

The Shadowrun #12 Supplemental

In This Issue:

SHADETROMPERS #2

It's time for some Legwork!

BERSERK

A new sport - Urban Brawl...
with character!

New Columns!

Damage Control, Places to Go,
People to See, and the return
of A Little Learning...

SwiftOne Speaks

SwiftOne gives his take on FASAs recent releases.

And more!



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Editorial Verbiage

Adam Jury (adamj@dumpshock.com)

Sixth months for the last issue. Four months for this issue. An improvement, but not good enough yet. With this issue the goal of being bi-monthly has been thrown out the window for now, and The Shadowrun Supplemental officially moves to being a quarterly magazine. This gives me a bit more time to breathe and allows me some extra time to edit and compile the contents of the magazine.

The other main news is that we've moved web addresses again - yes, again - this time to <http://tss.dumpshock.com>, which will be the last time we **ever** move. I swear. My email address has also changed to adamj@dumpshock.com. Please update any links, bookmarks, or address books that you may have. Please put TSS in any emails you send to me regarding The Shadowrun Supplemental, so I can keep organized.

So, with little major news to talk about, I'm going to spend some time talking about submissions. For once I'm not going to say "We need more submissions", because we're actually doing pretty well in that regards. We're still in need of submissions, but we're not in desperate straits. The stuff that I would really like to see more of is source material - Locations, runner groups, gangs, initiate groups, smugglers, plot ideas, and that sort of stuff. There's a lot of rules material already available in previous issues and coming out from FASA right now, people are wanting new source material, so let's give it to them!

Slushpile Submissions have become The Cluttered Datastore (For gear and magic stuff, mostly), and Places to Go, People to See (Locations and NPCs). You can submit these via the web at <http://tss.dumpshock.com/tss-cd.html> or by emailing them to adamj@dumpshock.com.

As you can see, we've added more short sections to the magazine - Bull's Damage Control column, along with the return of A Little Learning... ..is a Dangerous Thing!, and Fun on the Run, the new humour column. If you have ideas or suggestions for future editions of these columns, please send them to me and I'll pass them along to the appropriate author. Also, please note that just because we have a column dedicated to certain topics doesn't mean we don't take reader submitted articles on the same subject!

The other main issue is mixing Shadowrun and Real World in articles. Rules material and "Developers Say" material does not belong in the "Shadowland" style. For an example of an article that is written entirely in character, please look at The Corporate Review in this issue. It's treated like a file uploaded to Shadowland, with shadowcomments inside the main text. Then look at Anything to Declare? which is entirely out of character, and as such doesn't - and can't - have shadowcomments inside the article itself. If you want to mix In and Out of character material (As is done in The Cluttered Datastore), please try and keep the material separate from one another, as was done in The NARCAR Phenomenon in issue #11. When submitting articles

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that have shadowcomments in them, please just use plain greater than signs (>), instead of the old format that used lots of greater than and less than signs.

Submissions

If you have further questions about submission for The Shadowrun Supplemental, you can read them in their entirety at <http://shadowrun.html.com/tss-sub.html>, or you can email me at adamj@dumpshock.com, or send me a ICQ message, my UIN is 2350330.

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Berserk

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History

A spin-off of Urban Brawl, Berserk was established in the 2050s thanks to a marketing push and pressure from government and corporate agencies. The original Urban Brawl game was played with felons and criminals, and the fannish adulation such undesirables enjoyed as a result of their status as Urban Brawl players was considered risky by corporate spindoctors and government sociologists alike. Violent criminals were not seen as good role models for impressionable children and sports fans, and the UCAS government banded together with several megacorporations (most notably Ares, Shiawase and Gaetronics) to pressure the Urban Brawl league into cleaning up their act.

Most of the league resisted, but there was a significant faction that could see the appeal in more glitzy, marketable games that didn't endorse acknowledged criminals. A breakaway group formed the North Continental Brawl Union in 2055, funded by healthy donations from lobby groups, governmental subsidies, and generous corporate sponsorship. However, a protracted legal battle with Urban Brawl's ruling body ISSV left the NCBU legally unable to broadcast any matches played under the trademarked, patented and heavily protected official Urban Brawl rules.

Rather than play a pale imitation of "proper" Urban Brawl, the NCBU's brightest marketing sparks and sports experts put their heads together and cooked up a brand-new game – fast-paced, flashy and exciting, Berserk bears little resemblance now to the game that spawned it – and it's fast catching up on Urban Brawl's media dominance.

The Game

Berserk is an urban combat game, somewhat akin to the old paintball games of the 20th century. The game is played in four quarters of twenty minutes each; there are two three-minute breaks after the first and third quarters, and a fifteen minute half-time break.

Points are scored by 'tagging' enemy players with firearms or melee weaponry. The referees will adjudicate disputed tags, but most players are sensible about accepting a fair tag on them. Each tag is worth one point, and the victim is considered to be 'tagged-out'. A tagged-out player has to run back to their home goal area and hit a large button, referred to as 'tagging in'. Tagged-out players aren't considered eligible targets for more tags, but they can't participate in the action until they've tagged back in at their goal. A tagged-out player who tries to score their own tags, provide covering fire for team-mates, or otherwise participate in combat receives a three-point penalty.

A player who tags out another with sufficient force to wound them has to call "Medic" after the tag, to ensure that the victim receives timely medical attention if necessary. Failure to comply with this rule earns a three-point penalty.

The playing field is usually dotted with mannequins to represent civilians; tagging a civilian scores a one-point penalty. Wily players will lure their opponents into firing on a mannequin whenever possible.

The Referees

There are normally five mundane referees controlling the game – one in the referee's crows-nest, two on the playing field and two in a control room scrutinizing the extensive video feeds and communicating with the on-field referees to indicate infractions.

Magical Control

The referee team also includes two mages, one in the referees crows-nest and one projecting astrally over the field. In addition, astral space around the Berserk arena is thickly populated with watcher spirits and elementals with orders to identify all illegal uses of magic on the field. Any illegal use of magic during a game earns an immediate disqualification for the rest of the game for the player responsible, a five-point penalty for the offending team, and possible referral to a post-game disciplinary tribunal, depending on the circumstances of the incident. For example, mages who lose their head and stunbolt (or worse yet, manabolt) an opponent in the heat of combat will be referred to the tribunal after the game; a mage player who casts a Levitate spell to save the life of a player who's just fallen off a four-storey building will probably get away with just the game disqualification.

The Medics

DocWagon supplies two trauma medics for each game; they are equipped in Glo-Yellow full body armor and are forbidden targets. Tagging a medic is a five-point penalty. The medics are totally independent of the Berserk teams, and provide impartial medical aid on-field and off; severely injured players may be evaced at the medics' discretion as all Berserkers have DocWagon contracts. Medics are often ex-HTR docs who enjoy the adrenaline of mid-combat trauma work.

Gimmicks

Berserk is a game about trid ratings, and game organizers use any number of gimmicks to spice up a Berserk game. Usually the first quarter is a full-light 'day' quarter. The second quarter has very dimmed lighting and is a 'night' quarter. The third is variable – sometimes rain, fog or snow. The fourth quarter is usually back to daylight conditions but with a twist. One of the

more popular gimmicks involves the appearance of fake ‘Lone Star officers’, who carry encoded passes worth bonus points if slotted in the goal area. Tags from ‘Lone Star officers’ are permanent tag-outs for the rest of the quarter. Other gimmicks include armed ‘Citizens Defense Forces’ appearing from amongst the mannequins, hordes of ‘killbot’ drones, or rigger-controlled robotic ‘animals’. The home team is responsible for selecting each game’s fourth-quarter gimmick, with approval from the opposing team’s management.

Berserkers

The players, or “Berserkers”, come from all walks of life – generally they’re already trained in professional athletic violence, and many are ex-gangers, ex-cops or elite security personnel, and more than a few ex-shadowrunners. There are typically 22-25 Berserkers on a team, of whom 18 are nominated to play any given match. Each team may deploy up to 15 players at any one time; substitutions are unlimited and may be made for any reason, but only between quarters.

Weaponry

The firearms in a Berserk game fire a modified gel round that splatters on impact and contains a luminescent dye to tag victims with. Melee weaponry is blunted, and the impact surfaces are coated with the same dye to indicate a successful tag.

The team as a whole has a roster of permitted weapons that may be on the field at any time, and it’s up to the individual team to allocate weapons to the fifteen fielded players. The roster currently stands at 20 pistols, 4 SMGs, three shotguns, one rifle, one bow or crossbow, and unlimited melee weaponry. This can make substitution strategies rather involved, as substitutions will often need to be between players who prefer the same class of firearm, so as not to exceed the limitations of the roster. Players on the field can swap weapons with each other at any time, and are also allowed to improvise weapons and tools from anything they find on the field – with the usual proviso that combat should be non-lethal (so garrottes made from electrical flex, for instance, are a bad idea).

Cyberware

Due to the self-limiting nature of cyberware, there are no restrictions on the amount or type of ware a player may employ, with two exceptions – cybernetic (or external) comms gear must be disabled for the game, and since the regrettable incident of the 2059 Spring Demonstration Spectacular, subjects of the mysterious procedures known as ‘cybermancy’ are not permitted to take the field.

Magic

The use of magic is rigidly controlled in the Berserk game. Magicians, and aspected magicians, are permitted to use one and only one Sustaining Focus holding one of a short list of available spells. All other applications of magic are forbidden – no spellcasting on the field, no use of spirits, no metamagic, no astral perception or projection, and so on.

Adepts

Adepts are the single exception to the ‘no-magic’ fiat. Their powers are carefully monitored, and those such as Killing Hands and Astral Perception are prohibited – but they are highly sought after for those teams without sufficient funding to keep up with the SOTA curve of cyberware for their players.

The Playing Field

Berserk is usually played in an arena approximately the size of a large city block. The stadiums are vast, elevated affairs; seating usually begins several storeys above street level, and a typical Berserk arena seats 100,000+. The ‘field’ is a scaled-down city block or two, thickly interwoven with alleys and walkways. Overhead ‘telephone wires’ run between the buildings for easy use of grapple lines and flying foxes; the entire set-up is designed to allow as much spectacular action as possible. Buildings in the ‘block’ generally are limited to four storeys high, although variations have been noted – there are currently few rules about what constitutes a regulation Berserk playing arena. In this, as in everything about Berserk, flexibility is the key – the game designers made a conscious effort to keep the game simple and fluid, and in comparison with other popular North American sports, it’s relatively unregulated.

Tridscreens dot the Arena’s walls, showing multiple views of the action at any one time. A cylindrical scoreboard is usually suspended from the rim of the arena’s roof, and below the scoreboard is a referee’s ‘crow’s nest’.

The buildings in the block are often real buildings that have had an Arena put up around them; otherwise, they are constructed to be as realistic as possible. To spice up a game, there are often additional threats around – real gun-toting ‘civilians’ interspersed amongst the mannequins of passers-by, automated sentry weaponry on building roofs and corners, and the like. Players are allowed to disable automated measures if they’re able to, and can take action against hostile ‘civilians’ without scoring penalties.

The Teams

Atlanta Chargers
 Boston Carbines
 Cleveland Cleavers
 Dallas Posse
 Denver Cowboys
 Detroit Raptors
 Houston Rebels
 Lakota Tomahawks
 Los Angeles Phantasms
 Milwaukee Marauders
 Montreal Vikings
 New Orleans Barons
 New York Muggers
 Oakland Juggernauts
 Philadelphia Dawns
 Portland Saints
 San Diego Pumas
 San Fran Slammers
 Seattle Slayers
 Washington Wizards

San Diego Pumas

The Pumas were one of the original fifteen teams, and are credited as being essential to the success of the fledgling sport. They won the first Berserker Gauntlet in 2056 effortlessly, but dropped to second in 2057, and have since been unable to rise above skilled mediocrity. Their tactics mirror small-unit actions of special forces units, and while initially popular, have been unable to maintain crowds interest in an increasingly competitive media-driven sport.

The Pumas were a solid team with a good sense of marketing, and their personal appearances throughout the UCAS helped create a supportive fan base, but they fell quickly behind franchises

that accepted wildly dramatic tactics and experimental cyberware. The arrival of the five new teams in 2058 thinned their fanbase, and the recent rise of “theme” squads has threatened to end any hopes of a recovery.

The Pumas remain popular outside the arena, and several members are widely regarded as perfect role models for a new world: Friendly, composed, clean-cut, and skilled. The Pumas former manager, ex-marine Jake Tredlins, has recently been replaced with an Adept named Elaine Rathskin. Rathskin has put in place some new policies, and has not made herself popular with the team, who enjoyed a close relationship with Tredlins. The owners hope the Rathskin can put the Pumas back on the trail of success, but the results of recent policies, training, and trades remain to be seen.

Puma Star Players & Notable Figures

Scott Lawson

Scott Lawson has been with the Pumas since their start, almost always running shotgun. While he is famous for tagging three Slayers with one shot during the 2056 Gauntlet, his greatest fame is off the field. Lawson has a natural charm, and his charismatic smile has won over many a reporter of either sex, leading to some good early reviews for the team. Recent scandals involving numerous young ladies in towns along the Puma’s season have been largely ignored by the public and the media alike. Lawson has some basic combat cyberware (eyes, smartlink, wired reflexes), but has avoided anything that would ruin his useful looks. His relative lack of skill and focus on one weapon is becoming a hinderance to the Puma’s attempt to recover, but his popularity makes him difficult to give up.

Erin Flass

Erin Flass is perhaps the female counterpart to Scott Lawson, with a elven beauty and charisma that have helped the team be popular. She has a wider range of skills, but didn’t join the team until 2057, when she was brought in as a rookie, and thus missed the peak of the Puma’s career. Flass is an Adept specializing in stealth and detection, and acts as point for the group. Unlike the self-assured Lawson, Flass is very aware that the Pumas are in a state of flux, and that she could be traded out, a state she finds very undesirable for reasons unknown. With Tredlins gone, her safety line is cut, and she and Rathskin have been glaring daggers at one another.

Ross "Gadgetman" Poris

Gadgetman is a newcomer to the Pumas, just traded in from the Slammers. His combat skills are strictly mediocre, and he doesn't excel in stealth, detection, or other related talents. His cyberware is minimal (though he reportedly wishes to change that), and he isn't enhanced by any kind of magic. As an ork, he's fairly tough, but that doesn't score you tags.

What Gadgetman does have, however, is an uncanny ability to fashion traps and weapons out of the miscellaneous items found in the Arena. While the combat effectiveness of these traps in comparison to a skilled player is debatable, their appeal to the crowds is undeniable. Gadgetman was brought in by Rathskin, as part of a move to increase Puma popularity on the field. She traded away Eric Atkinson and Allen McGrath, two of the Pumas better marksmen to get him, and the deal is not popular with most of the other Pumas. Reportedly there is an agreement between Gadgetman and Rathskin about cyberware enhancements, but nothing appears on the official contract.

