50/50 white shirt with the trademark FASA Shadowrun feathered serpent and the Ka'ge logo in full color. Don't be left out! Please specify Large or X-Large.]<<<<

Only \$18.00

Catalog # ASR201 >>>>[Ka'ge Logo Sniper's Cap]

These hats have sold out twice and it's not hard to see why. The red and silver logo is on a sharp black hat that stands out for quite a distance!]<<<<

Only \$12.00

Catalog # ASR202 >>>>[Ka'ge Logo Bandanna]

These bandannas are in stock again for those with flair enough to wear them. Printed with the same Red and Silver design as the hats, this black bandanna is large enough to tie on your head in the standard manner, use as a hat band on a cowboy hat or for any other use you can think of.]<<<<

Only \$6.00

Catalog # ASR203 >>>>[Ka'ge Snake Shaman T-shirt]

This 50/50 white T-shirt has the Shadowrun Network Snake Shaman featured in black silk-screen print. The Snake Shaman is the original work that now appears on the SRN application, seen on the inside back cover of this issue. Captivating, the design measures 11" X 7" and was drawn by Dan Smith. Please specify Large or X-Large.]<<<<

Only \$12.50

Catalog # ASR204 >>>>[Weapons & Accessories Master Sheets]

Eliminate the tireless thumbing through of multiple Shadowrun sourcebooks for data regarding weapons and accessories during your gaming sessions. The Weapons & Accessories Master Sheets contain the various charts for weapons (pistols, rifles, SMG, heavy weapons, missile/rocket launchers, ect.), ammunition, melee weapons, explosives/grenades, firearm and weapons accessories (scopes, gyros, ect.), and clothing/armor from Shadowrun 2nd Ed., ShadowTech, Neo-Anarchist Guide to Real Life, Street Samurai Catalog 2nd Ed., and Ka'ge issues 0-7. The Sheets catalog reference information regarding weapons/accessories type, concealability, mode, ammo, damage, weight, cost, legality, availability, index, and the source the equipment was drawn from. These Master Sheets are 3 laminated, spiral bound sheets designed for durability.]<<<<

Only \$6.00

Catalog # ASR205 >>>>[Riggers & Melee Combat Master Sheet]

This Master Sheet contains the tables from Shadowrun 2nd Ed. that are used during runs by Riggers and for resolving melee combat. Riggers tables include barrier effect and rating, vehicle operation modifiers, moving target modifiers, ect. Melee combat tables include resolving melee combat, damage modifiers, perception modifiers, melee modifiers, visibility table, ect. This Master Sheet is laminated for durability.]<<<<

Only \$3.00

Catalog # ASR206 >>>>[Combat Master Sheet]

The Combat Master Sheet contains tables from Shadowrun 2nd Ed. that are during combat phases. Included on this Master Sheet is the combat sequence table, weapon range table, ranged combat modifiers, visibility table, damage modifiers, running modifiers, and actions table. Grenade range and damage tables are also included with blast and scatter diagrams. This Master Sheet is laminated for durability.]<<<<

Only \$3.00



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September

Burning Bright: A Shadowrun novel

Tom Dowd. \$4.99.

Dan Truman, CEO of media giant Truman Technologies, doesn't care what it costs, he wants his missing son back. He'll hire the best to find his missing heir, even if their motives are suspect... But will money and experience be enough to defeat the terrible power growing beneath the city of Chicago?

October

Prime Runners: A sourcebook for Shadowrun

Carl Sargent and Marc Gasgione. \$15.00.

Are you wiz enough to run with the very best? Find out in this book of fixers, deckers, assassins, mages, and others who populate the world of shadows, with full game statistics, descriptions and motivations for scores of non-player characters.

Harlequin's Back: A maxi-adventure for Shadowrun 2nd Ed. \$15.00.

Harlequin, one of Shadowrun's most popular and enigmatic characters, returns in a series of six interconnected adventures that take players beyond their worst fantasies and wildest nightmares. It's a wild and unpredictable trip that weaves in and out of a variety of obvious and subtle elements of the Shadowrun universe.