Montreal Vikings

The Vikings were one of the original fifteen Berserker teams, and consistently placed last in every ranking for most of their career. Their players, while not stellar, were not poor enough to explain their solid losing streak. Every figure they tagged turned out to be a civilian, or bait for a trap. Every room they took was an ambush. A combination of moderate skill, bad luck, and poor morale maintained this state.

With an almost non-existent fan base, and with snide comments abounding about the genetic heritage Canada had brought to the UCAS, the Vikings reinvented themselves late in the season of 2058. Gone was the lackluster team that everyone expected to be tagged. Now the Vikings take the field wearing animal furs, chanting in Norse. Their roster of weapons is hardly a concern, as they wield mostly melee weapons. No longer do they slink into the field to be quietly tagged out, and tag themselves in again to repeat the feat. The Vikings have taken the imagery to the extreme, referring to the goal as “Valhalla”, and even booing their own teammates who return to Valhalla without taking out an enemy first. Some backers of the team and the game reacted with shock and horror, but many new backers poured in, as the public roars their approval for this imagery. The 2059 season provided the Vikings with a full stadium for the first time, and introduced the five newest teams to the sport.

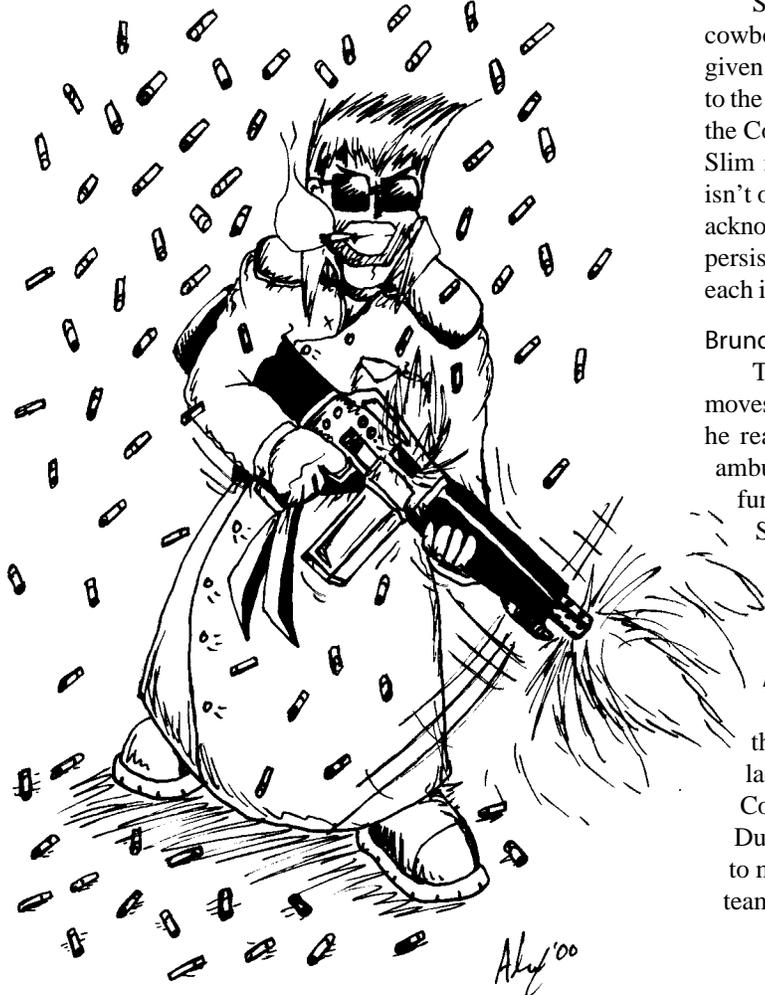
If possible, the team scores even worse, earning multiple penalty points each game, (for charging an enemy after being tagged, for use of potentially lethal force, and for numerous other penalties), as well as often being unable to return ranged fire. The Vikings still place on the bottom on all rankings, but the franchise is very profitable, popular, and the Vikings are credited with the introduction of “theme” teams, which might lead Berserk to a new level.

Viking Star Players and Notable Figures

Eric Bjornson

A member of the Vikings since 2057, Bjornson was previously famous for his ability to leap into a room held by enemies, spraying with two-full auto SMG’s, and hitting no one. (A feat he accomplished no fewer than three times out of four attempts, the fourth being an unfortunate incident involving mistaking a room held by his team for one held by the enemy. His aim was impressively accurate that day.)

Now, Bjornson is credited with the rebirth of the Vikings. He will not discuss the change, refusing to discuss anything about the team that happened before the new look. He now wields a battleaxe in combat, and has garnered three records in the 2058 season: Most penalties, most times a single Berserker has been tagged, and most taggings with a melee weapon.



Mac tags an opposition player. Several times.

The change has had a profound affect on his social life. Previously, Bjornson was a quiet, soft-spoken man with relatively little social interaction. Now he is a loud, belligerent man reknown for his carousing.

Denver Cowboys

Denver initially ignored Berserk, seeing it as a media-driven attempt to dictate their choice of sport, and unlike Urban Brawl, Berserk didn’t have underground support. By 2058, it appeared that Berserk was going to be around a while, and so a group of Texas based backers, tired by the claims of the top teams at the time, assembled the Cowboys.

The Cowboys joined the League in 2059, along with four other late-comer franchises. Filled with well-payded, cybered, and skilled individuals, the Cowboys have been almost impossible to beat. At first it was thought that the Cowboys were one of the new “theme” teams, but it was discovered that that was only partially true. The Cowboys, owned and run entirely by Texans are Texas to the core, and really **do** talk like that. It’s a bit exagerated perhaps, but only because the Cowboys want to show off their heritage, or so they claim.

Cowboy Star Players and Notable Figures

Larry “Slim” Thurble

Slim Thurble is a true pistol-packing, ten-gallon hat-wearing cowboy. A retired cop hired off of a ranch near San Antonio, given a crash course by an ex-Green Beret, and then turned over to the best cyber technicians in Dallas. Now he’s the best shot in the Cowboys, and among the fastest Berserkers in the League. Slim is always polite and friendly, but rumors persist that he isn’t on the team voluntarily. Neither Slim nor the owners will acknowledge anything other than full willingness, but the rumors persist. Slim leads the Cowboys, and is intimately aware of each individuals strengths.

Bruno “Tiny” Mertle

Tiny Mertle is a huge man. Larger, actually. While he moves quickly for such a large man (aided by his Adept abilities), he really works for the team in two other ways: detecting ambushes, for which he seems to have an uncanny ability, and functioning as a mobile shield. He might get tagged out, but Slim Thurble and Curly Haskins can use him for cover for an essential second or two, enabling them to take out any ambushers. This tactic has infuriated other teams, no formal complaint has been approved.

Aaron “Duke” Loper

Duke Loper is the Cowboys manager. Plagued over the last year with gambling and bribe scandals, only the lack of concrete evidence and the continuing success of the Cowboys on the field has kept him in the manager’s spot. Duke is eager to keep his paycheck, and is watching closely to make sure nothing interfere’s with the performance of the team.

Boston Carbiners

Good clean entertainment for the employees of Bostons many high tech firm, the Carbiners are an average team with a steady fan base. They play out of the Boston United Arena in the Back Bay area, and the team keeps a clean cut professional image which fits well with the climate in Boston. An aging team, the Carbiners will be fraught with problems if they don't pick up some younger players. However, a winning combination could be formed if a few younger players are signed and gel well with the nucleus of the team.

Cleveland Cleavers

You can guess the theme of the Cleavers. One of the few teams that plays the game using almost entirely melee weaponry, the Cleavers make up what they lack in efficiency - and firepower - with raw bloodlust towards the game. General Manager Patrick French makes it a practice of hiring mostly ex-gang members and those of "questionable" backgrounds, shady types who really want to succeed at the game, rather than ex-corporates who are only looking for a payoff. "Nails" Mahony has been the teams captain for the last three seasons, leading the team to winning records in the last two.

Atlanta Chargers

Owned by Turner Network Television (TNT), the Chargers have a virtually limitless payroll and advertising budget. However, frequently manager turnovers have left the team weakened, and they have never managed to capitalize and win the Gauntlet - or even get there, for that matter. The Chargers are well known for luring players from other teams with fat contracts, often using the other media under TNT's umbrella. Recent "purchases" (So named for the Chargers habit of locking players in long term contracts so they have no hope of going to other teams later in their career) include Shawn McCoy, a media-friendly and charismatic pistol wielding Adept, and Seth "Lumber" Jones, so named not only for his tree like proportions but also his lumbering gait.

Dallas Posse

Critics of the Posse repeatedly maintain that the team must have cost all of fifteen nuyen to put together, considering the uncouth and vile-smelling mass that is their roster. Fans of the Dallas team disagree wholeheartedly; they believe the figure is more along the lines of ten nuyen. Nonetheless, facing the Posse is often compared to being mugged in a dark alley by fifteen drunken vagrants at once. This, says their number one fan, is their charm. Or lack thereof.

Detroit Raptors

The Raptors feature the cream of the corporate crop when it comes to players. While this means most opponents expect to fight a dozen accountants, the reality is that the Detroit corps feed the team most of their 'special cases' when it comes to security guards and operatives. This means that not only are the Raptors one of the most surgically precise of all teams in competition, but their teamwork is impeccable and at least two or three members of each participating set is sure to have something unusual about them that effectively means all bets

are off. Several Berserkers have reported that fighting the Raptors is similar to trying to break out of New Alcatraz.

Houston Rebels

An all-show team, the Rebels are little more than calculated attempts at gaining popularity among rebellious teens and young adults, and have zero fanbase everywhere else. They're a rather good team apart from that, though, and critics say that if team captain Chip Rocksteady (of the New England Rocksteadies, no doubt) spent as much effort in tagging as he does in greasing every follicle on his body the Rebels would lead the tourneys.

Lakota Tomahawks

The only amerindian-themed team in Berserk, the Tomahawks, apart from being a decent team, suffer from one of the worst quitting streaks in Berserk player history, as the team can't seem to keep its players on for very long. Many attribute this to the extremely stereotypical garb and mannerisms the players are forced to emulate and endure; the crime here is that most of the stereotypes that form the base of the team's theme are partially, if not completely wrong. It would be easy to inject some historical and contemporary accuracy in the Tomahawks and thus get rid of their nasty problem, but team owner Jessica Rothcastle acquired the team in a soiree's flimsy and is now loathe to even pay attention to it.

Los Angeles Phantasms

The Los Angeles Phantasms are downright spooky, but not for the obvious reason; the team isn't at all theme-oriented, but happens to boast the longest winning streaks in its tumultuous set of matches. Few can explain this, as the players themselves aren't that incredible to begin with, although they are competent and well-trained. The best explanation for the Phantasms' record is that of monumental momentum; as soon as they grab a win, they steer themselves onward in a surge of willpower and nearly never give it up. This unreal aspect has given the Phantasms a gargantuan fan base, though critics attribute it all to their coach, an ex-military squad leader referred to as Sarge by the team. Very little, if anything, is known about Sarge's history, though his current lifestyle is modest and reserved in L.A.'s suburbs.

Milwaukee Marauders

The Marauders boast a few ex-mercenaries, some sports heavyweights, reformed gang lieutenants and (some say) a shadowrunner or two. This makes a very explosive and dedicated mix, and as such the Marauders are on a hellfire rocket to the top of the charts. A relatively new team to the list, the Milwaukee Marauders are marking their place in Berserk history not by overwhelming wins or climactic upsets, but by a seemingly unstoppable bullet train of points that can't seemingly be stopped. The slow and steady team by excellence, the Marauders should become a force to be reckoned with in short order.

New Orleans Barons

The Barons are one of the newer teams as well, and their main claim to fame is that they are nearly entirely composed of former Urban Brawl heavy-hitters. Though this meant a rocky start as the players adjusted to the Berserk style of play, the

team quickly adjusted and are now contending with the best. While some feel this is a surefire sign that Berserk is winning out against Urban Brawl, the Barons' heritage (and slightly underhanded publicity) has diverted a lot of their Berserk fans back to their original sport, perhaps not unintentionally. The team owner, a numbered corporation, has made no official comment on this.

New York Muggers

Said to be entirely made up of street misfits and thugs, the Muggers are actually a rather professional-looking team that specializes in ambushes and surprise tags, perhaps as a way to counterpoint their low rate of skill as far as standard combat goes. An underdog from day one, the team has embraced its status and fought around it to become nearly respectable in ranking. The New York Muggers now boast a fan base as diverse as can be imagined; some like their look, some their tactics, some their fighting spirit.

Oakland Juggernauts

The Juggernauts are another theme team, as each and every member is decked-out in heavy combat armor and the heaviest weaponry they can get away with, blitzing into combat in large packs and charging their opponents with reckless abandon. While some criticize this as copycatting the Montreal Vikings, fans maintain that the difference here is the Juggernauts are actually effective; in fact, they're not that bad a team and mostly thought to be on their way up the ranking ladders. Whenever the Juggernauts and Vikings face off, however, the stadium is always sold out and the ratings skyrocket as the behemoths clash.

Philadelphia Dawns

Commonly nicknamed the Philly Phraggers, the Dawns are a respectable team of professional sportsmen who take pride in remaining true to the sports unlike the new 'themed' teams coming into the game. The Dawns play (mostly) fair, take their tags with accuracy and receive theirs with good spirit, though not without coming back with a vengeance. Thought by many to be the epitome of what Berserk is supposed to be, the Dawns keep a loyal fan base and a steady rank in the charts. While this somewhat unchanging status can be a curse, it is their strength.

Portland Saints

The Portland Saints are a themed team, with wings, halo, white and gold team colors, and so on. The best way to describe them was coined by their team captain, Gabriel 'Seraphim' Low: "The faithful spirit of Heaven and the raw power of Hell." The Saints are one of the top teams, due to a mix of amazing skill and a staggering amount of willpower from the whole of the team. While most of their fan base is linked one way or another to religion, the rest are hardcore fans of the team's pure white record boasting little or no losses every season. While more than half the team is comprised of elves, this aspect isn't emphasized as much as the team's theme, and this has turned out to be the right way to go for the team so far.

San Fran Slammers

The Slammers are another team who favor the use of melee weapons. Big melee weapons. Large, unwieldy, bash-in-your-goddamn-head blunt melee weapons. And the players are big. Bigfoot big. Eight-foot-tall, armored-to-the-metal-teeth, steel-plate-in-place-of-groin, fragging HUGE big. As can be expected, most matches involving the Slammers end up in forfeit, one way or another. And as can also be expected, they're among the top 5 most popular teams in Berserk history.

Seattle Slayers

Most people in the know are aware that of all cities in the UCAS, Seattle's shadows are the most chock-full of heavily-armed and cybered operatives running around. Resultingly, the Slayers have the most volatile roster of non-confirmed members in all of Berserk, as new people come in and former players filter out in a matter of days. While this ever-changing team has little teamwork to speak of because of this, they boast the most combat-ready of all Berserkers, most of whom are shadowrunners earning a quick buck between downtimes. As can be expected, Slayers are highly individual and tend to go solo or in very small packs as soon as tagging begins. A few members are present with any kind of regularity; the most popular of those Berserkers is Mac, a shadowrunner who likes to blow off steam in the Berserk mayhem and often captains the team when he's playing.

Washington Wizards

One could say that Zachary Jackson, owner of the Wizards, has serious connections. The team has the highest quantity of Adepts, almost more than all other teams put together. There are practically no mundanes in the Wizards, which means the referees are falling over themselves to keep everyone in check. This in turn means that there are bound to be holes here and there where nobody's watching, and the Washington Wizards are sure to sniff these blind spots out and take advantage of them whenever they can. While they haven't gotten caught yet, critics who suspect something is afoot repeatedly say it's only a matter of time before this series of calculated illegal uses of magic blows up in the team's face, causing a sudden and rather deadly drain in players, so to speak.

Anything to Declare?

By Ted Rabinowitz (Tuvyah@aol.com)

They've eaten at the Glass Onion, danced at Dante's Inferno, and run the Seattle shadows until dawn. Now it's time to step out, take a new direction, maybe shake that fraggin' band of MCT payback specialists who've been dogging them for the last couple of days...Yep, it's time to flash.

Sooner or later the time will come when your players want out of Seattle...or Chicago...or Detroit...or wherever the heck you've been putting them. At one point, it looked like I had players who'd be splitting their home 'Plex for the California Free State...and that's when I realized I had no material on how they'd get there. "Hey!" I said to myself. "I've got no material on how they'll get there!"

Even today it's kind of hard to get that automatic rifle past Customs and the metal detectors. What will airports be like when half your body parts make the MAD ping like sonar?

With that in mind, here are descriptions, security procedures and target numbers for a large international airport in the UCAS (Sea-Tac); a smaller international airport located in a Free City (Long Beach International); a cross-border maglev train (the Ressay maglev connecting Seattle and San Francisco); a NAN border crossing (Seattle to Salish-Sidhe Council); and a NAN-operated cross-border bus line (Whippet Bus Lines). They can easily be generalized to other venues. These tables aren't meant to be fully realistic; instead, they're a handy thumbnail guide for a GM who feels that runners should have a little trouble at the borders, but doesn't want to spend two game sessions getting them through Customs.

Seattle-Tacoma International Airport

Sea-Tac is the archetypal Big City UCAS international airport, with helicopter and plane flights for the Seattle environs, HSCT (high-speed civilian transport) flights out of the metroplex, and semi-ballistic direct flights to Asia, the East Coast, and Europe.

With all this traffic, security is tight: A lot of people don't like the UCAS, or the potential passengers on Sea-Tac flights: Japanacorp execs, Yakuza, Tir Tairngire elves, NAN citizens, Russian free-lancers. There are also a lot of illegal, easily concealable goods that would make a tidy profit if smuggled through Customs.

Outgoing passengers face scanners for cyberware, weapons, chemicals, luggage, and ticket validity that are all located in the terminals between the front doors and the airplane gate areas. Incoming passengers face a SIN visa check and another chemical scan. Both incoming and outgoing passengers are likely to face profiling — the outgoing passengers to see whether they fit the "terrorist" profile; the incoming passengers to see if they fit the "smuggler" or "illegal entrant" profile. (cf. the section on "Profiling", below.)

In *Gnasher v. UCAS*, the Supreme Court defined aura checks as a form of search requiring a warrant, so they are not used in routine civilian UCAS airport screenings...at least not so far as anyone knows.

Seattle-Tacoma International Airport

Cyberware Scanner	Level 5
Weapons Scanner (MAD)	Level 7
Chemsniffer	Level 3
Luggage X-Ray	Roleplay
Incoming Profiling	Level 4
Outgoing Profiling	Level 6
SIN Check/ticket ID	Level 3
SIN Check/visa	Level 5
Aura Checks	None (Officially)

Long Beach International Airport

Free Cities have less political baggage than the UCAS, more of an interest in seeing that traffic flows freely, and more of a laissez-faire attitude toward weapons and shadowy commerce. They also have less money to enforce security, and this is reflected in lower scan and profiling levels.

However, they are also unconstrained by recent UCAS court decisions. LBI, LaGuardia, and John F. Kennedy airports are all rumored to use random aura sweeps by talented mages. Such sweeps are Level 5 Assensings (cf. p. 171, Shadowrun Third Ed.). They can reveal general emotions, health, essence and cyberware, and the presence of spells and foci. No matter how good a 0.01 Essence Street Sam looks on the outside, an assensing will show him for what he is, and guarantee some unhealthy attention. Of course, a good profiler can spot low Essence without any of that fragging wiz-bang drek. There's just something in the way they move....

Long Beach International Airport

Cyberware Scanner	Level 3
Weapons Scanner (MAD)	Level 7
Chemsniffer	None
Luggage X-Ray	Roleplay
Incoming Profiling	Level 3
Outgoing Profiling	Level 3
SIN Check/ticket ID	Level 4
SIN Check/visa	Level 4
Aura Checks	1/12 chance; Level 5

Seattle Port Authority

The Ressay maglev train is something of a special case. It connects a relatively free-wheeling UCAS enclave (Seattle) with a racist corporate occupation zone (San Francisco), passing along the way through a repressive feudal hierarchy (Tir Tairngire). The only people who profit from the maglev's presence are those who do business with San Francisco — and they're not exactly beloved by their fellow Seattlites. So the Seattle Port Authority has little political incentive to make the maglev secure, or to protect the Japanese Imperial Marines on the other end from any random policlub members who might want to go out in a blaze of glory. They also know that security on the San Francisco end is very tight indeed, and they rely on that to some extent to deter criminals.

In addition, the maglev's relative banality — it is essentially a commuter train that spends its time in the Tir traveling down a blank concrete tunnel — has made it less of a target for terrorists...so far, anyway. Although it's probably only a matter of time before some Clever Dick realizes just how spectacular a crack-up could be if it involved thousands of tons of metal speeding through a constrained tunnel. Like a bullet in a gun barrel....

When the train is inbound from SanFran, it's a slightly different story.

Seattle Port Authority

Outgoing to Seattle

Cyberware Scanner	None
Weapons Scanner	Level 3
Chemsniffer	None
X-Ray	None
Profiling	None
SIN Check/ticket ID	Level 3
SIN Check/visa	None

All outgoing security checks are fully automated

Incoming from Seattle

Cyberware Scanner	None
Weapons Scanner	Level 4
Chemsniffer Dogs	Level 3
X-Ray	None
Profiling	Level 6
SIN Check/ticket ID	None
SIN Check/visa	Level 5

San Francisco Ressay Maglev

Nobody leaves their heart in San Francisco anymore — not unless they're a metahuman caught in one of the Japanacorp's little "hunts". (Check out the California Free State sourcebook for more information.) Unfortunately for all concerned, the maglev train stops in San Francisco proper (an Imperial enclave), and not in one of the outlying areas which are still under the control (such as it is) of the California government. This means that San Francisco maglev security is handled by the Imperial Marines, and they are not happy campers.

The Imperials have their own version of profiling that applies specifically to metahumans. It's simple, really. All metahumans are automatically taken to one side, and subjected to full, thorough searches of person and property. A second SIN check, at Level 7, is made. Once the search is concluded:

1. The metahuman is imprisoned if incriminating material is found.
2. The metahuman is denied entrance to San Francisco and placed on the sealed San Francisco-Oakland "Freakie Train" if he/she does not possess a SanFran special metahuman visa.
3. The metahuman is (grudgingly) allowed entry if he/she does possess a special visa.

The security drops if the train is outgoing.

San Francisco Ressay Maglev

Outgoing to Seattle

Cyberware Scanner	None
Weapons Scanner	Level 3
Chemsniffer	None
X-Ray	None
Profiling	None
SIN Check/ticket ID	Level 3
SIN Check/visa	None

Incoming from Seattle

Cyberware Scanner	Level 5
Weapons Scanner	Level 7
Chemsniffer Dogs	Level 4
X-Ray	Roleplay
Profiling	Level 7 - Special
SIN Check/ticket ID	None
SIN Check/visa	Level 4 - Special

Border Crossing: Salish-Sidhe - Seattle

A border station isn't a public target like an airport; and both the S-S Council and Seattle/UCAS, despite their resentments, have a mutual interest in keeping freight and cargo moving as freely across the borders as they can. With some exceptions, they're not looking for terrorists; they're checking for smuggling and illegal agricultural products. The security procedures (at least from the NAN side) reflect this. No scanners; just a SIN check, sniffer dogs trained to detect explosives and/or other chemicals...and a Wolf or Dog shaman working security.

Of course, if the border soldiers feel they have a reason to search a player's vehicle, it will be a VERY thorough search indeed. To the point of destruction, in fact. And that Barrett sniper rifle in the trunk will be evidence in your trial, *wasichu* gun-runner.

Salish-Sidhe - Seattle

Cyberware Scanner	None
Weapons Scanner (MAD)	None
Chemsniffer Dogs	Level 5
Luggage X-Ray	None
Profiling	Level 5
SIN Check/visa/travel pass	Level 5
Dog/Wolf Shaman	2/6 Chance

Border Crossing: Intra-NAN

The border crossing is light between the UCAS and the NAN, but between two NAN states, the security is even looser:

The above doesn't necessarily apply to all NAN states: For instance, the Haida and Pueblo nations are known for tight borders, and the Cascade Ork region of the S-S Council is known for the corruption of its "border guards".

Intra-NAN

Cyberware Scanner	None
Weapons Scanner (MAD)	None
Chemsniffer Dogs	None
Luggage X-Ray	None
Profiling	None
SIN Check/visa/travel pass	Level 3
Security Shaman	1/12 Chance

Busses (Whippet Bus Lines)

Most runners don't even think about the NAN-owned bus companies. But for getting out of the 'plex quietly, quickly, no questions asked, you could do worse. Because the ticket prices are low, the travel time is high, and the destinations are primarily those that would interest only NAN citizens, the bus lines' major clientele are lower-income NAN citizens, tourists, workers, and seniors. Because they are NAN-owned, the bus lines have the right to conduct their own border, customs, and security procedures. And because their clientele is low-income, low-threat, and low-profile, those procedures are correspondingly lax.

Whippet Bus Lines

Cyberware Scanner	None
Weapons Scanner	Level 5
Chemsniffer	None
Luggage X-Ray	Roleplay
Profiling	None
SIN Check/visa/ticket	Level 3
Weapons Bond	Special

Weapons Bond

Nnobody's going to take your Pred III away from you in the S-S Council. You say it's yours and you've got a permit, that's good enough for the driver. What he WILL ask you to do, though, is store it in the bus weapons locker for the duration of the trip. And that "request" is more like an order. Hold something out on the driver, and you're apt to find yourself tossed from the bus at some point of maximum inconvenience — two hundred miles from the next town, say. And think twice before pulling on the drivers — they're a fairly tough bunch, and they ride in pairs.

Profiling

Ah, profiling. It's been around in an informal sense ever since there were cops, but in its modern version, it dates back to the Israeli anti-terrorist procedures of the late 20th Century. Supporters describe it as a vital tool to minimize security risks while still allowing the free flow of traffic; opponents, including decades of civil-rights activists, claim that it's nothing more than an excuse for cops to exercise their prejudices by detaining and harassing anyone who "looks funny". In game terms, it means that runner characters can be singled out for special attention by Security depending on their dress, their race, their manner, or their travel plans.

Each runner is assigned a base TN of 9. Deviations from the "Human Corporate" profile result in modifiers to the TN. The Star-boy doing the profiling makes a Security Procedures roll (or Border Guard Vindictiveness roll), and if he or she makes it, the runner is "taken to one side."

Profiling Modifiers

Elf/Dwarf	-1
Ork/Troll/	
Other metatype	-2
"Odd" dress	-1 to -3
"Enemy Alien"	-3
Gang dress	-3
Mob/Yak dress	-1
Tribal dress -	-1
"Enemy Destination"	-2
Visible Cyberware/	
Extreme Low Essence	-3

"Odd" dress is anything the Profiler might find unclassifiable and thereby threatening (so a Renaissance Faire minstrel costume would be odd; but a Japanese corp-kimono, though unusual, fits neatly into a category and gets no modifier).

"Enemy Alien" means that the passenger fits into whatever ethnicity has been deemed a threat by the local profiler — Tir Elves in CalFree, Orks in San Francisco, Azzies just about anywhere.

"Tribal Dress" applies only in non-NAN airports.

"Enemy Destination" applies if the passenger's destination or point of origin fits a hostile or high-crime area in the profile — Vladivostok, Tir Tairngire, Chicago, Aztlan, etc.

A failed Profiling Test means the runner is pulled aside for a luggage and personal search. The severity of the search depends on the number of failures in the Profiling test.

"Standard" and "Deliberate" refer to the time spent on the search. (p. 236-237, **Shadowrun Third Edition**) If the search is thorough, the searcher can bring in search equipment (X-Ray, cyberware scanners) that is of a different level than what's listed in the Checkpoint Table.

Profiling Results

One Success	Questions/Visa SIN check
2-3 Successes	Standard Search
4+ Successes	Deliberate Search

Final Thoughts

What's the point of all this drek? After all, your players didn't buy SR3 just to wait in line at the airport. They want to kick dragon-butt and play with corporate toys, right?

These tables give your PCs an excuse to finally use their concealable polyresin single-shot Derringers. Their toothpaste tubes full of C20. Their combination fountain pen/laser torches. All those tricky little James Bond devices that are so much fun and so useless in a full-on, go-anywhere, free-brawl anarchy.

It's also nice to remind them on occasion why most people **don't** have gleaming metal torsos. Why carrying that combat-rated auto-shotgun in plain view is a bad idea. Why they **should** be paranoid. Every runner hates The Man — so it's incumbent upon GMs to ensure that now and then, the Man reminds the runners why they hate him so much.

And it's a peachy way to mellow out your gun-munchkins.

THE GUNDEL

Appelizers

Langösz

Remoullade of Awakened Endive, Shallot, and Mushroom
Bruschetta à la Daviar

Salads

Mixed Greens

Macédoine of Dandelions, Fresh Kelp, and Awakened Thyme

Entrees

Paprikash

Fillet of Bluefin Tuna, Lightly Seared in an Awakened Herb Sauce
Buffalo Hump Steak à la Sintay Galeska

Desserts

Sorbet of Awakened Oranges
La Grande Torte Gundel
Assorted Chocolates and Coffees

Wines

Walkabout Petit Sirrah 2055
Turning Leaf Chardonnay 2055
Cabernet Sauvignon Mt. Shasta 2057

☛ Aww, DREK, what is this? Cap, can't ya keep the fraggin' nonsense to a minimum?