November

Divided Assets: An adventure for Shadowrun

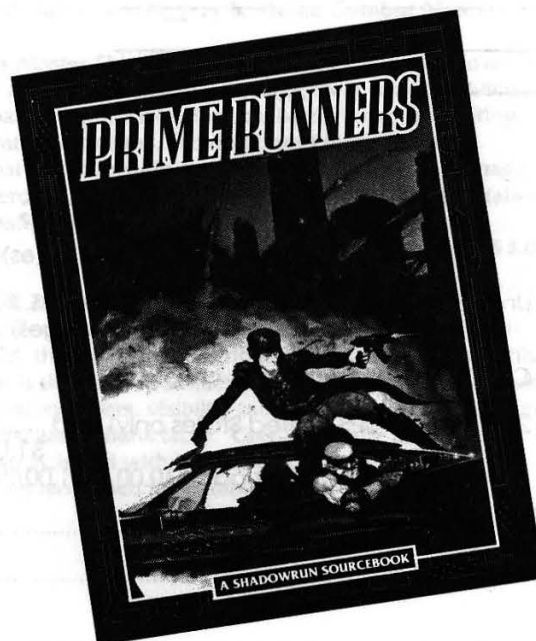
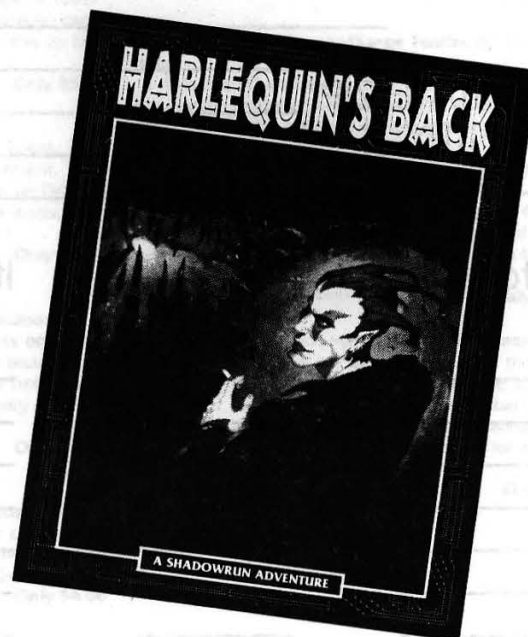
(for use with the Denver boxed set; it can be adapted for other locales.)

\$18.00.

To the corporations, everything's an asset to be charted, inventoried, and maintained. Everything is accounted for- even people. But what happens when a particular asset, namely an eight-year-old boy, becomes a pawn in a messy piece of corporate extraction? That's for the shadowrunners to decide.

FASA

CORPORATION





**OUTTA LUCK,
CHUMMER!**

The following Shadowrun titles have gone out of print.

Product Title
Shadowrun (1st Edition soft cover)
Shadowrun (1st Edition hard cover)
GM Screen (1st Edition)
Virtual Realities
The Rigger Black Book
The Universal Brotherhood
Neo-Anarchist's Guide to North America
DNA/DOA
Mercurial
Harlequin
Dragon Hunt
Shadowrun 2nd Edition (hard cover)

Prod. #
 #7100
 #7101
 #7102
 #7107
 #7108
 #7205
 #7206
 #7301
 #7302
 #7306
 #7307
 #7900

NEW RELEASES FROM



Nosferatu: A Shadowrun novel

by Carl Sargent and Marc Gascoigne.

Serrin Shamander, rootless mage and part-time shadowrunner, is on the run. Now Serrin and his friends are driven by mounting panic. Everywhere they go they feel evil eyes, elven eyes, watching them. Gradually they learn of their enemy's plan to wipe humanity from the face of the Earth, and they are desperate to confront him. Their enemy, however, is in no such hurry. Why should he be? Relentless, powerful, demonic, hasn't he already been waiting for more than three hundred years?

Double Exposure: An adventure for Shadowrun.

by Fraser Cain with Nigel D. Findley

Seattle's a cesspool of depravity and despair, but every once in a while someone tries to make a difference. Project Hope is an organization that's working to rebuild the Barrens by employing those who need it most: the homeless and the destitute. But can all be as it seems? Bet your life on that, Chummer, and you're bound to lose.