☛ Bullet

☛ Heavens, Bullet. I thought you'd be glad to get a glimpse of the High Life. After all, Gundel is the ne plus ultra in Seattle fine dining.

☛ Captain Chaos

☛ Yeah, it's the only way he'll get it.

☛ Wiz Kid

☛ Ne what?

☛ Radovan

☛ Ne plus ultra. So chic it tries to discourage business, not encourage it. Notice no prices on that fancy menu.

☛ Social Light.

☛ Langoscz? Remoullade? Que?

☛ Ermal

☛ Awakened Thyme? That's interesting....

☛ GrimNoire

☛ And as is so often the case, the perceptive Ms. Noire gets the No-Prize for why I posted this item. Not all Awakened changes are from armadilloes to Juggernauts. Some are subtle, and the latest craze in fine dining is using these mutations in food.

☛ the Smiling Bandit.

☛ Any one actually eaten this stuff?

☛ Wiz Kid

☛ Yes.

☛ John Hedwig.

☛ Hedwig? The columnist for Hello Seattle?

☛ Social Light

• Yes. The cuisine is remarkable. The sorbet, for inst- message interrupted 3.4 MP lost

• Looky, looky, we got a visit from the Straight World.

• Bullet

• Say goodbye to Bullet for the evening, folks. Sorry about that.

• Captain Chaos.

• Not a problem. As I was saying, the sorbet of Awakened oranges made me remember a visit to my grandmother....something I hadn't thought of for years. The Awakened thyme in the macédoine which means a "finely chopped" salad, by the way worked with the kelp to create a potent hallucination. I felt as though I were diving in a kelp bed, water running through my fur, searching for abalone clams. Make of that what you will. The tuna in Awakened herb sauce didn't have the same overt effect, but the sauce did seem to intensify the flavor of the fish and the side dishes, giving them a peppery sort of vividness. Although I was impressed by the pyrotechnics, I wouldn't do it again. Food should affect your palate, not your mind. Judging by the crowds, I seem to be in the minority on this issue.

• John Hedwig

• Okay, that's the Awakened stuff. I get it. But what's a "remoullade"?

• Wiz Kid

• In this case, an endive stuffed with shallots and mushrooms. It had a soothing effect, and sharpened my

appetite. The langoscz is a Hungarian fried-dough pastry, opped with cheese. Paprikash is a spicy hungarian beef stew, and bruschetta is slices of hard toast topped with mozzarella cheese, tomatoes, and vinegar. Gundel has added a sharp paprika to its version.

• John Hedwig

• What about the steak?

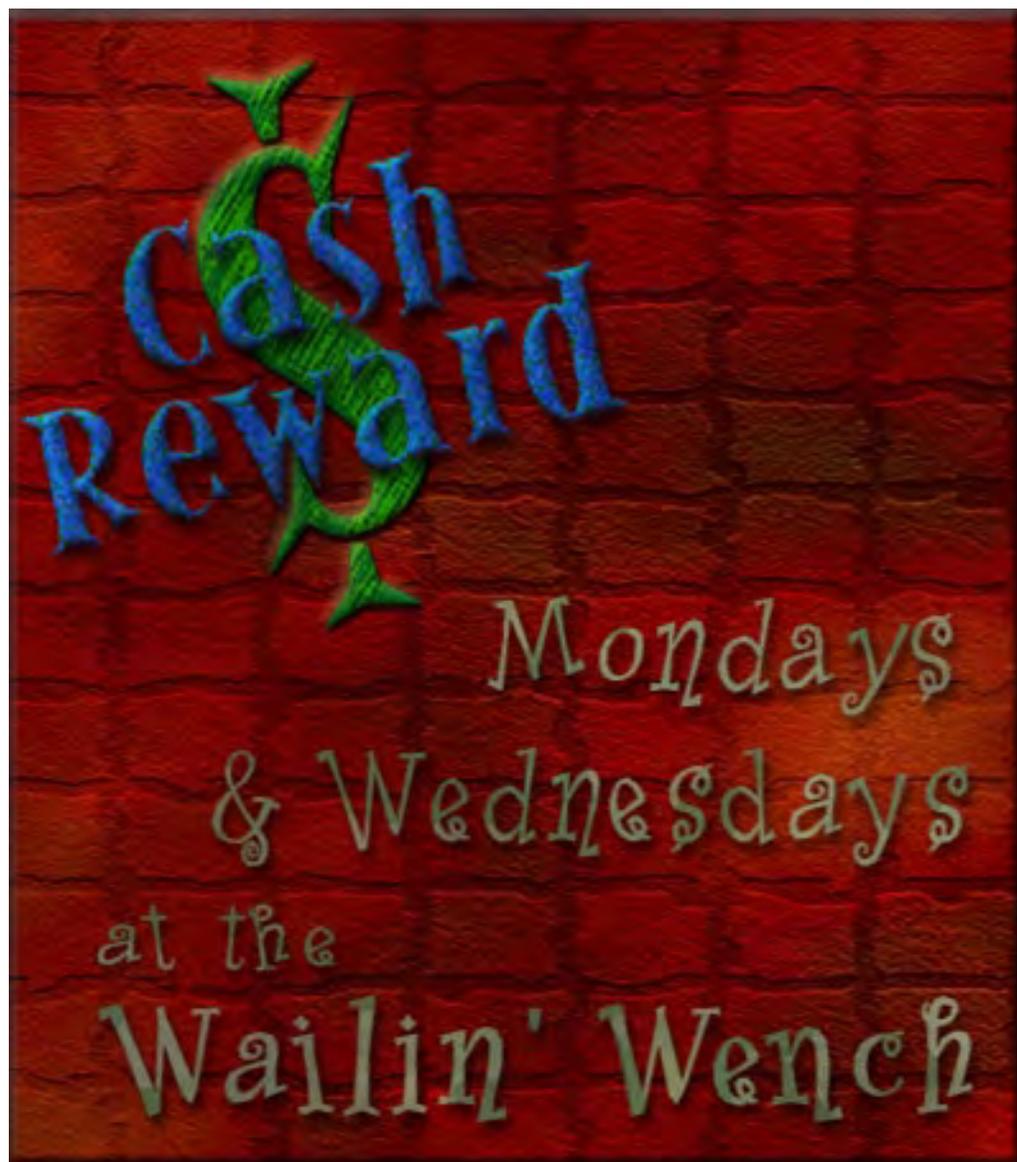
• Social Light

• Fresh-killed buffalo hump steak, certified free of disease and parasites. It was sweet, almost too rich for my taste. My dining companion, raised in the Sioux nation, thought it delicious.

• John Hedwig

• I think I'm gonna yarf....

• Radovan



The Corporate Review by SwifOne (swiftone@bigfoot.com)

• I was skimming through some files the other day, - never you mind where - when I came upon a corp name that wasn't familiar. So I did some digging and found some interesting data. Scan it and form your own opinions.

• SwifOne
"Need to Know"

Joozu Research

History

Joozu Research was founded in 2030 by best friends Robert Hintz and Steven Gerrod. Gerrod was a skilled hermetic mage with a degree in genetics, and Hintz was a modestly successful genetic researcher. They thought that they could mix science and magic in genetic research, and the thrashing the industry had gotten from the Crash was an opportunity not to be missed. The pair opened a small lab in Fort Lewis and hired a few graduate students to assist them.

After two fruitless years, they chanced upon a means of genetically affecting likely complexion (IE: fewer zits) of offspring. The research was in immediate demand, but the small Joozu didn't have the means to administer the treatment to any but a handful of patients. Hintz and Gerrod put their heads together, and set the future course of the company. Rather than marketing their goods directly, or being acquired by a larger company with more assets, they would focus on early research and sell their results to clients.

During the mid-30's (most of) today's megacorporations began to solidify. Joozu was briefly entertained by a few megacorps for acquisition, but was eventually left alone.

• Hey wait just one minute. "eventually left alone?" That doesn't sound like the mega-corps we all know and hate. What gives?

• Gabriel

• Two reasons. First, Joozu is involved in controversial research - namely, human germline modification - that mega-corps would just as soon not have drawing protesters. Second, genetic modification is a risky industry. You can spend millions of nuyen with nothing to show for it much too easily. The early mega-corps loved risky ventures, but they always stacked the decks in their favor.

• DarkHorse

• Human germline modifications? Like diddling with baby genes? I thought that was illegal in the UCAS. Don't start spouting that extra-territorial line at me, because I know Joozu is too small to be extra-territorial .

• Maine Mom

• Nope. Current UCAS law forbids modification of a baby's germs while in the uterus, which doesn't count any cells in a petri dish - otherwise you wouldn't have all of this neat bioware . Besides which, germline modification means altering an egg or sperm cell, which isn't a fully functional cell yet, and has no protection under law.

• DarkHorse

• If they can modify a "real" cell in a petri dish, why worry about germline cells at all?

• Faust

• Joozu isn't focused on localized "big" effects such as bioware. They focus more on subtle - and difficult - effects to pass on to children. This includes reduced risk of cancer, elimination of allergies, removal of many genetic diseases, etc.

• Testtube Baby

• Not to say that Joozu doesn't tinker elsewhere, just that they don't admit it. Joozu runs a lot of inexpensive healthcare shelters in the Barrens. Ask around and you'll find a lot of women that visit there are suddenly pregnant and carrying a bit of extra cash. Come back in 9 months and there isn't any sign of a baby, and the woman is poor again, so a few months later she's back at the clinic. It's sickening what these bastards can get away with.

• Lonely Father

Joozu has prospered since then, and has opened two new labs, one in Boston (2041), and the other in Chicago (2048). (Fortunately for Joozu, it was outside the area sealed off into Bug City in 2055.)

Joozu does no marketing, and relies on reputation among its clients (primarily mega-corps and their subsidiaries) to bring it continuing work. Mega-corps, particularly Shiawase and Yamatetsu, have begun to hint an interest in acquisition, but Hintz and Gerrod have negative interest.

Notable Personalities

Robert Hintz

Robert Hintz, a human, is one of the founding partners of Joozu, and remains in an administrative role. Before founding Joozu, he was a researcher at Berkeley University in California.

Although successful, he felt the university prevented him from engaging in “important” research. When the Crash of ’29 rocked his field, he saw opportunity, and founded Joozu with his longtime friend and fellow researcher Steven Gerrod.

Hintz is a loud, boisterous man, flushed with success. Joozu has accomplished what he set out to do, and he’ll argue for it with anyone who cares to listen. Sitting on his laurels and admiring his own success, he will fiercely resist any takeover pressures.

Steven Gerrod

Steven Gerrod was an uninteresting genetics research at Berkeley University until he tested positive for magical potential in 2028. After a few years of study as a hermetic mage, he found that he only had the patience and interest to continue when it affected his life long pursuit of genetic knowledge.

A quiet, seething person, he dislikes authority and felt constrained at the University. It took little effort for his friend Hintz to convince him to partner up and start Joozu where they could both research free of any administrative constraints.

The interaction of their personalities and approach to genetics helped Joozu reach conclusions and discoveries easier than companies trying merely science. Surprisingly, despite their differences, the two men have retained a close personal friendship that is seemingly unaffected by any disputes at work.

Gerrod has become one of the world’s experts on melding magical techniques with scientific ones, although most magicians will complain of his research techniques and notes as unorganized and undisciplined. Despite his advanced age (67), Gerrod continues to work in the labs on whatever project he considers most interesting.

Jane Hintz

Jane Hintz, 34, is Robert Hintz’s only daughter. Her mother died in a car accident in 2027, and her father raised her himself, with the aid of “Uncle” Gerrod. Jane Hintz is an attractive and charismatic young woman who dislikes Joozu’s research and attempts to raise public awareness of the company. This attitude has caused surprisingly little strife at home. Apparently her father believes that everyone should fight for something, although he is perfectly willing to fight for his side in return.

Her enmity towards the company may be sparing her father and would-be uncle from some difficulties. As the heir-apparent for both of them, no one wanting to acquire the company wants anything untoward to happen to them. Jane Hintz would waste little time in disrupting the company and destroying it’s research if she had the chance.

Running Against Joozu

Joozu’s approach to security is that their data is the most important thing. Their Matrix security is nothing short of phenomenal. Each lab has their actual work systems inside of no fewer than three nested systems, each loaded with fake data. The labs connect via temporary lines that open for a five minute period each hour. The nested systems have increasingly rigorous

security settings. Young wannabe deckers often test their skills against the lowest level of defenses without much problem. (System deckers often watch them without complaint simply to stay up to date with the new tricks of the trade.) Deeper layers of security include numerous trace routines and a few psychotropic black ice systems protecting the more sensitive data. None of the ice is cutting edge, but there certainly is a lot of it. Joozu can only maintain this level of security with a notable level of inconvenience for their researchers, but they have fostered an almost paranoid level of security consciousness in their offices to offset complaints.

◆ *Yeah, I had a beer with one of their workers once. Didn’t know he worked there, and frankly, didn’t care, until he got the notion that I was getting him drunk to steal his secrets. Got real mean then, and left in a hurry. Bloody idiot left me with his tab too.*

◆ *Barroom Bob*

Physical security is also present, though not nearly as rigorous. Joozu contracts out their security to local agencies, Lone Star in Seattle, Knight Errant in Boston, and Eagle Security in Chicago. Security usually consists of several wandering guards, an impressive array of keypad, retinal, and palmprint locks, and heavy fast response teams on call.

◆ *Fragging labs are built like tanks too. I was nosing about their Chicago lab, just curious you know, when I must have set off some alarm, because I could hear the sirens outside. Took me no fewer than 20 minutes to get through all the doors and locks to get away. If one of the arrivals hadn’t left the keys in the ignition it might have been curtains for me!*

◆ *No Carrier*

Magical defenses are minimal, but any research rooms are fairly well warded, and they always pay for the magical support on-call with their security contracts.

Joozu in the Shadows

Now that Yamatetsu and Shiawase are looking at Joozu, expect some shadow action to stir up. Damien Knight is unlikely to overlook any action in his backyard, so any runs affecting the Boston lab will doubtless operate under the all-seeing eye of Ares. Hintz and Gerrod have managed to retain full ownership of the company, so any runs will be targeted at them, though perhaps indirectly.

Joozu itself rarely hires runners, though it has on occasion done so. If any of the mega-corps start trouble, Joozu is not afraid to return the favor, and lacking any significant resources in that department, they will have to turn to runners.

Jane Hintz is a wild card that everyone will be watching.

Places to Go, People to See

This month, Places to Go, People to See contains submissions from Alexandre van Chestein (havoc@videotron.ca). To submit People and Places for Places to Go, People to See, please use the submission form at <http://tss.dumpshock.com/tss-cd.html>

'Bones'

Human Street Doc

Bones is a doctor in his mid-fifties with greying hair and a thick beard. He operates out of a shadowclinic in the Redmond Barrrens, paying good money to the local gangs so they keep their business elsewhere. He keeps to himself and denies any link to the Star Trek character other than his nickname.

He quit a lucrative practice to 'retire' to the shadows, where he wanted to see the true applications of the medical wonders he helped create. From this vantage point, he can truly seek to better understand the human body and mind, and continue his research into cybernetics.

Bones' true name is unknown, as he used professional help to burn any links between him and his former self. He is said to still work long nights at designing new and dangerous pieces of cyberware; where he road-tests them, and in whom, is not known.

Samuel Marx

Human Bartender

Sam, a middle-aged, balding fridge-shaped man with bushy eyebrows and beard, has seen 'em all. The young hotshot deckers who wind up brain-fried a week later, the first-time street sammies looking for a run, and the odd troll physad up for bouncer duty. His bar, the Baker's Dozen, is known for its maximum 15% of normal patrons. The other 85% not so normal patrons include a large majority of trolls, orks and dwarves, along with the odd shapeshifter.

No one is unwelcome at The Baker's Dozen, as long as racism is kept to null. If not, well, there's always the nice young horned gentlemen near the door who can toss the unfortunate offender out the door in a snap. The Baker's Dozen is also known to be a small-time meeting place for starting runners and Johnsons.

Sil Jackson

Human Fixer

Sil is a smallish woman in her early twenties who grew up on the streets and soon made a name for herself. Daughter of a fixer, she quickly followed in her mother's tracks and settled into her own web of shadowy dealings. Her short coppery hair and large round glasses often make people think she's younger than she is, and that is how she evades most stings. She seldom goes out into the streets, and has a quiet, subtly manipulative demeanor around her clients and acquaintances. She is respected by those who know her, and often overlooked by the rest.

Club Sniper

Owner: Zenith Supernova

Zenith is another one of those novastars who made it big quickly and immediately squandered their money into insane and risky ventures. The exception is that in this case, it worked. Even though he rarely gets out any albums, the neometal star Zenith Supernova (now CEO of Supernova Inc) has diverted his small-time corp's interests into very selective areas; namely, music, instruments, fast cars and clubs. One such club is Club Sniper, situated just inside Supernova's corporate grounds (so as to stamp down any claims of illegal proceedings inside).

Club Sniper is a club that is gaining quite a lot of popularity with thrillseekers and those past the desperation point. It consists of a ring of elevated and linked platforms with multiple bars and tables; each platform (six in all) has its own kitchen and meal repertoire, from Italian to Thai to English (the latter popularly referred to as the Smeg Bed). The platforms link to the central floor platform, which is a large dancing floor with lights, sounds, the works; the Club uses special aimed speakers which keep most of the sound in the central area, so as to keep the people who are eating from screaming their heads off.

Every Friday at midnight, Club Sniper has the Shootout, which gives it its name. Fifteen minutes prior, alarms are sounded and dancers are warned to get the hell out of the way if they don't want to get hurt. By midnight, the people who are left inside the central square (identified by construction-style black and yellow striping) take part in a contest of sorts. In the rafters, four employees come into play, armed with the latest sniper rifles, smartguns, and paint bullets. On the stroke of midnight, they pick a target and fire.

The dancer to get pelted with blue paint nets the third prize, usually something minor that ranges from free meals to gift memberships, to a small sum. The dancer who gets smeared with green paint gets the second prize, something better like gift packages from Supernova products (instruments, music systems, simsense hardware) and bigger cash sums.

The dancer splashed with the gold paint bullet gets the first prize. This is always something really big and extravagant, like an all-expense-paid trip or tour tickets with backstage passes, or in rare occasions, one of Supernova's extravagant (and expensive) hotrods. One can expect a sports car to be the first prize every month or two.

The fourth and final target nets himself what some refer to as the Grand Prize. The bullet is real. This is why Club Sniper requires any and all new customers to sign a waiver along with their membership papers, which indicates they are aware of the risks involved and cannot take legal action (themselves or their relatives) in the event of serious injury or (more often) death. Still, some say the gamble is worth it.

This combination of ambiance, food and the possibility that you could get capped at midnight make Club Sniper the place to find a very special crowd. It is also a popular meeting place for Johnsons, as no one in their right mind would hold a meeting there (though the Club has a couple of dedicated dining rooms for such events, with full-screen trid display of the dance floor.

Real Names for Fake People

by Alexandre van Chestein (havoc@videotron.ca)

Abhay	Bowra	Dagan	Fazal	Ignaszewski
Aditya	Brenda	Daoust	Feenstra	Imori
Al-Shawa	Brugger	Denger	Fehr	Iqbal
Aliberti	Bun Yak	Deryk	Fejtek	Isca
Alidib		Deshpande	Fern	Ivy
Alpine	Cabanes	Desmond	Filek	Ivylyn
Alvares	Calibaba	Detsky	Fiona	Jacek
Alvastone	Cara	Dev	Firoz	Jagannathan
Amalfi	Carkner	Dewji	Flavio	Jagjit
Ambrose	Carmine	Dezso	Franco	Jaikaran
Amrik	Carola	Dhillon	Friesen	Januszczak
Amy Lo	Cathro	Dhindsa	Fu	Jarin
Anda	Cepuch	Dieter	Gabor	Jellinek
Anouk	Cercone	Dilip	Gamble	Jensen
Anstey	Chadha	Dippold	Geta	Jerzy
Anumpa	Chaiyeeada	Dishoyan	Ghose	Jesper
Araki	Chan	Don	Goffe	Jinnah
Arbuckle	Chandran	Doolan	Goodick	Ju Ho Ha
Arun	Chattoo	Doris	Gordon	
Ash	Chavo	Dorosario	Granatstein	Kadoke
Ashworth	Chi-Kan	Dorothyhokay	Greaves	Kajrenius
Astle	Chikun	Dory	Guenther	Kallab
Aviad	Chinga	Dvaipayan	Gulka	Kamel
Avtar	Chiovitti	Dwyer	Gunvor	Kander
Asuncion	Cho	Dzialowski	Gupta	Kanporlam
Awad	Chopra		Gurcharan	Kapahi
	Christensen	Eachern	Gurdip	Karam
Baldev	Chu	Earle	Gursharn	Karamjeet
Baljit	Chuanshin	Ecclestone	Gustafson	Karmen
Bardakjian	Chyczij	Eigo		Kaur
Bazinert	Ciprick	Eiko	Habal	Ka Wing Ha
Beer	Coilroy	Egbert	Hang	Keri
Beltran	Collier	Eldon	Harinder	Kernaghan
Berglund	Colton	Empsey	Haripal	Khan
Berti	Coralie	Enzer	Harnam	Kim
Bhadur	Corinne	Erzsebet	Harrouche	Kimit
Bhargava	Cornelius	Essam	Hau	Kinghar
Bhereur	Courey	Essel	Hebfray	Kirpaul
Bhimji	Creath	Etsumi	Hendry	Kirstein
Bidmade	Croghan	Eves	Hettie	Klemmer
Bient	Crowston		Horak	Koko
Bikyuk	Csepregi	Fahim	Horvath	Kolhatkar
Birk	Culloch	Faienza	Hune	Kovacs
Blaine	Czachor	Fanourgiakis	Hunter	Kozicz
Bohsali		Farida	Hurtubise	Kwaifong
Bonfiglio		Farncombe	Hyman	Kwan
Bosomworth	Dabarno	Farrer		Kwok
Bourelle	Dabouz	Faruki	Iain	
			Ian	
			Ida	

Lai	Mitra	Ratnaswami	Singh	Wai Ho Ma
Lakshminarayanan	Moffat	Rauch	Siramthi	Waiyin
Lamy	Moira	Razanadrakoto	Sol	Walmsley
Lancaster	Molnar	Reibling	Spahr	Walwyn
Langleben	Morgentaler	Rie	Spence	Wee
Lars	Motohisa	Riegert	Spiegel	Wetselaar
Lawson	Mounir	Rivard	Spillett	Whitman
Lineker	Mudaliar	Rookmani	Spowart	Wintzenrieth
Lofchy	Muhunthan	Rowat	Sprague	Withrow
Lofsky	Mukherjee	Russ	Sproxton	Wohlau
Loreto	Munir	Rust	Stastny	Wong
Lorimer	Murlin	Rynard	Stirling	
Lorriman	Murugesu		Strilchuk	Yates
Luba	Nasutidball	Sack	Suk	Yoneda
Luk	Naveen	Sadik	Suppiah	Ypeus
Luviminda	Needham	Said	Swayam	Yukfongallison
Lydes	Norby	Sakaguchi	Swinton	Yuji
	Noriko	Salina	Szalpeter	Yunhoi
Makhija	Novakis	Sallaberger	Szeto	Yurchuk
Mahalingam		Samavedham	Szwec	
Mahdy	Oiling	Sanaimahmoud		Zackary
Majed	Oostenburg	Sandhu	Tamunoiyala	Zaghlol
Mamerdo	Orlikow	Sandy	Tannenbaum	Zaltz
Maneesha	Panchal	Sangara	Tannock	Zaven
Mantoura	Pankajkumar	Sangha	Taploo	Zbigniew
Manvi	Pantana	Sankoff	Taruna	Zieber
Marina	Parmar	Santoth	Tekanoff	Zoltan
Marshall	Pawan	Sanz	Thackray	Zottenberg
Martz	Pereira	Saraw	Thanh	
Masek	Petricic	Sasa	Thilo	
Masuda	Pickrill	Sauha	Thoft	
Maswar	Plener	Saul	Tighe	
Matys	Poon	Saynwittgenstein	Tirlok	
Matsue	Prabha	Sears	Tithecott	
Mazotta	Prokopetz	Seema	Towle	
Mazumdar	Puddington	Sekiya	Tran	
Mazur	Pui	Senson	Trotta	
Measner	Puifung	Seungduk	Tsang	
Medhat	Pulin	Shankar	Tucker	
Mei	Purushotham	Sharma	Tumanglay	
Mellas		Shessel		
Mensha	Quon	Shi	Vanderhoof	
Metarita		Shick	Vanderlubbe	
Methe	Raafat	Shilien	Van Everdingen	
Metler	Rachelle	Shimizu	Vesner	
Metrick	Ragui	Shinichi	Vidalin	
Michailiuk	Rai	Shpritser	Vijay	
Michetti	Raman	Siddals	Vrkljan	
Millican	Ramy	Sigridur		
Mirah	Rao	Simm		
Mirak	Rasul	Singal		

The Cluttered Datastore

This issues cluttered datastore features submissions from Ray Macey (nightrain@tpg.com.au), (Glenn Royer (groyer@ringling.edu), Cullynn Savill (someone@cullynn.com), Arclight (arclight@datahaven.de), Kwyndig (kwyndig@usa.net), Psybre (anything000@hotmail.com), and Yagathai (Yagathai@aol.com) To submit items to the cluttered datastore, use the submission form at <http://tss.dumpshock.com/tss-cd.html>

- Well, after some slight hiccups with our Matrix access, we're back, offering rundowns of new and interesting gear, along with a new section covering all sorts of magical stuff. As usual, keep the comments civil, and if you've got some interesting stuff, share the wealth, and pass it along to us!
- NuDawn

Electronics

Ares TechMan Wearable Computer

Composed of two parts, headset and a pocket computer. The headset consists of stereo headphones, a mounted incamera, a microphone and a hi-res monacle. The computer is just a regular pocket computer with 100Mp of memory. You could plug it into cyberterminals, decks, simsense players, but it only gives audio and limited visual readout, no other senses. Commands would be issued to the module via a natural language command processor.

For example, To scan a crowd for a face that's stored on a chip you would say - "Computer, scan area for visual pattern stored on memory module under file name "Target"

Decking can be done as if it the user was a turtle, but you could jack it into a rigged vehicle and get diagnostics reports and sensor readouts. No datajack bonuses are given. Also, smartlinked guns could plug into the computer, allowing for the normal smartgoggle bonus.

Weight	Avail.	Cost	SI
2	5/10 hours	3000¥	1.5

- The one overriding problem with this is that the angle has to match EXACTLY for the image identifier to work properly, since it's not a Trideo camera, and a trid image doesn't get interpreted properly by the image processor. In other words, if the guy's standing right in front of you, but his trid image is rotated so that the back of his head is the actual angle of view, the computer won't recognize it. Another thing with this is that it tends to go "crying to momma" when it gets sensory input it doesn't recognize, since apparently the original sensor software was designed for playback analysis, and if the input data isn't understood, it tends to embellish, which can lead to fatal mistakes.
- Jonesy

Behring Chemical Alarm

A small device constantly analyzing the surrounding air. When detecting a hazardous agent, it either activates an audio alarm or a small red LED. The Behring Chemical Alarm can also be linked to a computer system so an alert can be broadcast to a remote workstation.

Weight	Avail.	Cost	SI
0.1	8/6 days	500¥	2

- These things are used by lab techs to let them know when they've fragged up. But they can also be tuned to detect simple molecules, like carbon dioxide. I did a midnight run against a small ompany and their alarm system went off when the chemical alarms mounted near the doors detected my breath.
- Graht

Dataline Reader

A device attached to the exterior of a fiber-optic cable, this device slicesopen the casing and reads the pulses of light. Due to signal degradation, a Rating of 3 or higher is required to access sound, and a minimum Rating of 6 is required for video. This device is extremely hard to detect, requiring a physical inspection of the lines. A transceiver version is available, add (500 * 1 + Point of Flux) to the price.

Avail.	Cost	SI
Rating + 3/10 days	3,000¥ x RTG	5

- Don't believe the hype about them being so hard to detect. Putting one of these in place introduces noise into the fibre, degrading it's effectiveness, which can be a giveaway to those paranoid enough.
- Static

Dr. Odd's Shock Spheres

Developed by the eccentric mad scientist/shadowrunner Dr. Odd, these small, golf ball-sized silvery spheres are equipped with a miniaturized capacitor that packs a hefty charge. A barely perceptible hairline crack circumscribes the sphere, dividing it into two hemispheres. A quarter-twist of the hemispheres in opposite directions arms the sphere. After arming, impact triggers the weapon, releasing the capacitor's electric charge into the first conductive surface to touch the sphere's surface; typically, whomever it is being thrown at.