Denver: A campaign package for Shadowrun.

by Nigel D. Findley

Denver, the Treaty City. Divided politically, it is a hotbed of intrigue, deal making, and desperation. Are you savvy enough to master Denver's streets, or will you end up bagged and processed like so many before you? Denver is a campaign package that includes player-accessible material, plus a book of background elements for the gamemaster to choose from, making every Denver campaign unique.

>>>> (Nosferatu, Double Exposure, and Denver are now available for order through the Network at discounted member prices. Chummers, don't miss out on these exciting new products. Order your copies today!)>>>> Runner's Liaison (23:40:50/09-16-55)

>>>>(Featured FASA Product for Shadowrun this quarter is Denver. Access the AWOL FASA Products List for details.)>>>> Runner's Liaison (23:41:27/09-16-55)



>>>>(- is recording. I abhor these infernal devices. Oh. I am? Ah. Well. Thank you, Ms. Woods. You may go back to your desk now. Ahem. Excuse me. Begin message with: "I will attempt to keep this brief and succinct. My name is Professor Derek Lance and I am a languages specialist currently working on a linguistic map of North America. Unlike the efforts of my peers, (i.e. Corell, Dastién, Porter and others) my work will focus solely on the "lingua practica" of our culture, an idiom more commonly referred to as slang. I am currently beginning preliminary work on collecting the "slang" expressions of the criminal underclass", ---- wait a minute... Note: Ms. Woods - please edit that last to read, um... "class of individuals who live and move in the shadows of the megacorps"...I read that somewhere, I've forgotten now... commonly known as "shadowrunners." Let's see, um, yes - "Everyday language, by its very nature is difficult to quantify, and this challenge is increased by the surreptitious lifestyle of these individuals. Hence my request. I would like for you to assist me in collecting a listing of phrases currently in common usage by "shadowrunners." Please submit both the phrase or word along with its meaning. Below please find an addendum of some words currently in our database. Please send all entries to the address below. Thank you. Um, type all of this in, will you Ms. Woods? And do try and remember to run a spell check this time? I would rather not have my messages filtered through your paucity of education, thank you. Next memo. "Dear Dean Heinz. Your appalling lack of experience was obvious upon my reading of your report. I suggest that you... MESSAGE ABRIDGED.

>>>>(Well here it is... figured some of you would-be wordsmiths might be interested in playing Pygmalion. So open your ears and take note of the language goin' on around ya. Write it down, and upload it to us at our ka•ge address. I'll pass it along to herr good doktor Lance.)<<<< Sysop Quirk (20:12:15/6-25-55)

samples from "Lance's Lexicon: mapping the lingua practica"

Bull Dog: (Elfish) Ork or troll. <Highly insulting> See **Fur Face**

Chrome: A runner who is more machine than human.

Cobra: A well-organized sniper gang.

Cutter: Street Doc.

Flip Top: A rigger who continuously crashes in the heat of battle.

Freeker: Any type of magical spell which causes confusion.

Fringe: A samurai with a good reputation.

Fur Face: (Elfish) Ork or troll. <Highly insulting> See **Bull Dog**

Glitch: A decker in the matrix.

Jack Rabbit: Any runner who leaves his/her friends behind in a battle.

Phantom: A shadowrunner.

Ripper: Someone who is hooked on speed drugs.

Shadow Master: Shadowrun Game Master.

SimSissy: Anyone who uses simsense more than real life. A decker who spends more time in the matrix than in reality. (Very insulting)

Singed: A runner injured on a run.

Solo: Any shadow runner who prefers to go it alone.

Sparkey: A burned out mage; someone who has so much cyber wear they are on the verge of a melt down.

Venom: Leader of a cobra.

Ziggy: A decker who runs "naked" in the matrix.



>>>>(This issue we begin a new column for the players of Shadowrun. After much prodding from the readers to give the 'players' more help and the 'game master' less, we enthusiastically present Drak's Drek.