Used spheres can be recharged with an Electronics roll (TN 6) and access to the appropriate tools. Use caution, however, in

Conceal	Dam.	Weight	Avail.	Cost	SI	Legal
10	Special	2	6/48 hours	75¥	1.25	6-D

retrieving spent spheres. It's impossible to tell just from looking at one whether or not it has discharged. Damage from the sphere is (STR-2)M (Stun), and the damage from the electrical shock is 10S (Stun)

❖ *There's several groups knocking out cheap rip-offs of the original Dr. Odd's design, now. You get what you pay for - but you already know that, don't you?*

❖ *NoName*

❖ *I've got an adept friend who uses these things often. They work great unless you're dealing with someone wearing body armor.*

❖ *Hall, Great*

Lafton Optronics M456MK1

Resting above the left eye, the M456MK1 features a compact ultrasound emitter and a monocular visor operating on only one battery. The advantage of the M456MK1 is obvious: you can carry out your mission with normal vision but keep an eye out for enemies disguised by magical means. The system can mount on a face mask or helmet mount.

	Weight	Avail.	Cost	SI
M456MK1	0.2	8/4 days	5,500	3
Face Mask	0.1	4/48 hours	500	1
Helmet	-	4/48 hours	300	1

❖ *This thing works as advertised. It can be a little disorienting right at first, so I recommend getting used to it in a non-combat environment.*

❖ *Griffyn*

❖ *Unless your enemy is using Improved Invisibility, in which case it isn't worth the cardboard box it comes in.*

❖ *Graht*

Gear

Behring Chemicals Acidizer

Normally a acid dispenser for laboratories, this pistol-shaped device can be deployed to burn through locks. The device is constructed of light-weight polymers with a detachable plasteeel canister with a acid resistant inner coating.

The standard acid distributed with the Acidizer can create a 1 CM cubed pit per combat term in non reinforced metal.

Weight	Avail.	Cost	SI
0.2	10/6 days	150¥	0.5

❖ *Contrary to what you'll see on the trid, acid turns out to be a horrible weapon. Shoot a lock with this stuff, and the lock will soon be slag. Hit a person, and they'll get damage...after an hour if they didn't clean it off. If you must use this to defend yourself, shoot for the eyes. Or better yet, just throw it at them, it'll do more damage.*

❖ *SwiftOne*

❖ *Locks aren't the only thing you can use this little beauty on. A healthy squirt to the engine block, manifold, brake pads, or lug-nuts are all just little ways of telling that hostile rigger or police patrolman that you care. Planning ahead to disable a vehicle that's likely to pursue you will make your getaway that much smoother.*

❖ *D-Lux*

FireMax Jellnite

A fire-starting jell that cannot be detected after fire has burned down completely. Enough for 10 uses, available in a squeezable tube or as single use cubes.

Weight	Avail.	Cost	SI
0.1	4/24 hours	10¥	1

❖ *Buy this from the right people, and it will come in a toothpaste tube. Great for family travel!*

❖ *Ral*

❖ *Just make sure you don't confuse it with your toothpaste <grumble>.*

❖ *Graht*

❖ *Be careful to make sure the room will burn. Friend of mine thought he was home free after he tried to roast a not-so-friendly mage's lab who had some ritual materials on him. Turn's out the mage's place used that new fire-retardant drywall, and only suffered a large scorch mark. That's all that was left of Billy too, after the spell hit him.*

❖ *SwiftOne*

Gut jar

Back then when organic drugs were smuggled into the country more often, these tiny cylinders were swallowed to smuggle the contraband through customs. Will not show up on most scanners.

Weight	Avail.	Cost	SI
-	2/24 hours	10¥	0.5

HimalaTek Ascenders

A mechanical ascending device. Supports a maximum weight of 150kg, with a speed of 0.75m per second. The internal batteries recharge when descending.

Weight	Avail.	Cost	SI
0.2	4/24 hours	250¥	0.8

- ☛ *Where does he get all those wonderful toys?*
- ☛ *Joker*

- ☛ *???*
- ☛ *SwiftOne*

One thing to watch out for, though, is the fact that they are a long way from being easy to recharge any other way, so I hope you have a convenient building to hang from once it's all over with.

- ☛ *Mountangoat Mel*

Kaercher Decon3000 Kit

The manufacturer of the worlds most often used cleaning agents and producer of the worlds first decon praying device for individual use now markets his third generation of decontamination kits. The Decon3000 is a small cylinder holding a micro emulsion and pressured air. Enough to decontaminate 2 metahumans or a small vehicle.

Weight	Avail.	Cost	SI
5	12/4days	2500¥	3

- ☛ *Heh. Used one of these once to hose down a team mate. And not because he was contaminated, but because he hadn't taken a bath in about a week <grin>.*
- ☛ *Graht*

- ☛ *You forgot to tell them that afterwards I took that can and shoved it up your 0.01 MP deleted by sysop*
- ☛ *Magaga*

- ☛ *It was worth it Magaga, it was worth it.*
- ☛ *Graht*

Raiton Chaffer

The Chaffer is a cost effective way to jam ultra sound detection equipment. It can be loaded into any standard grenade auncher and when fired disrupts into a 5x5m cloud of shredded plastic Mylar.

The Raiton Chaffer's jamming effects last for 3 combat turns.

Weight	Avail.	Cost	SI
0.1	6/72 hours	200¥	2

This thing also does some pretty impressive things when combined with a high-intensity spotlight and a dark night...

- ☛ *CameraMan*

The only time I've seen these used was as confetti generators when a local go-gang held a block party. Fun party <big grin>.

- ☛ *Graht*

Shark Chain

Made from non-oxidating steel, this is the ideal protection against sharks and other predators.

Shark Chain cannot be shared between characters unless they are similarly sized and are the same metatype - GMs discretion.

Weight	Avail.	Cost	SI
Body +2	8/4 days	2500¥	2

- ☛ *Megalodons will just swallow you *grin**
- ☛ *Shark Boy*

"other predators", namely guard animals. Be wary though, while the chain prevents most of the damage from a bite, it doesn't keep you from being thrown and dragged around. The same chain that prevents the damage also gives them a really good grip. Pretty useless against bullets.

- ☛ *SwiftOne*

Being thrown and dragged around is often the least of your problems. Since it's a mesh, the chain is effectively fabric and flexes just like fabric, and thus offers almost no rigidity. Which basically means that it doesn't protect you from getting crushed. So that Piasma's tusks may not gore you, but it's jaws can still crush every bone in your body.

- ☛ *Munin*

- ☛ *But the suit comes through it okay :-0*
- ☛ *SwiftOne*

Be wary of cheap knock-offs. Any idiot with a drill and some pliers can make chainmail. But that doesn't mean that it'll stand up to teeth or claws. The honest to Jim "Shark Chain" tm has welded links that are unlikely to open or fail. ArcoTek CAS offers "DiveShield" tm, which is a similar product, but has links that are forged as a single piece which means they make the entire suit pretty much in one go, but the price is astronomical because the process is difficult. You get what you pay for, though.

- ☛ *Bayou Jack*

Tesa Corporation Tire strip

A sheet of plastic that molds when in contact with a catalyst stick. Hardens in 1 minute. Used by Lone Star forensics to secure tire tracks for later identification.

- *A creative mind can come up with many uses for this*
- *SwiftOne*

Weight	Avail.	Cost	SI
-	4/24 hours	50	1

Tai's Magical Goodies

- *Hoi there chummers,*

As it so happens, NuDawn needed some spells and other assorted magical goodies for this here fine publication. It just so happens that I'm in a position to provide just such knowledge. Further, I also owe her for some events that you nosy arkers are just going to have to live without knowing.

So what relevance does this have to you? Well, obviously it means that I have scrounged up a few formulas, some adept powers, and even a new metamagical ability making the rounds and put them all in one place for you to peruse.

Go to it and enjoy,

- *Tai*

Manipulation Spells

Emotion Paint

This transformation manipulation spell was invented by a blind mage who used it to aid her in an 'astral painting' art form that she invented. This art involved painting items with certain emotional imprints that conveyed meaning and feeling via the astral imprint, rather than visual cues. This spell allows the caster to embed certain emotions into an item, whether or not the mage is actually feeling the emotion. The number of successes determines the amount of fine control the caster has and the maximum number of successes a person viewing the item can achieve on the Assensing table (SR3 p172) to read the emotions.

Type	TN	Duration	Range	Drain
Mana	4	P (10 turns)	Touch	M

Ritual Cleansing

This transformation manipulation spell has the simple effect of destroying the ability of any given item to be used as a material link for ritual sorcery without visibly altering or damaging the item. This will work on blood samples, items from places and inactive foci (though activating the focus at a later point destroys the effects of this spell). The force of the spell limits the items that can be affected according to the Object Resistance Table (SR3 p182). In the case of foci, the maximum force of foci that can be affected is equal to the force of the spell.

Type	TN	Duration	Range	Drain
Mana	4	P (15 turns)	LOS	S

Illusion Spells

Blur

This indirect illusion spell serves to 'fuzz' the appearance of the target in technological recording/perceiving devices. Any perception tests to recognise (not detect, just recognise) the target are increased by the casters successes to a maximum of the spells force.

Type	TN	Duration	Range	Drain
Physical	4 (V)	S	LOS	L

Metamagical Abilities

Alter Signature

This is a metamagical power currently being taught by some of the less than legit magic groups out there. It's not easy to find someone to teach you, but it is possible.

This power allows the user to alter the astral signature left behind by the use of magic. It can alter any signature the user leaves behind himself, or that of anyone else. In either case, he can only alter the signature to that of another signature that the user knows.

To use the power, the user must first detect an existing astral signature via normal means. He then performs a complex action and rolls a number of dice equal to his initiate grade against a Target Number equal to the force or rating of the effect that left the signature. One success allows the user to alter the signature.

At this stage the user must resist Force (M) drain where Force is equal to the Force or Rating of the effect that left the original signature. If Force is higher than the users magic attribute, the drain is physical otherwise it is stun.

If at a later stage someone attempts to read the altered signature, the GM should secretly roll a test as if the viewer was trying to break the users masking. If this test succeeds, the viewer sees the original unaltered signature as well as the 'forged' signature overlying it. If this test is unsuccessful, then the viewer sees only the forged signature and believes it to be the real thing.

Adept Powers

Thermal Chameleon

Cost: .5/point

Shamanic Adepts following reptilian totems were the first to manifest this power. The heat radiated by the adept's body becomes similar to that of its surroundings. This does not mean the adept is cold-blooded.

Increase perception tests made to detect the adept with thermal vision/sensors by 1 for each level of thermal chameleon power the adept has attained. In the case of active sensor tests and sensor enhanced gunnery, increase the adept's signature by 1 for each level of thermal chameleon. The adept may activate this power with a free action, but it takes one full combat turn to take effect. These effects are cumulative with other sources of thermal masking designed to decrease the character's thermal profile.

Ricochet

Cost: 1

The Ricochet power bestows upon the Adept uncanny to downright scary proficiency with firearms. When the Adept fires a pistol, rifle or any other kind of gun that shoots a single bullet (shot and flechette ammunition do not work), he or she can attempt to 'bounce' the bullet off sufficiently hard surfaces in order to reach hidden or covered targets.

The Adept may use this power at any time, as long as the target can be reached by bouncing the bullet any number of times off hard (Barriers of rating higher than the weapon's Power) surfaces in order to reach the target. Each ricochet takes away 2 points from the Power of the weapon and adds 2 points to the Target Number of the shot. When the Power reaches

Totems

Scottish Wildcat (Felis grampia)

Exploitation of the laws that constitute 'What exactly makes a wildcat?' led to this reclusive species being hunted nearly to extinction. The species has existed since the Early Pleistocene era and is a survivor, despite man's intervention. Unfortunately it suffers from a catch 22, where hybridization will lead to its destruction, but without it, their species will be extinct soon anyway.

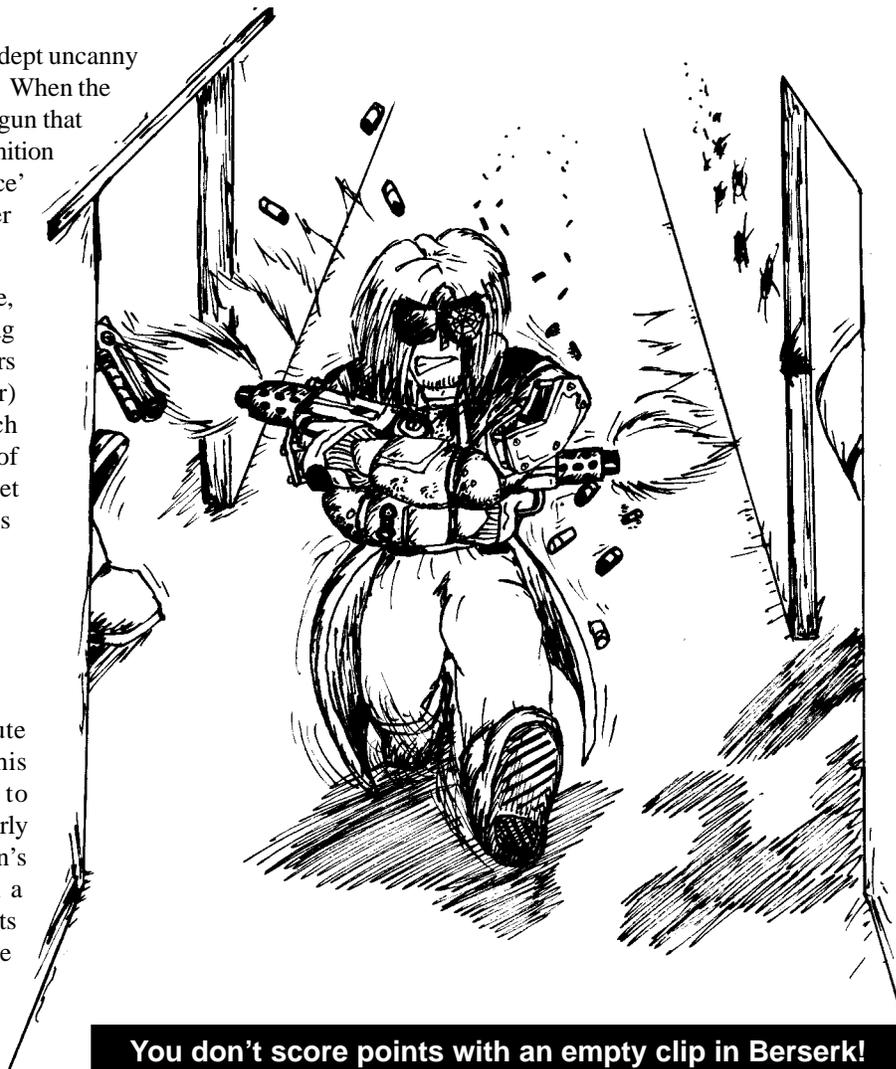
Totem: Scottish Wildcat has problems finding trusting people. It calls more to metahumans, and usually in rural settings. Scottish Wildcat is ever eager for vengeance,

and acts on impulse whenever it is sure of 'whats happening' and deals with revenge swiftly and brutally. Scottish Wildcat shamans almost always work alone, unless they have potential partners that they completely trust. Wildcat Shamans tend to be strong willed - Wildcat doesn't choose those that can't handle him, nor ones that are easily swayed. Stubbornness seems almost a necessity.

Environment: Traditionally open ground and around moors, with plenty of game. Can be found near civilization, but will rarely live around populated areas.

Advantages: +1 dice to all combat spells. +2 dice (cumulative) for all spells used that will directly inflict damage onto someone the shaman is acting out revenge on. +1 dice for illusion spells.

Disadvantages: Willpower (6) Test to not act out revenge immediately. -2 dice to all health spells.



You don't score points with an empty clip in Berserk!

Aljoo

Damage Control by Bull (bull@dumpshock.com)

Controlled Ruthenium

Ruthenium Polymers are, without a doubt, are one of those items that give Munchkins wet dreams. They're also once again a piece of required equipment for every Assassin, Scout, and general "Sneaky Type" character in the 3rd Edition World. And they are without a doubt an endless source of headaches for GM's "blessed" by the presence of players with any sort of munchy streak in them at all.

So what's a GM to do? Under **Man and Machine** rules, there isn't much. They're dirt cheap, don't have an unreachable availability number, have a pathetic Street Index, and for god's sake, are **legal!** I think every ganger and 'Runner wannabe with some loose change in their pocket has one of these all of a sudden. So outside of blatantly changing the rules and stats for these pieces of obnoxious tech (Which is fine and dandy, but not always a viable option), you need to think "Outside the Box", or in this case, "Outside the Rules".

I learned early on that the easiest way to control a player's gear is to take it away from them. However, do this too often, and you can lose your group fast. **But...** Damage the equipment so as to render it useable but less effective, and you just annoy the player, control the equipment, and spur him on to fix it. Sure, it doesn't cost as much to fix as it does to replace (Well, usually), but, it does help you control the item.

So after thinking about this a bit, and playing with a few different ways of "damage control" in my home game, I've decided to formalize a short list of rules governing damaging of these rather delicate pieces of technology. Ever notice how the most expensive toys can often be the most fragile? And let's face it, how often does the runner get a chance to stop and change clothes after the fighting has started. And how many of them is willing to leave their precious munch-tech behind while they do their fighting?

Camera Damage

Ruthenium Suits work via a series of cameras that constantly take pictures, then transmit them into the material of the suit, effectively creating a perfect camouflage to hide the wearer. The more cameras you have, the less work and dispersment each one has to do, and the more effective the suit is overall. However, these cameras are delicate items, and will often get smashed or cracked if the wearer takes any damage while wearing the suit.

Each time the player takes any sort of wound, roll 2d6 and add them together. If the result is equal to or lower than the current number of cameras operating in the suit, one of the cameras was damaged and becomes inoperable. Reduce the suit's effectiveness accordingly.

Ruthenium Cloth Damage

Like the camera's, the material of the suit is a somewhat flimsy material with conductive wiring sewn into the fabric. The material of the suit can easily be torn, and in a combat zone, it frequently is. Every time the character is physically hit, whether he was damaged or not, there is a chance that the suit will be torn or damaged enough to reduce it's effectiveness. Whenever a character is hit, roll a D6 and consult the Ruthenium Cloth Damage table.

Ruthenium Cloth Damage

Wound Level	Damage Effect
No Wound	The suit is damaged on a roll of 1. Reduce the effectiveness of the suit by 1.
Light	The suit is damaged on a roll of 1-2. Reduce the effectiveness of the suit by 1.
Moderate	The suit is damaged on a roll of 1-3. Reduce the effectiveness of the suit by 2.
Serious	The suit is damaged on a roll 1-4. Reduce the effectiveness of the suit by 3.
Deadly	The suit is automatically damaged. Reduce its effectiveness by 4.

Repairing Ruthenium Polymers

The Ruthenium cloth can be repaired, but it's much more complicated than simply sewing up a rip in your shirt. Miniscule electronic connections need to be patched, among other things, and these require a great deal of attention.

Ruthenium can be repaired by hand through the use of either an Electronics B/R test, or through a Ruthenium B/R test and access to an Electronics Shop or Electronics Facilities. The base TN for such a test is 4 for Ruthenium B/R, and 6 for Electronics B/R, modified by a +1 for each point of effectiveness that was reduced through damage to the suit. The base time for repairing the suit is 2 days per point of damage. Divide the base repair time by the number of successes generated on the repair test.

Ronin wants to repair his Ruthenium Cloak after a particularly hairy run in which he barely survived after taking a deadly wound. His cloak lost 4 points of effectiveness, and he's using his Electronics B/R skill for the test. His TN for the repair would be 10, and to fully repair the suit would take him 8 days. He makes his test, and rolls 2 successes. It ends up taking him 4 full days of work to fully repair the suit.

Having a suit repaired by outside means takes a number of days equal to the number of points of damage the suit has taken (how much it's effectiveness is reduced). It also costs 10% of the cost of the base suit (Not including extra camera's installed) per point of damage to have repaired. Modify this cost by street index as appropriate.

Damaged camera's cannot be repaired, only replaced.

A Little Learning... ... is a dangerous thing!

by Lady Jestyr (jestyr@iname.com)

Greetings.

In this, the second instalment of A Little Learning, I present more useful Knowledge skills for your edification.

Knowledge Skills

Accounting

Default: Stockbroking

Specializations: Embezzling, Fraud Control, Cost-Cutting

This skill allows characters to interpret financial data and manipulate it to their advantage. Using Accounting, characters can understand corporate profit and loss statements, prospectuses and other financial reports. A successful use of this skill will allow a character to falsify or manipulate financial data in such a way that it appears genuine. At the GM's discretion, characters may also use their Accounting knowledge to embezzle funds, or identify frauds committed by others. This skill is especially useful for deckers.

Conspiracy Theories

Default: Current Affairs

Specializations: By region, by group, by type (corporate, government, policlub, magical etc)

Stereotypically the favorite topic of wackos everywhere, knowledge of Conspiracy Theories can be very useful to the paranoid shadowrunner. This skill imparts knowledge of many secret conspiratorial groups and covert activities by public organizations (such as those presented in Threats).

Use of this skill also allows characters to analyze patterns in current affairs to identify the activity of many known and unknown power-crazed cabals. Even if the identity of the group in question is unknown, it is still possible to postulate its existence by identifying related events and assessing their influence on society.

The GM should feel free to offer characters somewhat misleading information if they rely too heavily on this skill - after all, eventually a paranoid will start seeing patterns and conspiracies even when they don't exist.

Current Affairs

Default: Conspiracy Theories

Specializations: By subject matter, by geographical area, by news media

This skill represents general/trivia knowledge in current affairs; the character keeps up with the newscasts and newsfeeds, and has a wealth of knowledge about random current events.

Use of this skill, at the GM's discretion, may allow characters to recall a range of information about current and recent happenings, if the information was publicised broadly in the public media. Characters possessing the Photographic

Memory edge (see p. 24, Shadowrun Companion) can be devastatingly informative if they use this skill, slowly becoming a walking news archive.

Police Procedures

Default: Security Procedures

Specializations: By company, by area

Knowledge of Police Procedures gives characters a good understanding of the standard operating and investigative procedures of a variety of law enforcement contractors (such as Lone Star, Knight Errant, and other similar companies). It allows characters to predict the reactions and behaviour of police personnel in standard areas of operation.

Among other examples, this skill allows the characters to estimate the police manpower likely to be assigned to a particular operation, to predict the severity of police response to a reported crime, to work out which officer they need to speak to about an issue, or to guess the departmental jurisdiction over a given case.

Security Procedures

Default: Police Procedures, Security Systems

Specializations: By security force, by risk level

The Security Procedures skill covers the techniques, tactics, and standard operating procedures of security personnel. Using this skill grants the character knowledge of the alertness of typical security personnel and their level of training and equipment, allows a prediction of typical reactions to security situations, and so forth. It also allows people to design appropriate security staffing rosters, and to assess their integration with other security measures on-site (such as technical or magical security).

Sign Language

This skill allows the character to know one specific sign language. The character must specify which sign language their character knows, and must take this skill separately for every sign language they wish to learn; however, defaulting from one sign language to another only adds a +2 penalty to Target Numbers.

There are a number of sign languages in existence, including Ameslan (one-handed), Sign English, Auslan, and a number of military sign 'dialects'.

Stockbroking

Default: Accounting

Specializations: By corporation, by stock type, by market, by area

This skill allows the character to predict the impact of current events on the state of the stock market, and to take advantage of it appropriately. While direct usage of this skill to make money from playing the stock exchange should be carefully monitored by the GM, it allows characters to benefit from their insider knowledge of a corporation's situation.

SwiftOne Speaks

by SwiftOne (swiftone@bigfoot.com)

FASA has been laying low with actual releases lately, and their Shadowrun line has had only four releases since the last issue, the novel Ragnarock, the adventure packs Corporate Punishment and Brainscan, and rule book Cannon Companion.

This does not mean that FASA has been silent. Quite the contrary. In addition to the items that we have been waiting for (The campaign Year of the Comet, currently set for sometime at Gencon, and Target: Awakened Lands) FASA has been talking about a great number of products. The full list is available in the Secrets of Shadowrun section on the TSS Productions web page. (<http://tss.dumpshock.com>), but here are the items that actually show up on the release schedule (and thus have better odds of existing soon):

The Matrix: Virtual Realities 2, edited and updated to be fully SR3 compliant. They might place information on their website for those who have VR2 and don't wish to purchase a minor upgrade. [Due August 2000]

Rigger Redux (working title): Ditto for Rigger 2. This might be a dangerous release, as the release of a Rigger book for any edition has thus far heralded the release of the following edition. [Due October 2000]

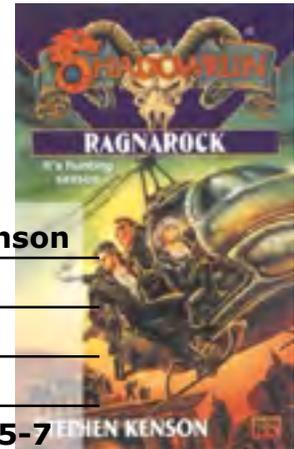
Target: Awakened Lands: Players have been champing at the bit to get into Awakened Australia, but FASA has closed a few attempts when the work done didn't meet their standards. Now we get to find out if we wish they had waited longer, or if we can let our Munchkins roam the Land of Oz. (Other, unspecified, vastly awakened areas are to be covered as well). [Due September 2000]

Threats 2: Have your players encountered all of Threats? Do you need something to scare them with? FASA plans to release a whole new set of powerful villainous threats for you to terrify them with. [Due December 2000].

FASA has is once again talking as if they intend to make use of their Internet presence. They have posted a new ShadowTalk update to their webpage (although they still haven't noticed that their XML comes through pretty ugly, and those of us using non-Microsoft systems tire of the dose of question marks that dot their pages). They have also solicited email replies to their recent release Corporate Punishment (see review this issue). [Note that the subject for the email listed in the adventure itself is different than the one listed on the Web Page. Giving FASA the benefit of the doubt, this is probably because the subject listed in the adventure gives something away, which they didn't want to do in their ShadowTalk. So the GM can feel free to use either subject for their email, FASA can handle it.]

It's good to see big bold plans coming out. The recent push for new players is good for the company, but experienced players have been waiting for any good non-rule products to come out.

Ragnarock



AUTHORS: Stephen Kenson

TYPE: Novel

PAGES: 288

PRICE: \$5.99

ISBN: 0-451-45775-7

Ragnarock was going to be a surprise. I knew this. Normally, when a product comes out from an established author, I have a reasonable idea of what to expect. Carl Sargent would acquaint me with my definition of 'munchkin'. Jak Koke will tell a good story, but use characters I have trouble believing in. Lisa Smedman would create great characters and work to have a plot worthy of them. Mel Odom would show great shadowrunners in action, as long as he ignored the Shadowrun rule system.

Stephen Kenson, however, doesn't have an established track record for novels. I've already gotten used to high-quality sourcebooks from him (such as **Portfolio of a Dragon** and **Magic In The Shadows**), but his novels to date have gotten mixed reviews from me. His first Shadowrun novel, **Technobabel**, left me recommending that he focus on sourcebooks. His second SR novel, **Crossroads**, forced me to eat my words and thank him for a good read. **Ragnarock** split the difference, and leaves me indifferent.

The novel focuses on Talon and his crew, who were introduced in **Crossroads**. This is a plus in my book, because the characters are believable. Rather than focusing on their strengths and great abilities as so many other writers do, Mr. Kenson brings out their vulnerabilities, their failings and frailties. It isn't overdone, and makes the characters more human. (I also recommend it as reading for any character playing a magician.)

Ragnarock, however, turns away from many of the strengths that **Crossroads** had. The setting changes to Germany. **Crossroads** was notable in that it alone of all the SR novels to date made the locale come alive. The flavor of the Boston Sprawl was throughout **Crossroads**. Germany, with the fragmented and confrontational city-states, with the anarchy of Berlin, with the different cultures and languages, should feel alien and different to runners from Boston.

But Talon slotted a German language chip, so we don't have to worry about that.

Perhaps I am being unfair here, perhaps Mr. Kenson tried to communicate the feeling of the industrial sprawl in the shadow of Saeder-Krupp. But regardless of whether the attempt was made, it failed to move me the way **Crossroads** had, and that disappointed me.

Another strength that was left behind was the power-level. Now longtime readers of my reviews will be aware that I am a great fan of low-power characters, the Joe Average runner who is skilled, but still nothing special in terms of stats, equipment, and skills. This biases (and I openly admit it), my reviews, so if you do not share my preference, this part may not bother you, but here it is. In **Crossroads**, Talon and crew were a highly skilled, well-equipped but believable team of runners. In **Ragnarock**, they have all moved up a few notches in skill level. As the book progresses, this becomes more gross in application.

Two remaining nits remain for me to pick. First, I would've expected the author of **Magic In The Shadows** to have been more precise in the portrayal of magic in the Shadowrun universe. Instead, rules are ignored (I was unaware that you could "lift" a sleep spell from anyone). This is minor, of course, as a good story is everything, but I don't feel the benefit to the story was worth the blow to the credibility. (Suspension of disbelief has rules too.)

The final, and perhaps most damaging blow, was the weakness of certain encounters. **Ragnarock** overall has a much more James Bond feel to it. The villain doesn't kill his greatest opponents when has them at his mercy, but instead inexplicably knocks them out and takes them along. Every threat encountered is escaped through the use of more magic, leaving no feeling of near-disaster. The snide paladin of Tir Tairngire falls in line and obeys the hero despite everything. The story was surprising, particularly in the middle, and then became predictable. This style of writing can be fun and successful (see my review of **The Wolf and the Raven**), but Mr. Kenson lacks the true knack to make it exciting and gripping. Not that he is untalented as a writer, because the easy flow of the story is what saved it. I enjoyed reading this novel, but I doubt I will reread it anytime soon.