Drak has retired from the shadow life and is enjoying the rewards of a long and fruitful career. After much coaxing he agreed to lend his experience to the readers of our magazine. Be forewarned that Drak is some what hard to deal with at times and even on his best behavior can send the average Johnson into a fit of rage. So with out further adieu, we present Drak's Drek.)<<<<

Drak's Drek

...lly, really, hate this kinda drek! If you didn't have those pictures of me an' dat slitch in yer lawyer's safe, baby I'd ... Waitaminnit! This fragging thing is voice-activated!?!)

(ahem)

Hoi, Chummers!! Welcome to the first installment of the new and (with my luck) on-going advice column for the Shadowrunner-On-The-Go. Considering the life I've led during my many years in the shadows, it was brought to my attention that there is a need of those less experienced out there to get a little ahead of the game, so to speak. For this reason I have been blackmailed, err...*convinced* to offer my experience "to the young runners lookin' for easy nuyen."

For those of you out there that have big dreams about being either Robin Hood or Dillinger, the first thing I'll remind you of is that those guys never got shot at with Victory Rotary Assault Cannons. They also didn't have mages, like yours truly, out there lookin' to turn 'em into cockroaches. (Damn, but I love that fraggin' trick. If

you time it just right ... oh ... sorry) The point is, the world we are all in is dangerous and the one that is cloaked in the shadows is just plain ridiculous. A chummer once told me that the only advice he ever heard worth anything was, "Shoot straight, conserve ammo, and never ever cut a deal with a dragon." Very good advice, but somebody should have warned that frag-head



about how it ain't healthy to torque off Ares Microtech either.

And we all know what happens when someone gets too cocky to learn anything in this biz. Can you say "flat-line" boys and girls? I knew you could!

In this biz there are two kinds of runner. One's smart. The other kind regularly gets sold as spare parts off near Beaver Lake in Redmond. Problem is that these days, even with everything chipped to the max, with wiz-wizards and sharp razors, you can still get royally hosed if you ain't more than a few steps ahead of the other

guy (or thing).

It all boils down to a question of what you've already been through and how good your karma is. However, if you would rather find out about a lotta really painful drek without having to be slapped around by it first, get back with me in twelve and I'll see if I can enlighten ya.

In the future I'll be dropping post to this same LTG as long as you want to learn from a guy that retired to someplace warm and sunny, with all his body parts intact, after some long and highly informative years on the street.

Oh yeah, did I mention that I retired as a multi-millionaire? It tends to slip my mind every now and again. (Hey can I tell them about the time I invested in Cattle Futures and had a guy on the inside fix the market? I made a killing and if it hadn't of been for that little investigation I wouldn't have bailed when I did. As it was I made a profit of 1000%!!! Oh, okay ... but you sure take the fun outta doin' this drek!)

Anyway, I hope you found this informative and I look forward to chatting with you again soon. Till then, may all of your runs be profitable and all of you losses be in your cred-account and not your body account.

(Whew! It's over! Now, dear, will you kindly tell me how to turn off this techno-drek thing-in-a-whatsis you hooked me up to? Never should have married a fraggin' reporter ... Hunh? Waddya mean yer still recording?!? YOU BONY-HOOPED SLITCH! I OUGHTA ...

Remember them telling you: "You can't get something for nothing?"

Guess what?

THEY LIED.

>>>(Here's some chiptruth for ya, chummers.

Ka•ge personals are now free.

What, did I stutter?

I said "free" n' I meant it.

So now you ain't got no excuse to not get off yer butt, turn off the trideo and actually write yourself up an ad advertisin' yer priceless antique NERPS collection or dat yer sister's a great dancer or maybe that yer the baddest Sam in the sprawl. Whatever. Jot it down, mail it to us and we'll post it fer ya. So what're you waitin' for, me to hold the pencil for ya? Get outta here, ya gakbag.)<<<<

Attention all runners and fixers.

I am looking for a piece of gear
(KA*GE 2) I am willing to talk nuyen
even for a cover to cover Xerox
copy.

Contact: James Watson / 4900 W
28th Place / Cicero, IL / 60650.

Attention runners of Houston.

I'm Outlaw and I'm serching for runners with the guts to stair deth in the face. So if your game Chummer Contact: Erik Facundo at Rt 2 box 25 Apt. #38 / New Caney, TX / 77357-9401.

Attention ka'ge members

This space could be yours...
Got something to sell, something to
say?
Say it here.