Ragnarock is a solid mediocre SR novel. While it was not stellar, it nonetheless outperforms many other SR novels. Mr. Kenson has still not created a pattern for his works, and so we'll have to wait for his next novel to see what results. For fans of the Doc Savage style of writing, **Ragnarock** may be worth a look, but for more gritty readers, you might want to pass this one by.



PROS: Good characters. Some surprises.

CONS: Poor setting, over the top action.

Corporate Punishment



Elissa Carey, Malik Toms, Andrew Frades, and Richard Tomasso

AUTHORS:

TYPE: Adventure Set

PAGES: 88

PRICE: \$15.00

ISBN: 1-55560-385-8

Corporate Punishment is a collection of three unrelated adventures (Double Take, Second Effort, and Legacy). Readers familiar with my tastes are aware that I am not a big fan of premade adventures, and so this review should be read with that in mind. While I do my best to restrict my bias, I do not doubt that I cannot remove it entirely. As with all of my adventure reviews, this is a non-spoiler review. Players and GM's alike can read it without learning any important content of the adventures.

As a collection, Corporate Punishment is a little odd because of the unrelated natures of the adventures (they are grouped together in this product because "the runners serve as pawns in a brutal corporate power struggle"). The struggle, however, is different for each adventure. A GM with a taste for conspiracy can attempt to weave them together, but it will be quite a task, as different corporations are involved in each.

The adventures are not "tracked", and are pretty brief, consisting of two to four "scenes", in a straightforward linear arrangement. The power level is a little higher than I would like, but tolerable (You might have Tir Ghost teams or MCT Unit 13 running about), GMs will want to adjust the payoff to their normal levels. The simple format of the adventures means that the players will either stick to the script or move away from it immediately. The adventures themselves are fairly inventive. I particularly liked the complications involved in Second Effort.

One difficulty, however, is that all three adventures have N groups after the runners, where N is a lot bigger than the players would want. This gives the players opportunities to learn how to play opponents off of one another, but also creates a very real potential for characters to be seriously interfered with or killed. A wise GM will decide how they want to handle these situations in advance, and be sure that their players will deal with the ensuing consequences. As evidence, on the survey (see below), one of the questions is "The characters [did something] (and actually survived) Explain how this is possible"

One final comment: FASA has included a quick survey of the results of the final adventure (Legacy), which they want you to photocopy and return to them (or email). [Why they did not use a reader response card is anybody's guess] This is a return to the player feedback system that led to the Election of Dunkelzahn. I think this is a very good idea, as gamers love to feel they that have influence on the world.

Corporate Punishment is strictly average fare in the world of FASA adventures. A bit more lethal than is perhaps standard, but a skilled GM will know how to use that with his or her players. The adventures are brief, but prepackaged adventures (as opposed to campaigns or event collections such as Blood in the Boardroom) really should be, if the players are to have any chance of staying close enough to the plot to make the purchase worth the GM's investment.



Pros: Solid, brief adventures

Cons: Very real risk of player unhappiness.

Cannon Companion



AUTHORS: Robert Boyle, Dan "Flake" Grendel, Mike Mulvihill and others

TYPE: Sourcebook

PAGES: 128

PRICE: \$20.00

ISBN: 1-55560-375-0

The Cannon Companion is the third Rules Expansion for SR3, and was slated to be the last of the "catch-up" books that brings all second edition rules to third edition (The recent announcement that FASA will release a 3rd edition version of Rigger 2 and Virtual Realities 2 changes this).

Because CC is a catch-up book, there is a lot of material that has been printed in previous books. There is also, however, a fair amount of new material. I list the diverse contents as a Con of the book because it makes it less targeted. Normally, a non-combat intensive group would avoid a sourcebook entitled the Cannon Companion. If they want detailed BTL or Skillsoft rules, however, they'll have to pick it up.

The Cannon Companion is only 128 pages (although currently "standard" in the industry, many companies, FASA included, have been pushing that standard in recent releases, accompanied by a push from \$18(US) to \$20(US)), which makes it a bit steep at \$20 (US). The complete absence of any index makes this even more curious. Perhaps the explanation lies in printing conventions: Print books come in sets of 16 pages. As an index would only use a few pages, FASA would have had to fill many more pages. Since the content is already stretched beyond the scope of a "gun book", this would have been difficult. Also, As the CC continues the new trend of not including Shadowtalk in rules expansions, and doesn't offer picture-a-page listings, much more is included per page than before 3rd edition.

While the index is missing, there is a complete table of gear prices and stats, as well as an expanded weapon ranges table and weapon record sheet (a character sheet for weapons), all of which is very nice.

The first sections of the CC introduce weapons. Melee, Projectiles, Thrown, Heavy, Special, Accessories, Ammo, and Explosives are covered. Many of these items appeared in The Street Samurai Catalog (SSC), Fields of Fire (FOF), Neo-Anarchist's Guide to Real Life (NAGRL), Corporate Security (CS), and Cyberpirates (CP), but others (Flame throwers, caltrops, etc) are new and overdue. Also included are very nice charts listing damage from improvised weapons (Bowling Ball, Hairspray and Lighter, Molotov Cocktail). Those items that had abused flaws in previous versions have been corrected (The Yamaha Pulsar Taser, for example, is now a very effective stun weapon, but doesn't cause automatic convulsions as it did originally). All the new weapons and gear seem fairly balanced, and offer more flexibility and style to characters rather than grossly increased power. The descriptions for the weapons also focus much more on game effects and rules, removing a lot of questions about accessories and recoil.

The Armor section reintroduces the subtle, social armors from NAGRL, and greatly expands the options available. Need armored coveralls? No problem. It also brings back the Hardened Military Armor (or "Bug Suits", as my group calls them) from FOF. Armor options are covered, such as chem seal, gel packs, non-conductive layers, thermal dampening, and others. The Battletac tactical communication system is covered, and quick but sufficient coverage is given to parachutes and underwater gear.

The next section expands the rules about skillsoft systems, long one of the more under-used SR options. The inclusion of the rules here is a bit unusual, as one of the reason it is under-used is that it best when applied to non-combat skills. (Reportedly, this section was material that couldn't fit into Man and Machine). The rules presented offer more flexibility to a skillchip buyer, and if a GM reads these rules, he will find many adventure seeds and plot twists. Also in this section are rules concerning Better Than Life (BTL) chips. The material goes a long way in explaining how simsense (Be it normal, Cal-hots, or BTL) works in the culture, and offers the GM even more material with which to craft adventures, but offers little to characters except interesting character concepts.

The next section is the long awaited Firearm Construction and Customization rules (as one person commented on rec.games.frp.cyber "This will render hundreds of Shadowrun fan websites obsolete"). The construction rules are nice. Easy enough to work out with a little time, rules for your character's skills and equipment (and/or contacts) included, and the options available allow you to create a wide range of weapons, but all within existing weapon power ranges. The Customization rules are also more than adequate, but don't just skim the rules or you'll miss the part that makes cost at character creation time easy.



The Advanced Melee Rules are even longer-awaited than the Firearm Construction rules. This is a difficult subject...the melee rules in SR are, frankly, unrealistic. Any attempt to change them will anger/annoy/frustrate **someone**. However, I'm fairly impressed with what FASA has settled on. I've seen **many** replacements for the SR combat system (some even in TSS, see *Melee Style!* issue 11), but this system maintains the simplicity of the basic melee system while adding options and flavor to it. The Melee Rules section is in two parts: Combat Options, which expands the concepts of Full Defense, Subduing, etc, and Martial Arts, which replaces the standard martial arts rules.

The Combat Options are fairly straight-forward. The only interesting part is that a sufficiently skilled opponent can use subduing combat to take down a much stronger (but less skilled) opponent. The Martial Arts rules treat martial arts as replacements to the Unarmed Combat skill, not specializations. Each Martial Arts Style (11 besides Brawling, the new form of Unarmed combat, are listed) acts similarly to a totem, giving advantages and disadvantages to the users combat. Each Style also has a list of Maneuvers that can be learned (at 2 Karma each) that have an effect in combat. The Styles are fairly sweeping (each Style represents several different Martial Arts), and the Maneuvers represent your approach to the outcome of the action (remembering that each action represents a series of moves). Thus, you don't learn Uppercut or Roundhouse Kick, you learn Full Offense or Kick Attacks. These rules avoid the classic trap of making Martial Arts intrinsically better than Brawling, but instead offer each style a set of options and advantages, so that fighters who can arrange to be in situations that maximize their benefits will succeed more often. Thus the Aikido expert will get fragged if he insists on charging his opponents, but can throw charging opponents with less difficulty. The rules are in line with the standard SR approach to melee combat, so if you loathe the basic rules, these changes will not appeal to you, whereas if you find the basic rules simple but adequate, you may well find this expansion to be of value in adding flavor to your game.

The final section of the book (before the charts and tables) is the Advanced Combat Rules. This section is a series of short rules and references, much like those in the back of *Fields of Fire*, but expanded, and inclusive of the underwater combat rules included in *Cyberpirates*. The Suppressive Fire rules (from *Fields of Fire*), previously used as the only way to fire full-auto (why have recoil and target penalties when you can just fire at a TN 4?), have been re-written to better accomplish their goal. Now Suppressive Fire will have them stay down to avoid being shot, but any hit from such an action will not inflict great pain. Heavily armored targets will not feel threatened by such fire (by the numbers, the GM can decide that being shot, even without effective damage, is threat enough.) A new rule, Searching Fire, is used to attempt to guarantee a hit by generating a hail of lead. That rule is pretty lightweight, however, and it quickly becomes easy to fire fewer shots to avoid the recoil penalties. The Strength to soak recoil rule from *Fields of Fire* has also made a revised return: Now the compensation doesn't begin until Strength 5. Many more niche rules are in this section.

On the whole the Cannon Companion does an excellent job of expanding combat options without creating overpowered monsters. The new gear and options promise more exciting and varied combats and characters. Even with a large amount of reprinted material, the lack of shadowtalk and the removal of the one item a page format has allowed an impressive amount of information to be squeezed into its pages. I recommend the book even to non-combat focused groups (perhaps especially to them), because the rules are less about bigger guns than they are about bigger choices. Only the inclusion of the off-topic sime sense rules and lack of an index keep Cannon Companion from being a 5.

Pros: Many well-balanced rules, the last major changes from 2nd edition.

Cons: Diverse content, No index, Limited appeal next to M&M and MITS



Brainscan



Brian Schorer, Robert Boyle, Davidson Cole, Steve Kenson, Jason Levine and David Hyatt

AUTHORS: Brian Schorer, Robert Boyle, Davidson Cole, Steve Kenson, Jason Levine and David Hyatt

TYPE: Adventure Set

PAGES: 152

PRICE: \$22.00

ISBN: 1-55560-410-2

A note about this review: I do my best to make all my adventure reviews non-spoiler, so that they can be read by both player and GM alike. I must, however, give away some generalities about the adventure, and with this particular adventure, I must give away some details about a previous product, namely Renraku Arcology: Shutdown. If you do not want any spoilers regarding that adventure, do not read this review any further.

Brainscan is more than an adventure, it is actually a series of five short adventures, with some interlinking discussion. The adventures consist of 2-3 tasks each, so Brainscan can keep a group occupied for many, many sessions. The adventures are not truly Matrix-based as I originally suspected (note that the description on the back cover is absolutely useless and has almost no resemblance to the content), although a decker will find plenty to do (the adventures do an adequate job of presenting system information.) Brainscan is actually about the machinations of Deus and his servants outside the arcology.

Before I can discuss the quality of the Brainscan adventures, I must first touch upon the nature of the beast. Amongst role-playing game designers, there are two primary forms of development: Static worlds, and metaplots. Static world designers prefer to develop a game world in detail, and then move on. (Note that detailing a game world can take many years of releases). Dynamic world designers (aka metaplot designers) prefer to have an evolving world where large-scale events happen and the the world changes. FASA is one of the latter, and has been with all of their most recent lines (BattleTech, Shadowrun, and Earthdawn). The advantages and disadvantages

of each are hotly debated: Many gamers enjoy having a company develop new challenges and twists, while others hate having a company interfere with their plots and outdated their sourcebooks. Personally, (if you care) I find benefits in both. The metaplot nature of the Shadowrun universe does not interfere with my games because the metaplots happen on a



scale that my runners do not interact with. The times it does trouble me is when it forces a player who wishes to stay abreast with the universe to purchase products they would not normally purchase. I had that complaint about Renraku Arcology: Shutdown, and I have that concern about Brainscan. It may be that my concern is unwarranted: The Matrix sourcebooks that I was also concerned about may reveal the changes that Brainscan has enacted in the Shadowrun Universe. Until those books are released, however, I can only wait. For the moment, Brainscan changes the Shadowrun universe, and does an inadequate job of describing the fallout of the adventures, leaving any GM running it in a lurch until a new sourcebook is released.

The adventures in Brainscan are actually quite good. They are simple enough to avoid most player complications, and the authors have done a good job of providing good debugging tips. (Although I still wonder why FASA continues to release adventures that don't account for the fact that any shadowrunners turning over an unwilling hostage are going to keep that hostage incapacitated). In most respects, Brainscan is superior to Harlequin, the previous linked adventure set (Which is the same size, produced in 1990, and cost \$12.00 (US)). The difficulty in the adventures comes from two points: First, and of least importance, the adventures continue to bring the players in without adequate explanation of why the players themselves continue to get the jobs. Harlequin had an explanation for this, Brainscan does not. A clever GM can come up with many, but the authors could have provided at least one. The second difficulty is that while the adventures themselves are fairly fault tolerant, the linking between the adventures is weaker and more linear. It would be quite simple for the characters to get "off-course" on any of the adventures, leaving the GM with more (pricey) adventures that can no longer be fit in without stretching credibility. This fault is inherent in the design, and the authors have done as much as they could be expected to to provide advice to try and stave this off, but players being players, this is still a definite risk.

As I have mentioned, another difficulty with Brainscan comes not from the adventures, but from the lack of final resolution. Imagine if Renraku Arcology: Shutdown had been an adventure that ended with the actual seizure of the Arcology, or if Bug City had described the attack by the insect spirits, but not any response. The GM would be left with a significant event in the Shadowrun universe, and no hint of how it would be handled. Brainscan's climax leaves just that sort of problem, and many GM's may wish to await information about the fallout of the adventure, even though doing so might result in players that know how Brainscan ends before actually experiencing the adventure.

As prepackaged adventures go, Brainscan is among the best I have seen FASA produce. The weaknesses built-in to the concept of linked adventures, along with the lack of final resolution and the hefty price tag are a serious blow to its appeal, however, and I remain skeptical of recommending it to everyone.

Pros: Complete adventure set, easily molded to different groups

Cons: Highly linear, expensive.