>>>>[Network with the best runners in the world. Dubbed "Graffiti," these Ka-ge classifieds can be 200 characters or less, and can deal with anything you want. Looking for runners in your area? Seeking some arcane piece of shamanic/hermetic lore? Want to claim you're the biggest baddest Samurai around? Do it in Graffiti. Fill out the form and mail it on in here.]<<<<

Graffiti Entry Form

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1. This space is for personal ads by members only, and is not to be used for advertisement of any product or service.

2. All personal ads are limited to 200 characters (including spaces).

3. Ka•ge will not print any ads containing foul language or slanderous statements.

~~4. All ads must be accompanied by a \$2 handling fee for each quarter you wish the ad to run.~~

5. All ads must be submitted using this form or a facsimile thereof.

(Please fill out the blocks below with one character per box.)

[illegible]



The following calendar lists the conventions for which we have heard rumors of Shadowrun events. If you know of any conventions that are not on the calendar, please let us know so we can inform other Network members.

SEPTEMBER 1994

TEXICON 1994: September 2-5, 1994 at the Westchase Hilton in Houston, TX. Gaming events include Shadowrun and various other role-playing, board, and miniatures games. Activities also planned include dealer's room, auction, and open gaming. Registration: \$20 before August 13; \$25 thereafter. For more information, write to TEXICON / PO Box 631462 / Houston, TX / 77263-1462.

AMERICON 1994: September 17 & 18, 1994 at the Clayton American Legion Hall in Clayton, NJ. Gaming events scheduled include role-playing including Shadowrun, live action Vampire, Call of Cthulu, Car Wars, Cyberpunk, and many, many more, as well as board games, and miniature games. Magic the Gathering all weekend long. Other special activities include art show and auction. Dealers and GMs welcome. Registration: \$11 pre-registered by August 15; \$12 at the convention. For more information, write to AMERICON c/o Carl "Thunder" / PO Box 125 / Mullica Hill, NJ / 08062

WHITE SHIELD 1994: September 24, 1994 at the Basque Center in downtown Boise, ID. Boise's premier gaming event in 1994. Gaming events include Shadowrun, BattleTech, AD & D, Sanctioned Star Fleet Battles, Magic the Gathering, War Hammer 40K, Man O' War, Vampire: Jyhad, Hero Vampire, the Masquerade, Car Wars, Palladium, and lots of other games. Special events include an auction and poetry in Klingonese with live Klingon actors. Registration: \$6 pre-registration by September 1; \$8 at the door. For more infor-

mation, write to: White Shield Gaming Convention / PO Box 8955 / Boise, ID 83707.

OCTOBER 1994

NECRONOMICON XIII: October 14-16, 1994 at the Airport Holiday Inn in Tampa, FL. Gaming events include Shadowrun and numerous other role-playing, miniatures, and board games. Special guests include Timothy Zahn and George R. R. Martin. Other activities include art show, auction, panels, workshops, and videos. Registration: \$25/weekend or \$10/day. For more information, write to NECRONOMICON XIII / PO Box 2076 / Riverview, FL 33569.

TOTALLY TUBULAR CON II: October 14-16, 1994 at the Days Inn in Fullerton, CA. Events include Shadowrun and many other role playing, board, and miniature games. Registration: \$20. For more information, write to: TOTALLY TUBULAR CON / PO Box 18791 / Anaheim Hills, CA / 92817-18791.

BAY GAMES 1994: October 21-23, 1994 at the Holiday Inn in College Park, MD. Events include Shadowrun and numerous other role playing, board, and miniatures games. Registration: \$15/weekend pre-registration; \$20/weekend or \$15/day on site. For more information, write to: BAY GAMES / PO Box 91 / Beltsville, MD / 20704-0091.

KETTERING GAME CON XI: October 22 & 23, 1994 at the Charles I. Lathrem Senior Center in Kettering, OH. Gaming events include Shadowrun and numerous other role playing, miniatures, and board games. Special activities include a game auction and computer games. Registration: \$2/day. For more information, write to Bob Von Gruenigen / 804 Willowdale Ave. / Kettering, OH / 45429.

NUKECON IV: October 28 & 29, 1994 at the Midlands Community Center in Papillion, NE. Shadowrun 1-3 events as well as BattleTech, Star Fleet Battles, Magic the Gathering, numerous other role playing and board games. For more information, write to NUKECON IV c/o Stephanie Murphy / 13115 Josephine Circle / Omaha, NE / 68138.

NOVEMBER 1994

ADVENTURE GAME FEST 1994: November 4-6, 1994 at the Oregon Convention Center in Portland, OR. Tournament, competition, and open play of board games, role playing, and miniatures of all genres, including fantasy, historic, and science fiction. Door and event prizes, game auction, miniature painting contest. Registration: \$15/3 days, \$12/2 days, and \$8/1 day. For more information, write to: Adventure Games Northwest / 6517 NE Alberta / Portland, OR / 97218.

Please note that we need to receive information about events at least 60 days before mailing dates in order to insure that they will make it into the issues they need to be in. (i.e. to have convention information in the December issue (which mails at the end of Dec.) we would need to have the info in early Nov. Our other mail dates are the end of March, June, and September.

* An asterisk means that there is more information about this item in the classified section.

@ An at symbol marks the conventions at which FASA plans to have representation as of press time.

& An ampersand marks the conventions at which MNA plans to have representation as of press time.



>>>>(Re-posted from the newsnet for your convenience.)<<<< - Quirk (10:10:28 - 05/19/54)

Today's Headlines

INTERNATIONAL

Fires Rage Across Osaka

For the third night in a row, fires swept through downtown areas of Osaka. Firefighters and corporate volunteers worked throughout the night in a vain attempt to keep the numerous blazes under control. Three separate fires have been raging since a series of unexplained explosions rocked the city on May 16.

"We're losing ground on two of the fires, but we have a good chance of gaining the upper hand on the third by nightfall," reports the City Fire Marshall. "And you can bet there will be hell to pay when we find out the cause." (Story continued on page A-3)

NATIONAL

Floods Continue to Plague the Midwest

With no relief in sight, Midwesterners prepare for another week of near-torrential downpours. Record flooding continues to be reported across the grain belt of the UCAS, giving rise to fierce commodities trading. Mages have managed to bolster sagging river levies by summoning a host of earth elementals, but it may be too little, too late.

Government sources indicate high-powered ritual magic may be required to break the rain cycle, but critics are quick to point out the possibly dangerous long-term side-effects. (Story continued on page B-17)

LOCAL

Relief Effort Making A Difference

The Reformed Church of Devine Truth and Light has reported great success in their recent Feed the Squatters campaign in the Redmond area. Area streets long known for their urban decay show promising signs of renewal as squatters work to improve the abandoned areas in return for food and clothing. Church officials would not comment on how renewal sites are chosen, giving new rise to concerns their motives are less than pure. Citizens of the area report, however, they are less concerned with the reasons than they are with the results. (Story continued on page C-10)

BUSINESS

Karriko Collapses

The business conglomerate Karriko appears on the verge of total financial collapse following the reported suicide of their President and Chairman, Keno Spandean. Miss Spandean was discovered yesterday, the victim of a self-inflicted gun-shot wound.

With the loss of their charismatic leader, investors have been selling stocks wholesale. Pending deals with Aztechnology and Hollywood Simsense seem destined to fail as well as senior managers scramble to protect their own assets. (Story continued on page D-32)

ENTERTAINMENT

Battle of the Bands Turns Lethal

The fifteenth annual Battle of the Bands held at Kowalins Park near Fort Lewis turned deadly last night when members of the band Iguana opened fire on the crowd. Brandishing automatic weapons, the five member band opened fire first on the judges table, then the crowd in general when they were awarded second place in the competition. Frustration at the loss of a guaranteed recording contract appears to be the likely motive. (Story continued on page E-9)

SPORTS

Charges Filed Against Sports Legend

Charges of racketeering and points-fixing have been leveled against Timberwolf player "Scratch" Potter. In an indictment handed down by the grand jury, Potter was named as one of three defendants in a series of events that were characterized by one jurist as "a large blemish on the face of urbanbrawlers everywhere." (Story continued on page G-60)





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